

'Lisbon to decide on Salem after probe'

New Delhi: The Portuguese authorities are considering the CBI's request for the extradition of mafia don Abu Salem, wanted in the 1993 Mumbai blasts case, and will take a decision after their own probe



Abu Salem

against the accused is over, according to the director of the investigating agency, P.C. Sharma.

"We have handed over the extradition request to the Portuguese authorities and they have told our officer that they will examine our request. They have also confirmed to us in writing that Salem's judicial remand has been extended by an-

other 90 days," Mr Sharma said.

Asked what the chances of Salem's extradition were, Mr Sharma said, "Well, extradition is a sovereign decision of a country. We can try and hope for the best."

Regarding Salem's involvement with terrorist groups like the Al Qaida, Mr Sharma said, "I have no information on that, but let me make it clear that such undesirable people don't come up so fast because of their hard work but because of some undercover links."

Salem's alleged involvement with terrorism has come under the scanner and the FBI is especially trying to establish his alleged connections with the Al Qaida. Mr Sharma acknowledged that some information

had been exchanged with the FBI about Salem. He said the cancellation of Salem's work permit and the extension of his judicial remand were heartening developments.

The extension of his judicial remand came close on the heels of the CBI sending an official with a formal extradition request listing Salem's involvement in three CBI cases, four cases with the Delhi police and two cases registered against him by the Mumbai police.

The extradition request, which gave an executive assurance to the Portuguese authorities not to award Salem capital punishment in case of his conviction by Indian courts, highlighted his role in the conspiracy leading to the Mumbai blasts. PTI

30 DEC 2002

INDIA-FRANCE TIES/ TURNAROUND SEEN

All de-escalation steps have come from India: France

By Vaiju Naravane

PARIS, DEC. 13. The importance France accords the continuing dialogue with India was underscored by the fact that Maurice Gourdault-Montagne, President Chirac's Diplomatic Adviser, who has been nominated to conduct the Indo-French strategic dialogue postponed his trip to Copenhagen on Thursday for the critical summit on European enlargement to host a working lunch for Brajesh Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and India's National Security Adviser.

Mr. Mishra made a brief stopover in Paris on his return from Washington in an attempt to get to know his counterpart who will lead the French side in talks in New Delhi next month. Mr. Gourdault-Montagne congratulated India on the developments in Kashmir and reportedly told Mr. Mishra that Paris had noted the fact that all de-escalation measures had come from India despite continued Pakistan-sponsored terrorist activity in Kashmir. This marks a turnaround in French policy. For, while Paris has always been sympathetic to India's concern over Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, senior officials speaking to this reporter had expressed scepticism about the possibility of holding free and fair polls in Jammu and Kashmir.

France is a major player within the European Union, the G-8 industrialised nations group and a permanent member of

the United Nations Security Council. It has also been the first Western nation to initiate a strategic dialogue with India. Now, with a stronger France both within the European Union and on the world stage, New Delhi hopes to deepen and widen its ties with Paris.

President Chirac's re-election last May with a record margin of votes and the sweeping victory won by his conservative political family in the legislative polls that followed has also given him a free hand to decide on matters both internal and external.

Rid of the cumbersome system of cohabitation, the new French team at the helm of affairs exudes confidence, flair and imagination. Mr. Chirac has trusted lieutenants with proven track records for diplomacy and an understanding of geopolitical subtleties. The Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin, who served in India in two different capacities, continues to be Mr. Chirac's *eminence grise* on foreign policy.

Mr. Chirac recently called another old India hand Maurice Gourdault-Montagne to his side as special diplomatic adviser and it is he who will lead the French side in the strategic dialogue scheduled to take place in New Delhi next month. The new French Ambassador to New Delhi, Dominique Girard, headed the Asia and Oceania desk at the foreign office; so there is continuity in change.

Coming closer to home, India is looking into several spheres of cooperation with Paris, particularly in the defence and civilian nuclear energy areas. In both these fields, the French have extremely advanced technology and hardware to offer.

While Paris fully understands India's concern that Pakistan-sponsored terrorist activity continues unabated or that not enough is being done to curb Pakistan internationally because of the new U.S.-Pakistan axis against terrorism, India's pleas for economic sanctions against Pakistan are likely to fall on deaf ears here as they have in Washington.

France has in the past advised India to open a dialogue with Pakistan while relentlessly cracking down on terrorist activity. New Delhi has been at pains to explain why it is not in a position to talk a nation that continues to funnel terrorist attacks of the worst kind.

There is a charged programme of activity coming up in the months ahead between India and France. India's Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani will be in Paris late January for a series of top level meetings that will include with Mr. Chirac.

In February, the French Prime Minister, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, is to visit India accompanied by five top-level Ministers — defence, finance, transport, foreign cooperation and industry. He will also be taking an impressive team of businessmen with him.

India, European Union to settle trade issues ✓

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, November 12

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN India and European Union on major issues like textiles, classification of whisky, movement of professionals and phasing out of trade-distorting export subsidies continue to affect bilateral trade.

But, both the sides are confident that these issues will be thrashed out in due course.

These issues are being dealt with separately by both the governments given the sensitivity and the trade volumes involved.

This is despite the bullish sentiments expressed by the sides on the outcome of the Indo-European Summit held at Copenhagen recently.

There seems to be some hope for India only on the movement of Infotech professionals as the member countries of EU seem to be inclined to open up their doors to Indian expertise. Simultaneously, India has

apparently agreed to encourage EU companies to set up shop in the country and train their technical professionals.

Briefing newsmen on Tuesday, head of the EU delegation and ambassador Michael Cailouet said a joint group has been set up to thrash out the thorny issues relating to textiles. On whisky, he said that tariffs on imports were prohibitive. With regard to movement of natural people, he was optimistic that the twin strategy would work out.

Meanwhile, a senior EU official maintained that the Union was committed to phasing out export subsidies. But, the pace and time frame is yet to be negotiated as part of the WTO agreement on agriculture for which informal negotiations would begin later this week at Sydney.

European Union sees convergence of interests with India though latter is seen as a potential exporter of agricultural products in

large scale. EU is harping on the point that while the member countries have been phasing out the export subsidies from 1991, US has hiked support to exports.

In the Sydney round of informal discussions, EU may link phasing out export subsidies to domestic support being given in various countries.

The 15-member strong EU seeks to comprehensively address the issues of market access, export subsidies and domestic support jointly to leverage its position better.

Meanwhile, India and EU have decided to enhance the bilateral trade to euros 35 billion by 2005 against euros 23 billion at present. By 2008, this volume is expected to go up to euros 50 billion.

In association with CII and Ficci, the EU as well as the related business chambers have identified areas to achieve this target and in the meantime sort out the thorny issues.

13 NOV 2002

HINDUSTAN TIMES

Ambassador to region says state has 'lot of catching up to do' to mend image

G-10
u/v
gudra, gudra

EU unveils programmes to prop education and health

STAFF REPORTER

Calcutta, Nov. 10: The European Union is poised to intensify its involvement with India through both bilateral trade and social-sector projects.

"We want to make EU more visible in this country of over one billion people," Michel Caillouet, ambassador, European Union, told **The Telegraph**.

Appropriately — arithmetically, at least — the EU has set aside a corpus of 1 billion Euro for development projects here, covering areas like primary education, health sector, water and sewage management.

"We are looking for concrete, feasible proposals from the Indian authorities," said Caillouet, in town for the Consular Corps golf tournament, after meeting chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation chairman Somnath Chatterjee over the weekend.

The head of the delegation of the European Commission to

India, Nepal and Bhutan, took the opportunity to mix birdies with business by meeting some captains of industry in Calcutta.

"This, my third visit to the city, is intended to promote business-to-business co-operation," Caillouet made clear.

The EU has set targets for itself to be seen "politically, socially and economically" active in the world's biggest democracy.

On the trade front, the 15-member Union has set a target of 35 billion Euro as annual bilateral trade volume between India and EU by 2005. At present, the EU-India annual trade stands at 25 billion Euro.

Admitting that there wasn't enough EU-linked activity in the state, Caillouet stressed the importance of having committees to address specific issues to increase the Union's involvement.

"We have been working with NGOs on the social front here for sometime. And now we are working towards promoting business-to-business co-operation with associations like the CII and

Ficci," said Caillouet.

Helping higher education and management of cities also figures high on EU's India agenda. A 40 million-Euro project to link major universities of Europe with Asian universities is being executed.

"Calcutta can make use of this Asia-Link programme to set up a school of medicine with EU aid to train local doctors, and also IT education centres. We know Bengal is a seat of learning and would welcome concrete proposals from educational institutions here for mutually beneficial exchange programmes," said the ambassador. The city can also utilise a special EU programme to help in management of cities, the authorities willing.

The ambassador, impressed with Bhattacharjee's "level of preparedness", told the chief minister that EU was looking at the possibility of direct transfer of money to the end-users.

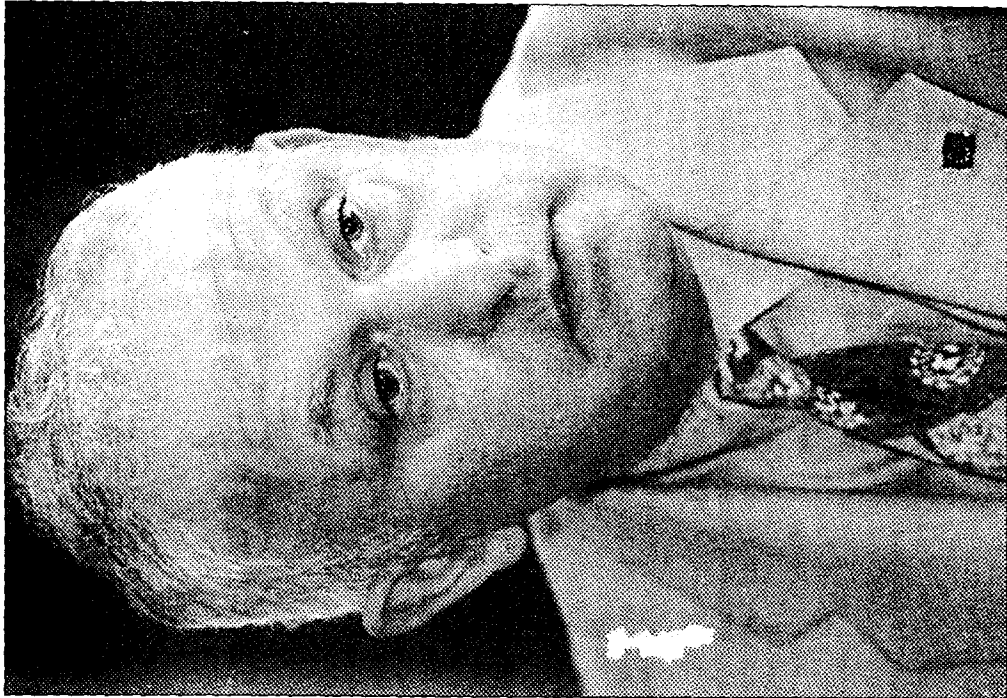
"About Rs 24 crore has already reached West Bengal from the EU's 40-million-Euro health-

reforms aid package for India. The chief minister has requested me for more, but the competition is intense and other states are also in the fray."

While listing the "things to do" to broaden the scope of economic co-operation between India and EU, Caillouet referred to the importance of India's image.

"Branding is so essential to alter perception. Look at how countries like Thailand, Singapore, and even Chile, where conditions are very similar to India, have improved trade with Europe. In this respect, Calcutta has a lot of catching up to do, even with other Indian cities like Bangalore," the ambassador said.

He urged Delhi to speed up economic reforms. "EU countries find it difficult to access the Indian textile market because of high import duty, whereas accessing the Pakistani market is much easier. The Indian government must address these issues related to market access," said Caillouet.



Michel Caillouet

India, E.U. differ on Gujarat issue

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, OCT. 23. Gujarat has emerged as a major point of difference between India and the European Union. Apart from the publicised non-acceptance of an E.U. "demarche" by New Delhi on the killings of Muslims in Gujarat earlier this year, the issue has remained contentious between India and the E.U.

The European Commission's Country Strategy Paper 2002-06, posted on the E.U. website in July, on the Gujarat issue and the communal killings, was watered down following Indian intervention in Brussels.

In its assessment of the political situation in India, the document said: "...communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims have regularly flared up since Independence, culminating in the destruction of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya in 1992. The outburst of communal violence in Gujarat of February 2002, though limited to this State, is a sign of a further sharpening of communal discord."

Following Indian intervention, the version now reads: "...communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims have regu-

larly flared up since Independence, particularly in the events leading to the destruction of the Babri mosque in Ayodhya in 1992 and the recent outbursts of communal violence in Gujarat. Nevertheless, India's secularist tradition attracts strong popular support".

The BJP-led Government's sensitivities on Gujarat are evident from the fact that it chose to respond to the Strategy Paper posted on the website. The E.U., which has developed a tradition of debate and discussion, has seen India say no to a dialogue on human rights, which Brussels had proposed.

Sources, however, point out that the E.U. has an ongoing human rights dialogue with China. At the troika meeting of Foreign Ministers on October 10, which preceded the India-E.U. summit in Copenhagen, the E.U. side raised the Gujarat issue, the human rights situation in Jammu and Kashmir as well as attacks on the Dalits.

The sources also claim that it was a "paradox" why India and the E.U. could not agree to a common formulation in the joint statement on the current situation in South Asia given the fact that both of them are

strongly opposed to terrorism.

They said that initially the E.U. wanted a reference to the importance of ensuring peace and stability in South Asia while the Indian side wanted a reference to ending infiltration across the Line of Control as a first step towards de-escalation. Finally, the E.U. ended up insisting on a reference to dialogue with Pakistan and India wanting a reference to cross-border terrorism. Also, the sources said that New Delhi, apparently going by protocol, sent a junior official in the Indian Embassy in Copenhagen for end-game negotiations on the joint statement — a decision which appears to have rankled E.U. circles.

The sources feel that the differences over Gujarat left a "bad taste" and could have been a factor that influenced negotiations on the joint statement issued in Copenhagen.

It is all very well to have "summit level" meetings, but there is little doubt that attention needs to be paid to detail in diplomatic negotiations to avoid embarrassment at the high-level. If prior agreement proves elusive, the potential for embarrassment remains real.

HD-12
24/10

24 OCT 2002

MONDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2002

THE PERILS OF IGNORING EUROPE ¹¹⁹⁻¹⁰

^{11/10} WHILE A SUSTAINED diplomatic effort would appear to have succeeded in making certain sections of the European community re-adjust the focus of their views on developments in South Asia, India's foreign policy establishment needs to draw lessons from the experiences in Copenhagen. The European Union President and Danish Prime Minister, Anders Rasmussen, did not cast himself in very good light when he drastically changed the emphasis of his line on subcontinental affairs even as he exchanged one hat for the other. While articulating their views at the end of the India-E.U. summit, Mr. Rasmussen and his officials did not deem it appropriate to accord sufficient attention to India's grievance at being a victim of cross-border terrorism even as they exhorted their co-summittees to initiate a dialogue with Pakistan. A day later — after dealing with his Indian counterpart, Atal Behari Vajpayee, on the bilateral plane — the Danish Prime Minister preferred to expound on his appreciation that an end to cross-border terrorism would improve the climate for a dialogue. The alteration in the thrust of Mr. Rasmussen's approach is, however, not the matter that India's foreign policy establishment must keep foremost in mind when it looks back at the Copenhagen experiences. New Delhi has to re-scrutinise its own diplomatic operations thus far and pinpoint the drawback that necessitated an extra effort for a more favourable outcome. In retrospect, it would appear that the interactions on both planes in Copenhagen would have been smoother if New Delhi had put its readiness to resume a dialogue with Islamabad up front and presented the issue of cross-border terrorism as a hindrance. That might have made for a more productive method than the one which has been followed of positing an end to cross-border terrorism as the pre-condition for a dialogue.

There is also a lesson to be learnt from the

facts that the Danish Prime Minister initially had an outlook on subcontinental affairs quite different from that of several other European leaders and that he was amenable to a change of mind once he was briefed in detail. An inescapable inference is that the Indian diplomatic efforts have yet to strike the right balance. While it is not possible to sustain the same level of efforts all around the globe, it is surely necessary that the cross-connections between the various nations that are being simultaneously dealt with are not overlooked. There is no complete unanimity of views within the E.U. and it is probable that European nations which have been directly afflicted by terrorism would be less sanguine on the matter than the Scandinavian bloc that has a markedly milder attitude to this phenomenon. But what Mr. Rasmussen's comments after the summit revealed was that for nations that are further removed from the epicentre of global terrorism the tensions between two nuclear-armed neighbours that could escalate into a horrendous conflict with a global fallout is a matter for more immediate concern.

To an extent, the E.U.'s hesitance to take on board India's projections could be attributable to New Delhi's slackness in engaging with it more vigorously on political, especially security related matters. This might have added to the sense of injury that the E.U. is currently suffering from on account of the rather dismissive manner in which Washington is dealing with it. While it is true that the E.U. has, either on account of a lack of ability or of will, not been involved to the extent that it should be on global security issues, to deal with it purely on the basis of current performance is to ignore the grouping's potential in international politics. It is after all to India's advantage that multi-polarity be enhanced and with Russia and China not able, for the moment, to exert their full potential there is a necessity to boost the E.U.'s prestige and its desire for engaging with global issues.

Pakistan rebuts E.U. team charges on poll process

MQM claims evidence of rigging

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, OCT. 13. Stung by the 'interim report' of the European Union election observers team, the Pakistan Government has come out with a point-by-point rebuttal of charges of 'serious flaws' in the electoral process even as the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) made a scathing attack on the alleged administrative interference on the polling day.

The carefully worded long rebuttal by the Pakistan Government termed the charges made by the EU mission as 'baseless' and refrained from strong comments. In one paragraph, however, the Government did take serious exception to the EU team report and asserted that equating the President of Pakistan with a local official in promulgation of laws was 'ridiculous.'

The Election Commission of Pakistan, in a separate statement, refuted the allegations of partiality levelled by the mission in its report on the polls and maintained that the Commission had acted with neutrality, impartiality, objectivity and independence at every stage of the election process.

"This is amply demonstrated by the statements made with one voice by all the polling

agents, including those of the PPP, the PML(N), the Tehrik-i-Insaf, the MMA, the Awami Tehrik, and the PML(Q)," a spokesperson of the Commission pointed out.

The Government said the mission's conclusion that the Pakistani authorities were engaged in "unjustified interference with the electoral arrangements and the democratic process," which resulted in "serious flaws in the electoral process," was unfortunate.

"This is just not true. There was no such policy or plan. In fact, the President had extended his personal pledge of fairness and transparency of the electoral process and had, therefore, ensured that the election observers, as well as the foreign media, were provided full and unfettered access to any part of the country," it said.

Pakistan said the Election Commission was autonomous and headed by a senior former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. It had done a 'reasonable job' of organising a mammoth election for an electorate that had been enlarged to nearly 72 millions.

It said the allegation against the President as having "imposed serious restriction on campaign activities" together with the Commissioner of Isla-

mabad was baseless. Equating the President with a local official in promulgation of laws 'is ridiculous.' "Some local infractions may have occurred, but that should not be generalised beyond reasonable limits."

It said the observation of the mission that the Government overstepped the limits set by the Supreme Court judgment of May 12, 2000, in that it had altered the salient features of the 1973 Constitution from a parliamentary to a presidential one was incorrect. "The Government of Pakistan, however, joins the mission in its hope that following the completion of this election process, all parties would work together to achieve the establishment of good governance in Pakistan."

In a related development the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), a non-government body, in its interim report has said that the general election lacked in both 'fairness and transparency'. The HRCP expressed serious concern at what it termed as allegations of 'post-poll manipulations.'

The HRCP regretted that not content with its 'pre-poll manipulation' of the electoral process, the administration seemed to have 'continued to tamper' with it during the polling and afterwards.

ISLAMABAD, OCT. 13. The Muttahida Qaumi Movement supremo, Altaf Hussain, has claimed that his party has 'solid evidence of rigging' and manipulation of the just concluded elections to bring 'Pakistan Taliban' to the assemblies and urged the President, Parvez Musharraf, to annul the election.

A party statement said Mr. Hussain, who lives in London on exile, addressed on telephone public meetings in Karachi, Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas and requested the international community to take notice of what he termed as 'naked rigging' of the elections. The MQM is agitated over the gains made by the alliance of six religious parties, particularly in Karachi and has accused the administration of helping the group.

"Please ask Gen. Musharraf to declare these elections null and avoid. The MQM has solid evidence of rigging and MQM has firm belief that through manipulation these election results were changed to bring Pakistani-Taliban to the assemblies and the corridors of power. In short, I would say that these elections were not held to restore democracy but to bring Talibanisation in Pakistan," he reportedly told party supporters.

E.U. hails J&K poll, faults that of Pak.

By K.K. Katyal

NEW DELHI, OCT. 13. The European Union has welcomed the completion of the Assembly poll in Jammu and Kashmir but its observation team in Pakistan describes the elections there seriously flawed.

A declaration issued in Copenhagen by the Danish presidency on behalf of the European Union "appreciates that many candidates and voters used their democratic right to elect local representatives despite terrorist violence and intimidation" and "strongly condemns the many violent incidents which led to the tragic loss of a large number of human lives". Noting that there was no E.U. observation, it said that a number of diplomatic staff (of the member-countries) followed the process with the assistance of the Indian Government.

Taking into account their personal impressions, "the E.U. welcomes the strenuous efforts of the Indian Election Commission in promoting free and fair elections. We encourage the Indian Government to follow through on its commitment to fully investigate reports of

irregularities". The E.U. hopes that the "elections will be a starting point for a forward-looking and inclusive dialogue with Kashmiri stakeholders" and that the "future developments will lead to improvements to the governance and human rights situation in Kashmir". Then there is a call on "India and Pakistan to resume, as soon as possible, diplomatic dialogue on all issues that divide them, including that of Kashmir."

A lasting settlement to the Kashmir issue can only be achieved through an inclusive dialogue, involving the Kashmiri people." The E.U., it is pointed out, is "ready to work with India and Pakistan and with others in the community to defuse the continuing crisis (between them) and to encourage efforts to settle their differences through bilateral dialogue".

In sharp contrast to it are the tone and content of the findings of the E.U. observers' mission in Pakistan, which finds clear evidence of official interference in favour of parties such as the Muslim League (QA) which support Gen. Musharraf. "Regrettably, in choosing the course of interference,

the Pakistan authorities engaged in actions which resulted in serious flaws in the electoral process," according to the mission.

The head of the mission has blamed the Pakistan Election Commission for failing to curb the misuse of state resources by the authorities in favour of certain political parties, particularly the PML(QA). In his view, the conduct of elections did not guarantee the establishment of democracy. The mission, according to its report, found solid evidence to believe that public authorities from the local administration (Nazims) up to the senior level of governance were actively involved in partisan electioneering. It cites several instances in this regard.

The Legal Framework order, issued before the elections, in the mission's opinion, institutionalises the role of the military in the governance through the National Security Council, which could subordinate civilian governments to military control.

It is seen as having crossed the limits set by the Supreme Court judgment (of May 12, 2000), as it alters the "salient features of the 1973 Constitution", from a parliamentary to presidential one.

'Differences within E.U. on S. Asia'

By Our Diplomatic Correspondent

COPENHAGEN, OCT. 10. The External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, today said that there were differences of opinion between the Danish Presidency of the European Union and the EU High Representative for Foreign Relations, Javier Solana, on approaching the situation in South Asia.

As the Danish Presidency dictated a tough line on India talking to Pakistan and exercising restraint, Mr. Sinha told presspersons that it was the European Union that was making New Delhi's relations with Brussels hostage to ties with Pakistan.

Speaking after a tense ending to the Third India-European Union Summit, Mr. Sinha said he raised the public comments made by the EU Commissioner for External Relations, Chris Patten, about India viewing relations with the EU through a Pakistani prism.

(Talking to reporters informally, Mr. Patten said his comments were in the context of certain concessions that the European Union had made to Pakistan in the textile sector. The Indian side, however, said that those concessions had now been withdrawn).

Asked how New Delhi would deal with pressures from the international community, including the United States, on resuming talks with Pakistan, Mr. Sinha said India would say the same thing to the U.S. as had been conveyed to the European Union today.

Referring to the differences over the joint press statement, Mr. Sinha said this had been under negotiation for quite some time. A couple of days ago the European Union came out with the formulation on India resuming the dialogue with Pakistan, with which India had problems.

New Delhi then suggested that it would be amenable to including the resumption of the dialogue if the reference included an end by Pakistan to cross-border terrorism. This, he said, was not acceptable to the E.U. side and, hence, all references to Kashmir and Pakistan were dropped.

Mr. Sinha echoed the Prime Minister when he said that there was no question of resuming talks with Pakistan till there was an end to cross-border terrorism. He said the E.U. telling Pakistan to end cross-border terrorism did not have any impact on Islamabad.

The External Affairs Minister, who was part of the India-E.U. "troika" meeting along with Mr. Patten, the E.U. High Representative, Javier Solana, and the Danish Foreign Minister, Per Stig Moller, said discussions were also held on the situation in Nepal and Sri Lanka.

On Iraq, when the E.U. side pointed out that there commonalities on the Indian position and that of the Union, Mr. Sinha said he pointed out that there were differences of approach on the question inside the E.U. itself. (Here, Mr. Sinha was possibly referring to the British position on Iraq).

Speaking late in the evening, sources said there had been a meeting between diplomats. They said there would be some effort to make amends from the E.U. side after what happened today. The E.U. side acknowledged the less than adequate handling of the situation.

While hoping that some steps would be taken to undo the lack of coherence on the Indian side, the sources said they had been "surprised" by the public comments of the Danish Prime Minister, Anders Rasmussen, on Kashmir and Pakistan.

Contrary to the differences that marked the Third India-EU Summit meeting on

Kashmir and dialogue with Pakistan, a joint press statement (which must have been agreed to in advance) said: "We express satisfaction with the positive results of the Summit and its contribution to consolidate our firm and comprehensive relationship."

It reiterated the commitment to combat terrorism. "We emphasise that there can be no justification for terrorism and that those who perpetrate and sponsor it will be brought to justice."

"We reaffirm our commitment to the universal implementation of all the UN anti-terrorism conventions and UN Security Council resolution 1373. We support early conclusion and adoption of the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism and the draft International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. We agreed to reflect on the need for consultations between EUROPOL and Indian agencies," it said.

"India welcomed the enlargement of the E.U., which is making good progress and the development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy." The two sides affirmed that these developments would further strengthen these developments between them," the statement read.

"We confirm our commitment to further strengthening of the multilateral trade regime of WTO, recognising that the objective of the WTO work programme launched at Doha should be to enhance market access, develop and strengthen WTO rules and disciplines.... we are therefore committed to driving forward all aspects of the Doha Work Programme in a balanced manner, including the issues of special and differential treatment and resolution of implementation related concerns of particular interest to developing countries," it added.

India, E.U. differ on Kashmir

11/10 By Amit Baruah MD-1

COPENHAGEN, Oct. 10. India and the European Union today differed publicly on the issues of Kashmir, dialogue in South Asia and cross-border terrorism as they dropped all references to the situation in the sub-continent in a joint statement issued this afternoon.

Addressing a joint press conference at the end of the third India-E.U. summit, the Danish Prime Minister and E.U. President, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, when asked why there was no reference to Kashmir in the agreed text, said: "To be honest and frank, we did not agree on a text. But I would like to... urge all parties in this conflict to find a peaceful solution... we did not think it would facilitate further progress to write a text."

The Indian delegation, which was clearly angry at Mr. Rasmussen making the differences public, hit back with a separate briefing by the External Affairs Minister, Yaswant Sinha, who claimed that the E.U. did not want any reference to the issue of cross-border terrorism while calling for a dialogue with Pakistan. Hence, all references to South Asia were dropped from the joint statement, which had been under negotiation for some time.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Rasmussen, reiterated what had been dropped from the E.U. formulation, a visibly perturbed Mr. Sinha told Indian journalists. Right through the press conference, Mr. Sinha, the Disinvestment Minister, Arun Shourie, and the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Brajesh Mishra, were consulting each other.

An aggressive Mr. Rasmussen said at least on

three occasions at the press conference that India should talk to Pakistan. The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, however, said in Mr. Rasmussen's presence that if Pakistan ended cross-border terrorism then India would resume its dialogue with it.

Mr. Rasmussen, who showed little appreciation of the successful elections in Jammu and Kashmir, stuck to his agenda till the end when he said that "concern" about the recent missile tests had been expressed at the summit meeting with Mr. Vajpayee.

The E.U., he said, had sent a "clear signal" to India about restraint. "We condemn the terrorist attacks on India. At the same time, we urge India to de-escalate the tense relations with Pakistan. We urge India to engage in a direct dialogue with Pakistan and to establish confidence-building measures on security issues, including on nuclear arms and in relation to Kashmir. Tensions in Kashmir should be lowered. We see a need for a dialogue among the stakeholders in Kashmir."

While there were the usual references — platitudes about the growing relationship between India and the E.U. in the bland joint statement — the summit appeared to have been hijacked by the public differences on Kashmir and Pakistan.

For his part, Mr. Vajpayee stated that de-escalation required a peaceful, congenial atmosphere and reminded his hosts that it was he who had travelled to Lahore and then invited the Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, to Agra.

On the Kashmir elections, he said the important thing was the fact that the polls were free and fair — not who triumphed.

Sinha stand: Page 12

11 OCT 2002

INDU

EU told of India's concern on textile issue

Nilova Roy Chaudhury
in Copenhagen

Oct. 10. — An important area of concern for Indian business and the government has been the major agreement of market access for Pakistani textiles in Europe (and the USA) that consists of massive concessions granted to the Pakistani textiles sector by the European Union, hinging on a regime of no quotas and zero tariffs, something that threatens the very survival of India's textile industry.

Both the government and industry chambers have taken up the issue strongly with their interlocutors in the EU who have indicated that the EU would wait to ratify the agreement with Pakistan based on its perception of the conduct of the Pak elections.

According to industry sources, the agreement was a political sop to Pakistan in return for its cooperation in the war against terrorism.

The entire issue of market access, non-tariff barriers (numerous ones exist in the EU) and numerous peak tariffs and the consequent issue of escalation (making it very difficult for Indian companies to compete) and

huge subsidies for farmers of developed countries has been "vigorously raised" and the EU has responded by "not questioning our labour laws" and agreeing with the logic of raised concerns, industry spokesmen said.

However, the EU has also asked India not to allow its relations with the EU to be 'clouded' and viewed 'through the prism of Pakistan.' Indian businessmen feel that the business meet has been able to break through a great many concerns on both sides.

Earlier this year, the key concern of companies in Europe wanting to do business in India was the level of "uncertainty"; would there be a nuclear war with Pakistan, what would happen in Jammu and Kashmir and so on.

The question of conducting business was secondary to these political concerns, and the chambers of Indian commerce and industry found it difficult to make themselves heard.

At the just-concluded India-EU business summit in this Scandinavian city, at least 60 top business leaders participated under the aegis of the CII and Ficci.

THE STATESMAN

11 OCT 2002

HO-12
10/10

India will not raise U.N. seat issue at E.U. summit

By Amit Baruah

COPENHAGEN (DENMARK), OCT. 9. India doesn't think that Thursday's summit with the European Union is the appropriate forum to raise the issue of New Delhi's permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council. Germany, he said, was itself a contender for a Security Council berth.

In response to a question, the Foreign Secretary, Kanwal Sibal, told presspersons that India was dealing with the issue at an individual level with different E.U. countries and pointed out that Britain and France had supported India's entry into the Security Council as a permanent member.

Mr. Sibal took the view that India's summit with the E.U. was a matter of considerable political and economic significance and pointed to India emerging as a "future pole" in a multipolar world.

He said that the E.U. consisted of two P-5 countries four G-8 countries and the three largest economies in the world after the United States and Japan.

The Foreign Secretary said it was not unimportant that

the E.U. was willing to lend a certain stature to India, given the fact that such summit-level interactions were conducted by the E.U. with the U.S., Russia, China, Japan and Canada.

He said that Kashmir would definitely figure in the summit-level discussions. According to Mr. Sibal, India was going to the Copenhagen summit with a "strengthened hand" after the successful elections in Kashmir. There will be, he said, a recognition of the importance and fairness of the elections that had been held in Kashmir. The credibility of India's political effort to deal with the Kashmir issue had been strengthened, Mr. Sibal pointed out.

Referring to economic issues, Mr. Sibal said though the E.U. was India's largest trading partner and the two-way trade stood at 25 billion Euros there was a need to enhance economic cooperation.

The Foreign Secretary pointed to certain difficulties with E.U. positions — in particular its protectionist approach. With 10 new countries joining the E.U. by 2004, India believes that

protectionism will be an ongoing issue of discussion with the E.U.

Mr. Sibal was quick to point out that this was not a bilateral issue, but this was a challenge that India's economic diplomacy had to meet. The differences on trade-related matters was evident at the Doha Ministerial meeting — specifically the problems developing countries had with the issues of labour standards and environment.

The Foreign Secretary said some recent concessions had been extended by the E.U. to Pakistan which put Indian textiles at a disadvantage, but claimed that the issue had now been sorted out. He revealed that India and the E.U. were currently negotiating an agreement on customs cooperation.

He maintained that all the institutions put into place by India and the E.U. had been meeting as per schedule. Mr. Sibal said with the European Parliament becoming a more effective instrument, India was keen on enhancing its cooperation with this body and pointed to the recent visit by a socialist delegation.

Pointing to the E.U.'s

efforts to evolve a common foreign and security policy, Mr. Sibal said the Union was increasingly going to become a powerful voice in world affairs. "What we make of this platform (the Indo-E.U. summit) also depends on us."

Separately, sources said, the issue of Iraq and imminent American actions would definitely figure in the talks the Prime Minister, A.B. Vajpayee, would have with the E.U. leadership tomorrow. Interestingly, the sources said, the Indian and E.U. positions on Iraq were quite similar. Whether the Iraq issue figures directly in the joint statement that will be issued tomorrow remains to be seen.

New Delhi is also conscious of the fact that the E.U. leadership will definitely urge a dialogue between India and Pakistan. For its part, India has sent some "messages" in advance about its position. Also, the recent comments by the Prime Minister about Pakistan and the issue of dialogue would have been noted by the E.U. While India was ready to engage in a dialogue if a "door" was opened by Pakistan, as of now that seemed to be a remote possibility.

Portugal jail cloud on Salem return trip

PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, Oct. 8: Underworld don Abu Salem may have to serve his sentence in Portugal before he is handed over to India, Portuguese authorities have indicated.

A lot would depend on what the Portuguese court decides to do with the gangster, who is facing charges of entering the country with false documents. According to the country's laws, he could be sentenced for three years.

Indian officials are preparing for the worst-case scenario. "Even if he is given the maxi-

mum punishment, it is a good development as this will mean Salem will be out of circulation for three years," a South Block official said, pointing out that in the intervening period, the Indian team would prepare a case for deportation that could satisfy the court in Lisbon. Delhi has sought Salem's deportation.

Foreign minister Yashwant Sinha, who wrote to his Portuguese counterpart Antonio Martens da Cruz, said if Lisbon deported Salem, the move "will be vital" to the fight against global terrorism. India and the European Union, of which Portugal is a part, had signed an agreement

last November to cooperate on international terrorism. Sinha argued that not only did Salem take part in terrorist activities in India, he had links with international terrorist groups.

Delhi is trying to convince Lisbon that the cases for which Salem is wanted are far more serious than the charges on which he has been arrested in Portugal. India is also trying to work on Portugal so that Salem is given the shortest possible sentence.

One problem the government is facing has to do with the domestic audience. They are having a tough time explaining that whether Salem is extradited or

deported, the process is long drawn. Since his arrest, people in India have been expecting that the Mumbai blasts accused will be brought back soon.

The disappointment was palpable when the CBI team returned here last night from Lisbon without Salem. "Somehow or the other, there was an impression" that the CBI team will return with Salem, a South Block official said. He added that irrespective of India's request, getting Salem back would be a time-consuming affair.

CBI director P.C. Sharma expressed a similar view. "We are dealing with a criminal who is

away in a different democratic country. We have to show utmost respect to their laws and everything will take time," he told reporters. Sharma said a criminal profile of Salem, who is wanted in India in 71 cases, has been handed over to Portuguese authorities.

Sharma said the CBI team had explained Indian laws to Portuguese officials and had gathered "a thorough knowledge" about their laws.

"Our future strategy will be based within the two legal frameworks and I don't rule out the possibility of sending another team to Lisbon."

Iraq, not Pak, tops Atal's EU agenda

Udayan Namboodiri
New Delhi, October 6

THE IRAQ issue is likely to get higher priority than the prevailing tension in South Asia in the European Union's political dialogue with India during Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to Denmark this week for the third India-EU Summit.

Vajpayee is expected to stress New Delhi's view that a diplomatic solution needs to be found to the problem. The United Nations must be the forum to deliberate on steps towards an end to the present crisis. India would go along with whatever is decided by the UN Security Council.

Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal said on the eve of the Prime Minister's three-nation tour that the UNSC may take a decision on the vexed question of whether UN inspectors should return under existing or new resolutions to coincide with Vajpayee's interaction with EU leaders. "The issue is of great concern and will naturally be discussed", he said.

The Indo-Pak stalemate, according to top officials, may get reduced attention. The Prime Minister is, however, intent on making a big splash in Europe

over the success of the Jammu and Kashmir elections and Pakistan's nonstop support to cross-border terrorism as manifested in the bloody poll process and the Akshardham attack.

On Iraq, India realises that it has a limited role to play. But New Delhi is keen not to give the impression that the "regime change" question has its acquiescence. Vajpayee is expected to appeal to humanitarian instincts by highlighting the suffering of the Iraqi people under sanctions.

To the EU, the Indian point of view may be factor as its member nations are still struggling to evolve a common approach. The US-Britain plan does not enjoy popularity and not a day passes in major European capitals without peace rallies being staged. India has already articulated its opposition to "regime change" saying only the Iraqi people could decide on that.

At the same time, New Delhi is preparing for the worst. In 1990, India stayed neutral, but that did not make any difference in the end. The presence of a large number of Indians in Iraq and Indian oil interests in that country were factors forcing such a position by New Delhi. But this time none of that exists.

SECRET
INDUSTAN

6 7 OCT 2002

PM to attend Indo-E.U. summit

5/10
By Our Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI, OCT. 4. The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, will lead the Indian delegation to the third Indo-European Union Summit in Copenhagen, Denmark, on October 7-9 and after the Indo-E.U. summit travel to London for a meeting with the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair.

The Prime Minister, who travelled to the United Nations and the Maldives last month, will leave New Delhi for Cyprus on October 7 and is expected back in the Capital on October 13.

Iraq, the elections in Jammu & Kashmir and the issue of cross-border terrorism will be on the agenda in the Prime Minister's interaction with the E.U. leadership. In Copenhagen, Mr. Vajpayee will be assisted by the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, and the Disinvestment Minister, Arun Shourie. The E.U. will be represented by its Presidency, Andres Rasmussen, Prime Minister of Denmark, the E.C. President, Romano Prodi, the E.U. High Representative,

Javier Solana, and the E.C. External Relations Commissioner, Chris Patten.

The institutionalisation of annual summits since June 2000 was a demonstration of the "new depth and maturity" of Indo-E.U. relations, the Foreign Secretary, Kanwal Sibal, said at a press conference today.

Mr. Sibal said the third Indo-E.U. business summit will take place on the margins of the political meeting on October 8-9. The business interaction is being organised by CII and FICCI and the Danish Chamber of Commerce and Industries.

Following the Indo-E.U. Summit, Mr. Vajpayee will begin a bilateral visit to Denmark — the first since Indira Gandhi went to Copenhagen 19 years ago.

In Cyprus, the Prime Minister will hold talks with the President, Glafcos Clerides. The talks will cover bilateral, regional and international issues, Mr. Sibal said.

In England, Mr. Vajpayee will meet the British Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair, for an exchange of views.

When asked about the trip to London, the Foreign Secretary said Britain had been

supportive of India and had made some good statements on the issue of terrorism. London, he said, also supported India's entry into the U.N. Security Council as a permanent member and there had been regular interaction between the two countries at the highest level.

India and Britain did not have any major differences of opinion, Mr. Sibal said. The two countries could discuss their differences, if any, in a friendly way, he said.

Asked about the reported travel advisory issued by Britain warning its citizens about travel to select Indian States, including Gujarat, the Foreign Secretary said Governments were concerned about the safety of their nationals.

While India should "take note" of the advisory, New Delhi should not get "overly excited" about it, the Foreign Secretary said.

He said India did not want to attach undue importance to the advisory.

If there was reason for New Delhi to express its views in a more considered manner then that would be done, he added.

THE HINDU

5 OCT 2002

Kashmir, a major threat to stability in South Asia: EU

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, OCT. 2. The European Commission, executive body of the European Union, is of the view that the Congress is "still struggling to re-emerge as a credible alternative to the BJP-led alliance in India."

As part of the "country-analysis" contained in "The EC-India Country Strategy Paper 2002-06", the Congress is nevertheless described as a "powerful national symbol commanding an efficient political machinery."

The paper, posted on the EU's website, said that Muslims in India played a constructive role in all walks of life and largely benefited from the social, economic and political rights provided in the Constitution.

"All the same, communal tensions between Hindus and Muslims have regularly flared up since Independence, particularly in the events leading up to the destruction of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya in 1992 and the recent outbursts of communal violence in Gujarat," it said.

Referring to India's foreign policy, the document said it was focussed on strategic partnerships in an emerging multi-polar world. It pointed to the annual EU-India summit meetings while mentioning that the traditional friendship with Russia had been revived.

"Relations with the U.S. have blossomed into a privileged partnership, and, in the post-September 11 era, may well extend to military cooperation. Contacts with China have multiplied as both sides are seeking a

new climate of cooperation."

The paper argued that the Kashmir issue remained the "major threat" to stability in South Asia. "The conflict aggravated dramatically by the terrorist attacks on Parliament and the Assembly in Kashmir and New Delhi end-2001, bringing India and Pakistan within a sliver of a new war."

"India, a vocal member of the International coalition against terrorism, is demanding action by the Pakistani Government to eliminate terrorist havens on its territory and put a stop to cross-border infiltration into Jammu and Kashmir," it said.

Talking about India's efforts to build stronger economic relations with South Asian nations, the EC said that prospects for invigorating the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) remained "frail" despite some progress made at the Kathmandu summit in January.

Turning to India's economic situation, it said that India's growth was "still far below" the 10 per cent required to substantially reduce mass poverty within the decade.

"In a globalising world where wealth is increasingly generated through trade, India's half percentage point in global trade reflects a continued relatively high degree of protection. FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) inflows linger at comparatively low levels, depriving India of extra impulses for growth and competitiveness on world markets," the paper said.

On disinvestment, the EC took the view

that the Government was committed to sell assets of public sector units. "Disinvestment will continue to advance despite resistance from labour unions and politicians," it said.

Turning to the social sector, the document said that India's population growth rate, which had dipped to 1.8 per cent for the last 10 years and is expected to decline to a new 10 year average of 1.2 per cent, would still see the addition of at least 160 million people by the year 2011.

Quoting the Indian Planning Commission statistics to show that poverty levels fell from 36 to 26 per cent between 1993 and 1999, the paper said that still 44 per cent of Indians lived on less than \$ 1 a day.

"The Government has set up numerous anti-poverty schemes. However, outcomes have frequently suffered due to poor management, gaps in governance and leakage," the document stated.

On literacy, it said a "major effort" was needed since illiteracy stood at 58 per cent for women and 34 per cent for men. "With an adult literacy rate of barely above 50 per cent, India still lags behind other low income countries such as Indonesia with 85 per cent or Vietnam with 95 per cent."

"Health outcomes have improved but still face challenges. Since India attained independence some 50 years ago, life expectancy has doubled from 30 to 63 years, and infant mortality was reduced by half in 30 years... excellent health facilities exist, in particular in urban areas, but access is beyond the physical reach of the poor," the paper added.

Portugal insists on following procedure

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Sept. 29. — In an indication that New Delhi may not be able to bypass judicial proceedings in bringing Abu Salem to India, Lisbon has told New Delhi that it would actively collaborate with India, but there would be constitutional and legal limits that the Portuguese government would have to respect.

"The extradition is with the courts," Portuguese newspaper, *Diario de Noticias*, said today in a report quoting diplomatic sources. Portuguese foreign affairs minister, Mr Martins Da Cruz, the newspaper said, had told New Delhi that Lisbon would actively collaborate with India agencies, but would not pressurize or intervene in judicial proceedings which would deal with Salem's extradition.

Lisbon is under pressure from several countries including the USA to expeditiously deal with Abu Salem's case to facilitate his return to India to stand trial. India has been trying to convince Portugal to opt for the easier option of deporting Abu Salem to India rather than work on his extradition.

Foreign minister, Mr Yashwant Sinha, had earlier spoken to the USA and UK, urging them to exert diplomatic pressure on Portugal to cooperate with New

Delhi. The newspaper, in another report, quoted government sources, admitting that the USA and other countries had spoken to Lisbon on India's behalf to seek its assistance in the inquiry.

In his first communication with Portugal following Salem's detention, Mr Yashwant Sinha had drawn Lisbon's attention to the global war against terrorism, highlighting Salem's suspected links with terrorist groups like the Al-Qaida and his involvement in terror acts like the 1993 Mumbai serial blasts.

The Indian government is prepared to give Portugal a sovereign guarantee, promising not to send Salem to the gallows if he is convicted of the crimes he has committed. This guarantee, however, is unlikely to make a difference if Salem is to be extradited, though the legal position with regard to his deportation is not very clear.

A CBI team had last week gone to Portugal to explore the possibility of securing Salem's deportation and understanding the laws of the country. An MEA official refused to comment on the reports, saying it was not immediately possible to verify the report.

CBI director, Mr PC Sharma, refused to talk about the legal aspects of the case, pointing that like Deputy Prime Minister, Mr LK Advani, he too was hopeful that Salem would be brought to India soon.

THE STATESMAN

30 SEP 2002

India, Pak. must resume dialogue: Villepin

By K.K. Katyal

PARIS, SEPT. 27. The French Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin, is an old India hand — he was in his country's embassy in New Delhi in the early nineties and is, thus, familiar with men and matters there. He had been — and is — a top aide of the French President, Jacques Chirac. These two attributes lent significance to his responses to my queries on a wide range of issues. Apart from the latest phase of the Iraq crisis (as reported yesterday), on which he spoke with passion and a strong sense of conviction during an exclusive interview in his office here, he dealt with the developments in South Asia and prospects of bilateral cooperation. As he saw it, it was for India and Pakistan to resolve their problems, though the international community had a legitimate interest in the quest for stability in the region. The only way out, according to him, was through resumption of dialogue in the spirit of the Shimla and Lahore agreements. France, he said, strongly condemned all acts of terrorism, whatever their nature.

As for Iraq, he spoke of the French Government's keenness for decisions within the framework of the United Nations. India and France had identical views on this issue, he said, recalling his meeting over lunch in New York earlier this month with his counterpart, Yashwant Sinha, with whom he had been in telephonic contact. (As he spoke to me, his staff were trying for a long-distance call to New Delhi.) France, he explained, had been in continuous touch with Russia and China (its Prime Minister was currently here and, needless to say, the main subject of discussions was Iraq). He expected the consultations at the U.N. to intensify in the days to come.

The following are excerpts from the interview:

K.K. Katyal: President Chirac's visit in January 1998 marked a milestone in Franco-Indian relations. What is the outlook today?

Dominique de Villepin: President Jacques Chirac's State visit in January 1998 gave a fresh impetus to Franco-Indian relations in all areas of cooperation and it was followed up by a spate of ministerial visits on both sides.

Several cooperative bodies were established on that occasion, and they are still at work. The Indo-French Forum, for example, due to meet in November of this year in India, is enabling our two civil societies to learn more about each other.

Strategic dialogue amongst ourselves,

wedding in France, the many French tourists who visit India, and the growing taste for Indian music, are all evidence of this evergreen interest.

The Minister with responsibility for Research and New Technology is due to visit India in the next few months. Also, Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin will be travelling to your country early next year to launch the "French Season in India". This major event emphasises the density of the

implementation of the Kyoto protocol. The forthcoming Conference of the Parties in Delhi from October 23 to 30 this year, underlines India's involvement in this issue. France stands shoulder to shoulder with it.

How can we strengthen our security and develop the means to combat terrorism?

Every state has a duty to fight terrorism. And they should do so with determination and resolve, for the threat is unprecedented

"The elections (in Jammu and Kashmir) mark an important stage in the return to stability. We condemn the acts of violence: not only are they an obstacle to the resumption of dialogue, they are an assault on the principles of freedom and democracy."

bonds between our two countries and the variety of the joint projects we are currently pursuing.

The early-90s saw a cooling of bilateral relations. What can we do to prevent a recurrence of that?

It is only natural that two great powers such as India and France, with their long-standing relations, should go through periods of apparently less intense cooperation.

But one has to look the long view. The ties that bind us have their roots in a centuries-old dialogue between our two cultures, and this creates a solid basis for launching new initiatives.

Look at the projects launched, or due to

INTERVIEW

be launched on the occasion of the "French Season in India": they cover every area, from culture to science, from high technology to education. And they are destined to go on developing year after year.

How do you see the future of cooperation between our two countries?

Our relations with India are expanding in a wide variety of areas. I take that as a sign of the wealth of our cooperation and the diversity of our interests.

I mentioned strategic dialogue earlier. These regular exchanges of views between two great States transcend the framework of purely bilateral relations: they are contributing significantly to the strengthening of stability in the world.

Education and culture are another priority. We are making a special effort to in-

crease the number of scholarships and fellowships for Indian students and researchers, and to make information about centres of excellence within the French university system widely available.

Exchanges between artists, too, will be facilitated via a residential programme for Indian and French artists, entitled Le Voyage. Lastly, we intend to enhance our cooperation in the fields of applied and industrial research through joint research laboratories...

crease the number of scholarships and fellowships for Indian students and researchers, and to make information about centres of excellence within the French university system widely available.

Exchanges between artists, too, will be facilitated via a residential programme for Indian and French artists, entitled Le Voyage. Lastly, we intend to enhance our cooperation in the fields of applied and industrial research through joint research laboratories...

Education and culture are another priority. We are making a special effort to in-

crease the number of scholarships and fellowships for Indian students and researchers, and to make information about centres of excellence within the French university system widely available.

Exchanges between artists, too, will be facilitated via a residential programme for Indian and French artists, entitled Le Voyage. Lastly, we intend to enhance our cooperation in the fields of applied and industrial research through joint research laboratories...

Education and culture are another priority. We are making a special effort to in-

crease the number of scholarships and fellowships for Indian students and researchers, and to make information about centres of excellence within the French university system widely available.

Exchanges between artists, too, will be facilitated via a residential programme for Indian and French artists, entitled Le Voyage. Lastly, we intend to enhance our cooperation in the fields of applied and industrial research through joint research laboratories...

Education and culture are another priority. We are making a special effort to in-

crease the number of scholarships and fellowships for Indian students and researchers, and to make information about centres of excellence within the French university system widely available.

Exchanges between artists, too, will be facilitated via a residential programme for Indian and French artists, entitled Le Voyage. Lastly, we intend to enhance our cooperation in the fields of applied and industrial research through joint research laboratories...

"Every state has a duty to fight terrorism. And they should do so with determination and resolve, for the threat is unprecedented in its nature and its extent."

crease the number of scholarships and fellowships for Indian students and researchers, and to make information about centres of excellence within the French university system widely available.

Exchanges between artists, too, will be facilitated via a residential programme for Indian and French artists, entitled Le Voyage. Lastly, we intend to enhance our cooperation in the fields of applied and industrial research through joint research laboratories...

Education and culture are another priority. We are making a special effort to in-

crease the number of scholarships and fellowships for Indian students and researchers, and to make information about centres of excellence within the French university system widely available.

Exchanges between artists, too, will be facilitated via a residential programme for Indian and French artists, entitled Le Voyage. Lastly, we intend to enhance our cooperation in the fields of applied and industrial research through joint research laboratories...

Education and culture are another priority. We are making a special effort to in-

crease the number of scholarships and fellowships for Indian students and researchers, and to make information about centres of excellence within the French university system widely available.

Exchanges between artists, too, will be facilitated via a residential programme for Indian and French artists, entitled Le Voyage. Lastly, we intend to enhance our cooperation in the fields of applied and industrial research through joint research laboratories...

Education and culture are another priority. We are making a special effort to in-

crease the number of scholarships and fellowships for Indian students and researchers, and to make information about centres of excellence within the French university system widely available.

Exchanges between artists, too, will be facilitated via a residential programme for Indian and French artists, entitled Le Voyage. Lastly, we intend to enhance our cooperation in the fields of applied and industrial research through joint research laboratories...

Education and culture are another priority. We are making a special effort to in-

crease the number of scholarships and fellowships for Indian students and researchers, and to make information about centres of excellence within the French university system widely available.

Exchanges between artists, too, will be facilitated via a residential programme for Indian and French artists, entitled Le Voyage. Lastly, we intend to enhance our cooperation in the fields of applied and industrial research through joint research laboratories...

Education and culture are another priority. We are making a special effort to in-

crease the number of scholarships and fellowships for Indian students and researchers, and to make information about centres of excellence within the French university system widely available.

Exchanges between artists, too, will be facilitated via a residential programme for Indian and French artists, entitled Le Voyage. Lastly, we intend to enhance our cooperation in the fields of applied and industrial research through joint research laboratories...

Education and culture are another priority. We are making a special effort to in-

crease the number of scholarships and fellowships for Indian students and researchers, and to make information about centres of excellence within the French university system widely available.

Exchanges between artists, too, will be facilitated via a residential programme for Indian and French artists, entitled Le Voyage. Lastly, we intend to enhance our cooperation in the fields of applied and industrial research through joint research laboratories...

Education and culture are another priority. We are making a special effort to in-

crease the number of scholarships and fellowships for Indian students and researchers, and to make information about centres of excellence within the French university system widely available.

Exchanges between artists, too, will be facilitated via a residential programme for Indian and French artists, entitled Le Voyage. Lastly, we intend to enhance our cooperation in the fields of applied and industrial research through joint research laboratories...

Education and culture are another priority. We are making a special effort to in-

crease the number of scholarships and fellowships for Indian students and researchers, and to make information about centres of excellence within the French university system widely available.

Exchanges between artists, too, will be facilitated via a residential programme for Indian and French artists, entitled Le Voyage. Lastly, we intend to enhance our cooperation in the fields of applied and industrial research through joint research laboratories...

Education and culture are another priority. We are making a special effort to in-

Delhi dismisses setback to stay in Salem hunt

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Sept. 22: The government will go ahead and seek the deportation of underworld don Abu Salem in spite of a reported adverse ruling by a Lisbon-based court.

The CBI and junior foreign minister Digvijay Singh denied that the ruling was a blow to the government's efforts to bring back the fugitive, accused in the serial bomb blasts in Mumbai in 1993. Both Singh and CBI director P.C. Sharma feigned ignorance about the court ruling, declining to confirm the authenticity of the report.

Singh said the Portuguese authorities were fully cooperating with Indian agencies. "We are constantly in touch with them. We are extremely confident that we will get Salem to India," he said. The government is keeping all options open on the deportation or extradition of the gangster and his actress companion, Monica Bedi.

Sharma said the CBI was working out a strategy with the Union government for Salem's

handover to India. He, however, warned that it could be a long-drawn process.

A report by the Luca news agency based in Lisbon had said a court had ruled against deporting 41-year-old Salem.

Unfazed by the development, Sharma said the CBI would still send a team to Lisbon to bring Salem back to India. "We are putting together evidence to make out a strong case for his extradition to the Portuguese authorities," he said.

On Friday, Interpol asked the CBI to prepare papers for Salem's extradition, though such a process would involve court procedures, which are not required in deportation where the prerogative lies with the host government. Salem has since been sent to 90 days' judicial custody. The CBI is confident that it will be able to either extradite or deport Salem within the stipulated time.

Privately, Indian officials insisted that the court ruling might not be the last word on the issue and the government would intensify diplomatic efforts and coordinate with Interpol and

other agencies.

Singh said the government is also studying Portuguese laws and considering making use of UN resolution number 1373 that makes it obligatory for nations to hand over persons wanted in connection with terrorism.

In a clear attempt to highlight his alleged terrorist links, deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani has said Salem was a conduit in the funding of Osama bin Laden's al Qaida network.

"There may be substance in this as he (Salem) has been out for so long, but this can be known only when we get him here and examine him," the CBI director said.

India does not have an extradition treaty with Portugal. In any case, being a signatory to a European Union convention, Portugal will not extradite a person if there is a possibility of him being given the death penalty in his home country. Official sources hinted at the possibility of Portugal being given a written assurance that Salem would not be executed even if found guilty.

■ See Page 8

23 SEP 2002

THE TELEGRAPH

France plays a hand

By Vaiju Naravane

140-10
16/8

LAST MAY, the French President, Jacques Chirac, re-elected to a second term in office, appointed his head of Cabinet, Dominique de Villepin, as the new Foreign Minister. For seven years of loyal service, the man who claims he "managed the brains of the President" was rewarded with the three-in-one portfolio of foreign affairs, cooperation and development and "Francophonie" — the spread of the French language and culture abroad. Insiders say Mr. de Villepin would have preferred the prime ministerial chair but had to be content with second choice.

The election was both surprising and paradoxical. The former because the extreme right wing leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen, edged out the socialist candidate Prime Minister, Lionel Jospin, from the second round. The latter because Mr. Chirac, who received the lowest-ever percentage of votes for a first round front-runner, finally won the second round run-off against Mr. Le Pen by a record 82 per cent of the vote — the largest margin since the current French Constitution was adopted in 1958. Left-wing voters whose apathy and divisions were partly responsible for Mr. Le Pen's strong showing, rushed to the defence of "La Republique" and its values of liberty, equality, fraternity, giving Mr. Chirac, their traditional adversary, unrivalled hold over power.

In order to consolidate his gains and avoid another spell of co-habitation — France's unique power-sharing exercise under which the President and the Prime Minister belong to opposing political families — Mr. Chirac hastened to appoint a new Government that promised "movement, action, results".

Between the presidential and parliamentary polls, he had six full weeks to convince voters to put a conservative legislature in place. The Government promised increased social benefits and public spending, a crackdown on crime and illegal immigration and reduced taxes. Implicit in these promises was a higher profile for France in world affairs, in keeping with the conservative, especially Gaullist, notion of the greatness of the French nation. Now that the President has a free hand again, the Chi-

rac-de Villepin duo is determined to give greater weight, thrust and cogency to French foreign policy.

It was in the run-up to these elections that Mr. de Villepin, a published poet and hagiographic biographer of Napoleon Bonaparte, brought out an impassioned manifesto entitled "The Cry of the Gargoyle" propounding ethical political activism. "Our history, like a palimpsest, is written on the

India and France took place. Mr. de Villepin who has served in India as the number two at the French mission, headed the Cabinet of Juppe when he was Foreign Minister and since has been advising Mr. Chirac is credited with a pivotal role in changing his Government's perception of India.

France claims there has been a shift from its earlier position of total parity between India and Pakistan,

signal renewed French interest in the continent.

The message Mr. de Villepin carried was clear: Mr. Chirac places foreign policy, of which he is the sole inspiration and arbiter, high on his political agenda. The change is evident. Eschewing the socialists' moralistic approach to foreign policy, France has refrained from bringing up the human rights issue in Chechnya with the Russians. The same can be expected from the French on Kashmir.

Mr. de Villepin with his penchant for "movement and action" suggested India de-escalates, starts a dialogue with Pakistan while cracking down on terrorism. New Delhi's appreciation of the level of infiltration in Kashmir also does not quite square with the French contention that infiltration has been reduced to a trickle. The External Relations Minister, Yashwant Sinha's declarations ruling out immediate de-escalation or a swift resumption of dialogue, also clearly indicated New Delhi was not buying the French line that India should not push Pervez Musharraf further into a corner.

As far as bilateral ties go, both India and France explored the possibility of further cooperation in the civilian nuclear field. Heightened military cooperation too is on the cards although the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, did not meet the French Foreign Minister. The economic relationship between the two countries, although growing, leaves much to be desired, with France's direct investment in India amounting to just under three per cent of the total foreign investments in the country. Lopsided now, with excellent political relations far outweighing economic ties, the Franco-Indian relationship could find further sustenance through increased military cooperation. India has objected to French arms sales to Pakistan but has made few purchases itself. New Delhi is looking at several options especially in the naval domain and talks are advancing rapidly. As a French diplomat formerly posted in India said, "with all the political investment we have made in India, there has to be some payback. We'd much rather sell arms to India than to Pakistan. But sell them we must and sell them we will".

Lopsided now, with excellent political relations far outweighing economic ties, the Franco-Indian relationship could find further sustenance through increased military cooperation.

scarred body of our nation", he says, decrying what he calls France's elitism and court culture. He urges movement and action, a mental revolution, in order to shake democracies out of their torpor. Mr. de Villepin is impatient for "concrete results", a fact evident from his many declarations since assuming office in May. For seven years from 1995 to 2002, during Mr. Chirac's first presidential term, Mr. de Villepin served as head of the Cabinet. The 48-year-old former career diplomat, is cordially disliked by elected politicians for whom he reportedly harbours mostly disdain. Mr. Chirac, however, places unbounded confidence in his gauntly elegant, silver-haired grey eminence, having retained his services despite an electoral fiasco in legislative polls in 1997 held on, among others, Mr. de Villepin's recommendation. Frankly admiring of his top lieutenant, Mr. Chirac once said: "Villepin catches on with fantastic speed. It is rare to meet a man like him, a poet who is also an excellent leader of a commando squad!"

France as a major regional power is considerably worried about the "Hegemon Factor" and has repeatedly spoken out against a world totally dominated, politically, economically, culturally, technologically, by what the former French Foreign Minister, Hubert Vedrine, described as "a dangerously simplistic hyper-power". French concerns, despite the blooming Indo-U.S. affair, have found a sympathetic echo in New Delhi. It was under the Socialist Government that the real rapprochement between

saying it has plumped for India as an equal partner in its attempts to build a global coalition for a multi-polar world. France loses no opportunity to remind New Delhi of its support for India's bid for a permanent U.N. Security Council seat or its understanding of India's position in the wake of its nuclear tests. This reassessment, French diplomats say, was influenced by events that shook up rigidly held Cold War positions such as the fall of the Berlin Wall, the crumbling of the former Soviet empire and the emergence of the United States as the sole superpower.

However, France has no intention of demoting Pakistan to a second rank regional power and Paris continues to maintain excellent relations with Islamabad. Although no new military contracts are in the pipeline, Pakistan remains France's top military client in South Asia. France has Pakistan's ear and, diplomats suggest, New Delhi might be wise to use French influence with Islamabad for further back channel communication. Clearly, France is eager to play a role in the Subcontinent, just as it craves mediation in the Middle East imbroglio.

Since assuming office in mid-May, Mr. de Villepin has undertaken a flurry of high-profile visits and not just to countries where France has traditionally held sway. These took him to Washington, Germany, the European Union headquarters in Brussels, the Middle East, Russia and Africa, where he visited both Francophone former colonies as well as Lusophone Angola and Mozambique, in an attempt to

EU mission meets Farooq, Hurriyat

H Bula Doot 17 New Delhi

Aug. 7. — As the curtain goes up on Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, a five-member European Union delegation is already on a fact-finding mission to the state. India has already made it clear that diplomats are welcome to watch the election process in their "individual capacity" but not as part of the official team of "observers" or "monitors".

Since Denmark holds the presidency of EU from July to December this year followed by Greece for the next six months, the EU delegation comprised Danish Ambassador Mr Michael Sternberg, councillor Ms Signe Ropke, Greek Ambassador Mr Efsthios Lozos, head of European Commission in Delhi Mr Michel Caillouet and deputy head of mission of the Italian Embassy Itala Maria Occhi. The diplomats arrived yesterday after which they had an interactive session with chief minister Dr Farooq Abdullah. Today, they met seven executive members of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference. The meeting lasted more than two hours.

The APHC chairman Prof Abdul Ghani Bhat told The Statesman from Srinagar that it was made clear to the delegation that the Hurriyat would not contest polls. On a query from the diplomats about the change the electoral process could bring about on the ground, Prof Bhat said: "I told them that there would be no change... But of course I drew their attention to India's claim about 'free and fair' elections — free for gun-wielding agency people and others to rig the elections and it would not be a 'fair' but 'fear' election." **Kalam condemns Amarnath killings:** President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam has condemned the "cruel" attack on Amarnath pilgrims and expressed confidence that people of the state would unitedly fight "divisive forces with full determination", adds PTI.

'Pakistan needs to eschew violence'

10-12

By Amit Baruah and
Vaiju Naravane

NEW DELHI, AUG. 2. India has sensitised France on the need for peace during the Jammu and Kashmir elections and how this was dependent on what Pakistan does in the run-up to the polls.

Speaking to presspersons after meeting the visiting French Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin, the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, said:

"There has been a deliberate attempt to target... political activists... with a view to influencing free and fair elections in Jammu and Kashmir."

In a clear message to Pakistan, Mr. Sinha said, "There is a clear need for our neighbour to eschew this kind of violence in order to ensure that the Jammu and Kashmir elections are held in a good atmosphere."

The visiting French Minister, who called on the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister and held talks with the National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra, will be in Islamabad tomorrow for discussions with the Pakistani leadership.

Asked to comment on the recent formulation by the United States Secretary of State, Colin Powell, that Kashmir was on the "international agenda", Mr. de Villepin said he shared the "same concern on the situation in Kashmir".

But, he hastened to add that the responsibility for resuming a dialogue lay in the hands of both countries.

He repeatedly said that Paris had no desire to interfere in an issue (Kashmir) that must be settled by India and Pakistan.

"This is your responsibility. You hold the keys in your hands. Yet, is it conceivable to ignore a problem with possible strategic consequences. It is a fact that in today's world, regional crises are no longer limited..."

Mr. de Villepin, who set out what he called "guiding principles" for a dialogue, said there was need for respect with the spirit of Shimla and Lahore which is at the "heart" of any solution.

He said that answers could be found provided a "substantial and comprehensive" dialogue



The French Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin, with the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, in New Delhi on Friday.

— Photo: Rajeev Bhatt

between India and Pakistan was resumed.

Stating that the conditions for the resumption of dialogue were well known, he said the J&K elections were very important.

"All efforts have to be made in order to ensure they (the elections) are held in good conditions," he said, adding that the challenge facing India and good relations not just with In-

dia, but also Pakistan. "We want to keep both our relationships..." he said, adding that terrorism was a major threat to day and dialogue must be pursued to ward off this threat. The issue, he said, went beyond the concerns of South Asia.

In response to a question, Mr. Sinha clearly stated that there was no change in India's position regarding the conditions necessary to open a dialogue with Pakistan. Dialogue could resume only after Pakistan fulfilled the promises it had made to the international community and these results were visible on the ground, he said.

Mr. De Villepin, when asked about his position that India should begin a dialogue even without Pakistan fulfilling its promises, said talks could not be imposed.

"It has to stem from the will of both countries. It stems also from a feeling of trust between both countries..."

In his opening remarks, Mr. Sinha said India and France had a shared thinking and approach on the issue of international terrorism.

French Minister for breathing 'new life' into ties with India

9/22/88
S. Narayan

11/12/88

By Valju Naravane

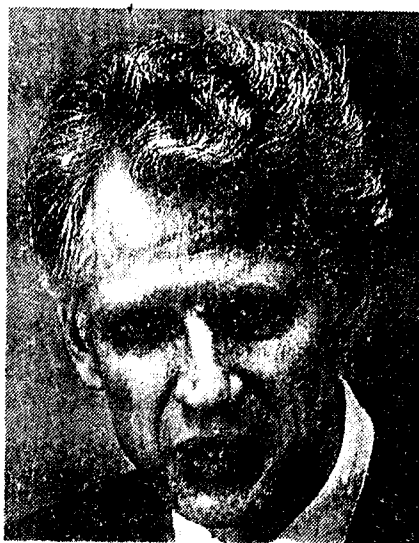
NEW DELHI, AUG. 1. Kashmir and bilateral ties figure prominently on the agenda of France's new Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin, who arrives here tomorrow for a day's discussions with Indian leaders before going on to Islamabad.

Although a French Foreign Ministry press communique describes Kashmir as an issue of international concern, diplomats in Paris are now laying the accent on the "bilateral nature of the visit", a change of tack not unrelated to the furore caused by the U.S. Secretary of State, Colu Powell's remarks on the international nature of the issue.

Since he assumed office last May, Mr de Villepin, one of President Jacques Chirac's most trusted lieutenants, has undertaken a flurry of high-profile international visits. These include Washington, Moscow, the Middle-East, Africa — and not just France's former colonies — Germany and the European Union headquarters in Brussels. Given the French interest in South East Asia and the nature of the country's ties with China and Japan, it is significant that he has decided to make India and Pakistan his first stop in Asia.

The silver-haired de Villepin, described as the President's grey eminence, is bringing a clear message: France fully intends to win back some of its lost prestige and importance in world affairs; President Chirac, elected last May with a thumping majority, is the sole arbiter of French foreign policy.

Mr. Chirac did not find the former socialist government's public and rather moral-



istic espousal of the human rights cause to his taste and the change is evident with France refraining from publicly evoking Chechnya with the Russians.

As a major regional power, France continues to be worried about the "hegemonic factor" and has repeatedly spoken out against a world totally dominated, politically, economically, culturally and technologically by what a former Socialist foreign minister described as a "dangerously simplistic hyper-power".

However, while it has not given up its goal of building a large coalition of nations, India among them, that could serve as a counterweight to U.S. domination, Mr. de Villepin has tried the soft approach in an

attempt to distance himself from the harsh truth games so favoured by his predecessor.

"Let us not argue about semantics. It is not too much power that threatens the world, but a power vacuum," he said recently in an obvious bid to improve France's trans-Atlantic dialogue.

A writer, a poet and political pamphleteer, Mr. de Villepin describes himself as a man of action. In his recently published book *The Cry of the Gargoyle*, an impassioned pamphlet propounding selfless political activism in France, he advocates movement, action and results. "Only action can pull our country out of the rut," he says in his book, a scathing indictment of France as a society ruled by self-interest and influential cliques that have promoted a "court culture".

There is an inter-dependence, the Minister maintains, between the world situation and various "regional crises" whose gravity should not be underestimated.

"This is true of India and Pakistan, Afghanistan and the Middle East. We cannot simply get used to lowering the tensions, then forgetting about them. Our duty to produce results is very great. Our people no longer want solutions in the air, they want progress, results."

Mr. de Villepin will try hard to breathe new life into the Indo-French relationship now somewhat over-shadowed by India's increasingly cosy ties with Russia and the U.S. There have been suggestions that France should use its influence with the Saudis and the United Arab Emirates to open up another channel of influence to temper Pakistan's Kashmir policy.

France wants India, Pak to resume talks

By Dileep Padgaonkar
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: While reiterating its intention to encourage President Musharraf to continue his efforts to "combat infiltration along the Line of Control", France fervently hopes that India and Pakistan will resume their dialogue to seek a "genuine solution" to the Kashmir issue.

In an interview given to *The Times of India* on the eve of his first official visit to the sub-continent, France's minister for foreign affairs, Dominique de Villepin, said that such a solution would reinforce stability not only in South Asia but also in the world at large. It would stimulate development and dynamic progress for the benefit of the entire region. A conflict over Kashmir, on the other hand, "would have a generally negative impact on all strategic balances."

Addressing "a great nation, a great civilisation, a great people", he said that France desired that India's "deserved role in international affairs should not be undermined by an abscess that can be exploited by all those who are not desirous of peace."

Mr de Villepin, a career diplomat who served in New Delhi from 1989 to 1992, said that France, which has also "paid the price of blind violence in blood", supports India's demands regarding a permanent halt to cross-border terrorism. He went on to argue that "to await the total cessation of all terrorist activities before dialogue can be restored is to resign oneself to the maintenance of a high level of tension, keep the prospect of armed conflict open and, ultimately, run the risk of intensified violence." Asserting that "in situations of



De Villepin

conflict, movement is imperative", he said he was confident of India's ability to "continue to progress along the path of wisdom which it has chosen since the beginning of the period of tension."

"Our own history allows us to understand the extremely sensitive nature of territorial disputes in which attachment to a land and a language, the idea of nationhood and a certain conception of political organisation are at stake. But old enemies must in the end find a way forward to reconciliation. I am confident of your ability to face this challenge." Mr de Villepin said.

The minister emphasised, however, that France did not approach India's security issues solely from the point of view of its relationship with Pakistan. "This would not be in accord with India's role and responsibilities on the international stage." This is why, he said, Paris has "developed a strong relationship with New Delhi in the domains of defence and industrial cooperation. And it intends to go further down this road."

Their strategic dialogue, he added, has been conducted "in a climate of great trust and openness" over the past four years and it has led to "projects of a practical nature such as discussions on nuclear safety, the importance of which is vital for reliable economic development of India."

(For de Villepin's views on Indo-French cooperation in the economic, cultural, scientific and other areas see Q & A on the edit page. And for the full text of the interview see timesofindia.com)

11/8

Indo-French ties may get a boost

By Vaiju Naravane

118
NEW DELHI, JULY 31. On the face of it, the impending visit of France's new Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin, coming in the wake of the visits by the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, and the European Union's security and foreign policy chief, Javier Solana, has nothing extraordinary about it.

He will meet his Indian counterpart, Yashwant Sinha, discuss Indo-French cooperation in the political, economic, military, scientific and cultural fields and review the strategic dialogue initiated between the two countries in 1998 to chalk out a way forward.

Besides Mr. Sinha, he is scheduled to meet the National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra, the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, and the Deputy

Prime Minister, L. K. Advani, and possibly call on the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee. No doubt Mr. de Villepin will issue the statutory condemnation of terrorism while urging restraint, de-escalation and a resumption of dialogue with Pakistan over Kashmir.

A day later, he is likely to make similar pronouncements in Islamabad, perhaps more forcefully, since France too has been a victim of terrorism in Pakistan. Last May, 11 French military engineers were killed in a bomb attack in Karachi.

Informed sources say that the talks in New Delhi will include possible security arrangements involving an exchange of intelligence data, increased naval cooperation and the likely purchase of French military hardware by India. Civilian nuclear cooperation is an avenue both

HO-11
sides would like to pursue. France has become one of India's closest Western partners and the visit is expected to deepen the political understanding that already exists between the two countries.

Much of what is special has to do with the new political landscape in France and Mr. de Villepin's place in it, for he is no ordinary Foreign Minister. For seven years — from 1995 to 2002 — during Jacques Chirac's first presidential term, he served as his head of Cabinet. The 48-year-old career diplomat and former India hand reportedly described his job at the Elysee Palace in a single laconic sentence: "I manage the brains of the President."

As India's new best friend, France, an influential player in the European Union, claims to have deflected criticism over

Kashmir and the nuclear tests. So far, the French have supported New Delhi's rejection of any outside mediation on Kashmir. However, diplomats in Paris have expressed scepticism over the electoral process in Kashmir and, while not questioning India's legal position over the State, Paris feels New Delhi must take into account the situation on the ground and the disaffection of the Kashmiris. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, is doing all he can and should not be pushed into a corner, since his successor might be far worse, goes the argument in Paris.

However, given the outcry in India about Gen. Powell's remarks over Kashmir, it is doubtful whether Mr. de Villepin, scheduled to hold a press conference in Paris, will risk airing these views in public.

J&K polls, a process to find solution: EU

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JULY 27. The European Union Foreign Policy chief, Javier Solana, today said that the EU did not consider the coming Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir as a solution to the Kashmir issue but viewed it as a process towards finding a solution.

Mr. Solana, who arrived here from New Delhi as part of the efforts by the United States and the West to defuse the Indo-Pak. tension, was responding to a question at a joint news conference with the Pakistan Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Inam ul Haq, on how he could endorse the election process in Kashmir during his visit to Delhi when the United Nations resolution had clearly spelt out that election is no substitute for plebiscite.

Perhaps, with the experience of the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, fresh in mind, Mr.

Solana was extremely careful in articulating his views on the Indo-Pak. tensions and what the world community could do to bring the two countries to the negotiating table.

He made it a point to mention several times that the EU was not a mediator. "There are several spokespersons of the Government of India to talk about the subject.

"I am not here to express the views of New Delhi", he told a questioner who asked him why India was not responding to repeated offers of dialogue by Pakistan and what its pre-conditions for talks were.

Unlike Mr. Straw, the EU representative had an "interactive session" with the Pakistan President.

He was all praise for Gen. Musharraf for his "bold and courageous steps" and expressed the hope that the General would do more to ease tensions with India.

"President Musharraf has done very very important things, taken very brave decisions in the last months. We would like him to continue taking decisions in that direction (of easing tensions) with the same courage, with the same energy and with the same determination that he has shown. I am sure he is going to take that," Mr. Solana said.

There is little chance of a breakthrough in the current round of shuttle diplomacy by the Anglo-American club and this was evident in Mr. Haq's blunt statement in the presence of Mr. Solana about the current state of affairs between India and Pakistan.

"We have apprised Mr. Solana of the constructive and substantive measures taken by Pakistan to defuse tensions in South Asia.

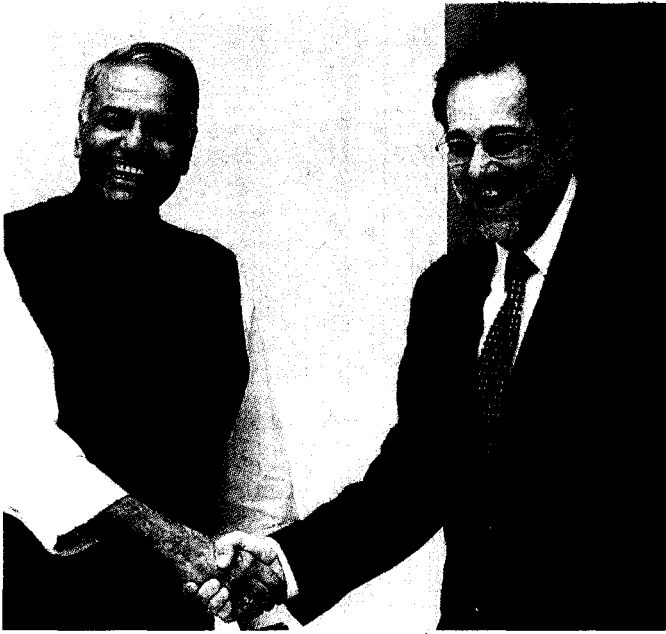
"There has been unfortunately, a lack of response on India's part. It is imperative that

India adopts reciprocal measures so that a serious dialogue is initiated to resolve the central issue of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people and other issues between the two countries", Mr. Haq said.

He made it a point to mention that Islamabad had conveyed to Mr. Solana that it would welcome and value a role by the EU to facilitate a dialogue between Pakistan and India.

Conscious of New Delhi's sensitivity on the subject, Mr. Solana made it clear that EU had no plan or desire to be a mediator.

In the last few days, there have been enough signals from the military establishment as well as the Pakistan Foreign Office that Islamabad is unhappy over what it perceives as the inability of the interlocutors from the U.S. and the U.K. to persuade India to reciprocate Pakistan's gestures.



The External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, with the European Union Representative, Javier Solana, in New Delhi on Friday. — PTI

Pak. needs to do more: Solana

By Amit Baruah HD-1

NEW DELHI, JULY 26. Progress in reducing tensions between India and Pakistan had to be "sequential"— if Pakistan did more to curb cross-border terrorism then the Indian response would be positive.

Spelling out such a scenario at a press conference here this evening, the visiting European Union's High Representative for a Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana, came close to accepting India's position that Islamabad needed to do more before New Delhi could begin normalising relations with Pakistan. For its part, India told Mr. Solana that Pakistan had reneged on its pledge to the international community that it would put an end to cross-border terrorism.

REFE HINDIA

27 JUL 2002

Move to boost Indo-Bangla trade

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SILIGURI, July 20. — The state government is likely to take up the issue of opening the Fulbari land customs station adjacent to Siliguri with the Centre to facilitate trade with Bangladesh.

Inaugurated in November 1997, the Fulbari LCS provides an export route between Nepal and Bangladesh. Indian exporters are barred from utilising the facility.

The Focin secretary, Mr Biswajit Das, said: "Vehicles from Nepal and Bangladesh, utilising the Fulbari LCS, travel 40 km of Indian territory that lie between the two countries. Barring Indian exporters from availing this facility is unjust."

The North Bengal Exporters' Association wants the arrangement to be altered to accommodate Indian exporters.

"Exporters of the region, particularly Siliguri, would be saved from travelling around 140 km to and from Bangladesh, if the Fulbari LCS is opened up to Indian exporters," the president of the North Bengal Exporters' Association, Mr Rupchand Prasad, said. The region has around 200 exporters who conduct business with Bangladesh. Of that, around 100 exporters are Siliguri-based who have to send cargo through the Changrabandha LCS in Cooch Behar district.

Proposal on gas supply to India awaits Khaleda nod

By Haroon Habib

HD-12 20/7
Jud. Bangladesh
DHAKA, JULY 19. An alternative proposal on gas supply to India from Myanmar through Bangladesh is likely to receive a positive response from Dhaka. The proposal, reportedly accepted by Bangladesh's Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources on Wednesday, is awaiting the final approval of the Prime Minister, Khaleda Zia, a leading daily, *The Independent*, has reported.

It said the Ministry had accepted the proposal "in principle" for construction of the Taka 900-crore pipeline. The \$ 1 billion proposal was submitted recently to the Ministry by a company, Mohona Holding Limited. The Ministry has formed a

committee to review the plan within a time-frame.

The project is quite different from the one the international oil company, UNICAL, had earlier proposed — a pipeline from Sylhet's Bibiana gas field to Delhi via Bangladesh's northern Rajshahi. The proposed pipeline will cross the Bangladesh border through Brahmanbaria from Tripura and enter West Bengal through Bangladesh's Rajshahi. If the proposal gets the approval, it may help export gas to India without interference by any IOC. "It is not a bad proposal. We accepted it on principle, and we shall take it up with the Prime Minister," the State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources, A.K.M. Musharraf Hossain, was quoted as saying.

He said, "Bangladesh can earn Taka 1,000 crores a year through this project, and I think there is no harm in constructing such a pipeline." "It is not at all a political issue." It is learnt that before giving final assent Dhaka would lay some conditions, which may include the pipeline having 30 to 40 inches diameter and the country's petroleum authority be made one of the parties in the consortium. And Bangladesh will be the operator of the pipeline.

It is learnt that the U.S., Australia and some Indian companies have offered funds for its construction. The Government is now reportedly awaiting the final recommendations of the two national committees to assess the actual gas deposit and to determine its best utilisation — to take a final decision. But the committee on utilisation saw little scope for gas export unless new reserves were found. "No matter what decision is taken on the export of gas, Bangladesh will face moderate to severe energy crisis in another 25-30 years," said the draft report.

20 JUL 2002

THE HINDU

India not keen on promoting trade: Bangladesh Minister

119-12
57
By Haroon Habib
Pamila

DHAKA, JULY 4. Bangladesh's Commerce Minister, Amir Khasru Mahmood Chowdhury, has said that though Dhaka is eager to promote trade with its neighbouring countries, the same level of response has not been received from its biggest neighbour, India.

Commenting on duty-free access granted by India to 40 Bangladeshi products, he told a news conference here that most of these products were not produced in the country. When reminded that the list of products had been provided to India by Bangladesh itself, he said it was provided by the previous Awami League Government. "Yes, the Awami League Government made a mistake, but if India had good intentions, it could have provided us duty-free access to some other products produced domestically by revising the list as it also knew very well that most of those 40 items were not our domestic products."

Mr. Chowdhury said securing duty-free access to 166 items would be the priority for Bangladesh at the ensuing secretary-level meeting with India. Dhaka saw no link between transit or transshipment issues and trade negotiations. It had taken initiatives to explore the 25,000-crore rupee market of the northeastern States in India, including the holding of trade fairs.

The Indian High Commissioner, Manilal Tripathi, meanwhile said that the time available for

a decision over gas export to India from Bangladesh is not unlimited.

"The issue, which has been under debate for quite some time, can be addressed in a pragmatic manner for the mutual benefit of both our countries," he told a Rotary International meeting here this week while speaking on 'Regional Cooperation for International Understanding'. Because "we are also looking at other potential sources."

The High Commissioner said Dhaka could also take advantage of its geographical location to generate welcome revenues by offering transit facilities to India.

"Of course, a decision in this regard is Bangladesh's sovereign prerogative. Once a decision is taken, details regarding freight rates and other related matters could always be worked out through mutual consultations."

The Khaleda Zia Government is yet to take a decision on gas export as the two national committees on assessment of deposit and utilisation are yet to submit their recommendations. The reports are likely to be placed before the Prime Minister soon, but with divided opinion.

The Rotary function was also addressed by Bangladesh's State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Reaz Rahman, who did not refer to the gas export issue. He said SAARC, mooted by Bangladesh, was the best example of effective regional cooperation.

5 JUL 2002

New EU plan may hit Basmati exports

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BRUSSELS, June 29. — India's exports of Basmati rice to the 15-nation European Union could be threatened by a plan of European Commission to replace the current import system with "a more linear system".

Under the new system proposed by EU's executive arm, the quantity India can export annually will be fixed, and could not be exceeded.

India stands to lose the present duty abatement of 250 euro a ton under the new system. At present, India's 140,000 tons export of Basmati rice enjoys preferential access to the EU market.

The planned system, however, also offers duty-free quota to India, which would guarantee Indian exporters a share of the EU market.

Any new system devised by the European Commission

would have to be formally adopted by the EU's member states, before it could come into force.

The new system could be operational as early as next 1 January, according to sources here.

The exports are subject to a duty abatement, or reduction, of 250 euro a ton on the duties applied by the EU on its rice imports.

In view of its much higher price, Basmati rice cannot be competitive on the EU market without this duty abatement. The EU may also feel obliged to offer India a duty-free tariff quota, given the fact that the present abatement was negotiated under the previous Uruguay Round of trade negotiations.

Meanwhile, the European Commission has denied claims made by the USA that it is seeking to restrict access by American and other exporters to the EU markets for food grain and rice.

"The opposite is true," the EU's agricultural commissioner, Mr Franz Fischler, has publicly stated. "We have no intention to restrict access of cereals and rice to the EU market." Exports by the USA and other countries would probably be subject to fixed duties.

The current allegations by the the US Agriculture Secretary, Ms Ann Veneman, and Trade Representative, Mr Robert Zoellick, can be seen, therefore, as an attempt by them to ensure that these fixed duties are set at levels that do not compromise US rice and grain exports.

The European Commission is expected to ask the 15-EU governments in September for a mandate to open negotiations with its World Trade Organisation partners over its proposed new system.

The partners would be given 90 days within which they would have to file their replies.

THE STATESMAN

30 JUN 2002

New Delhi, Dhaka want trade hurdles removed

40-11 1876 9 Jun 2002 P. Singh

By C. Raja Mohan

NEW DELHI, JUNE 17. India and Bangladesh today stressed the importance of removing at the earliest the many obstacles on the way towards an economic integration between the two nations.

There was a "clearly expressed political will" on both sides to move quickly towards expanded trade and transit ties, the Foreign Office spokeswoman said in a comment on the talks between the visiting Bangladesh Foreign Minister, Morshed Khan, and the External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh.

India and Bangladesh have long squabbled over Dhaka's demand for "duty-free" access to its products in the Indian market and New Delhi's quest for transit rights through Bangladesh territory to the Indian North-East.

Although today's talks did not go into the details of trade and transit and the linkage between the two sets of issues, India and Bangladesh were signalling today

positive political intent to move forward. The two Ministers acknowledged the new imperatives of Indo-Bangla economic cooperation in a globalising world and agreed that the two nations could not be "defeated by small difficulties", the spokeswoman said.

This is the first visit to India by the Foreign Minister since the elections last October that brought the Bangladesh National Party to power in Dhaka.

Mr. Khan is a businessman himself and was apparently reflecting the new Dhaka desire of wanting to get on with the task of deepening commercial links with New Delhi.

He used the opportunity to dispel the misperceptions in New Delhi that Dhaka wants to mediate between India and Pakistan in their current confrontation.

There was political irritation in New Delhi at reports from Dhaka that Bangladesh wants to interject itself into Indo-Pakistan disputes.

While Bangladesh was concerned about

new military tensions in the subcontinent, it had no desire to get in the middle of Indo-Pakistan disputes, it was conveyed to the Indian side today.

The Bangladesh delegation also apparently made it quite clear that organisations such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation had no role in the bilateral issues between New Delhi and Islamabad.

While reaffirming India's commitment to peace in the region, Mr. Singh insisted that "there is no scope for multiplicity of efforts" on easing the current stand-off between New Delhi and Islamabad.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Khan had a lengthy discussion with the National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra.

Mr. Khan also had consultations with the former Prime Minister, Inder Kumar Gujral, and the Leader of the Opposition, Sonia Gandhi.

He called on the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, in the evening. He left for Bangkok late tonight.

Offering free trade to Bangladesh

By C. Raja Mohan

110-11
9/20
Bangladesh
17/6

NEW DELHI, JUNE 16. The time has come for India to unveil an offer that Bangladesh cannot refuse. As the Bangladesh Foreign Minister, M. Morshed Khan, makes the political rounds in the capital on Monday, India must propose immediate fast track negotiations on a liberal free trade arrangement with Bangladesh.

Having long sought "duty-free" access to the Indian market, Bangladesh is likely to jump at it. But to make a political impact on the relations which badly need a make over, the Indian offer on free trade needs to be backed by assurances from the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, that New Delhi is ready to break the mould on bilateral trade with Bangladesh.

New Delhi also needs to resist the temptation to link its offer to decisions in Dhaka that will allow transit of Indian goods to the North East and gas exports from Bangladesh to the energy-hungry Indian market.

One good turn need not necessarily depend on another. If India acts in its own enlightened self-interest on freer trade with Bangladesh, it could create the political space for Dhaka to move on transit, which will generate considerable revenues to Bangladesh economy.

Instead of insisting on a negotiated advance, through tortuous talks at the bureaucratic level, India must demonstrate it is ready for "positive unilateralism" in deal-

ing with its smaller neighbours. India's unilateral actions could trigger off a virtuous cycle of economic integration between India and Bangladesh.

Relations with Bangladesh are too important to be left to traditional ways of doing diplomatic business. Bangladesh is one of the few Islamic nations of the world where a fragile democracy is taking root; it is a large market for Indian goods and has a huge bearing on India's security and development challenges in the North East.

The fact that it took nearly eight months for the new Foreign Minister of a key neighbouring country to come to India reflects the stagnation which now marks Indo-Bangla relations.

Although New Delhi dispatched the National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra, immediately after the general elections in Bangladesh last October with the message that India is ready to do business with the new Government of Khaleda Zia, there has been little movement forward.

But the unease in bilateral relations pre-dates the return of the Bangladesh National Party to power. The initiative by the then Foreign Minister, Inder Kumar Gujral, in 1996 to clinch an agreement on sharing the Ganga waters with the earlier Government led by Sheikh Hasina had opened the door for a positive phase in Indo-Bangla relations.

But the drift in bilateral relations since then has been captured by continuing

clashes of security forces on the border, the glacial pace of negotiations on demarcating the remaining 6.5 km of the 4,090-km frontier, the Indian reluctance to think creatively about trade with Bangladesh, and the unwillingness of Dhaka to move on transit and gas exports.

Mr. Vajpayee can, however, break the stalemate with the offer on a liberal trading regime with Bangladesh. If the penny-pinching bureaucrats of the Commerce Ministry look beyond the immediate revenue-loss, they could find that freer trade with Bangladesh would facilitate faster growth in Bangladesh and make it a bigger market for Indian goods.

On its part, Bangladesh needs to end its political posturing on transit between Indian mainland and its remote North Eastern regions. Just as freer trade is in New Delhi's self-interest so is allowing transit in Dhaka's. Further delays on Dhaka's part would only force India to look at alternatives.

If they shed their past political impulses to "beggary neighbour", New Delhi and Dhaka could focus on problem-solving and create new levels of shared prosperity in the eastern part of the Subcontinent.

This could be built around an accelerated schedule of talks to complete boundary demarcation and rapid movement towards freer trade and economic integration. But the political initiative for such a creative approach must, naturally, come from India.

THE HINDU

17/6/97

War clouds worry BSF

Alert along border with Bangladesh

OUR BUREAU

9/2/02
Bangla
1-9
6/6

Shillong/Agartala, June 5: Warnings from Western intelligence agencies about saboteurs lurking behind army lines has prompted the BSF to convene talks with the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) on preventing ISI-trained mercenaries from breaching the Indo-Bangladesh border in the event of a war with Pakistan.

The flag meeting between the BSF and the BDR top brass is slated for next week, somewhere along the Indo-Bangladesh border in Tripura. Sources said the likelihood of infiltration by mercenaries was at the top of the agenda.

BSF director-general Gurbachan Singh Jagat is scheduled to meet his Bangladeshi counterpart in New Delhi on June 14. Before that meeting, he will make a tour of the Northeast, starting June 10.

In what appears to be a related development, BSF inspector-general (TCM sector) M.C. Parmar today said that a team of officials from the Union home ministry would arrive in Agartala on June 15 to monitor the progress in fencing the state's border with Bangladesh.

Defence sources said that the Centre had already put the army, BSF, Assam Rifles and the Eastern Air Command on high alert

against any attempt by ISI-backed mercenaries to sneak into the country in the event of a war with Pakistan.

Some BSF battalions are likely to be moved from Nagaland for redeployment along the international border with Bangladesh in Tripura, Meghalaya and Assam, they said.

The BSF inspector-general based in Shillong, B.K. Dey Sawian, said Jagat would first visit Tripura. From there, he will head for Meghalaya before leaving for Delhi.

He is expected to meet senior officers of the BSF and discuss the ground situation as far as ISI activities in the region are concerned. Dey Sawian refrained from commenting on the intelligence alert.

He merely said that the BSF, as always, was keeping a close vigil on the Indo-Bangladesh border. "As of now, the situation along the border is peaceful. But we are prepared to thwart any infiltration attempt from across the border."

Defence sources said the Centre sounded an alert on Monday because it was loath to take any chances along the country's eastern frontier, where the ISI is known to be active. Army officials in the Northeast, however, said there would be no let-up in anti-insurgency operations.

0 5 2002

THE TELEGRAPH

THE TELEGRAPH

UK denies reports, says no arms embargo on India

KATE KELLAND
LONDON, MAY 27

BRITAIN said on Monday it had no plans to impose a formal embargo on arms sales to India and Pakistan but that tensions between the two nations meant rules on export licences must be applied stringently.

Responding to newspaper reports that Britain had suspended exports of arms to the two countries, Foreign Office minister Ben Bradshaw said: "It would be wrong to talk about a formal arms embargo...but clearly the current state of tension between India and Pakistan will inform the sorts of decisions we make (on export licences)."

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw will visit both countries this week in an effort, he says, to bring the two sides "back from the brink". He warned last week there was a real risk of nuclear war between the neighbours.

The *Telegraph* newspaper reported on Monday that Britain had suspended arms exports to India and Pakistan, saying Trade and Industry Secretary Patricia Hewitt had signed an order last week halting export licences.

A Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) spokesman declined to confirm or deny that Hewitt had signed any order and said all applications were looked at on a strict case-by-case basis. "The situation in the region is taken fully into account in considering export licence decisions," he said.

Bradshaw said there had been no change in policy. He cited European Union rules governing decisions on export licences which explicitly rule out granting approval if there is a clear risk that the equipment could be used for external aggression or internal oppression.

"Obviously if tensions are high, the risk is higher that equipment could be used...for aggressive purposes," Bradshaw said. "We will stick rigidly to the criteria."

British media reports suggested talks between British Defence firm BAE Systems and India on the sale of around 60 Hawk trainer aircraft, worth an estimated 1 billion pounds (\$1.5 billion), could be under threat.

But both the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Prime Minister Tony Blair's spokesman dismissed such suggestions. —Reuters

INDIAN EXPRESS

28 MAY 2002

Indo-Bangla trade faces many obstacles

GAUTAM BHATTACHARYA
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, May 25. — Trade between India and Bangladesh has reached an impasse. Indian Chamber of Commerce officials have said the country's trade with Bangladesh faced several barriers and this was preventing the region's economic integration.

The Chamber along with others had made unofficial moves to improve ties with neighbouring nations, including Bangladesh. But, so far as Dhaka is concerned, the efforts are yet to result in substantial results.

At the last secretary-level meeting between the two countries, Bangladesh was disappointed at India's decision to allow duty-free mar-

ket access to only 40 items and had warned that restrictions on its import of yarn and sugar through land routes and India's use of transit facilities would stay unless Delhi included more items in the duty-free list. India is reportedly agreeable to the inclusion of 25 more items. Bangladesh has also complained about non-tariff barriers. Mr M Islam of the country's deputy high commission said recently the balance of trade was in India's favour.

According to an ICC document, India's exports to Bangladesh increased from \$532 million in 1991 to \$1.3 billion in 1995-96. But it stagnated at about \$1 billion for the rest of the decade. Bangladesh's exports to In-

dia rose from \$10 million in 1990 to \$65 million in 1994-95 and then hovered over imbalance \$60-80 million for the next six years. The large trade has been a constant source of friction between the two countries.

Bangladeshi officials also complained of luxury tax imposed on certain imports from Bangladesh in West Bengal. Chamber officials said the Centre would soon discuss the issue with the state government.

Sources said official trade between the two countries was \$1,172 billion in 2000-2001, of which Bangladesh's export to India was little over \$62 million. Bangladesh says unofficial trade with India, most of which go against it, is around \$1.5 billion.

THE STATESMAN

26 MAY 2002

India banks on EU tough talk for Pak

Saurabh Shukla
New Delhi, May 21

CONCERNED ABOUT a possible escalation of the tension between India and Pakistan, the European Union is now working on a parallel track to the US initiative to find a last ditch diplomatic solution. And there are indications that the EU's package for diffusing the crisis has some tough talk in store for Pakistan.

Europe's External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten who arrives here on Thursday, will be in Pakistan before that and New Delhi has been informed through diplomatic channels that Patten is going there with a list of demands for Pakistan to adhere to. This includes a time-bound plan for the arrest of terrorist leaders, a definite action for prevention of terrorism across the Line of Control and handing over the terrorists mentioned in the list of 20 that New Delhi has asked for.

Sources say that EU-Pakistan treaty on cooperation that EU signed with Pakistan following September 11 that is yet to be ratified by European Parliament may be held back in case Pakistan fails to show any substantive results.

On Friday, Patten will be meeting External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and may meet the National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra. Sources say that the EU is expected to put Musharraf on notice with some tough talk and will ask him to show visible and substantive result or lose the economic aid and trade benefits that came its way since it joined the war against terrorism.

Diplomats here say that there is a growing concern over what they see as Pakistan's failure to fully implement pledges to persecute or hand over all perpetrators linked with terrorist activities in India and Patten is expected to communicate this to Musharraf.

European Parliament condemns Gujarat violence

By Batuk Gathani

10.1
BRUSSELS, MAY 18. The European Parliament has passed a resolution saying that it is appalled by the sectarian violence in Gujarat, which has claimed more than 900 lives.

1913
It adopted a resolution on Thursday "strongly condemning" all sectarian violence in India, which "followed the burning to death of 58 Hindus on a train" in February. It called on the Central and State Governments to continue to "investigate the killings" and resolved to support efforts for the rehabilitation of the refugees. It noted, "Most of the dead are Muslims and the escalation of violence was a direct consequence of reprisals against the Muslims following the attack on the train."

The Parliament had expressed its concern over the vi-

olence in the State following its "general affairs council" meeting in mid-April.

The Parliamentarians debated the issue mindful that Article 25 of the Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion and said successive Governments had committed themselves to protecting minority ethnic and religious groups. A prominent British member of the European Parliament, Charles Tannock, said, "No system of government is perfect, but since the (Indian) Army was called in, already some 30,000 arrests have been made with 80 per cent of those arrested being Hindus. It is also significant that the violence did not spread to other parts of India, while large areas of Gujarat remain calm."

"We should not forget that India is currently reeling under a series of atrocious terrorist attacks by Islamist 'jehadi' extre-

1913
mists, more recently the killing of 30 people, including women and children on the outskirts of Jammu," an attack which made the dangerous threat of war more likely between the nuclear-armed India and Pakistan. Similar sentiments were echoed by Maria Carillho, chairperson of European Parliament's South Asia delegation, who was recently in India. Another Parliamentarian, Dupluis of Italy, stated that India was the biggest democracy in the world and regretted that the E.U. paid more attention to China and Pakistan. The Green Party parliamentarian was critical of India and stated that the Gujarat violence was "orchestrated" by State Government authorities.

India's stand was supported by Thomas Mann, a prominent Christian Democrat of Germany, and Sakellario, who has been a "warm friend" of India.

THE HINDU

19 MAY 2002

India, Europe reverse perceptions on U.S.

By C. Raja Mohan

110-11
1375

BERLIN, MAY 12. When it comes to the new American assertiveness around the world, India and Europe seemed to have traded places. Europeans now sound like the Indians a few years ago, ready to criticise American unilateralism at the drop of a hat. India in contrast seems more comfortable than ever before with the U.S. engagement in its neighbourhood.

The Europeans are surprised by the new romance between India and the U.S. At a time when Europe cannot find anything right with the Bush administration's policies, New Delhi is enthusiastic in supporting the U.S. line on international terrorism, missile defence, and global environmental management.

Many European analysts wonder if India's new alliance with the U.S. is really sustainable as they point to the inconstancy of American policies. New Delhi, however, senses a better American understanding of India on the nuclear issue and greater empathy to Indian concerns on terrorism.

More basically, while India has discovered a long-term convergence of interests with the United States it finds the Europeans less sensitive to its immediate security dilemmas. Europeans, with the exception of the French, tend to mechanically apply the rules of the NPT regime against India and proffer simplistic approaches to the Indo-Pak. conflict.

Some Europeans point to deeper tendencies that drive India closer to the U.S. and Europe away from it. One is location. Unlike in the Cold War, Europe is no longer the principal area of security concern to the United States. India on the other hand, is now located between the Middle East and

Asia, which have become the main foci of American security policy.

Others suggest Europe is relatively content with the world order, and wants to hang on to its rules and institutions, while the United States is seeking to change the rules of the game, whether in dealing with nuclear weapons or the political crisis in the Middle East.

India is a revisionist power that seeks to enhance its own standing in international relations by changing the rules to make

EUROPE IN FLUX

them better suited to New Delhi's interests. It is this quest for revising the global order, perceptive Europeans say, that propels India into an alliance with the United States.

The hopes in the wake of September 11 that the war on international terrorism will unite Europe and America have turned out to be illusory. The day after September 11, the French newspaper *Le Monde*, not known for any empathy for Americans carried a front-page banner proclaiming we are all Americans now. For the first time in its history, the American alliance with Europeans -- North Atlantic Treaty Organisation invoked Article V of the treaty on collective defence.

But the American strategy of fighting the war in Afghanistan and beyond poured cold water over European support. The U.S. made it clear it was not willing to constrain its freedom of action in the pursuit of its new national security objectives. Carrying a large coalition and accommodating the individual interests of the partners was considered too much of a burden by the United

States. In the expanding war against terrorism, the U.S. of course is willing to give some role for the European nations. They could look after the peacekeeping functions in and around Kabul, they could mobilise funds for the reconstruction of Afghanistan, and hold peace conferences. But the war on terrorism will be led in an unconstrained manner by the U.S. As the Europeans come to terms with their marginalisation in the American strategic calculus, the following dictum has come to characterise the transatlantic relationship: America fights, United Nations feeds, and Europe funds.

Nearly three decades ago when the President, John Kennedy, came here and declared *ich bin ein Berliner*, he set up a special bond between the city of Berlin and America. Kennedy's ringing rhetoric that he too was a citizen of Berlin, then on the frontlines of the Cold War between East and the West, was about American commitment to defend the freedom of this great city.

But the special emotional relationship has frayed so much over the decades that the present Mayor of Berlin, Klaus Wowereit, had to be persuaded to stay back in the city to receive the U.S. President, George W. Bush, who will be here as part of a European tour later this month.

Mr. Wowereit had plans to travel to Australia and had suggested he had no desire to cancel his trip to welcome the U.S. President in town. A political controversy that followed has now forced the Social Democrat to stay back.

He has also issued an appeal to Berliners not to participate in

the peace rallies being organised here in protest against Mr. Bush who will be in Berlin during May 22-23.

BJP unhappy over deportation of Bangladeshis

*9mls
Bangla*

*HD-12
6/5*

By Our Staff Reporter

BHUBANESWAR, MAY 5. The Orissa unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party has expressed displeasure over the deportation of Bangladeshi infiltrators by the State Government. Nearly 3,000 infiltrators have been identified in different districts and a batch of 21 has been deported.

The party's state executive committee passed a resolution at the end of a two-day meeting here today demanding that a high-level committee look into the issue before the Government went ahead with the deportation.

Observing that the Government was deporting Bangladeshi refugees treating them as infiltrators, the committee suggested that there should be proper identification of refugees and infiltrators living in the State. Briefing presspersons at the end of the meeting, the vice-president of the State unit, Anadi Charan Sahu, said the State Government had started the deportation in Nawrangpur and Malkangiri districts under pressure from parties opposed to the BJP. The 800-odd families who had been identified as illegal infiltrators were second generation refugees, he said.

Mr. Sahu alleged that the authorities had not

initiated action against illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators who were running small businesses in different towns.

The Government started deporting the Bangladeshis from Nawrangpur even though it was opposed by several BJP Ministers in the State, Mr. Sahu said, while adding that the Union Home Minister, L.K. Advani, had been apprised of the issue.

The State Government had earlier said that infiltration posed a potential security threat and decided to deport the infiltrators in batches of 25 persons each. The deportation process will continue till all the infiltrators were sent back, the Home Secretary, T.K. Mishra, had said.

The Government had also clarified that the present deportation drive would not be restricted to Nawrangpur district. The next phase would be carried out in Malkangiri and Kendrapara districts. Mr. Sahu said his party was not satisfied with the performance of the coalition Government headed by Naveen Patnaik. However, the BJP was compromising on several issues and was making efforts to improve the Government's performance.

HPD-12
205

EU, India review ties

By Alok Mukherjee

NEW DELHI, MAY 2. A meeting of senior officials of the European Union and India today reviewed the developments in India-EU relations as a preparatory to the India-EU summit to be held in Denmark in October this year. While Spain holds the current EU Presidency, Denmark is to take it up at the end of June.

As part of the preparatory process for the summit, the two sides recently held dialogues at the level of the civil society; a meeting of the Joint Working Group on Trade and Economic Issues had met and a Ministerial-level meeting had also taken place in Madrid in February this year. The EU's stated position is that India was one of its strategic partners.

The issue of terrorism also figured in today's meeting, with both sides reiterating their resolve to strengthen their fight against this scourge and the need to be vigilant on this count. While the

EU side briefed Indian officials about the steps taken by them to fight terrorism, India emphasised the point that it had been a victim of terrorism for the last two decades with nearly 61,000 civilians and numerous security personnel being killed. A joint meeting on terrorism is also scheduled for the third week of May in Brussels.

Trade and economic relations between India and the EU was also the focus of discussions since the EU is India's largest trading partner. The two sides have had constructive dialogue on matters concerning the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on cooperation in information technology, science and technology and developmental activities in general. India's exports to the EU in the first six months of 2001 amounted to \$6.6 billion while its imports from there were worth \$6.4 billion.

The meeting also discussed India's relations with its neighbours, including Pakistan and Afghanistan.

THE HINDU

F 3 MAY 2002

9/2/01
- Europe news

Controversy over EU position 'regrettable'

HD-1
375

By Alok Mukherjee

NEW DELHI, MAY 2. After a series of terse statements, India today took up directly with the European Union (EU) the recent controversy regarding the EU's position on the recent Gujarat incidents.

According to the External Affairs Ministry spokesperson, the two sides agreed that the recent controversy caused by media reports on the EU's position on Gujarat was "regrettable" and it was decided to put the issue be-

hind. The occasion to sort out the controversy came during the meeting here of senior officials of the EU and India as part of the bi-annual meetings between the two sides which have been formalised after the India-EU summit in Lisbon in June 2000.

"The EU recognised that their concerns regarding violence, loss of life and property and the requirement for urgent humanitarian relief had already been addressed vigorously and effectively in the Indian media, pub-

lic opinion and civil society and by the Indian Government and Parliament," the spokesperson said.

Asked about the nature of the discussions and the concerns raised by the EU officials, she said "the issue was discussed in an open and candid manner."

About a possible demarche being handed over by the EU, the spokesperson reiterated that she had reported exactly what had happened at the meeting.

India, EU clear air on Gujarat

Statesman News Service

5-6 8/8

NEW DELHI, May 2. — Propelled primarily by the huge volume of trade existing between India and the European Union, relations between the two appeared to have resumed normalcy today after some plain talk on both sides on issues including Gujarat.

Buoyed by the Parliamentary debates, the Indian team of officials, led by the foreign secretary, Mrs Chokila Iyer, at a meeting with officials of the EU decided to shed their defensive stance and addressed the EU's concerns on human rights and the violence in Gujarat, the foreign ministry spokesman said.

"The issue was discussed in an open and candid manner," the spokesman said. "The EU recognized that their concerns regarding the violence...and the requirement for urgent humanitarian relief had been addressed vigorously ..in the Indian media ..and Parliament," the spokesperson said, adding, "the two sides agreed that the recent controversy caused by media reports on the EU position on Gujarat had been regrettable, and decided to put the issue behind them."

The EU is India's largest trading partner, with exports in the first half of 2001 totalling \$6.6 billion, as well as the largest source of direct foreign investment. Though the recent Gujarat riots had raised concerns over the economic content of the relationship, the EU today hailed India as "a crucial strategic partner."

The meeting today (with the EU troika of Belgium, Spain and Denmark) was in preparation for the Indo-EU Summit scheduled in Copenhagen in October.

THE STATESMAN

3 MAY 2002

E.U. diplomats call it 'planned violence'

115
By Batuk Gathani

BRUSSELS, APRIL 30. The Gujarat violence "was not spontaneous but a pre-planned policy involving State Ministers to purge Muslims and destroy their economy."

The "worst" religious riots in a decade were "backed by the State", says a report prepared by the embassies of the European Union countries in India, according to *The Financial Times* (European edition) today.

The latest report by the E.U. diplomats is rated as the most damning indictment yet of the Gujarat riots, which may have killed about 900 people — mostly Muslims with "clear evidence of complicity by State Ministers."

It has been submitted to the 15 E.U. Governments, which have yet to officially respond to the Indian situation.

It remains to be seen if the issue will be raised at next week's summit between the E.U. and India in New Delhi. India has consistently maintained that the tragic events are "an internal matter" and that the "riots" were ignited by a fatal arson attack on a train carrying Hindu activists at Godhra resulting in the death of 59 persons. The diplomats' report is based on investigations by a number of individual member states — Britain, Germany and Holland — that sent staff to the States.

The conclusion is that Godhra was no more than a "pretext" for "Hindu mobs' violence, which was planned months before" and that "free swords were being distributed by Hindu activists days before the riots began." The death toll was put at "more than 2,000 and 140,000 people are estimated to be refugees as a result of the attacks." On the role of the

BJP and State officials in Gujarat, the report said: "Hindus

took active part in the violence... senior police officers were instructed not to interfere in the rioting..." According to *The Financial Times* report, last week some diplomats described the events as "genocide" for the first time, while the E.U. report stopped short of using that word.

Human Rights Watch reaches the same conclusion: "What happened in Gujarat was not a spontaneous uprising.

It was a carefully orchestrated attack against Muslims" and police were "complicit".

The Financial Times editorial said: "a chilling report from Human Rights Watch released today charges that State officials in the Indian state of Gujarat have been directly involved in the killings of hundreds of Muslims since February 27 and are now engaged in massive cover-up".

It argued that the Indian Government "can no longer brush off these accusations" and states that "some 2000 Muslims have been killed and over 100,000 remain in refugee camps" and appeals to the Indian Government to "conduct an exhaustive investigation" into the origin of the violence.

"The Indian Government protests that the outside world has no right to interfere in the country's internal affairs."

"But India's treatment of its minority population has become a matter of international concern. India, which has taught the world so much about democracy, must now return to its practices," it concludes.

It is also ironical to note that such patronising comments from European diplomats, on a delicate and highly emotive ethnic situation in India, comes at a time when Europe is seen lurching to the centre-right political spectrum with a sudden upsurge of xenophobic pressure on the ethnic minorities.

Indian embassies deny EU demarche

Vijay Dutt
London, April 27

REPORTS ABOUT the European Union issuing a demarche regarding the situation in Gujarat has been denied by the Indian embassies in Madrid and Brussels.

A senior Indian diplomat in Brussels told *Hindustan Times* that the embassy there had positively not received any demarche. The last communiqué by the EU was issued on April 15 in which it expressed concern at the situation in Gujarat. It did not contain any criticism about the Government.

The deputy charge de'affair in Madrid RS Srivastava also said he had no knowledge about any demarche having been sent to the embassy by the EU, which is presently under the presidency of Spain.

Ambassador Dilip Lāhiri was out of Madrid and expected to return on Monday. Srivastava said he was not in a posi-

tion to say anything further. But, he pointed out that even on the Spanish EU website there was no mention of the demarche until Saturday.

Normally, the EU is very prompt in posting its decisions, observations, resolutions and actions taken by it. If the demarche had been issued on Wednesday as per reports, it should have been posted on the website.

The EU comments on the December 13 attack on the Indian Parliament was published immediately. The media in Spain has also not shown much interest in the Gujarat situation. It was not possible to get any response from the European Union or Spanish officials, the offices being closed for the weekend.

Another source in Madrid however said there were some "heated" discussions in the EU on Gujarat but he also said he was unaware of a demarche having been actually sent to the Indian embassy in Madrid.

EU snubs South Block, undertakes Gujarat *demarche* in Madrid

By Aunohita Mojumdar
Times News Network

NEW DELHI: The European Union undertook its *demarche* on the Gujarat situation in Madrid on Wednesday. Sources said a note was delivered to Indian ambassador Dilip Lahiri after failed efforts to secure a definite date for a meeting with external affairs ministry officials in South Block.

The *demarche* comes close on the heels of South Block's sharp remarks accusing some EU countries of interfering in India's internal affairs. In a caustic statement rejecting the EU remarks, the MEA had accused some EU countries of having violated diplomatic norms, appearing partisan and injuring India-EU relations. The issue was also taken up by the Prime Minister, who said India did not need to be "preached" to about secularism by Western countries.

The controversy had erupted after newspapers reported on the internal reports prepared by several EU countries on the Gujarat situation. Their assessment, at variance with that of the government of India, as also the remarks of various visiting ministers, had irked the MEA, which said other countries had no *locus standi* to comment on the issue.

South Block, it is learnt, had come up with several reasons, among them government holidays and the absence of the senior officials concerned to delay an appointment requested by the EU on Monday. Given the mood, the EU decided to undertake its *demarche* in Madrid where the same formulation intended to be used here was conveyed. EU diplomats also expressed surprise at the extent of the MEA's prickliness, suggesting that the issue had been exacerbated by the government's attitude. It was not out of place for diplomatic missions to express their opinions on such events, they said. The EU had not wanted to engage in a tiff with the MEA and therefore was not responding to the harsh statements from the government.

The government's attitude seems to have triggered greater unanimity within the EU by sweeping away any lingering doubts that some countries have had on making public a statement on the Gujarat violence.

Straw sorry for embassy news leaks

Udayan Nambodiri
New Delhi, April 25

BRITISH FOREIGN Secretary Jack Straw has apologised to Jaswant Singh for the media leaks attributed to his mission in New Delhi which has led to a diplomatic chill between the two countries.

Another piece of good news for the Vajpayee Government came today from Madrid, where senior officials of the European Presidency categorically denied the reported references to apartheid, Nazi Germany and pogroms. Indian Ambassador Gautam Lahiri was informed that none of the 15 EU missions mentioned these things in their official despatches on the Gujarat situation to their respective foreign offices.

"It seems to be a mischievous plan aimed at souring the pitch ahead of the third Indo-EU Summit", an official told Lahiri. The EU's official statement does not make such stinging remarks and also refers to the "general improvement" in the situation in Gujarat, the official is believed to have said.

Straw, who spoke to Singh yesterday over phone, made it clear that London considered Gujarat an internal issue of India and also appreciated the steps taken by the Vajpayee Government to diffuse the communal tension in the State.

Sources said Singh also raised the Kashmir issue

PM takes umbrage

ATL BIHARI Vajpayee on Thursday hit back at countries, expressing concern over Gujarat violence. "India is being advised on pluralism and secularism. We need not learn about secularism from anybody," he said apparently replying to the concern voiced by Britain, Canada and some European Union countries.

PTI, New Delhi

during his talk with Straw. Last week, Straw, in a speech before the British House of Commons, had said "independent monitors" may be an inevitability in Kashmir. When the Indian Foreign Minister objected to this, Straw said Britain stands by its position that Kashmir is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan.

Indian foreign office sources said the ministry has noted a "difference" in the speed at which the British High Commission here has reacted to the news stories based on leaks and that of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London.

"High Commissioner Young has not been as swift in making an unequivocal statement as was expected of him," a senior official said.

Stop interfering on Gujarat, govt tells European Union

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 24 APRIL

INDIA HAS taken serious umbrage to foreign missions leaking their internal reports to the media as a way of involving themselves in the Gujarat mess. After a spate of media reports quoting from different European countries' internal memos comparing the Gujarat carnage to periods in European history, the MEA on Wednesday, in a sharp statement, criticised these countries for "injecting themselves into the highly politically charged internal debate in the country and creating an impression of playing a partisan role."

The MEA is seething at what it calls the "tactics" employed by these missions. Because internal reports are a sovereign matter of the country concerned, the MEA's jurisdiction does not run over them. And none of these countries have expressed their concerns in as many

words in public or on record. The MEA spokesperson said there had been no official representation from these countries. The EU official opinion is confined to a statement made two days ago dissociating itself from a newspaper report.

The MEA, roundly referring to this as "political interference" said this was "contradictory to well-established norms of diplomacy and injurious to the friendly relations that exist between India and the EU as well as individual European countries identified in the press as sources of leaks and political interference." It is believed that the same message will be given to an EU team that is due to visit next week.

Yet, the continued leaks in newspapers about the countries' outrage over the Gujarat violence, blaming the state government has made it difficult for the MEA to counter these statements officially except through press statements.

— PTI

Gujarat sees 1st calm day

Our Ahmedabad Bureau
AHMEDABAD 24 APRIL

Gujarat remained relatively calm throughout the day, with no reports of untoward violence coming in from any part of the state on Wednesday.

Three persons were injured when police fired several rounds and burst teargas shells to disperse a strong mob in the curfew-bound Vejalpur area on late Tuesday night. Tension continued in the Vejalpur area and the adjoining Sarkhej police station areas, which were put under indefinite curfew after a youth was burnt alive in Aslali police station area on Tuesday. The army too has been deployed in the Vejalpur area.

25 APR 2002

The Economic Times

Delhi warns EU countries about Gujarat remarks

Times News Network

NEW DELHI: The gloves came off on Wednesday as Indian diplomacy took on European Union missions for their remarks on Gujarat, accusing them of violating diplomatic norms and appearing partisan.

In unusually combative mode, a statement from the ministry of external affairs charged "some foreign countries and missions in Delhi" with "injecting themselves into the highly politically charged internal debate in the country" and "creating an impression of playing a partisan role".

Terming this "contradictory to well-established norms of diplomacy", the government warned that this would be "injurious to the friendly relations that exist between India and the EU as well as individual European countries identified in the press as sources of leaks and political interference".

The MEA denied that the stand of the EU countries amounted to a failure of Indian diplomacy.

25 APR 2007

THE TIMES OF INDIA

25-6
28A

Fresh influx of Bangla Hindus

9th
Bangla

Statesman News Service

SILIGURI, April 22. — After a lull of about five months, Hindu families from Bangladesh are again migrating to India. There has been a sudden increase in illegal migration from Bangladesh, say BSF officials here.

"Last week, our jawans apprehended 22 Bangladeshi nationals in Uttar Dinajpur. All of them are Hindus," said a senior BSF official at the North Bengal headquarters.

The exodus began during the Pujas last year and continued till November. It decreased during the winter. The first arrivals were in Uttar Dinajpur district and later spread along border areas in Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar.

"The recent arrests indicate that the problem has resurfaced," a BSF official said. The people apprehended last week are from the Thakurgaon district of Bangladesh, BSF officials said. Besides the Hindu

families, the number of infiltrators like smugglers, criminals and cattle rustlers has also increased. Between January and March this year, BSF jawans have apprehended 950 infiltrators. "This proves the abrupt rise in infiltration. It also substantiates our decision to seal the border during the Hujur Saheb's fair

held annually at Haldibari," an official said.

People of all communities revere Hujur Saheb's majhar at Haldibari. A fair is held at the majhar every winter and thousands come from across the border for it. The BSF chose to keep the border sealed this time.

"We didn't deprive those who came with proper documents. Only illegal entries were discouraged... the recent development

Arrests irk Orissa BJP

BHUBANESWAR, April 22. — The state government's decision to arrest and deport 21 Bangladeshi "infiltrators" from Nowrangpur district has angered the BJP here. It has demanded that the deportation move be abandoned and all of them released. The BJP says these people are "refugees", not "infiltrators". The BJP state unit president, Mr Manmohan Samal, said Mr Navin Patnaik had pleaded ignorance over the deportation move. Mr Patnaik said the decision was taken without his knowledge.

Mr Samal said his party would take this matter to the highest level if their demands were not met. — SNS

proves our decision was right," a BSF official said. "What goes on in that country is no concern of ours. But we shall continue strict vigil at the border and dissuade infiltration of any kind."

Now EU draws a parallel with apartheid and Nazi Germany

VRINDA GOPINATH
NEW DELHI, APRIL 21

IN another setback to the image of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's government abroad, the European Union (EU) has said in a just-finalised declaration that "the carnage in Gujarat was a kind of apartheid...and has parallels with Germany of the 1930s".

The declaration, to be made public this week, carries 15 signatures, including those of the ambassadors of Britain, France, Italy, Spain and Belgium. It has been written on the basis of reports from the EU's own fact-finding team, apart from the reports submitted by government and quasi-government bodies, the National Human Rights Commission, media reports and other sources.

The EU report concludes that Godhra served as a pretext for triggering the violence that followed in the state; the post-Godhra violence was pre-planned and the pattern suggests that the attempt was to purge Muslims from Hindu areas; the Chief Minister instructed senior police officers not to intervene in the rioting; the state and Central

No guilty to be spared: PM

■ **DIBRUGARH (ASSAM):** Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said here on Sunday that nobody would be spared for the violence in Gujarat that has claimed over 800 lives so far. "My government is clear on its stand...No criminal, big or small, will be allowed to go free, no matter to which faith he belongs," he said.

Describing the Gujarat incidents as a national crisis, he called for "unity". He, however, dismissed the charge that his government had been biased in providing succour to the victims and asserted there had been no discrimination whatsoever on religious lines. "Every person will get relief without any discrimination, irrespective of his or her religious following," the PM added. —ENS

governments failed to meet the immediate humanitarian needs of the victims; and the Prime Minister visited Gujarat only on April 4.

The declaration observes that the violence was led by the VHP and other extremist Hindu groups, that relief efforts for the riot victims were slow and that the state government's compensation programme was discriminatory. It also expresses great

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Now, EU draws a parallel with apartheid and Nazi Germany

concern about the violence, voices pain over the number of lives lost, expresses regret that acts of violence are still occurring and would encourage the Government of India to meet the immediate humanitarian needs arising from the violence as quickly as possible. The declaration urges the Government of India to carry out a full and transparent investigation to bring the perpetrators of the violence to justice. It also "welcomes the Government of In-

dia's condemnation of the violence." An EU official explained they would not be satisfied with the removal of Chief Minister Narendra Modi but would urge his entire government's dismissal since several ministers were also indicted by riot victims.

"It's not enough that Modi goes; the state government must go, as findings have pointed out that ministers in the Modi government had taken active part in the vio-

lence," the official said.

An EU delegation is likely to meet Home Minister L K Advani, or External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh to present its memorandum. "India cannot plead that the events in Gujarat is an internal matter as what has happened is a human rights issue as it was a kind of genocide and ethnic cleansing. And as a signatory of the UN Convention on Human Rights, it is forbidden to conduct such violence," the official said.

7 2 APR 2002

INDIAN EXPRESS

Apex court delinks Bangla migrants' cases

FROM R. VENKATARAMAN

New Delhi, April 15: The Supreme Court today "de-linked" two sets of petitions in the illegal Bangladeshi migrants case — one calling for immediate identification and deportation of illegal migrants and the other challenging the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunal) Act (IMDT).

A three-judge bench of Justices G.B. Pattanaik, Brijesh Kumar and Arijit Passayat decided to hear the petitions separately. The second petition has been posted for hearing on April 22. The All-India Lawyers' Forum for Civil Liberties (AILFCL), the original petitioners, had appealed for the deportation of over one crore illegal migrants from states like West Bengal, Assam, Delhi, Bihar and Maharashtra.

Writs of Sarbananda Sonowal, a sitting MLA of the Assam Assembly, the Assam Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind and Ramesh Borpatra Gohain, professor of law in Guwahati University, were tagged on to the petition. Sonowal had challenged the Act itself, while the Jamiat petitioned against repealing of the Act.

Gohain sought a direction to strike down the constitutional validity of Section 6-A of the Citizenship Act, under which immigrants who had come to Assam before 1986 would be recognised as citizens and their names would be included in the voters' list.

This section was inserted as an additional provision, making it applicable only to Assam.

The AILFCL contended that over one crore illegal Bangladeshis have infiltrated into India, endangering the security

and sovereignty of the country.

In Delhi, the then BJP government under Madan Lal Khurana, had deported several migrants. On an appeal by social action groups against the deportation, Delhi High Court had held that possessing ration cards and election cards did not make a person a genuine citizen.

Corroborating the high court ruling, the Supreme Court today "de-linked" two sets of petitions in the illegal migrants case.

The issue before the apex court were of two types: detection and deportation of the illegal migrants and challenge to the IMDT Act under which a suspect need not prove that he or she is a foreign national, the onus of proof being on the prosecution.

In its written submission to the apex court, the Jamiat said that firstly, IMDT was enacted to give "at least" one chance to the suspect, now classified as "D" voter meaning "doubtful voter", to establish his or her identity.

Second, "lakhs... were deported from the country and were pushed inside the borders of Bangladesh without even being given any opportunity to establish their Indian citizenship".

The written submission said the IMDT Act provided machinery to protect genuine and bonafide Indian citizens who were given judicial safeguard under the law.

It said a direction should be issued to the Centre and the Assam government to provide all requisite infrastructure so that the tribunals under IMDT work effectively and fulfil the object of the law.

In its counter affidavit, the Union government stated that

without the aid of the law, half a million illegal migrants have been identified and deported in West Bengal alone, whereas under the law, the deportation figure in Assam is less than 1,500 in the past 18 years.

Political parties and governments have so far taken their own stand according to their perception and political suitability. The BJP-led Centre had told the apex court that IMDT should be repealed along with its ally, the Asom Gana Parishad.

The West Bengal government under Jyoti Basu had filed an affidavit, stating that "unscrupulous politicians and officials have given them (the migrants) ration cards, elections cards and even houses" and that it was "humanly not possible" to detect and deport the migrants.

Under Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, the government filed an affidavit, saying measures were being taken to detect and deport illegal migrants.

When the Shiv Sena-led government in Maharashtra deported a few hundreds in the name of "illegal migrants", Mamata Banerjee of the Trinamul Congress raised a hue and cry and said Bengal would give them asylum.

There was, however, no detection of illegal migrants in Delhi when the Congress took over the reins from the BJP.

The Centre's counter affidavit criticises Section 6-A of the Citizenship Act, alleging that the provision, enacted during the Rajiv Gandhi regime, "has created a division between persons of Indian origin who have come to Assam and those who have entered India through other states".

Bangla asks India to expand list

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DHAKA, April 13. —The Bangladesh finance minister has expressed disappointment at India's decision to allow duty-free market access to only 40 items and warned that restrictions on import of yarn and sugar through land routes and India's use of transit facilities would not be removed unless additions are made to the list.

Mr Saifur Rahman said that India should open its market for all Bangladesh products "except arms", adding "unless it (India) allows free access (of goods from Bangladesh to her market),

restriction on yarn and sugar through land port will remain", media reports said today.

These were some of the toughest remarks against India made by a minister in six-month-old Khaleda Zia government. Bangladesh had officially welcomed the outcome of the commerce secretary-level meetings between the two countries which concluded on Wednesday with India agreeing to allow duty-free market access to 40 items under 16 categories.

During the talks, Bangladesh had asked that access be provided to 191 items under 25 categories.

"I was told that if we do not consider transit or transshipment, India is not going to allow free access to Ban-

gladesh products. I said we will never accept such proposals," the 'Daily Star' quoted Mr Rahman as saying yesterday.

Bangladesh had recently imposed restrictions on the use of land routes for import of sugar and yarn from India. The Indian delegation at the three-day talks had demanded that the restrictions be removed in the interest of bilateral trade.

"India has made more than a billion dollars trade gap with us. No major power in the world treats its neighbour as India has done with us", Mr Rahman said.

Mr Rahman said Bangladesh would not be able to export more than nine items under the new facility as the others are not popular in the Indian market. Reports said the understanding reached at the talks would remain pending till April next.

The Indian delegation raised the issue of transshipment at the talks, but Bangladesh asserted that border trade was beyond the ambit of bilateral trade, the weekly 'Dhaka Courier' reported. India agreed to the Bangladeshi stand, it added.

The issue of transshipment would be taken up by foreign minister level Joint Economic Commission which is scheduled to meet shortly, a joint statement issued after the talks had said.

DUTY RELIEF

India, Bangladesh may renew trade pact

By Haroon Habib

110-12
8/9
DHAKA, APRIL 7. The Commerce Secretaries of India and Bangladesh will begin their two-day trade talks here tomorrow to review the trade agreement which is expiring this month. The talks, which were postponed twice earlier in December last and January this year, will cover the entire gamut of bilateral trade and also find ways to resolve the issues that had forced the postponement of the earlier meetings.

Indications are that the two countries will renew their bilateral trade agreement. The agreement was signed in 1980 for three years and was last renewed in October 2001 for six months. However, Bangladesh wanted a new trade agreement with a wider scope as it felt that the existing one did not serve its interests. The Indian Commerce Secretary, Dipak Chatterjee, will lead a 20-member delegation while the Bangladesh Commerce Secretary, Suhel Ahmed, will lead the home team. Dhaka is expected to see the meeting against the backdrop of a yawning trade gap against it and raise the long-pending demand of zero-tariff access to 25 categories of its products

to the Indian market. However, Delhi may seize the opportunity to raise some vital issues such as transshipment, anti-dumping duty on Bangladesh's lead acid battery and transit facilities. With the adoption of anti-dumping measures by India in January last, the duty on Bangladesh battery rose to 131 per cent, trade circles said here. The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, during his visit to Dhaka in 1999, had pledged to offer zero-tariff access to 24 categories of Bangladesh products to India. The commitment is yet to materialise.

Sources here said India now tagged transshipment with the offer. It has demanded, as a reciprocal gesture, duty concessions on 90 of its items to the Bangladesh market. Industry here said that the Indian decision to impose anti-dumping duty was in violation of the WTO rules.

Delhi also wants to raise the issue of Dhaka's recent ban on yarn import through land ports from India. This particular issue may have an adverse impact on bilateral relations, the Indian High Commissioner here is learnt to have told Bangladesh's Finance and Planning Minister, M. Saifur Rahman, in a recent letter.

EU steps to hit Indian steel exports

Press Trust of India

BRUSSELS, March 29. — Indian steel exporters will be hit by the provisional safeguard measures which came into effect in the 15-nation European Union (EU) today. The EU on Wednesday, decided to start a six-month temporary safeguard measure over steel imports.

India's exports of the products in question include electrical sheets, other than GOES, and stainless steel wire - exceed three per cent of total EU imports. This is the threshold set by the EU in case of imports from developing countries.

India's steel exports to the EU amounted to 300,806 tons in 2001, according to figures from the EU's statistical office. Exports in 2000 came to 503,011 tons, and for 1999 to 510,899 tons.

The EU today launched a safeguard investigation too, at the request of some EU countries. The latter maintains that the clo-

sure of the US market to imports will result in a dramatic rise in imports into the EU.

These EU countries claim that current trends in imports of 15 steel products appear to call for safeguard measures.

They have therefore asked that provisional measures be introduced, pending the outcome of the investigation, nine months from now.

The provisional measures introduced today will remain in force for six months - i.e until 28 September.

Conventional duty rates will continue to apply during this period.

However, EU imports in excess of the quotas specified for each of the 15 products shall be subject to additional duties.

The tariff quota for electrical sheets has been set at 41,444 tons, and for stainless steel wire at 18,547 tons. The additional duties are 17.7 per cent and 15 per cent respectively.

China concerned: China, the world's leading steel producer has expressed deep concern

about the European Union's launching of temporary safeguard tariffs on steel products, media reports said today.

The Chinese government's concern was conveyed by the minister of foreign trade and economic cooperation, Mr Shi Guangsheng, in a letter to Mr Pascal Lamy, trade member of European Commission.

According to the decision, starting from early April, EU will put tariff quota limitations on 15 kinds of steel imports, and levy safeguard tariffs of up to 14.9 per cent to 26 per cent on those exceeding the quotas.

Mr Shi said that EU safeguard tariffs would severely affect China's steel exports to the EU, and severely damage the country's enterprises.

The Chinese government will hold consultations with the EU in a bid to find a solution, Mr Shi said.

Recently, China filed a compliant with WTO against a steep import tariff on steel levied by the USA.

THE STATESMAN

30 MAR 2002

'India still wants *Akhand Bharat*'

Ihsanul Karim in Dhaka

5/11/73

March 11. — The Bangladesh home minister has said India still believes in the concept of *Akhand Bharat* (undivided India), comprising territories from the Khyber Pass to Chittagong and from the Himalayas to the Indian Ocean.

Mr Altaf Hossain Chowdhury said India had split Pakistan, thereby creating an independent Bangladesh.

Mr Chowdhury said at a function here yesterday: "We, though, benefited from this (split) as we got ... a national flag, a President, a Prime Minister, a chief of the armed forces and so on." The

India - Bangladesh
minister was quoted by the United News of Bangladesh.

He said if Bangladesh became economically weak and there was unrest in the country, there was a possibility that India might exploit the situation.

The minister admitted that the Bangladesh government was under pressure both at home and abroad and said words like Taliban, fanaticism or fundamentalism were being labelled.

"But the fact that Bangladesh is not a fanatic or communal nation was clearly proved when there was neither any violence nor a single minority community casualty here as a backlash against the riots in India," Mr Chowdhury said.

THE STATESMAN

Well networked to fight terror

*9/11
Europeans
\$1-5*

At 61, Heimo Richter is one of Germany's much respected career diplomats. He studied law, economics and underwent training in journalism. He also did a year's course in Berlin's prestigious German Development Institute and has held key diplomatic appointments in Africa, Paris and Tel-Aviv before being appointed Ambassador to India. In a wide-ranging interview with **MANASH GHOSH**, he discusses issues ranging from Germany's role in the international coalition against terror to how Indian information technology experts give a new dimension to bilateral relations:

Since 11 September, Germany, like India, has become a partner in the international coalition against terror. What brought this about?

Germany has been doing its homework on terror for quite some time. This is because outsiders don't realise that ours is a country with a large population of political refugees who have either been victims of political persecution in their countries or wanted to save themselves from it. Among these political refugees, Muslims form the largest component and their inflow is increasing steadily. Already there are about 3.4 million Muslims, about four per cent of our population, who live in Germany.

Germany provides an interesting case study on how Muslims from different nationalities, backgrounds and systems have made our country their home. In a free, democratic society, it is difficult to detect beforehand who is a terrorist. It is a stupendous task to track them down since many of them are students studying in our educational institutions.

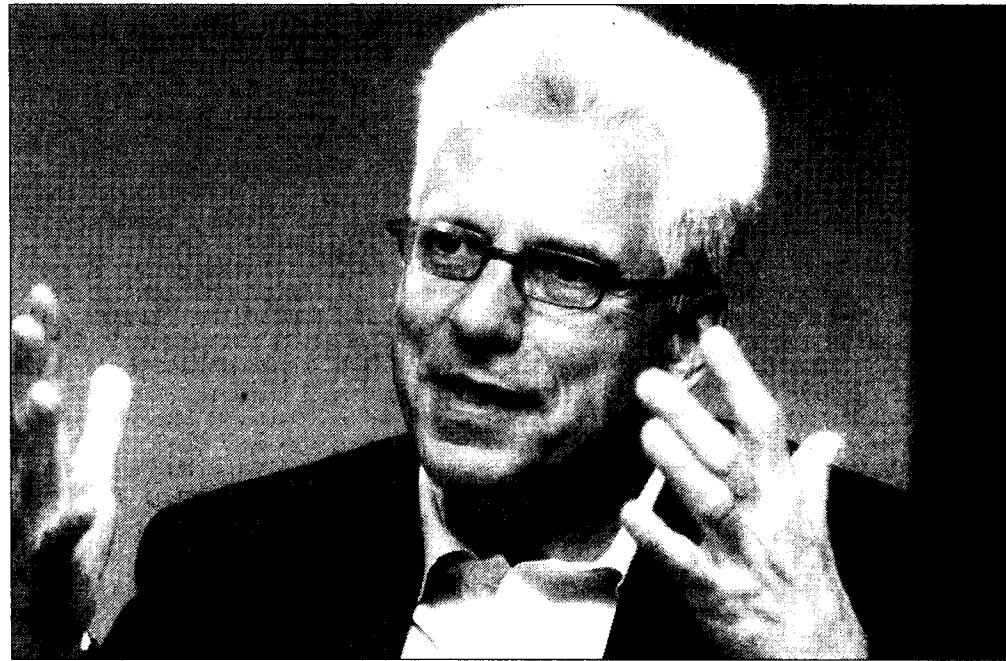
Besides, Germany has two categories of foreigners: workers from Turkey, the Balkans, east Europe and Iran, who were invited in the 1950s and 1960s to work in our factories and build infrastructure; and illegal immigrants attracted by Germany's wealth and quality of life. We have a population mix which is different from many countries.

Is it true that both the Indian and German governments are working in close cooperation to fight terror?

Last year when our Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, visited India, our interior minister Otto Schily accompanied him. There is a good working relationship between the two interior ministries. I think we use all channels to have extensive connection and exchange of information. It helps both countries to fight terror. We are cooperating with all those who have pledged to fight terror internationally.

Can Germany extradite someone who has been given political asylum or German citizenship?

When it comes to the question



German Ambassador to India, Heimo Richter: 'We figure among the first five of India's trading partners'. — Rajib De.

of political asylum, we are very orthodox. But once someone is on German soil and puts forward his or her case of political persecution, he or she could stay in Germany until the case is disposed of. This is why Germany has become a country of convergence for asylum-seekers from all over the world.

We have an extradition treaty with many countries, including India. But we have certain provisions in our constitution which prohibit extradition of those who have been condemned to death by the countries of their birth. This is because we are against the death penalty.

Recent revelations by terrorists in India show that they have established a Kolkata-Mumbai-Dubai-Karachi-Hamburg-New York nexus for their nefarious activities. Has Germany taken note of this?

Our police have followed every tip that has been provided by foreign agencies, including yours. This has led to spectacular discoveries of terrorist networks operating in and outside Germany and their plans and plots of terror. We have pursued telephone calls made to Germany by terrorists and this has led to many arrests.

What has made Germany so interested in Afghanistan, especially, in restoring peace and providing assistance worth 620 million euro for that country's reconstruction and development?

We have traditional links with Afghanistan. Also, Germany has a large Afghan population which has close ties with its home country. Second, the Taliban was a threat to the world and to democratic institutions. If you

demolish something you have to put something in its place through reconstruction. Any half measure will invite trouble, as has happened in Afghanistan. We are helping to train the Afghan police force and build a telecom network.

Being one of the leading economies, Germany has certain responsibilities towards countries like Afghanistan. That is why we have despatched a military contingent there. If you look at our foreign policy, it has become more global. We work together with the European Union. Afghanistan will be a major recipient of our assistance in future.

How do you rate Indo-German ties and their prospects?

We realise there are three countries in Asia – Japan, China and India – which are of prime importance. When our foreign minister visited India last year, we worked out a timetable for planned cooperation. What I discovered when I came to India was the importance of culture in Indian life. It has a solid base and influences the attitude of Indian people and institutions in multifarious ways.

It influences our bilateral relations also. Both countries have a long tradition of economic ties. Statistically, we have been one of India's leading economic partners; government-to-government cooperation alone works out at 18 billion DM.

We figure among the first five of India's trading partners. We are also among the top four foreign investors in India, though our investment in China is much higher because China opened up to the world more than a decade ahead of India.

German industry? What is the feedback?

The feedback is very good. The 2,000-strong Indian IT specialists have proved their worth. They form the single-largest group among foreign IT specialists who have been issued green cards and allowed to work in Germany. With their high qualifications, rich experience and capacity for integration, the Indians among the 10,000-odd foreign IT experts have managed to carve out a niche for themselves. Besides, Indian IT companies, including Infosys and Tata, have set up offices in Germany. They have provided a new content to our relations.

But Germany to attract the best Indian IT talent has to compete with the USA, the UK and Australia which have large concentrations of highly sought after Indian IT experts, many of whom have done India proud. Naturally these countries are more attractive to Indians than Germany. But we have devised an alternative plan under which German enterprises can outsource their work to IT companies in India, thereby avoiding a lot of bureaucratic hassle.

The German companies are responding to this scheme favourably as many think this is the best way Indian IT experts can service German industry. The Indo-German Chamber of Commerce is playing a role in this. But my advice to Indians wanting to go to Germany is that they must learn German as its knowledge would help them excel both in their professional and social environment.

Have Indian IT experts given a new dimension to Indo-German ties? Have they been a boon to

(The author is a veteran journalist with The Statesman, Kolkata.)

Germany wins website

THE German government has won its right to www.deutschland.de URL after a two-year battle with an Internet consultancy firm. Frankfurt based Medianet registered the domain name in 1995 but has now settled to give it to the country. This would become an information portal about the country and start functioning in a few weeks. The German government argued in court it has a right to the country's name as it represents the state. Most sites on Germany are in the German language. But <http://userpage.chemie.fu-berlin.de/adressen/brd.html> gives comprehensive links about the country. — SNS

Injured cat site

A WEBSITE charting the recovery of a pet cat injured in a road accident is attracting thousands of hits. The owner, David Donnan, launched the site www.cathospital.co.uk/ with the hope of contacting the couple who stopped to help the cat. Donnan and his wife, in fact, thanked the couple, but forgot to ask their names. The cat, Frank, is recovering from a broken pelvis at his home in Cambridge. Two webcams are placed with Frank, which are giving images of his recovery. Since it started in the third week of February, it has attracted thousands of visitors and get-well messages. An interesting feature of the site is that it tells us how many visitors are watching Frank. It is not known if Donnan was successful in contacting the couple who rescued Frank. — SNS

If you have interesting insights into the Net, or have discovered a great new site e-mail details to thestatesman@vsnl.com

THE STATESMAN

8 MAR 2002

Poor work culture

India, France on way to long-term defence ties

HT Correspondent

New Delhi, February 22

FRANCE HAS offered New Delhi a long-term strategic and defence partnership. "We made a long-term commitment to India which did not waiver even in the face of post-Pokhran western sanctions," French Ambassador Bernard De Montferrant said today. He said France was now keen to turn the partnership into a long-term one.

"The close Indo-French relations are based on three pillars: regular strategic and security dialogue, increasing cooperation in the field of joint development of hi-tech weapons and military-to-military cooperation," he said.

Montferrant said India and France have an established security dialogue and have regular exchanges on global issues. France is in the race for procuring Indian defence contracts and several French companies are keen to set up joint venture units here. "We are still waiting to interpret the new guidelines and then we will announce our plans," he said, referring to the opening of defence sector for FDI.

The two countries are on the verge of concluding the Scorpene Submarine deal, which will get India six submarines besides the technology transfer for manufacturing six more in India. Scorpene Submarine fields a state-of-the-art combat system, ideal for anti-submarine and ship warfare.

Montferrant said Indo-French defence relationship has been growing since early 1960s. Cheetah and Chetak helicopters were built by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited in cooperation of Aerospatiale. Another French company, Thomson and Bharat Electronic Limited, was assisting India in upgradation of radars.

Turbomeca, yet another major French company, announced it had already delivered 26 of the 82t m3332 B2 engines designed for India's indigenous advance light helicopter. The first of the three helicopters have been delivered to India.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

23 FEB 2002

EU rules out mediation between India and Pak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MADRID, FEBRUARY 14

THE European Union today ruled out mediation between India and Pakistan on de-escalating tensions between the two countries even as New Delhi asserted that it is always prepared for 'constructive' dialogue if there was a conducive atmosphere.

Indo-Pak tensions figured in the bi-annual meeting between External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and his counterparts from the EU troika countries in which the situation in Afghanistan and South Asia came up for review.

Spanish Foreign Minister Josip Pique told reporters later that the meeting had an opportunity to convey the EU's common concerns on the escalation of tensions in the region and the possible fallout in case of a conflict between the two nuclear powers.

"In no event, we are going to intervene in the situation," he said unequivocally, adding "EU was interested in appropriate action for reduction of tensions."

The troika comprises Belgium, Spain and Denmark.

Singh said India was the initiator of the dialogue process and it always wanted a constructive and productive dialogue.

"For that there is a need for a conducive atmosphere and for that cross-border terrorism as a state policy (of Pakistan) must end and there should be translation of this statement into action", he said.

Singh said "for every one step that our western neighbour takes

we will take two steps."

Reacting to Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's allegation that India was planning a nuclear test, he said it was a 'canard' and recalled that India had announced a voluntary moratorium on nuclear tests and that shall remain forever. "We shall not stand in the way of the test ban treaty coming into force," he added.

The meeting was attended by EU's External Affairs Commissioner Christopher Patten, representative of EU secretary general Javier Solana and Secretary of State for Denmark Constaour and Pique.

At the outset, Pique said the troika had a very good working meeting with India when the relationship between New Delhi and the 15-nation EU came up for review particularly regarding the follow-up on implementation of decisions taken at the last meeting.

Patten spoke about EU's policy vis-a-vis situation in Asia and international security during a review. Indo-Pak relations and situation in Kashmir also came up for discussion.

Pique said India was extremely significant, particularly its role in forging links with the US, Russia and the EU.

"Our intention is to deepen our relations with India in every sense of the word," he said.

Reciprocating the sentiments, Singh said this was a singular honour and India greatly valued its relations with the EU which had historical and social roots.

Singh said there was a candid and productive discussion on all issues.

INDIAN EXPRESS

15 FEB 2002

UK endorses India stand on talks with Pak

Our Political Bureau

NEW DELHI 18 JANUARY

BRITAIN on Friday endorsed the Indian position that talks with Pakistan could be resumed only after Pervez Musharraf made good his promise of stopping export of terrorism. Coming a day after US Secretary of State Colin Powell expressed similar views during his day-long visit to New Delhi, the twin developments must have come as a shot in the arm for the government strategists in their diplomatic offensive vis-a-vis Pakistan.

The developments have been encouraging and we hope that Musharraf will be able to translate his speech into action on the ground," the British High Commissioner to India, Sir Rob Young, told reporters after meeting the Centre's pointman on Kashmir, Mr K.C. Pant.

Responding to queries on the British concerns about the situation prevailing between India and Pakistan, Sir Rob observed: "Well, we have been active for past several weeks with an agenda to reduce the level of tension between the two countries." The Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf's speech, he said, had been received well by India and it was also necessary for New Delhi to give him some more time in implementing his promises.

The Economic Times

19 JAN 2002