

Time for Pak to act: PM

Statesman News Service

Sops for starters

JAMMU, Aug. 29. — The Prime Minister, while announcing a series of relief measures for the people of J&K today, said there could be no meaningful talks with Pakistan unless terrorist violence from across the border is stopped.

"If terrorism continues... people get killed every day, how can meaningful dialogue with Pakistan be possible? How is it possible to initiate talks without normalcy? We would like to have meaningful talks with Pakistan but if terrorist acts continue it is not possible," Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee said. In a reference to the recent *fidayeen* strike in Srinagar and the twin blasts in Mumbai, he said such activity was an indicator that things were far from normal.

An Rs-14,944 crore package for speedy completion of development projects was announced, with the assurance to the state that the Centre would provide Rs 2,200 crore in a month for the Baglihar power project in addition to the Rs 665 crore already sanctioned for the Sewa-II project.

Mr Vajpayee said the first phase of this package, announced in

NEW DELHI, Aug. 29. — India today made gestures intended to take the PM's peace initiative forward and normalise relations with Pakistan. A day after talks to resume bilateral civil aviation links stalled, India handed a note verbale to Pakistan high commissioner Mr Aziz Khan granting consular access to six Pakistani youths who had strayed across the border into this country, the MEA said. The Hindu boys, all below 18, met representatives of the Pakistani high commission and would return to Pakistan shortly.

The boys who had strayed into India chasing their goats were told they were being released and could go back to their homes. They had been caught inside the border in Gujarat by the BSF. — SNS

May last year, will involve an expenditure of Rs 8,519 crore. The second phase announced in this May provides another Rs 6,425 crore of funding. "The total cost of the two packages is Rs 14,944 crore out of which Rs 9184 crore stands sanctioned," he said.

Another cause for cheer for his audience was Mr Vajpayee's promise of completion of the railway line to Udhampur by March next year and up to Katra by 2205. "The first train will reach the Valley by 2007," he said, to thunderous applause.

Speaking to the press at the technical airport here this afternoon at the end of his three-day visit, Mr Vajpayee recalled how he extended a friendly hand to Pakistan thrice — Lahore, Agra and then Srinagar — with the hope that something positive may turn out. "Though few steps have been taken to normalise ties between the two countries — diplomats have been exchanged and efforts are on to revive airlinks — there are hurdles on the way..."

On extending the invitation for talks to the Hurriyat, he said Mr LK Advani had sent them an invitation. "The Hurriyat should not insist on a formal dialogue. Let them start informally and see what happens."

Pak response: Pakistan said the restoration of peace in J&K was India's responsibility and called for early resumption of talks between the two countries to resolve the Kashmir issue, PTI adds from Islamabad

Indo-Pak. talks on air links 'inconclusive'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 28. The process of normalisation of ties between India and Pakistan has hit a roadblock with the civil aviation experts on both sides failing to achieve a breakthrough on resumption of air links and overflight facilities. The only consolation is the understanding to continue the talks at a date and venue to be announced after mutual consultation.

As anticipated, Pakistan's insistence on some form of a commitment that in future there would be no "unilateral suspension" of overflight facilities was the main hurdle. But the Indian delegation did not put it across as the reason for the "inconclusive talks".

While Pakistan suggested the immediate resumption of air links pending an agreement on overflights, India did not agree to the proposal on the ground that both issues were inter-linked. India's contention is that allowing or not allowing overflights was the sovereign right of a country and that there could be no conditionalities attached to it.

Conscious of the repercussions on the peace process if the talks were termed unsuccessful, both sides agreed to continue the dialogue. A brief statement issued at the end of the two-day

talks in Rawalpindi said that the "technical level talks between Pakistan and India on resumption of civil aviation were held in a cordial and business-like atmosphere.

The talks provided an opportunity to the two sides to understand each other's perspective position. It was decided to continue the talks. New dates would be announced after mutual consultation".

There is no surprise element over the failure of the experts to arrive at a pact. Minutes after the talks began, the Indian delegation pointed out that the proposal for a commitment against the unilateral suspension of overflights was not part of the original agenda circulated by Islamabad. The delegation said it needed time to look at various aspects related to it.

Notwithstanding this major

irritant, there was agreement on several aspects. At the time of suspension of air links, there were 12 flights operating between Mumbai-Karachi and Lahore and New Delhi. It was agreed in principle that the frequency of operations as well as destinations should be increased. It was also agreed that private airlines should be allowed to operate in both the countries.

'Pak. negative approach to blame'

By Our Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI, AUG. 28. India today blamed Pakistan for the failure of the two-day technical talks in Rawalpindi on resumption of overflights and civil aviation links between the two countries.

"An agreement could easily have been reached. It is regretted that this did not happen because of Pakistan's negative approach and its attempts to bring in extraneous issues," the External Affairs Ministry spokesman told presspersons this evening. Though an "agreed press release" issued in Pakistan said the civil aviation "talks" would continue, fresh dates would be worked out through diplomatic channels, the spokesman said.

Providing details of the talks, sources in the Ministry of External Affairs said that Pakistan was not prepared to resume overflights facility.

"Its argument that there was a need for a guarantee that such facilities (overflights) would not be disrupted in future was clearly only an excuse. They have sought no guarantees that there would be no disruption in future of the Delhi-Lahore

bus or any other services between the two countries. Picking our overflights only indicates some other intention," the sources alleged.

According to them, seeking guarantees was a path that would require "further" guarantees. "Civil aviation links, including overflights, between India and Pakistan, were resumed following specific provision in the Shimla Agreement."

"There would thus be a need also for Pakistan to guarantee that it would never violate Shimla Agreement and its provisions; that it would never unilaterally seek to alter the status of the Line of Control." The sources said the "inconclusive outcome" of these talks were a clear reflection of the "negative mindset" of the Pakistani establishment. "They have prevented themselves from seizing this opportunity to take forward the process started by the initiative of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, in Srinagar in April this year. This process has found tremendous resonance in the people in both the countries. An agreement would have been to the tremendous advantage of the people of both countries."

...the deal is the Rs 750-crore
...terror cover purchased by Re-

Pak to hand over Gang of 20

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 26 AUGUST



Advani

DEPUTY prime minister L.K. Advani on Tuesday hit out at Pakistan for its refusal to hand over the 20 fugitives (including the main accused in 1993 Mumbai blasts case, Dawood Ibrahim) being demanded by New Delhi.

Waiving aside Pakistan's condemnation of Monday's twin blasts in Mumbai, Mr Advani demanded that the "words of condemnation" be backed by action. "The people of Mumbai know that those who perpetrated a bigger tragedy a decade back, claiming over 250 lives, and were wanted by the Interpol and the courts, are enjoying the patronage of Pakistan. They must be handed over to India," he said, adding that only this would prove the credibility of its condemnation.

Stating that the Mumbai police were suspecting the Simi-Lashker network to be behind the blasts, Mr Advani said: "The involvement of Pakistan-based LeT and the fact that the bodies of two LeT terrorists killed in a recent encounter were yet to be claimed, raises doubts about our neighbour."

"I would say that our neighbour's war of terrorism against us is directed not only at Jammu and Kashmir as the impression has it. The analysis and experience of the past shows that the target is not only J&K, Punjab or Delhi alone. There is an attempt to destabilise the whole of India," he said.

Recalling the 1993 Mumbai serial blasts, the deputy PM said the pattern followed to carry out the latest explosions was similar as vehicles laden with explosives were principal instruments of the tragedy ten years back.

The Economic Times

27 AUG 2003

Pak. complaint to U.N. against India a 'surprise'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 23. Observers here are intrigued at Pakistan's decision to lodge a 'complaint' with the United Nations over what has been dubbed as the 'persistent refusal' of India to resume bilateral dialogue.

The perception here is that while there is nothing unusual in Islamabad rushing to the U.N. cribbing about India, it acquires a new significance as both countries are engaged in a peace process since the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee's initiative in April.

It has also not gone unnoticed that in the last few weeks Islamabad has upped the ante vis-a-vis the peace process.

Not only is the theme of Kashmir as the 'core' issue firmly back on the agenda, there have also been some very provocative statements by the Foreign Office.

At his press briefing last week, the Foreign Office spokesman, Masood Khan, accused India of operating 55

militant camps with the aim of destabilising Pakistan. It was found to be scandalous even by a section of the Pakistan press.

The English daily, *Daily Times*, in its editorial termed the charge a 'gimmick' and chided the spokesman for not being serious.

One explanation for the Pakistani Permanent Representative to the U.N., Munir Akram's formal letter complaining against the Indian 'attitude' could be that he is preparing the groundwork for the next month's General Assembly session. Mr. Vajpayee and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, are scheduled to speak at the session though on different dates.

Mr. Akram complained that "India's persistent refusal" to resume bilateral dialogue and agree to a serious, substantive and sustained engagement for peaceful resolution of all issues — notably Jammu and Kashmir — "should be a cause of concern for the international community".

"So far, there is no talk about talks,

no road map and no signpost for moving towards a genuine process for peace and security in South Asia," he said.

In an obvious reference to visits by parliamentary and other delegations at the track-II level, he said that unofficial exchanges "cannot be a substitute for official talks".

He claimed that Pakistan had "persistently called on India to resume the composite dialogue on the basis of the previously agreed agenda, which includes all issues of mutual concern, including Jammu and Kashmir".

Mr. Akram claimed that Pakistan's approach was guided by a sense of responsibility and a desire to lower tensions and prevent conflict.

"A bilateral dialogue is not a favour, which either country would bestow on the other. India's demand that Pakistan make unilateral concessions to its position is designed to frustrate not facilitate a dialogue," he stated.

"India's aversion to talks, is premised on seeking concessions from Pa-

kistan unilaterally through coercive means. A delay in opening such a dialogue is bound to strengthen the positions of extremists and complicate the search for acceptable mutual solutions to outstanding issues.

These trends may accentuate in view of the ascendancy of militant Hindu extremist sentiments within the Indian polity now being manifested in the pre-electoral play in India."

Pointing out that a resolution of the Kashmir dispute was central to the promotion of normal and friendly relations between the two countries, Mr. Akram said it was the principal item on the agreed agenda for bilateral talks.

"However, these small steps to gradually revert to the pre-military mobilization status (December 2001) should not create the incorrect impression that there has been forward movement in resolving the outstanding differences between India and Pakistan, especially over Jammu and Kashmir. Official talks between the two sides have not been resumed."

The security environment in South Asia remains fragile and volatile. India has not withdrawn its forces from the Line of Control in Kashmir.

Sporadic exchange of fire continues along the line. Indian leaders continue to make periodic threats against Pakistan.

"In the context of the upcoming State elections and next year's national elections in India, Indian political parties and leaders have revived their belligerent posture towards Pakistan and may take other steps that could heighten tensions and revive the danger of another conflict," he said.

He said recent congregations of the BJP have not only issued belligerent rhetoric against Pakistan; they have called for the construction of a Hindu temple on the site of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya and the destruction of over 3,000 other mosques across India.

"An electoral campaign based on hate against India's Muslims and Pakistan does not augur well for peace and stability in the subcontinent."

Terrorists won't be allowed to use Pak. borders: Musharraf

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 24. Coinciding with the end of the two-day visit of the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri, to Afghanistan, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, on Saturday said Pakistan would not tolerate any terrorist activity across its borders. Though he used the term borders, it was essentially in the context of Afghanistan.

Gen. Musharraf made this commitment to a six-member U.S. congressional delegation that called on him here Saturday. The congressional delegation was earlier in Kabul for a first-hand assessment of the ground situation in Afghanistan in the wake of reports of resurgence of Taliban and Al-Qaeda. Observations made by Gen.

Musharraf and a joint statement issued at the end of the visit of Mr. Kasuri to Kabul assume significance as relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan have been strained in recent weeks. Afghanistan has repeatedly been charging Islamabad of failure to nab suspected Al-Qaeda and Taliban operatives who are believed to have found shelter in its tribal areas. The contentious Durrand Line, which defines the Pak.-Afghanistan borders, has been another major bone of contention between the two sides. Kabul has complained several times in the past that Pakistani forces have intruded into its border. Pakistan has contested the charge.

Significantly, in his interaction with the U.S. congress delegation, Gen. Musharraf emphasised the need for 'timely

exchange of intelligence' between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The joint statement issued at the end of Mr. Kasuri's visit to Kabul said that "the two sides reaffirmed their resolve to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and decided to reinforce existing cooperation bilaterally as well as within the framework of the tripartite commission".

The U.S. delegation that called on Gen. Musharraf was led by Senator John McCain (Republican - Arizona) and included Senator Lindsey Graham (Republican - South Carolina), Senator Maria Cantwell (Democrat - Washington), Senator John Sununu (Republican - New Hampshire), Senator Kay Baily Hutchison (Republican - Texas) and Congressman, Jim Kolbe (Republican - Arizona).

THE HINDU

24 AUG 2003

'WE ARE NOT SHY OF A MEETING AT SUMMIT LEVEL'

Ready to discuss India's concerns: Pak. envoy

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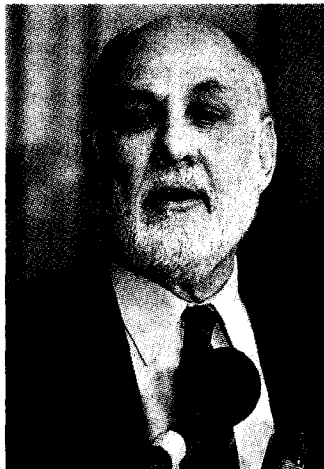
By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, AUG. 20. Pakistan is ready to discuss Indian concerns about terrorism, as part of the composite dialogue structure that was agreed upon by the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries in June 1997.

In an exclusive interview to *The Hindu*, the new Pakistani High Commissioner to New Delhi, Aziz Ahmed Khan, said that Islamabad was not averse to contact at the summit level on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly session in New York next month. Asked if Islamabad was ready for a meeting between the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, in New York, he said: "We are not shy of a meeting. Of course, there should be a mutual desire to have that meeting.."

On the statements made by New Delhi that Islamabad had not extended its cooperation to India as it had to the United States in fighting terror, Mr. Khan said: "Let the Indian delegation sit across the table and talk about these things." He added: "We'll find out what cooperation they [the Indian side] need and what cooperation Pakistan can or has extended. These subjects cannot be discussed through the media..."

Asked about the Government of Pakistan having allowed leaders of the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammad to operate freely despite its promises to act against all terrorist groups, Mr. Khan claimed that Islamabad had taken the "ac-



Aziz Ahmed Khan

tion" that had been promised. "You just can't put people behind bars just for the sake of putting them behind bars. If there is some evidence against somebody, then action can be taken..." he said. He claimed that Pakistan's record in cooperating with the international community on terrorism was "impeccable".

The High Commissioner made it clear that trade issues between India and Pakistan, too, had to be discussed bilaterally as part of the composite dialogue process that was agreed upon in 1997. As part of this agreement, the subjects of terrorism and Jammu and Kashmir were to be discussed "separately" by the Foreign Secretaries. So should issues such as trade, Siachen and the Tulbul project.

He said: "A composite dialogue will be a simultaneous dialogue in all areas. Of course,

Pakistan is ready and willing to discuss trade issues. It's not that Pakistan does not want trade with India, but then Pakistan also has concerns on this issue..."

Since one round of talks was held in 1998 as part of the composite dialogue process, Mr. Khan saw no reason why it could not be resumed. "The Secretary-level talks can kick off the discussions and as progress is achieved one can see whether and when to raise the level of discussions."

If talks are held, who would be the interlocutor from the Pakistani side - Gen. Musharraf, or the Pakistani Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali? "The Prime Minister is the head of government." But what about Gen. Musharraf's recent comment that he was ready to get involved in the dialogue process if necessary? "That just shows Pakistan's commitment to the peace process..."

Progress in the four months since April 18 when the ice was broken by the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's April 18 speech in Srinagar and Mr. Jamali's response to it had been a little slow", Mr. Khan said. But he believed that the pre-December 13, 2001 position could be restored in "one go".

This applied not only to transport links but to the restoration of staff levels at the High Commissions in Delhi and Islamabad. The absence of rail links affected the people of both India and Pakistan.

"We cannot cater to requests for visas here, for the simple reason we do not have the staff... We have offered the res-

toration of rail links... Four months have passed... All we have done is just to have High Commissioners in place and [resume] the bus service."

The High Commissioner was candid in pointing to the problems that impede any discussion of the issue of air links at the scheduled technical-level talks in Islamabad on August 27 and 28.

"My saying anything at the moment would be pre-judging the outcome of the meeting... all subjects will be discussed... You know we have certain views about the overflights issue," he said, stressing that there was no problem in resuming air links. "The two issues have become separate. They are not really linked issues. Air links can be restored immediately. As far as overflights are concerned, the two issues were delinked quite some time ago when India offered restoration of overflights."

Mr. Khan maintained: "We feel this is an issue which needs to be discussed because it has harmed commercial activities of the two airlines... Again, this is a technical issue, and we might as well leave it to the technical people to discuss..."

How would he place the recent visit of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) chief, Fazlur Rehman, to India, in the context of bilateral relations? Maulana Fazlur Rehman had come on a private visit. Whatever he had to say was in the open. I cannot really add anything to it. I would classify it as a part of the track two dialogue that has been going on," said the High Commissioner.

Pak. proposes talks on train services

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 18. Pakistan today proposed technical-level talks between the railway authorities of the two countries for resumption of the Samjhota Express in the second half of September.

Islamabad took the initiative without waiting for New Delhi's consent to the May 6 proposal made by the Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan, as part of the confidence-building measures.

Pakistan's proposal was formally conveyed to the Indian High Commission here. "We have communicated the message from the Pakistan Government to our Foreign Office," a senior official in the Indian High Commission said. Islamabad's move comes just over a week before the civil aviation technical-level experts from both sides are to meet — on August 26 and 27— to discuss the resumption of air links and over-flight facilities.

Pakistan's decision on the

technical-level talks for resuming the suspended rail service is seen by observers as a shrewd move to test India on the pace it wants the Srinagar peace-initiative of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, to move.

When Mr. Jamali made the initial proposal on May 6 for resumption of the Samjhota Express, India was clearly not enthused for a variety of reasons.

New Delhi said that it would like a step-by-step approach even in the process of normalisation of relations and would respond to the various CBMs unveiled by Mr. Jamali at the appropriate time.

A view gaining ground is that the pace of normalisation would have to be faster if the proposed SAARC Summit in Islamabad in the first week of January next year is to materialise. To that extent resolution of the contentious issues related to de-linking of air services from over-flight facilities and resumption of the train link would be keenly watched.

Pakistan appears to have pushed for the proposal on the technical-level talks for resumption of the rail links after the recent message of Mr. Vajpayee to a conference of Indian and Pakistani parliamentarians and journalists on the need to strengthen people-to-people contacts. Mr. Vajpayee had emphasised the need for cooperation and the right of people for peaceful economic cooperation.

There have been signals from New Delhi in the last few weeks, after the SAARC Foreign secretaries agreed on the dates of the summit in Islamabad, that it would expect Pakistan to honour the economic commitments it has made within the framework of SAARC. The Forum is scheduled to meet in Kathmandu sometime in October to discuss the South Asian Preferential Trade Treaty (SAPTA) and if there is agreement on it, India has reasons to be happy.

In response to the May 2 announcement of Mr. Vajpayee,

announcing the appointment of High Commissioner in Pakistan and resumption of air links, Mr. Jamali on May 6 unveiled several proposals.

The India-centric measures were: restoration of the snapped rail and road links on a reciprocal basis; release all Indian fishermen in Pakistan jails, besides the 20 Sikh youth and 14 members of Rajalaxmi; proposal for resumption of sporting ties; restoration of staff strength at the High Commission to the pre-December 2001 level and suggestion for a dialogue on nuclear security related issues as agreed upon in the Memorandum of Understanding in the Lahore Declaration.

While there is some progress on some of the proposals, several of them are still pending assent by New Delhi.

India on its part has been emphasising that end to "cross-border terrorism and dismantling of terrorism infrastructure" would go a long way in normalisation of ties and resumption of dialogue.

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AUG 2003

Party over House for Indian MPs in Pak

MOHAN SAHAY
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 16. — True to what happens in Parliament these days, Indian MPs while in Pakistan recently, couldn't help but indulge in a bit of partisan politics. So much so that almost all of them save one introduced themselves to General Musharraf as "Leader of the RJD... of the Congress ... the BJP ... the SP ... and so on."

The only face-saver came from one MP, who realising what was going on, told the bemused General: "I am so and so and I am a Member of the Indian Parliament (and desisted from mentioning his party's identity)." Others were carried away by the Pakistan President's "graciousness" in speaking to them for almost 90 minutes. Some of them were heard saying: "Yeh Musharraf to acchha admi hai...itna time

diya...itna time to hamara President bhi humlog ko nahin deta hai..." This man (Musharraf) is good... look how much time he has given to us...even our President does not give so much time to us. All this within the earshot of Pakistani officials present at the meeting. And never mind President Kalam's already famous accessibility.

Prominent among the 30 MPs who went to Pakistan were Mrs Margaret Alva (Congress), Mr Mani Shanker Aiyar (Congress), Mr Balbir Punj (BJP), Mr Laloo Yadav (RJD), Mr Ram Vilas Paswan (Lok Janshakti), Mr Abani Roy (RSP), Mr Bir Singh Mahto (Forward Bloc), Mr Ramjilal Suman (SP), Mr Moinul Hassan (CPI-M) and Mrs Sarila Maheshwari (CPI-M)

The MPs, rather than spreading the message of goodwill as they were meant to do, spent most of their time beating their own drum and ended up

looking like "pygmies in front of Musharraf", said an angry member. At the tete-a-tete with the General, too, most of the exchanges were inane, to say the least. One MP recalled his past association with the territory and lamented the fact that he was born on the other side of the border (in India) after Partition!

More illustrious members told Gen. Musharraf that they were on a "mission of goodwill and friendship with Pakistan" but did not follow up with any details. Hardly an original contribution, remarked the MP who had introduced himself as a member of Parliament.

The General, however, was at ease and willing to spend more time with the visiting Indian delegation "because the conversation was dragging". It must have been one satisfied General "who got an image of an India riven by divisions", the MP said.



Pakistani and Indian parliamentarians at Wagah on Thursday. — PTI

FRIDAY, AUGUST 15, 2003

A NON-STARTER

MO. 12
15/8
9/8/03

THE PROPOSAL BY Pakistan's President, Pervez Musharraf, that he will enforce a ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) if India meets certain conditions has been rightly dismissed by official India. Among the conditions that India has been asked to meet are a reduction of its forces in Jammu and Kashmir and an end to 'atrocities'. The Pakistan political establishment is in the habit of defining the term 'atrocities' sweepingly to include even detention of suspected terrorists. When read in context, General Musharraf's proposal implies a demand that India considerably scale down its counter-insurgency operations. His offer in respect of the LoC amounts to a vague suggestion that Pakistan will stop resorting to artillery fire to help terrorists penetrate Indian lines. In other words, Pakistan's military ruler has proposed that he might lower the level of military and other material assistance that Pakistan provides to the terrorist infiltrators if India agrees to wind down its security forces operations in Jammu and Kashmir. General Musharraf's offer falls well short of a promise that Pakistan will proactively try to prevent terrorist groups from crossing the LoC. His depiction of all the insurgents, foreign and indigenous, as "freedom fighters" indicates that he is not willing to undertake serious action against them.

General Musharraf has also proposed that he can "facilitate" a ceasefire within Jammu and Kashmir if India agrees to downsize its operations. This proposal flies in the face of the statement, which he concurrently made, that he has little control over the "freedom struggle." However, that is only one aspect of the matter. New Delhi should try to reach a ceasefire agreement with the indigenous Kashmiri rebels, if that is possible. The Indian security forces are under no obligation, moral or otherwise, to suspend operations against those who have infiltrated into the State. Indeed, the security forces

have the right and the responsibility to root out the foreign militants, even if the infiltrators heed General Musharraf's instructions to observe a ceasefire. Action on these lines is all the more necessary since the infiltrators were primarily responsible for the collapse of ceasefire initiatives in the past. The infiltrators are not inside Jammu and Kashmir because they want to live in peace. They are motivated enough to provoke confrontations on their own. As General Musharraf probably views it, Pakistan has the option of describing any major Indian action against the foreign terrorists as a ceasefire violation and thereby free itself from any inconvenient commitments.

This offer has been made in a season when India and Pakistan are trying to outdo each other in moves towards détente. General Musharraf's offer appears to have been a response to the message sent to the people of Pakistan a day before by the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, in which he said that mutual cooperation could help the two countries solve their problems. This particular exchange merely demonstrates that India and Pakistan have not abandoned their scripts as they follow contrasting approaches to the disputes between them. Mr. Vajpayee's observation stems from the Indian view that disputes such as Kashmir will become less intractable once the relationship between the two countries develops in other dimensions. General Musharraf's proposal reflects official Pakistan's mindset that the relationship between the two countries can develop only after a solution is found to the Kashmir dispute. The dynamic developing on the ground suggests that the Indian approach is proving more effective at the moment. A vibrant 'track II' interaction, which has just concluded in Islamabad, has left the strong impression that multi-dimensional exchanges can help the two countries handle their differences sensibly.

THE HINDU

15 AUG 2003

It's a deal, general

There is much merit in taking Musharraf

just part up on his ceasefire offer 9/6/03

THERE can be little doubt that the Pakistani leadership believes promises are made only to seek opportunities to break them; and they are broken so that space is created for new ones to be made. And so the cycle could go on whereby their narrow interests continue to get served. Thus it is easy to be cynical, especially after President Pervez Musharraf's latest overture calling for a ceasefire on the Line of Control. After all, he has made many promises after "thirteen-twelve" and the subsequent Indian military mobilisation, promises that are far from fulfilled. But we must continuously keep an eye open for opportunities to track straws in the Pakistani wind. Only, we must ensure that we do not get euphoric about every, possibly fleeting, silver lining.

It is in this context that we must consider what General Musharraf said this week. It is true that there is nothing new in what he said. But we must judge each and every move by Pakistan from the criteria of how it serves our interests, and how far this can be relied upon to obtain progress in, to paraphrase Bill Clinton, "capping, reducing and eliminating" terrorism. We must keep testing Musharraf's resolve and promises rather than bury ourselves under the burden of our own negativity — a trait that is normally the hallmark of Pakistani policy toward

India and peace in the region. We know that Musharraf calls the shots in Pakistan, and the army intends to stay in the driving seat for the foreseeable future. But we obviously cannot accept to go along with, or reject, everything he says. What we need, therefore, is a more discerning approach in crafting our responses to what he is offering.

We should, therefore, take up Musharraf on his offer of a ceasefire on the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir. Official India has been asserting that Pakistan initiates the firing across the line mostly to provide cover for pushing in terrorists. Silencing the guns would deny the terrorists this umbrella while consolidating the peace process now initiated. At the minimum, ending such firing would ease the pressure of casualties and damage to civilian life and property. A ceasefire agreement would also send a strong message to terrorists in the entire region that Pakistan is reducing support to them, however tardy that may be from our perspective. Not doing so would be justifiable only if such a commitment does not serve our interests, or cannot be reversed by us if needed. If this is only a tactical ploy by the general, then we can treat it as such. But if it produces desirable results, then this can be another building block for the future.

Munir leaves his coins behind

Ranjeet S Jamwal in Jaipur

Aug. 13. — Munir returned home with loads of gifts and lots of love and good wishes from people in India, but he has left behind something he may miss very much.

Munir's sole possession — (Pakistan) Rs 10 — is now lying at the Kesari Singh Pur police station where he was brought after being arrested by BSF men for straying into Indian territory. There are seven coins — three two-rupee coins and four one-rupee coins.

The police had mentioned the recovery of coins from Munir while registering the case. The coins were kept at the *malkhana* (store room) of the police station, where the 13-year-old boy stayed for a few days. He was shifted to a juvenile home after the Rajasthan High Court intervened in the matter. Apparently, the policemen forgot to return Munir his coins. Now, the police officers have realised



Home again. In Lahore on Tuesday night. — AFP

their mistake. An officer said the process of the Pakistani boy's deportation went so fast after the Prime Minister's intervention that they did not get time to think over the matter. Officers are trying to think of ways to return the coins. "We will have to go through a long process... But we will try our best to ensure that Munir gets back his money," an officer

FORGET KARGIL, GENERAL TELLS DELHI

Pervez proposes, India disposes

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Aug. 12. — India is not impressed by the Pakistan President Gen. Pervez Musharraf's call for a ceasefire along the LoC, nor is it under any pressure to hasten bilateral dialogue despite a series of statements from Pakistani leaders.

The government feels statements reiterating that India should reduce its troops in J&K, or that Kashmir is the "core issue" that cannot be "wished away" or that Islamabad has done all it could to prevent infiltration of terrorists into this country are all aimed at "pressuring" India to talk, but given the situation, the government has told its international interlocutors that no significant talks

Hizbul promise

MUZAFFARABAD, Aug. 12. — Promising "protection" to Hindu migrants, Hizbul Mujahideen has urged them to return to their homes in Kashmir. "They should return home and the mujahideen would provide them all possible protection," Hizbul chief Syed Salahuddin said at a meeting here yesterday. — AFP

process can begin. Such statements have been made by the General, Prime Minister and foreign minister in the recent past.

In Islamabad, piqued by repeated references to Kargil by his army, Gen. Musharraf said "we have to forget the past and move ahead". He told a delegation of

Indian parliamentarians and journalists "you talk about Kargil again and again. Then, I am ready to go to Siachen and even further to 1971 (war)", adds PTI.

The General also said he is ready to speak to Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee provided there is a "very positive response" from him. "My talking to him, yes ... if it serves the purpose."

Contrary to statements by the Pakistani leadership, infiltration levels so far this year have continued at significant levels and is broadly of the same order as in previous years. There is also, India feels, no decline in financial support to fund terrorism in J&K. In fact, eight of the 10 suicide attacks in the Valley this year have been after Mr Vajpayee announced his peace initiative, officials said.

WANTS INDIA TO 'RECIPROCATE' GESTURE IN KASHMIR

Musharraf offers 'ceasefire' along Line of Control

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 12. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has offered a conditional ceasefire along the Line of Control if India is willing to reciprocate and reduce the strength of its forces in the Kashmir Valley and cease "atrocities" in Jammu and Kashmir, among other measures.

In a 90-minute interactive session with a visiting delegation of Indian parliamentarians, strategic affairs experts and editors at the presidential office, he linked the ceasefire proposal to similar gestures from India in the Valley.

Though there is nothing new in the proposals, it is for the first time in recent years that Islamabad has so explicitly linked its willingness to enforce a ceasefire along the LoC to conditions in the Valley as it perceives them.

Gen. Musharraf offered once again — contingent on Indian reciprocity — to "facilitate" a truce in Jammu and Kashmir if India stopped "atrocities" in the State. "If India stops atrocities, human rights violations, releases political prisoners and creates an atmosphere, then, may be, we can facilitate a ceasefire (in Kashmir)."

The Indian delegation is now here on a four-day trip in connection with a two-day conference organised by the South Asia Free Media Association part of the track-II efforts to give a fillip to the Vajpayee peace initiative.



The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, greeting the RJD leader, Laloo Prasad Yadav, in Islamabad on Tuesday. — AP

The former Bihar Chief Minister, Laloo Prasad Yadav, and the Chairman of the Kashmir Committee, Ram Jethmalani, are among the 50 or so delegates who interacted with Gen.

Musharraf.

The delegates were impressed with the "candid manner" in which Gen. Musharraf held forth covering all aspects of India-Pakistan issues.

However, they came out with the impression that while the General was in total command of the state of affairs in Pakistan, there was little change in his attitude on all contentious issues

between New Delhi and Islamabad. A senior parliamentarian well versed in India-Pakistan affairs said that Gen. Musharraf's proposal was a non-starter. "By seeking a reciprocal ceasefire in the Valley what Gen. Musharraf in effect is telling India is to give up its commitment to the international community on fighting terrorism," he said.

The MP pointed out that by offering a ceasefire along the LoC, Gen. Musharraf had shown that his regime was capable of reigning in the militants trying to sneak across.

"The ceasefire offer has no meaning if the Pakistani establishment throws up its hands and maintains that desperate elements crossing over are beyond its control."

According to a member of the delegation, a suggestion was made to Gen. Musharraf to remove the impression from the minds of Pakistanis that India was not willing to talk on Kashmir. "He was told that since Shimla India has always said it is ready to engage in a dialogue that includes the issue of Kashmir, but Pakistan has sought to undermine this position. However there was no response from the General to the suggestion."

On the developments in Kashmir, Gen. Musharraf stuck to the theme that what was happening in the State was a "freedom struggle" that was not under Islamabad's control. "It is not possible to be done from here because we don't have a whistle which we blow from here and things start happening in Kashmir." On the ceasefire along the LoC, he said it could be achieved "even today if both sides agree".

'Forget Kargil'

To a specific question from a delegate on whether he could guarantee that there would be no more Kargils, he said India should forget Kargil, maintaining that both countries "have hurt each other. There should not be a repeat of this. We should work for future peace".

He asserted that such an operation in the future was unthinkable because "I am talking of ceasefire. There is no point in going back in past. We have had a bitter history. If you talk of Kargil, I would talk of Siachen and so on and so forth."

'Let's move forward': Page 14

'Nothing new', says India

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, AUG. 12. India said today that there was "nothing new" in the suggestions made by the Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, for a ceasefire along the LoC and in Jammu and Kashmir. "They have not been found effective in the past because Pakistan has continued to sponsor terrorism directed against India and provided support to cross-border infiltration," the External Affairs Ministry

spokesman said.

"Once this (terrorism) is stopped and Pakistan-aided terrorists stop crossing the LoC, the level of firing would naturally go down," he said in a statement.

There was nothing preventing the Pakistan-aided terrorists from stopping their activities inside Jammu and Kashmir. "Once these activities stop, there would inevitably be a change in the necessary measures required to be taken by the security forces," he said. "We are also dis-

appointed by the suggestions emanating from the Pakistani leadership that they had done all that they could to stop cross-border infiltration and terrorism.

"The facts point to continuing Pakistani support through funding, training, indoctrination, launch and guidance," the statement said. Instead of "propagandist" statements, Pakistan should take effective and long-term oriented measures to dismantle the infrastructure of support to terrorism, it added.

'Environment conducive for Indo-Pak talks'

Islamabad: The environment is conducive for Indo-Pak dialogue and both countries are determined to carry the peace process forward, India's ambassador to Pakistan Shiv Shankar Menon has said.

"I think certainly there has been a great advance in the last four months since the Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee extended a hand of friendship towards Pakistan. There has been a series of steps that will take the process forward," Mr Menon said in an interview to NDTV 24/7 news channel.

"It is our hope that we will have an atmosphere where it is possible for us to build a constructive relationship with Pakistan.... Certainly we are in touch. We now have high commissioners in place in both the countries. We have the channels. We have the means in place," Mr Menon said.

He said both countries are determined to carry this forward. "But, we can't prejudge what is going to happen and we cannot predict the future today." He said the process of talks is not just at the official level but the entire society is involved.

"It is more than just an official dialogue...I think we have a dialogue today between India and Pakistan because of relationship between the two countries. Not only officials are involved. Members of Parliament and also media. This is a relationship between two societies, two nations, two countries."

To a question on whether official level structured dialogue will take place before the pro-

Optimistic note



I think certainly there has been a great advance in the last four months since the PM extended a hand of friendship towards Pakistan

—Shiv Shankar Menon

posed Saarc summit in Islamabad in January, the high commissioner said, "We will certainly keep talking to each other. We are talking to each other. We will talk to each other and we will see how we can move this relationship forward."

On whether the Saarc summit will be held on schedule in January, Mr Menon said, "There is consensus between all members of Saarc that we will hold the summit in Islamabad in January." About resumption of air and rail links between the two countries, Mr Menon said talks on the issue have not been held so far but the matter would be taken up at the talks on August 27 in Islamabad and "after that, I presume, we will discuss resumption of rail links."

He said, "We are hopeful. We will try our best (to resume air links). To try and resume them." PTI

'Saare should mediate in Kashmir row'

Islamabad: A day after Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee called for "cooperation" and not "confrontation" in resolving Indo-Pak issues, President Pervez Musharraf on Monday advocated peaceful resolutions of all issues, including Kashmir, and said conflicts are "unthinkable" in this modern century.



P. Musharraf

"Peace is in the interest of the entire region and especially for Pakistan and India. Pakistan is against conflict which is unthinkable in the conventional sense and

would be disastrous for the two countries and the region," Gen Musharraf told the inaugural session of a three-day international seminar on 'Major Powers and South Asia' organised by the Institute of Regional Studies here. "He said Pakistan desires peace and will do its utmost to follow the track of negotiated settlement of all issues, including Kashmir, with India. Demanding modification in the Saarc charter to address regional disputes, including Kashmir problem, the Pakistan President said that bilateralism has become disfunctional. He was addressing the seminar at the same hotel where a peace

Conflict resolution

- I am extremely happy that Indian delegates are in Pakistan: Gen Musharraf
- Says conflict will be disastrous for the neighbours and the region

conference of politicians and journalists from both the countries is taking place. "I am extremely happy that Indian delegates are in Pakistan," he said referring to the peace conference which began on Sunday with a message by Mr Vajpayee saying "violence and bloodshed can't provide any solutions" to the problems. Observing that the solution of inequalities, regional mistrust and conflicts lies in the modification of the Saarc charter to settle regional disputes in preference over bilateralism, Gen Musharraf said "it is the Indo-Paki disputes, which have an adverse impact on the collective relationship of the South Asian region." He said the worst of all these disputes is Kashmir, which has become a flash-point for the world. PTI

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9/2/80

Everybody was nice to me: Munir

By Our Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI, AUG. 10. One wrong turn brought 13-year-old Munir Mohammad Bilal into India over 40 days ago. Though he was detained, his stay here did him more good as he got a good exposure to life outside his village in Pakistan.

On his way back home, Munir today reached Delhi from Bikaner. As the Bikaner Express rolled into the Sarai Rohilla station here this evening, all eyes and cameras were once again trained on Munir — even members of the public ran in from all sides to have a glimpse of the boy. The glimmer in his eyes showed how happy he was to be on his way back home. He admitted that he was treated very well in India. Apart from some clothes, chocolates and sweets, Munir is also carrying the rakhis and friendship bands he got at the home in Bikaner. He keeps repeating that all the people were 'bade hi changay' (very nice)

Barring these three words it is very difficult to make out Munir's language. The five-member Border Security Force patrol that caught him straying into



The Pakistani boy, Munir, who had strayed across the border in June, escorted by police in New Delhi on his way back to Pakistan on Sunday. He was released from jail, as part of the Prime Minister's peace initiative. — PTI

India and the joint interrogation team also had a problem in communicating with the young boy.

It was sub-inspector Madho Singh of Sriganganagar police station, who understood Mu-

nir's language and helped him come out of the trauma. Noting that Munir was "like a son" to him, Mr. Singh also helped translate whatever the boy was asked or had to say. Munir, who hailed from Battu Pind in Baha-

walpur, had developed a liking for sweets — especially kheer. The boy would be presented before officials of the Home Ministry tomorrow for completion of formalities before he would take a bus to Lahore on August 12.

THE HINDU

1 1 AUG 2003

VAJPAYEE'S MESSAGE TO PAKISTAN

'Cooperation holds the key to peace'

11/8
H.D. 1

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 10. Asserting that "cooperation" and not "confrontation" held the key to solving the problems between India and Pakistan, the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, said today that violence and bloodshed could not provide enduring solutions to the differences between the two countries.

"Violence and bloodshed cannot provide any solutions. We can live together only if we let each other live," he said in a statement read out at a peace conference attended by Indian

parliamentarians and journalists here.

"Cooperation rather than confrontation is the answer to our common problems of development and poverty alleviation," he said. Referring to the process of globalisation and the emerging trends of regional and sub-regional economic cooperation, he said India and Pakistan should heed these winds of change.

"We should not defy logic and distort reality to avoid mutually beneficial cooperation. We cannot deny our people

their right to peaceful economic cooperation," the statement said on the opening day of the two-day conference organised by the South Asia Free Media Association. Among the Indian delegates at the conference are Laloo Prasad Yadav, Mani Shankar Aiyer, Balbir Singh Punj, Ram Vilas Paswan, Ram Jethmalani and senior journalist Dileep Padgaonkar.

Mr. Vajpayee said the meeting and themes for its discussions were a forceful reiteration of the popular desire in the two countries for a normal, peaceful, friendly and cooperative relationship.

He referred to his April 18 speech in Srinagar extending a hand of friendship to Pakistan and said the two peoples at different levels and in their own way had contributed further meaning and content to his overtures. Most of the Indian speakers referred to the militants' infiltration in Jammu and Kashmir, describing it as the major cause of bilateral tension. Mr. Yadav, in his inimitable style, said everyone should play his/her part in tearing down the wall of hatred.

The Pakistan National Assembly Speaker, Chaudary Amir Hussain, said "the resolution of the Kashmir dispute is vital for peace in South Asia and we must strive to move in that direction". — PTI

Shimla pact provides the framework: Sonia

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, AUG. 10. Reiterating her party's stand of having cordial and good neighbourly relations with Pakistan, the Congress president, Sonia Gandhi, has favoured the process of dialogue between the two countries for resolving all contentious issues.

"The Shimla Agreement signed by Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1972 provides the framework within which the two countries can discuss all issues and build a durable friendly relationship," Ms. Gandhi said.

In her message to the South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA) conference being held in Islamabad, she said it provided a "good occasion for building confidence between our two countries and peoples". The Congress had welcomed the initiative of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, to resume talks with the Pakistani Government, she said. "However, for a conducive atmosphere for having meaningful talks or negotiations, it is essential that cross-border terrorism must cease."



Members of the Parliamentary delegation listening to the national anthems of India and Pakistan before the start of the South Asian Free Media Conference in Islamabad on Sunday. — PTI

Track-II diplomacy on course

Laloo's Pak dreams

NEW DELHI, Aug. 9. -- While most of the Pakistan-bound MPs preferred to remain in the confines of the Swarna Shatabdi Express, it was Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav who cheered up things at the New Delhi Railway station.

The Raja of Bihar has a cherished desire -- to meet his Bihari brethren in Pakistan. "Hum log sadbhavana leke aye hein, Bharat ke mahajanata ke taraf se Pakistan ke bhai bahen ke liye (we are going on a goodwill mission from people of India to brothers and sisters in Pakistan)." "Vishesh karke Bihar ke bade pehmane par Pakistan mei log hei. Mein unse zaroor milna chahta hoon (There is a large Bihari community in Pakistan I want to meet). -- PTI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, Aug 9. -- A track-II delegation of MPs and journalists today left for Pakistan on a three-day visit carrying a message of peace and brotherhood.

The group, who took a train to Amritsar and will walk across the border through the Wagah check post by afternoon, is expected to meet Gen. Pervez Musharraf and an array of high-profile politicians and social leaders and discuss wide-ranging bilateral issues.

The delegation, consisting of around 20 MPs and 10 journalists, is the largest ever to visit Pakistan after the bilateral relations hit a new low after the 13 December attack on Indian Parliament.

Amid slogans for Indo-Pak friendship at New Delhi railway station, Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav, Mr Mani Shankar Aiyer, BJP MP Balbir Punj, Lok Janshakti MP Mr Ram Vilas Paswan and senior journalist Dilip Padgaonkar told reporters they were going to Pakistan with the message of peace, brotherhood and to envisage all modes to improve people-to-people contact. "Let us see what we can contribute towards bridging the gap. It is the politicians of both countries who are



The Indian delegation cross the Wagah border post into Pakistan on Saturday. -- AFP

at loggerheads while the people with a "high-profile government both sides are longing for lasting peace," Mr Aiyer said. The delegation plans to discuss a wide range of bilateral issues during a meeting

STILL FRAGILE

India's relations with Pakistan are inching towards normalization. There are, however, still no signs that stability in bilateral relations can be sustained over the long term. Achieving a real breakthrough in India-Pakistan ties requires not just a determined political initiative, but unprecedented bureaucratic imagination and public support. Civil aviation authorities of India and Pakistan will meet this month to discuss the modalities for resuming direct air travel between the two countries. The authorities will discuss also the issue of overflights and the need for rationalization of aeronautic charges. By next month, therefore, air travellers, flying from Delhi to Lahore, for instance, will not have to break journey in a third country. Road links have already been revived and the bus service will undoubtedly prove to be as popular as it was before it was suspended the last time. In addition, the two high commissioners, Mr Shiv Shankar Menon and Mr Aziz Ahmed Khan, have taken their places in Islamabad and New Delhi respectively. Besides these, there has been an unusual growth in people-to-people contacts. Parliamentary delegations from both countries have visited each other and a collection of Indian political leaders, journalists and social activists will be visiting Islamabad soon for a conference. A well-known Pakistani leader from the far right of the political spectrum, Maulana Fazlur Rehman of the Jamiat-e-Ulema-e-Islam, visited India earlier this month. The *maulana*, who was once popularly described as the "father of the taliban", met the prime minister, Mr Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and the leader of the opposition, Ms Sonia Gandhi, and a range of other political leaders. He consistently gave the impression that he was someone whom New Delhi could do business with in the future and, more significantly, rejected the use of violence as an instrument for achieving political ends in Jammu and Kashmir.

These are all positive changes, but they do not suggest that India-Pakistan relations have turned around. The fact remains that there is still no timetable for an official dialogue. And while the prime minister has signalled that he would visit Islamabad for the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation summit, it is not clear whether any bilateral talks will take place in Pakistan. India is still insisting that no formal talks will take place until cross-border terrorism ends. Meanwhile, terrorist attacks continue to take place in Jammu and Kashmir. The peace process between India and Pakistan, if it can be so termed, is still very fragile and needs to be carefully nurtured if it has to survive.

✓ The first step in solving the Kashmir problem is to restore Indo-Pak road links

Clear all roadblocks

BY A.G. NOORANI

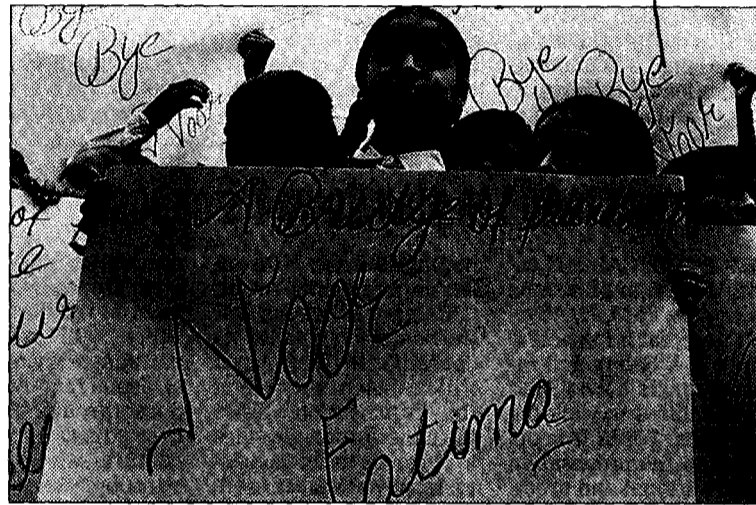
FERRETING OUT and publishing secret official documents is a hoary tradition of the Indian press. It was established during the high noon of the British raj. In October 1889, the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* published the full text of a memorandum written by one of the most powerful foreign secretaries, Sir Mortimer Durand. It was a very sensitive document. Dated May 6, 1888, it opposed the British resident in Kashmir, Trevor Chichele Plowden's, proposal to annex Gilgit. The paper teasingly advised the Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, that he would find its original in the Foreign Office.

No such claim, however, is being made here for a half-century-old document of great current relevance. It is not a secret document; only a forgotten one which is being rescued from obscurity. For it is nothing less consequential than an Indo-Pak agreement to open the Srinagar-Rawalpindi road. The accord was concluded at the highest military level by none else than the commanders-in-chief of the two armies on January 15, 1949, the day General K.M. Cariappa took over from General Sir Roy Bucher as "chief of the army staff and C-in-C, Indian army". His Pakistani counterpart was General Sir Douglas Gracey. Cariappa ceased to be C-in-C on January 26, 1950, when the Constitution came into force.

A word about the context. An exchange of telegrams between Bucher and Gracey brought about a ceasefire in Kashmir from midnight December 31 or January 1, 1949. Lieutenant-General Maurice Delvoie of Belgium, who was appointed military adviser to the UN commission for India and Pakistan, arrived in the subcontinent on January 2. His immediate task was to organise a team of UN military observers to supervise the ceasefire.

The accord was recorded in the 'Notes by the Military Adviser on the meeting of the two Commanders-in-Chief, at the Army HQ in New Delhi, on January 15, 1949'. They record at the very outset: "Today, January the 15th, after their meeting, the two commanders-in-chief called me to impart to me the conditions they had agreed upon. They divided their task into: (1) a first part, entirely in their competence, which would be immediately achieved. (2) a second part, for which the agreement of their respective governments would be needed. This part being secret, none of its details have been communicated to the press."

Accord on the road was mentioned in part one which reads thus: "Three main points must be dealt



THE JOURNEY IS THE DESTINATION: Children at the Amritsar border

with." The first concerned division of the areas under the two armies' occupation into three sectors and authority to the sector commanders "to settle all incidents between themselves". The second envisaged "particular agreements" on roads held by the army of one country but controlled by the army of the other from overlooking mountain ranges.

The third point in part one merits quotation *in extenso*: "(3) When one of the armies needs to use the whole of a road, part of which is held by the other army, to supply its troops, it will be allowed to do so. On my request, both commanders-in-chief agreed to restore the communication by road between Srinagar and Rawalpindi, and to rebuild the necessary bridges. In addition, telephonic liaisons between these two localities will be restored."

This agreement between the C-in-Cs was recorded in the first part which comprised matters "entirely in their competence, which could be immediately achieved". One is not sure as to what transpired thereafter. Even if it was carried out initially, the accord later fell through. Certainly, the premier of Jammu and Kashmir, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, would not have allowed it to work. He tried to stabilise his regime by invoking the Enemy Agents' Ordinance in order to throw dissidents across the ceasefire line into PoK.

The accord collapsed. But the yearnings it reflected did not wane. During the election campaign in 1977, preceding the polls for the state assembly, the Sheikh's right-hand man, Mirza Afzal Beg, would exhibit to emotionally charged audiences a piece of rock salt from Pakistan and pledge to reopen the Srinagar-Rawalpindi road if the

National Conference was elected.

Till October 1947, it was by this road that tourists entered the Kashmir Valley. Likewise, Jammuites and Sialkotis could visit each other's cities to play a one-day cricket match and return home the same evening. For over half-a-century, Kashmiris were separated by barriers as stringent, if not worse, than those that separated the two Berlins or the two Koreas. Even traffic between the rest of India and Pakistan was far easier. Opening of the road remained a dream. Kashmiris longed for its reopening; but nothing was heard of it bar the occasional demand.

It is to the credit of Atal Bihari Vajpayee that he brought that dream into the realm of practical politics two years ago by making a formal offer to Pakistan on the eve of the Agra summit. A press release of July 9, 2001 said: "It is our conviction that the foundations of peace between India and Pakistan have to be laid in the minds and hearts of men and women, and above all, the youth of both countries. Thus travel between India and Pakistan should be made as simple and easy as possible." After announcing grant of visa facilities at the checkpoint at Attari and the opening of one at Munabao in Rajasthan, the press release said: "Similar checkpoints will also be opened at designated points along the IB (International Border) and the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir. Administrative arrangements, including those for transport, will be urgently put in place so as to implement the prime minister's decision within three months."

At a press conference on July 12, the then Minister for External Affairs, Jaswant Singh, amplified the

offer: "The government has proposed that the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar route be opened, reopened and the people in J&K are facilitated to travel to one or other part of occupied Kashmir and this side. We have similarly proposed the facilitation of international border which is between Jammu and the Pakistan part of Punjab. Now it is to be determined where it is going to be. It could easily be between Jammu and Sialkot. That after all was the old route. We have also proposed for the reopening of Munabao-Khakropar road."

The Agra summit collapsed on July 16 and acrimony took over. The PM's intention to implement his offer "within three months" remained unfulfilled. The chief minister of Kashmir, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, has repeatedly urged the opening of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road. Notably, at Jammu on May 9 this year, he said: "If the border could be opened at Wagah in Punjab and bus and rail services started between India and Pakistan, why could it not be done in the case of Jammu and Kashmir? Thousands of families, divided by the border, could have relief. Let the people meet their families on the other side." To enable this, the Jammu-Sialkot and Muzaffarabad-Srinagar road network could be opened and free flow of vehicular traffic and people could start on both sides.

On July 30 this year, in reply to an unstarred question (No. 1094) by Ghulam Nabi Azad, Minister of State for Home I.D. Swami referred specifically to the CM's remarks and recalled the PM's proposal of July 9, 2001, and said explicitly, "The government stands by its proposals." Reportedly, the CM of Rajasthan, Ashok Gehlot, has written to the PM proposing the resumption of the old rail link from Munabao that would enable people from Mumbai, for instance, to travel by rail to Karachi.

Pakistan has not shown any enthusiasm for the idea. Its fear that the relaxations would freeze the status quo is as unreal and groundless as was India's fear, formerly, of security breaches. India has shed them. Pakistan must follow suit. Refusal to do so would betray its distrust of Kashmiris. In the final analysis, it is the people of Jammu and Kashmir who would decide their future set-up. Keeping them apart only puts off the moment of decision. Let them freely mingle with each other. Pakistan must first agree to open the roads before it talks of drawing up a roadmap for a settlement of the Kashmir question.

Attacks will not halt peace push'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK & PTI

Srinagar\New Delhi: Defence minister George Fernandes on Wednesday accused a Pakistan-based militant group of launching a series of attacks in Jammu and Kashmir, but stated categorically that New Delhi would not be deflected from its new push for peace with Islamabad.

Mr Fernandes accused the outlawed Lashkar-e-Taiba of mounting the raids and said that "many factions" inside Pakistan were trying to derail the peace process by stirring up violence in India. "This should not be allowed to happen," he said. In Jammu, the defence minister

ruled out any security lapses leading to the suicide attack by terrorists on an army camp in Akhnoor on Tuesday and blamed Pakistan for sending militants to engineer trouble in the state. "There were no security lapses as such attacks have continued in the past as well," Mr Fernandes said.

Eight army personnel, including a brigadier, were killed in the attack at Tanda army camp in Akhnoor. The attack came with 12 hours of explosions in Katra, where seven Vaishno Devi pilgrims were killed.

On Wednesday, six persons, including a woman and an Amarnath pilgrim, were injured in a grenade blast triggered by militants in a

crowded market area in Qazigund on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway, official sources said. Elsewhere, six militants, including a self-styled divisional commander of the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen were killed in clashes with security forces.

Meanwhile, the army has decided to bolster security measures around its camps in the Jammu region on the lines of those in the Kashmir valley. The new measures will include "aggressive area-dominance operations".

Army chief General N.C. Vij has issued "comprehensive instructions" to this effect to all formation commanders.

THURSDAY, JULY 24, 2003

gulo pane **ROCKY ROAD TO PEACE** *WX*
HD-10
29/7

THE ROAD TO India-Pakistan peace is as full of hidden mines and booby-traps as any stretch of the Line of Control. Aside from killing eight Army personnel, including a brigadier, and injuring two three-star generals, a two-star general, a brigadier and eight others, Tuesday's murderous terrorist attack on what used to be regarded as a 'safe' military camp in Tanda near the border town of Akhnoor in the Jammu district of Jammu & Kashmir constitutes a major provocation. Political India has shown considerable maturity in making it clear, at the level of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Defence Minister, that it will not allow the détente process to be held hostage by terrorists. But the Government now needs to engage with the difficult question of just how to keep the peace process going amid escalating violence. In important ways, the attack on the Tanda camp and the escalating violence that preceded it is a wholly predictable consequence of ongoing efforts to bring about an India-Pakistan dialogue. The Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Ramzan Ceasefire of 2000-2001 provoked terrorist groups to unleash exceptionally high levels of violence — violence that eventually undermined the initiative itself. Nor was it a coincidence that terrorists carried out mass killings around the time of Mr. Vajpayee's bus journey to Lahore, in 1999. From the standpoint of the terrorist groups, such actions make perfect sense; raising the level of violence is the best hope of their voice being acknowledged in the course of a future India-Pakistan dialogue. After all, the likes of the Lashkar-e-Taiba's Hafiz Mohammad Sayeed have openly boasted that India is talking to Pakistan about Jammu and Kashmir because of the *jihād* waged by terrorist groups.

Pakistan's military and intelligence establishment has a complex position on this argument. On the one hand, the military ruler, General Pervez Musharraf, is under intense international pressure to twist the arm of *jihadi* organisations so that they de-escalate armed operations against India. On the other hand, the violence serves the Pakistan establishment's interests, by

giving 'muscle' to its political posture on Jammu and Kashmir. Moreover, influential elements within this establishment seem to believe that Pakistan loses nothing by allowing *jihadi* groups to continue their operations. As Pakistan's former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Asad Durrani, has pointed out, India no longer retains the option of going to war as retaliation against major terrorist outrages. This ambiguity has found expression in recent official Pakistani conduct. No action was taken, for example, against the Hizbul-Mujaheddin chief, Mohammad Yusuf Shah — an Indian national resident in Pakistan — after he recently threatened to escalate *fidayeen* attacks in Jammu and Kashmir. Notwithstanding Mr. Fernandes' certification, General Musharraf seems unwilling or unable to take on the Islamist far Right, which is influential among the officer corps of the Pakistan Army.

How, then, should India respond? Perhaps the answer lies in the realisation that defence management and dialogue are not mutually exclusive; it can even be argued that the first is a precondition for the second. First, notwithstanding Mr. Fernandes' denial of any "security lapse," the basic deficiencies in security management highlighted by the Tanda attack need to be urgently addressed. Secondly, offensive operations against terrorists, which have been in disarray for the past several months, need to be revitalised. Thirdly, some serious thought needs to be given to the strategic objectives of counter-terrorism and the means needed to realise them. Most importantly, political India needs to realise that peace making cannot be an on-again, off-again, episodic activity. The Vajpayee Government must frame a set of well-defined policy objectives based on an institutional and political consensus to ensure that this peace initiative does not go the way of its predecessors. It is profoundly in the interest of the peoples of India and Pakistan that the present peace initiative succeeds — and that blows to Army morale such as the one terrorists were able to inflict at Tanda are anticipated and averted.

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Terror continues

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THE PAKISTAN-INSPIRED terrorist network has struck in Jammu and Kashmir again, confirming their isolated mode of functioning which is seemingly oblivious of events in the state or at the national level. Clearly, the thaw in India-Pakistan relations and the dissensions within the separatists in the Valley are of no consequence to these vicious mercenaries who remain obsessed with their murderous operations. Evidently, they are still organised enough to be able to exploit every opportunity which a crowded place or a less than secure army camp may provide. There is also little doubt that their suicidal tendencies enable them to take risks beyond the comprehension of rational people, thereby making them far more dangerous than ordinary marauding gangs.

What is worth noting, however, is that they are still receiving some kind of guidance, not to mention arms and ammunition, as well as motivation for their insane acts. It is obvious that either they are displeased with the current marginal improvement in India-Pakistan ties or are not bothered if their criminal conspiracies damage the prospect of better relations. Similarly,

it is also clear that they remain unconcerned about the post-election scene in Kashmir, which has underlined the increasing disenchantment of the local people with acts of terrorism.

It doesn't take much perspicacity to see that those indulging in such insensate violence are part of a terrorist infrastructure which acts on the basis of unending hostile relations between India and Pakistan with Kashmir serving as a pawn in the confrontation. Since, in a way, this group is cocking a snook at even the friendly gestures made by a hawk like Maulana Fazlur Rehman by his visit to India, it may be fair to conclude that its agenda is an old one, indifferent to later developments. If Islamabad's protestations that it is trying its best to control the *jehadis* are to be believed, then, surely, it is the rogue elements in the Pakistan army and the ISI who are the inspiration behind these attacks. Since it is suspected that they are still acting in cahoots with the Taliban and al-Qaeda operatives now in Pakistan, there is nothing surprising in their *jehadi* instincts remaining as strong as ever. As long as Islamabad fails to control them, there can be no forward movement in India-Pakistan relations.

Fazlur Rehman calls on Sonia

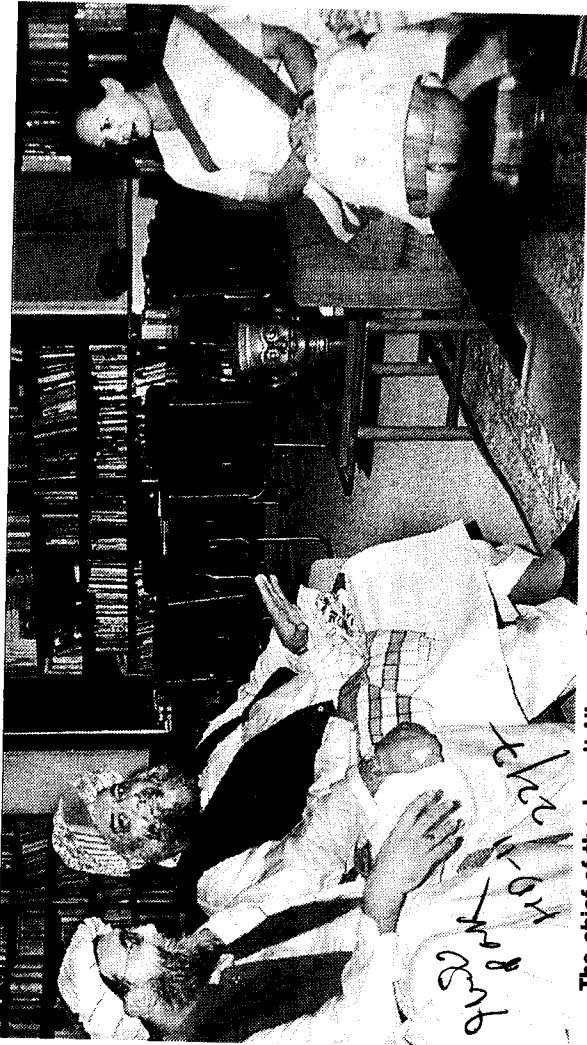
By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JULY 21. The chief of Pakistan's Jamait Ulema-e-Islam, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, today called on the Congress president, Sonia Gandhi, here and stressed on the need for both countries to resolve outstanding issues through dialogue.

"Currently in Pakistan, there is a thought that both sides (India and Pakistan) should resolve issues among themselves and the Congress president also appreciated it," the Maulana told presspersons after the 45-minute meeting this evening.

He said Ms. Gandhi mentioned that the Congress had been supportive of the Vajpayee Government's initiative to extend a hand of friendship towards Pakistan. Her party was keen on improving India's relations with the neighbour.

Mr. Rehman was accompanied by Maulana Mahmood Madani of the Jamait Ulema-e-Hind. The senior Congress leader, K. Natwar Singh, was present.



The chief of the Jamait Ulema-e-Islam in Pakistan, Maulana Fazlur Rehman (second from left), and a delegate with the Congress president, Sonia Gandhi, at her residence in New Delhi on Monday. — Photo: Rajeev Bhatt

AICC sources said the Congress was pleased that the Maulana had earlier mentioned the Shimla Agreement as the basis on which both nations could

address outstanding bilateral issues. The Maulana also called on the VHP leader, Acharya Giriraj Kishore, the RSS leader, Madandas Devi, and the Samajwadi Party president, Mulayam Singh Yadav, conveying the message of peace he has carried from Pakistan.

Pak hardliner lauds 'peacenik' PM

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, July 20. — It may have been a "courtesy call", as the PMO preferred to describe it, but the Prime Minister's more than hour-long meeting with the "father of the Taliban" was enough to give cheers to subcontinental doves. And, perhaps, they were not mistaken.

For, emerging from the talks, Maulana Fazlur Rehman of Pakistan's Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam lauded Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee's peace initiative and committed himself to carrying it forward. He also

stressed that talks were the only way to resolve disputes.

Government sources too, even while admitting the maulana does not represent Islam-abad, expressed optimism about the meeting. An official said it indicated that there had been "some forward movement" in bilateral relations.

The maulana, accompanied to the meeting by his three colleagues from the National Assembly, described the talks as "positive", though the discussion did not go beyond "broad generalities". He said he had conveyed to Mr Vajpayee that he had "consistently advocated"

a peaceful solution to J&K.

The Prime Minister, he said, wants all roadblocks in the way to bilateral dialogue to be gradually dismantled. "Vajpayee confirmed to us that he would visit Pakistan for the Saarc summit in January. He also made it clear that secretary-level talks should be held before that," the maulana said. "It is, in fact, necessary to have a secretary-level meeting because no one wants a summit to fail. Homework should be done before such a meeting."

Asked to comment on his suggestion of converting the LoC into International Bor-

der, he said: "Both countries have stated positions on all disputes. I am no one to comment on anything. Let us sit together and work out a solution." The maulana, however, refused to answer a question on cross-border terror, saying "these issues need to be solved at the talks table."

Earlier, government sources had said the maulana and his colleagues, all from the right-wing Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, were visiting the country on an invitation from Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam. JUIH leader Maulana Madani was present at the meeting, also attended by Mr Brajesh Mishra.

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SURPRISE VISIT
What is the MMA leader doing in India?

THE visit to India of Maulana Fazlur Rahman, hard-line Pakistani leader attempting to Talibanise the Northwest Frontier Province where his party, the Mut-tahida Majlis-e-Amal, holds sway, comes as a surprise. What is even more surprising is his stated desire to see talks between India and Pakistan take place under the Shimla agreement. One of the central tenets of the agreement is that India and Pakistan should settle Kashmir bilaterally instead of involving third parties. That is different from past Pakistani positions that General Musharraf reiterates *ad nauseam*, calling for third party and UN involvement. What makes Rahman, a hardliner and fundamentalist, take what looks like a softer line on Kashmir? One answer could be the changing Western stance on Kashmir. As long as India was identified with the Soviet bloc it made sense for Western nations to pressure India. After 9/11, however, a Talibanised Kashmir is hardly something the West can contemplate with equanimity.

From Rahman's point of view the US in particular and Western principles in general would be anathema and he would see little good coming out of Western mediation. His call for bilateral negotiations does not necessarily herald a softer line; it may be just that he prefers dealing directly with India. While Rahman has emphasised that he does not represent an official position — he is, after all, leader of the Pakistani opposition — Prime Minister Jamali has made intriguingly similar noises of late, saying that India and Pakistan should draw up their own roadmap, and the "third party" is the Kashmiri people themselves. That marks a subtle shift in the Pakistani discourse where "third party" always meant US or UN mediation. Jamali, of course, doesn't carry much authority and is proving to be a lame duck premier. But it is just possible that Islamabad may be getting a little more flexible on Kashmir and Musharraf is using Jamali to float some trial balloons. It is worth exploring just how much flexibility there is in the Pakistani position post-9/11, without being at all misty-eyed or overly optimistic about the man who ruined Lahore and Agra and still calls the shots in Pakistan.

People-to-people contacts will help: Gujral

By R.K. Radhakrishnan

CHENNAI, JULY 17. The former Prime Minister, I.K. Gujral, said today that the best hope for improvement in India-Pakistan relations lay in encouraging people-to-people exchanges and strengthening the regional forum, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

"This girl Noor has made a tremendous contribution," he said, referring to Noor Fatima, the Pakistani child who was operated on successfully in a Bangalore hospital.

Commenting on the spontaneous affection for the child from all over the country, he said that events like these built more bridges. "It was not sponsored by anybody, it was not built by any political party and suddenly you find that a child comes who is not well and everyone responds. That shows basically how people-to-people relationships are there."

In an informal chat during a visit to *The Hindu* in Chennai, Mr. Gujral said it was sad that when the bus service resumed, it did not correlate with the issue of visas by the Indian authorities. "It is a very sad comment that in the very beginning an empty bus should come. I hope that by

the time that the next bus goes, the visa regulations would be relaxed. One argument that was given was that the staff were not there. But that should have been done first."

Mr. Gujral said that nothing positive could emerge out of a meeting of leaders of India and Pakistan at this juncture. "So far as government-to-government talks are concerned, I am very pessimistic. Yesterday, I told a mediator, 'supposing tomorrow the Prime Ministers (of India and Pakistan) meet what will they discuss?' 'Give me Kashmir.' 'I will not give you Kashmir.' The talks are over. And that is where I go back to my own talks with (the then Prime Minister) Nawaz Sharif. And I must tell you that it was remarkable. Nawaz said 'I cannot take Kashmir from you, I know it. You cannot give it to me, I know it.' And that was the beginning of a new chapter," Mr. Gujral said.

In his view, the Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, could not be trusted. "He has a vested interest in non-settlement. Who in the Pakistan polity will spend 60 to 70 per cent of his budget on the Army if the bogey of India collapses? Therefore, I do not

place much confidence in any talks between the (Indian) Prime Minister and the General. It will be a repeat of Agra again," he said. "Talking to Musharraf and improvement of relations are two different things. Ultimately Musharraf will give in only if people-to-people relationship improves. Only then internal pressure will come on him. Talks are no pressure."

In his opinion, India should take the "SAARC route" to ensure that its relationship with all its neighbours improved. "The real emphasis should be on SAARC. That is where my difference with the Government of India comes. In the success of SAARC, in the advancement of SAARC, we have a vested interest. And so I feel, ultimately, whenever issues are sorted out, it will be through the SAARC route," he said.

But India's relationship with Nepal, Bangladesh or Sri Lanka were beset with problems and the country was not addressing any of these. India and the U.S. were strategic partners, but the U.S. was active in the region without consulting India. "Why are they active in Nepal and Bangladesh without taking us into confidence? For the first time, the U.S. is

bypassing India in this region. This is primarily because India let its relationships in the SAARC region slacken on small things. Like, for instance, the trade relationship with Bangladesh."

Mr. Gujral said he was more worried about the foreign presence in Nepal than anything else in the region.

In Sri Lanka, the talks between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Government was "collapsing." There, India had ruled itself out from the very beginning. "We have completely got ourself out. There is pressure between the (Sri Lankan) President (Chandrika Kumaratunga), and the Prime Minister (Ranil Wickremesinghe). We are not even a point of reference. I am worried about it. We are absenting ourselves from the region. This apart, our strategic ally (the U.S.) is present everywhere."

On the Indian decision not to send troops to Iraq, he said this was a very wise move. "It would have sent a very wrong signal. If the Americans are in a hard place, it is of their own choice. They bypassed the entire world. Now they find that colonisation is no more a part of the 21st century."

INDIA

18 JUL 2003

Kashmir issue cannot be sidelined: Musharraf

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JUNE 17. On the eve of his departure of a four-nation tour, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, asserted that while Islamabad was willing to talk with India on all issues, the Kashmir issue could not be sidelined.

In an interview to a private television channel, Geo, Gen. Musharraf said: "There is no doubt that Kashmir is still the core issue between India and Pakistan. I am not 100 per cent sure. Talks should take place. They are moving very slowly. They need to move faster, they can move faster. Whether we move forward on Kashmir, we will see, time will tell."

"The problem with India is that they are too conscious of their large size and they believe in coercing their neighbours. They want to dictate terms to us. They want to dictate their version of a solution. We will not take that. We will not compromise on our sovereign equality... We will take three steps if they take one, but let them not treat us like any small country around. We are a powerful nation."

On India's reported decision to set up a number of consulates in Afghanistan, Gen. Musharraf said that it had nothing to do with promotion of economic ties. The only ob-

jective of Indian presence in Afghanistan was to "harm" Pakistan.

He had taken up the matter with the Afghan President, Hamid Karzai, and Mr. Karzai assured him that the Afghan soil would not be allowed to be used against Pakistan.

Amid these utterances of the General, a Western diplomat said: "By taking a hard-line and reacting to the supposedly Advani statements, Gen. Musharraf is only making it difficult for the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee."

Major, 3 militants killed

By Our Special Correspondent

GUWAHATI, JUNE 17. A major of the 14 Field Regiment of the Army and three ULFA militants were killed this morning in an encounter at Neogpara in Darrang district of Assam. The exchange of fire lasted two hours.

A team of police and Army personnel had surrounded a house where the militants were hiding. As they opened fire, the security personnel retaliated. Major I. F. Babbar who was hit by a bullet died on way to hospital. Some militants are believed to have escaped.

Shimla pact still relevant: Fazlur Rehman

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, JULY 17. The Kashmir issue should be resolved through dialogue as envisaged under the Shimla Agreement, Maulana Fazlur Rehman, chief of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) in Pakistan, said at a press conference today.

Mr. Rehman, Leader of the Opposition in the Pakistani National Assembly, said that the United Nations resolutions and all agreements between India and Pakistan from the Nehru-Liaqat Pact to the July 2001 discussions in Agra, could, however, guide the process of dialogue. He also disfavoured third-party mediation between India and Pakistan.

Mr. Rehman, who steadfastly denied any links with "jehadi organisations", had been accused in the past of having ties with the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and its offshoots. Presenting himself as a moderate and believer in the democratic process, the secretary-general of the Muttahida

Majlis-e-Amal (MMA), an alliance of religious parties in Pakistan, said he had come with a message of peace and friendship. Mr. Rehman heads a four-member delegation of JUI parliamentarians. Here at the invitation of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind, Mr. Rehman, known for his rhetoric against the United States in the past, said it was necessary for the "ulema" (religious scholars) and religious parties to play a role in promoting good relations between India and Pakistan.

Pointing to the warm welcome at the Wagah border, Mr. Rehman, who arrived in the capital this afternoon from the Deoband religious seminary in Uttar Pradesh, said he would meet Indians from all walks of life.

Appointments had already been sought with the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, the Deputy Prime Minister, A.K. Advani, and the Defence Minister, George Fernandes.

The objective of their visit was to create a congenial atmosphere between the two

countries and to "force" the "rulers" of both countries to resolve their disputes peacefully.

Asked about cross-border terrorism from Pakistan, Mr. Rehman said there was no "agreed" definition of terrorism and he didn't want to start a "new debate". "I am not representing those who talk of fighting. I am representing those who want to resolve issues through dialogue."

The JUI leader rejected the contention that he had come as a representative of the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf. Mr. Rehman, who mobilised Pakistanis to "fight" in Afghanistan earlier, said he did not favour the continuing presence of U.S. troops in Afghanistan.

Interestingly, Mr. Rehman pointed out to a reporter the fact that he was a man from the "pre-Partition" era. "We are people from before Partition. We have a history. You don't know about it. Jamiat Ulema has a history. We have fought the battle for this country's freedom together..."

Pakistani baby's parents open their hearts and start a fund

9:50 AM - TIMES NEWS NETWORK 7/17/03

Bangalore: Nadeem Sajjad and Tayyaba, the parents of two-and-half-year-old Pakistani heart patient Noor Fatima, have donated Rs 1.4 lakh, set aside for the surgery of their daughter, towards creating a fund to treat poor patients from Pakistan.

Noor underwent corrective surgery for a congenital heart condition on Tuesday in Narayana Hrudayalaya hospital, Bangalore, and is now doing well.

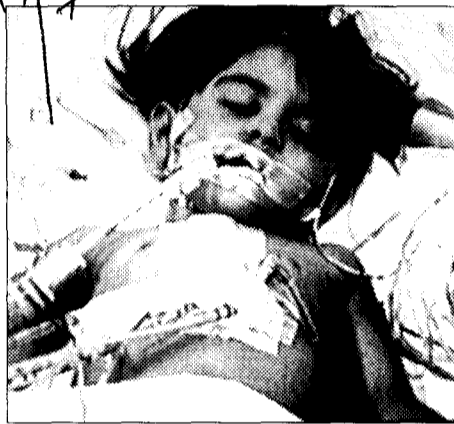
Mr Sajjad said he had deposited Rs 1.4 lakh with the hospital towards surgery and other expenses before his daughter's operation. But the expenses were met through donations. Therefore, this amount would now be used to create the fund.

The parents have added another Rs 50,000 to the fund towards treating poor Pakistani patients who may come to India for surgery in the future. Meanwhile, Dr Devi Shetty, director of the Narayana Hrudayalaya hospital said, "The surgery, originally scheduled for Wednesday, was pushed ahead after Noor's condition showed slight disturbances."

A team of three doctors headed by paediatric cardiac surgeon Dr Rajesh Sharma performed the operation. "It was not an emergency surgery. There was a fear that she may develop chest infection. We did not want to take a chance," said Dr Shetty.

Noor and her parents came to India on July 11 on the first trip of the resumed Lahore-Delhi bus. Noor will be in the Intensive Thoracic Unit of the hospital for three days. She is likely to stay in the hospital for another 10 days.

Dr Sharma has performed surgeries on



A television grab shows Noor Fatima, the two-year-old Pakistani girl, on a hospital bed after her successful heart surgery on Tuesday at a hospital in Bangalore.

over 60 Pakistani children over the past few years.

In the recent past, following the terrorist attack on Parliament and strained Indo-Pak relations, patients were cut off from treatment for a while.

When Pakistanis were subsequently allowed entry into India, the lack of direct access to Delhi forced patients to take a long arduous route via West Asia to get here.

Six-month-old Babar, who came to India a few days before Noor, developed pneumonia on arrival due to the stress of his long journey. He died late on Monday night. Sources said Babar's parents brought him to India via Dubai from Karachi. The journey had weakened him.

Towards positive unilateralism

By C. Raja Mohan

Taking unilateral steps on trade, economic cooperation and people-to-people contact will help India liberate itself from the limiting confines of the current negotiating framework with Pakistan.

DESPITE THE welcome but limited improvement in the atmospherics of India-Pakistan relations, the bilateral engagement faces the danger of returning to the predictable pattern of posturing and one-upmanship. Unless the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, puts politics back in command of the diplomacy towards Pakistan, his peace initiative could well be grounded amid feckless negotiations between the two bureaucracies. India and Pakistan have negotiated off and on in the last few years. The exercise has degenerated into semantics about what is the core issue between the two nations, and a series of linkages between one set of issues and another. The current negotiating framework is designed to fail and prevent any forward movement in any area. India must find a way to break out of it.

Let us look at two issues in play. First, the simple proposal from Mr. Vajpayee for having envoys back in place and restoring road and air links has taken months to implement. The envoys are now in position and the bus service between New Delhi and Lahore has resumed. But the question of air links is caught up in an unseemly wrangle.

Pakistan says it is willing to restore point-to-point flights but has proposed a discussion on the question of overflights, which is of some priority to India. Islamabad, upset at New Delhi's cancellation of overflight rights in December 2001, and earlier during the 1971 crisis, now wants a political commitment from India that it will not resort to such a course in future. India, which initially refused to discuss the question, has now agreed to talks, but is yet to hear from Pakistan on the dates for a meeting. India can either let this drift continue, in the name of a step-by-step process, or act unilaterally to move forward. Instead of slow negotiations, India, on its part, can restore overflight rights to Pakistan and apply political pressure on Islamabad to reciprocate.

A second question relates to Mr. Vajpayee's travel plans to Islamabad. At a meeting of the officials of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in Kathmandu last week, India finally agreed on a set of dates for the delayed summit. It made clear, however, that the eventual decision on Mr. Vajpayee's attendance would depend on Pakistan's readiness to show substantive

movement on trade liberalisation in the run-up to the summit in January 2004.

On the face of it, India has a good argument. Why should Mr. Vajpayee waste his time at a SAARC summit that has no serious agreements to be signed? Has not Pakistan refused to give minimum trading privileges to India and stalled progress on regional trade — either preferential or free?

In linking the question of joining the SAARC summit to progress on trade, India has only postponed its diplomatic dilemma. Refusal to accept dates for the summit would have shifted the onus for the failure of the SAARC process on to New Delhi, while it lies elsewhere — in Islamabad. India could, however, find itself in the same trap at the end of the year in having to judge whether Pakistan has made "substantial progress" on trade.

There is nothing to suggest that Pakistan's behaviour on regional trade would change in any way in the next few weeks and months. India could once again find itself back to square one — where it will have to choose between going to Islamabad, despite lack of progress on trade, and refusing to. The latter course would mean taking the responsibility for scrapping the summit one more time.

The real questions about the SAARC summit are somewhat different. They are about whether Mr. Vajpayee should take the political opportunity to visit Islamabad to engage the leadership of Pakistan and its people as well as define the future steps for cooperation under the SAARC. There is some hope in South Block that by tying up India's participation to the question of trade liberalisation, and holding out the carrot of a bilateral summit, Islamabad can be forced to act on trade. But this pressure is unlikely to work. Knowing Pakistan's tactics, it is unlikely to offer satisfaction to India on trade and likely to throw the ball back into New Delhi's court.

Instead of playing this unproductive diplomatic game, Mr. Vajpayee should make up his mind that he will

indeed travel to Pakistan or what would be only the fifth visit by an Indian Prime Minister in the last five-and-a-half decades. Instead of letting the discussion between Commerce Ministry bureaucrats on the number of tariff lines to be exchanged decide the prospect of his trip to Pakistan, Mr. Vajpayee should use the next few months to unveil an action-oriented agenda for bilateral relations.

If Mr. Vajpayee wants to breathe life into his faltering peace initiative, he must recognise that negotiation with Pakistan is an end in itself. Nor is the traditional framework of engagement with Islamabad a sacral one that cannot be flouted.

Diplomacy towards Pakistan must be a flexible tool to achieve one single Indian objective — the establishment of a normal neighbourly relationship free of cross-border violence and a settlement of all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir. The last decade of talks with Islamabad suggests that there will be no radical breakthroughs over the short term and New Delhi needs a patient strategy that seeks to isolate and contain the forces inside Pakistan that are wedded to compulsive hostility towards India. New Delhi's objectives cannot be achieved by a negotiating strategy that is complicated by a series of conditionalities.

Five critical elements must form the core of a new strategy towards Pakistan as Mr. Vajpayee heads there at the dawn of the New Year. First, reiterate India's readiness to address the Kashmir question in a purposeful manner. Although that has been the central premise of Mr. Vajpayee's peace initiative, many in the Pakistani establishment believe that India's diplomacy is aimed at avoiding a serious negotiation on the subject. Rather than get into a semantic argument with Pakistan on whether Kashmir is the core issue or not, India should reaffirm, again and again, that it is ready for a final resolution of the question. Such an assertion will not only help prepare the nation for such a settlement but also test

Pakistan's own seriousness about facing up to a reasonable final settlement on Kashmir.

Second, keep up the pressure on the question of cross-border terrorism without linking it to other issues. The linkage has never been sustainable, as India has found out many times in the last few years. A revamped military strategy on the ground to deal with cross-border terrorism, and the mobilisation of the international community are likely to work more effectively than negotiations with Pakistan on the issue.

Third, instead of making progress on trade cooperation a precondition for engagement with Pakistan, take every opportunity to break the economic barriers between the two nations. If Pakistan is not ready for direct trade, take measures to actively promote it through third countries. Letting trade flow is more important than how it happens. India must also test Pakistan on its proclaimed willingness to immediately implement mega economic projects such as trans-border natural gas pipelines by removing its own objections.

Fourth, make it easier for the two civil societies to interact. By denying opportunities for contact, New Delhi has, in fact, played into the hands of those in Islamabad who want to keep the doors between the two countries closed. It is also in India's interest to engage the Pakistani political leadership across the board. Make Delhi a regular stop for Pakistani politicians of all hues. In that context, the visit by Maulana Fazlur Rahman of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam is indeed a welcome opportunity to interact with an important force in Pakistan. New Delhi must also facilitate travel to India by other Pakistani leaders, including those who are exiled. The more intensive India's engagement with Pakistani political leaders, the more diplomatic options that it will have.

Finally, India has the power to act unilaterally to change the dynamics of the current stalemate with Pakistan. If New Delhi focusses on outcomes rather than diplomatic procedure, it can unveil a strategy of positive unilateralism. Taking unilateral steps on trade, economic cooperation and people-to-people contact will help India liberate itself from the limiting confines of the current negotiating framework with Pakistan.

17 JUL 2003

ONE HINDU

Noor safe after surgery, Babar not so lucky

By Divya Sreedharan 167

BANGALORE, JULY 15. The prayers and sincere wishes have not been in vain — little Noor from Pakistan is doing well now after a successful heart surgery today.

The open-heart surgery, initially fixed for Wednesday morning at the Narayana Hrudayalaya hospital here, was advanced to Tuesday "in the best interest of the child," said Rajesh Sharma, the paediatric cardiac surgeon who led the operating team.

The 13-member team worked from 7.20 a.m. to about 1 p.m. to plug "two holes" in the two-and-a-half-year-old child's heart. Dr. Sharma said the child was "stable" and kept in the hospital's Intensive Therapy Unit. "If Noor responds well, she can be kept in a post-operative ward for four to five days."

Meanwhile, Babar, a six-month-old Pakistani child, who had been in the ITU since Wednesday last, battling pneumonia, died late on Monday.

The infant was brought here through a circuitous route — Karachi to Dubai and then to India. The rigours of the journey had weakened him. Dr. Sharma told *The Hindu* that Babar's parents had left the hospital for home.

Noor's parents — Nadeem Sajjad and Tayyaba Nadeem — said they had seen their child after the operation. "We could not sleep last night. Even this morning we were very anxious.

It seemed as if time stood still. And only when Dr. Sharma came out smiling from the operation theatre, we understood everything was all right," Mr. Sajjad said.

Noor's mother thanked God. "I entrusted my child to Allah. His grace, the doctors' skill, and everyone's blessing and prayers have helped her," she said. Noor's elder siblings, Tehsin and Mahrukh, would be apprised of the child's condition, the parents said.

The Lahore-based couple said their daughter was lucky. Mr. Sajjad said they were given priority for seats on the Delhi-bound bus from Lahore. In fact, doctors said the surgery had been done at the right time and that the child's condition could have become more complicated had the surgery been delayed.

Noor's father said he felt at "home, 4,000 miles away from my actual home. We thank every mother, father, sister, and elder, who has prayed for her."

He said they would have had to go to America (brother Naeem is a nephrologist in Boston) if the bus service had not been resumed.

Though many philanthropists were ready to foot Noor's medical bills, currently at over Rs. 1.4 lakhs, Mr. Sajjad said they could pay it themselves.

Dr. Sharma said Noor did not need follow-up visits to the hospital. "There are good doctors in Pakistan and they can be consulted," he said.

Politicians to blame : Page 12

Small steps, but long road ahead



**MICHAEL
KREPON**

RISK takers can make big messes or big successes, especially when they lead nuclear-armed rivals and when they have little in common except their fondness for bold maneuvers and impatience with diplomacy. Think of Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, two men of utterly different temperament and background. When these ambitious risk takers met, the outcome was usually in doubt. Bilateral ties during their tenure lurched forward like a roller coaster ride. High expectations were followed by deep dips. This ride had a happy ending, however. By dispensing with conventional wisdom and risking failure, Reagan and Gorbachev broke the back of the nuclear arms race.

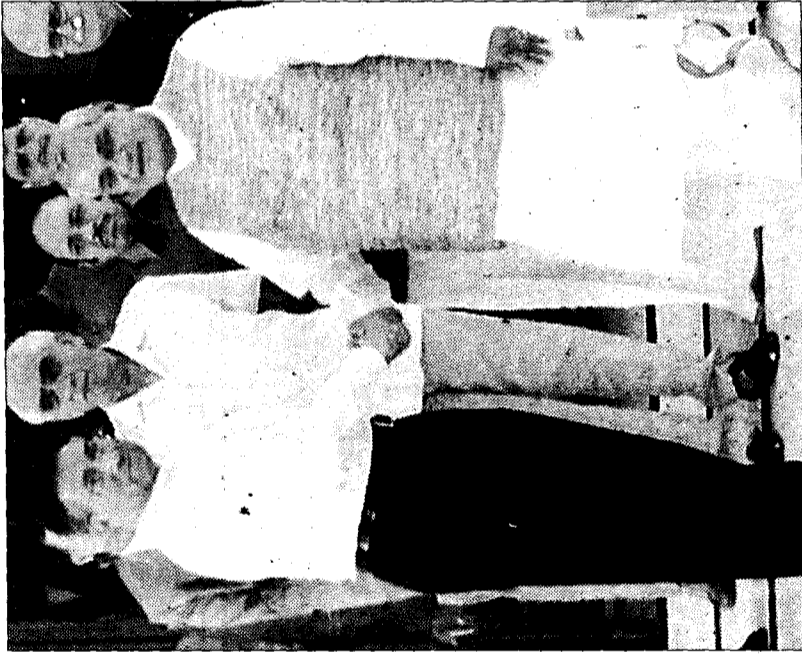
The oddest nuclear bedfellows today are India's Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pakistan's Pervez Musharraf. One writes poetry, the other has been trained as a commando. But they share the same propensity for risk-taking. Vajpayee defiantly tested nuclear weapons against world opinion. Musharraf disposed of a popularly elected government and surreptitiously seized Indian territory across the Kashmir divide, initiated a brief border war in 1999. Then, Vajpayee invited Musharraf to an unscripted summit in Agra. So far, they have interacted badly. Can they, too, engineer a happy ending?

Bilateral talks are likely to re-

sume after a two-year freeze, following an attack on the Indian Parliament by militant groups with home bases in Pakistan. This is the third time that Vajpayee has offered to normalise ties, despite strenuous opposition from his Hindu nationalist political

his initiatives, and it is an article of faith among Pakistan watchers that his Army leadership is incapable of accepting a realistic Kashmir settlement.

Most South Asia hands would be content with small steps in the right direction and the ab-



Musharraf and Vajpayee at the Agra summit. Express file photo

base. Religious extremists who back a holy war in divided Kashmir have also gained ground in Pakistan, where successive governments over the past decade have clung to unrealistic hopes for a settlement.

There is much ground for pessimism about a resumption of talks between India and Pakistan. Positive initiatives in South Asia are notoriously tenuous and reversible. Vajpayee has not energetically followed through with

small ties might well be the best achievable outcome.

Small, positive steps are certainly welcome — the more the better, since pursuing one step at a time simplifies blocking strategies. The big problem with thinking small, however, is that modest steps don't lead to a safe destination. As in the Israeli-Palestinian case, building blocks for peace can easily collapse after large explosions.

Nor have small steps in South Asia led to nuclear stabilisation, since Pakistan's military leaders have previously linked progress on this front to positive developments in Kashmir, and since India's political leaders have previously refused to talk while infiltration facilitated by Pakistan continued.

For a peace process to be durable, small steps need to be taken, but the big issues of terrorism, Kashmir and nuclear security also have to be tackled. Talks between India and Pakistan hit a dead end when there is no choreography between small steps and big problems. Finding the right structure to cover these bases isn't the problem. The problem is that when professional diplomats talk about highly sensitive issues, they usually say nothing that could generate progress — and trouble — back home. Governments have found the conventional wisdom to be safer than a peace process.

Many alternatives to a diplomatic settlement have been tried, and Pakistan have both engaged in brinkmanship over Kashmir, including the mobilisation of both armies for war during much of 2002. These gambits have failed, while inviting unwanted escalation. Before the advent of nuclear weapons, India fought

and won conventional wars with Pakistan, but gained little satisfaction on Kashmir. New Delhi has also tried to put Kashmir on the back burner, but old wounds haven't healed. It has also tried and failed to isolate Pakistan.

Islamabad's track record is no better. It has failed to win Kashmiri Muslims over by example, by force of arms, or by diplomacy. Its entreaties at the United Nations fall on deaf ears. Over the past decade, Pakistan's Kashmir policy has relied heavily on military to punish India and to leverage favourable outcomes. This approach has failed to gain traction, while weakening Pakistan at home and tarnishing its image abroad.

Why not, then, explore privately the contours of a diplo-

mat settlement this time around? Sceptics of ambitious diplomacy in South Asia may be right in concluding that the Pakistan Army is unalterably wedded to a failed Kashmir policy, and that Vajpayee does not have the stamina to follow through with his initiatives. But these widely held assumptions have not been properly tested. Musharraf might mean what he says when he calls for a dignified resolution to the Kashmir tragedy. We won't know unless the conversation over Kashmir gets beyond well-rehearsed public statements.

It is certainly curious that se-

True, the track record of interactions between Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Musharraf hardly inspires confidence, and powerful domestic constituencies are poised to oppose progress on J-K. But risk-taking leaders are capable of making surprisingly wise as well as bad decisions. Reagan and Gorbachev started badly, but ended famously

constituencies are poised to oppose progress on Kashmir. But risk-taking leaders are capable of making surprisingly wise as well as bad decisions. Reagan and Gorbachev started badly, but ended famously. If Vajpayee and Musharraf cannot rise to the occasion, it is unlikely that their successors will do better.

— The writer, founding president of the Stimson Center, is the author of *Cooperative Threat Reduction, Missile Defense, and the Nuclear Future* and co-editor of *Nuclear Risk Reduction in South Asia*

All hearts go out to her

By Divya Sreedharan

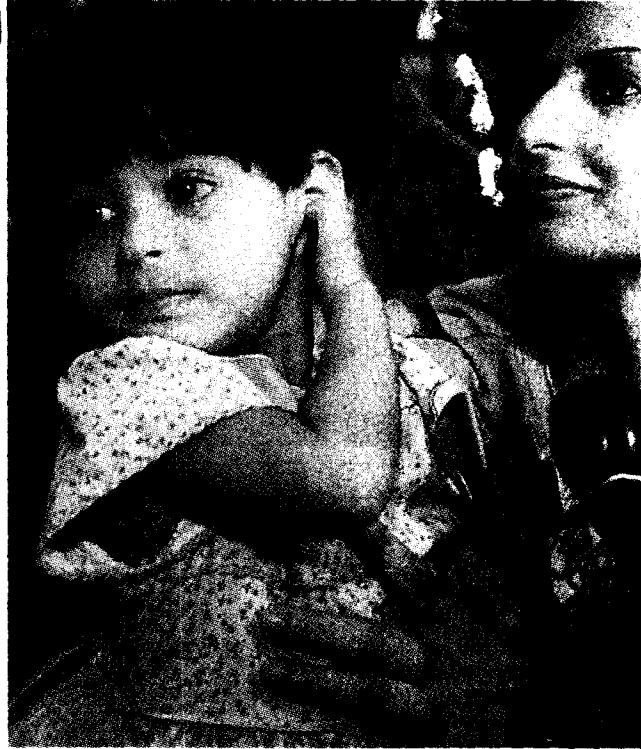
BANGALORE, JULY 14. The two-and-a-half year old Pakistani child, Noor Fatima's open heart surgery has been 'tentatively fixed' at 6.30 a.m. on Wednesday, July 16. Her parents, Nadeem Sajjad and Tayyaba Nadeem, nervous about the delicate procedure that lies ahead, have also had to deal with intense media attention.

The healing of Noor's heart, even as she stays in clinical isolation, has come to symbolise the healing of hearts across the ravaged borders. Among those saying prayers for her are her siblings, Tehsin (6), and Mahrukh (4) back in Lahore and scores of people in India and Pakistan.

"The team of surgeons who will operate on her are confident that everything will go off fine," said the official spokesperson of Narayana Hrudayalaya, a heart-care speciality hospital here, where she has been admitted.

The child arrived in India with her parents when the Lahore-Delhi bus service was resumed last Friday.

A battery of surgeons, headed by the paediatric cardiac surgeon, Rajesh Sharma, will perform the operation expected to last four to five hours. Dr. Sharma said that when she was less than a year old, Noor was diagnosed as having a ventricular septal defect (VSD) with pulmonary stenosis — holes in the heart with obstruction of blood flow to the lungs. "There is a defect in the wall separating the right and left ventricles in the heart and, therefore there



Noor Fatima with her mother, Tayyaba Nadeem In Bangalore. — Photo: V.Sreenivasa Murthy

is mixing of pure and impure blood. This, in turn, leads to other complications," he explained. At the time of the diagnosis, Noor was too young to undergo surgery.

The operation costs around Rs. 1.25 lakhs. Noor's parents can actually afford to pay, but the hospital is considering giving them concessions. Several philanthropists have come forward to bear the expenses. While Noor's parents have expressed appreciation for such gestures, hospital sources said that "all they (the parents) want is the goodwill of the people."

While little Noor prepares for her surgery after a relatively short journey to Bangalore, another Pakistani child, six-month-old Babar, is still trying to fight off the rigours of a more circuitous route. He arrived here via West Asia and, according to hospital officials, has been in the Intensive Therapeutic Care Unit since Wednesday last, being treated for pneumonia among other things.

"Doctors are still trying to decide when to operate on him," sources said. Parents of both children are staying at the hospital.

KIN ACROSS BORDERS REUNITE

Delhi-Lahore bus service resumes

By Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar

LAHORE, JULY 11. The Lahore-bound Indian bus crossed over into Pakistan at the Wagah border this afternoon, signalling the reopening of the direct passenger transportation links between the two neighbours.

The resumption of the suspended Delhi-Lahore bus service was widely cheered by people on both sides of the border. As the bus crossed into Pakistan, a large crowd raised cheers. Similar scenes were later witnessed at the Faletti's Hotel here where the service culminated and people called it

the "dosti (friendship) bus service". The security personnel all along the 536-km route waved at the golden brown *Sada-e-Sarhad* (Call of the Border) bus as it passed by.

Earlier in the day, the bus was flagged off by the Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, B.C. Khanduri, amid tight security from the Ambedkar Stadium Terminal in Delhi.

With 13 passengers and 19 mediapersons on board, the bus started at 6.05 a.m. About half-a-dozen escort and pilot vehicles of the Delhi police — their sirens blaring — accompanied the bus up to the Singhu border

from where the Haryana police took over.

Afterwards, the air-conditioned bus, which for the first time had been fitted with a mobile phone and a DVD player, then cruised towards Punjab, where the passengers and crew were welcomed by a bhangra troupe at a restaurant at Sirhind, 87 km from Pipli.

Following a short break for snacks, it headed forth, almost keeping with its time schedule. It next halted after three hours and 144 km at a restaurant in Kartarpur for the lunch break and reached the Wagah border at 4 p.m. It took another two hours for Customs and Immigration clearance. Following a security check by the bomb squad and dog squad of the Border Security Force, the bus entered Pakistan to a tumultuous welcome from the people.

At Wagah, there were emotional scenes as some of the passengers were reunited with their relatives.

The joy of the Lahore-based journalist Nadeem Ahmed knew no bounds as he lifted his four-month old son, Abdullah — whom he was seeing for the first time — in his arms.

The child was born in Jaipur while Mr. Nadeem's wife, Zahoor Saba, was visiting her parents along with her other son, Aun.

If this re-union was emotional, so was Zahoor's bidding adieu to her parents and brother in Delhi.

For most other passengers the bus was all about the restoration of normal people-to-people contact.

It was aptly summed up by a message put up by the Delhi Transport Corporation — "We may not be one country, but are one culture; keep walking alongside, for our goals are the same."

A memorable
ney: Page 11



A warm welcome being given to the bus from Delhi as it cross the Wagah border and enters Pakistan on Friday. — Reuters

Let's resume air, rail links: Pak. envoy

By Our Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JULY 10. Ten days after he arrived here, Pakistan's new High Commissioner to India, Aziz Ahmed Khan, presented his credentials to the President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, at the Rashtrapati Bhavan today.

Apart from Mr. Khan, the Ambassadors of Eritrea and Croatia, Gabriel Fasil and Dino Debeljuh, presented their credentials to Dr. Kalam.

A statement from the Rashtrapati Bhavan said that senior officials of the External Affairs Ministry and diplomats attended the ceremony.

Soon after presenting his credentials, Mr. Aziz Khan told presspersons that the two countries should move quickly to resume air and rail links as well as

restore the full strength of their High Commissions. Later, negotiations between the two countries could begin as part of a composite dialogue. Pakistan has not had a High Commissioner in New Delhi since May 2002 when the Government asked Ashraf Jehangir Qazi to leave India following the terrorist attack in Kaluchak.

The Indian High Commissioner-designate to Pakistan, Shivshankar Menon, who has completed his tenure as Ambassador to China, is now here for official meetings before leaving for Islamabad.

With Mr. Menon going to Islamabad, India will have a High Commissioner in place after December 2001 when New Delhi recalled Vijay Nambiar in protest against the December 13, 2001 attack on the Parliament House.



The new Pakistan High Commissioner to India, Aziz Ahmed Khan, presenting his credentials to the President, A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Thursday.

9/20/02
FOSTERING BILATERAL TRADE 40-12
11/2

THE LATEST ATTEMPT by the Governments of India and Pakistan to improve bilateral relations has now extended to the economic sphere. While it may be fanciful to speak at this point of a "South Asian Union" trade bloc, as the Foreign Minister, Yashwant Sinha, has done, any move to increase trade between India and Pakistan is to be welcomed. An improvement in bilateral relations at the political level does lead to greater trade. The reverse is also true. The development of economic relations between countries too brings them closer. It is useful to remember that the European Union has its roots in the formation in 1952 of the European Coal and Steel Community, which was created partly to give West Germany a greater stake in a closely integrated Europe and thereby prevent the outbreak of another war on that continent. An India and Pakistan bound by a large movement of goods and people would have an interest in resolving the many disputes that have bedevilled bilateral relations for decades.

Trade between India and Pakistan is at the best of times a meagre \$200 million a year. Unofficial trade, smuggled or routed through West Asia, is estimated at 10 times this amount. Still, the volume of total trade between the two countries is insignificant given their size and broadly similar economic structures. The political hostility between India and Pakistan that has spilled over into the economic arena has had another effect — of stifling the development of a free-trade region in South Asia. The tensions between the two biggest countries of South Asia have affected economic exchanges among all the countries in the sub-continent. And this has resulted in South Asia being one of the few regions in the world without a regional

trade bloc of any significance. The South Asian Free Trade Area was supposed to have been established in 2002, yet even the preparatory union, the South Asian Preferential Trade Area, has not developed fully. Trade within South Asia is still a mere four per cent of the region's total external trade. Given the baggage of history that India and Pakistan carry, any improvement in economic relations can take place only slowly. But Pakistani industry, which for years fearing that it would be swamped by imports from India resisted the development of bilateral trade, has recently become more aware of the opportunities from trade between the two countries. There no doubt remain differences within Pakistani industry about the benefits to be had from removing the existing curbs, but the slow change in attitude reflects a new realisation that it is not only Indian industry that will gain from trade. Pakistani goods, especially in light engineering and textiles, will be competitive in the Indian market. The lifting of the old fears clears the way for Pakistan eventually treating imports from India on the same terms as goods from elsewhere. With Pakistan then granting India the "most favoured nation" status, one thorn in bilateral trade relations will be removed.

It is encouraging that the India-Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, the joint grouping that is working for greater bilateral economic links, is now focussed on highlighting the infrastructural constraints on trade. The strange aspect of India-Pakistan trade is that the legal movement of goods can be conducted only by sea and air. The establishment of road and rail trade crossing points and, of course, the creation of a visa regime that facilitates business travel are two pre-conditions for fostering closer economic links between India and Pakistan.

Atal's Pak date set for January

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PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, July 10: India today joined other South Asian nations in accepting Pakistan's proposal that the next Saarc summit be held in Islamabad between January 4 and 6.

If all goes well and India participates in the summit, it could lead to a meeting on the sidelines between Prime Ministers Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali.

Despite the thaw, tit-for-tat politics continued as usual. Whirlwind in the Delhi-Lahore bus rolls again tomorrow, foreign minister Yashwant Sinha will not flag it off as scheduled. B.C. Khanduri, the minister for surface transport, will do the honours instead.

Islamabad had initially chosen Jamali to flag off the bus from Lahore. But once it got wind of the fact that Sinha, not Vajpayee, would be involved in Delhi, the programme was changed. Tourism minister Ramesh Muniir Ahmed was told to take Jamali's place.

In retaliation, Delhi has decided to replace Sinha with Khanduri. The bus will leave the capital on its 11-hour journey at 5 am.

"A consensus has been

reached in the meeting of the senior officials on the proposal made by Pakistan that the next Saarc summit be held in Islamabad between January 4 and 6 next year," foreign secretary Kanwal Sibal said.

But there are two riders to India's participation. One, there has to be substantial and visible movement on trade and economy in Saarc. Two, India expects cross-border terrorism in Kashmir and elsewhere to stop and Islamabad to take urgent steps to dismantle its terrorist apparatus.

Sibal did not spell out the conditions but he implied that unless these were met, it would be difficult for the Prime Minister to travel to Pakistan, especially with four crucial Assembly elections slated for the year-end and speculation that next year's general elections might be brought forward.

The Islamabad summit was scheduled for early this year but had to be called off when India refused to confirm the dates proposed by Pakistan. India had said that unless there was meaningful progress towards a free-trade pact and greater economic cooperation in Saarc, it made little sense for the heads of government to meet.

"Our concerns that before the heads of government meet, there will have to be a substantial economic agenda and good progress on the trade front remain," the foreign secretary said this afternoon.

Sibal added: "The sense that I get from the meeting is that there should be progress on the trade front — both on the South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement as well as the South Asian Free Trade Agreement." Officials will meet in Kathmandu in September to finalise the treaty framework of Safta.

But the foreign secretary refused to give any indication whether the progress on trade will also lead to a bilateral meeting between India and Pakistan.

He justified holding bilateral meetings with counterparts from all Saarc nations except Pakistan, saying "the difficulties that India has in its relations with Pakistan" do not exist with the other neighbours.

Vajpayee, by initiating the peace process, has given Islamabad another opportunity to normalise ties. "We have opened the door for Pakistan to walk in. But Pakistan should be able to walk in without the baggage of terrorism."

See Page 7

Road to normality

Negativity in Indo-Pak relations would be a formidable barrier. Let's think positive

RESTORATION of the bus service between New Delhi and Lahore may appear a minuscule step for the governments of Pakistan and India, but it is a giant stride for the people of the two countries. It is ordinary Pakistanis and Indians, caught in the web of hostility and frustration, an of-again, on-again war of words and the continuing cross-border violence, who have suffered the most. It is their welfare that has been sacrificed as a consequence. For them, there are family ties and social obligations to fulfil; there are deeply-held religious beliefs which entail visiting and paying homage at holy sites across the very same borders; and there are trade and cultural ties to be nurtured. It is not surprising, therefore, that responses to the recent visits of Pakistani and Indian MPs to each other's country evoked strong sentiments of friendship and the desire to move forward without the baggage of past hostility.

The visit of Pakistan businessmen to India also shows clearly what is possible in the pursuit of mutual benefit. There are the obvious advantages and scope for bilateral trade. One might even be tempted to say that we should leave the whole gambit of bilateral relations to businessmen and ordinary people on either side of the borders while their governments step back and play the role

of facilitators for a change! Unfortunately, this cannot be the case, especially since exclusivity seems to have become an important ingredient of official policy on both sides, spurred on by the "core issue" syndrome. Certainly, the army-centred establishment in Pakistan has for a very long while believed in such a strategy. Reports of Pakistan wanting to peg restoration of over-flight rights to a bilateral agreement seems to be rooted in similar exclusivity and search for exploiting an area where the costs to India of not restoring such rights would be higher. But this must be seen in the overall perspective of what each side seeks from the process of re-establishing normal ties since that would define the relationship after normalisation.

The trends in the past three months since Prime Minister Vajpayee surprised everyone with his peace initiative indicate a steady movement forward. Given the historical record of the possibility of rapid fluctuations in relations between the two countries, and the deeper problems that have dogged even normalisation of relations, it is good that the progress remains steady, even if slow. But this is why it is necessary to ensure that no negative impulses are now introduced into the process, either to seek brownie points, or in search of an asymmetric advantage.

Pakistan has to take steps for talks: Sibal

Sudeshna Sarkar in Kathmandu

July 9. — With foreign minister Mr Yashwant Sinha yesterday ruling out any possibility of foreign secretary Mr Kanwal Sibal holding any bilateral meeting with his Pakistani counterpart Mr Riaz Khokkar at the fourth special meeting of the Saarc Standing Committee of foreign secretaries under way, speculation in the diplomatic circles about the talks have all but died.

Mr Sibal's itinerary, as it stands now, also rules out the possibility of any talks. Tomorrow, a bilateral session is scheduled in the evening with Sri Lanka and in between, Mr Sibal will also call on King Gyanendra and the Nepalese prime minister, Mr Surya Bahadur Thapa. On Friday, he will meet the Opposition party leaders, Mr Girija Prasad Koirala of Nepali Congress and Mr Madhav Kumar Nepal of the Communist Party of Nepal-United Marxist-

'No early parley'

NEW DELHI, July 9. — Ruling out an early Indo-Pak summit meeting, India today asserted that while it was not shying away from discussing Kashmir, Pakistan should emulate the Sino-Indian model of not allowing one single issue to hold "hostage" progress in all other issues. Emphasising the step-by-step approach towards a dialogue, external affairs minister Yashwant Sinha said the time was not ripe for a summit or even a meeting at the level of foreign secretaries. — PTI

Leninist. No bilateral meeting with Pakistan is scheduled. "All the SAARC countries will be here and we'll be talking to each other," Mr Sibal told journalists on his arrival. "We will advance the progress as

much as we can." But, for bilateral talks with Pakistan, the neighbouring country has to take "the necessary steps", he said.

The international community also expects Pakistan to do so, he said, adding that once the steps were taken, the door for dialogues would be open. Mr Sibal said that Pakistan had shown some "reciprocity". Regarding fresh dates for the 12th SAARC summit, which was postponed indefinitely by host Islamabad after a standoff with India, he said that though India had suggested certain dates, it was up to the SAARC Secretariat to take the decision.

Though Mr Sibal didn't mention cross-border terrorism, which India says is sponsored by Pakistan, Indian diplomatic sources here said: "you have to live in India to understand the situation there" while refuting allegations here that India has not shown any interest in holding bilateral talks.

No Indo-Pak talks at SAARC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 8

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha today made it clear that Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal will hold no bilateral parleys with his Pakistan counterpart Riaz Khokkar on the margins of the SAARC foreign secretaries' meet starting Wednesday at Kathmandu.

According to Sinha, such a measure did not fit into New Delhi's "step-by-step approach" towards establishing peaceful relations between both countries. A Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson later said, "There was no plan for a bilateral meeting (between the two foreign secretaries)."

Sinha — who was responding to questions after he launched a MEA publication *India 2003-04 Reliable Business Partner, Attractive*



Pakistan business delegation leaves the PM residence after meeting A.B. Vajpayee in New Delhi on Tuesday. Express photo by Anil Sharma

FDI Destination — shot back at the media when prodded that the pace of normalising relations was rather slow:

"This is not to be determined by the media. We will decide on it. Representatives of both countries will determine it. We have already said we will move forward cautiously step by step. We are moving ahead in that direction."

Pointing out that the Pakistan High Commissioner-Designate to India Aziz Ahmed Khan is already here, Sinha said the Indian envoy, Shiv Shanker Menon, too will reach Islamabad soon. He underlined that these are "concrete developments" which cannot be overlooked while assessing the pace at which matters have moved since Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee announced the peace initiatives.

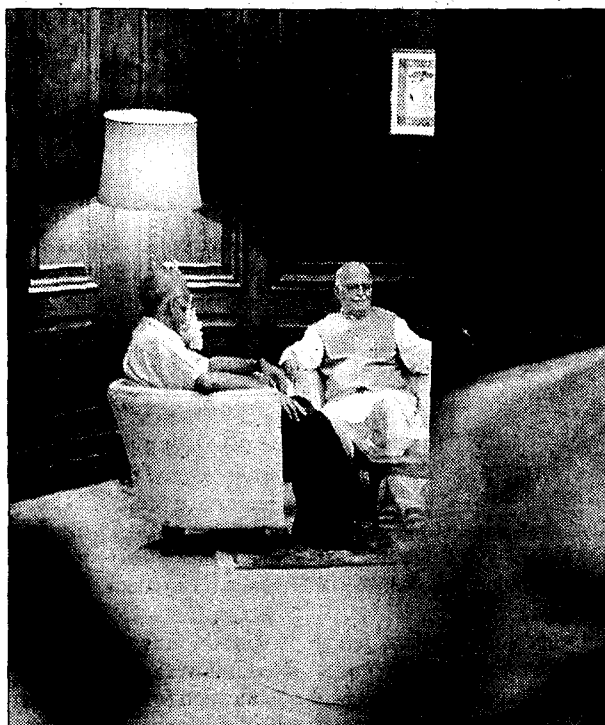
On the resumption of civil aviation links, the External Affairs Minister indicated that the ball was very much in Islamabad's court as India had already announced its willingness to hold technical-level talks on the subject. "We said our technical team is ready to hold talks with their technical

team. They should tell us when and where. We are awaiting response."

New Delhi had earlier sought clarifications from Pakistan on whether granting overflight facility would be included while resuming civil aviation links between both countries. Though no specific response came from Islamabad, India accepted that this issue could be discussed at the technical meetings. However, with no dates being announced from the other side, there has been no development on this front.

Meanwhile, visiting business delegates from Pakistan met Prime Minister Vajpayee who apparently assured them that New Delhi would support initiatives to improve trade between both countries.

Head of the delegation Senator Ilyas Ahmed Bilour later said they presented a joint memorandum prepared along with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry to the Prime Minister.



Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan Shiv Shanker Menon with Deputy PM L.K. Advani in New Delhi on Tuesday. Express photo by Anil Sharma

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9/15

Peacemeal

India must deal with Pakistan's insincerity

India's lukewarm response to Pakistan's reciprocal peace offers is entirely justified and hopefully will withstand external pressure to act to the contrary. For Pakistan to say high commissioners will be exchanged and transport links restored is not enough. It must at least acknowledge that there is a terrorist problem that has to be dealt with. Islamabad's mention of denuclearisation and confidence building measures on nuclear issues is a mushroom cloud with twin functions. First, please America, which wants South Asia to denuclearise, and therefore, second, defuse India's focus on terrorism. More of this may come in the future and New Delhi will have to remain very careful and vigilant that dialogue, at whatever level, is not manipulated — for example, questions on India's rights as a sovereign, responsible, democratic country to have nuclear weapons — or be at the receiving end of suspect — “friendly” “informal” advice from Washington. A good way to ensure this is to be proactive, not in terms of arranging summits, but in terms of setting the bilateral agenda. When push comes to Kashmir in Indo-Pak talks, India should offer the LoC as the formal dividing line. Right now, when talks about Kashmir are going on, India's proactive policy should concentrate on raising bilateral issues like Sir Creek, Tulbul Navigation Project, the Siachen conflict and trade preferences. That Pakistan has left many commodities on the negative list while announcing what it claimed were trade liberalising measures demonstrates not only Islamabad's insincerity but also India's opportunities in writing the script.

At the more cynical, and, with Pakistan, the more important, level of policymaking, India must keep in mind the generals of Rawalpindi. Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali is hardly his own man. General Musharraf, who even as “elected” President has refused to give up his post of commander-in-chief, is in charge of all decisions. But even he is not free to ignore the army brass and the ISI. Enmity towards India and keeping the India bogey on the public agenda are among the important reasons the army and ISI command so much power in Pakistan. If Indo-Pak relations really improve, the brasshats and burkah-and-dagger crowd will become seriously underemployed and, therefore, lose a lot of sheen. Therefore, in the unlikely eventuality of some progress in bilateral ties, they will be certain to create difficulties. Only Washington can keep the Pakistani army in line, which says as much about the current nature of the Pakistani state as of future of Indo-Pakistani relations.

7 4 M 3

'OVER-FLIGHTS SHOULD BE DELINKED'

Pak. sets terms for resuming air links

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JULY 8. In response to India's proposal for a resumption of air links, Pakistan has said that it will not be inclined to consider it unless New Delhi is prepared to give guarantees that in the future, a suspension of air links does not automatically entail a stoppage of over-flight facilities.

For the first time since India made the offer for restoration of air links (the May 2 statement of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee), the Pakistan Foreign Office spokesperson, Masood Khan, made it known that Islamabad was ready only for restoration of air links.

When had India sought a clarification whether the restoration of air links would also imply the resumption of over-flight facilities, Pakistan initially said it was a matter to be decided by technical experts. Last fortnight, India agreed for a meeting of the technical

experts.

Mr. Khan told a news conference here that "over-flights have a different dimension. India since January 2002 suspended over-flights for Pakistan and we have to react". He said Pakistan suggested a meeting of civil aviation officials of the two countries to "ensure that one party would not be able to withdraw the over-flight rights of another country".

"This can create a very messy situation. Air links, yes. There is no automaticity for over-flights. For that we will have to have a mechanism and modalities and will have to come to an agreement in accordance with international obligations and treaties," he argued.

It is for the second time in less than a week that Pakistan has talked about the issue of delinking the restoration of air links and over-flight facilities. Last week the Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Riaz Khokar, told journalists in Berlin that Pakis-

tan was ready to resume not only over-flights but also air links between India.

On the suspension of over-flights, he said: "India has already done it two times, so this time we want to make sure there will be no third time".

It is nearly eight weeks since both sides have expressed their desire for revival of air links and yet the proposal has not moved forward. At the heart of the controversy on air links is the question of allowing over-flight facilities on a reciprocal basis.

Pakistan has deliberately adopted the stance to first register its unhappiness over the decision of New Delhi to suspend over-flight facilities from January 1, 2002 along with snapping of air links. Secondly, in the perception of Islamabad, while it is the right of any country to suspend air links, allowing over-flight facilities falls in a separate category.

"It is for the third time since the 1971 war that India has unilaterally suspended the over-flight facility. We believe that the issue of suspension of air links and over-flight facility should be delinked. This is the reason why Pakistan did not respond positively in June last year when India proposed the restoration of over-flight facilities," a senior official in the Pakistan Foreign Office said.

However, a senior diplomat in the Indian High Commission contested the claim. He maintained that Islamabad had moved the International Court of Justice on the subject after the suspension of over-flight facilities in the 70s and lost the case. "Suspension of over-flight facilities is very much the sovereign right of a country," he asserted.

Haggling over the issue is expected to continue in the coming days though there is optimism that air links would be restored in the near future. After all, the Delhi-Lahore bus service is all set to resume on Friday overcoming all hurdles.

Secretary-level talks ruled out

By Our Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JULY 8. India does not see any possibility of talks on the "sidelines" between the Foreign Secretary, Kanwal Sibal, and his Pakistani counterpart, Riaz Khokhar, when South Asian Foreign Secretaries meet in Kathmandu over the next two days.

The Foreign Office spokesman echoed the remarks of the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, that there are no plans to have a bilateral meeting between Mr. Sibal and Mr. Khokhar.

Speaking to presspersons after a public function, Mr. Sinha said he did not think there would be a one-to-one meeting between the Foreign Secretaries as this was not part of the step-by-step approach.

On the resumption of air links Mr. Sinha said that India was ready for technical-level talks between the civil aviation authorities of the two countries. New Delhi was awaiting a response from Pakistan.

India wanted to proceed cautiously in the direction of normalising relations with Pakistan. Mr. Sinha said that the Pakistani High Commissioner-designate was already in India and his Indian counterpart would soon be in place in Islamabad.

The External Affairs Minister also referred to the ongoing visit of a Pakistani business delegation to India.

Tickets issued for Lahore bus

By Our Staff Reporter

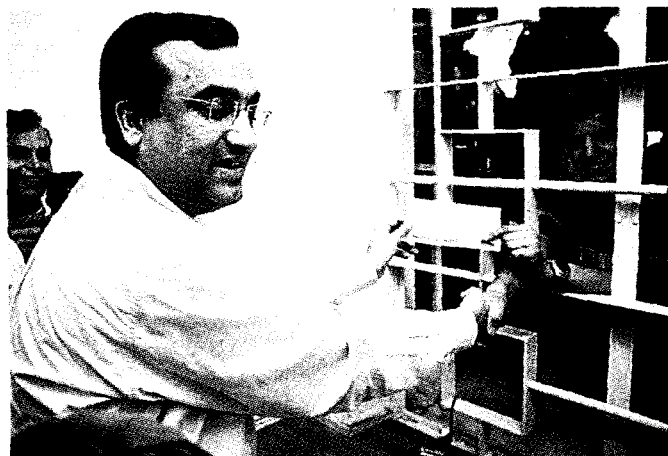
NEW DELHI, JULY 8. While a lot had waited for the past year for resumption of the Delhi-Lahore bus service, it was Mohammad Abdullah of Jammu and Kashmir who bought the first ticket to Lahore.

Giving away the first ticket at the Ambedkar Stadium Terminal was the Delhi Transport Minister, Ajay Maken. His Government had done everything possible to ensure that the buses hit the road at the earliest, he claimed.

For Abdullah it was a pleasant surprise. "I am going to Rawalpindi to meet my sister," he said, adding that the travel would save him a lot of money.

Abdullah was lucky to hog the limelight, as Chandrashekhhar Kulkarni from Mumbai, who was actually issued ticket number one, did not turn up.

Another person who



The Delhi Transport Minister, Ajay Maken, handing over the first ticket for the Delhi-Lahore bus service, in New Delhi on Tuesday. — PTI

attracted media interest was Sunil Lalwani of Indore. Born and brought up in Larkana area of Sindh in Pakistan, he had migrated to India in 1987 and set up a steel and iron business. "We are Hindus but our family had not been able to migrate during Partition

and so 99 per cent of my relatives are in Pakistan," he said.

Noting that this father, a doctor, wanted him to establish himself in India, Sunil said even after marrying a Pakistani, Sangeeta, he had moved here

and subsequently applied for Indian citizenship, which he duly received.

While Sunil is not travelling to Pakistan, his parents — Jeomal Lalwani and Meera Bai — who had come over to India two years ago will be returning "home" on July 30.

A number of people flocked to the booking office.

While some managed to procure the tickets on valid visas, others had to go to the Pakistan High Commission to get the "bus" visa for undertaking the journey.

Incidentally, while there is lot of euphoria among the ordinary people with respect to restoration of the bus service, the official response is rather subdued.

As yet there are no grand plans for a flag-off and unlike last time when the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, had taken the inaugural bus to Lahore, this time there are no important persons lined up for the ride.

Economics must play dominant role in Indo-Pak. ties: Sinha

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, JULY 7. Economics should play a dominant role in India-Pakistan bilateral interaction so that the two countries could meet the challenge of living together as good neighbours, the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, said today. Addressing 100 business leaders from Pakistan at the third meeting of the India-Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (IPCCI), Mr. Sinha said that chambers of commerce of the two countries could play a "critical role" in ensuring the primacy of economic relations. He reiterated his proposal for a "South Asian Union" to further trade relations in the region and said India was prepared to enter into discussions on the issue "from tomorrow".

Speaking at the meeting, the Pakistan High Commissioner-designate, Aziz Ahmed Khan, said that "addressing outstanding political issues" on the basis of "sovereign equality and mutual benefit" would promote trade ties between the two countries and in the rest of South Asia. "Trade and economic cooperation flourish in an atmosphere of peace, amity and cooperation... low intra-regional trade in South Asia can only be attributed to the persistence of suspicion-prone and conflict-relations between the two major countries of the region — India and Pakistan."

Mr. Khan expressed concern at what he termed the "one-sided" export growth strategies. "Ultimate trade restrictive policies not only impeded growth of trade but also adversely affect all partners in the region. For example, although India has extended the MFN (most favoured nation) status to Pakistan, throughout the last decade we have suffered an adverse balance of trade vis-à-vis India." Pakistan, Mr. Khan said in his first public speech after arriving in India, felt that mega-economic projects like the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan and the Iran-Pakistan-India gas



The External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, with (from left) Ilyas Ahmed Bilour, president of the India-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, A.C. Muthiah, president, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), and Aziz Ahmad Khan, Pakistan High Commissioner-designate, at an India-Pakistan trade meeting in New Delhi on Monday. — Photo: V.V. Krishnan

pipeline projects would help in "promoting trust and regional economic cooperation" between New Delhi and Islamabad.

Mr. Sinha said the intention was not to wish away the difference that existed in South Asia. Referring to both the South Asia Preferential Trading Arrangement (SAPTA) and the proposed South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA), he said minimal progress had been made on these fronts. "After eight years and four rounds of SAPTA negotiations, intra-SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) trade forms only four per cent of the total trade of South Asia. The number of products on which preferential tariffs have been exchanged with Pakistan, is in particular, minimal. Back in 1997, SAARC had decided at the summit-level to have a free trade area by 2002. However, till the begin-

ning of 2002, only one meeting had taken place and efforts continue to be made to delay this process. We are now in the second half of 2003, and not a single meeting has taken place this year on SAFTA despite the Kathmandu summit mandate for a speedy conclusion of the talks to finalise the framework treaty."

Mr. Sinha tried to put at rest apprehension that larger economies will inevitably swamp smaller neighbouring countries. "For example, out of the \$1.8 billion worth of trade with China in 2002, Pakistan's exports are quite substantial and to the tune of \$750 million. There is no need to harbour any special fears about India."

Senator Ilyas Ahmed Bilour, new IPCCI chief, said that SAARC visa-holders had been restricted to specific cities for travel purposes when they crossed the border at Wagah.

He also claimed that giving the MFN status to India was "not that important" an issue. This could be extended to India by Pakistan at any time, but the two countries needed to begin trading. South Asia was the only region that had failed to form a regional trading bloc in the current era of "globalisation" due to "our bitterness", the Senator said.

The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) president, A.C. Muthiah, called on the Pakistani business community to impress on its Government to allow free trade with India. He too called for free travel between the two countries. Not only should businesspersons get visas-on-demand, they should be free from "police reporting" and not restricted to a single port of entry or exit. He suggested the resumption of air links at the earliest.

Cross-border business

The Pak business delegation's visit should be followed up by normalisation of trade ties

WITH the exception of North and South Korea, there may be no other neighbouring nations, apart from India and Pakistan, that have a sizeable economy and do not trade actively with each other. The recent phase of low commerce between these two subcontinental biggies is unnatural. Despite three wars, India-Pakistan trade was buoyant in the 1980s and early 1990s. The impasse of the last few years must end and Pakistan can help by restoring normal trade links and adhering to all its multilateral trade obligations bilaterally. A first step in this direction could be marked by the on-going visit of a Pakistani business delegation. It is just as well that these 20 entrepreneurs have come with their families, mixing business with pleasure. For much of India-Pakistan trade is about exchanging goods and services that ordinary people value. Pakistan's fear that Indian goods will flood its market is vastly exaggerated if transportation costs are taken into account. Moreover, if normal trade with a larger and more competitive industrial economy like China has not hurt Pakistan, how can trade with India hurt it?

The time is opportune for Pakistan to take the initiative on normalising its commercial relations with India because of the impressive performance of the Pakistan economy this fiscal. Recording a rate of economic growth of 5.1 per cent in 2002-

03, compared to India's 4.3 per cent, Pakistan has built up foreign exchange reserves of up to 11 months of imports. This should give the country confidence to restore normal trade relations. Hopefully the visiting Pakistani business delegation will go back home and convince their government that restoring business relations with India is a win-win deal for both. It should be recognised here that next to liberal and secular Pakistanis, it is the ordinary traders and businessmen of that country who want improved relations with India. Business everywhere speaks the language of mutual benefit and pragmatism. While neither country figure in each other's list of top ten trading partners, the fact is that "unofficial" cross-border trade, an euphemism for smuggling, and trade through "third countries", denoting switch trade where the final destination is the neighbour but all official papers show a third country's name, is several times larger than official trade.

In 1997, before the present phase of distrust was initiated by General Musharraf, the total official trade was close to \$ 500 million, while unofficial trade was estimated to be \$ 2 billion, a ratio of 1:4. While official trade has fluctuated from year to year since then, the unofficial component may well have increased, as Pakistan's economy is doing better. It is time we made it all official and legal.

Quetta attack: Jamali points finger at India

9/7 (N) Quetta - PTI
Islamabad: In the midst of peace moves by New Delhi, Pakistani Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali on Sunday pointed a finger at India for Friday's suicide attack on a mosque that killed 53 people.

Mr Jamali, who had on Saturday blamed a "foreign hand" for the attack in Pakistan's south-west city of Quetta, went a few notches ahead on Sunday, saying he suspected it could be the fallout of India opening its consulates in Kandahar, Herat and Zaidan. "We cannot overlook the opening of Indian consulates," he told reporters, adding, "the fallout of these consulates will be fully investigated".

The high-level investigation committee probing the attack includes the governor of south-west Baluchistan province, the home minister and the corps commander of the area, he said.

Mr Jamali was in Quetta for the last two days to co-ordinate the efforts to contain the riots which had broken out after the attack on the mosque attended by the Shia minority. He said it was a planned attempt to sabotage the successful tour to the US and four other countries undertaken by Gen Pervez Musharraf to improve the image of Pakistan. PTI

Pak. trade team hopes ties will improve

By Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar

WAGAH BORDER (AMRITSAR), JULY 4. A 58-member Pakistani delegation crossed over into India from the International Border here this morning in the hope that the small step it took across the border would go a long way in improving ties between the two nations and strengthen bilateral trade which stood at a mere \$ 204.10 millions in 2001-03.

Leading the delegation, which comprised 38 businessmen, Senator Ilyas Ahmed Bilour said they had come to promote love, affection and harmony and discovered an opportunity to do so in the friendly atmosphere created by the initiatives taken by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, and his Pakistani counterpart, Mir Zafarullah Jamali.

"I feel the two Governments are working to normalise relations and so this is the time for businessmen on both sides of the border to seize the initiative and work for increasing bilateral trade which has the potential of growing manifold within a short time-frame," said Mr. Bilour, who also owns Bilour Industries in Peshawar.

In India, he said, these delegates would be joined by more from Pakistan. Together, nearly 150 delegates would then take part in the two-day Third Meeting of the India-Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IPCCI) beginning in New Delhi on July 7.

At the end of the conference, "the biggest-ever business delegation to India from Pakistan" would submit its recommendations to the Pakistan Government. The conference would also witness the conduct of elections to the IPCCI besides deliberations on strengthening its role and improving cross-border trade. "We want rela-



The visiting Pakistani business delegation at the Wagah border in Amritsar on Friday.

—Photo: R.V. Moorthy

tions to improve. Over the past 50 years, people on both sides have suffered enough due to the politicians," he said, adding "neighbours cannot be separated". Sharing his views, the life-member of the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI),

Anwar Ahmed Tata, said restoration of road, rail and air links was very necessary for improving trade. "Our hearts were always united. The animosity should be buried. When Europe can come together as one and have a common currency, why can't we improve our trade," he

wondered, and quipped that "we are being crushed by prejudice".

The delegation, which was given a warm welcome by the FICCI's Deputy Secretary-General, Krishan Kalra, also hoped that various pending issues such as grant of MFN (Most Favoured Nation) status to India by Pakistan would be resolved soon and trade in goods such as pharmaceuticals, textiles and leather would pick up.

Noting that women also had an important role to play in improving bilateral relations, a member of the FPCCI ladies group and wife of Mr. Bilour, Firat Bilour, asserted that the atmosphere was more conducive now than ever before to do business. "I am here on my fifth visit and find the mood now is probably the best it has been in the past six or seven years."

She has her own agenda

By Our Staff Reporter

WAGAH BORDER (AMRITSAR), JULY 4. While for the senior members of the Pakistan delegation the next week will be all about business, the youngest member, four-year-old Ayesha Butt, who is accompanying her parents, has other things on her mind. On her second visit to India, this fan of Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan is fascinated by the idea of visiting the toy stores of Chennai, the beaches of Mumbai and the parks of Bangalore all of which she had seen on her previous visit in March. Probably, her dreams are shared by many others in Pakistan as well.

Musharraf pushes West Asia-style road map on Kashmir

PARIS, JULY 4. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, today pursued his push for a four-step West Asia-style peace roadmap on the Kashmir issue, despite India's rejection of the concept. Gen. Musharraf told reporters in Paris at the end of a four-nation tour that world leaders could help the nuclear-armed rivals resolve their dispute.

"I am fully satisfied, I am very glad that the ice has been broken and there is a move toward initiation of dialogue and normalisation of relations," he told reporters.

"Problems only arise when we start talk-

ing but we don't talk of Kashmir. This is untenable."

He outlined the four steps as: begin talks; accept Kashmir as the central problem dividing the rivals; "eliminate whatever is unacceptable to the people of Kashmir, for India and for Pakistan"; and adopt a "win-win" solution.

"Can there be more flexibility, can there be more accommodation, can there be more understanding on this issue?"

Last week, Gen. Musharraf suggested a West Asia-style peace roadmap on Kashmir

that would include third party mediation, a proposal rejected by India.

But he said there were already third parties working "behind the scenes to encourage this process of dialogue to start," without specifying the parties concerned.

Acknowledging that resolving the dispute through bilateral channels would be preferable, he said: "You clap with two hands; maybe a third hand is not required to clap. But when one of the hands is not coming forward, then you require someone to facilitate." — AFP

Trade relief hope for peace push

PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, July 3: There is a strong possibility that Pakistan may offer substantial trade concessions to India in the next few days.

If that happens, it will give a major boost to the peace process between the neighbours and brighten the chances of a summit between Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and his Pakistani counterpart, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, by the year-end.

Indications are that Pakistan may remove 73 items from the negative list in its trade dealings with India. The decision may be formally announced either before or at the forthcoming Saarc senior officials' meeting in Kathmandu next week.

"If that happens, it will be a very positive development," a senior foreign ministry official said. He pointed out that the 73 items in question had been put on the negative list by Pakistan in 1998 and several rounds of negotiations have failed to knock them off the list.

Their removal from the negative list might be viewed by some in India as too little, too late. But many feel this can be the first big step towards normalising bilateral trade relations.

Foreign secretary Kanwal Sibal and his Pakistani counterpart, Riaz Khokar, will participate along with others in the Saarc meet scheduled from July 9 to 11. Among the decisions the foreign secretaries of the South Asian nations are likely to take is to finalise the date for the Saarc summit in Islamabad.

Pakistan has suggested a date at the year-end, but the other Saarc members are yet to decide whether December was a good time. India has maintained that a summit will be meaningless

unless the members manage to make substantial progress on the economic front.

The possible trade concessions may be offered by Pakistan in the Saarc forum and not directly to India. But since the 73 items were put by Pakistan on the negative list with India in mind, their removal will directly benefit Delhi.

In May this year, Jamali had offered 250 items India could trade in while announcing a series of confidence-building measures in response to Delhi's nomination of a new high commissioner for Islamabad.

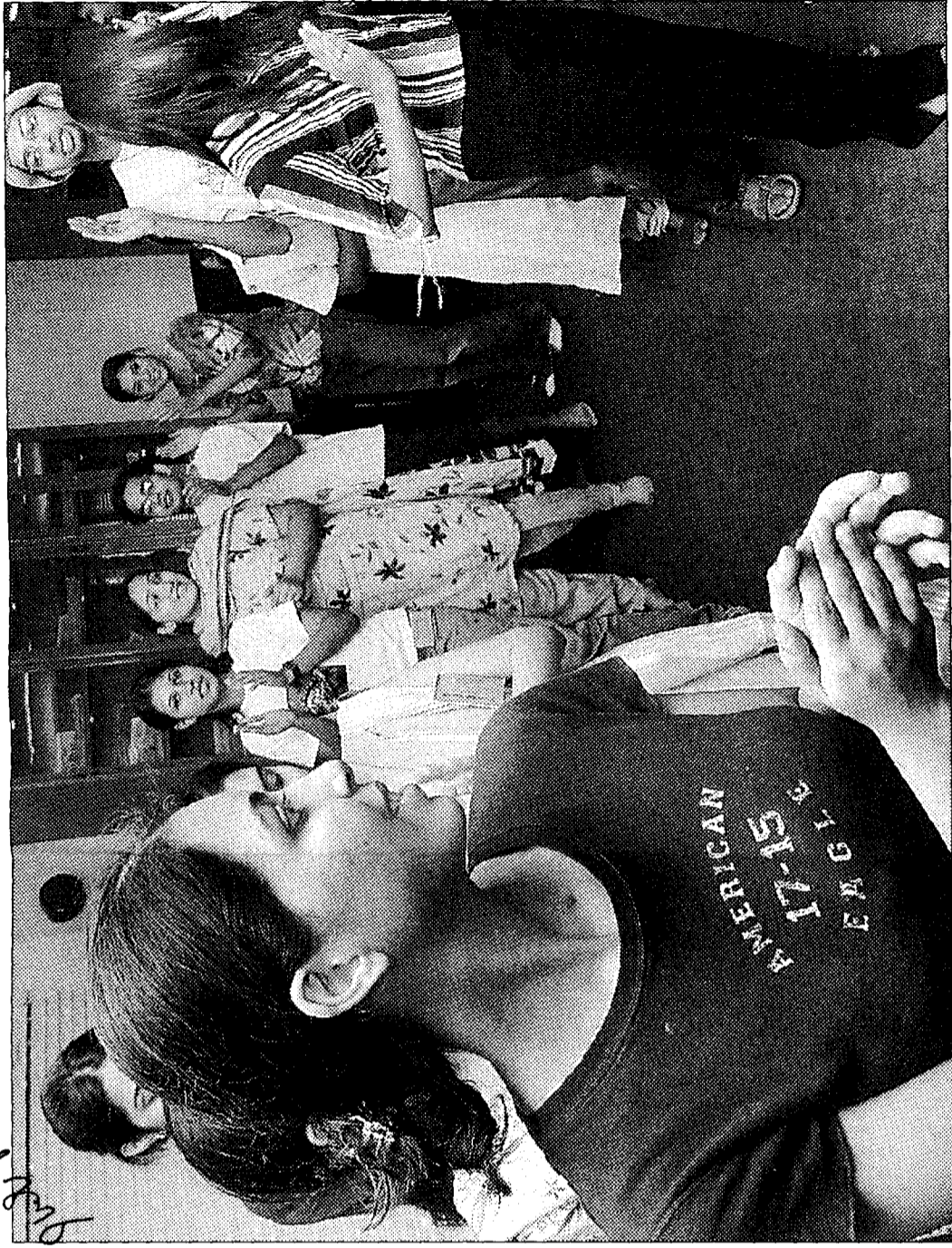
But Delhi soon found out that 146 of the items were on the negative list.

Pakistani officials said no decision has yet been taken on the 146 items. Neither are they willing to confirm whether an announcement on the 73 items will take place in the next few days.

Officials in South Block pointed out that there have been unofficial reports that Islamabad is willing to remove the 73 items from the negative list.

They argued that in the new financial year — which began from July 1 — Pakistan is scheduled to come out with its new export-import policy. If it takes a decision on the 73 items, it will be reflected in their gazette. "We cannot take a stand on the issue unless we see the announcement of their removal from the negative list in the official gazette," an official said.

The Indian foreign ministry has made it clear that the Kathmandu meeting would not be a bilateral one and the focus will remain firmly on Saarc-related issues, particularly trade. But if Pakistan finally decides on removing some of the tariff barriers, it may help clear the air between the neighbours and pave



Members of the Youth Initiative for Peace, an organisation of Indian students, practise for a cultural programme in Karachi. The group of 15 students is on a 10-day visit to Pakistan to participate in a cultural festival. (AFP)

the way for resuming the stalled dialogue.

Musharraf on talks

Peace talks could start soon and should not be derailed by trouble in Kashmir, Reuters reported. Pakistani President Pervez Mu-

sharraf as saying today. "We are moving towards both sides," Musharraf told a news briefing at a Paris conference on investment opportunities in Pakistan. Violence in Kashmir goes on,

despite steps to improve ties, including plans to resume bus services between the two countries this month. Militants stormed an army camp at Sunjwan in Jammu, killing 12 soldiers, on Saturday. Pakistan had condemned the attack, describing it as a "terrorist act". "It (trouble in Kashmir) must not upset the process of peace," said Musharraf. "If there are extremists who want to derail the peace process, they should not stand in the way of two governments who want peace."

Pakistan High Commissioner presents credentials

NEW DELHI, July 1. —The Pakistani High Commissioner-designate, Mr Aziz Ahmad Khan, presented a set of his papers of credentials (references) to the foreign ministry's chief of protocol, Mr Pinak Chakravarty, today, as a first step. Mr Khan will have to wait till the President, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, is ready to receive his credentials, and only then will he be able to perform his official functions as his country's envoy. Given his hectic schedule, it is normal practice for the President to accept the credentials of a few envoys bunched together, so Mr Khan may have to wait a while.

India's High Commissioner-designate to Islamabad, Mr Shiv Shankar Menon, is expected to assume charge towards the end of July. The next phase of diplomacy is expected to begin once the High Commissioners are officially in place. India, meanwhile, has proposed that the stalled Delhi-Lahore bus service begin from 11 July and is awaiting a response from Pakistan, official sources said. There has been no communication from Islamabad on civil aviation links either. — SNS

India for Delhi-Lahore bus from July 11

HDI By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, JUNE 30. India has suggested to Pakistan that the Delhi-Lahore bus service could resume on July 11, even as the Pakistan High Commissioner-designate to India, Aziz Ahmed Khan, arrived here this evening.

Official sources said that as both India and Pakistan had given visas to their bus crew on Saturday and Monday respectively, New Delhi had suggested that the operations could begin on July 11. Pakistan, too, said that the service was "about to resume".

The service operated on Tuesdays and Fridays before it was suspended after the December 13, 2001, terrorist attack on Parliament House.

The Delhi Transport Corporation will begin accepting bookings from tomorrow for those having valid visas.

On arrival after crossing the Wagah border, Mr. Aziz Khan reiterated the Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf's offer that Islamabad is ready for a dialogue with India anytime and anywhere.

Hoping that the dialogue would start soon, he favoured restoring the strength of the High Commissions in Islamabad and New Delhi.

'No parallel'

In a related development, the Foreign Office today said there was no parallel between Tibet and Jammu and Kashmir as



The Pakistan High Commissioner, Aziz Ahmed Khan, on his arrival at the Wagah border checkpoint on Monday. — PTI

suggested by the Pakistani President. "There is no similarity between Tibet and Jammu and Kashmir. Our position that the Tibet Autonomous Region is part of the territory of the People's Republic of China has been consistent for nearly five decades.

"On Jammu and Kashmir, the problem is precisely that Pakistan refuses to recognise the political and legal reality that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India. Clearly, therefore, the flexibility that President Musharraf has referred to, has to be shown by

Pakistan," the spokesman said.

Talking to presspersons at his residence, after driving down from Amritsar this evening, Mr. Aziz Khan said Islamabad had no hesitation if the Indian and Pakistani Foreign Secretaries met on the sidelines of a SAARC meeting in Kathmandu in early July.

Asked what message he had brought from Islamabad, he said: "Pakistan wants good... neighbourly relations based on the internationally-recognised principles of sovereign equality... we would like to resolve all outstanding issues with India through peaceful means... including the Jammu and Kashmir issue."

Mr. Khan hoped that the process "started now" would gain momentum and move rapidly leading to the two countries sitting across the negotiating table "very soon".

He favoured early technical discussions to resume air services between the two countries.

Asked about his previous stint as the Deputy High Commissioner here in the 1980s, Mr. Khan said that it was a pleasant experience although his stay was a little less than two years. "Revisiting India was a great pleasure and honour."

On coming to a house that has been "empty" since the previous occupant, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, was asked to leave by India in May 2002, Mr. Khan merely said: "No fault of ours".

INDIA, PAK. HAVE A LONG WAY TO GO: MUSHARRAF

New Pak. envoy arriving today

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

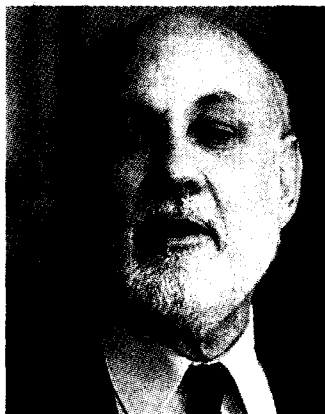
ISLAMABAD, JUNE 29. India and Pakistan will be taking the first concrete step tomorrow, since the April 17/18 peace initiative by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, when Pakistan's High Commissioner-designate to India, Aziz Ahmad Khan, reaches Delhi tomorrow evening.

Mr. Khan, an old India hand who had served as Deputy High Commissioner in the Pakistan mission in Delhi in the late Eighties, will take charge soon, amid expectations from the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, that vis-a-vis Kashmir India would show the kind of "flexibility" it has shown in the case of Tibet.

In an interview to a private Pakistani television channel in Los Angeles, where he is on a high-profile tour, Gen. Musharraf made it clear that while the first tentative steps towards peace have been taken, India and Pakistan have a long way to go in resolving of their differences.

"The flexibility India has shown on Tibet is a welcome sign. One can only hope it happens in the case of Kashmir too. At Agra Mr. Vajpayee and I had agreed that there could be no peace in the sub-continent without solution of Kashmir. I believe the Indian Prime Minister is a man of peace," he said in response to a specific question.

Asked about the comments made by the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, that India does not subscribe to any "road map on Kashmir" from a



Aziz Ahmad Khan

third country, Gen. Musharraf said it had been the position of New Delhi.

"I have given my four-point formula of step-by-step approach. Till India and Pakistan are sincere in finding a solution to Kashmir, there could be no movement. Of course Kashmiris have to be involved in any eventual solution," he said.

The Pakistan mission would be seeing the return of the top diplomat after over a year.

The last High Commissioner, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, had to return to Islamabad in May 2002 after Delhi sought his recall on the ground of "parity". India had recalled its then High Commissioner, Vijay Nambiar, in the last week of December 2001 in the wake of the December 13 Parliament attack.

Mr. Khan, now camping in Lahore, is scheduled to cross over to India tomorrow morning through the Wagah border.

From there, he would travel by road to New Delhi through Punjab and Haryana.

He would reach New Delhi late in the evening and take effective charge of the mission after presenting his credentials to the President, A.P.J. Kalam. No date for the formal ceremony has been fixed yet.

The Indian High Commissioner-designate to Pakistan and present Ambassador to China, Shivshankar Menon, is expected to reach here in the third week of next month. Mr. Menon is in the process of winding up his stay in Beijing and handing over charge to his successor.

He is expected to be here some time in the second week of July.

Diplomatic and political observers believe that the restoration of diplomatic contacts is expected to speed up the process of normalisation initiated after Mr. Vajpayee's peace initiative.

After taking over, Mr. Khan is expected to hold discussions with the Indian Government on the delays in the restoration of bus, air and rail links between the two countries.

Khan has vast contacts with Indian politicians, diplomats and the media.

He has also served as Director-General of the South Asia desk in the Foreign Office here and shot into prominence as Pakistan's Ambassador to Afghanistan during the Taliban regime, during which he was the only foreign diplomat in Kabul.

FIGMENT OF GENERAL'S IMAGINATION: DELHI

Pervez roadmap plea rejected

Statesman News Service
and Agencies

BEIJING/NEW DELHI, June 26. — India today rejected Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf's suggestion for a US-sponsored roadmap on the lines of West Asia to resolve the Kashmir issue, saying there was no place for third party mediation.

According to officials and diplomats, the suggestion that there is such a roadmap is "a figment of his (the General's) imagination." "It is something that he (Musharraf) has repeatedly tried to push through," an observer said.

"We have repeatedly said there is no third party role in the bilateral dialogue... There is no space for a third party at the table," the external affairs minister, Mr Yashwant Sinha, said. He told a TV news channel that issues between India and Pakistan have to be resolved bilaterally.

General Musharraf had told an American TV channel that he would like US President George W Bush to involve himself in a West Asia-style 'roadmap' on Kashmir, but feared India would not allow that as it wanted bilateral resolution "of everything".

The USA, however, refuses to get directly involved, and has denied it seeks any role in the talks. According to diplomatic sources, beyond "gently nudging" the two countries "in the direction of talks," the USA has always maintained that the issue is for India and Pakistan to resolve

their differences bilaterally. The only 'facilitation' it has done is to try and remove irritants that prevented the two sides from getting together at the table, a diplomatic observer said.

Pakistan has consistently attempted to get either the UN or any other third party (preferably the USA) involved in talks with India to "shy away from its commitment to the Shimla Agreement," official sources said. But the Indian government is equally clear that outstanding differences, including those over Jammu and Kashmir, can only be resolved bilaterally.

Officials point out that talk of a 'road map' and active third party involvement, for example in West Asia, have led nowhere in stemming the flow of violence or resolving the decades-old tensions there.

Mr Sinha has been asked in recent weeks about a 'road map' the Indian government may have chalked out on how it wants to go ahead on the road to dialogue with Pakistan. While denying that there is any firmly outlined roadmap, the government is clear that it will take forward the Prime Minister's 'hand of peace' initiative, slowly, one step at a time.

Advani on US aid: In a virtual disapproval of the \$ 3 billion US economic aid to Pakistan, half of which is for defence, Mr LK Advani today said it baffled the people and the government of India why such assistance is extended to "sponsors and abettors" of terrorism.

India should compromise: Musharraf

Press Trust of India

WASHINGTON, June 26.

— Acknowledging Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee as a "partner" in the historic peace process, President Pervez Musharraf has said Pakistan realises its stake in better relations with India but wants New Delhi to show "magnanimity" and "greatness" in resolving the Kashmir issue.

"The onus or initiative for reconciliation and accommodation is always shown by the larger country... therefore, I would suggest, that the onus for peace in the region lies much more with India than with Pakistan," Gen. Musharraf said at the US Institute for Peace here last evening.

Asserting that Pakistan was committed to peace and doesn't believe in violence, he said, "We realise our stake in better relations with India." Maintaining that Pakistan wanted a just and mutually acceptable resolution of J&K and other issues, he, however, said it has to be a "win-win" situation for both the countries and the Kashmiris.

Pakistan's ambassador to the USA, Mr Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, has said the "dubious character" of India was the reason for the three Indo-Pak wars.

We have repeatedly said there is no third party role in the bilateral dialogue... There is no space for a third party at the table

27 JUN 2003

India, Pak. figure in Blair-Putin talks

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, JUNE 26. The British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, said today that India and Pakistan figured in his talks with the visiting Russian President, Vladimir Putin, here this morning, but did not give details. The deployment of Indian and Pakistani troops in Iraq was believed to have been the context for the discussion as Mr. Blair repeatedly emphasised the need for the international community to cooperate in the reconstruction of post-war Iraq.

He had also raised the issue with the Indian Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, when the two met here

recently, and on Wednesday Mr. Blair told the Commons that 19 to 20 more countries were expected to send their troops to Iraq in the next few weeks.

Mr. Blair, who was speaking at a joint press conference after his talks with Mr. Putin, said the new U.N. resolution provided the basis for the world community to work together to build a "democratic", "stable" and "prosperous" Iraq.

In remarks that were seized

by India watchers to interpret as a reference to Indian concerns over cross-border terrorism, Mr. Blair warned against the threat from terrorism and rise of "religious extremism".

"The issue is high on the consciousness of the international community after the recent interaction which the Indian Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister had with world leaders, including Mr. Putin and Mr. Blair," an Indian source said.

'INDIA AS THE LARGER COUNTRY SHOULD BE MAGNANIMOUS'

10-1
27/6

LoC as border not a solution, says Musharraf

Ind
PK

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, JUNE 26. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has said that India being the larger country should show "magnanimity" and make more compromises if a lasting solution to the Kashmir problem is to be realised.

Gen. Musharraf dismissed the idea that the Line of Control (LoC) could be turned into an International Border as a way of achieving permanent peace.

"We have fought three wars on this Line of Control. You are proposing a solution which is the dispute itself. How can a dispute be a solution," he asked in response to a question.

Gen. Musharraf was participating in an afternoon session organised by the United States Institute of Peace here.

He said that in his view Kashmir was the only issue between India and Pakistan and warned that New Delhi's insistence on the status quo would not be facilitating a peace process.

"If, instead of a peace process, India insists on the permanence of an unjust status quo in Kashmir, when this status quo has been the problem from the very outset, then it would be creating obstacles to a peace process, rather than facilitating it," he said.

"The onus or initiative for reconciliation and accommodation is always shown by a larger country... if Pakistan during mediation (takes) steps to compromise, it is seen as a sellout, it is seen as a sign of weakness. While if the same thing is done by a larger partner, India, it is seen as a sign of magnanimity and a sign of greatness," Gen. Musharraf observed.

On a high profile visit to the U.S. that included a summit meeting on Tuesday at Camp David with the President, George W. Bush, Gen. Musharraf said that he was extremely encouraged by the recent overtures of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, and said that

he looked forward to the resumption of the dialogue process.

"Despite many disappointments and differences of the past, the Prime Minister of Pakistan and I are ready to acknowledge Prime Minister Vajpayee as a partner in a historic peace process. This should be aimed at altering negative public attitudes and stereotypes on both sides of the border while moving towards a broad range of cooperation and a just and mutually acceptable resolution of Jammu and Kashmir and other issues," Gen. Musharraf said.

While the onus was on India, Pakistan was willing to play its role, Gen. Musharraf said but warned that there were principles that could never be compromised with.

Gen. Musharraf reiterated his four-step peace process that he originally proposed at the Agra summit in 2001 — envisaging a meaningful dialogue; acknowledging the centrality of Kashmir in the India-Pakistan dispute; discarding unacceptable positions; and, finally, focussing on win-win scenarios acceptable to all parties, including the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

"I believe this is the only way

forward. I have long expressed my readiness for dialogue at any level, time and place," he said.

"We are committed to a peace process. We do not believe in violence as (a) means to peace... We realise our stake in better relations with India. If India can adopt a similar attitude towards relations with Pakistan, then our efforts to resolve our differences on Kashmir and other issues need no longer tread the barren paths of the past," Gen. Musharraf maintained.

'Cannot give guarantee on infiltration'

In a conversation with the reporters and editors of *The Washington Post*, Gen. Musharraf said that there was "no mathematical answer" to cross-border terrorism and that his country had done all it can and cannot be held responsible "to ensure, to guarantee that not a bird will fly across the Line of Control". He was replying to a question on his assessment of the situation on the LoC.

"...this cross-border terrorism has no mathematical answer, there is no mathematics involved... I can't answer you how much infiltration is going on, I don't know. For me there is

no infiltration going on..."

Gen. Musharraf said he would not be able to give a guarantee that nothing was taking place across the LoC. But, at the level of the Government, the Pakistani leader argued, it had been ensured that nothing ought to be happening across the LoC. "... Pakistan cannot be held responsible to ensure, to guarantee that not a bird will fly across the Line of Control. It's not humanly possible. Let the 700,000 troops of India do it. Why aren't they doing it? They've got 700,000 troops. Because it's not possible, Gen. Musharraf said.

He said that he had banned the religious extremist groups who were creating apprehension in India and the world as also making problems for Pakistan. The "Lashkar-i-Taiba has been banned, the Jaish-i-Mohammad has been banned. There are hundreds of offices out there, and I mean hundreds and hundreds of offices around the country, including Kashmir have been sealed and closed. Their accounts have been frozen. Nobody before this could have touched them, they couldn't even have touched anyone of these organisations or their leaders..." he said.

No third party mediation: Sinha

NEW DELHI, JUNE 26. India today rejected the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf's suggestion for a U.S.-sponsored road map, on the lines of West Asia, to resolve the Kashmir issue, saying that there is no place for third party mediation.

"We have repeatedly said there is no third party role in the bilateral dialogue... There is no space for a third party at the table," the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, told NDTV, adding that the issues between India and Pakistan had to be resolved bilaterally.

Gen. Musharraf had told an American TV channel that he would like the U.S. President, George W. Bush, to involve himself in a West Asia-style 'road map' on Kashmir, but feared India would not allow

that as it wanted bilateral resolution "of everything".

On whether India had accepted China's territorial sovereignty over Tibet, and Beijing had agreed to New Delhi's control over Sikkim, Mr. Sinha said "I would say we have made progress on all issues including a great understanding on Tibet and Sikkim." And, there was no fundamental change in India's stand on Tibet.

Asked if the two countries continued to see each other as rivals for control in the region, he said, "I don't think so. It's a healthy competition as between any two nations." The two countries should move ahead in their bilateral relations and a lot of issues would be sorted out along the way. — PTI

'Kargil sabotaged our Kashmir resolution'

TALKING WITH
NAWAZ SHARIF

EXILED Pakistan premier **NAWAZ SHARIF** may have been badly mauled politically but he refuses to fade away. Having left Pakistan under an alleged deal with General Pervez Musharraf's regime, Sharif and his family are not supposed to either return to the country or create any political trouble for General Musharraf. However, Sharif has continued to manoeuvre politically and run his party from long-distance. **DAILY TIMES**
HASAN interviewed him via e-mail to ascertain his views on a range of issues confronting Pakistan. *Excerpts:*

■ **A virtual political deadlock has developed in Pakistan and there appears to be no meeting point between parties of the opposition and General Pervez Musharraf. How can the situation be resolved?**

The underlying cause of the stalemate characterising the Pakistan political arena is the illegitimacy on which Musharraf has tried to base his edifice. How can one man play with the destiny of 140 million people? There is only one recourse to it now. Musharraf has to drop his LFO completely, give up his uniform and step down. This crisis will itself find its way to its logical end: an end which I clearly see as the triumph of the democratic forces in Pakistan. As things stand today it is one person versus the whole country.

■ **There have been calls for a grand national reconciliation...**

There can be no parleys with traitors. However, the need for a national reconciliation is a must among the democratic forces in the country. A code of conduct must be defined for the future under which all democratic norms be respected by the political forces of the country.

■ **How can the Pak Army be kept out of politics now and forever?**

In my opinion it is not the belief of the armed forces in general that the politicians are incapable of ruling the country. They also do not believe that they have equal rights to exercise political power in running the government. The top military leadership has unfortunately

wish there was a judge or a court in Pakistan to take cognisance of this.

■ **Is it possible for you and Ms Bhutto to together land in Pakistan to call the regime's bluff and make its stay in power untenable. Or would you like to return under some sort of an "arrangement" with the regime?**

While Ms Benazir Bhutto and I are unanimous on the need for the restoration of democracy in Pakistan, we have had no discussions or understanding regarding our return. Insofar as return by "arrangement" with Musharraf is concerned, if that were to be an option, I would not have had to undergo what I had to. General Mahmood and his team of senior generals wanted to strike a deal with me on the fateful night of the coup i.e. October 12, 1999 in return for my resignation as Prime Minister and for dissolving the parliament. Or at least I could have taken advantage of the deal offered to me here in Jeddah through high-profile emissaries from Musharraf. I may add that there are politicians who also believe in self-respect and honour more than the politics of opportunism.

■ **The rise of the MMA and the Taliban-like agenda it is pushing through is causing great anxiety all around because many see them as terrorists. How do you see these developments?**

The continuity of bad governance, creation of a political vacuum by forcibly keeping the major political parties away from the scene and the failure of Musharraf's government to address geopolitical concerns, has culminated into the natural consequence of emergence of clerics. Regarding the MMA, it is unfair to compare them with terrorists. In politics whatever may be one's belief or ideology, one must learn to be tolerant towards others, giving them the right to their point of view. It is only then that anomalies and indeed extremism

■ **Vajpayee and myself had decided a deadline for a resolution of the Kashmir dispute.**

Had it not been for Kargil was a link in the chain.

sabotaged the issue of Kashmir would have reached a historical resolution long ago



■ **Kargil is a long story. However, all events in the aftermath of Kargil episode especially Oct 12, '99, are inextricably linked. Insha Allah the true version of the misadventure of Kargil shall not remain a secret like the truth behind the fall of Dhaka. Kargil is a skeleton in Musharraf's closet. For the time being, I can only say I took every thing on my shoulders to save our army from a major embarrassment**

can be avoided. In the absence of an atmosphere of accommodation, resilience and tolerance the hardliners get promoted as is being experienced in Pakistan.

■ **What, once for all, is the Kargil story?**

Kargil is a long story; long enough to disallow its exhaustion here. However, all events in the aftermath of Kargil episode especially 12th October 1999 are inextricably linked. *Insha Allah* the true version of the misadventure of Kargil shall not remain a secret like the truth behind the fall of Dhaka. The facts shall be brought before the public and all those responsible shall have to account for their deeds. Kargil is a skeleton in Musharraf's closet. For the time being, I can only say I took every thing on my shoulders to save our army from a major embarrassment.

and pressuring and blackmailing members of parliament and politicians. Yes, the charter of duties of the ISI has to be redefined if we are to safeguard the country from both internal and external enemies.

■ **In 1997 you were returned to office with a massive mandate. It is the general view that not satisfied with that, you tried to grab more and more power, proceeding on the questionable assumption that you should have your own handpicked men, loyal to you, in every position. Wasn't it this thinking that led to the show-down with the CJ of the Supreme Court, the then COAS and not much later with your own handpicked COAS, now the President?**

I have always fought to uphold the Constitution and the norms of democracy. I have indeed refused to compromise on principles. If a hardened swindler refuses to give up his conduct, the solution is not to legalise his criminality. As they say evil rises to the surface when good men remain silent. It is our greatest weakness, that people have been able to leave unpunished after causing disasters. Thus we have those responsible for the fall of Dhaka at large with no questions asked. Our tragedy from the outset has remained that infiltrators have been successful in conspiring their ways to the corridors of power through illegal intrusion on the realms of those actually mandated by the people.

My experience twice as PM has indeed been mind-boggling. My conclusion is that due to undemocratic powers like Article 58(2)(b), duly backed by the army chief, the mandate and the ensuing authority of the Prime Minister is disregarded and they resort to blackmail through each other to compromise on his constitutional authority for which he is accountable to his electorate.

This tug of war inevitably leads to a clash resulting in disruption of the democratic process. It has happened in the case of the dismissal of the Assemblies in 1990 and then in 1993 when to our surprise, the military took over key establishments like the TV station even before President Ghulam Ishaq Khan's dissolution order was issued. The then army chief General (Abdul Waheed) Kakar had no authority to send the forces anywhere without the Prime Minister's orders.

The ambit of authority of the army chief does not allow him to meddle with the country's internal politics. Thus a proposal by General Jahangir Karamat for a National Security Council over and above the PM and the Cabinet was not simply undemocratic but an attempted assumption of executive authority under the illegal sanction of military might. When this was pointed out, he like an officer and a gentleman accepted his fault and asked for an early retirement. In his words "... a lesson for posterity".

But the abuse of the trusteeship of the armed forces of the country to make such a proposition and then to disrupt the business of the country by implications of such statements continued unabated. Things were not dissimilar when I dismissed Musharraf. In his case it was basically a chain of events leading from Kargil that made me resort to such action.

■ **It has been said that had you and Ms Bhutto learnt to live and let live, democratic politics would have flourished and Pakistan would not have been under military rule...**

Rightwing political politics was consolidated during General Zia's regime, aimed at checkmating PPP. The consequence was a yawning gap between left and right-wingers. This divide has played a somewhat negative role in the political arena. In the final analysis it is the feeling of superiority of the army over civilians, a legacy of the Raj, and the greed for power which goads the Army Chief to usurp the government.

■ **Did the Pakistan army sabotage the Lahore Summit Process in 1999? What were the understandings reached between your government and that of Mr Vajpayee? Former ambassador Niaz Naik has made some astonishing claims about a solution having been found for Kashmir. Isn't it time you spoke as to what the Lahore process was and what it wasn't?**

I can only say here that Mr Vajpayee and myself had almost decided a deadline for a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute. Mr Vajpayee's visit to Lahore was a link in the chain. Had it not been for Kargil whereby all our plans were sabotaged the issue of Kashmir would have reached a historical resolution long ago.

(Courtesy: Daily Times)

Delhi finds cheer in Bush conditions

PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, June 25: The \$3-billion financial package for Pakistan that the US announced yesterday may be withheld unless the Pervez Musharraf regime shows tangible progress in areas like curbing terrorism and nuclear proliferation and restoring democracy.

The aid package, half of which is earmarked for military purchase, was announced after a meeting at Camp David between US President George W. Bush and Musharraf. The \$3 billion will be given to Islamabad over a period of five years.

"It is a process which has just begun. But a lot will depend on whether Pakistan takes America's concerns on some of the crucial issues seriously or not," a South Block official said.

Another factor that may have played a role in making the conditions tighter is the possibility of India joining the US effort to stabilise Iraq.

Though India has been watching the developments closely it has so far not made any public comments. But South Block insiders pointed out that though there is nothing to be alarmed about, a lot would depend on how the process that has been started yesterday evolves over the next few years.

Matching the Indian view, the *New York Times* said Bush has offered a "tightly conditioned" package to Pakistan. Quoting a senior US official, it said: "Mr Bush had made clear that the new package of aid was dependent on continued cooperation in battling terrorism and a permanent end to assisting the North Korean nuclear programme."

The official, the paper added, also said Musharraf, who has publicly denied that his country aided North Korea in building uranium-enrichment facilities, told the US President he under-

stood that any kind of military aid is "a no-go area".

The aid package, particularly the part on military purchase, remains undefined. There are, however, indications that though the F-16 fighter planes have been denied, the US is looking into Pakistan's request for the Hawk-eye and Orion — sophisticated Airborne Warning and Control Systems.

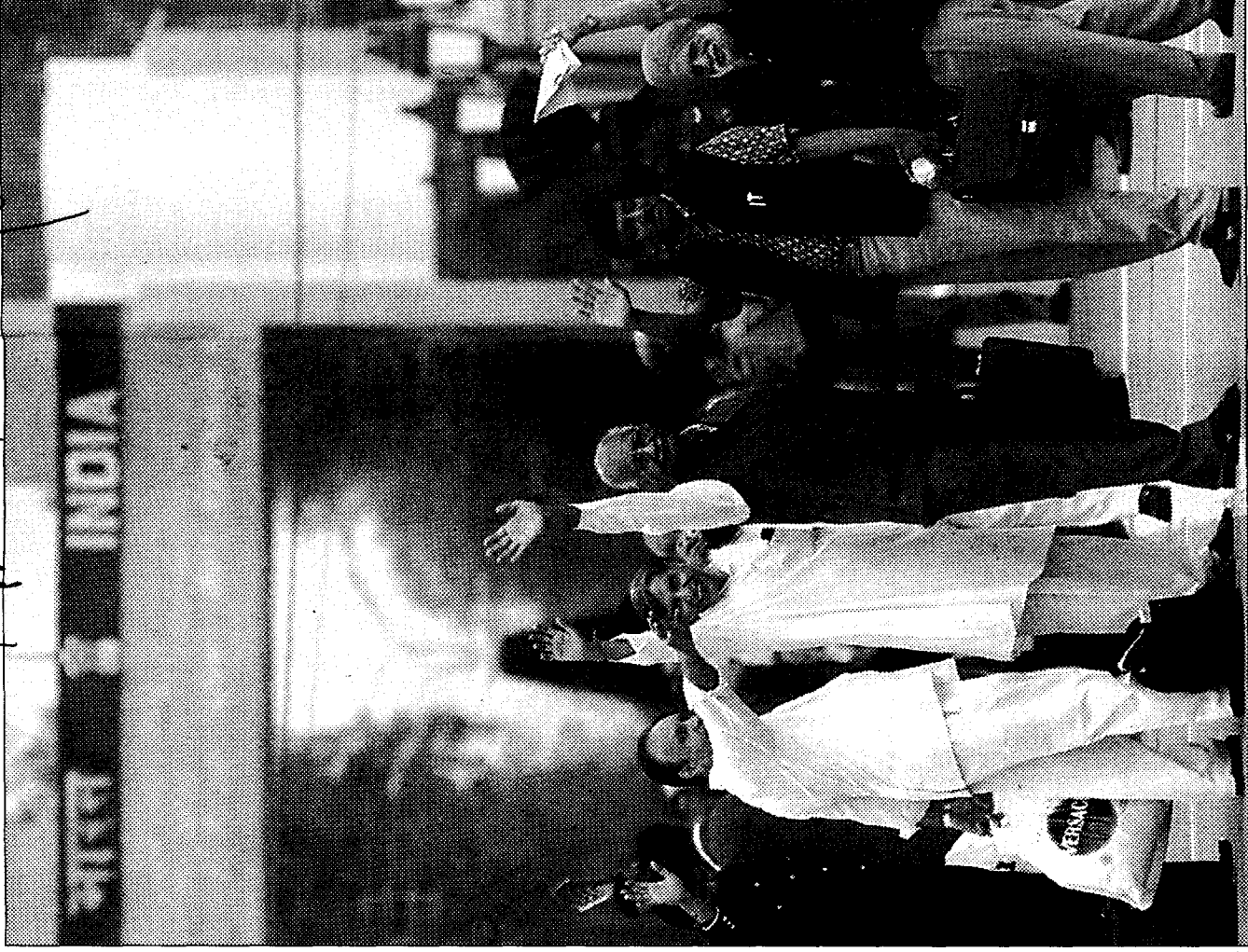
But sources in the Indian establishment pointed out that much of what Pakistan is likely to get as military hardware has already been shared by Washington with Delhi and there was nothing to be alarmed about the package.

The aid package, Indian officials said, is for "services rendered" by the Pakistan President to the US in its fight against al Qaida and to bolster his image at home. That Bush has made it clear that Musharraf needs to take action against terrorists active in Kashmir was also an indication that Washington will watch Islamabad's actions.

There are, however, sections in India which feel that the outcome of the Camp David meeting has been a major setback for India. They argued that Bush has publicly announced what he is offering Pakistan to show the importance he gives to Musharraf, but the so called commitment made by Musharraf to Bush was done in private.

But others pointed out that there are clear indications that Musharraf will be closely watched. The aid package as well as the military hardware can only go through after getting congressional approval, they said.

They pointed to reports in the American media which quoted a US official as saying that Musharraf understands that failure to "democratise, curb terrorism and stop proliferation" would halt aid.



Indian parliamentarians led by Kuldip Nayyar (third from right) bid goodbye at the Wagah border as they leave Pakistan on Wednesday. (AFP)

Pak rivals slam aid package

Islamabad, June 25 (Agencies): Pakistan's Opposition yesterday denounced a \$3-billion US aid pledge secured by President Pervez Musharraf as a disgrace to the country and evidence of subservience to Washington.

The vice-president of Jamaat-e-Islami, Pakistan's main Islamic party, said Musharraf had obtained "nothing" for his people in his meeting with President George W. Bush at Camp David on Tuesday.

Khurshheed Ahmed added that Bush's refusal to deliver 28 F-16 fighter aircraft under a stalled deal dating back to the 1990s was "actually a slap on our faces". "The \$3-billion aid package is a disgrace for Pakistani people."

"Musharraf has provided every support in the so-called war against terrorism, but in return what has he got? I would say nothing for the people of Pakistan."

He accused Musharraf of pursuing a policy that has made Pakistan "subservient" to Washington and said it was unclear how much of the package would go to important debt rescheduling. "Even if \$1 billion of the package goes to debt rescheduling, then I would say Musharraf has compromised on peanuts."

Senator Faratullah Babar, spokesperson of the Pakistan People's Party led by Benazir Bhutto, said: "The economic package... is dismal and disappointing. It is far too short of what could have been achieved given the losses incurred by Pakistan in economic, political and social sectors because of its support to the international community in the fight against terrorism."

U.S. role in Indo-Pak. ties

By Rajindar Sachar

WHAT GAME is the U.S. playing in India-Pakistan relations? The query has become relevant in the context of the sudden freezing of relations after the optimism generated by Atal Behari Vajpayee's Srinagar speech.

For no apparent reason, we have Pervez Musharraf on television making two very damaging statements. One, that notwithstanding the fact that Pakistan was "pushed into" Kargil by the 'mujahideen,' it could happen again. And two, he challenged the validity of the Kashmir elections, which have been acknowledged as fair and free even by international observers. Inevitably, Mr. Vajpayee talked of a "fourth defeat" for Pakistan.

Gen. Musharraf was perhaps tempted by the strategy of L. K. Advani in appealing to the U.S. to "rein" him in — it seemed to suggest that India was helpless in controlling cross-border terrorism, which is contrary to New Delhi's stand.

Did Washington take it as a sign of weakness and introduce a not-so-subtle trade-off? Has the U.S. demanded Indian troops for Iraq as a *quid pro quo* for restraining Gen. Musharraf?

Our answer to the U.S. ploy should have been a categorical 'no'. Instead, Mr. Advani prevaricated and suggested that Pakistan's restraint across the borders could be helpful in making up New Delhi's mind in favour of sending troops to Iraq. Did this give U.S. strategists the opportunity to nudge Gen. Musharraf to talk tough? That is one way of rationalising the bellicosity of Gen. Musharraf's interview.

As it is, Gen. Musharraf is mired in serious domestic problems. The apparent support he has within the Pakistan Army apart, all the Opposition parties in the National Assembly want him to give up his uniform — which he will not because his survival depends on it. The General has

deliberately and cleverly increased the pitch of India-Pakistan tensions.

So that, while on his current tour of the U.S., he can pretend to be misunderstood and use dove-like language to get Washington's 'approval' to keep his job as both Army Chief and President.

As for the U.S., it is reeling under the response of Iraqi nationalism. The Iraqis have realised that getting rid of Saddam Hussein was not the

spirit of nationalism. Surely, the Congress should be sensitive and appreciative of the hostility to foreign troops. The presence of British forces in our country during the World War II period generated tremendous anger and resentment.

Must our young soldiers, besides falling victim to Iraqi bullets, also be demeaned and disgraced by being treated as an occupation army? There is another angle to the U.S.

Has the U.S. demanded Indian troops for Iraq as a quid pro quo for restraining Pervez Musharraf?

only item on Washington's agenda. The real agenda was what was spelt out by the U.S. Secretary of State over a decade ago to I. K. Gujral, who, as India's Foreign Minister, met him in 1990 to discuss the evacuation of Indians from Iraq.

His response was direct and acerbic: "Oil is our civilisation, we will not let demon (meaning Saddam Hussein) sit on it". This is public knowledge. If, in spite of this, India wants to burn its fingers by sending troops to Iraq, it will be an accomplice in aggression. Indian troops cannot be allowed to spill Iraqi blood — we have thousands of years of civilisational contact and amity.

The Iraq venture is not going to be a picnic for the U.S. There are no welcome hugs or arches as there were at the time of the breach of the Berlin Wall. In a recent Senate Foreign Relations Committee meeting, the U.S. Army Chief made it clear that Washington needed a large peacekeeping force and that conditions in Iraq were more serious than in Bosnia. The U.S. forces have, after all, been in Bosnia for over eight years and there is still no end in sight. Are our politicians ready to do the dirty work of the neo-conservative group controlling George W. Bush?

The BJP may not be sensitive to the compulsions and the sacrificial

request for Indian troops. Apparently, it has been suggested that the troops will be posted in the Kurd-dominated area where there is massive resentment against Saddam Hussein. The Kurds are fighting for separation from Iraq.

Neighbours Turkey and Iran, which have sizeable Kurdish populations, would not want any trouble. But Kurds are waiting for an opportunity and will not sit quiet. In such a situation, the Indian troops may have to fight them and would not Pakistan exploit the situation, though illogically, as an excuse to foment terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir? The implications of sending Indian troops to Iraq are thus horrendous and unimaginable. The chapter must be closed at once.

I am surprised at the attitude of the Congress and the BJP (Vajpayee-Sonia meeting) on the issue — working for a consensus and holding consultations with Iran. Do they seriously believe that Iran would want Indian troops to be sent to the region when it is being accused by the U.S. of forming part of the "axis of evil" and is mischievously being targeted for a regime change? The Congress spokesperson and the Foreign Minister made the same noise about developing a consensus. This when millions of people in the U.S.

and Europe have already demonstrated against a war, which, as has been well established, was fought by the U.S. and Britain on the basis of lies, deception and forgery.

Why this temptation to send troops? Is it the hope of pocketing dollars from reconstruction money already guzzled by U.S. multinationals? Or is it the fear of legislation banning outsourcing being contemplated in the U.S.? It is misplaced and not based on an understanding of the inner logic of capitalism. Let us not sell Indian honour for a pot of silver. Our heritage is noble. Our young generation deserves better. Or has neo-liberalisation, backed both by the BJP and the Congress, made us so impervious that self-respect and honour have ceased to be the measure in Indo-U.S. relations?

After a Pakistan parliamentary delegation visited India as part of unofficial diplomacy and returned with better people-to-people understanding, the journalist and Rajya Sabha member, Kuldip Nayar, managed to collect a dozen MPs, from the BJP and the Congress included, for a reciprocal visit. It is understood that Mr. Vajpayee appreciated it as a logical extension of his efforts to improve relations with Pakistan.

But then, those in the BJP leadership who want to exploit India-Pakistan tensions to their electoral advantage pulled out their MPs at the last minute. The Congress, which is becoming a soft Hindutva party, followed suit with equal vigour. It is a pity that the political parties cannot rise above petty electoral considerations.

Fortunately, non-official groups in Pakistan have not fallen for the trap and have welcomed the delegation. There is no doubt that peace-loving people in both the countries will view this reciprocal exchange as a beneficial one. Let people of both the countries rise above petty manoeuvres and give a valiant push to India-Pakistan friendship.

India for talks on air links with Pak.

140-1
25/6
By C. Raja Mohan

NEW DELHI, JUNE 24. In a bid to overcome Pakistan's delaying tactics on the resumption of air links with India, the Government today agreed to open technical discussions on the subject with Islamabad.

The Foreign Office today called in the Acting High Commissioner of Pakistan, Munawar Saeed Bhatti, and conveyed the Government's readiness to hold talks at a mutually convenient time.

What should have been a simple matter after the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, proposed it on May 2, the restoration of air links has been held up by Islamabad's reluctance to grant immediate overflight rights to India.

Instead of restoring the status quo ante that existed before the terrorist attack on Parliament on December 13, 2001 and the Indian diplomatic measures that followed on December 31, Pakistan has been insisting on technical discussions about air links.

Pakistan's policy appeared to be premised on the fact that In-

dia would gain more by the resumption of overflights. Most west-bound flights of the Air India and the Indian Airlines have to overfly Pakistani territory. Pakistan had calculated that in snapping air links, New Delhi had lost more than Islamabad. As a result it appears in no hurry to resume over flights while offering landing rights for Indian airliners on a reciprocal basis.

Pakistan is also aware that overflight rights would allow India to fly its own aircraft to Afghanistan. The sense of a competition with India in Afghanistan is also believed to be a factor in Pakistan's lack of enthusiasm in granting overflight rights to India.

The Government, irritated by the stalling tactics of Pakistan, has now agreed to hold technical discussions with Islamabad on the restoration of civil aviation links.

With some visible movement in the peace process with decisions in both capitals on the return of High Commissioners and an early restoration land links, the Government now has an opportunity to test Pakistan's approach on civil aviation.

judpak

'KASHMIR IS THE PRIME DISPUTE' ✓

HD-1

Musharraf wants Western arms embargo on India

W/B

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, JUNE 19. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, today called for a Western arms "embargo" on India, and ratcheted up the rhetoric over Kashmir, saying that he "cannot guarantee (that) nothing happens" there.

Portraying an alarming picture of India's growing defence capability in an interview to *The Times*, Gen. Musharraf urged Britain and America not to allow New Delhi to develop a military superiority over Pakistan, and reportedly warned that otherwise his country would be forced to rely on its nuclear weapons as the only real deterrent. He demanded restrictions on arms exports to India to prevent a "dangerous" military imbalance between the two countries.

On Kashmir and India's accusations of continuing Pakistan-backed cross-border terrorism, Gen. Musharraf said: "if they think I am going to stop even a bird from flying across the Line of Control, I will not. I cannot guarantee nothing happens in Kashmir". But he insisted that at present "nothing" was happening and that there was "not one terrorist camp in Kashmir".

A day after he warned that the "lull on the LoC" could not be sustained indefinitely without progress, Gen. Musharraf said that Kashmir was the "prime dispute to be resolved before any other topics could be discussed". "I am for resolving all possible disputes, but Kashmir is a part of all those disputes... What are the other issues? People don't even know what they are, that is their triviality."

Gen. Musharraf, who met the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, on Tuesday and is on his way to Washington to meet the U.S. President, George W. Bush, complained that while the Indian defence spending was rising,

Pakistan faced restrictions on buying arms and indicated that he intended to tell Mr. Bush: "There's an imbalance which is being created. Don't let it be created."

Nuclear option

He reportedly warned that Indian military superiority would leave Pakistan dependent on its nuclear arsenal. "Every country has to survive. Any country which wants to live in honour and dignity wants to preserve sovereign equality and its sovereignty. Nobody will

compromise with that," Gen. Musharraf said.

Even as he tried to play down fears of a nuclear confrontation saying that "no sane person in normal conditions can ever even contemplate going into a non-conventional war", Gen. Musharraf said that "basically the best guarantee is to avoid conflict". He explained that "when a war starts (you don't know) what direction it will take because there are a lot of intangibles which then come in the way..."

Gen. Musharraf's remarks

were seen as an attempt to pressure America into lifting the restrictions on arms sales to Pakistan ahead of his meeting with Mr. Bush as well as a warning to India not to ignore Islamabad's nuclear option.

Uncalled for statements: Pak.

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JUNE 19. Pakistan has expressed 'regret' over what it termed as "uncalled for" statements by the Indian leadership and officials in the recent days.

A carefully-worded statement by the Pakistan Foreign Office said the Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted with 'regret' the recent statements by the Indian leadership and the Indian Ministry of External Affairs over the "slanted reporting" of the remarks made by the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, in an interview to the NDTV.

A senior official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while expressing a "deep sense of disappointment over the unnecessary controversy generated by the Indian media and the uncalled for statements by the Indian officials and leaders", said that the controversy should have ended after the clarification by the President of Pakistan that he was being quoted incorrectly and out of context by the Indian media. He claimed that viewers who watched the interview "carefully" have noted that the transcript of the interview carried by Indian newspapers was "distorted" and "a deliberate twist was given by those in India who wanted to derail the peace process".

The statement said that what Gen. Musharraf had emphasised in the TV interview was the desirability of the resolution of the "Kashmir dispute so as to avoid tension in the region".

Will the bus to Lahore resume on July 1?

By Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar

NEW DELHI, JUNE 19. Even as Indian and Pakistani officials today held a "good, cordial" meeting on restoring the Delhi-Lahore bus link, the service may not start on July 1 as proposed.

The three-member Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation delegation wasted no time in getting down to business with senior Delhi Transport Corporation officials this morning soon after reaching here from Lahore after a nearly 12-hour circuitous air journey via Dubai. "It was for both sides to come up with a date to resume the bus service. Naturally, it will be on a mutually-agreed upon date," a Foreign Office spokesman said.

Following the meeting between senior Indian officials led by the DTC Chairman, A.J.S. Sahney, and three Pakistani officials — the Deputy Chairman of PTDC, Azfar Shafqat, the General Manager, Saeed Anwar Khan, and the Manager (Accounts), Sayed Quasim Abbas — the two sides said that due to immigration and visa procedures, the service may not be able to get under way on July 1.

Announcing that two buses each of both corporations would run on Tuesdays and Fridays, Mr. Sahney said the destinations, frequency, halts, seating capacity and fares would all remain the same for the time-being. The agreements were already in place as the services had only been suspended, the DTC Chairman said, adding that while the cost of operations have increased the revision of fares would be taken up later.

Mr. Shafqat said the two sides would now process action on issues like immigration and visa requirements. He said the PTDC was in a position to start the service from July 1. But as the buses travel for just about an hour in Pakistan while they travel for nearly 12 hours in India, more preparatory work needed to be done on this side of the border.

Resumption of air link a tough issue: Page 12

THE HINDU

20 JUN 2003

THE HINDU

Sinha shuts Pak out

PRANAY SHARMA

Ind. Pak 19/6

New Delhi, June 18: India today effectively blocked Pakistan's entry into the high-profile Asean Regional Forum.

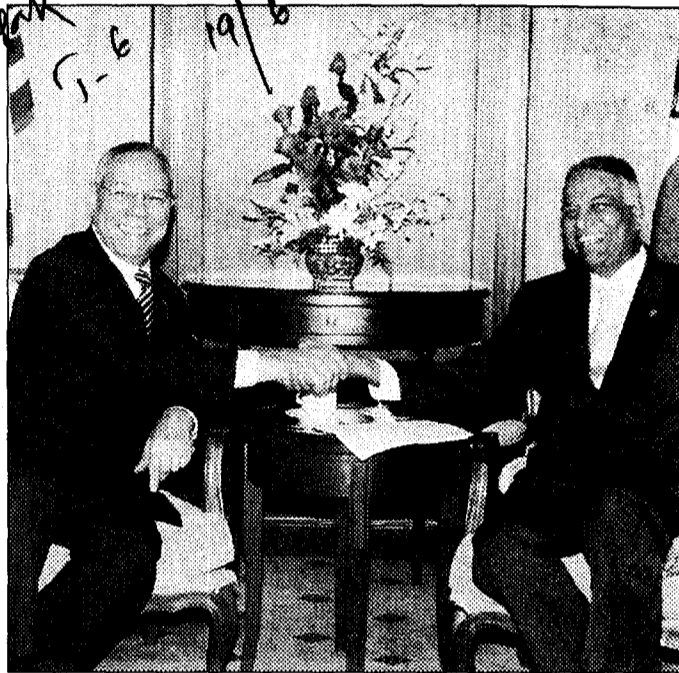
Though foreign minister Yashwant Sinha, who played a crucial role in blocking Pakistan's entry, stressed that Delhi was "committed" to restoring lasting peace with Islamabad, the move could further strain relations between the neighbours and impede the peace process India has initiated.

While India has been a member of the security forum since 1996, Pakistan is only a sectoral dialogue partner and has been trying for years to get into the body.

As in the past, Malaysia took the initiative of pushing Pakistan's case. But unlike other years, none of the foreign ministers — especially those close to India — raised any objection to Pakistan's entry. It was more surprising as the forum had announced a moratorium a few years ago on taking in new members.

Today, when the issue came up for discussion and approval of the members, Sinha raised serious objections to Pakistan's entry. His "forthright argument", based on precedence and the forum's declared policy not to take in more members till it had consolidated, left Islamabad's backers with no option but to go along with his objections.

According to the guidelines,



US secretary of state Colin Powell with Yashwant Sinha in Phnom Penh on the sidelines of the Asean forum. (Reuters)

a country keen to join the forum has to make an application to the chairman. It is then put forward at the meeting of senior officials of the foreign secretary level. After their approval, it is placed before the foreign ministers.

In Pakistan's case, the application was never put before the senior officials. Moreover, East Timor, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are other countries waiting to get into the forum. Sinha

also highlighted the haste with which Pakistan's case was taken up while the other applicants were ignored.

"It is too important a matter to be discussed with other matters of (the) ARF," Sinha said, adding that there were "existing procedures" and "guiding principles" on taking in new members. An important criterion is a detailed assessment on whether the country has left a "geographical footprint" on regional security.

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'WE'LL TAKE TWO STEPS IF INDIA TAKES ONE'

Jindr Pak

Lull on LoC cannot be sustained for long: Musharraf

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, JUNE 18. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has warned that the current lull on the Line of Control may not last indefinitely if India does not "reciprocate".

Even as he offered to take "two steps towards peace" if India took one, Gen. Musharraf today made it clear that the present situation when — as he put it — "nothing" was happening on the LoC could not be sustained for long in the absence of any movement on Kashmir.

"When I say that there is nothing happening on the LoC, I am very sure that there is nothing happening but all that I say is that this situation is not sustainable for long periods. You cannot keep a military on high alert for a long period, and you would not like people to turn their guns against you and undermine your own Government because you are selling out, because there is no reciprocation coming from the other side," the Pakistani leader, who is now visiting Britain, said in an interview to the Asia

Today programme on BBC World.

Gen. Musharraf insisted that what was going in Kashmir was a "freedom struggle" and said reciprocity from the Indian side was necessary for the success of his efforts to control cross-border terrorism. "...all that we try to do in Pakistan gets to a nought because there are definitely elements sympathetic to the freedom struggle in Kashmir and these very elements then start blaming the Government for a sellout. Therefore while we take action, there has been to reciprocation from the Indian side," he said.

The General's remarks were seen to have echoes of a previous statement — later denied — which was construed in New Delhi as amounting to a threat of another Kargil-like "war". The Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, then in London, had reacted strongly saying no meaningful dialogue was possible in the face of such remarks, though he sought to put an end to the row after Gen. Musharraf claimed that he had been misquoted. Observers feel that his latest remarks are likely to revive the controversy.

Gen. Musharraf welcomed Mr. Advani's statement that India was willing to make compromises in the interest of peace.

"I am very glad that he is prepared to make compromises towards peace — if India takes one step, we will take two steps towards peace," he said but repeatedly claimed that India was not responding to Pakistani gestures.

In reply to a question, Gen. Musharraf said that Pakistan had offered "seven confidence-building measures" but "we haven't got a reply as yet, so the ball is entirely in their court". Asked if he agreed that there was "distrust" of him in India and that he was seen as someone who was behind the Kargil operations, he said:

"Unfortunately, these aspersions are cast by the Indians." He blamed India for the breakdown of the Agra summit, and about the prospects of another high-level talks within this year, he said: "I think there will be. (The) Pakistani leadership wants it. It depends on the other side whether they want to extend the other hand also."

Britain asks Musharraf to do more on terror

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Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD, June 18. —A day after Mr LK Advani said there had been no let-up in cross-border infiltration in J&K, Britain today asked Gen. Pervez Musharraf to do more to tackle terrorism even as it appreciated his efforts to counter the menace.

"We continue to urge President Musharraf to do all that he can as more can be done to tackle terrorism. This applies to all international partners of the coalition to fight against the scourge of terrorism. We hope we can see further progress," an official spokesman said. Britain urged the Pakistani President to do all that he could to stop infiltration of terrorists into India and dismantle terrorist training camps, if any, the spokesman said. Britain, he said, wanted India and Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir issue bilaterally. "We can only help if the help is sought. But Britain has no road map to resolve the problem," he said.

Asked to comment on Gen. Musharraf's claim the LoC had been peaceful and there was no terrorist activity, a fact countered by Mr Advani here with facts and figures, the spokesman said: "It is not for Britain to be an arbitrator." He said: "We have very good relations with the two countries - India and Pakistan and aware that the two countries don't enjoy very good relations with each other."

Welcoming Mr LK Advani's statement that compromises have to be made by both India and Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir issue, General Pervez Musharraf has said if New Delhi takes one step, Islamabad is willing to take two to normalise relations.

USA readying F-16 deal with Pak

WASHINGTON, June 18. — The USA is readying an F-16 fighter deal with Pakistan to consolidate alliances in preparation for strategic moves on Iran and North Korea, US defence secretary Mr Donald Rumsfeld informed Mr LK Advani recently in "a very private meeting," according to a media report.

During his recent visit to the USA, Mr Advani received the "disappointing" news from Mr Rumsfeld that the US government was preparing to announce the resumed sales of new Lockheed Martin F-16 fighters to the Pakistan Air Force, *Defence and Foreign Affairs Daily* reported, quoting highly-placed Washington sources. "The announcement (of sales) would be made during the visit of Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, who was due to arrive in Washington on 24 June. The proposed sale would symbolise the commitment of the Bush Administration to Pakistan, which is now being seen as increasingly central in the USA emerging strategy to contain Iran and to isolate North Korea," the Daily said. "Significantly, Mr Rumsfeld broke the news of the intended sale at very private meeting with Mr Advani, when he arrived at the Willard Hotel in Washington, on 8 June. The meeting was unusual in that Mr Rumsfeld wanted to tell Mr Advani personally of the proposed sale to Pakistan, in order to avoid the news reaching the Indian government through less formal channels." — PTI

In an interview to *BBC Asia Today* telecast today Pakistan's President who is currently in London, said he was willing to meet India more than half-way. Gen. Musharraf said he was "very glad he (Advani) said that he is prepared to make compromises. If India takes one step we are ready to take two steps towards peace," Gen. Musharraf said.

Hinting that there was a possibility that India and Pakistan could hold high-level talks during this year, he said, "I think there will be talks. Pakistan leadership certainly wants it. But it depends on other side, whether they want to extend the other hand also." He said Pakistan was doing everything possible to prevent armed militants from crossing into Kashmir but that he could not guarantee a total end to infiltration. "There is no infiltration, absolutely none, no official patronage."

Pak reacts sharply

Islamabad tonight reacted sharply to statements by Indian leaders over the "slanted reporting" of Gen. Pervez Musharraf's remarks, adds a report.

"The ministry of foreign affairs has noted with regret statements by the Indian leadership and the external affairs ministry over the slanted reporting of the remarks made by the President of Pakistan," an official statement said here. Gen. Musharraf in an interview to a news channel had indicated that he did not rule out yet another Kargil-type intrusion. Describing it as an "unnecessary controversy generated by the Indian media", the statement said the controversy should have ended after the clarification by the President of Pakistan that he was being quoted incorrectly and out of context by the Indian media.

LoC is quiet, claims Musharraf; facts speak otherwise, asserts Advani

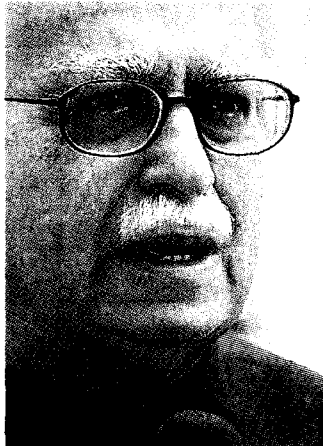
By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, JUNE 17. The verbal exchanges between India and Pakistan spilled over to London today with the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, challenging each other's contention over cross-border terrorism and both making widely divergent claims.

Gen. Musharraf, who met the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, barely 24 hours after Mr. Advani's talks with the British leader, accused India of unnecessarily "harping" on cross-border terrorism and claimed that the Line of Control (LoC) was quiet. "Nothing is happening on the LoC. The Indians are harping on it, (so) it is my word against them," he said after meeting Mr. Blair adding "what is happening is indigenous".

Mr. Advani reacted sharply, insisting that infiltration was on and that there had been no decline in cross-border terrorism. "I say it on the basis of facts which I can provide," he told reporters asked to comment on Gen. Musharraf's remarks.

Mr. Advani said there had been three cases of infiltration in the past 10 days alone, and,



in fact, infiltrators had been killed on the LoC. He wondered if Gen. Musharraf had any facts to back his claim that nothing was happening. He accused Pakistan of running a "covert" war and said that while India was willing for a dialogue to settle all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, peace should not be held "hostage" and all violence should stop. He said this was what he had told Gen. Musharraf on the eve of the Agra summit as well.

Reacting to Gen. Musharraf's reported remarks which were construed by India as a threat of "another Kargil", Mr. Advani said he had been surprised by



the Pakistani leader's reported comments, but now that he had denied it claiming that he had been "misquoted" it was better to end the controversy. "I think the matter should end here."

Gen. Musharraf, speaking to journalists, did not say if Indian concerns over cross-border terror were conveyed to him by the British Prime Minister, but said that India-Pakistan relations were discussed. He said Pakistan's stand on Kashmir, which he apparently impressed on Mr. Blair, was "very clear". A solution to the Kashmir issue would "depend on India, Pakistan and the people of Kash-

mir". The process of dialogue with India should be a "wholesome one", though he did not indicate what he meant.

Mr. Advani, who wound up his three-day visit to the U.K. today after meeting the Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, maintained that Pakistan should fulfil its "commitment" on ending cross-border terror and dismantling the "terrorist infrastructure".

He emphasised the need for a dialogue, saying that it was only through talks that a compromise on extreme positions was possible. On Kashmir, he said, there was a wide gulf between Indian and Pakistani positions and that it could be bridged only when talks were held.

Meanwhile, contrary to the Indian officials' claim on Monday that the issue of sending Indian troops to Iraq was not raised in his talks with Mr Blair, Mr. Advani disclosed today that it was raised.

"The question of India's participation in a stabilisation force in Iraq was also briefly discussed. I expressed to Prime Minister Blair that India had desired certain clarifications in this regard. A decision would be taken after the clarifications sought by India were settled."

PM warns Pak of 'fourth defeat'

Statesman News Service and PTI

MANDLA (MP)/ LONDON/ ISLAMABAD, June 17, — Prospects for peace between India and Pakistan took a battering today with the Prime Minister lashing out at President Musharraf over his reported threat of repeating Kargil.

"Gen. Musharraf has reminded us of Kargil but he should remember Pakistan was defeated thrice in wars and is now preparing for a fourth defeat," said Mr Vajpayee in his first public meeting ever addressed by a Prime Minister in the tribal-dominated district of Mandla, about 100 km from Jabalpur.

Earlier in Islamabad, President Musharraf's intransigence was apparent again as he ruled out chances

of accepting the Line of Control ^{LoC} as international border in a compromise deal to resolve the Kashmir issue. In a statement late last night, he said Pakistan would talk on all matters with India but was not ready to sideline the "core issue" of Kashmir. "LoC is the problem and cannot be a solution."

And, the Kashmir issue apparently

Jurists' trip off

NEW DELHI, June 17. — A 17-member team of jurists from India set to start on a Pakistan tour from June 19, today announced postponement of the trip to August due to President Pervez Musharraf's "non-availability" and other "security considerations". — SNS

came up today in London as well, at President Musharraf's meeting with the British Prime Minister, Mr Tony Blair, sources said.

Also in London, Mr LK Advani today rejected President Musharraf's claim that no terrorist activity directed against India was taking place from his country, asserting that there was no let up in infiltration and terrorist violence in J&K. "What I have said is based on facts. If he (Musharraf) has given facts, I will respond to them," Mr Advani said.

In Mandla, Mr Vajpayee also questioned the Pak President's continued description of terrorism in Kashmir as a "freedom struggle".

A Pakistani team will arrive in Delhi on Thursday to discuss the logistics of the bus service to Lahore.

TUESDAY, JUNE 17, 2003

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NEED NOW IS FOR RESTRAINT

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TWO STEPS FORWARD and one step back can make for very painful progress. The India-Pakistan relations, boosted by the Prime Minister's offer of the hand of friendship on April 18, saw some bold initiatives by both sides leading to the important decision to normalise diplomatic relations. But after the agreement on the choice of the High Commissioners and on resumption, in principle, of rail, road and air communications, there has been a worrisome pause. The ties appear in fact to be losing the momentum generated by Mr. Vajpayee's offer and Islamabad's hearty response which raised visions of a quick return to near normality. It must be easy to trace the drift to the need for the two Governments to address their domestic audiences and not appear to be yielding undue ground to the other. But there can be no rationale for the avalanche of unhelpful comments emanating from some of the leaders of the two countries. Pervez Musharraf's startling remarks on Pakistan's Kargil misadventure display a disregard for the delicate state of the bilateral relations and the initiative for peace. L.K. Advani's apparent singular obsession with Pakistan during his visit to the U.S. betrays a narrow vision even as he made remarks on the need for compromises on both the sides that are positive.

New Delhi has responded with caution and restraint to Gen. Musharraf's comments on the Kargil war during a television interview. His implied claim that but for Kargil, Kashmir would have remained a dead issue confirms the widely held suspicion that as Army Chief during the summer of 1999 he masterminded the Kargil operations behind the back of the civilian Government headed by Nawaz Sharif, just then pursuing peace following the Lahore bus initiative. Gen. Musharraf's response to the supplementary whether he could have another Kargil was even more shocking. "(It) de-

pends on how we proceed on the peace track, on how things develop. One can't say," he replied in what, for the sake of the current peace initiative, can only be termed an apparently casual manner. If these and other remarks can be traced to the General's domestic compulsions in the context of the stalemate in the National Assembly and the continuing nexus between sections of the military intelligence and the religious extremists, they are most unwelcome. Also unhelpful were Mr. Advani's speeches to the audiences wherever he went during his weeklong visit to the U.S. The speeches had but one theme and one tone: the threat of terrorism came from the same source for India and the U.S. and they must fight it together. The villain was named at a few places and not in others. Mr. Advani, who made some amends by stressing the need for give-and-take over the Kashmir issue while addressing a gathering of NRIs during the fag end of his visit, chose to play out his domestic agenda.

Such rhetoric on both sides can inject acrimony into a roller coaster relationship that is just now slowly on the upswing. What the two countries should aim to do now is to ensure a continuous movement forward. The present drift will hopefully end when the High Commissioners assume their diplomatic responsibilities in Islamabad and Delhi and relations get a semblance of normality after a year and a half. As with India's suggestion on resumption of trade ties, which has revived apprehensions in some quarters in Pakistan, progress on all fronts will be slow. But essential humanitarian measures such as Pakistan's release of Indian prisoners and greater people-to-people contact can help overcome the huge backlog. For the atmospherics to improve markedly, it is essential that the leaders of the two countries exercise caution and restraint. The opportunities opened up by the peace initiative can then be exploited to mutual advantage.

17 JUN 2003

THE HINDU

Musharraf wants fuller dialogue

16th JUN 2003
Dawn/Asia News Network

WASHINGTON, June 16. — President Pervez Musharraf is coming to the USA with a proposal for “composite dialogue” with India, diplomatic sources told *Dawn* yesterday.

He is also expected to sign two major agreements — the trade and investment framework agreement (TIFA) and another on science and technology — during his stay in the USA.

While the Indian and Pakistan media are focusing on the impact of the visit on the ongoing peace process, particularly on the search for a possible solution in Kashmir, official and diplomatic sources say the talks will focus on economic issues.

They describe the expected signing of the TIFA as a major achievement, pointing out that it will ultimately lead to a free trade agreement.

In an apparent attempt to backtrack on his remarks on the chances of recurrence of a Kargil type conflict with India, Gen. Musharraf has claimed that he has been quoted out of context and said it was an attempt to project him as a “war monger,” PTI adds from Islamabad. “They are looking for an excuse to target me.”

Pervez 'just' wants J&K; to meet PM

Agencies

ISLAMABAD/CHICAGO, June 13. — Pakistan President Gen. Pervez Musharraf has again spoken about the "just struggle" of the Kashmiris saying that terming the same as cross border terrorism was a "dishonest portrayal of facts".

"J&K is a disputed territory and recognised as such by the UN," he said in an interview to Saudi daily Okazm yesterday coinciding with his visit to Saudi Arabia. Referring to the ongoing peace process, he was quoted as saying by official news agency APP that Pakistan wants a peaceful and just resolution of the Kashmir issue and hoped a similar spirit will prevail in India. "We're also looking forward to restoration of full diplomatic ties leading to a meaningful

and result-oriented talks with India," he said.

In another interview to an Indian TV news channel, the General said he was "more than willing" to meet Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and lead the peace talks.

"PM Jamali may be a better person for him (Mr Vajpayee) to meet. But if Mr Vajpayee is willing to meet me, I would be more than willing to meet him and lead the talks."

He said since there was a campaign to malign him and his government after the Agra talks, he thought Mr Jamali might be a better person.

He, however, refused to accept that the Kargil war was a mistake. "Kargil was a decision taken by the mujahideen, and we got involved because of the action taken by the Indian troops."

He also refused to commit himself

to avoiding Kargil-like situations in the future saying "to avoid Kargils, we need to resolve disputes and much depends on how we proceed on the peace track and how things develop."

Speaking in Chicago, Mr LK Advani had earlier asserted that Pakistan had now indisputably emerged as the "hotbed" of Al-Qaida and charged that country with trying to wrest Kashmir from India using terror tactics. Mr Advani also advised Pakistani leaders against holding peace hostage to the resolution of their differences with India.

"There has to be give and take in negotiations," he said, urging Pakistan to "sincerely" implement its own promises of putting an end to cross-border terrorism and dismantling the terrorist infrastructure it had "fostered over many years".

Air, rail links will follow: Musharraf

By B. Muralidhar Reddy 14/6

ISLAMABAD, JUNE 13. Pakistan's President, Pervez Musharraf, has claimed that the resumption of the New Delhi-Lahore bus service would be followed by the restoration of the 'all severed' air and rail links. Implied in the statement was the suggestion that the resumption of air links would cover the grant of overflight facilities on a reciprocal basis.

In an interview to the Saudi daily, *Okaz*, Gen. Musharraf was unusually blunt in his observations on Kashmir and said that "terming the just struggle of (the) people of Kashmir cross-border terrorism is nothing but a dishonest portrayal of facts". Since the peace initiative by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, on April 17/18, Gen. Musharraf had tended to be careful in his formulation on Kashmir.

The statement on the resumption of air-links should put at rest doubts in New Delhi on whether or not Islamabad is willing to grant overflight facilities. Of course, Pakistan has compounded the problem by choosing to maintain an enigmatic silence on the subject.

Islamabad's stated position being that issue of overflight facilities was to be settled

between civil aviation experts from both sides.

"We are also looking forward to the restoration of full diplomatic contacts leading to a meaningful and result-oriented dialogue with India," Gen. Musharraf told the paper. The interview coincided with his day-long visit to Riyadh for discussions on cooperation with Saudi Arabia in the field of terrorism, particularly in the context of the recent bombings in the Kingdom.

The General's desire for resumption of full diplomatic contacts means Islamabad wants restoration of the pre-December 13, 2001, status between the two countries. Responding to the confidence-building measures announced by Mr. Vajpayee his Pakistani counterpart, Mir Zafarullah Khan, unveiled a six-point India-centric agenda. New Delhi had said that it would respond on the CBMs keeping in view the ground realities, a reference to "cross border infiltration and dismantling of terrorism infrastructure".

Gen. Musharraf claimed that in 1989, following decades of repression by India, the Kashmiri people renewed their indigenous struggle for self-determination, which India tried to put down with brutal use of force. "The Kashmiri people were, therefore,

left with no option but to take up arms in their legitimate struggle for their right of self-determination," he said. "The Kashmiri struggle is indigenous. No freedom movement that has touched millions could be sustained by mere outside support."

Pakistan wanted a peaceful and just resolution of the Kashmir 'dispute', he said and expressed the hope that a similar spirit would prevail in India to achieve lasting peace in South Asia. Reaffirming Pakistan's position on the issue, he called for a peaceful and just resolution, in accordance with the wishes of the people of Kashmir as mandated in the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions.

"Pakistan has always emphasised the necessity of a meaningful and constructive dialogue to resolve the Kashmir dispute. We are and will remain optimistic about achieving a negotiated settlement to the dispute," he said and hoped "a similar spirit will eventually prevail on the other side and we will make progress towards a lasting peace in South Asia."

Gen. Musharraf conceded that although the two countries did not enjoy the best of relations "at least we have agreed to talk to each other and hopefully we will gradually move forward with time".

Musharraf 'more than willing' to meet Vajpayee

49-1A/6

By Our Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JUNE 13. The Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, today said that he did not "trust" India when it called for focussing on trade matters and saw this as an "attempt" to sideline the "main issue" of Kashmir.

In an interview to NDTV, the Pakistan President said he was ready to "lead" talks with the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, while not ruling out the possibility of future Kargils. On whether he ruled out another Kargil, Gen. Musharraf, widely regarded as the architect of the 1999 misadventure, was quoted as saying: "No. Let me tell you that before Kargil, Kashmir was a dead issue. To avoid Kargils, we need to resolve disputes and much depends on how we proceed on the peace track."



Denying that Kargil was against Pakistan's interests, he reiterated an oft-repeated position: "Kargil was a decision taken by the mujahideen, and we got involved because of the action taken by the Indian troops." In what appeared to be

a bid to inject himself into the Vajpayee-Jamali track, the President said, "(Pakistani) Prime Minister (Mir Zafarullah) Khan Jamali may be a better person for him to meet, but if Mr. Vajpayee is willing to meet me, I would be more than willing to meet him and lead the talks."

Gen. Musharraf's responses seemed to suggest there had been little shift in the Pakistani position on India. "We can talk of trade and economy and other issues, but no talks will succeed unless the core issue is addressed."

On the impressive turnout in last year's election to the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, the General said he was "clear" on one thing — that the people of Kashmir did not want to be part of India. "I would like cricket and all sporting ties to resume... but cricket is a 'trivial' issue. And let me tell you that my

players don't want to play in India."

Interestingly, the Pakistani leader was ready to consider sending his troops to Iraq — in what appeared to be an attempt to appear "more willing" than India to commit troops to Iraq.

Pointing out that his own "referendum" was a mistake, the President said he regretted the way democracy and Parliament had emerged in Pakistan after the elections. Pakistan, he felt, had failed to evolve a functioning democracy.

On the imposition of the Sharia in the North-West Frontier Province by the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal administration, the General said he would dismiss the provincial Government if it moved towards "Talibanisation" of NWFP.

"I am for a moderate, progressive and dynamic Islamic state," he added.

Make haste slowly

Six weeks have gone by since the offer of the Indian prime minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, to resume the dialogue with Pakistan. It has got a reticently positive response from Pakistan. The media, as usual, proceeded to be enthusiastic about breakthroughs and new beginnings. It is worthwhile undertaking a reality check on what has happened since Vajpayee's offer of a dialogue and the response of the Pakistani president, Pervez Musharraf, welcoming the offer.

The international community has generally welcomed the initiative. Whatever the governments of India and Pakistan may say, a certain amount of tactful but insistent pressure from the United States of America, the precedent of pre-emptive intrusive action in the US invasion of Iraq and public pronouncements by US officials that south Asia is nuclearly the most dangerous area in the world, impelled the Vajpayee initiative and the Pakistani response. While Pakistan has had no hesitation in accepting the reality of this pressure, the government of India continues to pretend that there was no such pressure. We seem to have a pathological aversion towards acknowledging the impact of realpolitik in inter-state relations.

It is good to see the US being sensitive to Indian complexities. There have been repeated assurances by US officials that they do not envisage playing a mediatory role. The government of Pakistan initially gave its game away by converting dialogue into a publicity exercise. The Pakistani prime minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, suggested an early summit with Vajpayee despite the unfortunate experience that both the countries had gone through at Lahore in February 1999 and at Agra in July 2001.

India's response that the dialogue should be a structured and gradual process bestowed practicality to the initiative. Jamali announced Pakistan's willingness to expand bilateral trade within the framework of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, to restore bilateral civil aviation contacts and restore diplomatic relations at the level of high commissioners. Each one of these offers was a repetition of what India had offered Pakistan in order to restore normalcy in bilateral relations last October and November, as India decided to pull back its armed forces from its forward deployment positions.

Both countries have now designated high commissioners to each other's

The author is former foreign secretary of India

capitals, Shiv Shanker Menon, our ambassador to China, is to proceed to Islamabad, and Aziz Ahmed Khan, former Pakistani ambassador to the Taliban government in Afghanistan and now a spokesman of the Pakistan foreign office, have been designated high commissioners.

Being personally acquainted with both these diplomats, I am clear that the choice has been not only appropriate but careful and measured. These are individuals of temperament who will be nodal points in structuring bilateral relations at this sensitive and critical juncture. Both are sober, non-political and practical officers. Knowledgeable about the foreign policies of their countries, and firmly committed to their national interests, they are known for their patience, tact and practical approach in negotiations.

It was obvious that there was some difference of opinion within the Pakistani establishment as to who should come as the Pakistan high commissioner. The names mentioned were Maleeha Lodhi and Riaz Ahmed Khan. Lodhi and Riaz Ahmed Khan have a record of assertive anti-Indianism in recent years. Jamali, in fact, publicly announced Riaz Ahmed Khan's name, which was later contradicted by the government of Pakistan. Musharraf's final choice is Aziz Ahmed Khan, who is no less firm about Pakistani policies. But he has two advantages. He has served in New Delhi as deputy high commissioner and director general, south Asia, in the Pakistan foreign office. Secondly, he is not confrontational in his style of diplomacy when compared to some of his predecessors in New Delhi.

So one can draw the conclusion that Pakistan wants the process of dialogue to continue without controversies in its initial stages.

India has responded to the suggestion about re-activating trade relations with a sense of detachment, stating that these relations can evolve, depending on Pakistan's attitudes, for the present. It is obvious that Pakistan still has reticences about full-scale trade relations. The bus service between Lahore and Amritsar has been restored but neither side has yet given clear indications about restoring the train services — the Samjhauta Express.

As far as restoring civil aviation links go, Pakistan has only agreed to restoration of flights between India and Pakistan (perhaps Delhi-Lahore, Delhi-Karachi and Bombay-Karachi). While India has suggested in addition the restoring of overflight facilities,

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Pakistan is procrastinating over a decision on the matter. Could it be that Pakistan wants to exploit the fact that lack of overflight facilities costs India much more than it does Pakistan — and it is an argument of Pakistanis that after all it was India which started this punitive action.

Track-II diplomacy has been revived as a result of non-governmental initiatives. A Pakistani parliamentary delegation visited India in May. Indian members of parliament and academics have visited Pakistan over the last six weeks. Pugwash organized a con-



Everybody knows that Musharraf is the ultimate deciding authority in Pakistan

his keeping his options open about pulling back from the negotiations and disowning Jamali as Jumejo was disowned by General Zia-ul-Haq.

Everybody knows that Musharraf is the ultimate deciding authority in Pakistan. In fact, it is he who should have called Vajpayee and not Jamali. As long as Musharraf remains executive president, his pretending to delegate the negotiating authority to Jamali to establish Pakistan's democratic credentials, is at best a cosmetic gesture and at worst it only increases

India's apprehensions about Musharraf's real intentions.

Vajpayee in his discussions with the US deputy secretary of state, Richard Armitage, with the German chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, and with the US president, George Bush, has underlined that a dialogue can move on to substantive issues when Pakistan stops supporting cross-border terrorism. Infiltration and violence continue in Jammu and Kashmir. Externally sponsored separatist militants are politically becoming incrementally defensive with the growing credibility of the Mufti government supported by the Congress.

The Hurriyat is in disarray, which may make the *jihadis* across the border more desperate. There is a need to be alert about this, as they can disrupt the process of a dialogue. Bush promised to speak to Musharraf when the latter visits Washington in June to be more purposeful in stopping cross-border terrorism. He gave this assurance to Vajpayee at St. Petersburg on May 31. Anticipating pressure from the US, Musharraf has taken some concrete steps to curb *jihadis* in his country. The Jamiat-e-Islami has expelled the Hizbul Mujaheddin from its offices. The Jaish-e-Mohammed and the Lashkar-e-Toiba have been subjected to official restraint over the last three weeks. Militants like Masood Azhar have been prevented from their public activities. One hopes that this is the beginning of Pakistan disassociating itself from these terrorist organizations, though one is not very optimistic.

There are indications that middle level officials from both countries may commence discussions on the agenda for official level dialogue. Meanwhile, some further steps to buttress the process could be taken by both the governments. Full civil aviation facilities should be restored, the train service between the two countries should be revived, sports and cultural contacts could be re-initiated. The hot lines between the prime ministers, the foreign secretaries and the directors-general, military operations, could be fully re-activated. The confidence building measures agreed upon between 1989 and 1996 should be brought back into operation. Most important, both parties could take the major decision of convening the joint experts group on nuclear risk reduction, agreed upon in Lahore in February 1999.

The path ahead will have hurdles, will have disruptions. India and Pakistan should make haste slowly but in the interim should not hesitate to take substantive steps to underpin the process of a dialogue.

Pak. complains of slow pace of peace process

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JUNE 9. For the first time since the Vajpayee peace initiative, Pakistan today complained about the slow pace of the process and openly expressed its worry over what it called reports of "internal dissension" within the Vajpayee Government on the approach towards the resumption of a dialogue.

The newly-appointed Foreign Office spokesman, Masood Khan, surprised journalists with his comments on the Indo-Pak peace moves. The High Commissioner-designate to India and outgoing spokesman, Aziz Ahmed Khan, who sat through the news conference, did not intervene. Would the new spokesman have ventured into such a sensitive territory as Indo-Pak ties without clearance from the highest quarters?

He was, of course, answering specific questions on the pace of the peace initiative and whether Islamabad was satisfied with it. The burden of Mr. Masood Khan's argument was that Pakistan had not seen the kind of progress it would have liked in the normalisation process; it had also reasons to be concerned over the "conflicting" statements emanating from Indian leaders. "The Pa-

kistani leadership has been very constructive, forward-looking and positive in its approach towards the resumption of a dialogue. Unfortunately, we haven't seen the same sort of tone from the Indian leadership," he said. "The Indian leadership should put its act together and speak in one voice. We hear about internal dissension about the normalisation of relations with Pakistan and that is worrying."

Mr. Khan said: "We should not try to introduce conditions before the talks and that is the spirit (with which) we should work." Without referring to any specific statement, Mr. Khan said, "they do not seem to be helping this process (of talks) a lot". He expressed the hope that India would help Pakistan keep the momentum of the engagements which were at an "embryonic" stage. "We hope that the engagements between Pakistan and India would be more intense, purpose-oriented and in a time-frame."

Replying to a question, the spokesman said Pakistan had been calling for a nuclear weapon-free South Asia, but things changed after the nuclear testing by India in 1998. However, he said, there had been no change in its policy that called for a strategic balance between

the two nuclear-states. "In realm of nuclear and missile capabilities, there is a parity of sort, but there is a conventional (weapons) imbalance."

On the restoration of air, bus and rail links between the two countries, he said a lot of conditions were being put forth by India. But Pakistan wanted to resume talks quickly without any conditions. For the restoration of air links, the aviation authorities of the countries would hold consultations to sort out technical details, he said.

On the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf's visit to the U.S., U.K., France and Germany, he said the people have good expectations, as Pakistan had been a close ally of these countries in the war against terrorism. The objective of the visit was to consolidate ties that were multi-dimensional.

The Russian Foreign Minister would be visiting Pakistan from June 15 and the two sides would discuss bilateral and regional issues, Central Asian states, the situation in South Asia and issue of non-proliferation.

Mr. Khan said the Afghan Ambassador had been called to the foreign office today and an official protest was launched over the recent incident in Spin Boldak near the Pakistan-Afghan border.

Return to Lahore, but carefully

By Pran Chopra

HN-10 9/6

THE PRIME Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, has been publicly raining gestures of peace on Pakistan in recent weeks. In the meantime, a group of Indians and Pakistanis, veterans of peace-making exercises on official and non-official tracks, have been conferring privately on how best some progress can be made.

Such efforts are not new. The sub-continent is crowded with such tracks, and traffic on many of them has been getting heavier of late. What is new, however, is the speed with which a broad consensus, even if imprecise as yet, has emerged on one track at least on what should be attempted and when and what should be left for better times. The consensus is neither limited to singing the virtues of peace nor pretends to prescribe comprehensive agreements, here and now. But it does mark a stage, cautiously but concretely, neither ignoring the probability that much bigger hurdles may lie farther ahead nor remaining stuck in the grooves of past disagreements.

This track, like others, has been provided by "facilitators". But it bears no mark of the "pressures" which imaginative people in both India and Pakistan see emerging from every third country plane that lands in either. Such progress as has now been made on this track has mainly resulted from one change: instead of trying to rubbish agreements made in the past or failing to learn from past mistakes, a conscious effort has been made to see what can be built, and how, upon earlier gains.

This change has also helped everyone see once again that the best gains were made when the effort was most clearly bilateral and indigenous, without third-party interests playing collateral games. The consensus in question emerged over just two meetings, together lasting less than one week, one in early November last year and the next in mid-May this year, both in Geneva, under the auspices of the Pugwash Workshops on South Asian Security. Under the protocol of the workshops, what is said by whom is not cited or quoted without the permission of the participant

Instead of trying to rubbish agreements made in the past or failing to learn from past mistakes, a conscious effort has been made to see what can be built, and how, upon earlier gains in Indo-Pak. relations.

concerned. But enough has been permitted by some participants or made public by Pugwash itself on its website to show the extent of consensus.

As was narrated on this page soon after the first meeting, a prominent participant from Pakistan, Gen. Asad Durrani, former head of the all-powerful Inter-Services Intelligence, enlivened the proceedings there by saying that the three documents resulting from the Lahore summit between Prime Ministers Nawaz Sharif and Mr. Vajpayee had created an "opportunity" but unfortunately it was "squandered". This was also the view of the Indian side of the summit when it saw that Gen. Musharraf, who had banished Mr. Sharif from Pakistan after staging a military coup against him, was also busy burying the summit and the "opportunity" created by it.

Therefore, Gen. Durrani's constructive description of the documents prompted an Indian participant to suggest in the November meeting that Pugwash invite Gen. Durrani to constitute a small group of Indian and Pakistani participants to see how best the "opportunity" may be revived, if necessary by revising and updating the documents too. No one opposed the suggestion but it got shelved when the discussion took an acrimonious turn later, on the unrelated issue of why the Agra summit failed.

However, when Pugwash began to draw up the agenda for the meeting in May this year, an Indian invitee suggested that the programme include a revisit to "the Lahore process". The suggestion prospered and when the re-visit began, Gen. Durrani widened the "opportunity" by saying that even better than the Lahore documents was an agreement signed by the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries in 1997. The implications of

what he said are as interesting as the reasons he gave for saying it, and the reasons as well as the implications would be widely acceptable in India.

He said the 1997 agreement covered a broad and yet integrated agenda, and while it was inevitable that progress on some issues would be slower than on others, there would be a "synergy" between them, the speed of progress on some prodding the slower coaches as well. Few in India would disagree with this reason. Fewer still with the first implication, that since the 1997 agreement was a purely bilateral effort, the merit seen in it by the General gives greater depth to the chronology of successful bilateralism, extending it back to times when the norm was third-party intervention.

Second, it showed that Pakistan was no longer rigid on its stand, which Indian interlocutors had found frustrating for years, that nothing can be discussed until the Kashmir issue is solved. Much else can be discussed, he implied, so long as Kashmir also is. Kashmir was, of course, a "core issue", but, he argued in his quiet irrefragable way, you cannot reach the core of anything without dealing with the crust.

Third, Pakistan has at last responded to the advice its closest friend, China, had given to it way back in the mid-1990s, that a difficult issue is sometimes made amenable if easier issues are resolved in the meantime. Fourth, since the "Lahore documents" are basically a re-make of the 1997 agreement, they show that summits are more likely to succeed if the ground is carefully prepared for them at lower levels. In other words, a rush to the summit, as at Agra, is better avoided than attempted.

And finally the fifth, that with skilful preparation at appropriate levels, even touchy issues can be smoothly

taken on board at summits, as the nuclear ambitions or fears of the two countries were in Lahore.

The nuclear issue was not even mentioned in the 1997 agreement because neither country had carried out nuclear explosions till then. By 1999, it had mushroomed into the hottest issue between the two countries, next only to Kashmir. And yet it was not only taken up at Lahore but, as can be seen in the texts crafted by experts on the two sides, some intricate and far-reaching approaches were adopted.

There is no implication here, none at all, that part-time peacemakers finally won the day last mid-May in Geneva, point, set, and match. No, the game has not even begun as yet, and India still faces a cruel enigma, whether or not you may call India's position on it a "precondition" for talking to Pakistan. The enigma is in two parts.

First, wherever the Indo-Pakistan border might come to be in Jammu and Kashmir as the result of a settlement, whether along the present or a modified Line of Control, or the border as it existed at the time of the creation of Pakistan, given the present ethnic, religious, political and geographical terrain of the western strip of the state, it will always be vulnerable to the kind of violence 'jehadi' bands can work up in their lairs on the Pakistan side unless Islamabad decides to nip them in the bud.

Second, however large the fund of goodwill at the negotiating table, either the Indian or the Pakistani hand will freeze in the act of signing if cries of the victims of clashes break in through the window. To what avail will all the negotiating be then?

A senior Pakistani participant gave a partial answer to that, and an Indian counterpart gave a response. The former said let stable peace first settle into normality before trying to find new frontiers, and, in the meantime, take every step with the utmost care. The latter said it would be enough for the day if broad principles were settled first and details left for better times to fill in. In the general spirit of consensus, which existed at the meeting, none disagreed with the other.

'REMOVE DAMOCLES' SWORD OF TERRORISM'

Vajpayee happy over Islamabad's response

By K. Balchand

HO-1
7/6

NIRMALI (BIHAR), JUNE 6. The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, today expressed happiness over Islamabad's favourable response to India's proposal for talks but stressed that terrorism would have to stop completely for creating a conducive atmosphere for a dialogue.

Addressing a mammoth meeting after laying the foundation for the Rs. 323-crore Kosi mega rail bridge project, Mr. Vajpayee maintained that there

had been a decrease in cross-border terrorism but asserted that the Damocles' sword of terrorism had to be brought down for talks to begin.

The Prime Minister said Delhi had made it clear that the problem could be solved only through talks and not war. "War is not a solution. We fought three battles with what results? Nothing had been gained."

Drawing an analogy with the proposed bridge, Mr. Vajpayee said Delhi was keen on bridging the distance with all its neighbours including Pakistan,

stressing that one could change friends but not neighbours. "We have to live together but that was possible only on the basis of justice, friendship and equality."

The Prime Minister asserted that India would not give up its path of 'dharm' (righteousness) and would not rest till Islamabad realised its own 'dharm' for improving relations.

Ahead of the resumption of road communication with Pakistan, Mr. Vajpayee said tourists with passports and visas would be welcome, but not

those seeking to sneak in surreptitiously.

"There was no place for terrorists and they would not be allowed to come in and annihilate innocent men, women and children."

'India's century'

Referring to his recent European tour, the Prime Minister said he had undertaken the visit as the head of a developing country and the reactions there had spurred him into making this country a developed one. "We have to get over the problem of self-guilt and resolve to prevail. We have to make this century, India's century."

He hinted at the possibility of launching space missions soon, expressing confidence in the abilities of Indian scientists to land a man on the moon.

"Our scientists show the light in other countries. But before that we want to light up each house."

Expressing concern over world opinion on the poor growth rate, the Prime Minister underlined his intention of creating a mechanism which would monitor development activities and ensure proper use of funds. "We have to do something to convince them (the world) of our seriousness."

He sought the cooperation and support of NRIs in achieving the goal. Responding to the Bihar Chief Minister, Rabri Devi's demand for a special package to the State, Mr. Vajpayee said some of the demands had been met, while some others were in the pipeline. The Railway Minister, Nitish Kumar, presided.

7 JUN 2003

Pak. downplays PM's statement

By B. Muralidhar Reddy
 ISLAMABAD, JUNE 4. Pakistan today did not respond to the statement made by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, that if talks were to resume with Pakistan on Kashmir, they should begin first on Pak-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Under normal circumstances, the Pakistan Foreign Office would not have allowed such a strong statement to go uncontested. Obviously, at least for the time being, Islamabad has decided not to match word for word and deed for deed from Delhi.

The reason is obvious — Pakistan does not want to say or do anything on Mr. Vajpayee's peace initiative.

This is evident from the conciliatory statements made by the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri.

Even the usually sharp-tongued Pakistan Information Minister, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, particularly when it came to matters related to India, was not ready to join issue with Mr. Vajpayee on the latest statement.

When contacted, Mr. Ahmed was at pains to emphasise that he was not aware of the text and context of Mr. Vajpayee's observations.

"I would rather be guided by the series of statements of Mr. Vajpayee since he extended the hand of friendship to Pakistan rather than pick and choose," he

said. The Minister said that leaders should realise the "importance and sensitive" nature of the issue.

"I don't think there is any need to react. You analyse the statement of the respected Prime Minister Vajpayee for the last one-month. So you will be in a better position to realise what he wants to say.

"It (Kashmir) is a very touchy subject.. The leaders should realise the importance and sensitive nature of the subject. We should not give any harsh statement before it (dialogue) starts," he said.

"As far as Pakistan is concerned, we are waiting for his (Vajpayee's) response and the timing for the dialogue and we believe and we want that we should start with a

good atmosphere and a positive approach...."

Asked at what stage should the Kashmir issue come up in the talks, the Pakistani Minister said that it was a "million dollar" question.

"The most intelligent and intellectual diplomat cannot reply in one sentence on how we are going to manage..."

Mr. Rashid said he believed that when the dialogue started, there would be a solution.

Referring to the recent missile tests by India, Mr. Rashid said, "you know we are very close neighbours and if you see the last testing, there was no provocation from our side. We want the dialogue to start on a positive and good atmosphere."

Indo-Pak. talks and Rawalpindi

By C. Raja Mohan

India certainly does not have the luxury of simply choosing between the Pakistan Army and the civilian leadership.

AS INDIA goes through a tortuous phase of confidence-building with Pakistan and prepares for a formal dialogue, there is one important question that stands out. Who should India talk to in Pakistan?

Should it talk to General Pervez Musharraf, the President and Army Chief of Pakistan, or the Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali? In theory, Mr. Jamali is the top gun of the political system in Pakistan. The reality is that Gen. Musharraf calls the shots on key questions. There is no simple answer to India's diplomatic dilemma on finding the right interlocutor in Pakistan.

India must certainly think through the problem, since the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, has staked so much on the prospects for peace with Pakistan. Mr. Vajpayee has indicated that his latest gamble for peace with Islamabad is not a mere tactical manoeuvre. He has repeatedly signalled in the last few weeks the political will in New Delhi for a serious negotiation on the vexatious subject of Jammu and Kashmir. Mr. Vajpayee has hinted that if Pakistan creates the right environment for the talks, India is ready to consider a final settlement of the Kashmir question.

It is in this context that finding the appropriate interlocutor in Pakistan has become so important. Just as in India, the internal situation in Pakistan remains an important and unpredictable variable in the engagement between the two nations. In any negotiations between two states which have had a hostile relationship for so long, managing the domestic front is often more demanding than negotiating agreements with the adversary. Gaining internal support for settling territorial questions loaded with ideological baggage is even more challenging.

Mr. Vajpayee is widely seen as having the political standing to make an agreement on Kashmir stick. But it is

not clear if Mr. Jamali, Mr. Vajpayee's counterpart at least in protocol terms, is in a position to negotiate and sell substantive agreements with India.

The tension between the civilian and the military establishment in Pakistan has always created complications in the dialogue between the two nations. India knows that the General Headquarters (GHQ) of the Pakistan Army based in Rawalpindi holds a veto over all potential outcomes of a dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad.

The asymmetry in the nature of power structures in India and Pakistan and the unique role of the army next door have been realities India has had to deal with in the past.

Mr. Jamali has already emerged as a *de facto* interlocutor for Mr. Vajpayee. But can India afford to ignore Gen. Musharraf? The rest of the world, including the United States, understands that Gen. Musharraf is the principal force in Pakistan. The diplomatic approach of most nations towards Pakistan is premised on this political reality.

All major Governments assess that the authority for final decisions on key issues relating to foreign policy and national security vests with the Army in Pakistan. The proposition that Gen. Musharraf must be the prime interlocutor for India, then, presents itself.

But not so fast. India certainly knows that it was Gen. Musharraf who scuttled the peace process that was initiated by Mr. Vajpayee along with his counterpart, Nawaz Sharif, in 1998-99. Mr. Sharif, who was ousted by Gen. Musharraf and is now exiled in Jeddah, is not only bitter about Gen. Musharraf but also complains that India has decided to engage the Army leadership notwithstanding its recent

record. Any final settlement, Mr. Sharif seemed to suggest in a recent conversation with a senior Indian journalist, that is not endorsed by the civilian leaders of Pakistan will lack legitimacy in the public eye. This is a sentiment that is echoed by the only other credible leader in Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto. This is not a view that India can easily dismiss.

That brings us back to the original question. Should India deal with the military, the dominant force in Pakistan or should it focus on the elected Government? This perpetual dilemma is further complicated by the fact that the Pakistan Army is also implacably hostile to India.

Pragmatists in India might say deal with the devil in Pakistan since it is the Army alone that can deliver a final peace settlement. Cynics will counter that the Army has no desire for peace with India. The Army in Pakistan will have a lot to lose if there is even a normalisation of relations with India, let alone a resolution of the Kashmir dispute. The Army's power in Pakistan is built on sustaining hostility towards India, in the absence of which it will find it difficult to sustain its political pre-eminence. Would it be wise for India to expect that Gen. Musharraf, who is the Chief Executive of a huge enterprise called the Pakistan Army, will issue an ordinance that will undercut his own corporation?

Here then is the paradox: those who have the power in Pakistan to settle with India do not have an incentive; and those who might want peace have no power to deliver. New Delhi has no choice but to cope with this real political challenge. It must find a sophisticated response that brings together many dimensions of engagement with

Pakistan to create a sustainable peace process. India certainly does not have the luxury of simply choosing between the Army and the civilian leadership.

India has a long-term interest in promoting economic modernisation and political moderation in Pakistan. Its ability to move Pakistan away from compulsive hostility against India will depend on reducing the centrality of the Army in the Pakistani society. Engagement of the civilian leadership and boosting its political profile must be an essential part of India's basic strategy towards Pakistan. But it also cannot ignore the reality in the near-term that a peace process with Pakistan cannot be sustained if the GHQ in Rawalpindi is not on board.

India, rightly, will hold official negotiations with the Jamali Government. There will be some opportunity to engage the armed forces of Pakistan in the formal discussions on border management and military and nuclear confidence-building measures. Beyond that, it is important for India to devise a variety of other mechanisms to discuss difficult political subjects with the Army leadership, including Gen. Musharraf.

Even more urgent for India is to encourage greater contact with the full spectrum of Pakistani civil society. Rather than obstructing such contacts, it is in New Delhi's interest to facilitate them. It must encourage Pakistani political leaders of all hues, including those who represent the religious parties, to come here and express their views on Indo-Pak. relations and on the nature of a final settlement to the Kashmir dispute. This process should take place in tandem with the informal engagement of the Pakistan Army. For, New Delhi cannot succeed in normalising relations with Islamabad without a broader support from the people of Pakistan as well as a wink and nod from Rawalpindi. That, in turn, calls for an Indian diplomacy pursued in many different tracks and at many levels.

HD-1
GET-READY FIAT TO DELHI GOVT. 4/6

Bus to Lahore from July 1

By Sujay Mehdudia

NEW DELHI, JUNE 3. Setting the date once again for a historic journey which could throw open the floodgates for peace and people-to-people exchange, the Ministry of External Affairs today told the Sheila Dikshit Government to prepare the ground for resumption of the now-suspended Delhi-Lahore bus service from July 1. The bus link had been severed on December 22, 2001, in the aftermath of the attack on Parliament House by Pakistan-backed terrorists.

According to the Delhi Chief Minister, Sheila Dikshit, a decision to tentatively resume the bus service from July 1 was taken at a meeting held in the Ministry of External Affairs.

The Delhi Government was represented by its Principal Secretary (Transport), Sindhushree

Khullar, and the DTC Chairman, A.J.S. Sawhney.

"I have given directions to the Transport Department to go in for the best luxury coaches which have the latest technology upgradation. The bus service symbolises peace and promotes brotherhood. It would also represent Delhi's and DTC's image before the people of our neighbouring country and so everything has to be the best and most modern," she said.

As the condition of the two luxury buses which were operating on the Delhi-Lahore route earlier was not up to the mark, the Government as an immediate measure has decided to go in for hiring of two state-of-the-art Volvo buses which will be run on "Km Scheme".

Taking the cue from the Rajasthan State Roadways Transport Corporation (RSRTC),

which is already running these super luxury buses on a similar pattern, the Delhi Government in all likelihood will lease these buses till the new ones are inducted into the DTC fleet.

The Volvo buses are expected to cost Rs. 40 lakhs to 50 lakhs and running them on the Km Scheme would be more viable. The present cost of hiring such a bus under the Km Scheme would be around Rs. 11 a km plus the cost of diesel.

The Delhi Transport Minister, Ajay Maken, said the 540-km Delhi-Lahore route was a tough stretch and the old buses would not be able to undertake the journey on such a route. Keeping these factors in mind, the Km Scheme was found to be the most viable option as the collections from one trip range from Rs. 26,000 to 27,000.

Mr. Maken said the Delhi Government also took up with

the MEA the issue of reimbursement of arrears of Rs. 24.61 lakhs from the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation since the suspension of the bus service.

However, Mr. Maken said the non-reimbursement of this amount would not come in the way of resumption of the bus service.

Mr. Maken said the Ambedkar Bus Terminal, from where the Delhi-Lahore bus would be flagged off, would be given a facelift.

However, the Government had still not been told who would be the VIPs and other passengers travelling in the first trip of the renewed service.

The bus service would also provide an opportunity to Ms. Dikshit — who could not undertake the journey to Lahore last time — to make the trip this time round.

Ready to address India's concerns: Kasuri

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JUNE 3. The Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri, has said that Islamabad is seriously interested in a dialogue with India and is ready to address Indian concerns. The two countries should address each other's concerns, he said.

In an interview to an Indian TV network here today, Mr. Kasuri said, "we are seriously interested in dialogue. We have to address mutual concerns. Pakistan has to address India's concerns and India has to address Pakistan's concerns."

He was responding to a question about India's concern on cross-border terrorism and the steps taken by Pakistan's President, Pervez Musharraf in banning militant groups last year.

Reminded about his statements in April this year about the closure of militant camps, Mr. Kasuri said, "those references I

made were to camps for collection of funds. A lot of money was collected over the years and President Musharraf himself said the money was not properly used."

Reiterating that Pakistan was not in a position to stop infiltration even if it wanted and that it had no Alladdin's magic lamp, he said, "we are not in a position because people are in suicide missions."

Asked if it amounted to an admission that the Pakistan army had failed to prevent infiltration, he said the Indian Army deployed 6 lakh troops, which amounted to placing a soldier every three metres.

By the same logic the Indian Army too could be accused of failing to stop the infiltration, he argued.

Denying that he was a "puppet" in the present military-dominated political setup, Mr. Kasuri said, "I had resigned from Parliament due to differences with (then) Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. If I disagree with President Musharraf, I would not stay

in the Cabinet." Asked how much freedom he enjoyed as Foreign Minister on policy matters, he said the Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, and Gen. Musharraf had given him a free hand. He also denied that the army exerted pressure on politicians.

Mr. Kasuri was all praise for the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, for demonstrating what he termed "real leadership". "I absolutely believe that Prime Minister Vajpayee has demonstrated real leadership. He has shown much strength in the background of very provocative statements from his Ministers... I am quite happy with Vajpayee. His heart is in the right place."

On the perception in Pakistan that the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, was a hardliner, Mr. Kasuri said the Indians should stop demonising Gen. Musharraf, and likewise Pakistan too should stop demonising Mr. Advani.

- 4 JUN 2003

PoK groups welcome Vajpayee's peace move

By Bisheshwar Mishra
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The peace process initiated by India has given a fresh impetus to the people's movement in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) to free themselves from the yoke of Pakistan's military dictatorship, intelligence sources indicated on Sunday.

They said this movement was being spearheaded jointly by the All Parties National Alliance (APNA), Gilgit-Baltistan National Alliance (GBNA) and other political groups. These organisations have also raised their voice against cross-border terrorism being aided and abetted by the military regime in Pakistan.

APNA, GBNA, the Jammu and Kashmir National Awami Party (JK-NAP) and several Kashmir-based political organisations have welcomed the latest Indo-Pak peace initiative of Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee and hoped that it would lead to the resolution of the Kashmir issue.

PoK unrest

- Movement spearheaded jointly by the APNA, GBNA and other political groups
- PoK leaders demand people of J&K should have full representation in the process through genuine representatives
- People dissatisfied with the political, economic, constitutional and legal system introduced by Pakistan in PoK
- Participation of general public in various civilian protest programmes has increased

At the same time, the Kashmiri leaders have demanded that "the core party in the dispute, the people of Jammu and Kashmir, should have full representation in the process through genuine representatives".

APNA had organised a "black day" on April 28, for it was on this day they said that the 'Karachi Agreement' was signed between Pakistan and the so-called "Azad" Jammu and Kashmir government in 1949. Following this agreement, Gilgit-Baltistan, the so-called Northern Areas, which are geographically and historically part of Jammu and Kashmir, was given to Pakistan by the puppet rulers of AJK.

The sources said that the participation of the general public in various civilian protest programmes since then had increased. Early this month, the JKNAP had organised an international convention which was attended by APNA leaders from PoK.

"Speakers at the convention expressed their dissatisfaction with the political, economic, constitutional and legal system introduced by Pakistan in PoK and the Northern Areas," intelligence sources added.

The sources quoted the speakers at the convention as saying that there was no "sign of democracy, no economic and social justice, no constitution and no rule of the law whatsoever throughout Pakistan and in its extensions wherever they are, be it 'Azad Kashmir' or the Northern Areas. Everything is subservient to the needs of the armed forces, especially a tiny minority in the forces. This minority in the armed forces is a law unto itself."

The speakers, the sources said, demanded that the armed forces of Pakistan be brought under a democratically-elected defence minister like other democratic countries and that the defence functionaries should not enjoy "any exceptional status at the cost of the people".

I WILL TAKE UP ISSUE WITH MUSHARRAF: BUSH

Talks cannot succeed if terrorism continues: PM

By Amit Baruah

EVIAN (FRANCE), JUNE 1. The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, has conveyed to the U.S. President, George W. Bush, that a successful dialogue with Pakistan is not possible till Islamabad puts an end to cross-border terrorism.

Authoritative sources told correspondents that the dinner hosted by the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, in St. Petersburg last night saw Mr. Bush agree with Mr. Vajpayee that Pakistan required to end terrorism directed against India. Applauding Mr. Vajpayee's initiative, Mr. Bush reportedly stated that he would take up the issue of terrorism when the Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, met him in the United States later this month.

The conversation between the two leaders lasted a little over five minutes, the sources said adding that the rest was "chit-chat" over a social dinner at which the Italian and Greek Prime Ministers were also present.

On Pakistan, the sources maintained that the "litmus test" for Pakistan ending cross-border terrorism lay in Islamabad taking a "strategic decision" to end the menace. "We have to be convinced that Pakistan has taken a strategic decision to stop cross-border

der terrorism." Asked if the Government believed that Pakistan had taken such a decision, they said: "Not yet."

They claimed that infiltration across the Line of Control had continued in May — with 10 to 15 persons trying to move in at any given point of time. In May itself, the security forces had killed between 18 and 20 terrorists, the sources maintained.

Asked whether the formal G-8 summit document would make a reference to India and Pakistan, they said they had been assured that the final document would not have any such reference.

On the "summary" of the French Presidency after the G-8 Foreign Ministers meet, the sources said: "Even this should not have happened." The summary, issued on May 23, read: "We welcomed efforts undertaken by both countries to normalise their bilateral relations, following the initiative taken by India and Pakistan's positive response."

"We solemnly called on the two parties to continue on the path of bilateral dialogue and rapprochement..." it said adding that the Ministers' hope that a political process aimed at resolving all their differences through dialogue, in the spirit of the Shimla and Lahore agreements, would ensue.

At their last summit, the G-8 leaders had suggested the course of dialogue to the two

countries while calling upon Pakistan to put a permanent stop to terrorist activity originating from territory under its control. The sources believe that this time the G-8 leaders are not likely to make any reference to India-Pakistan issues in the "Chairman's summary".

Asked about their impression of the meeting between Mr. Vajpayee and the Chinese President, Hu Jintao, last night, the sources maintained that it was all about getting to know each other. "You can't come to conclusions after one meeting," they said, stressing, however, that it was a "good, friendly meeting".

On the meetings that the Prime Minister had with different world leaders late on Friday night and on Saturday morning and the discussion on Iraq, the sources said the Indian leadership got the impression that a sizable body of opinion believed that "matters had got bogged down" after the unilateral military action by the U.S. and Britain.

The sources said the Prime Minister did exchange views on Iran — specifically the issue came up during the talks Mr. Vajpayee had with Mr. Putin. The dialogue route remained the best option for Iran and the U.S., they added.

See also Page 14

TWIN PROBLEMS OF TERRORISM, DOUBLE STANDARDS

I offered friendship despite infiltration, says PM

By Amit Baruah

BERLIN, MAY 29. "I hope my political initiative will inspire action to end cross-border terrorism and to dismantle the infrastructure of support to it," the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, said last night about his peace moves with regard to Pakistan.

Addressing German parliamentarians, he said: "But, even while we continue to deal with our specific problem of cross-border terrorism, I have extended a hand of friendship to Pakistan in the hope that it may initiate a process leading to peace, friendship and cooperation between our two countries."

His statement is, perhaps, the most direct that he has made in recent weeks — rejecting the previous condition of non-contact with Pakistan until cross-border terrorism ends. Now, he

has said that even while India faces the problem of cross-border terrorism, he had offered the hand of friendship to Islamabad once again.

While saying that India had suffered both from terrorism and the consequences of "double standards" applied by countries to deal with terrorism in different places, Mr. Vajpayee said he encouraged "friends and partners" (in the international community) to help bring this menace to an end.

He argued that the twin lessons of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks were that global terrorism needed a global answer and that there could be no negotiation with terrorism. "As partners in the international coalition against terrorism, India and Germany should recognise that our success against terrorism will depend on how well we have learnt this lesson."

Addressing a constituency that has often spoken of its concerns about human rights and the inability of the Government to tackle communal violence in Gujarat, the Prime Minister said: "We have preserved the multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious fabric of our society within a constitutional, democratic and federal framework. Our system institutionalises fundamental freedoms, human rights and the rule of law."

"We have regularly changed governments through a peaceful, non-violent expression of popular will. As I look around at the functioning of real and sham democracies around the world, I sometimes feel the enormity of India's achievements in this direction is not fully appreciated." Mr. Vajpayee said that recent global developments had pointed to the need to evolve a coop-

erative, multipolar world order, which would promote the ethic of pluralism and consensus, protecting the legitimate interests and aspirations of its constituent elements.

"We are happy that the United Nations Security Council has reached unanimous agreement on the manner of moving forward in Iraq, and an important role for the U.N. and its organisations. I believe that the recent events have again underlined that the United Nations and its organisations need to be made more reflective of modern political realities..."

Referring to India's economic liberalisation, he said the reform process had to face conflicting interests and demands within political parties, unions, civil society as well as Parliament and Government.

"We have followed the patient process of trying to reconcile the various competing interests, and to move forward in a manner more conducive to equitable economic development and social justice.

"It may not be a very rapid process but it does make for greater stability. I think you have also experienced this process in decision-making in Europe. I should inform you that my coalition Government has nearly as many parties as the number of countries the European Union would have, after its expansion," he added.

What did the PM mean?

By Amit Baruah

MUNICH, MAY 29. What did the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, mean when he used the word "retire" in an interview he gave to the German magazine, *Der Spiegel*?

To a question by *The Hindu* whether he would "retire" from his third peace-making bid with Pakistan if this initiative, too, failed, Mr. Vajpayee said in Hindi: "I used it for myself". Then he flashed a smile before getting into his

car at the Munich airport. In his interview, the Prime Minister was asked: "You have said this is your last peace initiative (with Pakistan). And if it fails..." Mr. Vajpayee replied: "Then I have to accept my defeat, then I retire." There was no amplification whether this meant "retiring" from the peace effort or from political life.

The television channels made his remarks into a "big story". Mr. Vajpayee's clarification made in a lighter vein, did not throw any greater light either.

30 MAY 2003

THE HINDU

Indo-Pak. talks on Indus begin

By Gargi Parsai

NEW DELHI, MAY 28. The India-Pakistan Permanent Indus Commission began its meeting here today with notes being exchanged on the annual report for March 2003. The report, which will be finalised during the meeting, will be submitted to both Governments.

On day one, Pakistan did not raise the Baglihar or the Kishan-Ganga projects in Jammu and Kashmir. Both sides, however, discussed the tours that could be undertaken by technical experts from either side to the sites of the projects under construction.

Stating that the meeting commenced in a "conducive atmosphere", the leader of the Pakistan delegation, Jamait Ali Khan, said "we are trying to ensure that there is no problem in arriving at a decision on the agenda".

Asked whether Pakistan would insist on having neutral experts on the Baglihar hydro project in Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Shah said "we will see after the meeting".

India's Commissioner, Indus, A.D. Bhardwaj, said the meeting was spread for three days.

During Indo-Pak talks on the Baglihar project in February, Pakistan had threatened to bring in neutral experts to look into alleged violations of the 1960 Indus Treaty on the Baglihar hydroproject. India has, however, ruled out any need for third party presence.

"There is no violation of the Treaty and the matter can be sorted out mutually with consensus," the Minister for Water Resources, Arjun Charan Sethi, had told reporters on the sidelines of a water conference on Tuesday.

The Pakistan delegation had called on the Water Resources Secretary, A.K. Goswami, on Tuesday.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2003

ANOTHER STEP FORWARD

ANOTHER SIGNIFICANT STEP has been taken in the cautious and calibrated exercise aimed, in the short term, at restoring civil relations between India and Pakistan and, in the longer run, at commencing a dialogue aimed at resolving a clutch of prickly bilateral issues. New Delhi's decisions to resume the suspended Delhi-Lahore bi-weekly bus service and release 130 Pakistan citizens who have been in custody on charges of trespassing are the latest overtures in the thaw that is evolving in an unhurried but definite manner. While the return of the prisoners is a reciprocal gesture for Islamabad's decision to free 20 Indian nationals who were languishing in Pakistani jails, the resumption of the bus service marks a tentative beginning towards the restoration of people-to-people contacts. Rail links have not been restored and while Pakistan has appreciated New Delhi's offer of opening air links, there has been no forward movement yet on this front. However, going by the official mood on both sides of the border, it would appear that a comprehensive resumption of transport links is now only a matter of time.

If the two countries have been able to proceed so far, it is principally because both have given up, or at least shifted some distance from, time-worn, rigid and unhelpful postures. Islamabad may continue to stress, for the sake of its domestic audience, that Kashmir remains the core dispute and that there can be no real rapprochement without its resolution, but its willingness to engage in a step-by-step process, that comprises a series of incremental confidence-building measures, is a practical repudiation of the Kashmir-before-anything-else stand. As for New Delhi, the Vajpayee Government has for all practical purposes abandoned the position that there can be no talks before the end of cross-border terrorism. The clearest expression of this subtle but significant shift in policy was contained in a recent interview to a British newspaper, where the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, has admitted as much by mak-

ing a distinction between having dialogue with Pakistan and having successful dialogue with Pakistan. In other words, India would not lay down a halt to cross-border terrorism as a precondition to enter into talks, but such talks can be successful or meaningful only in the absence of cross-border incursions by militants.

With the exchange of envoys expected to take place shortly, with no obstacles for the resumption of road, train and air links and with the possible early resumption of sporting contacts, there is likely to be a considerable advance in the relationship at a people-to-people level in the days to come. The expansion of trading contacts should be actively pursued to widen the nature of the engagement between the two countries and to raise the economic stakes for the maintenance of the peace. But this is likely to be a somewhat difficult nut to crack. There is (and possibly understandably) serious opposition within Islamabad's economic ministries to granting India the most favoured nation (MFN) status, such reservations stemming from fears of the adverse impact that better-produced Indian goods could have on the Pakistani economy. Nevertheless, the fact that Islamabad has called the first of a series of inter-ministerial meetings to discuss this issue is a positive step. From India's perspective, the most significant confidence-building concession made recently by Pakistan is easily the announcement of curbs on the Hizb-ul Mujahideen, the largest and most powerful militant outfit in the Kashmir Valley. How sincerely these curbs are implemented may have a considerable bearing on the exact manner in which this process of rapprochement unfolds or develops. The road map towards an official dialogue is being very cautiously plotted and the two countries may still have to travel a considerable distance before they find themselves engaged in substantive discussions on the really key or outstanding issues. But the first steps they have taken towards this end have been definite, constructive and very encouraging.

28 MAY 2003

THE HINDU

I won't be a hurdle to peace process: Musharraf

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 27. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has said that he would not be a hurdle to the peace process between India and Pakistan and expected the dialogue to take place between the two Prime Ministers, Atal Behari Vajpayee and Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali.

Gen. Musharraf was responding to a specific question at a gathering of businesspersons on Monday night. Interestingly, he has spoken on the same lines in the course of a telephone interview to the Pakistan Urdu daily, *Jang*. Observers have found it intriguing that he should be speaking to a Pakistani daily, with offices in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, over the phone.

He was asked whether Mr. Vajpayee wanted to give an impression that Gen. Musharraf was an "obstacle" in the way of a dialogue. The General said he was not a hurdle to talks with India.

"The Indian Prime Minister has talked to our Prime Minister, who will talk to him (Mr. Vajpayee). We have taken the first step towards improvement of relations with India and Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali first contacted the Indian leadership. We have thoughtfully taken initiative for (the) restoration of ties with India. I am fully backing the Prime Minister on the initiative," he said.

In response to a query on the



Indian proposal for intelligence sharing with Pakistan to check terrorism, he said if any concrete proposal came from India, Pakistan was ready to look into it. "In this regard, we will see that how and why the two countries can share intelligence," he said.

In a related development, an inter-ministerial meeting at the Foreign Office on Monday reviewed the progress of Pakistan-India relations since the Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali's telephonic contact with Mr. Vajpayee on April 28.

The purpose of the meeting was to take stock of the post-April 28 situation and to evaluate the progress. Presided over by the Foreign Secretary, Riaz Khokhar, the main objective of the conference was to coordinate with the Ministries con-

cerned to get their standpoints on various issues related to the confidence-building measures announced by both sides.

On the issue of granting the Most Favoured Nation status to India, the general view was Islamabad should proceed cautiously.

It appears there was some concern over what was perceived as the New Delhi's "reluctance" towards addressing some issues to the exclusion of others contrary to Pakistan's position of discussing all issues simultaneously, including the "core issue of Kashmir."

The revival of a police case against Pakistan's former Deputy High Commissioner in New Delhi, Jalil Abbas Jilani, has also been a matter of concern. Mr. Jilani figures in the second column in the FIR filed by the Delhi police in connection with the alleged provision of funds to Kashmiri freedom fighters.

It is believed that Pakistan had already provided consular access to 261 of the total 344 Indian fishermen in Pakistani jails.

An official told the meeting that once the Indian side confirmed fishermen's national status they would be repatriated to India.

The meeting was told that India had confirmed the status of six of the total 22 Sikh youth detained in Pakistan and that the moment the status of the remaining 16 was confirmed, they would all be repatriated.

NEW DELHI'S NOD AWAITED

Aziz Ahmed Khan, Pak. envoy to India *Indu Park*

H.D.-1
20/5

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 27. Ending days of suspense and confusion, Pakistan has nominated the career diplomat, Aziz Ahmed Khan, as its new High Commissioner to India.

The formal papers seeking approval for the name of Mr. Khan, now Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesman, currently the Foreign Office spokesman, were given to India on Monday.

The Pakistan Information and Broadcasting Minister, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, who confirmed the news indirectly, maintained that Islamabad would wait for the green signal from New Delhi before making

a public announcement. Pakistan found itself in an embarrassing situation last week when the Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, named Riaz Mohammad Khan, now Ambassador to China, as Islamabad's choice for the post of High Commissioner in New Delhi.

Mr. Jamali had made the "disclosure" in the course of a television interview to a private producer for Doordarshan. Within hours of the interview being recorded, the state-run Pakistan Television (PTV) announced in its regular news bulletins that Mr. Jamali had "appointed" Mr. Riaz Khan as the new envoy to New Delhi.

A shocked Foreign Office is-

sued a terse statement at 2 a.m., contradicting the item and asserted that no decision had been taken.

The whole episode revealed the differences within the establishment on the ideal choice to New Delhi.

Known for his moderate views on critical issues of Pakistan's foreign policy and soft nature, Mr. Khan is not new to India as he had worked as Deputy High Commissioner in New Delhi for over two years.

Considered an expert on the intricate politics of Afghanistan, Mr. Khan had served as the envoy to the country during the years when Taliban was in power.

Delhi-Lahore, non-stop

The bus could still be a key vehicle of Vajpayee's bid for subcontinental peace

THE government's decision to recommence the bus service between Delhi and Lahore is heartening. In itself a 526-km journey — even one that wends through the ceremonial pageantry at Wagah — may not amount to much. But it is just the kind of bilateral engagement that could give depth and balance to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's peace initiative, and the reciprocal response from his Pakistani counterpart. After a 15-month-long chill following the terrorist attack on Parliament and two near wars, official contacts are being quickly re-established. The people-to-people contact that a bus service through the green fields of Punjab would add substance to the apparatus of normalcy being constructed.

The short-lived Delhi-Lahore bus route is, in fact, extremely symbolic. Okayed in December 1998, the bus with the emblems of both India and Pakistan painted on it, literally became the vehicle of goodwill when it ferried Vajpayee a few months later to the other side of Radcliffe's line. Its shiny golden exterior reflected the politics of the time — as the prime minister put it, it was a defining moment. Shrill threats by groups like the Shiv Sena to pave the route with nails highlighted domestic hostility to normal-

isation — while then Pakistan prime minister Nawaz Sharif's military commanders' refusal to greet Vajpayee off the bus indicated the institutional resistance to innovative peace moves aimed at breaking half a century of hostilities. That peace initiative and the resultant Lahore Declaration were overtaken by Pakistan's Kargil misadventure in the summer of 1999, and audacious Pak-sponsored terrorist activity finally culminated in the snapping of all communication links between the two countries.

Today, a new sobriety and cautiousness are discernible in the peace moves as both sides seek to create a conducive atmosphere for bilateral dialogue. But here is the enduring paradox of India-Pakistan relations. As absolute postures are still visible, a yearning for people-to-people contact, too, is evident. Restoration of air and road links, relaxation of visa regimes, scheduling of cultural exchanges, all serve to feed the curiosity about the Other. They all conspire to foster a sense of shared history and geography — and hopefully enhanced understanding. And they present a challenge to the prime minister's peace initiative: To facilitate personal exchanges in tandem with more fractious bureaucratic encounters.

130 PAK. PRISONERS TO BE RELEASED

India's nod for resuming bus service to Lahore

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, MAY 26. India today announced that it had "approved" the resumption of the "suspended", twice-a-week Delhi-Lahore bus service "as soon as details" were worked out by the "technical authorities" in New Delhi and 'slamabad.

"The Government of India has also decided to release 70 Pakistani fishermen and 60 civilian prisoners presently in Indian custody. They would be transferred as soon as Pakistan has indicated that it is ready to accept them," said an official release of the External Affairs Ministry.

The surprise announcement came even as the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, is leaving for a three-nation foreign tour tomorrow.

The release said the Prime Minister had emphasised the importance of people-to-people

contacts for creating a conducive atmosphere in India-Pakistan relations. "Accordingly, the Government of India has today approved the resumption of the Delhi-Lahore bus service, on twice a week basis, as soon as details have been worked out by the technical authorities of the two countries," it added.

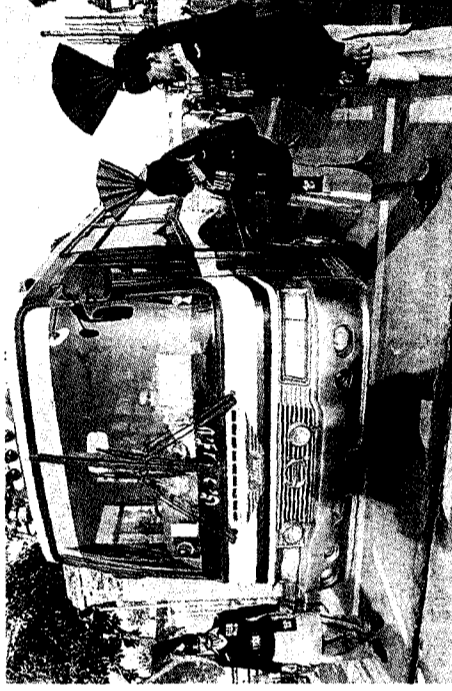
The Delhi-Lahore bus service launched in February 1999 had none other than Mr. Vajpayee as its first passenger. It was the newest transport link between the two countries after the Samjhauta Express began service in 1976. All transport links were snapped by India after the December 13, 2001, attack on Parliament House.

The Indian response on the bus service could break the logjam that has marked the resumption of contacts with Pakistan since there has been no forward movement on restoring the civil aviation links

bus and train services. "Since the majority of travellers between India and Pakistan use train and bus services, these will be resumed immediately on acceptance by India," he had said. India's statement today does not say anything on resumption of the Samjhauta service.

Asked whether the Government had been in touch with the Pakistani authorities, official sources said it was entirely India's decision. Resumption of the civil aviation links have been held up in the absence of a technical level meeting between Indian and Pakistani officials. Perhaps, Pakistan wants a response for the bus/train proposals that it had made.

For the thousands of divided families living in India and Pakistan, the latest statement on resumption of the bus service will be welcome. Many of these families who cannot afford air travel were using the train and bus options.



Pakistani border security officials watch the last bus from New Delhi enter Pakistan at Wagah border on December 22, 2001. Later, India announced that it was stopping the bus and train services to Pakistan following the attack on its Parliament House on December 13. — AFP (File photo)

and on Islamabad naming a Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan High Commissioner to India. It will also match a proposal jamali, on May 6 referring to the

27 MAY 2003

THE HINDU

Pakistan hails New Delhi's decision

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 26. Pakistan tonight welcomed the decision of India to accept its proposal for resumption of the suspended Delhi-Lahore-Delhi bus service as a 'positive gesture' and expressed the hope that it would agree for a meaningful and serious dialogue for resolution of all issues, including Kashmir.

The Pakistan Information and Broadcasting Minister, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, said that Islamabad was keen not only on restoring travel and transportation links with India but also initiating serious talks on all contentious issues. He made it a point to mention that it should include what he termed the

"core issue" of Kashmir.

Sources in the Pakistan Foreign Office said a formal reaction to the Indian decision would be given tomorrow. There is little doubt that it would welcome the Indian acceptance.

However, it would once again emphasise the need for restoration of ties to the pre-December 13, 2001 status.

A senior official in the Pakistan Foreign Office told *The Hindu* that Pakistan would like India to accept all the confidence-building measures outlined by the Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, on May 6.

In his statement, Mr. Jamali had accepted to proposals

made by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, for the appointment of High Commissioner and the resumption of air links.

Besides, he had sought the diplomatic status quo as it existed between India and Pakistan prior to the December 13, 2001 Parliament attack and dialogue on nuclear and security-related issues.

The India-centric measures announced by Mr. Jamali are: immediate restoration of the snapped rail and road links on a reciprocal basis; restoration of air links as proposed by Mr. Vajpayee; release of all Indian fishermen in Pakistani jails besides 20 Sikh youth and 14 members of Rajhatxmi cargo boat as a

posing dates for the SAARC Summit scheduled in Islamabad and decision of Pakistan to hold the thrice postponed South Asian Federation (SAF) games.

However, so far Islamabad could initiate action only on two CBMs.

Of the 300 or so Indian prisoners in different Pakistan jails, it has released 20. It is in the process of appointment of a High Commissioner.

Though Pakistan has agreed on resumption of air links, there has hardly been any progress on the subject as Islamabad has remained ambiguous on the issue of over-flight facilities despite New Delhi seeking specific clarification.

goodwill gesture; proposal for resumption of sporting ties to begin with in the fields of cricket and hockey and proposal for restoration of staff strength of India and Pakistan missions to pre-December 2001 level and suggestion for dialogue between the two countries on nuclear security-related issues as agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding in the Lahore Declaration.

The SAARC-related confidence building measures which would have a bearing on India-Pakistan ties are: the decision by Pakistan to add 78 more items on the list of items that could be imported from India; decision to approach SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu pro-

Lack of trust queers peace pitch

Nilova Roy Chaudhury 571
in New Delhi

May 25. — The initial flurry of activity and excitement over, it is now clear that the lack of trust between the principals is going to hold up any possibility of a dialogue between Indian and Pakistan officials.

Senior MEA officials say India is not going to rush into anything. It has acted on the two fronts Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee announced in Parliament earlier this month: announcing the appointment of a high commissioner to Pakistan, and asking for a mutual restoration of civil aviation links.

Pakistan has not yet responded positively to either gesture and the government is waiting for Islamabad's response before it will decide on further

confidence-building measures. India will also not give up its insistence on an end to cross-border infiltration and terrorism.

Having made a serious offer to initiate a dialogue, it wants some of its basic concerns met, officials said. According to the external affairs minister, Mr Yashwant Sinha, a "reduction" in levels of infiltration is not good enough. State sponsorship of terrorism by Pakistan must end before India enters into a comprehensive dialogue process.

(According to agency reports from Islamabad, Pakistan today described Mr Sinha's proposal to share intelligence for curbing infiltration as "theoretical", saying it would not succeed without Delhi and Islamabad first entering into a dialogue.

Pakistan's foreign minister Mr

Khurshid Ahmed Kasuri today said that theoretically, everything was possible. But practically, confidence, trust and mutual understanding was imperative, which could only be achieved through dialogue. Without dialogue, there would be no positive impact on the relations between the two countries, he said.)

Mr Sinha had proposed a joint mechanism by India and Pakistan, including "intelligence-sharing", to deal with infiltration, if Islamabad faced a problem in reining in militants.

"Terrorists move around Pakistan, go into PoK and then cross over to this side. It is not possible that there is no knowledge about their activities. So let us have intelligence-sharing under a joint mechanism," Mr Sinha had proposed in an informal interaction with media people in Delhi.

THE STATESMAN

26 MAY 2003

Pak. meet today to discuss MFN status to India

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 25. The Pakistan Government has called a meeting here tomorrow to discuss the issue of trade ties with India including New Delhi's demand that it reciprocate the most favoured nation status.

The Pakistan Commerce Minister, Humayun Akhtar, has already said that as of now Islamabad had no intention of granting MFN status to India but that it was willing to discuss the subject once both the countries got into a dialogue mode covering all contentious issues such as Kashmir.

Quoting a senior official, the English daily, *Dawn*, said that a preliminary meeting in this connection would be held on Monday at the Foreign Office to deliberate upon various proposals for discussion between the two countries.

The meeting — which would be attended by senior officials from the Ministries of Defence, Railways, Sports and Culture, Interior, Foreign Office and Commerce — would also work out a negotiation agenda for a possible resumption of dialogue. It would also discuss resumption of air, train, bus services and sport ties between both countries as well as proposals for further enhancement in these areas.

The main task, however, would be to discuss the pros and cons of possible extension of MFN status to India and its

likely implications on Pakistan's economy.

According to a report, the paper said, giving MFN status to India would create problems for Pakistani manufacturers engaged in producing goods that were also being produced by their Indian counterparts. "There is a possibility that the products in which the Indian producers enjoyed an edge in quality could wipe out the Pakistani products from the local market."

The report recommended that to facilitate trade and technology exchange between the two countries, especially in agriculture, it was necessary that more border-crossing spots were set up.

It also recommended relaxation of visa procedure for businessmen.

The report said that Indian industry would have an edge in accessing Pakistani markets because of government support.

Indian exports covered under the export promotion capital goods and technology up-gradation schemes were tax-free in India along with several export incentives available to such goods.

Resume dialogue: Kasuri

Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri, has asserted that the resumption of dialogue was the only way to discuss any proposal or resolve all the differences be-

tween India and Pakistan. He was reacting to statements by some Ministers in the Vajpayee Government in the last few days including a suggestion by the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, for a 'joint mechanism' of India and Pakistan to monitor the Line of Control.

"Theoretically, everything is possible. But practically, the confidence, trust and mutual understanding of each other is imperative, which could only be achieved through dialogue," Mr. Kasuri told the state-run Associated Press of Pakistan, when asked to comment on Mr. Sinha's proposal.

The only way to build confidence, trust and mutual understanding was a dialogue; otherwise, there would be no positive impact on relations between the two countries, he said.

Once Pakistan and India develop trust in each other through a dialogue they would be able to resolve all contentious issues and would be able to have such a "mechanism."

Earlier, India's proposal for a joint patrolling of the LoC had been rejected by Pakistan.

Instead, Islamabad had stressed the need for an 'impartial' monitoring of the LoC by deploying a reasonable number of international observers and strengthening the United Nations Military Observers Group on India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP).

26 MAY 2003

THE HINDU

Sinha throws book at Pakistan again

TIMES NEWS NETWORK AND AGENCIES

London\New Delhi: India has tried to call Islamabad's bluff on cross-border terrorism by pledging full "cooperation to jointly fight the menace", even as it significantly quoted the text and tone of the two-year-old UN anti-terrorism resolution 1373 to Pakistan.

Foreign minister Yashwant Sinha's comments on Tuesday evening came almost simultaneously with Pakistan Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali's insistence on Doordarshan that Pakistan had "no control over cross-border incursions (which are) outside Pakistan's purview".

"Pakistan has made efforts (to stop

cross-border incursions by militants). But a movement is on which is outside our purview. We can try to rein them in, make them understand. We don't have control over them," Mr Jamali said. He said it was for India to use its resources to deal with the problem. "You have much more available resources; so in that context I would expect India to be more firm in their borders and give us a chance so we can be a helping hand in the betterment of humanity," he said.

"They (the militants) are already in (your area). We must realise whose responsibility is what, and once we earnestly and honestly realise this, only after that things will start falling in the right places. But rest assured, I have said this before, I

am saying this today, we have never encouraged these things. We will keep on discouraging. We have done our best but, of course, we have limited resources."

But Mr Sinha pointed out that both India and Pakistan had signed UN Security Council Resolution 1373, the wide-ranging, comprehensive anti-terrorism resolution adopted by the council in the wake of 9/11.

South Asia watchers said it may be significant that Mr Sinha chose, for the second time in less than a month, to literally throw the book at Pakistan for playing an allegedly devious, double role in the global war on terror. Just weeks ago, Mr Sinha had said Pakistan was "a fit case" for pre-emptive military action.

22 MAY 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

'NO U.S. PRESSURE ON INDIA'

PM hopes Pak. will act on curbs against Hizb

By J.P. Shukla

LUCKNOW, MAY 21. The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, today welcomed Pakistan's action to ban the activities of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and said there was no reason to adopt a soft attitude towards terrorism. He expressed the hope that Islamabad would "sincerely implement" the restrictions on the Hizb and said that a solution to the problems between the two countries would be found through talks.

However, Mr. Vajpayee said, Pakistan would have to demolish the bases of terrorism that it had built within its territory. He wished that a climate would soon develop to have negotiations with Pakistan to resolve all outstanding issues.

He refuted the Opposition charges that India had been forced to negotiate with Pakistan under "American pressure". The insinuations had been re-

jected even by the U.S. leaders, he said.

Addressing a press conference, Mr. Vajpayee favoured a solution to the Iraq problem through the United Nations. What had happened in Iraq had affected the whole world and the issue should be dealt with as such, he said when asked to comment on the U.S. move in the Security Council to have more powers to deal with the situation in Iraq.

Mr. Vajpayee also disapproved of the way Pakistan had raised the issue of Jammu and Kashmir in the Security Council. "No country was in favour of such a move by Pakistan which did not get any support in the Security Council." Islamabad, he hoped, would take a lesson from this fact and try to resolve the various problems bilaterally.

The recent killings at Rajouri in which the throats of children had been slit by terrorists indi-

cated the severity of the terrorist problem. Some people were hoping that the terrorists might have learnt their lessons as they had lost all popular support in Jammu and Kashmir but they were disappointed. These incidents in India as also in some other countries had come as a warning and there was need to strengthen efforts to fight terror at the international level.

To a question, the Prime Minister said a reshuffle of the Union Cabinet would take place shortly.

Asked if the Lok Sabha elections would be advanced, he said there was no such proposal before him.

During his two-day visit to Lucknow, Mr. Vajpayee launched a number of projects, including the development of a new railway terminal at Gomti Nagar. Today, he inaugurated a direct Air-India flight from Lucknow to Jeddah. Later Mr. Vajpayee left for New Delhi.

'Let infiltration not be the barometer'

By Sandeep Dikshit

NEW DELHI, MAY 21. The Defence Minister, George Fernandes, today said that incidents of infiltration and fire fights in Jammu and Kashmir should not be the "barometer" for assessing the merit of the Indo-Pakistan peace initiatives.

Confidence building measures, initiated with the decision to re-appoint High Commissioners, would take time to take root and should not be linked with incidents of violence in Jammu and Kashmir, he said. At the same time, the Centre would continue with the dialogue with various groups in the State. The Centre's interlocutor, N.N. Vohra, was doing his bit. His efforts would continue.

Playing down the varying perceptions within the Government on the peace process with Pakistan, Mr. Fernandes said: "The question of peace is much larger than how many were shot. Let us not diminish the efforts made by the Prime Minister... don't expect daily developments (on the infiltration rate)."

The Minister would not comment on the infiltration rate. "We have been saying for ages that the situation (in J&K) changes every morning and night. Yesterday, four were killed on the LoC. Today, there have been no reports but we don't know what the situation would be in the evening... A complete assessment would have to be made over a period of time."

Earlier in the day, the Chief of the Army Staff, N.C. Vij, appeared to reiterate the Minister's observations on the need to assess the infiltration rate over a period of time before arriving at a conclusion. He felt that though the next three to four months would be crucial in estimating infiltration, available information suggested that "efforts are not lacking". The first infiltration effort in north Kashmir, he pointed out, was detected and foiled on Tuesday.

Dwelling on the operations near the Line of Control, south of the Pir Panjal range, which he reviewed on the ground, Gen. Vij said the area was important from both tactical and strategic levels. From the point of view of counter-insurgency operations, this area, because of thick vegetation and lack of roads and tracks, was the hub for harbouring terrorists operating in the Surankot "bowl". More than that, the terrorists could have interfered with the lines of communication for the troops operating in areas beyond Surankot.

He thanked the State Government for acceding to the Army's request to stop nomadic shepherds from using the area. This strategy deprived the terrorists of local cover as they used to mingle with the shepherds. The cessation of civilian movement also enabled troops to engage in a no-holds-barred battle with the terrorists of whom 60 were killed.

22 MAY 2003

INDIA

LoC TROOP DEPLOYMENT BEING REVIEWED

India starts blocking infiltration routes

By Sandeep Dikshit

NEW DELHI, MAY 20. As part of a three-pronged counter-terrorism strategy in Jammu and Kashmir, India has started blocking infiltration routes favoured by militants, reviewing troop deployment along the Line of Control and installing an electronic warfare system to cut off communication between terrorists and their mentors across the border.

The Army has recently begun placing barbed wire inside the Indian territory, parallel to the LoC, on certain stretches in the higher reaches known to be used by infiltrators. So far no opposition has been reported from the Pakistan Army.

The International Border, 100 metres from the zero point in the Jammu region, had been the target of Pakistani shelling because Islamabad considers it to be a "working boundary".

India has already fenced a considerable part of the IB in Rajasthan without much opposition, as there is no dispute over it.

"This is an area that has been looked into in great detail," sources said, suggesting that there was no intention to unilaterally convert the LoC into a permanent boundary. Though the work looks suspiciously close to fencing the border, the sources said the final aim matched the intentions expressed by Pakistan — to check

the movement of terrorists across the LoC.

The second leg of the strategy is an exhaustive review of troop deployment along the LoC. Army officials here were short on details because the exercise is on, but said the focus would be on the second tier of defence which, unlike the first, keeps an eye on both infiltration and exfiltration.

The review will also consider stepping up the supply of "force multipliers" such as imported night vision devices and thermal imagers to detect body heat.

The third part is installing electronic warfare systems to cut off the ability of Pakistan-based commanders of terrorist organisations to communicate with and pass instructions to militants operating in India.

The Government is in the process of finalising an elaborate electronic system that would detect and jam all transmissions from Pakistan to operatives in Jammu and Kashmir. The omnibus electronic system will also be able to record most of the transmissions between terrorist groups inside Indian territory, thus considerably cutting down the reaction time of the security forces.

The Army may like to accelerate work on all these counts following its recent major success in an encounter about 50 km from the LoC. Operating in rugged terrain, troops of the Ro-

meo Force of the Rashtriya Rifles shot dead 60 terrorists and busted 90 hideouts where they were stocking food and ammunition.

The importance of "Operation Sarp Nash" (extermination of serpents) could be gauged from the fact that the Chief of Army Staff, N.C. Vij, accompanied by the Director-General of Military Operations toured the area for two days in order to boost the morale of the troops who entered into close quarter combat for nearly four weeks while suffering casualties themselves.

The operation has been called off with the recovery of considerable ammunition and documents, but the troops are learnt to be still scouring slopes of the forbidding Pir Panjal range for remnants of three terrorist organisations that had congregated in what is known as the Hill Kaka area.

Highly-placed sources said the bulge was strategically located and would have supported conventional operation by cutting off the lines of communication of Indian troops.

But another, and more likely, interpretation is that terrorists infiltrating from Pakistan used it for regrouping because of thick woods and sparse population. This time they had probably planned to make it a quasi-permanent transit point for their entry into the Kashmir Valley.

2 1 MAY 2003

THE HINDU

Start talks and help us fight terror: Kasuri

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New Delhi, May 19 (PTI): Close on the heels of Atal Bihari Vajpayee asking Pakistan to do more to halt cross-border terrorism, Islamabad today said it would be able to check any such activity "more effectively" if an "unconditional" dialogue starts with India.

On BBC World, Pakistan's foreign minister Khursheed Mehmood Kasuri dismissed suggestions the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) was supporting militancy in Jammu and Kashmir.

"ISI is not an independent entity. It is answerable to the government of Pakistan and there is no way it can have an independent agenda," Kasuri said.

Pakistan, he said, was "trying" to stop cross-border activity, "but we will be far more effective in stopping it if a meaningful dialogue starts because then we (will be able to) tell the Kashmiris why are you blowing yourselves up... There will be a future for you. Pakistan and India will arrive at an arrangement in which your aspirations will be reflected".

Welcoming the statesmanship shown by Prime Minister Vajpayee for his peace initiative



Kasuri: Stress on dialogue

es, Kasuri said Delhi should "accept the fact that the government of Pakistan is equally interested (in improving bilateral ties)".

"India will not admit state terrorism and we will not admit the fact that we are facilitating the entry of people (into Kashmir). So, the only civilised way of conducting business under the circumstances is to have an unconditional dialogue," he said.

On India's insistence that cross-border terrorism should end before resuming bilateral

talks and Pakistan's insistence on starting a dialogue first, Kasuri said: "You see, I am a politician and, unfortunately, some times politicians have to address two constituencies — the international constituency and the domestic constituency."

According to Kasuri, Delhi would "find in us, (a) people who are genuinely wedded to peace and a resolution of all issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, through a composite, sustained and tiered dialogue. That's what we would want and that, I hope, is what he (Vajpayee) wants".

On the ISI being accused of backing militant outfits in Kashmir, he said: "There is lot of propaganda about this. In ISI, basically 90 per cent of the officers are Pakistan army officers and they don't stay for more than two-three years and if they want their career advancement, they have to follow orders."

Asked why Pakistan has been unable to stop militants from crossing the border, Kasuri said the international community rightly wished to be "honest brokers" and they do not wish to alienate either country beyond a certain point.

20 MAY 2003

THE TELEGRAPH

LoC transit?

Don't jump the gun, Mufti

There is both strategic and emotional merit in Mufti Mohammed Sayeed's suggestion that transit points be opened on the Line of Control to facilitate movement among the Kashmiri people. But its timing is not particularly happy and his use of the term "softening" will evoke a hard response from those who confuse softness with weakness in calling the shots — literally — across the western frontier. The Mufti contends that contact across the cease-fire line, as it once was, will be a major confidence building measure, but he must understand that it will serve the purpose only after a host of other CBMs are in place and a significant lowering of tension is visible. Experience with other steps to facilitate trans-border movement has not always been pleasant: the rail link through Wagah-Attari threw up serious problems of drug-running and smuggling of currency; the ISI was suspected. The sheer numbers involved makes effective screening over land routes difficult, and if stringent measures are enforced they generate the misgivings that people-to-people contact seek to eliminate. No, transit points in the Valley and the Rajouri-Poonch sector will not automatically result in the induction of a higher number of militants — the LoC is hardly a barrier anyway — they will attain the goal only when Pakistan abandons its policy of subverting every goodwill gesture to India's detriment.

Yet New Delhi should not reject the suggestion outright. In a more relaxed climate people on both sides of the LoC will relish taking the direct and less-costly route to re-establishing family and personal bonds that no man-made boundary can dismantle. India would actually gain if people returned from PoK after seeing things for themselves; it exposes *jihadi* propaganda that Islam is under attack in the state. Visitors should also be made to understand that the inconveniences flowing from the massive deployment of security forces are actually the creation of the militants — there was little need for them before the late 1980s when the culture of the gun and fundamentalist elements combined to erode the essence of what can best be described as Kashmiriyat. There is also reason to question the public airing of the Mufti's suggestion. It would have been prudent to have sounded out the Home Ministry, convinced it to give the proposal serious thought and awaited acceptance. Such matters have to be progressed in tandem. By jumping the gun he is in danger of complicating a difficult situation, and having to pay the price of raising hopes which he cannot fulfil. Dreams that sour are worse than nightmares.

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Indian prisoners back home from Pakistan

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By Sarabjit Pandher

CHANDIGARH, MAY 18. As part of the ongoing confidence-building measures, both Pakistan and India launched yet another round of goodwill gestures at the border. Twenty Indian nationals, including six Sikh youths, walked back to freedom today after languishing in Pakistani jails for the past two years.

Emotional scenes were witnessed as relatives received their loved ones at the Attari-Wagah joint check-post in Amritsar district. These include 14 crew members of the Indian cargo vessel 'Raj Lakshmi' which sank off the coast of Karachi. The release, which was announced earlier this month by the Pakistani Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, had been delayed by a day, while it was an agonising period of waiting for the families of the captives.

Reports in the regional

media said a team of Coast Guard officers was also present to receive the 14 crew members who were taken into custody by the Pakistan Navy off the Gujarat coast.

According to a journalist, Deepak Sharma, who has been a witness to 33 such repatriations, today's event was quite different. "Unlike the previous occasions when detenus brought home remains or souvenirs of other prisoners who died in Pakistan jails, those released today were carrying boxes of sweets wrapped in green paper. They also carried the best wishes for their country men from the authorities across the border."

Mr. Sharma said that mediapersons were not allowed to interact with the released persons as soon as they crossed the border. For more than an hour they were "tutored" by the Indian intelligence agencies. Even then not all were allowed to meet the

media, which had been barricaded at quite a distance.

The scribes were taken aback when the released persons began to praise the Pakistani authorities. Most of them even claimed to have received "exceptionally good" treatment.

However, it was 30-year old Surinder Singh, who could not control his emotions when he saw his mother, Gurmeet Kaur. He "exposed" the exercise and narrated the extremely inhuman conditions in which about 100 Indians were still languishing in Kot Lakhpat jail near Lahore.

He said at least 40 per cent of the prisoners, owing to regular sessions of torture and abuse, had lost their mental balance, while some had even forgotten their addresses back home. Others continued to suffer from disease, as they were not provided any medical care.

19 MAY 2003

THE HINDU

19 MAY 2003

Track-II diplomacy back on rails

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 18. Peace moves between India and Pakistan have given a new lease of life to the Track-II diplomacy that had fallen on the wayside after rise in tensions between the two countries in the last 16 months. The former Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Niaz A. Naik, (an active Track-II member of the Nimrana group) would lead a four-member Pakistani delegation to Kathmandu for an inter-action with a group of Indian intellectuals. The Vice-Chancellor of Aligarh University, Prof. Khuro, would head the Indian team. The Pakistani side will include Gen. (retd.) K.M. Arif, Asma Jehangir, Talat Wazarat of Karachi University and Lt. Gen. (retd.) Jahangir Karamat. The Indian side will have the former Minister of State for External Affairs, Salman Haider, Mani Shankar Aijer and others.

issues relating to exchange of cultural delegations, trade and easing visa restrictions would be discussed. A delegation of retired generals from India is expected to be here as part of the Indo-Pak. Soldiers for Peace Initiative. Among those active in this forum include the former Navy chief, Ramdas.

Mr. Naik, who was actively engaged in back channel diplomacy during the Kargil crisis, has claimed that he had discussed the 'Chenab Formula' with his Indian counterpart, R.K. Mishra, and that the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, was in the knowledge of the discussions. In a recent television interview, he claimed that the Indian Government "showed a lot of interest" in it. "We discussed the formula with a map of Jammu and Kashmir in front of us". He claimed that many things were decided but they did not materialise. He said, according to the formula, Chenab river was to be adopted as the new line of division between India and Pakistan.

This will be the 23rd informal contact between the two sides, the last one having taken place in 2001. Kashmir, Siachen and

THE HINDU

20 prisoners return home from Pakistan

By Yudhvir Rana
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Wagah: Twenty Indian prisoners—14 crew members of a cargo vessel and six Sikhs—crossed over to the Indian side of the Wagah border on Sunday, carrying gift packs and haversacks, to be received by Border Security Force officials.

Representatives of the Gujrat Maritime Board, Gandhi Nagar, were also present to receive the 14, whose release follows Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's peace initiative with Pakistan.

The cargo vessel, Raj Lakshmi, was on its way to Mundra port in Dubai with a 15-member crew when it caught fire and sank. One of the crew members died while the rest escaped in a life boat, only to be arrested by the Pakistani coast guard on June 22, 2001, near Omura port.

The six Sikhs had entered Pakistan through the Iran border after being duped by travel agents. They were kept in Central Jail, Mach, and in Quetta jail.

Surinder Singh, who spent more than a year in a Pakistani prison despite being sentenced to only three months, said he had been kept in a dark isolation cell for eight days after his arrest. But prisoners were not harassed much, he said.

He said various Pakistani intelligence agencies tried to persuade Indian prisoners to indulge in espionage in India for handsome rewards. "Some of them came to me several times but I refused to work against my own nation."

Salim Mohammed, another released prisoner, said he had been sentenced to three months but spent two years in prison. He said there were around 100 Indian prisoners in Kot Lakhpat jail and around 10 in Quetta jail.

Gurnam Singh said he had gone to Lebanon, where travel agents had promised him a lucrative job in Italy. But he was caught and pushed into Pakistan. He said the Iranian police usually informed the tribals living along the Pakistan-Iran bor-

der about such push-ins. The tribals would then catch such people and force them into labour before handing them over to the Pakistani police.

Sources said another batch of Indian prisoners might arrive home in the near future as part of the peace efforts.

Track-II diplomacy is also set to resume with former diplomats, retired military men and bureaucrats of both the nations meeting in Kathmandu on June 12, agency reports from Islamabad said.

Track-II dialogue had virtually come to a halt in the months that followed the terrorist attack on Parliament in December, 2001.

Confusion over Riaz Khan's appointment

Islamabad: Confusion prevailed on Sunday with regard to Pakistan's new high commissioner to India, with the foreign office saying no decision had yet been taken and the Prime Minister's office maintaining that Riaz Khan had been appointed as the new envoy.

Nearly eight hours after state-run PTV said that premier M.Z.K. Jamali had appointed career diplomat Khan as high commissioner to New Delhi, the foreign office in a statement said a final decision had not yet been made and that Mr Jamali had been "wrongly quoted".

However, Rai Riaz, press secretary to the PM, told AP here on Sunday that Mr Khan had been named high commissioner to India. Mr Khan himself told PTI in Beijing that it was premature to comment on reports about his transfer. "There is nothing official about it as far as I know," he said. Agencies

Advani wants Pak under terror scanner

Statesman News Service

ON BOARD DY PM'S SPECIAL AIRCRAFT, May 18. — The serial bombings in Saudi Arabia and Morocco over the past week today has prompted New Delhi to urge the world community to take a "holistic approach to terrorism" that has so far been focussed on Kabul and at best, Iraq.

Apparently worried that the global alliance against terrorism had not taken its stated objective of stomping out terrorism beyond Afghanistan, more particularly Pakistan, too seriously, Mr LK Advani said he was hoping the tragedies in Riyadh and Casablanca that cost more than a 100 lives would prompt the global community to take a fresh look at the direction it was training its guns.

The global community had first started to vigorously think of ways and means to put an end to this evil of terrorism and formed the global coalition against terrorism when Al-Qaida operatives carried out the 9/11 attacks.

"I wish these two incidents trigger off a fresh round of pro-active thinking in the international community as to how humanity, civilisation and more particularly, democracies can really overcome

terrorism," he told a group of journalists accompanying him to Thiruvananthapuram, a clear reference to the international community list of priorities in which Pakistan did not appear to figure even as it continued its direct, and indirect support to terrorists in J&K and elsewhere in India.



Mr LK Advani

Suggesting that the war against terrorism had not been taken to its logical conclusion, Mr Advani said the two incidents during the past week only highlights the fact that "terrorism continues to be a menace for all".

Describing suicide attacks as the "worst device" ever conceived since countries started trying to evolve most effective weaponry and most dangerous instruments against others, Mr Advani said the suicide bomber was being used for all major attacks, right from the 11 September attacks, the attack on Parliament and the recent bombings in Riyadh and Casablanca.

Making out a case for the international community to take a re-look at its unidirectional war against terrorism, Mr Advani said the global community vigorously started to think of ways and means to put an end to this evil of terrorism and formed the global coalition against terrorism.

19 MAY 2003

THE STATESMAN

Kashmir core issue: Pak. MPs

WAGAH (PUNJAB), MAY 17. After a week-long "goodwill" trip to India, the old song of 'Kashmir-first' was back on the lips of the delegation of Pakistani parliamentarians, who today insisted that Kashmir would be the "core issue" in any talks between India and Pakistan.

No significant headway can be made in any talks unless Kashmir was discussed, the leader of the 12-member delegation, Ishaq Khan Khakwani, said before the group crossed the Radcliffe line into Pakistan here. One of them left by air.

Talking to reporters before crossing over, he claimed that steps taken by the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, to check cross-border terrorism were "sufficient." He commended Gen. Musharraf for his "boldness" in "initiating" the peace process.

Asked about the visit, Mr. Khakwani said it was a success. "I exchanged views with Indian MPs, including Opposition members, who warmly reciprocated our feelings and concerns, besides assuring us that they would prevail upon the Indian Government to make a head start in the peace process, so that people of both the countries can exchange visits frequently."

Mr. Khakwani said he expected "significant dialogue on log-



The Pakistani MP, Sardar Saleem (third from right) and other legislators entering Pakistan at the Wagah border on Saturday. — AFP

ical issues" between India and Pakistan as both sides would be keen to avoid anything that could scuttle the peace initiatives as had happened in Agra.

He said he was heartened by the National Congress Party leader, Sharad Pawar's decision to lead a delegation of MPs to Pakistan as a reciprocatory gesture.

Begum Shahnaz Sheikh, a member of the delegation, said it had met several bureaucrats, diplomats and prominent social workers, besides heads of vari-

ous political parties who were keen on holding talks.

"There are hundreds of people in each country who have close relatives living on the other side, but the strained relations between the two nations is preventing them from visiting their near ones," she said.

Sheikh's daughter Amina, who had accompanied the delegation, said she was "overwhelmed" by the response of the Indian masses and the warm welcome accorded to them. "I hardly found any dif-

ference in the masses of the two countries. They even have the same culture and lifestyle. I will really miss the Indian people after crossing the Radcliffe," she said.

Advocating the early return of the exiled former Prime Ministers, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Shariff, the Opposition National Assembly member, Shakeela Khanam Rasheed, said their return would create a congenial atmosphere, both at home and between the two nations. — PTI

'NO SUMMIT BEFORE OFFICIALS SETTLE ISSUES'

Pak. must destroy terror reservoirs, says Sinha

410-1
18/5

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, MAY 17. India wants Pakistan to wipe out the infrastructure of cross-border terrorism, rather than just reduce infiltration, before any bilateral summit can take place. "Cross-

border infiltration is like a tap which can be turned on and off," the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, said here last night. "What is needed is to destroy the reservoirs of terror and the pipes through which it flows."

Mr. Sinha told the Indian community in Moscow that no summit with Pakistan was possible before "all issues have been settled at (the) official level". He said he had conveyed this message to the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, dur-

ing their meeting here on the sidelines of their respective visits to Russia.

Moscow has also urged Islamabad to end cross-border terrorism. A statement issued by the Russian Foreign Ministry after Mr. Sinha's talks with his Russian counterpart, Igor Ivanov, said that "the full implementation of obligations assumed by Islamabad to stop infiltration of terrorists across the Line of Control into Jammu and Kashmir and destroy all terrorist infrastructure on Pakistan-controlled territory would foster the spirit of cooperation in South Asia." India and Russia also resolved to strengthen cooperation in confronting the terrorist and drug threats emanating from Afghanistan.

The Foreign Secretary, Kanwal Sibal, who accompanied Mr. Sinha on his visit, had a separate meeting with Russia's pointman for the anti-terror fight and First Deputy Foreign Minister, Vyacheslav Trubnikov. "The (two) sides paid special attention to strengthening bilateral and multilateral interaction in confronting new threats and challenges, specifically, terrorism and narcotics on the Afghanistan front," the Foreign Ministry said.



The Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, greets his Indian counterpart, Yashwant Sinha, during their meeting in Moscow. — AP

Bid to revamp bilateral trade: Page 8

18 MAY 2003

THE HINDU

Pak. to release 20 Indian prisoners today

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

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ISLAMABAD, MAY 16. As a follow-up to the May 6 confidence building measures (CBMs) announced by Pakistan's Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, Islamabad would hand over to the Indian authorities tomorrow at the Wagah border 20 Indian prisoners lodged in different Pakistani jails.

Officials of the Indian High Commission have already reached Lahore today en route to Wagah to receive the prisoners and facilitate their entry into India. Of the 20 prisoners, 14 are crew members of an Indian cargo boat, Raj Laxmi, and six Sikh youths. The crew have been in Pakistan for several months since the boat sank in the Arabian Sea, near Karachi.

The story of the Sikh youths is tragic. Over a year ago, Pakistan arrested 22 Sikh

youth on its Iranian border. Capricious agents selling dreams of a good life in Europe tempted these youths to travel to Greece via the land route. Their luck ended at the Iranian border as the guards pushed them into Pakistan. Only six of the 22 will be free tomorrow. The rest will have to wait some more as India is still verifying their credentials.

Mr. Jamali's "goodwill gesture" to release Indian prisoners was without any qualification and covered all categories. There are three categories of Indian prisoners in Pakistani jails besides those supposed to have been held after the 1965 and 1971 wars. Islamabad has repeatedly denied the presence of PoWs and even offered to allow an Indian delegation to visit Pakistan to verify the facts.

The three categories are the 14 crew members of Raj Laxmi; 22 Sikh youth and 250

or so fishermen who had strayed into Pakistani territorial waters while fishing off the Gujarat coast. It appears that Pakistan has asked the Sindh provincial government to collect information on Indian fishermen in various jails to give consular access to the Indian mission. The process might take a few weeks.

There is a sense of disappointment in Islamabad over what is perceived as New Delhi's "lukewarm" response to the CBMs proposed by Mr. Jamali. The proposals include the restoration of the rail and road links and the strength of the mission prior to the "diplomatic sanctions" imposed by India; resumption of the sporting ties and a dialogue on nuclear security-related issues as agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the Lahore Declaration.

17 MAY 2003

THE HINDU

'AMERICANS ARE HELPING OUT IN SOUTH ASIA'

We need intermediaries, says Pak. Foreign Minister

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MAY 16. Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri, has held out the hope that the international community, including the United States, will remain "engaged" in South Asia; and that the "helping out" by Americans did not mean they were trying to "impose" a solution.

"I don't think if the Americans are helping out in South Asia, they are trying to impose a solution. Pakistan and India are two large countries... There's no question of anybody imposing their will on India or Pakistan. But we need friends. What happens is when two friends stop talking to each other, you sometimes need friends who will make them talk to each other," Mr. Kasuri said at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think-tank here on Thursday.

Mr. Kasuri praised the Bush administration for its "positive role" in the subcontinent and said that one would have to be "grateful" for this.

"... After all, it's quite evident that last year when we were on the verge of war, who was running hither and thither? It's the Americans. So we should be grateful to them instead of saying that they were applying pressure," Mr. Kasuri said to a question on the role of the U.S.

"I think they were doing something that is very noble — trying to prevent two nuclear armed countries from going for mass slaughter. So I'm not one of those who regard this as pressure. I look at it in a positive light," he added.

Pressure was not the correct phrase when referring to the role of the U.S. for, this brought with it a belief that "some sort of an unwelcome input" was being



made against one's wishes and particularly so in an Asian context where there was the concept of "loss of face".

"... I think you need intermediaries — you can give them any name. Sometimes our Indian neighbours are sensitive to the use of the term "mediation". We can invent facilitation; if that word is not found suitable, we

can invent yet another word. Whether it is facilitation, mediation, friendship, encouragement, coaxing — I don't know what other words we can use," Mr. Kasuri remarked.

Mr. Kasuri was asked how he would explain Pakistan's efforts for economic development, on the one hand, and its desire to purchase American weapons worth hundreds of millions of dollars on the other.

He replied that there had been three wars between India and Pakistan and that India had a much larger military force.

"We have decided as a nation that we want friendship with India, but we will not tolerate hegemony... since we've had three wars and these fears are not imaginary, no Government in Pakistan will lower its threshold below a certain level," Mr. Kasuri said.

No mediation: Page 11

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THE HINDU

Indo - Pak

There is no alternative to Indo-Pak talks on terrorism, Kashmir and nuclear arms

Nuclear false dawn

BY PRAFUL BIDWAI

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THREE EVENTS of seemingly fleeting significance, all of which occurred within the past week, contain important lessons of lasting value for India. These events are: the two rounds of talks held in New Delhi and Islamabad by US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, the visit to this country of 13 members of Pakistan's Parliament (the first of its kind in either country), and the fifth anniversary of the Pokhran II nuclear blasts.

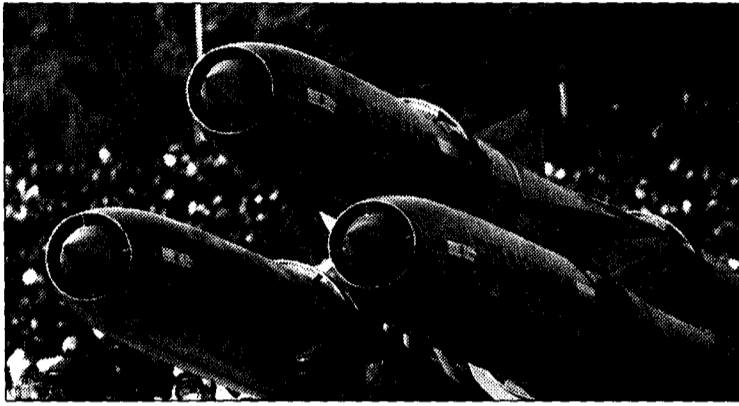
The Armitage visit was meant to assess the state of India-Pakistan relations and deliver two messages to New Delhi. First, the US is very keen that India and Pakistan build on the momentum created by Atal Bihari Vajpayee's 'hand of friendship' offer and draw up confidence-building measures and 'road maps' for normalising relations and beginning a dialogue. The 'road maps' are now indeed being drawn.

Second, Washington will *not* use its leverage over Pakistan, especially through an economic squeeze, to ensure that Pervez Musharraf fulfils his promise made last June to end support to 'cross-border' infiltration — 'permanently' and 'verifiably'. ("That's not my job," said Armitage.) It is for India alone to assess whether Musharraf is delivering on that commitment and to respond appropriately.

This should provoke some serious rethinking in New Delhi on its reading of the US-Pakistan relationship and hence on the wisdom of the sole strategy it has deployed, besides threatening outright war, to deal with Islamabad: namely, somehow try to persuade the US to pressure Pakistan to secure a 'responsible' pattern of behaviour.

Apart from being inconsistent with the principle of bilateralism which India tom-toms, this shopworn strategy is fundamentally sterile. Throughout the Eighties and most of the Nineties, it comprehensively failed to prevent Pakistan from proceeding with its nuclear weapons acquisition programme. No amount of hectic, expensive lobbying in Washington, no quantity of breast-beating about the US's sale of F-16s to Pakistan — the Indian media's single greatest front-page story of the Eighties — nor even amendment after tough amendment (e.g. Pressler) to US non-proliferation and export-control laws could secure that result.

Yet, paradoxically, for one-and-a-half decades, the Indian government persistently refused to engage Islamabad in talks on the nuclear issue. It grossly overestimated US leverage over Pakistan, not just during the Eighties — when that 'front-



POINTING AWAY FROM A SOLUTION: Missiles on display at the Republic Day parade

line' State's cooperation in training and financing the *mujahideen* in their fight against the Soviet Union was vital for the US — but even later. Beyond a point, New Delhi couldn't care less. It became far more important for it that it should openly go nuclear than that Pakistan, its main threat source, shouldn't.

At any rate, this strategy, which has long proved bankrupt, is even more unlikely to work today. Traumatized by the worst-ever attack on its mainland, America needs Islamabad as its 'indispensable ally' in anti-al-Qaeda-Taliban operations so badly that it is willing to gloss over Pakistan's two-track or double standards-based approach to terrorism: cooperate fully in fighting terrorism directed at the US — to the point of violating domestic legal procedures while extraditing US-identified suspects — but covertly support the Kashmiri militants in India.

This is unsurprising. Washington itself has always had a short-termist double standards-based approach to terrorism, dictators and tyrants everywhere: this 800-pound gorilla is wonderful provided it is *our* 800-pound gorilla!

That's how America has created a succession of monsters, many of whom turned hostile, including radical Islamist Osama bin Laden, Vietnam's Ngo Dinh Diem, the Philippines' Ferdinand Marcos, Panama's Manuel Noriega, Angola's Joseph Savimbi, and, yes, Iraq's Saddam Hussein. India would be unpardonably naive to expect a fair, even, deal from a 'strategic partnership' with the US.

It would be far more principled, prudent and productive for New Delhi to hold a straightforward comprehensive bilateral dialogue with Pakistan — even if that means putting the Kashmir issue on the negotiating table. In all honesty, India cannot *both* cite the Simla agreement — only to scuttle multilateral

discussion or external mediation — *and* not once discuss Kashmir in 31 years. Its advocacy of bilateralism lacks credibility when its operational strategy is centred on a third power.

That's what makes the Pakistani MPs' crossing of the Wagah border so important. The visit is the culmination of numerous citizen-to-citizen initiatives launched during the darkest decade of State-level India-Pakistan relations. Its importance isn't merely symbolic.

Without *first-hand* exposure and *personal* interaction, Indians and Pakistanis will find it hard to overcome the many layers of ignorance, prejudice and distrust cemented in their minds over decades of hostility, through scores of textbooks, hundreds of films and TV shows, and countless stereotypes of one another as inveterate enemies.

That's why Indian MPs must quickly reciprocate this visit. Snowballing people-to-people contacts will help loosen State-level gridlocks and pave the way for bilateral talks in good faith.

To be adequately productive, the talks must be comprehensive and include, besides terrorism and Kashmir — respectively the two States' conflicting 'core-issues' — nuclear restraint and disarmament as well.

This would only be consistent with the Lahore Summit's mandate, in which India and Pakistan made a solemn commitment to measures "aimed at prevention of conflict", to meeting "periodically to discuss all issues of mutual concern, including nuclear-related issues", and to "bilateral consultations on security concepts, and nuclear doctrines, with a view to developing measures for confidence-building in the nuclear and conventional fields, aimed at avoidance of conflict".

There is an even more compelling reason to discuss the nuclear issue today. Five years after Pokhran II

and Chagai, the India-Pakistan security balance sheet looks blotched and ugly. The two have lost, not gained, in security and mutual trust — and in global stature. They have been on the brink of nuclear catastrophe far too many times — during Kargil, and then again, during last year's 10-month long eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation.

Millions of Indians and Pakistanis who are in no way responsible for official policies have now become vulnerable to unspeakably devastating attacks from nuclear missiles, against which there is no defence, civil, medical or military. Destruction wrought by these weapons lasts for many future generations.

India and Pakistan have become more edgy and nervous about each other's designs and doctrines, and prone to panic. Nuclear weapons have not induced 'maturity' and 'sobriety' in our leaders. Indeed, they have promoted hubris and adventurism. The casual, cavalier, manner in which Indian and Pakistani officials have repeatedly exchanged nuclear threats is spine-chilling.

Nuclearisation has *not* expanded India's or Pakistan's room for global diplomatic-political manoeuvre. Rather, their bargaining power has shrunk as they have wooed the US with unwarranted concessions to somehow legitimise and accept their nuclear weapons. Yet, they cannot possibly reverse Security Council Resolution 1172 condemning their nuclearisation, for which coercive measures can be taken under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Nuclearisation has proved no invitation to the world's high table.

The (still-unfolding) economic costs of nuclearisation will prove onerous. India has almost doubled its military spending over five years — at the expense of health, education and social welfare. To acquire a small nuclear arsenal, about one-fifth the size of China's, India will have to spend anything from Rs 60,000 crore to 100,000 crore. This could bankrupt the government and cripple public services, spelling State failure.

Nuclearisation's social-political costs are equally heavy. Associated with it is legitimisation of mass destruction, militarism and 'nuclearism' (a near-mystical faith in the power of the bomb to produce, among other things, security). These violate elementary sanity and reason, and corrode democracy. In the overwhelming public interest, India and Pakistan must begin a dialogue on nuclear restraint — not to dignify horror weapons, but to abolish them.

16 MAY 2003

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Pak tones down J&K rhetoric at UN

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Pakistan toned down its references to Jammu and Kashmir in the UN Security Council discussion on the pacific settlement of disputes, with the presidential statement issued by its foreign minister, Kurshid M. Kasuri, at the end of the meeting making no mention of the specific issue.

Although Mr Kasuri referred to the UN resolutions on Kashmir and specifically to the plebiscite issue in his own speech to the council, he expressed his confidence that the international community, especially the council and the Secretary General, would extend their full support to Pakistan and India in their fresh en-

deavours for peace.

This is a marked departure from Pakistan's usual routine attempts to seek UN intervention and is being viewed as a result of both the current thaw in Indo-Pak relations as also the lack of response from other SC members to its attempts to internationalise the issue.

In response to a question, the external affairs spokesperson said India regretted Pakistan's reference to the Kashmir issue in its statement but added that it did not come as a surprise as Pakistan had used every opportunity to raise Kashmir in every forum.

"It is important to note that no member country raised the issue and there was no support for raising

the issue."

Officials said the change was reflective of increasing acceptance of the Indian position on the need to solve the issues between India and Pakistan bilaterally and "vindicates our stand".

Sources said officials had been working hard behind the scenes to convince other SC members of the Indian position. SC members were told "that to bring in issues that were best solved bilaterally would only vitiate and complicate the situation.

The current thaw in Indo-Pak relations had helped cement the support in favour of the Indian position, an official said adding, "Pakistan has also taken cognisance of the developing new mood."

15 MAY 2002

THE TIMES OF INDIA

India, Pak raise Kashmir at UN

Press Trust of India

UNHQ, May 14. —For the first time in several years India and Pakistan did not attack each other directly while raising the Kashmir issue in the UN Security Council with New Delhi maintaining that differences are best settled through bilateral negotiations and Islamabad stating that a solution to the problem can be achieved only after fulfilling the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

During a Security Council debate on pacific resolution of conflicts, India's UN ambassador Mr Vijay K Nambiar repeatedly stressed during his presentation yesterday that resolution of issues through bilateral negotiations is seen by "distinguished jurists" as the "most preferred methods of settlement of disputes."

Mr Nambiar, throughout his address, did not name either Pakistan or Kashmir. But he did criticise continuous low-intensity proxy wars and said such a situation did confer right on victim state to take all necessary measures in self-defence just as would be the case if there is an armed attack. He also effectively rejected Pakistan's contention that there should be UN-supervised plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir pointing to the fact that events have overtaken such an approach.

Pakistan foreign minister Mr Khurshid M Kasuri, who presided over the meeting as his country is the president of the Council for the current month, agreed that the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration — to which both countries are parties — support bilateral discussions.

He referred to Kashmir and the Council resolution adopted which, he said, promised a "free and fair plebiscite under UN auspices".

We'll convince or get convinced'

ISLAMABAD, May 14. — Pakistani Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali has said it's time the two countries engaged in a free and frank dialogue. "We will convince them (New Delhi) or get convinced" on the manner in which peace has to be achieved, media reports today quoted him as saying.

He told the *Daily Times* that when he talked to Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee this month, his emphasis was on the economy. Economic challenges, like issues linked to the World Trade Organisation regime, remained the same for both the countries, he said. "We don't want change (history) by wars, but by changing the political culture," Mr Jamali said. — IANS

In an apparent reply to the Pakistani foreign minister's mention of the Security Council resolution, Mr Nambiar, who spoke later, said where member states have agreed to implement resolution of the UN, they are justified in expecting such implementation to be complete and in the sequence agreed to without "emasculatation, revision or re-interpretation."

His reference was to the provision in the resolution that Pakistan must first vacate the territory under its occupation before the subsequent provisions could be put into operation. Islamabad did not implement that provision. Apparently, he was also rejecting any intervention by a third party in bilateral issues.

Masood Azhar: Pakistan today banned Masood Azhar, Jaish-e-Mohammed chief, from entering PoK, adds PTI.

'CROSS-BORDER TERRORISM SHOULD END FIRST'

Dialogue will begin at appropriate time: Sinha

By Our Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 12. India today reiterated that a dialogue with Pakistan could begin provided an atmosphere conducive to talks is created. This, the Foreign Office spokesman said, called for an end to cross-border terrorism and infiltration.

Asked what kind of a "road map" had been prepared by India for talks with Pakistan, the spokesman said the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, had not specified the "road map".

Since the telephone call between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan on April 28, the Foreign Office here has been saying that a "road map" existed on the next steps to be taken with Pakistan.

In an interview to a private television channel, Mr. Sinha was today quoted as saying: "Every step is clear in our mind. There is no confusion and we will proceed according to the plan."

The two Prime Ministers have spoken on the telephone. We have announced some steps and there has been some response from Pakistan. And, I suppose, at some appropriate time, the dialogue will also begin," he maintained.

Sticking to the script that has been read out time and again at both the political and official level, Mr. Sinha said "the thawing" had already begun between the two countries. "The general approach is to begin with official level talks leading to a political summit. The idea is to prepare the groundwork and discuss what we are going to talk about."

Favouring a "composite" dia-

logue, one which is envisaged under the June 1997 "two plus six approach", Mr. Sinha questioned the official Pakistani position that Kashmir was the "core issue".

"None of the existing agreements between the two countries have ever referred to Kashmir as the core issue. When you start a process, you can't write history or erase it. You have to start on the basis of existing issues. The right ap-

proach would be to treat Jammu and Kashmir as one of the issues and start a dialogue on all issues, including that of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Mr. Sinha took the view that an end to cross-border terrorism was not a pre-condition for talks, but a "practical necessity".

Separately, the Foreign Office spokesman did not spell out India's stand on the re-entry of Pakistan to the councils of the

Commonwealth at the upcoming meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) in London.

The Commonwealth, he said, had its own rules under the Harare Declaration and the Millbrook action plan that dealt with countries that had seen an interregnum in the democratic process.

According to the spokesman, the CMAG decision would be a "multilateral" one, and that he would not like to "pre-judge" what this body will do.

He did refer to the current political situation in Pakistan — the Opposition demand on the Legal Framework Order — and the fact that the President and the Army Chief were the same person.

These issues, the spokesman added, would have to be explained.

Unlike in the past, when the Government of India has publicly stated its opposition to the return of Pakistan to the Commonwealth and spoken derisively about the recent elections in that country, the spokesman took no such public position today.

At a time when there have been a few, faltering steps towards dialogue between the two countries, India does not want to be seen taking a public opposition that it opposes Pakistan's re-entry into the Commonwealth.

Mr. Sinha, meanwhile, was scheduled to leave the capital in the early hours of Tuesday for the May 13-18 visit to Russia, during which he will also have a meeting with the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, on May 14. He will then go on to London for the May meeting.

Does Pak. have a road map ready?

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 12. Pakistan says it is ready with a "road map" for talks with India for the resolution of all differences including the "core issue of Kashmir".

The Pakistan Information and Media Development Minister, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, has made the claim even as the Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman, Aziz Ahmed Khan, told a news conference that Islamabad was waiting for a "signal" from New Delhi on resumption of the stalled negotiations.

It is not for the first time that the Media Minister and the Foreign Ministry have been at different wavelengths. At one stage, the Foreign Office had told reporters not to be guided by the Information Ministers on matters related to foreign policy. However, after the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, at a news conference identified the Minister as one of the spo-

kespersons of the Government, Foreign Office had little option but to allow his statements go uncontested.

The truth of the matter is that Pakistan's Foreign Office has little idea about the so-called "road map for talks" mentioned by Mr. Rashid. "So far, there is no decision on a crucial issue like who should be the High Commissioner in New Delhi. Road map far down the line in our immediate priorities on Indo-Pak relations," a senior officer in the Ministry said.

Observers are intrigued over the delay in announcement of the choice of a candidate for High Commissioner. It appears too many pulls and pressures are at work. The names of the former Pakistan Ambassador to the United States, Maleeha Lodhi, the former Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Secretary, Inam-ul-Haq and Mr. Aziz Ahmed Khan, continue to be mentioned as possible candidates.

THE HINDU

13 MAY 1997

No 'tacit understanding with India': Pak. 1375

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 12. Pakistan today dismissed as "rubbish" reports in a section of the Pakistani press that it has agreed to put the Kashmir issue on the back burner and follow the "Chinese model" in its relations with India.

The Foreign Office spokesman, Aziz Ahmed Khan, was unusually harsh on the media report suggesting a fundamental change in Pakistan's Kashmir policy and described the report as "unfortunate and irresponsible".

The front-page report in the English daily, *The Nation*, claimed that thanks to the behind-the-scenes role played by the United States, India and Pakistan were "inching towards a tacit understanding to freeze the core Kashmir dispute" for the next few years.

It said that Islamabad had already given two major "concessions" to New Delhi by not insisting on the U.N. Security Council resolutions on Kashmir and an assurance to "choke" cross-border infiltration and rollback the "so-called militant camps".

Mr. Khan asserted that there was no change in the Government's Kashmir policy and reiterated that the long-running dispute should be resolved in line with the U.N. resolutions and in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people. "There has never been any change, dilution or doubt in Pakistan's standpoint on the Kashmir issue," he said.

Asked whether there was any progress on the Indo-Pak. peace initiative, Mr. Khan said that apart from the routine diplomatic channel, there had not been any official contact over the resumption of dialogue. He,

however, expressed Pakistan's readiness to resume negotiations with India stating that it was Islamabad's policy to have a "composite dialogue" with New Delhi on all outstanding issues including the "core Kashmir dispute".

About the appointment of Pakistan's new High Commissioner to New Delhi, he said a decision was yet to be made.

To a question on Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's statement that Indian nuclear weapons were not Pakistan-specific and, hence, it was not possible for New Delhi to accept the proposal for de-nuclearisation, Mr. Khan merely said that Pakistan had always called for a nuclear-free South Asia.

He claimed that things had, however, changed after the Indians tested a nuclear device in May 1998, impelling Pakistan to follow suit for "defensive purposes". But Pakistan, he said, had acted responsibly in its new status, its nuclear command and control structure was impeccable and had been duly recognised by the world community.

On the latest missile testing by India, the spokesman said that everyone knew the increasing progress of New Delhi's missile programme. To a query on allowing over-flight rights to India, he said the two countries had announced resumption of air links and that the matter could be discussed in a meeting between aviation officials from both sides.

Asked whether there was U.S. pressure on Pakistan and India to resume dialogue, he recalled the recent remarks of the U.S. Deputy Secretary, Richard Armitage, that his country was not exerting any pressure on either country.

On the Indian allegation of

cross-border movement, he said Pakistan's position of stationing neutral observers on the Line of Control was reasonable and could help verify any claim to that effect. Whatever was happening in Kashmir was "an indigenous struggle" and it was for the people of Kashmir to decide on the strategy that want to follow.

However, Pakistan would continue to extend its "moral and diplomatic support" to the struggle.

About the proposed visit of the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, to the U.S., he said the dates had not yet been finalised. All matters of bilateral interest as well as regional and international concern, including Pakistan-India relations and Kashmir, would come up for discussion.

Tariq Anwar criticises Rabri

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI MAY 12. The NCP general secretary, Tariq Anwar, has criticised the Bihar Chief Minister, Rabri Devi, for walking out of the Chief Ministers' conclave organised by a news magazine. It is surprising that she has shown concern for the "humiliation of Bihar", because "she and her husband's regime were responsible for all that", Mr. Anwar said in a statement.

He accused the RJD and the Congress regimes of halting all developmental work, and pushing the State to its worst-ever position.

He also criticised the Central Ministers from the State for remaining silent spectators to the "deterioration" in Bihar.

Delhi dodged Armitage draft, claim officials

Aloke Tikku in New Delhi

May 12. — US deputy secretary of state Mr Richard Armitage had come to India with a draft on how Indo-Pak talks should proceed but New Delhi refused to talk on the issue, firmly telling the USA that Pakistan had to first convince the world that it had stopped cross-border terrorism.

And that, senior government sources said, had not even begun to happen. It could not have even convinced Mr Armitage, who brought with him Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's assurance that there were no terrorist camps across the Line of Control and if those were there, the same would be dismantled the next day.

When Mr Armitage conveyed this

message to New Delhi, he was reminded that Islamabad had made similar assertions to this effect earlier as well. The US official is learnt to have remarked that he was only repeating what the President had told him, sources said, pointing out that Mr Armitage did refer to suggestions on how to take the talks with Pakistan forward. "But we ignored them," claimed the officials.

New Delhi is also believed to have pointed out that in its war against terrorism, the US had dealt with Pakistan and some Gulf countries most of which were autocratic in nature. But India was a vibrant democracy where the government had to be sensitive to public opinion.

Refusing to accept Washington's argument that it did not have any clout

Mufti calls on Kalam, Advani

NEW DELHI, May 12. — Jammu & Kashmir chief minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed had a series of meetings with the President, Mr APJ Abdul Kalam, the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr LK Advani, the information technology and communication minister, Mr Arun Shourie, and the Centre's newly appointed interlocutor, Mr NN Vohra. In the evening, he called on the Congress president, Ms Sonia Gandhi. Although it was a courtesy call, Mr Sayeed apprised Mr Kalam on various aspects of the state, including the ground situation, during his 30-minute meeting. During wide-ranging talks with the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr LK Advani, he reiterated his stand on "softening of the Line of Control", stating it would be the "biggest confidence-building measure between the two countries". He said: "When opening of entry points in Rajasthan was considered to facilitate the visit of Sindhis, what is the harm if similar facility is considered for divided families of Jammu and Kashmir." — SNS

with Islamabad, Indian leadership including Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani are understood to have told the US deputy secretary "there is no

way Pakistan would not accept US diktats as it had done in the case of fighting Taliban in Afghanistan".

The US delegation initially claimed

that New Delhi appeared to have an exaggerated view of the US clout over Islamabad. Indian leaders are learnt to have then cited Pakistan's move to hand over 500 Al Qaeda men to US when they were refusing to hand over 20 fugitives to India all the while. Sources said Deputy Prime Minister emphasised this point during his talks with the US official.

New Delhi also took exception to recent statements by some US officials that appeared to argue that it was important to deal with the political issue that was resulting in terrorist activities in India, reminding the US delegation that US President George W Bush had categorically said after 9/11 that terrorism was an evil and there was no question of any political issue justifying it.

New Delhi wants Islamabad to make tangible moves first to establish peace and create conducive atmosphere for the talks to begin. This is the third time that the peace effort was being initiated by India and it has sent a clear message that it was proceeding cautiously.

In this regard, Prime Minister Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and Mr Advani are reported to have referred to Pakistan Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali's statement that besides forging other links, the two nations should also start playing hockey.

The Indian leaders are understood to have asked Mr Armitage how New Delhi should react if a massacre took place when a match was going on between the two nations.

Prelude to peace

Hectic diplomatic activity clarifies
multilateral assistance in a bilateral process

PEACE moves between India and Pakistan can have so many seemingly incongruous pieces. This weekend, however, many of them fell into place to inspire confidence that Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's "third and last" peace initiative could be the start of a durable engagement. The action took place in different theatres of diplomacy. In Washington, DC, National Security Adviser Brajesh Mishra had his meetings with State Department and Pentagon officials topped with an unscheduled tete-a-tete with President George Bush. After briefing US officials about India's friendly overture to Pakistan and receiving messages of support in the endeavour, Mishra put the American role in perspective. A distinction has to be made, he said, between international, including American, efforts at "prevention of conflict" between the two neighbours and a bilateral dialogue aimed at reducing hostilities.

It is in this context that US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage's three-day tour of the subcontinent must be situated. A year after he sought to avert an Indo-Pak war by carting to New Delhi an assurance that Pakistan would "permanently" end cross-

border terrorism — and just hours after he conveyed Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's contention that terrorist training camps had ceased to exist in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir — he was presented proof to the contrary. In response, the envoy promised greater American pressure on Islamabad to curb terrorist activity. America's leverage in Pakistan has been repeatedly demonstrated in recent months, and it is time Musharraf's army was held to account for its protestations about preventing infiltration across the Line of Control.

In re-establishing diplomatic and communication links after a 16-month chill, in seeking re-engagement without threading in old maximalist conditions or plans for grand summit-level talks, Prime Minister Vajpayee has ensured his initiative a tremendous amount of flexibility. It allows India and Pakistan to balance domestic and bilateral concerns as they set about restoring the appurtenances of normalcy. And, it guides multilateral involvement, like America's, toward creating a conducive atmosphere to take forward the initiative — that is, in ensuring that the entire peace process is not derailed once again by terrorism.

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INDIAN EXPRESS

No scope for mediation, Delhi tells Armitage

India presents terror list

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 10. — Indian officials today presented US deputy secretary of state Mr Richard Armitage with a detailed list outlining Pakistan's continued backing of terrorism in this country. The list includes the number and location of terrorist camps in Pakistan, the number of infiltrators caught and the number of those entering India from across the LoC.

The US delegation was told that Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee's offer of a "hand of friendship" was meant to help Pakistan end its sponsorship of terrorism, and was not a "substitute" for India's concerns on cross-border terrorism.

(Journalist-turned diplomat Ms Maleeha Lodhi and former minister of state for foreign affairs Mr Inamul Haque are among those short-listed by Pakistan to be appointed as its new High Commissioner to India, adds PTI from Islamabad. Pakistani foreign minister Mr Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri today said General Pervez Musharraf would discuss the Kashmir issue with the US leadership during his visit to Washington next month.)

The government told the US delegation that Pakistan would have to translate its promise to end cross-border infiltration into reality to create an atmosphere conducive for the resumption of dialogue. It impressed upon Mr Armitage that there was no place or scope for US "mediation" between India and Pakistan.

"It is for India to judge when a conducive atmosphere is created for the dialogue to take place," Mr Navtej Sarna, foreign ministry spokesman, said. He ruled out suggestions that Mr Armitage had come



Mr Richard Armitage in Delhi on Saturday. — AFP

here with messages or a mediation offer. "There is no place for mediation. There is no intention of this." Mr Armitage was conveyed of the need for Pakistan to take "firm and credible action" to end cross-border terrorism and dismantle its infrastructure, Mr Sarna said.

In the evening, Mr Armitage met Mr Vajpayee and Mr LK Advani. He handed over to the Deputy Prime Minister a letter of invitation from US Vice-President, Mr Dick Cheney, to visit Washington. Sources said Mr Advani accepted the invitation and is likely to visit the USA next month.

The US deputy secretary of state also held talks with Mr Yashwant Sinha, Mr Jaswant Singh and Mrs Sonia Gandhi before leaving the country.

■ See ARMITAGE: page 10

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'IT IS FOR INDIA TO ASSESS PAK. ACTIONS'

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Armitage hopeful of 'step-by-step' process

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, MAY 10. It is for India to make up "her own mind" about what "she thinks" of the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf's statement that terrorist training camps, if any, would be gone "by tomorrow", the United States Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, said here this evening.

Mr. Armitage, who had day-long meetings with the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, and senior members of his Cabinet, including the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, said that it was not his job to give assurances.

Indicating that it was for India to assess Pakistani actions and intentions on the issue of cross-border terrorism, he, however, told presspersons that all violence must be brought to an end. In response to a question, Mr. Armitage made it clear that he had made no "specific request" for the deployment of Indian troops in Iraq "or anything of that nature" while saying that there would certainly be a role for India in the reconstruction of Iraq.

At a separate briefing, the Foreign Office spokesman clarified that it was India's policy to participate in peacekeeping operations only under the United Nations' umbrella.

Asked what was "new" about the "message" that Mr. Armitage had brought from Islamabad this time around, the spokesman claimed that this theory of "bringing, carrying" messages was "quite misplaced".

The spokesman said India had heard claims and declarations before, but these had not been translated into action. And, New Delhi would judge Is-



The visiting U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, with the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, at his residence in New Delhi on Saturday. — Photo: S. Arneja.

lamabad by what it does, not what it says. Pointing out that India had received assurances before on the issue of cross-border terrorism, he said: "every season was a new season". India had taken a new initiative with Pakistan hoping to see an "appropriate" response on this all-important issue.

Asked whether India had presented "evidence" to Mr. Armitage about terrorist training camps, he said New Delhi's "latest assessment" on training camps, launching pads and communication networks was shared with Mr. Armitage.

On whether India had pointed out that action by Pakistan on U.S. concerns had led to the arrest of high-profile leaders of the Al-Qaeda while the leaders of the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Muhammad roamed freely, he said: "This is a self-evident duality".

Would Mr. Armitage's visit

create a more conducive environment for India-Pakistan talks? "There is no place for mediation, no intention of mediation," the spokesman said.

For his part, Mr. Armitage said on re-engagement between India and Pakistan: "I remain cautiously optimistic that the process begun by the act of statesmanship (shown) by the Prime Minister of India could possibly lead to a step-by-step process that would eventually resolve all issues."

"We would like to see two great nations — India and Pakistan — living side by side, in peace, stability and harmony," he said adding that the U.S. wanted to develop relations "separately" with India and Pakistan without having to take into account "other interests".

On the levels of cross-border infiltration, he said it was a "terrible thing" to reduce the death

of a person to a statistic.

"I concentrate on the fact that all violence must end," he stressed.

An invitation for Mr. Advani to visit the U.S. (in June) on behalf of the U.S. Vice-President, Dick Cheney, was also communicated by Mr. Armitage.

Maleeha Lodhi's name on the list?

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 10. A day after Pakistan gave the green signal to the proposed appointment of Shiv Shankar Menon as India's top envoy to Islamabad, there is intense speculation that the Jamaali Government has finalised its choice for the post of its High Commissioner to India.

The names mentioned include those of the former Minister of State of Foreign Affairs, Inam-ul-Haq, Pakistan's former U.S. Ambassador, Maleeha Lodhi, and the Foreign Office spokesman, Aziz Ahmed Khan.

Dr. Lodhi, who has won accolades for her two stints in Washington as Pakistan's Ambassador, recently figured in the media as Pakistan's new High Commissioner to Britain. But she is reported to be keen

Bush supports PM's initiative

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MAY 10. In what is being held out as yet another proof of the deepening of the relations with India, the United States President, George W. Bush, met India's National Security Advisor, Brajesh Mishra, at the White

Oval Office to see the President.

"I conveyed the greetings of the Prime Minister to President Bush and reminded him of the invitation that is pending..." He did say some supportive things of the initiatives taken by the Prime Minister," Mr. Mishra told

1 1 MAY 2003

THE HINDU

'IT IS FOR INDIA TO ASSESS PAK. ACTIONS'

Armitage hopeful of 'step-by-step' process

By Amit Baruah

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Mr. Armitage, who had day-long meetings with the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the External Affairs Minister, Yashwantrao Chavan, on the day before, said that he had discussed the issue with the Indian Prime Minister.

He said that he had also discussed the issue with the Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, and the Pakistani Foreign Minister, Iftikhar Chaudhry, on the day before.

Mr. Armitage said that he had also discussed the issue with the Pakistani Prime Minister, Shaukat Aziz, and the Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister, Mirza Asif Ali Zardari, on the day before.

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The visiting U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, (left) meets with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, at his residence in New Delhi on May 9.

Asked whether India had presented "evidence" to Mr. Armitage about terrorist training camps, he said New Delhi's "latest assessment" on training camps, launching pads and communication networks was shared with Mr. Armitage.

On whether India had pointed out that action by Pakistan on U.S. concerns had led to the arrest of high-profile leaders of the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Muhammad roamed freely, he said: "This is a self-evident duality".

Would Mr. Armitage's visit

be a step towards re-engagement between India and Pakistan? He said: "I remain cautiously optimistic that the process begun by the act of statesmanship (shown) by the Prime Minister of India could possibly lead to a step-by-step process that would eventually resolve all issues."

"We would like to see two great nations — India and Pakistan — living side by side, in peace, stability and harmony," he said adding that the U.S. wanted to develop relations "separately" with India and Pakistan without having to take into account "other interests".

On the levels of cross-border infiltration, he said it was a "terrible thing" to reduce the death

rate of the Indian population by 10 per cent, he said. He also mentioned that Dick Cheney was also communicated by Mr. Armitage.

Maleeha Lodhi's name on the list?

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 10. A day after Pakistan gave the green signal to the proposed appointment of Shiv Shankar Menon as India's top envoy to Islamabad, there is intense speculation that the Islamabad Government has finalised its choice for the post of its High Commissioner to India.

The names mentioned include those of the former Minister of State of Foreign Affairs, Inam-ul-Haq, Pakistan's former U.S. Ambassador, Maleeha Lodhi, and the Foreign Office spokesman, Aziz Ahmed Khan. Maleeha Lodhi, who has a long record in the service of Pakistan, is considered as the favoured candidate for the post. She has served as the High Commissioner to Britain, France, and Germany in the past.

Bush supports PM's initiative

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MAY 10. In what is being held out as yet another proof of the deepening of the relations with India, the United States President, George W. Bush, met India's National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra, at the White

Oval Office to see the President.

"I conveyed the greetings of the Prime Minister to President Bush and reminded him of the invitation that is pending..." He did say some supportive things of the initiatives taken by the Prime Minister," Mr. Mishra told

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Govt. 'cold-shoulders' Pak. delegation

By Anita Joshua

NEW DELHI, MAY 9. Parliamentarians from India and Pakistan today committed themselves to creating a conducive climate within their legislatures to facilitate the fresh initiative that has been made to improve relations between the two countries.

Though the visiting Parliamentary delegation from Pakistan could not meet anyone from the Government, they had a long interaction with Opposition leaders; first with a predominantly Left group and then the Congress. At both these meetings, issues of concern were avoided. Instead, the focus was primarily on people-to-people contact. If there was a general understanding among the Par-

liamentarians on the merits of steering clear of contentious issues, there was also a common feeling that a small group of fundamentalists on both sides of the border was holding the peace process to ransom.

Besides, the Pakistanis, like their Indian counterparts, did not favour any third-party intervention. "Arms should not be allowed to be twisted by others," Shakeela Rashid of the Pakistan People's Party said.

With this initiative of the Pakistan-India Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy materialising after a long gap, the mood, according to the Congress MP, S. Jaipal Reddy, was "effusive" with all present eager to celebrate the age-old shared heritage of the

sub-continent and bury the differences that have rewritten the region's recent history.

Beginning early to make best use of their time in India, the delegation met 13 MPs — including the former Prime Minister, H. D. Deve Gowda, the Samajwadi Party leader, Mulayam Singh Yadav, and the Congress leader, Shivraj Patil — at the residence of the CPI(M) leader, Somnath Chatterjee, in the morning. Later, they were closeted with over a dozen Congress MPs.

And, in both instances, the meeting went into "extra time".

Giving details of the meeting, Mr. Chatterjee said all spoke with great feeling of friendship and stressed the need for dia-

logue and exchange in the area of sports, literature and culture. Also, he lamented the fact that no one in the Government and the NDA had met the visiting delegation despite the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, speaking at length on Thursday in Parliament about the need for friendship and good neighbourly relations.

While the forum had not slotted any engagements for the delegation in the afternoon in the hope of getting an appointment with someone in the Government, the absence of any response from the office of the Prime Minister, the External Affairs Minister and the Speaker has made the organisers abandon this course and keep the visit purely on "Track-II".

Apparently, the forum had written to the three — seeking appointments — through the eminent Gandhian, Nirmala Deshpande, over a week ago. Till date, there has been no response though the Speaker, Manohar Joshi, today maintained that he had received no such request.

The Government's cold shouldering notwithstanding, the delegation has got a warm reception from various quarters, with the Editors' Guild of India hosting a lunch for them; the Lok Janshakti leader, Ram Vilas Paswan, inviting them home for dinner; the CPI (M-L) welcoming their mission; and the South Asian Fraternity planning a public meeting on Saturday in their honour.

Armitage says infiltration down, but figures tell another tale

*Sub PMK
11-5*

By Manoj Joshi
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The question was blunt, "Do you think the cross-border incursion into Indian Kashmir is down?"



R. Armitage

The answer was direct: "The cross-border violence and lethality are down from this time last year." But in India, US deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage's response to a Pakistani questioner at Thursday's press conference in Islamabad has few takers.

Figures available with the government do not quite tally with Mr Armitage's asser-

tions. Untill May 8, some 54 terrorists have been killed trying to get across the Line of Control. This is almost identical to the figure of people killed in the same period in 2002.

With a straight face, Mr Armitage also spoke of the "absolute assurance" he had received from Pakistan President Pevez Musharraf that there were no camps in "Azad Kashmir" and "if there were, they would be gone tomorrow".

Given his own punctilious demeanour and careful articulation, Mr Armitage can hardly have escaped the irony of Gen Musharraf's response. In May 2002, he was the one who carried the General's promise to New Delhi that Pakistan would end infiltration across the LoC "permanently".

For this reason, there is little

or no excitement in New Delhi. Speaking to a TV channel on Friday, defence minister George Fernandes said that terrorist camps were still functioning and the government had ample proof of their existence not just in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, but across Pakistan itself.

On the same day, speaking to the BJP Sahyog cell, deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani described this infrastructure: training camps for terrorists, provision of weapons, giving money to families of terrorists and sending instructions to terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir using the communication networks.

Official agencies concede that they do not have an easy way to determine just how much infiltration is going on.

19 MAY 2003

18 MAY 2003

4 'OUR NUCLEAR PROGRAMME NOT PAK-SPECIFIC'

We will tread carefully: PM

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, MAY 8. The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, said today the Pakistani suggestion of "de-nuclearisation" was not acceptable to India since New Delhi's nuclear programme was not Pakistan-specific.

Replying to a debate on India-Pakistan relations in the Lok Sabha, Mr. Vajpayee said that while Pakistan's nuclear programme was India-centric, New Delhi had to take into account the environment that developed in (India's) neighbouring nations.

The Prime Minister, who was repeatedly warned by members to proceed with caution when it came to dealing with Pakistan, said he would tread very carefully.

He said that India's nuclear doctrine envisaged a "no-first-strike" option, but Pakistan had refused to provide such a com-

mitment. The Prime Minister questioned the utility of a "no-war pact" and instead went along with a party member who suggested a "no-proxy war pact". Under fire from the Opposition for "failures" in Lahore and Agra, the Prime Minister said the search for peace was not a crime. Success or failure, he felt, was not the issue. "Just because we might fail — that was not a reason not to try."

Refusing to accept that he was to "blame" for Lahore, Mr. Vajpayee reiterated that one had to live with one's neighbours. "We should not lose the chance of improving relations," he said. Pilloried by some members for suddenly dropping the condition that there would be no contact with Pakistan till it ended cross-border terrorism, the Prime Minister appeared a trifle defensive on the question.

In his defence of the "new beginning", the Prime Minister always said that the doors of diplomacy and the windows of dialogue must be kept open and active at all times.

She also pointed out the "contradictions and the inconsistency" in the Prime Minister's statements. "The Government's stand has vacillated from one extreme to another giving rise to the impression that it was responding to external pressures."

"We were repeatedly told that there would be no resumption of dialogue till cross-border terrorism continues. Are we now to understand that the Government has obtained firm commitments from Pakistan that its sponsorship of cross-border terrorism will cease? Are we to understand that this remains the pre-condition for the resumption of dialogue?"

Ms. Gandhi contrasted the "lack of vision and clarity" in the Government policies with the "farsighted" manner in which previous Congress Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and Narasimha Rao had dealt with the issue.

Responding to a point made by the Congress leader, Sonia Gandhi, the Prime Minister said there was no question of partitioning Jammu and Kashmir.

"Who says Kashmir will go? Whoever says this, can that person live here (in India)? Nobody can break Jammu and Kashmir."

To the Samajwadi Party leader, Mulayam Singh Yadav, he said there could not be a "federation" between India and Pakistan. The Prime Minister claimed that there had been "preparations" before the summit meetings in Lahore and Agra.

Giving an account of his discussions with then Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, in Lahore, Mr. Vajpayee said there was an agreement not to refer to Kashmir as it was a complicated issue, but move forward by addressing other issues.

But, in Agra, the Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf, wanted India to accept "his position" on Kashmir. Mr. Vajpayee claimed that Gen. Musharraf had to return "empty-handed" from Lahore. The Prime Minister said he had taken the position that cross-border terrorism must end before talks could begin because he wanted the problem to end. Such a position was taken in order to stop terrorism — that was the ultimate objective.

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GSLV lifts off, places satellite in orbit

By R.K. Radhakrishnan

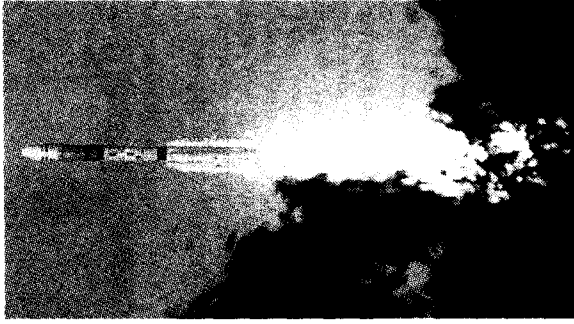
SRIHARIKOTA, MAY 8. India today took a step forward in realising the dream of placing its satellites in a geo-synchronous transfer orbit (GTO) following the success of the second experimental flight of the Geo-synchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre here.

The first successful flight was on April 18, 2001, when the GSLV D-1 placed a 1540-kg satellite, GSAT-1, in a geo-synchronous transfer orbit. From the GTO, satellites are lifted to their allotted slot by firing the boosters on-board the satellites.

The second developmental flight of the GSLV had a "textbook" lift-off at 4.58 p.m. today and stayed on course for 1013.34 seconds to place the 1800-kg GSAT-2 at the appointed slot, a geo-synchronous transfer orbit at the "right height, the right speed and the right direction."

"It is one of the most memorable moments. This is a major milestone for ISRO. I am proud of the technological achievement. Most importantly we have full confidence in the vehicle," the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Chairman, K. Kasturirangan, said.

Two successful development flights are required to acquire the tag 'operational' for a launch vehicle. With this flight, the GSLV has delivered and joined the ranks of operational vehicles. The GSLV Mark-1, each costing about Rs. 150 crores, use the Russian cryogenic stage, a crucial part of the launch vehicle. This time, the ISRO Chairman made it a point to thank the Russian delegation for the perfect functioning of



The GSLV-D2 launch vehicle taking off in Sriharikota on Thursday. — Photo: M. Moorthy

quire the tag 'operational' for a launch vehicle. With this flight, the GSLV has delivered and joined the ranks of operational vehicles. The GSLV Mark-1, each costing about Rs. 150 crores, use the Russian cryogenic stage, a crucial part of the launch vehicle. This time, the ISRO Chairman made it a point to thank the Russian delegation for the perfect functioning of

decade.

WORLD NEWS

Pak. delegation crosses over to India

WAGAH, MAY 8. Amidst peace overtures by India and Pakistan, a 13-member Pakistani parliamentary delegation today walked into India on a week-long visit during which they would be holding talks with their counterparts, writers and intellectuals.

Shiv Sena activists waved black flags and raised slogans such as "back to Pakistan". But they were duly checked by the police and were prevented from creating a scene.

The delegation, led by the former Planning Minister, Khalid Ranga, crossed the Red Cliff at Wagah carrying banners and placards in Urdu reading "open the ways for peace". The delegation members and those who received them raised slogans "Hind Pak dosti zindabad" (long live Indo-Pak friendship).

The local MLA, Raj Kumar, the Amritsar City Mayor, Sunil Dutt, the Additional Deputy Commissioner, H.S. Nanda, and member of Indian People Welfare Society, Jatinderpal Singh Jolly, received the delegation which included members of National Assembly and Provincial Assemblies.

Sardar Mazari of the Muslim League said that the aim and objective of the visit was to bring a message of peace. "Our message to both the governments would be sit down, resolve your issues across the table." Asked about India's concern over continuing cross-border terrorism, he said "this is something which is to be dealt with by both the countries".

Shakeela Rashid, another member, told report-

ers that they had come to India "to pave the path for progressive and purposeful peace initiatives" by both the countries.

Begum Rashid and other delegates, while speaking on the cross-border terrorism, said, "India is also not sure as to who is behind the inhuman killings in Jammu and Kashmir as the identity of the terrorists never came to light. So it is difficult to say Pakistan is behind the killings in India".

On the hardliners in Pakistan who are against the peace initiatives, the delegates said: "No doubt there are certain sectarian groups in Pakistan creating hurdles for peace talks, but the same type of people are also here in India who are inhibiting the Indian Government from heading towards the bilateral peace talks".

They said they were committed to mollify the fundamentalist in Pakistan and similar efforts were needed in India.

Former Editor of *Herald*, Karachi, Sheery Rehman, stressed the need for more such peace missions from both sides. She said this would help in the confidence-building process.

Mr. Ranga said that on reaching Delhi the delegates would meet Parliamentarians to exchange views besides inviting them to visit Pakistan.

During their seven-day stay, the delegates would go to Hyderabad, Kolkatta and Mumbai.

The delegation later visited the Golden Temple and paid homage to martyrs at the historic Jalianwala Bagh. — PTI, UNI

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THE HINDU

MAY 2003

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Trade promotion after resolving political issues, says Pak.

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 8. As the suspense on the question of over-flight facilities and controversy over the 78 additional items added by Pakistan in the India import list continues, the Pakistan Commerce Minister, Humayun Akhtar, has asserted that Pakistan and India could exploit their 'trade potential' only after resolution of political issues.

Speaking at a luncheon hosted in his honour by the London Chambers of Commerce and Industry here today, he said the promotion of commercial relations between two countries were linked with progress on the political issues.

Comments of the Minister came even as there was no effort by Pakistan to clear the

air on the issue of over-flight facilities and 78 items put on the 'positive list' ostensibly to further the SAARC process. The External Affairs Ministry spokesman on Wednesday had said that India expected a clarification on both the issues.

In the aftermath of the December 13, 2001 Parliament attack, India had not only snapped air links but also suspended over-flight facilities to Pakistani aircraft. Islamabad reciprocated the measures and ever since the air space of each other's country is not available.

In June last year, India said it was willing to lift the ban on over-flight facilities on a reciprocal basis.

However, the suggestion was turned down by Pakistan on the ground that it was

'self-serving and deceptive.' The argument here was that many more Indian flights were affected on account of the ban than the Pakistani aircraft.

Efforts to get a clarification from the Pakistani authorities proved to be futile. It appeared no one from the Government had got in touch with the Indian High Commission either.

Mr. Akhtar, who is an ardent advocate of resolution of the Kashmir issue before trade relations, was believed to be at loggerheads with the Foreign Ministry some months ago on the question whether or not Pakistan should send a delegation to participate in the South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA) talks at Kathmandu. Ultimately the Foreign Ministry prevailed.

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9 MAY 2003

SHIV SHANKAR MENON TO BE NEW ENVOY

Pak. needs to take credible steps: India

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, MAY 7. In a measured official response to the proposals made by Pakistan last night, India today announced that it had sought an agreement (Agreement in diplomatic parlance) for the appointment of a new High Commissioner to Islamabad. The response, contained in a statement read out by the Foreign Office spokesman, was more in tune with the overall objective of keeping the process of rapprochement with Pakistan on track.

It is learnt that Shiv Shankar Menon, a 1972 batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, currently Ambassador in Beijing, will be the new Indian High Commissioner to Islamabad.

"We welcome the fact that Pakistan has responded to the initiatives of our Prime Minister. It is quite clear that several specific steps would need to be taken by Pakistan to move this process meaningfully forward..."

After official sources described the Pakistani Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali's "statement" as "completely inadequate" last night, the spokesman today welcomed the nod given by Mr. Jamali to resume the civil aviation links. Even here, there was a qualification: "Our understanding is that such links would

include direct air services and overflights. We have sought a specific confirmation from Pakistan in this regard. The Pakistani authorities have indicated that this issue could be discussed further between the civil aviation authorities of the two countries."

On trade issues, India continued to describe the SAARC-related proposals by Mr. Jamali as "clearly inadequate" given the "mandate" of the last summit of the grouping in Kathmandu. "We have repeatedly made it clear that substantive progress on trade and economic cooperation should take place to make the next summit meaningful," the spokesman said.

Referring to Mr. Jamali's statement, formally handed over by the Pakistani side to the Ministry of External Affairs today, he said the Pakistani leader had also proposed the resumption of road and rail links as well as sporting contacts.

Making it plain that there was no immediate acceptance of these enhanced proposals from Pakistan, the spokesman maintained: "These measures can be considered in due course as we see progress on the steps announced by our Prime Minister, and there is evidence of Pakistan taking firm and credible action against cross-border terrorism and to dismantle the infrastruc-

ture of support to terrorism."

On the issue of terrorism, India, the sources said, wanted credible steps from Pakistan such as the arrest of leaders belonging to the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Muhammad, as well as dismantling of the Lashkar's Muridke "launching pad". Other linked steps, such as snapping communication links from Pakistan to terrorist groups in Kashmir, would also be welcome in New Delhi.

As far as the possible resumption of dialogue was concerned, the spokesman said: "We remain committed to resolve all issues between India and Pakistan bilaterally, as provided for in the Simla Agreement and the Lahore declaration." "Prime Minister (Vajpayee), in his statement to Parliament on May 2, had made it clear that a sustained dialogue would necessarily require an end to cross-border terrorism and the dismantling of its infrastructure." Regarding the issue of talks on "nuclear and strategic stability" raised by Mr. Jamali last night, the spokesman remarked that talks on nuclear and other confidence-building measures could be held in the context of the "composite dialogue" (agreed upon in June 1997) which has the specific agenda item of peace and security, including CBMs.

Asked to respond to the remarks made by the Pakistani Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri, to press reports that the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, had travelled to Africa to keep Pakistan out of the Commonwealth, the spokesman said Mr. Sinha did not react to Mr. Kasuri's comments. The less "we talk" the better it was for the process (of detente) between India and Pakistan, the spokesman said. It was, he added, "not helpful to get personal".

As India and Pakistan cautiously approach each other, engagement with the United States will also be a key factor in this process. Informed sources said that India had already "sensitised" the U.S. to its concerns during the meeting between the

Our CBMs 'far larger': Pak.

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 7. India's description of the confidence building measures (CBMs) announced by the Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, as "inadequate" has not gone down well here.

Before New Delhi's official statement, the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri, maintained that it was not 'fair' to quantify or qualify the CBMs unveiled by Mr. Jamali. However, the Minister could not be reached after the External Affairs Ministry spokesman made known the detailed Indian reaction.

Mr. Kasuri said Pakistan's CBMs were "far larger" than those announced by Mr. Vajpayee. It did not augur well for the nascent peace process if one were to sit down to analyse every move and word. "We appreciate the statesmanship shown by the Prime Minister of India and expect that the people of India and the Government display a greater degree of generosity towards what the

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Pakistan must do more for peace, insists India

Statesman News Service

Nuclear teeth?

NEW DELHI, May 7. — Having already sent the name of an official it would like to appoint as High Commissioner to Islamabad for clearance, the government says it is actively pursuing its stated objectives in pushing the peace process forward.

Pakistan, on the contrary, is not doing enough. It has not even sent a name for clearance in the form of an *agreement* (a diplomatic no-objection certificate from the host government) for its appointee as envoy to New Delhi. The frontrunner for the post appears to be Mr Shiv Shankar Menon, currently ambassador to Beijing.

Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee will make a statement on the peace initiatives in the Lok Sabha tomorrow.

Gen. Pervez Musharraf's insistence today on the "centrality" of the "Kashmir" issue in any India-Pakistan dialogue (in an interview to *Pakistan TV*) would place Pakistan in a "spot" because "what is central to the Kashmir problem is cross-border terrorism that Pakistan must address," a senior official said.

Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee had made it clear in Parliament last week that a sustained dialogue would necessarily require an end to cross-border terrorism and the dismantling of its infrastructure. India is clearly unimpressed with Pak-

ISLAMABAD, May 7. — Gen. Pervez Musharraf and Mr Jamali today attended a high-level meeting of Pakistan's Nuclear Command Authority (NCA), which controls the country's strategic weapons.

Official media reports here said the meeting chaired by the general reviewed the development and effectiveness of the nuclear command-and-control system and approved a number of proposals. The minutes reiterated that while deterrence was the cornerstone of security, Pakistan did not believe in an arms race.

Time-frame: Mr Kasuri suggested a two-month time-frame to hold meetings of officials. Speaking on *PTV*, he said India should decide whether it wants fast or slow-track diplomacy. "On the fast track, we are prepared not to reinvent the wheel". — PTI

Armitage in Islamabad

The US Deputy Secretary of State, Mr Richard Armitage, arrived in Islamabad tonight on a mission to normalise relations between the South Asian neighbours. He will fly to New Delhi on 9 May.

istan's response to its peace initiative, with the government emphasising that "several specific steps" would need to

be taken by Islamabad to move this process "meaningfully forward."

Though he welcomed some of the measures announced yesterday by the Pakistani Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, for normalisation of relations between the two countries, the spokesman of the external affairs ministry said they were not enough.

India welcomed Mr Jamali's statement on the resumption of civil aviation links. "Our understanding is that such links would include direct air services and over-flights. We have sought a specific confirmation from Pakistan in this regard. The Pakistani authorities have indicated that this issue should be discussed further by the civil aviation authorities of the two countries," the spokesman said.

Mr Jamali had made several suggestions on diplomatic representation, resumption of road and rail links and sports contacts, the spokesman said, and "these measures can be considered ... as we see progress on the steps announced by our Prime Minister. There is evidence of Pakistan taking action to dismantle the infrastructure of support to terrorism."

However, the spokesman said that Saarc-related trade proposals were "clearly inadequate" in the context of the Kathmandu Saarc summit in 2001.

Another report on page 4

MAY 2003

THE STATESMAN

JAMALI PROPOSES DIALOGUE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES

Pak. to restore diplomatic ties; road, rail and air links

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 6. The Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali tonight unveiled the much-awaited confidence building measures (CBMs) to pave way for a dialogue with India by agreeing to the proposals made by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee last week. Among other things he has sought diplomatic status quo as it existed between India and Pakistan prior to the December 13, 2001 Parliament attack and dialogue on nuclear and security-related issues.

At a hurriedly-convened news conference here, Mr. Jamali read out from a carefully-drafted statement outlining the CBMs. These included six directly related to India and Pakistan and two in the field of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

Mr. Jamali's announcement came hours before the U.S. Secretary of State, Richard Armitage along with the Assistant Secretary of State, Christina Rocca's arrival to discuss bilateral and Indo-Pakistan issues.

The India-centric measures announced by Mr. Jamali are: immediate restoration of the

snapped rail and road links on a reciprocal basis; restoration of air links as proposed by Mr. Vajpayee; release of all Indian fishermen in Pakistani jails, besides 20 Sikh youths and 14 members of the Rajhalaxmi cargo boat as a goodwill gesture; proposal for resumption of sporting ties to begin with in the fields of cricket and hockey and proposal for restoration of the staff strength of India and Pakistan missions to pre-December 2001 level and suggestion for dialogue between the two countries on nuclear security-related issues as agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding in the Lahore Declaration.

The SAARC-related CBMs which would have a bearing on India-Pakistan ties are the decision by Pakistan to add 78 more items on the list of items that could be imported from India; decision to approach the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu proposing dates for the SAARC Summit scheduled in Islamabad and the decision of Pakistan to hold the thrice-postponed South Asian Federation (SAF) games.

In his opening statement Mr. Jamali sought to address the

two issues uppermost on the agenda of New Delhi — cross-border infiltration and dismantling of terrorism infrastructure. The Pakistan Prime Minister declared that his country was opposed to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and would not lag behind anyone in tackling the menace. However it came with a rider.

"Pakistan condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and would continue to cooperate with the international community to eliminate this scourge. Of equal importance is the promotion of regional peace and security in regions of the world, suffering from tensions and unresolved conflicts", he said in an obvious reference to Kashmir.

Mr. Jamali said he appreciated the recent moves of Prime Minister Vajpayee and said the measures sought to be taken by his Government were aimed at 'setting the stage' for a meaningful dialogue with India on all outstanding issues, including Kashmir. "We should begin talks from where they were left off at Agra and work out an agenda for a tiered dialogue, including Summit-level interaction".

He made it a point to refer to Kashmir as the 'core issue' and had a 'special message' for Kashmiris. "I want to tell the Kashmiris and the people of Pakistan that at all stages, their interests would be supreme". Mr. Jamali talked about his consultations with all parties and said he enjoyed the fullest support of the people and all major parties. "With this national consensus we are ready to engage in a serious and substantive dialogue with India", he said.

When a reporter wanted to know from Mr. Jamali if the omission of reference to the United Nations Resolutions on Kashmir signalled a shift in the traditional stand of Pakistan, he sought to make light of the question. "It has figured so many times". In response to another question if he apprehended that 'hard-liners in India would sabotage the latest peace move like they did in Agra', he merely said that "that would be bad luck".

Answering another question whether he has had any contact with the Deputy Prime Minister, Lal Krishna Advani in recent days, Mr. Jamali replied in the negative. "I would very much like to meet Mr. Advani. From my side there would be no problem". In response to another question about whether he was hopeful of resolution of differences between India and Pakistan before the 2004 general elections, he quipped "Well, they are Indian elections, not Pakistani elections".

Mr. Jamali said he was hopeful that India would come forward to address all outstanding issues in a sincere and sustained dialogue. "I hope we would be able to put aside the past acrimony and move towards resolution of all problems, including Jammu and Kashmir". He said both the countries could pick up from where they had left off at

Inadequate, says India

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, MAY 6. India today described as "completely inadequate" the Pakistani Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali's response to the hand of friendship extended by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Official sources said that Mr. Jamali had not addressed India's concerns on the issue of cross-border terrorism. On trade issues, it had only put 78 items on the positive list, while some 146 other items remained on the "negative

ferred to a free trade area proposal.

The sources said that while Pakistan had agreed to restore civil aviation links, Mr. Jamali had been totally silent on the issue of "overflights." How could direct flights be restored while nothing was said on the question of overflights? They maintained that Mr. Jamali's remarks were not in keeping with the spirit in which Mr. Vajpayee had taken the initiative to mend fences with Islamabad.

On the issue of trade, the sources said that placing 78

146 of a total of 200 items proposed by Pakistan in SAP-TA-IV remained on the negative list of trade with India. They made it plain that as far as India was concerned concrete measures against the menace of terrorism were critical. The whole Pakistani effort was to take the situation to pre-December 13, 2001, without saying anything on what steps it would take on the terrorism question. While the Indian initiative remained on the table, it was evident that New Delhi is feeling a trifle let down by the

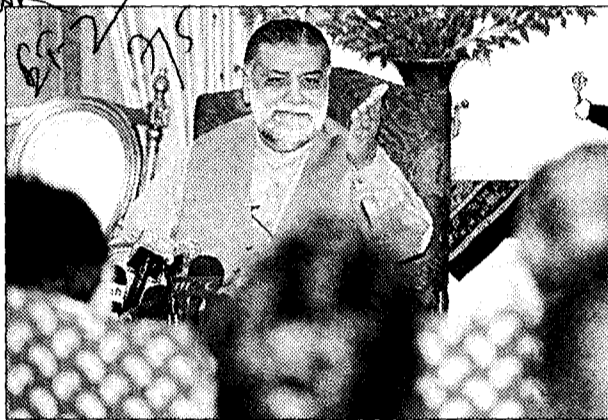
Pak game for restoration of diplomatic relations

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 6 MAY

RECIPROCATING to the proposals made by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, Pakistan on Tuesday announced restoration of full diplomatic relations with India, air, train and bus links as also sporting ties and called for confidence-building measures on nuclear issues and a comprehensive dialogue, including Kashmir.

The Pakistani response was unveiled by Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, who, after securing the Opposition's support to government moves on Monday at an all-party meeting, made the announcements at a press conference telecast live on Tuesday evening.

New Delhi, however, withheld its reaction to the reciprocal moves with the foreign office spokesperson declining to comment on the fresh development. But officials here seemed unimpressed with the Pakistani insistence to club Jammu and Kashmir together with the proposals. Mr Jamali's assertion that there was no change in



Jamali at a meeting with Opposition parties in Islamabad. — AFP

Islamabad's position on Kashmir and his assurance to the Kashmiris that "at all stages, their interest would be of supreme importance" is being viewed with much suspicion.

Favouring resumption of dialogue from where it was left in Agra, Mr Jamali said: "I believe all issues have to be addressed sincerely and constructively through sustained dialogue. India should put the acrimony to the back-burner and discuss all issues including the core issue of

Jammu and Kashmir." Replying to questions about the possibility of a third party and whether he had any assurance on the outcome of talks, Mr Jamali said: "I need guarantee from God, not anyone else. We (India and Pakistan) have spoken. Assurance comes from within."

Mr Jamali favoured confidence building measures enshrined in the 1999 Lahore Treaty providing for arms restraint and promotion of security in the region.

7 MAY 2003

The Economic Times

Pak reciprocates India's overtures

Islamabad will restore full diplomatic and transport links

Mishra meets Armitage in London

Islamabad: Unveiling a series of reciprocal measures, Pakistan on Tuesday announced restoration of full diplomatic relations with India.

It also announced the restoration of air, train and bus links and called for confidence measures on nuclear issues and a comprehensive dialogue on all issues, including Kashmir.

After securing the opposition's backing for the government's moves, Pakistan Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali disclosed the promised steps at a news conference in response to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's announcement on Friday.

Favouring the resumption of a dialogue from where it was left in Agra, Mr Jamali said, "I believe all issues have to be addressed sincerely and constructively through a sustained dialogue.

"India should put acrimony on the back-burner and discuss all issues, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir," he said, adding that a national consensus was behind him to hold a dialogue with India. Mr Jamali assured Kashmiris that "at all stages, their interest would be of supreme importance".

Calling for confidence-building measures on nuclear issues, he said the possession of nuclear weapons by the two countries had put a responsibility on them to "seek nuclear and strategic stability" in the region. "Nuclear realities in our region impose certain obligations and responsibilities on our two countries," he said.

"It is therefore important for both India and Pakistan to engage in a serious memorandum of understanding signed during Mr Vajpayee's visit to Lahore in February

1999," Mr Jamali said, expressing the hope that resumption of a dialogue would enable the two nations to conclude substantive and result-oriented measures "for arms restraint and promotion of security" in the region.

He also said that his government had decided to release all Indian fishermen detained in Pakistan and to take steps towards restoring sporting ties.

Asked what made him confident that the talks would succeed this time, Mr Jamali said "my faith and commitment". To another question about the possible role of a third party and whether he had any assurance on the outcome of the talks, he said, "I need a guarantee from God, not anyone else. We (India and Pakistan) have spoken. The assurance comes from within."

Mr Jamali said there was no change in Islamabad's position on Kashmir. To a question on Mr Vajpayee expressing certain reservations, he said, "I feel it is positive from the Indian side. The foreign office guides us, but both sides are positive."

To a question on whether a solution to the Kashmir issue could be found by October 2004 when general elections were due in India, Mr Jamali merely said, "Things should come around well. It all depends. It is their elections, not ours. As far as we are concerned, we have to see what happens in the international context."

To a question on India continuing to insist that cross-border terrorism should end, he said, "There is no bar on talking. I can't stop them from talking." PTI

● See Edit: Bombs Away, Page 12

By Rashmee Z. Ahmed
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

London: In an apparent quickening of the diplomatic choreography of the rapidly-thawing Indo-Pakistan relationship, US deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage met national security adviser Brajesh Mishra here on Tuesday, just a day after his talks with ISI chief Ehsanul Haq in Washington.

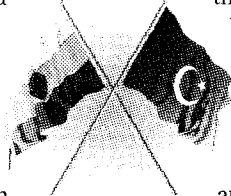
The London meeting comes just days before Mr Mishra is understood to be meeting his British interlocutors here. Officials described it as "deftly scheduled", "covering a lot of ground and a gamut of issues" and "wide-ranging".

Mr Armitage is on his way to South Asia as part of a dramatic thaw in India-Pakistan relations.

Late on Monday night, in a BBC interview, Mr Armitage bristled at suggestions that he was heading for South Asia armed with a peace plan and a set of clearly defined rules. "I am not a schoolmaster," he objected, insisting that both India and Pakistan would have to do the heavy-lifting of the peace process themselves.

Observers said this could be decoded as an appreciation of the Indian position, calling for considerable groundwork at the official level before yet another high-level summit, the third in four years.

Few details are being released about the Armitage-Mishra talks, which were one-on-one. British officials did not take part this time around. South Asia watchers said the privacy and the deliberate media black-out may underscore the depth and extent of Washington's desire to communicate to New Delhi the tone and timbre of the signals it had been receiving from Islamabad.



7 MAY 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Indo-Pak thaw

Shouldn't stall moves in J&K

With the focus of the top echelons in government concentrated on the intricacies of reviving the dialogue with Pakistan there is every danger of the recent initiatives toward winning hearts and minds in Jammu and Kashmir being relegated to the background. That is something which New Delhi must not permit, rather it must make strenuous efforts towards their success. For while Pakistan may have been responsible for militancy flourishing over the past decade or so, there is need to understand that a sense of frustration and maybe even alienation existed in the state, the valley in particular, before the culture of the gun arrived. Hence while dealing with Pakistan is critical at one level, removing the misgivings of a large section of Kashmiris is crucial at only a slightly lower level. There is, therefore, some cause for satisfaction in NN Vohra persisting with his mission, not abandoning it as KC Pant virtually did as soon as Vajpayee invited Musharraf to Agra. The process towards peace with Pakistan, must to the extent possible be delinked from the domestic process of reconciliation, something which New Delhi must not ignore. Thus promises made in recent times, particularly what the Prime Minister offered on his last visit to Srinagar must be fulfilled.

If there has been any change in the climate that prompted Vajpayee's making his third peace offering — international pressure excluded — it has been signs of a mood-swing in Kashmir. A swing initiated with the conduct of reasonably clean elections, the little-recognised decision of the National Conference not to try and manipulate its way to a majority in the new assembly (it is the single largest party, remember), and the mature decision of the Congress, after initial hiccups, to allow its junior coalition partner — in terms of numbers — to head the government. It was that combination of factors that enabled Mufti Mohd. Sayeed to apply his healing-touch therapy which enabled the prime minister to address a public meeting after a gap of 14 years. Despite what sections of the Sangh Parivar say and do, there must be no flagging of the internal commitment to capitalise on the changed circumstances. The Mufti has, rightly, concentrated on dealing with immediate difficulties rather than raking up the autonomy issue, but sooner or later it will have to be addressed. And there is no reason to duck it out of apprehension that it will complicate the dialogue with Pakistan. On the contrary, a happy valley will strengthen the Indian position at the negotiating table.

7 MAY 2003

THE STATESMAN

ICE HAS MELTED, SAYS JAMALI

Pak. for dialogue on all issues including Kashmir

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 5. The all-party meeting being held here to consider the response to the Vajpayee peace initiative began on a positive note with a statement by the Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, that the "ice has melted between India and Pakistan".

Talking to presspersons in Chakwal town in the Punjab province, hours before the meeting began, Mr. Jamali said efforts were under way to create a "congenial atmosphere" to begin talks between the two countries.

It is not clear if Mr. Jamali had in mind (when he used the expression congenial atmosphere) the desire expressed by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, for a "proper groundwork" before starting a dialogue at the highest level.

The Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri, told *The Hindu* that after the interaction with representatives of the political parties, Mr. Jamali would announce "measures to help normalisation" of relations with India. He declined to elaborate on the plea that it would be appropriate for Mr. Jamali to spell out the details.

Asked if it would address the two chief concerns of India — infiltration across the Line of Control and the existence of terrorist infrastructure — Mr. Kasuri said: "Please be rest assured that if Mr. Jamali could pick up the phone and talk to Mr. Vajpayee, obviously he has thought through the process. The Pakistan Government is committed to the process of normalisation of relations with India."

Mr. Jamali told correspondents that all issues would be discussed with India on the nego-

tiating table. He referred to the all-party meeting and said the aim was to take everyone into confidence on the coming talks on India. The Government wanted to start talks with India after taking the entire nation into confidence first.

Leaders of all major parties are taking part in the meeting being held at Mr. Jamali's residence. Most parties in Pakistan have welcomed the peace initiative. However, the religious parties have cautioned the Government against any attempt to sideline the "core issue" of Kashmir.

Reflecting the general mood in the country, the Foreign Office described Mr. Vajpayee's letter to Mr. Jamali in response to the invitation to visit Islamabad as a "positive response". Its

spokesman, Aziz Ahmed Khan at the regular briefing said, "Pakistan has received a positive response... I can't go into the details".

Reiterating Pakistan's position, he said, "we have always called for a composite dialogue, on all issues, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir". "Pakistan wants a meaningful and positive dialogue on all issues".

Regarding the "composite" dialogue, he said Pakistan had been calling for a dialogue to discuss all issues including the core Kashmir dispute. "It never meant exclusively discussing Kashmir".

He further elaborated that "composite means all issues, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir".

The earlier Foreign Secretary-level talks had identified eight different areas on to start talks and these included Kashmir.

Mr. Khan said it was Pakistan's responsibility to properly respond to all the gains made by India.

"We want to enter the dialogue process with a proper frame of mind. We are ready to hold talks with India at any place, anytime, anywhere, any level," he said.

Asked to comment on Vajpayee's statement, Mr. Khan said that groundwork must precede the dialogue process, he said Pakistan will also make an analysis of the ground situation.

Pakistan wanted that the dialogue process started in earnest and was sustained. "opening up of the air space," he said, "all matters are under consideration".

To a question on reports of CIA map about Kashmir, he said he had checked the site and found that it showed the area as "disputed territory".

Asked to comment on a statement by the Hurriyat leadership, he attributed it to "misleading and tendentious reports".

Pakistan stood side by side with its Kashmiri brethren would continue to provide "moral, diplomatic and financial" support to their just till the issue was resolved in accordance with the wishes of the people of Kashmir.

To a question on the "continued firing" from India along the LoC and heavy casualties in "Azad" Kashmir, Mr. Khan hoped that the firing would stop soon. About the SAAI summit, he said the dates for holding the summit would be worked out and announced soon.

Solve Kashmir, sign no-war pact: Musharraf

ISLAMABAD, MAY 5. Amid fresh peace overtures by India and Pakistan, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has said his country could work for a no-war pact with India followed by mutual reduction of troops and denuclearisation of South Asia if the Kashmir issue was resolved.

If the Kashmir issue was resolved and there was peace and security in the region, South Asia could be denuclearised mutually by India and Pakistan, Gen. Musharraf said in an interview to a Pakistani TV channel, ARY Gold.

"Our concern is our security. We have been saying that if there is no problem to our security, Pakistan and India can move to mutual reduction of forces and have a no-war pact — this has been our stand," he said. He was quoted as saying that the Pakistan Army could cut its size if the Kashmir issue was resolved. Gen. Musharraf also dismissed reports that India and Pakistan agreed for a dialogue process following pressure from the international community. Gen. Musharraf said the new peace move was initiated due to the prevailing impression in India and Pakistan that issues could be resolved through a dialogue. "I think that there can be realisation in the minds of the Pakistanis and Indians that the talks should be restarted and all the disputes should be resolved in the mutual interest of the two countries and the region. I think that may be this realisation is developing in their minds." — PTI

India, Pak. officials' visit unlikely to attract attention

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MAY 5. Even as the attention is focused in the sub-continent on the visit of the United States Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, and the Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Christina Rocca, the likely visits of the Chief of the Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Ehsanul Huq, and the Principal Secretary to the Indian Prime Minister and the National Security Advisor, Brajesh Mishra, to Washington, though considered significant, may not attract the front pages of the media here.

Though Lt. Gen Huq's visit is yet to be officially announced, he is likely to call on officials of the State Department and the White House and also take him to the headquarters of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and a meeting with a top spy of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mr. Mishra, who is arriving here in the middle of this week, will also be visiting the State Department and the White House. He would hold talks with his counterpart, Condoleezza Rice.

During the course of the visit,

Lt. Gen. Huq is also slated to meet the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, Dr. Rice and the Secretary of Homeland Security, Tom Ridge.

Lt. Gen Huq's visit to Washington is generally believed that it has more than the United States-Pakistan-Afghanistan angle, even if the visit could primarily revolve around this. It was also felt that though the ISI chief may not raise the Kashmir issue, the U.S. intelligence agencies and the Bush administration had been demanding an end to infiltration from Pakistan across the Line of Control and no one is naive enough to believe that the ISI does not have a hand.

The fact that India and Pakistan are on the way to restoration of bilateral ties adds an element of urgency and importance. The Bush administration, given the context of the 'newly evolved relations,' has given a clear impression that while it was willing to lean on Pakistan against infiltration, there is going to be no public rebuking of Islamabad or indulge in any largescale Pakistan bashing on this score.

Whatever is said, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, is going quiet and private. Staying in the realm of the U. S. -Pakistan relationship, the Bush administration had praised Islamabad for the recent turn of events that included the capture of at least six Al Qaeda terrorists and thwarting a plan to ram a small plane or helicopter into the American Consulate in Karachi.

The law enforcement authorities here have been pointing to the arrests and foiling of the plan to attack the consulate as proof of international cooperation on the terrorism front.

But the U. S. has yet another critical aspect to talk to Lt. Gen Huq about—the sudden spurt in activities of the Al Qaeda and the Taliban along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, and in the general, concern for the increasing sympathy inside Pakistan for the Al Qaeda and the Taliban.

In fact, one perception here is that the finer aspects of Lt. Gen Huq's talks in Washington would be with the Head of the FBI, Robert Mueller and the Chief of the CIA, George Tenet.

NO CHANGE IN PAK. POLICY, SAYS FOREIGN OFFICE

Jamali calls all-party meet to discuss Vajpayee's offer

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 4. The Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, has convened an all-party meeting here tomorrow evening to discuss his counterpart, Atal Behari Vajpayee's peace initiative and Islamabad's response.

Mr. Jamali's invite to representatives of all parties is akin to a similar exercise by the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, on the eve of the July 2001 Agra Summit. However, Gen. Musharraf went to Agra with a totally free hand, as there was no pre-fixed agenda for the talks.

The situation this time is different. India is sticking to the two main pre-conditions — end to cross border infiltration and dismantling of terrorist infrastructure — for any contact at the highest level.

Mr. Jamali decided to convene the meeting after the Jamaat-e-Islami chief, Qazi Hussain Ahmed, demanded a special Parliament session to discuss the situation. Mr. Jamali

obviously would like to listen to representatives of all parties before making public Pakistan's response.

On Saturday, Gen. Musharraf had told a group of intellectuals that Mr. Jamali would announce some 'India-centric concessions' as a sequel to India's desire to re-establish full diplomatic relations. The same day, during a telephone conversation with the U.S. Secretary of

State, Colin Powell, Mr. Jamali said he would unveil measures for 'peace and security' in the region.

Mr. Jamali's choice of words has given room for interpretation that Pakistan could be considering some steps to meet India's two chief concerns. Of course, Pakistan has all along denied any infiltration across the Line of Control and denied Indian charges that it pursued

'jihad' (holy war) as an instrument of foreign policy.

It is against this backdrop that the all-party meeting convened by the Jamali Government assumes significance.

The sensitivities of Indian relations was evident yesterday when the Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri, and carried a section of the press that India even without progress on the Kashmir issue.

A spokesman clarified Mr. Kasuri, while talking to a Hindi Service correspondent on a broadcast channel, "has misquoted and reported out of context." He added, "Pakistan's policy is quite clear and unambiguous in this regard. It has been reiterated repeatedly that Pakistan desires a meaningful and result oriented dialogue on all issues, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir. There has been no change in this policy."

Kasuri's claim: Pa

'When is your boss coming?'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 4. The Acting Indian High Commissioner, T.C.A. Raghavan, today had a 'chance encounter' with the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, at a posh restaurant here.

As he walked in, Gen. Musharraf, in his inimitable style, went around greeting guests in the restaurant. When Mr. Raghavan introduced himself, Gen. Musharraf exchanged pleasantries with him and asked: "When is your boss coming?" obviously referring to the announcement made by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, about India's desire to appoint a High Commissioner in the Islamabad mission. The Indian envoy told him that "it would be soon" and added that he would convey the message to New Delhi.

Islamabad's response awaited

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, MAY 4. India is awaiting an official Pakistani response to the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee's proposal to exchange High Commissioners and restore direct flights between the two countries.

Official sources told this correspondent that once this response came in, New Delhi and Islamabad could move towards discussing the details on both fronts. On the civil aviation side, for instance, there would be many details to work out. India is also hopeful that Pakistan will respond to its concerns on terrorism — even some small movement would indicate that Islamabad is serious about addressing the issue.

In his reply to the Pakistani leader, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, the Prime Minister made it clear that an end to cross-border terrorism and dismantling the terrorist in-

frastructure could create a conducive atmosphere for talks.

Mr. Vajpayee may not be making talks hostage to an "end" to cross-border terrorism now, but his concerns on the question are direct and transparent. Given that the very public activities of groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Muhammad persist in Pakistan, India will continue to press Islamabad on this issue.

India must take up specifically and systematically its points on terrorism with Pakistan. Its request for the "wanted" can also be made sitting across the table. By not engaging, India had given a handle to those who would be an aggressive move on Pakistan. This is precisely the point that many who saw India-Pakistan relations in a different light from the "hawkish" perspective that had held sway after the failure of the Agra summit and the

December 13, 2001, attack on Parliament House, have been making.

In one sense, the "failures" in Lahore and Agra might have opened the eyes of leaderships of India and Pakistan to a summit-level meeting here or there going to dramatically alter the terms of lateral discourse.

In February 1999, when Lahore opened, India was unaware that by the fact of the "bus journey" it was sharp on the contradictions within the Pakistani establishment itself.

For some, Agra was a mysterious coming as it did after a policy of total contact with the regime of Pervez Musharraf.

Mr. Vajpayee may have spoken his mind out in the Rajya Sabha on Friday, but the course in this process of re-establishing contact is unlikely to be easy.

Army, Musharraf one on ties with India, says Kasuri

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 4. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, and the Army were fully on board the Government's decision as far as the present effort to normalise relations with India was concerned, the Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri, said today.

In an interview to the *Daily Times*, the Minister argued that Gen. Musharraf was not only the President but also the Chief of the Army Staff.

"The Indian assumption that the Army will not allow the normalisation of relations is wrong. The Pakistan Army is a very disciplined force and it understands Pakistan's geo-strategic compulsions," he said.

The Army only wanted a minimum deterrence so that Pakistan did not become a client state of any country in the region.

"We want India's friendship, not their hegemony. That's what the Pakistan Army wants as far as India is concerned. We don't accept the thesis that the Army will always try and block peace efforts between the two countries."

Expressing the hope that talks with India would succeed, Mr. Kasuri said Islamabad would show full commitment

to the peace process when it was launched in the form of a composite dialogue. As far as Pakistan was concerned, the issue of Jammu and Kashmir had been the cause of many wars.

On India's position of talking about trade-related issues, he said, "Pakistan is ready to talk about both countries moving forward on gas-pipeline issues."

He expressed the hope that "the talks would soon begin and it will not take too long", adding that there was no reason for any delay.

The Minister supported the idea of the proposed dialogue starting from the point at which it had been abandoned in Agra when Gen. Musharraf and Mr. Vajpayee had reached an agreement.

"Personally, I don't believe in reinventing the wheel," he said adding that a lot of work had already been done at the secretaries' level before the Agra summit.

On Mr. Vajpayee's concern of cross-border terrorism, Mr. Kasuri said conditional talks could never succeed.

"Pakistan has done all it can to stop it. But if the activity is taking place despite that effort, then it is not because of the Government's position but it is despite the Government's position."

Pakistan had proposed neutral monitoring of the LoC but India had rejected this offer.

"So we say to our Indian interlocutors that in the ultimate analysis if they don't accept neutral monitoring, how can they give hope to the people on both sides of the LoC."

On the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), he said Pakistan wanted an early meeting. "But there is nothing to stop Pakistan and India from meeting on the sidelines of many international conferences. They should try to behave maturely and not little kids who are trying to avoid each other."

The present peace initiative could mark a turning point in the history of Pakistan and India, he said.

"If this initiative is handled with care, it can succeed. And if the talks succeed, the sky is the limit. I think after three wars and last year's crisis, India has realised that coercive diplomacy does not work and Pakistan can't be browbeaten."

The international community was concerned about the situation in South Asia because of the reckless statements made by some Indian Ministers, Mr. Kasuri said. "So I hope the talks will succeed this time."

Indo-Pak ice broken, but thaw yet to set in

Jamali calls all-party meet to frame reply

US wants Indian, Pak forces to police Iraq

Islamabad: Pakistan Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali has convened an all-party meeting on Monday to discuss the government's stand in talks with India, state television reported on Sunday.

Mr Jamali told a public meeting at Mansehra in the North West Frontier Province on Sunday that he had invited the ruling coalition and opposition parties to discuss Pakistan's response to Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee's offer of talks and his subsequent announcements.

Leaders of all political parties who have representation in the National Assembly have been invited for the meeting to be held here, Pakistan TV reported.

The meeting was reportedly called after criticism from opposition parties that the government was taking some critical initiatives to improve bilateral ties without consulting them.

Ahead of Mr Jamali's announcement of the all-party meeting, foreign office officials here said that Pakistan had already decided to appoint a new high commissioner to head its mission in New Delhi.

The announcement by Mr Jamali that he planned to discuss the stand to be taken by Pakistan comes ahead of his talks with US Secretary of State Colin Powell. Mr Jamali has said

that he will announce a set of measures aimed at creating a congenial atmosphere and promoting peace and security between the two countries.

His choice of these phrases has raised hopes that he will soon be announcing specific steps aimed at allaying Indian concerns about cross-border infiltration. Without elaborating, however, Mr Jamali said he had already responded to Mr Vajpayee's talks offer last month. Since then he said he has already extended an invitation to Mr Vajpayee to visit Islamabad.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan government has denied reported remarks by foreign minister Khurshid Muhammad Kasuri that trade ties with India could be resumed without linking it to the Kashmir issue. A foreign ministry statement issued on Sunday said Mr Kasuri had been misquoted by the BBC's Hindi service about his remarks over resumption of trade ties. "Pakistan's policy is quite clear and unambiguous in this regard. It has been reiterated that Pakistan desires a meaningful and result-oriented composite dialogue on all issues, including the core issue of J&K. There has been no change in this policy," it said. PTI

By Chidanand Rajghatta
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Washington: Indian and Pakistani troops who were poised eyeball-to-eyeball in confrontation only a few months back could soon be standing shoulder-to-shoulder in peace-keeping operations in Iraq if the US has its way.

Washington is asking both nations to contribute to a multinational division that will help police Iraq and enable most US troops to return home, according to reports here. The proposal will be discussed further at a force generation conference organised by the UK in London next week followed by another meeting in Warsaw later in the month.

Officials in both the US and India say the matter has been discussed in a general way during the past month and is expected to come up during talks between India's national security advisor Brajesh Mishra and his US interlocutors this coming week.

New Delhi is skittish about troop commitments for Iraq, not because of its reservations on the war on Iraq or the lack of UN sanction, but more because it believes it does not have the domestic political space to make such a pledge.

For that to happen, the ruling BJP will have to cover a lot of political ground with its allies and the opposition Congress and that is a difficult proposition in the current atmosphere, say senior government officials. In the meantime, New Delhi is also hoping the US will obtain the necessary UN mandate that will make it easier for India to commit troops.

For now though, India has told the Bush administration that it will be happy giving a hand in other areas of stabilisation, including help in restoring law and order and bureaucracy, essential urban infrastructure and maintaining hospitals.

Although both India and Pakistan opposed the US war on Iraq, they are being asked to send troops because they are among the most experienced nations when it comes to peace-keeping operations. Throwing the troops together, mostly likely under the command of Poland, also appears to be Washington's way of defusing tensions between the two sides.

The US currently has about five divisions in Iraq (each division has up to 20,000 troops) and the plan is to downsize it to as little as one division.



A.B. Vajpayee



M.J.K. Jamali

● See Edit: Initiative Kashmir, Page 14

5 MAY 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD RECIPROCATES ■ AIR LINK & FULL DIPLOMATIC TIES SOON

PM push for Pak talks, one last time

A copy of SFI

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, May 2. — Making what he called a final pitch for peace in the sub-continent, the Prime Minister informed Parliament today that the government had decided to restore diplomatic ties between India and Pakistan to the level of high commissioner, and simultaneously seek a restoration of civil aviation links between both countries.

The path that he outlined, in identical statements to both houses of Parliament, marked a significant move forward, laying a 'road map' as it were to taking bilateral relations ahead. And while he did not mention the 'K-word' (Jammu and Kashmir), the emphasis clearly was on reducing terrorism, thereby making the 'atmosphere' conducive to a dialogue.

According to agency reports from Islamabad, Pakistan, which warmly welcomed Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee's statement, in a reciprocal gesture agreed to restore full diplomatic ties with India.

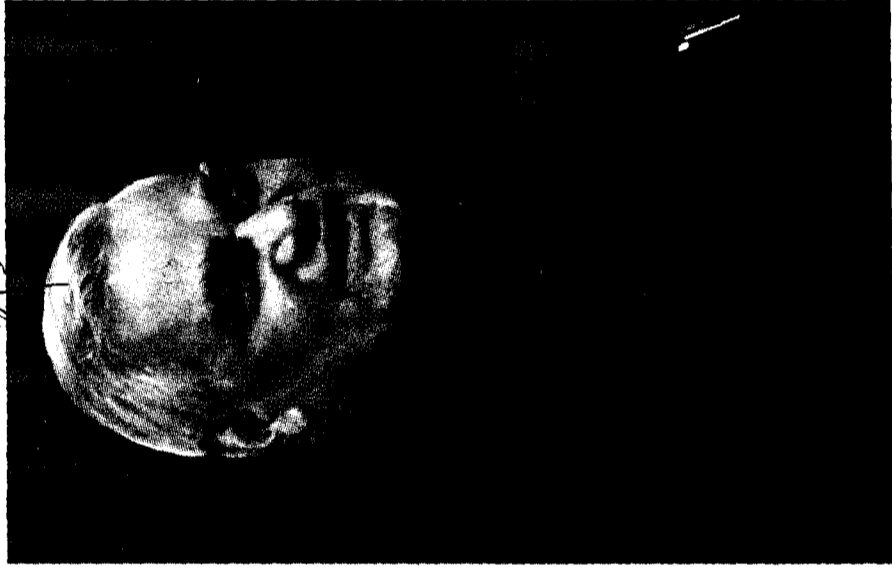
In Islamabad, the Pakistani foreign minister denied that the neighbours were under any external pressure to resume talks. "The momentum has to come from within India and Pakistan. Ultimately we have to talk to each other." He said it was Mr Jamali who had "picked up the phone" and talked to Mr Vajpayee.

Giving details of the conversation he had with the Pakistani Prime Minister on Monday, Mr Vajpayee said he and Mr Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali had agreed to discuss how economic cooperation, cultural exchanges, people-to-people contacts and sporting links between the two countries could be revived.

Mr Vajpayee said: "In this regard, I emphasised the importance of economic cooperation, cultural exchanges, people-to-people contacts and civil aviation links. These would create an environment in which difficult issues in our bilateral relations could be addressed. Prime Minister Jamali suggested resumption of sporting links between the two countries. We agreed that, as a beginning, these measures could be considered."

Mr Vajpayee said he had been invited by Mr Jamali to Pakistan, but had told him that he was unable to visit at this time. He declined to elaborate.

The Prime Minister, while responding to queries



Now whatever happens will be decisive, and this will be my third and last effort. I am confident I will succeed

from members in the Rajya Sabha, said the name of the new high commissioner would be finalised in con-

sultation with Pakistan. The name of Mr Harsh Bhasin, a career diplomat, has been mentioned as high commissioner-designate to Islamabad, and, with Pakistan reciprocating, the process of sending names and clearances would be set in motion shortly. India's charge d'affaires, Mr TCA Raghavan, assumed charge in Islamabad in February.

India had withdrawn its high commissioner to Pakistan, Mr Vijay K Nambiar, after the 13 December 2001 terrorist attack on Parliament, and announced a stiff dose of diplomatic measures, including the snapping of air, rail and road links with that country. It had then asked Pakistan to withdraw its high commissioner, Mr Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, from New Delhi and reduced the strength of the diplomatic mission by half.

Declaring that his government was "committed to the improvement of relations with Pakistan and we are willing to grasp every opportunity for doing so," Mr Vajpayee said this offer of a 'hand of friendship' would be "decisive and the last, at least in my lifetime".

"How long are we going to fight? India and Pakistan must learn to live together," he said, echoing his words before he took the bus to Lahore.

There was, however, no question of New Delhi accepting any mediatory role by the UN or any other third party in the resolution of Indo-Pak issues, the Prime Minister clarified. "Kashmir is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan and no third party would be allowed to mediate." India has "repeatedly" expressed the need to create an atmosphere conducive for a sustained dialogue. This "requires an end to cross-border terrorism and dismantling of its infrastructure," he said.

But, he said, in response to some comments from Mr K Natwar Singh (Congress), the Indo-Pak dialogue this time would be "decisive" and "conclusive," although the unity of the country would not be compromised. "Now whatever happens will be decisive and this will be my third and last effort" in that direction. "I am confident I will succeed."

USA hails PM move: The USA welcomed Mr Vajpayee's announcement as "very, very promising", PTI that, first steps, on the way to finding a way for the difficulties that exist between those two nations," secretary of state Gen. Colin Powell said en route to Albania.

Hizb a terror group, says US report

Statesman News Service & PTI

JAMMU, May 2. — The US state department has declared the Hizbul Mujahideen a "terrorist organisation". In its annual report on "Patterns of Global Terrorism" released yesterday, the department said cross-border terrorism was continuing in Jammu and Kashmir and that the Hizbul was a terrorist group.

The Hizbul has criticised the USA for including it in the list of terrorist groups. "The decision is unrealistic, partisan and contradictory to ground realities," Syed Salahuddin, Hizbul chief, said. The organisation has been listed in the category of "other terrorist groups" with 36 organisations.

Security officers in J&K feel the decision would affect the functioning of the group which has been active in the state for the past 12 years. Kashmir I-G Mr K Rajendra said the flow of funds to the group would be blocked.

Denial: The US embassy in Delhi has described as "complete fabrication" media reports which claimed that the US-appointed administrator for Iraq, Gen. Jay Garner, had said that the USA had developed a "Kashmir roadmap". A release said Gen. Garner had never made any such comment. "These reports in their entirety and in each allegation are a complete fabrication."

Atal powers 'final' peace push

HTC
8/5

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, May 2

WHY THE OLIVE BRANCH?



A LEGACY OF PEACE

Concerned about his place in history and worried about his advancing for years, Vajpayee has been hoping for another chance at holding talks with Musharraf. He would like it sooner than later. Advani, too, is willing



A REP ON INFILTRATION

Delhi wants infiltration checked before the elections. The *ninda* resolution on Iraq ensured the US won't do the dirty work for it. The Centre hopes Pak will hold back the terrorists so long as dialogue is on



WASHINGTON IN THE ACT

The US has stepped up pressure before Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage's visit. Washington believes in a trade-off: Pakistan stops infiltration and India agrees to resume dialogue

Pak move at UN

IN A fresh move to internationalise the Kashmir dispute, Pakistan — which has assumed the presidency of the UN Security Council for a month — said on Thursday it wanted to convene a special meeting on May 13 to discuss Palestine and Kashmir. India said the move was inappropriate.

HTC, New Delhi

with confidence, not weakness." (Terming Jamali's response as encouraging, he said: "I felt there should be some way out. When there is darkness, nobody stops from burning a lamp.")

Pakistan is likely to reciprocate to India's decision in the next 24 hours with Jamali announcing a slew of new confidence building measures, including restoration of full rail, road and air links as well as full diplomatic relations. The package was finalised at an emergency meeting between President Pervez Musharraf and Jamali.

Musharraf identified that the fresh peace overtures by India and Pakistan were the result of "some outside pressure". On the phone conversation between the two Prime Ministers, he said: "This is a very good sign. I think it's a new beginning after the Agra Summit."

Government sources in Islamabad, however, claimed that the proposed visit of Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage later this week to India and Pakistan had prompted the South Asian neighbours to soften their stands.

"The proof of US involvement in the new peace initiative is that Jamali rehearsed his conversation with Vajpayee countless times on April 27 and 28. Friends from a third country got a prior guarantee that Vajpayee will not only take the call but would also be gracious to his Pakistani counterpart," a source said.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell said India's decision to resume diplomatic and air links with Pakistan was "very, very promising... I am very pleased with the developments."

Khokhar, Bhasin in running for envoy posts, Page 11

DOMINION PRESS

3 MAY 2003

PM's statement handed over to Pak.

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, MAY 2. A copy of the statement made by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, in Parliament today was handed over to the Pakistani Charge d'Affaires, Munawar Saeed Bhatti, by the Joint Secretary in the External Affairs Ministry, Arun Singh, this evening.

Mr. Bhatti's attention was drawn to the specific reference in Mr. Vajpayee's statement that spoke of a return of High Commissioner to Islamabad and the restoration of civil aviation links: both on a reciprocal basis.

The meeting is seen as significant as this is the first, publicised meeting between officials of the two sides following Monday's telephone conversation between the two Prime Ministers. It is a sign that diplomatic ties between the two countries are returning to normal once again.

As far as return of a High Commissioner to Islamabad is concerned, a particular officer, Harsh Bhasin, had been identified some time ago as a possible candidate to take up the job. However, a final decision

has not been taken on who will go there. In a related development, the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, telephoned the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, and informed him of Mr. Vajpayee's statement.

Mr. Sinha, the Foreign Office spokesman said, shared with Mr. Straw the Government's thinking on the statement. Mr. Straw, warmly welcomed the Prime Minister's statement and remarked that Mr. Vajpayee had shown great "statesmanship".

Mr. Sinha also spoke to the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, and was scheduled to telephone the French Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin.

Official sources told this correspondent that the Prime Minister's remarks in the Rajya Sabha were self-explanatory. It was clear that Mr. Vajpayee had taken the plunge in favour of one final effort at dialogue with Pakistan. They pointed to the repeated references to terrorism in the Prime Minister's speech — an indicator while the move forward had begun — India remained concerned about the impact of the forces of terrorism.

Mr. Vajpayee left none in doubt that he

had taken on a heavy responsibility and there was need to take every step in the process of re-engagement with care.

The Prime Minister's statement on the "final effort" is clearly aimed at Pakistan — that this effort should not be allowed to go waste. While there can be difference of opinion on what led to the "failure" in Agra, there is no dispute that the Pakistani Army was sitting in Kargil as Mr. Vajpayee spoke to his then interlocutor, Nawaz Sharif, in Lahore.

Mr. Vajpayee has both been stern and conciliatory — a sign that he has to maintain a delicate balance as the process unfolds. Even as he spoke about his hopes and fears, he did not make any reference to the possibility of high-level meetings between the two leaderships.

It is an indication that a different tack will be used after the high-level contacts at Lahore and Agra.

While today's steps are more in the nature of undoing the damage that had been done to the links and relations between the two countries, picking up the threads of dialogue at the level of officials will be the possible next step.

India to appoint High Commissioner, restore air links to Pakistan

27/5

By Our New Delhi Bureau

NEW DELHI, MAY 2. Ending about 17 months of high tension, the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, today announced that a High Commissioner would return to Islamabad and the civil aviation links would be restored with Pakistan on a reciprocal basis.

Four days after a telephone conversation with his Pakistani counterpart, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, the Prime Minister said that his "third" attempt at dialogue with Islamabad would be "decisive" and the last effort during his lifetime. Giving clarifications in the Rajya Sabha after a statement in both Houses, Mr. Vajpayee said the re-engagement with Pakistan must be seen in the changed world situation — with the world standing on one "pole".

'Will this bloody game end?'

In a statement that found wide support from members, the Prime Minister asked how long would "we" continue to fight with Pakistan, how long would Pakistan and India continue to fight each other. "Will his 50-year-old bloody game end or not," he wondered.

Mr. Vajpayee said he wanted



getting it either."

He said Pakistan should remember that even as it took over as President of the U.N. Security Council it remained tied to the Shimla agreement. The Kashmir issue had to be resolved bilaterally, without mediation, and not through a "third forum".

"We know the circumstances of the Shimla agreement. Pakistan is trying to back off from it. It has thrust a proxy terrorism war on us. Terrorism is an enemy of humanity. It should be ended or else we, as an independent nation, will decide our policy."

There was "darkness" around, but who had said that a lamp could not be lit? The Prime Minister also said that he had been invited to visit Pakistan by Mr. Jamali, but he had not accepted the offer. "I don't want to say anything further."

On the return of High Commissioner (India recalled its envoy after the December 13, 2001 attack on Parliament while it sent back the Pakistani High Commissioner in May 2002), Mr. Vajpayee said that India had felt the need to have an ambassador in place.

He left none in doubt about the "uncertainties" of the process he was embarking. No one,

he said, could make any predictions about terrorism. India, he said, was prepared to deal with situations as they developed.

A big responsibility

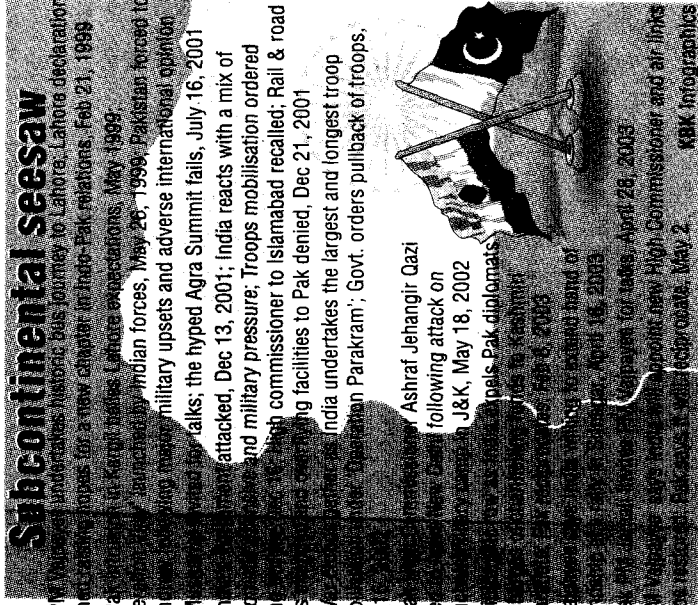
Buoyed up by the collective appreciation of the House for

his April 18 Srinagar speech, Mr. Vajpayee said: "I have taken on a big responsibility. I am in the dock before my colleagues... that is why I am telling them that this is my last attempt (at peacemaking)."

But, he said, India and Pakistan should live in peace. Pointing out that Pakistan was in occupation of one-third of Kashmir, he referred to the Parliament resolution on the issue, but added that he was willing to discuss this issue in a friendly atmosphere. "There should be no battle even on this."

Mr. Vajpayee, who repeatedly referred to the concerns on terrorism, stated that if the U.S. President had declared that he had won a battle against terrorism, then he wanted to tell Mr. George W. Bush that there were other centres of terrorism which were still to be tackled.

Responding to the Opposition concern at the reported remarks made by a former U.S. army officer, Jay Garner, in Iraq that a solution to the Kashmir issue would be in place by December 2004, the Prime Minister said he would not give importance to such statements but it was a matter of concern that such forces were raising their heads to decide about other nations.



Subcontinental seesaw

- PM Vajpayee's historic bus journey to Lahore, Lahore declaration signed, Feb 21, 1999
- Pakistan's Lahore declaration, May 1999
- Opening of diplomatic relations, Feb 21, 1999
- Military upsets and adverse international opinion, May 26, 1999; Pakistan forced to talk; the hyped Agra Summit fails, July 16, 2001
- India attacked, Dec 13, 2001; India reacts with a mix of diplomatic and military pressure; Troops mobilisation ordered
- High Commissioner to Islamabad recalled; Rail & road links to Pakistan facilities to Pak denied, Dec 21, 2001
- India undertakes the largest and longest troop mobilisation in Parakram; Govt. orders pullback of troops, Oct 2001
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We will respond in concrete form, says Islamabad

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 2. Responding to the announcement of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, on the desire of India to re-establish full diplomatic ties with Pakistan, Islamabad today said it would 'reappoint' a High Commissioner in its New Delhi mission. It also proclaimed that Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali would "respond in a concrete form" to the offer of Mr. Vajpayee.

The Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, made a brief statement to the media welcoming Mr. Vajpayee's statement in Parliament. His statement followed consultations between him and Mr. Jamali. Separately Mr. Jamali called on the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, and reviewed the peace initiative.



"I believe first it would be at the level of officials. Then it would proceed to the level of Foreign Ministers and culminate in a Summit at a later date". The Minister emphasised that nothing would be achieved by hurrying matters and solid groundwork was needed before

contentious issues were taken up at the highest level. Perhaps this is based on the experience at the Summit in Agra in July 2001.

Mr. Kasuri termed the Indian overtures as "better late than never" and said that "Pakistan is ready to start the dialogue process so as to hold meaningful discussions on all outstanding issues between the two countries including that of Jammu and Kashmir."

"We are pleased that measures previously taken by India unilaterally which had affected our relations, are being withdrawn by the Government of India." Mr. Kasuri said Pakistan had always called for maintaining ties at the level of High Commissioners and had been supportive of people-to-people contacts and resumption of various links and exchanges.

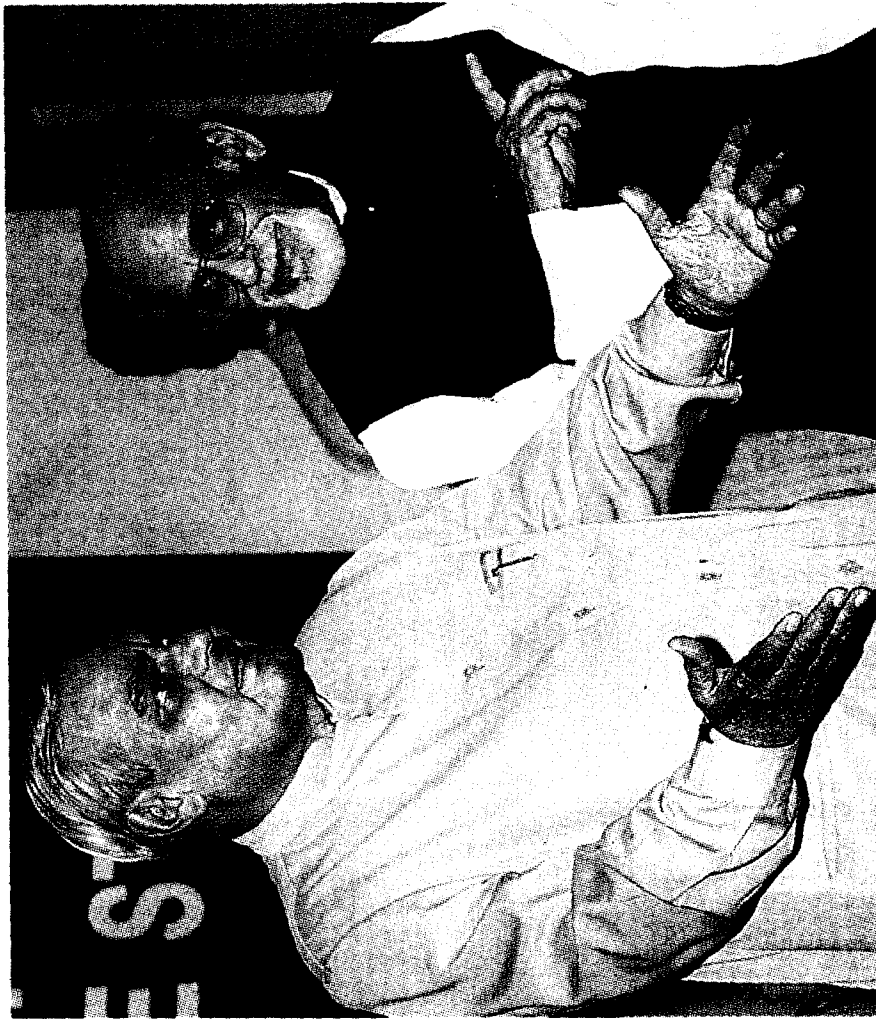
Mr. Kasuri dispelled the impression that the two countries were under some external pressure to resume talks. He said there were friends who would like us to resume normal relations. He said it would be unfair to term it "outside pressure".

Responding to a question he said that the credit for a move towards resumption of normal relations went to President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Vajpayee. During the Agra summit, the declaration was ready to be signed. Since then other things had happened.

There was a coercive display with the armies of the two countries standing eyeball-to-eyeball. However, he termed it a "success of Pakistan's foreign policy that it did not respond to the aggressive policy of the other (side)."

Envoy returns with hand of friendship

245
245
245



HANDS OUTSTRETCHED: A.B. Vajpayee with his predecessor I.K. Gujral in New Delhi on Friday (PTI)

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, May 2: Sending out a clear signal for renewing talks with Pakistan, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee today told Parliament he wanted to restore diplomatic, civil aviation and sporting links between the two countries.

"It has been decided to appoint a high commissioner to Pakistan and to restore civil aviation links on a reciprocal basis," Vajpayee said in a statement read out in both Houses on his phone conversation with Pakistan counterpart Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali on Monday.

This is the third time -- after the Lahore bus diplomacy and the Agra summit -- that Vajpayee is taking a shot at bettering bilateral relations. The government had snapped all diplomatic ties with Pakistan after the terrorist strike on Parliament in December 2001.

"The third round of talks with Pakistan will be decisive and the last dialogue with the country in my lifetime," Vajpayee said in an emotional outburst in the Rajya Sabha later. But he made it clear he had no immediate plans of going to Pakistan.

Islamabad welcomed the move, announcing it would fully reciprocate it. "This is a very good sign. I think it is a new beginning after the Agra summit," President Pervez Musharraf said.

Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri said "knowing Pakistan's policy... it stands to reason that we are for the upgrading of (ties)". But he added Jamali would make a "concrete announcement" on the ambassador to Delhi "in due course".

The US congratulated both countries. Secretary of state Colin Powell said India's decision was "very, very promising".

In Parliament, the Opposition welcomed the peace initiative but demanded to know what had pushed Vajpayee into taking it. "The answer... lies in the changed international situation. The world is unipolar and gravitating towards one centre of power. We do not want any one nation to become the sole pivot of power," he said.

Vajpayee also hinted that the US-led war on Iraq had impacted his decision. He has been suggesting off and on that one lesson to be learnt from the war is that unless nations resolved differences bilaterally, external intervention could be expected.

"There are some nations which have taken it upon themselves to decide the future of other nations," Vajpayee said.

Replying later to legislators' queries in the Rajya Sabha, Vajpayee said Jamali had invited him to Pakistan but he had turned down the offer. "The Prime Minister suggested resuming sporting links.... I emphasised the importance of economic cooperation, cultural exchanges, people-to-people contacts and civil aviation links. We agreed that as a beginning these measures could be considered."

Underlining that Jamali had condemned terrorism, he said: "We have repeatedly expressed the need to create a conducive atmosphere for a sustained dialogue which requires an end to cross-border terrorism...."

Vajpayee made it clear not all his "friends" appreciated the gesture. In an oblique reference to critics in the Sangh parivar, he said: "In the eyes of my compatriots, I am in the dock for opening a channel of communication with Pakistan."

But his tone was confident and hopeful that the future would see easing of tensions. "The road ahead is bumpy. But I do not see darkness," he said.

■ See Page 7, Sport

Dec 13: Militant attack on Parliament
Dec 22: India recalls high commissioner, cuts transport links
Dec 27: India and Pakistan cut staff strength in missions by 50 per cent

Jan 4: In Kathmandu, Delhi hands over list of 20 criminals demanding extradition
June 8: US deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage tells Indian leaders Pervez Musharraf has promised to stop infiltration

Jan 22: India expels two diplomats and two staffers from Pakistan high commission in protest against harassment of Indian deputy high commissioner Sudhir Vyas in Islamabad

Jan 23: Pakistan retaliates by expelling two Indian diplomats and two staffers
Feb 8: Another tit-for-tat expulsion, this time of deputy high commissioners

March 20: War on Iraq starts

April 9: Baghdad falls to US forces

April 18: Vajpayee extends hand of peace to Pakistan from Srinagar

April 28: Pakistan Prime Minister Jamali calls Vajpayee

May 2: Diplomatic ties restored to normal, air link re-established

PM's statement handed over to Pak.

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, MAY 2. A copy of the statement made by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, in Parliament today was handed over to the Pakistani Charge d'Affaires, Muhammad Saeed Bhatti, by the Joint Secretary in the External Affairs Ministry, Arun Singh, this evening.

Mr. Bhatti's attention was drawn to the specific reference in Mr. Vajpayee's statement that spoke of a return of High Commissioner to Islamabad and the restoration of civil aviation links; both on a reciprocal basis.

The meeting is seen as significant as this is the first, publicised meeting between officials of the two sides following Monday's telephone conversation between the two Prime Ministers. It is a sign that diplomatic ties between the two countries are returning to normal once again.

As far as return of a High Commissioner to Islamabad is concerned, a particular officer, Harsh Bhasin, had been identified some time ago as a possible candidate to take up the job. However, a final decision

has not been taken on who will go there. In a related development, the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, telephoned the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, and informed him of Mr. Vajpayee's statement.

Mr. Sinha, the Foreign Office spokesman said, shared with Mr. Straw the Government's thinking on the statement. Mr. Straw, warmly welcomed the Prime Minister's statement and remarked that Mr. Vajpayee had shown great "statesmanship".

Mr. Sinha also spoke to the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, and was scheduled to telephone the French Foreign Minister, Dominique de Villepin.

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THE HINDU

3 MAY 2003

Gift Pak

India Pak 5/1/03
America takes off the wrapping 2/5

Following the Indian Prime Minister's offer of the hand of friendship, his Pakistani counterpart has made a friendly call. The Americans, in the form of Richard Armitage, are paying a friendly visit to the subcontinent, no doubt to force yet more chumminess. American pressure behind India's reversal of stand is so clear that even our foreign office has not strenuously objected. Rather, the talk is about the order of measures to increase chumminess — high commissioners to be exchanged, flight rights restored, also bus and train links. There's even talk of rediscovering the holy grail of bilateral cricket ties. But that may not preclude Pakistanis with more deadly intent from operating elsewhere in India. That will bring up the first question the Indian government has to answer. What has changed since the attack on Parliament, since the Kaluchak massacre and since the Nadimarg horror? Even the US State Department won't say that Pakistan has changed its conduct (Colin Powell dismisses it as not relevant). There's, at a fundamental level, no justification for India resuming any sort of dialogue. But diplomacy is often about disregarding fundamental incongruities and looking for benefits. So, what will India gain?

No Pakistani government, certainly not Musharraf's, whose popularity has declined sharply, can overlook what Islamabad calls "liberation" of Kashmir. An end, even a sharp decline in infiltration and covert support, is therefore unlikely to follow dialogue. On the other hand, with America working behind the scenes to get India and Pakistan talking, the possibility remains that sooner or later some form of multilateral framework will intrude. Russia apart, there's really no major country that disfavors such an approach. If India-Pakistan bilaterals fail, as they are most likely to, and if Pakistan proposes third party "help", there will be massive international pressure on India to accept. The ideal solution is that India should stay firm and dismiss the possibility of negotiation with a country that sees armed goons as an instrument of foreign policy. But the hand of Washington's man in Delhi, Brajesh Misra is plainly visible. Washington wanted that speech by the Prime Minister in Kashmir and it will want further Indian "efforts". To cut our losses, we must call Pakistan's bluff — recommend the Line of Control as the international border and add that incursions after an agreement will be considered an act of war. International opinion is likely to favour this idea since it is the least cost option. Costs for India will also be lowered — Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir has become a huge, ethnically-riven mess. Pakistan is entitled to stew in the juice it has cooked up.

P 3 MAY 2003

THE STATESMAN

India wants 'official' word from Pak.

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By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, MAY 1. India today said it would respond to the Pakistani Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali's "offer" to visit New Delhi once it heard something "officially".

The Foreign Office spokesman reiterated that the issue of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, going to Pakistan or Mr. Jamali coming over had figured in a very general way in Monday night's telephone conversation between the two leaders. As India and Pakistan make efforts to come out of an intense period of acrimony, the spokesman also responded to the latter's effort to convene a meeting of the U.N. Security Council on March 13 under Chapter VI of the U.N. Charter that relates to the "pacific" settlement of disputes.

According to official sources, this Pakistani effort, which has been in the pipeline for some time, would raise the Jammu and Kashmir issue as part of outstanding international questions such as Palestine and Cyprus.

Pakistan took over as chairman of the Security Council for a month from today as a non-permanent member. The sources said that India was maintaining a close watch on the proposed discussion. The spokesman said that it was for Islamabad to decide whether or not this effort was "compatible" with New Delhi extending the hand of friendship. On the positive references to Pakistan in the latest U.S. State Department report on global terrorism, the spokesman said he had "no comment" on the issue since it involved an American assessment of Pakistan. But, he went on to say that the report confirmed what had been evident to India for a long time — that infiltration had been fuelled from across the Line of Control (LoC).

Taking the argument forward, the spokesman said the report contradicted Pakistan's claims to the contrary. He maintained that this recognition of the Pakistani role in infiltration needed to be

followed up with a resolution of this problem.

He said this was where the international community had not been able to meet with "as much success" as it should have. India, he stated, was aware of the realities of cross-border infiltration, the nature of these groups and where they drew their sustenance from.

The spokesman rejected the view that India was working on any kind of pressure as far as the incipient rapprochement process with Pakistan was concerned. "India does not work under pressure on these issues... the presumption of pressure should be discounted once and for all."

'Let's go back to pre-Dec. 13 status'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 1. Pakistan today said India and Pakistan should go back to the pre-December 13, 2001 status vis-a-vis diplomatic relations between the two countries to create a conducive atmosphere for a composite dialogue on all outstanding issues.

The Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri, told the State-run Pakistan Television in an interview that Islamabad would take up the matter with New Delhi. "Yes, we are taking up the matter with India", he said in response to a question.

However, he hastened to add: "there are many things we can suggest. Already these issues are being taken up. Some directly and some through backdoor diplomatic channels. It must be remembered that it takes two to tango. We believe the Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, is serious about the talks offer and hopefully these things would materialise."

THE HINDU

THE HINDU

2 MAY 2003

Lack of trust queers peace pitch

Nilova Roy Chaudhury
in New Delhi

SP1

May 25. — The initial flurry of activity and excitement over, it is now clear that the lack of trust between the principals is going to hold up any possibility of a dialogue between Indian and Pakistan officials.

Senior MEA officials say India is not going to rush into anything. It has acted on the two fronts Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee announced in Parliament earlier this month: announcing the appointment of a high commissioner to Pakistan, and asking for a mutual restoration of civil aviation links.

Pakistan has not yet responded positively to either gesture and the government is waiting for Islamabad's response before it will decide on further

confidence-building measures. India will also not give up its insistence on an end to cross-border infiltration and terrorism.

Having made a serious offer to initiate a dialogue, it wants some of its basic concerns met, officials said. According to the external affairs minister, Mr Yashwant Sinha, a "reduction" in levels of infiltration is not good enough. State sponsorship of terrorism by Pakistan must end before India enters into a comprehensive dialogue process.

(According to agency reports from Islamabad, Pakistan today described Mr Sinha's proposal to share Intelligence for curbing infiltration as "theoretical", saying it would not succeed without Delhi and Islamabad first entering into a dialogue.

Pakistan's foreign minister Mr

Khurshid Ahmed Kasuri today said that theoretically, everything was possible. But practically, confidence, trust and mutual understanding was imperative, which could only be achieved through dialogue. Without dialogue, there would be no positive impact on the relations between the two countries, he said.)

Mr Sinha had proposed a joint mechanism by India and Pakistan, including "Intelligence-sharing", to deal with infiltration, if Islamabad faced a problem in reining in militants.

"Terrorists move around Pakistan, go into PoK and then cross over to this side. It is not possible that there is no knowledge about their activities. So let us have Intelligence-sharing under a joint mechanism," Mr Sinha had proposed in an informal interaction with media people in Delhi.

100-11
1875

End state-run hate campaigns, urge Pak. MPs

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, MAY 15. A visiting Parliamentary delegation from Pakistan today called on both India and Pakistan to stop "all State-run hate campaigns", arguing that "much more is required" than normalising formal relations to ensure "goodwill and accommodation".

Reading out a prepared statement at a press conference this afternoon on behalf of the "goodwill mission", Ishaq Khan Khakwani, a member of the delegation, said: "Lessons have to be learnt from past failures and efforts made to build a sound edifice for a composite, meaningful and sustainable dialogue..."

The Parliamentarians, here at the invitation of the Pakistan-India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPFD), called for "debaring" the use of force by all actors, be they State or private parties, and rejected acts of terrorism against innocent people. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), they said, should not be allowed to turn into a hostage to India-Pakistan differences. "As agreed at the 11th SAARC summit in Kathmandu, trade and economic cooperation should be allowed to take place..." Claiming that a degree of flexibility was "visible" on both sides, the Pakistani MPs quoted their Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri, approvingly when he referred to the fact that the Pakistani Ar-

my was "fully on board" as far as the present initiative to restore ties with India was concerned.

Suggesting a "ceasefire" by all sides, they said that the "plan for talks" must involve the Kashmiris at "some stage" to resolve the Kashmir dispute without jeopardising the legitimate interests of India or Pakistan. "What is most important is that the rigid national consensus and officially stated positions on Kashmir should give way to openness and flexibility. And there are other issues too that should be given due importance such as nuclear stabilisation in the subcontinent." This nuclear proposal is broadly on the lines of the recent thinking of the Pakistani Government.

Calling for the "signature" of an "apparent agreement" on Siachen, the Parliamentarians suggested that the MoU on confidence-building measures agreed to in Lahore "be further improved and activated".

They suggested that people-to-people contact must be encouraged and "journalists allowed free movement across frontiers without visas". Both the MPs and their hosts, the PIPFD, said that nobody within the BJP or the Central Government had responded to their desire to meet them. However, both in Maharashtra and West Bengal, the MPs had met with Government representatives.

Asked whether the Shimla Agreement or the Lahore process should be the basis for dialogue between the two

countries, Mr. Khakwani said that the basis should be that India and Pakistan should keep talking. Another MP, Minoobhandara, said that terrorists were not just the enemies of India, but Pakistan as well.

Mr. Bhandara said at a previous CII interaction that rightwing religious parties were happy that India had broken off road, rail and air links with Pakistan. These groups were pleased that India was promoting "their agenda", he stressed.

Responding to a CII suggestion to send a CEOs mission to Pakistan and organise "India-Pakistan" trade shows in Karachi and Lahore, Mr. Bhandara suggested the idea of "tourism as business".

He also pointed to the benefit India and Pakistan would derive from oil and gas pipelines coming through Central Asia. For his part, Mr. Khakwani said he would take the proposals made by the CII to the "right quarters" in Pakistan. He stressed that they had simply come on a "goodwill mission" to break the stalemate between the two countries.

Pointing out that they had been well received in India, Mr. Khakwani said the Parliamentarians would take these "vibes" back with them to Pakistan. "Let us as individuals do something for the two countries... let's keep the ball rolling."

The delegation, which returns to Pakistan on Saturday, also met the Ram Jethmalani-led Kashmir Committee in the evening.

FRIDAY, MAY 16, 2003

A PAKISTANI GESTURE

16/5

IN A SCENARIO of rising expectations, the best insurance against a slideback is the slow but steady step-by-step process adopted by India and Pakistan. The two neighbours are displaying a welcome maturity as they approach the evolving thaw in their bilateral relations. Except for striking the stray discordant note on Kashmir, addressed more to hardliners at home, the two countries have in the four weeks toned down the rhetoric and taken steps in different directions that have helped to markedly lower the heat in the subcontinent. They are doing more. On Wednesday, on the eve of Milad-un-Nabi, the Jamali Government imposed restrictions on the entry of the Jaish-e-Mohammed leader, Masood Azhar, into occupied Kashmir. As a confidence-building measure and as testimony to its faith in the nascent peace process, Pakistan could not have taken a more welcome step. One of the three militant leaders who secured freedom from Indian jails in a humiliating exchange for the lives of passengers of the Indian Airlines plane hijacked to Taliban-ruled Kandahar, his release has left a deep scar on the Indian psyche. The ban on his entry into PoK may not significantly cramp his anti-India activities, much less induce a change of heart in him or his terrorist organisation. But as a symbolic gesture of reconciliation from the Pakistan Government, it is undoubtedly promising.

The release of Indian fishermen and the crew of a cargo boat and the expressed eagerness to host the South Asian Federation games are forward looking and flow from the promise made by the Pakistan Prime Minister early this month. Pakistan needs, however, to do more to curb the jihadi organisations which are openly functioning in the country, raising funds, arms and followers and proclaiming that they are engaged in holy wars in over a dozen places around the world, including Kashmir, Palestine and Chechnya. Within a month of Masood Azhar's "victory" parade on his release in the passenger swap, Pervez Musharraf made a publicised visit to PoK

and rubbished allegations that Pakistan was abetting cross-border terrorism. Two years later, under changed global circumstances, in January 2002 he promised a complete ban on infiltration of jihadi fighters into Kashmir. The banned outfits, however, reappeared under other names and their arrested leaders secured their release, casting doubts on the real intentions of the Musharraf Government. The latest action of the ban on the entry of Azhar into PoK perhaps carries a qualitatively different message, reinforcing reports that infiltration across the Line of Control has shown no significant increase despite the summer's easing of the passage across. The onus continues to remain on Pakistan to demonstrate through action that it no longer supports the militancy in Kashmir.

In the weeks ahead, the return of the High Commissioners and their staff and resumption of communication links will soon be followed hopefully by restoration of sporting contacts. Blueprints already exist of the so-called "road map" for the dialogue — the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, said it was being drawn up. The External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, has pointed to the six-plus-two format as part of the composite dialogue agreed upon by the then Foreign Secretaries in November 1997 during the regime of Nawaz Sharif that culminated in the Lahore summit. That format was eminently pragmatic and would be most suited, updated if required, to the current step-by-step approach. Under it, technical committees comprising officials discussed six key points at issue — Wullar barrage, Siachen, Sir Creek, narco-terrorism, economic and commercial cooperation and people-to-people exchanges in different fields. The two crucial issues — one, confidence building measures (then in the context of the newly acquired nuclear arms) and second, Kashmir — were to be tackled at the higher level of Foreign Secretaries and the political leadership. There is no need to look elsewhere for a format to begin the promised dialogue.

THE HINDU

16 MAY 2003

We have to go step by step: Jamali

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 15. The Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, has said that he is convinced about the seriousness of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, in taking forward the peace initiative, but at the same time warned of moves by "hawks" on both sides to derail the process.

In an interview to BBC Asia, Mr. Jamali said that "I wish we had the videophones for myself and the Indian Prime Minister so we could see each other's gestures and figures but I felt so and I think he is serious. Peace should come in. Both countries should develop".

Mr. Jamali said if the efforts for resolution of differences between India and Pakistan succeeded, history could be created. "And I think this is how it looks. This is how I see it at the moment".

On India's charges of infiltration across the Line of Control (LoC), he said it was a "very porous" border and it was impossible for any country to completely seal the border.

"The same problem continues even after 9/11 between Afghanistan and Pakistan. No country is in a position to seal of the border altogether.

"With the might that India has, they can't seal it off, how can we in Pakistan at a lesser level seal it? There are people, there are volunteers... at times you just try to talk to people to put some sense into them. But they are not bound by Pakistan".

He said India and Pakistan should take measured steps leading to talks.

"You cannot jump up and start talks at once. There needs to be step-by-step measures, which have to be taken. They said a few things. We have said a few things and the talks could start at the 'best' time possible," he said.

Asked how flexible Pakistan would be during talks, he said "either we convince India on our principles or they convince us on theirs.

"This can only happen through dialogue and you cannot fight wars... This is the point I want to emphasise".

THE HINDU

16 MAY

Speed up the peace process

By Kuldip Nayar

Sikh pilgrims returning from Pakistan told me that there were neither posters nor slogans in support of Khalistan at the gurdwaras they visited there. In the past, their experience was that militant Sikhs from other parts of the world would even disturb the congregation through their fierce advocacy of Khalistan.

It possibly means that New Delhi's demand to stop cross-border terrorism is having some effect. The Defence Minister, George Fernandes, has also said that the infiltration has gone down. This confirms that the pressure on Islamabad on this point is working.

The remark by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, on his arrival in Manali was significant. He dwelt on cross-border terrorism but added that it was not a "pre-condition". In other words, even if there was no evidence of lessening of infiltration India would go ahead with the talks. This is a welcome development.

Making up with Pakistan is all the more important when we have seen how America has let India down. The U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, said last year that Pakistan's President, Pervez Musharraf, had given him a commitment that cross-border terrorism would stop. The same Mr. Armitage now says that it was for India to decide what to do with cross-border terrorism.

New Delhi rightly feels let down and bemoans that America has double standards. It puts its trust in Washington and is betrayed again and again. The world saw how

America got a resolution against Iraq passed in the Security Council on the understanding that the Security Council would decide what was to be done in case it was felt war was unavoidable. But, the U.S. President, George W. Bush, ordered his forces to march into Iraq in the face of opposition by most of the Security Council members.

Mr. Vajpayee's predicament is two-pronged: how to effect an agreement when there is anti-Pakistan pressure on him from within the party and when Islamabad is not unequivocal on cross-border terrorism. The only way to bring around and convince Pa-

signatures on the agreement.

Mr. Vajpayee believes in striking while the iron is hot. Some Pakistani parliamentarians have come to India for creating a thaw in the frozen relations between the two countries. But their visit has become secondary because the purpose has been served by Mr. Vajpayee's speech at Srinagar. The Prime Minister's letter to his Pakistani counterpart, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, suggesting "a calibrated approach", is wise and realistic. Fanatics on both sides are trying to sabotage the process. At least New Delhi should not be seen as dragging its feet. This fear has already begun to be perceptible in Pakistan.

However, I have an uneasy feeling about New Delhi's officialdom. In the name of preparing "adequate ground" it has undone many agreements in the past. In fact, the bureaucracy in both countries has developed a vested interest in the status quo. It gives it an alibi to mislead public opinion whenever anything goes wrong in either country. At the same time, the bureaucracy has come to acquire importance because of the confusion in the minds of the leaders on both sides. They want to have their cake and eat it too. That can never happen when a Government has to choose between war and peace and between jingoism and normalcy.

It would help if Mr. Vajpayee and Gen. Musharraf were to open an unofficial communication channel, away from the glare of publicity and the day-to-day drudgery of meeting a point with a counterpoint. This channel should be used to sound the top without bringing them in officially.

OPINION

kistan is to tell it frankly how sincere Mr. Vajpayee's initiative is despite the mistrust about India in Pakistan.

It should be clear to both countries that a settlement has to be evolved, taking care of every detail. The edifice needs to be built brick by brick. We failed so many times in the past probably because we wanted the India-Pakistan settlement to be a big show. Agreements were reached at the eleventh hour in a dramatic manner after early phases of reverses. Lal Bahadur Shastri and Ayub Khan first announced their failure at Tashkent. But then suddenly they signed a many-clause agreement as if all was decided in the last few minutes. The exercise at Shimla was no different. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had to send for his luggage which he had dispatched after the "failure". The official seal was in the luggage. It was retrieved and both Indira Gandhi and Bhutto put their

No request from U.S. for sending troops to Iraq: India

NEW DELHI, MAY 14. India said today that it had not received any formal request from the United States for sending its military forces to Iraq for assistance in peace keeping and stabilisation operations in the war-torn country.

"We have received no formal request. Our policy in such matters is clear and well-established. We participate in such operations only under the United Nations flag," an External Affairs Ministry spokesman told reporters here.

The spokesman was asked to comment on a report in an English daily that India was still undecided over a U.S. request to participate in the proposed Iraq stabilisation force. — UNI

N.C. Jain sworn in

By Our Staff Correspondent

JAIPUR, MAY 14. Nirmal Chandra Jain was sworn in Governor of Rajasthan at a simple ceremony held on the Raj Bhavan lawns here today. He replaces Anshuman Singh, whose term expired recently.

The oath of office was administered by the Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court, Anil Dev Singh.

The Chief Minister, Ashok Gehlot, his Cabinet colleagues, leaders of political parties and senior officials were among those present.

Mr. Jain took the oath in Hindi after the State Chief Secretary, R.K. Nair, read out the Presidential Warrant for his appointment.

India, Pak. raise Kashmir issue in U.N.

UNITED NATIONS, MAY 14. For the first time in several years India and Pakistan did not attack each other directly while raising the Kashmir issue in the U.N. Security Council, with New Delhi maintaining that differences are best settled through bilateral negotiations and Islamabad stating that a solution to the problem can be achieved only after fulfilling the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

During a Security Council debate on pacific resolution of conflicts yesterday, the U.N. Ambassador, Vijay K. Nambiar, repeatedly stressed during his presentation that resolution of issues through bilateral negotiations was advocated by the world body's charter and that such a course was also seen by "distinguished jurists" as the "most preferred methods of settlement of disputes."

As it involved bargaining and may involve elements of give and take, there was a greater probability of the parties carrying out the agreement faithfully, he said, adding that an imposed solution was likely to be reopened by the aggrieved party and thus would be no real settlement.

Mr. Nambiar throughout his address did not name either Pakistan or Kashmir.

But he did criticise continuous low-intensity proxy wars through infiltration, cross border terrorism and other means using force and said such a situation did confer the right on the victim state to take all necessary measures in self-defence just as would be the case if there was an armed attack.

He also effectively rejected Pakistan's contention that there should be a U.N. supervised plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir, pointing to the fact that events have overtaken such an approach.

The Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid M. Kasuri, who presided over the meeting, as his country is the president of the Council for the current month, agreed that the Shimla agreement and the Lahore Declaration to which both countries were parties supported bilateral discussions.

"At the Agra summit in July 2001, Pakistan and India almost succeeded in launching a framework for revived talks," he said but did not blame anyone for the failure.

He referred to the Kashmir issue and the Council resolution adopted following negotiations and agreement between the two countries which, he said, promised a "free and fair plebiscite under

U.N. auspices to enable the people of Jammu and Kashmir to determine whether they wish to join India or Pakistan."

But he did not directly blame India, saying that the process ran aground due to the cold war when the Council could not persuade the parties to implement the resolution and then went on to say that the Shimla agreement and the Lahore declaration supported a solution through bilateral discussion.

He did say that no durable peace was possible unless the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir were taken into consideration and called for flexibility, goodwill and wisdom on both sides to resolve the issue.

He sought the support of the international community in the fresh endeavour of the two countries for peace, but did not call for its intervention.

In an apparent reply to Mr. Kasuri's mention of the Security Council resolution, Mr. Nambiar, who spoke later, said that where member states had agreed to implement the resolution of the U.N., they were justified in expecting such implementation to be complete and in the sequence agreed to without "emasculating, revision or reinterpretation."

Mr. Nambiar's reference obviously was to the provision in the resolution that Pakistan must first vacate the territory under its occupation before the subsequent provisions could be put into operation. Islamabad did not implement that provision.

"Where attempts are made to apply such resolutions selectively or in partial, self-serving manner, they have obviously not worked but have only served to subvert their original spirit. In some cases, their subtext has changed and they have proved obsolete, defunct and overtaken by events."

Mr. Nambiar was obviously implying that what Kasuri said about plebiscite has been overtaken by the events.

India's experience with the working of the U.N., he said, had been "sufficiently long and educative" for it to remain vigilant of threats, pressures and blandishments that had been exerted during various periods of history "in the guise of furthering the pacific settlement of disputes affecting us." — PTI

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NHRC seeks details on missing Kashmiris

V

By Anjali Mody

NEW DELHI, MAY 14. The National Human Rights Commission has asked the Jammu and Kashmir Government for a report with regard to the "disappeared" persons in the Kashmir valley, even as the Central Government maintains that the disappeared persons were "terrorists" and that some of them have been killed in "encounters".

The NHRC's call for a report follows a statement issued by the Association of the Parents of Disappeared Persons (APDP) for the past few months, statements made in the Legislative Assembly and media reports all of which give different figures, ranging from 364 to 3184 to 'more than 8,000', for the number of the disappeared.

The NHRC has asked the Chief Secretary of Jammu and

Kashmir for specific information about any system to record allegations of enforced or involuntary disappearances established by the State Government, the number of such allegations recorded by it. The system established to investigate allegations and the results of any investigations it has undertaken, the measures being taken to prevent occurrences of enforced or involuntary disappearances, and the measures being taken to bring to book those who may be involved in such disappearances and provide justice to those who have suffered.

The NHRC first took cognisance of the issue of the disappeared persons in Kashmir following newspaper reports published in September 2000. These reports also mentioned the APDP and a document it

had prepared containing a list of missing persons. The Commission issued notice to the State Government on September 1, 2000. It also issued notice to APDP, requesting a copy of its list of missing persons and material this was based on.

It received a list of 364 names from APDP in 2001 and the promise of a more complete list. However it has, as yet, received no second list. The 364 names were sent on to the State Government and the Union Ministries of Home and Defence, with the direction to report on their findings to the Commission.

The NHRC has received responses from the State Government in respect of 93 cases and from the MoD in respect of 85. The MoD has said that Army personnel had "allegedly been involved in only 85 of the 364 cases".

THE HINDU

15 MAY 2003

Ind-pak

A BOOST FOR INDIA-PAKISTAN PEACE MOVES

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15/5

Masood Azhar's entry into PoK banned

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 14. In a move that could have a bearing on the latest India-Pakistan peace initiative, the Government of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) today indefinitely banned Maulana Masood Azhar, leader of the banned Jaish-e-Mohammed militant outfit, from entering the province.

A private Pakistani TV channel reported today that the PoK

Home Secretary in an administrative order had banned Masood Azhar from entering the province specially to attend a meeting in connection with the Milad-un-Nabi celebrations tomorrow.

Of course it is not the first time that Maulana Azhar has been debarred from entering a particular territory in Pakistan or the territory under its control. Even before the Jaish was declared a banned outfit, Mau-

lana Azhar, known for his oratorical skills, had been banned from entering specific districts in Sindh.

It is not clear if the PoK Government was acting on its own or under orders from the Pakistan Government. After the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, imposed a ban on the outfit in his much-publicised January 12, 2002, address to the nation, the Jaish is believed to have been largely op-

erating from PoK. There were local media reports suggesting that the Jaish and other proscribed outfits in Pakistan had changed their names and were operating clandestinely.

The day the Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, called up his Indian counterpart, Atal Behari Vajpayee, to appreciate his Srinagar initiative, the Interior Minister, Faisal Saleh Hayat, issued a warning that the Government would not allow banned outfits to operate under changed names.

Mr. Azhar, who had been released from prison recently, was to address a meeting in Kotli town of PoK tomorrow. Days after the December 13, 2001, attack on India's Parliament, Pakistan detained Maulana Azhar under the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) but was forced to release him soon afterwards as no chargesheet was filed against him.

Today's administrative order by the PoK Home Secretary said Masood Azhar should not be allowed to enter the province. It also asked the law enforcement agencies to set up pickets in the province to prevent him from violating the order.

The ban on Maulana Azhar is significant in view of India's allegations that the Jaish, along with other militant groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba, has used the province to hold training camps and to infiltrate Jammu and Kashmir for carrying out subversive activities.

The Jaish and the Lashkar were banned by Gen. Musharraf last year at the height of military tensions between India and Pakistan following the attack on India's Parliament.

'Move to appease India'

AFP reports: Azhar, speaking from his Bahawalpur home in Pakistan's central Punjab province, said the move was aimed at appeasing India. New Delhi has demanded Islamabad to stop incursions into Kashmir by militants. "It is unjustified to stop me from going to PoK to express solidarity with the freedom struggle in Indian-held Kashmir," Azhar told AFP.

No meter to measure U.S. pressure on Pak.: Sinha

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, MAY 14. The External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, has voiced satisfaction with the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell's understanding of the importance of putting pressure on Pakistan on the issue of cross-border terrorism, but voiced disappointment with the effectiveness of that pressure.

"They keep telling us that they are applying pressure, but we do not have a meter to measure that pressure, for some reason or the other, the words conveyed to us sound very reassuring, but the impact on the ground is not equally reassuring," Mr. Sinha told reporters today after meeting Mr. Powell here, on the sidelines of their separate bilateral visits to Russia.

By contrast, Mr. Sinha was all praise for Russia's position on the issue. "We get full understanding and unstinted support from Russia on the problem of cross-border terrorism."

He explained to Mr. Powell India's step-by-step approach to normalise relations with Pakistan and stressed the need for Islamabad to end cross-border terrorism and dismantle the terrorist infrastructure.

He said there was full understanding with Mr. Powell about their approaches to Pakistan-related issues. "There



The External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, with the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, in Moscow on Wednesday. — AFP

was no suggestion from the U.S. side at the meeting of any pressure on the issue of India-Pakistan relations."

He ruled out any third-party role in India-Pakistan talks, saying that the only issue India was prepared to discuss with the U.S., or any other country for that matter, was bringing pressure on Pakistan to stop cross-border terrorism. Meanwhile, India and the U.S. will put in place a monitoring mechanism to push forward bilateral cooperation in the crucial areas of space, nuclear power and high-tech. Mr. Sinha and the U.S. Secretary of State agreed to maintain regular interaction, even if it is on phone, every month to review progress the two countries make in the "trinity issues" of

cooperation in cutting-edge technologies.

Mr. Sinha described the decision to set up a monitoring mechanism at the level of Foreign Ministers as a "very welcome outcome" of the hour-long meeting with Mr. Powell. The mechanism will start functioning after India's Foreign Secretary, Kanwal Sibal, visits Washington in early July for indepth review of cooperation plans in the space, nuclear and high-tech triad.

The foreign policy supremos of India and the U.S. discussed bilateral ties in other thrust areas, such as defence, trade and economic cooperation. "We are satisfied with much progress being made in defence cooperation

Army, Musharraf one on ties with India, says Kasuri

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 4. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, and the Army were fully on board the Government's decision as far as the present effort to normalise relations with India was concerned, the Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri, said today.

In an interview to the *Daily Times*, the Minister argued that Gen. Musharraf was not only the President but also the Chief of the Army Staff.

"The Indian assumption that the Army will not allow the normalisation of relations is wrong. The Pakistan Army is a very disciplined force and it understands Pakistan's geo-strategic compulsions," he said.

The Army only wanted a minimum deterrence so that Pakistan did not become a client state of any country in the region.

"We want India's friendship, not their hegemony. That's what the Pakistan Army wants as far as India is concerned. We don't accept the thesis that the Army will always try and block peace efforts between the two countries."

Expressing the hope that talks with India would succeed, Mr. Kasuri said Islamabad would show full commitment

to the peace process when it was launched in the form of a composite dialogue. As far as Pakistan was concerned, the issue of Jammu and Kashmir had been the cause of many wars.

On India's position of talking about trade-related issues, he said, "Pakistan is ready to talk about both countries moving forward on gas-pipeline issues."

He expressed the hope that "the talks would soon begin and it will not take too long", adding that there was no reason for any delay.

The Minister supported the idea of the proposed dialogue starting from the point at which it had been abandoned in Agra when Gen. Musharraf and Mr. Vajpayee had reached an agreement.

"Personally, I don't believe in reinventing the wheel," he said adding that a lot of work had already been done at the secretaries' level before the Agra summit.

On Mr. Vajpayee's concern of cross-border terrorism, Mr. Kasuri said conditional talks could never succeed.

"Pakistan has done all it can to stop it. But if the activity is taking place despite that effort, then it is not because of the Government's position but it is despite the Government's position."

Pakistan had proposed neutral monitoring of the LoC but India had rejected this offer.

"So we say to our Indian interlocutors that in the ultimate analysis if they don't accept neutral monitoring, how can they give hope to the people on both sides of the LoC."

On the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), he said Pakistan wanted an early meeting. "But there is nothing to stop Pakistan and India from meeting on the sidelines of many international conferences. They should try to behave maturely and not little kids who are trying to avoid each other."

The present peace initiative could mark a turning point in the history of Pakistan and India, he said.

"If this initiative is handled with care, it can succeed. And if the talks succeed, the sky is the limit. I think after three wars and last year's crisis, India has realised that coercive diplomacy does not work and Pakistan can't be browbeaten."

The international community was concerned about the situation in South Asia because of the reckless statements made by some Indian Ministers, Mr. Kasuri said. "So I hope the talks will succeed this time."

THE HINDU

3 MAY 2002

NO CHANGE IN PAK. POLICY, SAYS FOREIGN OFFICE

Jamali calls all-party meet to discuss Vajpayee's offer

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 4. The Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, has convened an all-party meeting here tomorrow evening to discuss his counterpart, Atal Behari Vajpayee's peace initiative and Islamabad's response.

Mr. Jamali's invite to representatives of all parties is akin to a similar exercise by the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, on the eve of the July 2001 Agra Summit. However, Gen. Musharraf went to Agra with a totally free hand, as there was no pre-fixed agenda for the talks.

The situation this time is different. India is sticking to the two main pre-conditions — end to cross border infiltration and dismantling of terrorist infrastructure — for any contact at the highest level.

Mr. Jamali decided to convene the meeting after the Jaamat-e-Islami chief, Qazi Hussain Ahmed, demanded a special Parliament session to discuss the situation. Mr. Jamali

obviously would like to listen to representatives of all parties before making public Pakistan's response.

On Saturday, Gen. Musharraf had told a group of intellectuals that Mr. Jamali would announce some 'India-centric concessions' as a sequel to India's desire to re-establish full diplomatic relations. The same day, during a telephone conversation with the U.S. Secretary of

State, Colin Powell, Mr. Jamali said he would unveil measures for 'peace and security' in the region.

Mr. Jamali's choice of words has given room for interpretation that Pakistan could be considering some steps to meet India's two chief concerns. Of course, Pakistan has all along denied any infiltration across the Line of Control and denied Indian charges that it pursued

'jihad' (holy war) as an instrument of foreign policy.

It is against this backdrop that the all-party meeting convened by the Jamali Government assumes significance.

The sensitivities of India-Pakistan relations was evident today when the Foreign Office deemed it necessary to clarify a recent statement made by the Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri, and carried by a section of the press that Islamabad was ready for trade with India even without progress on the Kashmir issue.

A spokesman 'clarified' that Mr. Kasuri, while talking to a Hindi Service correspondent of a broadcast channel, "has been misquoted and reported out of context." He added, "Pakistan's policy is quite clear and unambiguous in this regard. It has been reiterated repeatedly that Pakistan desires a meaningful and result oriented composite dialogue on all issues, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir. There has been no change in this policy."

Kasuri's claim: Page 11

'When is your boss coming?'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 4. The Acting Indian High Commissioner, T.C.A. Raghavan, today had a 'chance encounter' with the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, at a posh restaurant here.

As he walked in, Gen. Musharraf, in his inimitable style, went around greeting guests in the restaurant. When Mr. Raghavan introduced himself, Gen. Musharraf exchanged pleasantries with him and asked: "When is your boss coming?" obviously referring to the announcement made by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, about India's desire to appoint a High Commissioner in the Islamabad mission. The Indian envoy told him that "it would be soon" and added that he would convey the message to New Delhi.

'NO IMMEDIATE PLANS FOR SUMMIT-LEVEL TALKS'

Careful preparation needed, PM writes to Jamali

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, MAY 3. A polite, diplomatic reply has been sent by New Delhi to Islamabad's letter inviting the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, to Pakistan, but Mr. Vajpayee has no immediate plans for a summit-level meeting with his counterpart, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali.

Responding to a formal letter from Mr. Jamali to resume talks on all issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Vajpayee said tonight that careful preparation was required for a dialogue at the highest level. A conducive atmosphere for dialogue required an end to cross-border terrorism and dismantling of the terrorist infrastructure, he pointed out.

According to a foreign office spokesman here, Mr. Vajpayee pointed to his decision to send back a High Commissioner to Pakistan and restore the civil aviation links and hoped that Islamabad would respond positively to these proposals.

All "normal courtesies" had been observed in the letter, the spokesman said adding that Mr. Vajpayee's reply had been sent to the Indian High Commission in Islamabad to be handed over to Mr. Jamali's office.

Informed sources said Mr. Jamali's letter had said that a warm welcome awaited Mr. Vajpayee in Pakistan while calling for talks on all bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir. Speaking in the Rajya Sabha yesterday, the Prime Minister said about Monday's telephone conversation with Mr. Jamali: "Pakistan's Prime Minister has invited me to Pakistan. I did not accept it (the invitation). I don't want to say anything further."

It would appear that the formal invitation from Mr. Jamali "stands", but there has been no direct "acceptance" or "rejection" from India to the meeting offer. Also, New Delhi, while willing to appear reasonable and dialogue-oriented, is sticking to its guns on the all-crucial issue of cross-border terrorism. Any forward movement on this issue would be very welcome in New Delhi.

By referring to a dialogue on

all issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan, too, is making it plain that the most important issue for it remains Kashmir.

In continuing contacts at a high-level, the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, telephoned the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, from Damascus last night, and welcomed Mr. Vajpayee's initiative. Mr. Sinha also spoke to his French counterpart, Dominique de Villepin, who described the "third" effort by the Prime Minister as a "very courageous move".

The sources also stated that the Government had decided against sending Harsh Bhasin, previously designated "ambassador-in-waiting", as the new High Commissioner to Pakistan. Fresh names will be considered for the job, the sources maintained. They stated that India had decided on a "cali-

brated road map" to deal with Islamabad as the process of re-engagement unfolded with Pakistan. Much, of course, would depend on the response from Islamabad.

The sources were firm that India would not be "hustled" into speeding things up by anyone. They were equally firm that it was "incumbent" on both parties to ensure that the process of rapprochement was not allowed to fail this time round.

Unanimity on PM's initiative

Asked about a report in a section of the press that spoke of deep differences within the higher echelons of the Government on dealing with Pakistan again, the sources replied that it was "completely fictitious". An informal meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security was held on Thursday, they said, but

there was "complete unanimity" on the initiative taken by Mr. Vajpayee to try and build bridges with Pakistan once again.

New Delhi, the sources said, was ready to consider "talks-about-talks", but a summit-level contact was not being considered in the Indian scheme of things as of now. Interestingly, the "step-by-step" approach has been widely referred to in official circles, confirming that the talks will begin at the level of officials, possibly involving Joint Secretaries (Director-General in the case of Pakistan) at the first stage.

After months of stalemate, diplomatic contacts between India and Pakistan seem to have resumed in earnest.

Well-wishers of this process, especially in the light of the Lahore and Agra results, are keeping their fingers crossed.

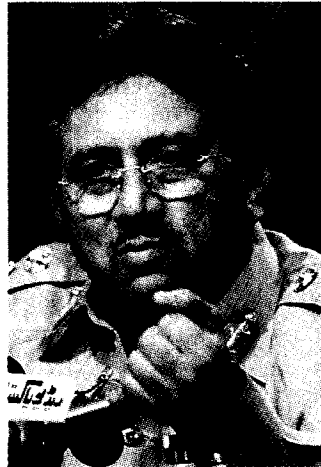
'India-centric concessions soon'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 3. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, today informed a group of intellectuals here today that his Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, would soon announce India-centric 'concessions' in response to the peace initiative of the latter's Indian counterpart, Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Those who attended the meeting on current international affairs included the former Ambassador to the United States, Maleeha Lodhi, the Chairman of the Islamabad Policy Research Institute, Pervez Iqbal Cheema, and a retired Pakistani general and defence analyst, Talat Masood.

Khalid Mehmud, Research Analyst, Institute of Regional Studies, who also attended the meeting, later said that there was a consensus that Mr. Vajpayee's peace initiative would go a long way in defusing the tension in South Asia. However, not everyone



was sure if the latest mission would help India and Pakistan resolve their problems.

Such is the impact of the peace initiative that India-Pakistan relations consumed the entire question and answer session. One participant suggested the 'de-linking' of the Kashmir issue from the talks and proceeding towards normalisation of ties in other areas. The President's response was that it was not possible.

In his introductory remarks, Gen. Musharraf said all bilateral issues, including Kashmir should be resolved through talks. Claiming that the international community had hailed Pakistan's stand on different regional and international issues, he said it was an example of the country's successful foreign policy.

On Friday, at a banquet hosted in honour of Prince Karim Agha Khan, the President said, "we seek peaceful resolution of all disputes and differences (with India), especially the core dispute over Jammu and Kashmir. We, on our part, will demonstrate all our seriousness." Pakistan had made consistent overtures for a better climate of relations with India, he claimed. "Mistrust and confrontation is much to the detriment of progress and prosperity of more than one-fifth of humanity that inhabits South Asia. We desire tension-free and cooperative relations with India. We stand ready to enter into a dialogue anytime, anywhere," he said.

Ind - pak

TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2003

49-10

RETURN TO BILATERALISM 13/5

INDIA AND PAKISTAN have in the past few days relearned the bitter lesson that there is no alternative to bilateralism and that their dependence on a third party leaves them with less than half the loaf each. The geopolitical reality, harsh as always, is that with Washington's single-minded pursuit of its national interest, it would be futile to expect it to work overtime for other countries. The warm handshake that Brajesh Mishra, National Security Adviser, received in Washington from the American President and the cold shoulder that Indian leaders got in Delhi from Richard Armitage, the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, during the weekend are no accident or contradiction. They are signals to India that while it is welcome as a strategic partner it is being extremely short-sighted in expecting Washington to lean on Pakistan in support of its cause. If the Vajpayee Government had set much store by the visit of Mr. Armitage, hoping that he would come back with the kind of promise from Islamabad that he did last time, it has only itself to blame for the disappointing end result. As for Mr. Armitage, the diplomatic firefighter, he has completed one more of his missions to the subcontinent, his main objective of lowering the heat having been achieved for all practical purposes. Mr. Armitage made it clear that the U.S. would leave it to the two countries to sort their disputes by themselves. New Delhi would not have missed his pointed remark on the U.S. wanting "all violence to end" and its concern about "all civilian deaths" in Kashmir.

The two neighbours must now decide whether they will proceed on the path they have boldly charted for themselves in the weeks since the April 17 initiative of Mr. Vajpayee or allow the hardliners on both sides to retake the stage and push the subcontinent to the brink. The ceaseless talk of "double standards" which contrasts with India's own effort to keep the Kashmir issue out of the international agenda and the

noises being raised in this country mostly by sections belonging to the ruling alliance reflect a negative mindset, the same mindset that resulted in the shabby treatment of the visiting Parliamentary delegation from Pakistan. The ideological blinkers of the BJP and its allies blanked out an interaction with members of the team who otherwise received a warm welcome everywhere. These posturings notwithstanding, the two countries have, by their standards, travelled quite some distance since April 17 in terms of reciprocal forward steps beginning with the prospective return of the High Commissioners and resumption of air, road and rail links. More goodwill visits and confidence-building measures are expected even as the two countries attempt to keep up the momentum by building on the groundswell of support for the process and a willingness to lower expectations following the two failed attempts earlier.

With India having made the unconditional offer of the hand of friendship, the onus is on Pakistan to address New Delhi's major concern and demonstrate a serious and binding commitment to halt and altogether end cross-border incursions. With the onset of summer, there will be proof on the ground that Pakistan is keeping its promise. India would judge Islamabad by its actions rather than words, keeping in view Pervez Musharraf's promise on closing down militant training camps in PoK. With sustained pressure from the U.S. — the publicised visit to Washington by the powerful chief of the Inter-Services Intelligence is a pointer — Pakistan knows that the situation cannot continue as it is and that it can no more use militancy as a point of leverage with India. Ironically, with receding fears of a fundamentalist backlash over the Kashmir issue, Mr. Musharraf is in a stronger position now than at any time since seizing power two and a half years ago to transform the current turning point in bilateral relations into a permanent reality for mutual good.

THE HINDU

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Ind. Pak

'CROSS-BORDER TERRORISM SHOULD END FIRST'

Dialogue will begin at appropriate time: Sinha

13

By Our Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 12. India today reiterated that a dialogue with Pakistan could begin provided an atmosphere conducive to talks was created. This, the Foreign Office spokesman said, called for an end to cross-border terrorism and infiltration.

Asked what kind of a "road map" had been prepared by India for talks with Pakistan, the spokesman said the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, had not specified the "road map".

Since the telephone call between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan on April 28, the Foreign Office here has been saying that a "road map" existed on the next steps to be taken with Pakistan.

In an interview to a private television channel, Mr. Sinha was today quoted as saying: "Every step is clear in our mind. There is no confusion and we will proceed according to the plan".

"The two Prime Ministers have spoken on the telephone. We have announced some steps and there has been some response from Pakistan. And, I suppose, at some appropriate time, the dialogue will also begin," he maintained.

Sticking to the script that has been read out time and again at both the political and official level, Mr. Sinha said "the thawing" had already begun between the two countries. "The general approach is to begin with official-level talks leading to a political summit. The idea is to prepare the groundwork and discuss what we are going to talk about."

Favouring a "composite" dia-

logue, one which is envisaged under the June 1997 "two plus six approach", Mr. Sinha questioned the official Pakistani position that Kashmir was the "core issue".

"None of the existing agreements between the two countries have ever referred to Kashmir as the core issue. When you start a process, you can't write history or erase it. You have to start on the basis of existing issues. The right ap-

proach would be to treat Jammu and Kashmir as one of the issues and start a dialogue on all issues, including that of Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Mr. Sinha took the view that an end to cross-border terrorism was not a pre-condition for talks, but a "practical necessity".

Separately, the Foreign Office spokesman did not spell out India's stand on the re-entry of Pakistan to the councils of the

Commonwealth at the upcoming meeting of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG) in London.

The Commonwealth, he said, had its own rules under the Harare Declaration and the Millbrook action plan that dealt with countries that had seen an interregnum in the democratic process.

According to the spokesman, the CMAG decision would be a "multilateral" one, and that he would not like to "pre-judge" what this body will do.

He did refer to the current political situation in Pakistan — the Opposition demand on the Legal Framework Order — and the fact that the President and the Army Chief were the same person.

These issues, the spokesman added, would have to be explained.

Unlike in the past, when the Government of India has publicly stated its opposition to the return of Pakistan to the Commonwealth and spoken derisively about the recent elections in that country, the spokesman took no such public position today.

At a time when there have been a few, faltering steps towards dialogue between the two countries, India does not want to be seen taking a public opposition that it opposes Pakistan's re-entry into the Commonwealth.

Mr. Sinha, meanwhile, was scheduled to leave the capital in the early hours of Tuesday for the May 13-18 visit to Russia, during which he will also have a meeting with the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, on May 14. He will then go on to London for the May 19-20 CMAG meeting.

Does Pak. have a road map ready?

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 12. Pakistan says it is ready with a "road map" for talks with India for the resolution of all differences including the "core issue of Kashmir".

The Pakistan Information and Media Development Minister, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, has made the claim even as the Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman, Aziz Ahmed Khan, told a news conference that Islamabad was waiting for a "signal" from New Delhi on resumption of the stalled negotiations.

It is not for the first time that the Media Minister and the Foreign Ministry have been at different wavelengths. At one stage, the Foreign Office had told reporters not to be guided by the Information Ministers on matters related to foreign policy. However, after the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, at a news conference identified the Minister as one of the spo-

kespersons of the Government, Foreign Office had little option but to allow his statements go uncontested.

The truth of the matter is that Pakistan's Foreign Office has little idea about the so-called "road map for talks" mentioned by Mr. Rashid. "So far, there is no decision on a crucial issue like who should be the High Commissioner in New Delhi. Road map far down the line in our immediate priorities on Indo-Pak. relations," a senior officer in the Ministry said.

Observers are intrigued over the delay in announcement of the choice of a candidate for High Commissioner. It appears too many pulls and pressures are at work. The names of the former Pakistan Ambassador to the United States, Maleeha Lodhi, the former Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Secretary, Inam-ul-Haq and Mr. Aziz Ahmed Khan, continue to be mentioned as possible candidates.

13 MAY 2003

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THE HINDU

~~4 MAY 2003~~

No 'tacit understanding with India': Pak.

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By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 12. Pakistan today dismissed as "rubbish" reports in a section of the Pakistani press that it has agreed to put the Kashmir issue on the back burner and follow the "Chinese model" in its relations with India.

The Foreign Office spokesman, Aziz Ahmed Khan, was unusually harsh on the media report suggesting a fundamental change in Pakistan's Kashmir policy and described the report as "unfortunate and irresponsible".

The front-page report in the English daily, *The Nation*, claimed that thanks to the behind-the-scenes role played by the United States, India and Pakistan were "inching towards a tacit understanding to freeze the core Kashmir dispute" for the next few years.

It said that Islamabad had already given two major "concessions" to New Delhi by not insisting on the U.N. Security Council resolutions on Kashmir and an assurance to "choke" cross-border infiltration and rollback the "so-called militant camps".

Mr. Khan asserted that there was no change in the Government's Kashmir policy and reiterated that the long-running dispute should be resolved in line with the U.N. resolutions and in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people. "There has never been any change, dilution or doubt in Pakistan's standpoint on the Kashmir issue," he said.

Asked whether there was any progress on the Indo-Pak. peace initiative, Mr. Khan said that apart from the routine diplomatic channel, there had not been any official contact over the resumption of dialogue. He,

however, expressed Pakistan's readiness to resume negotiations with India stating that it was Islamabad's policy to have a "composite dialogue" with New Delhi on all outstanding issues including the "core Kashmir dispute".

About the appointment of Pakistan's new High Commissioner to New Delhi, he said a decision was yet to be made.

To a question on Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's statement that Indian nuclear weapons were not Pakistan-specific and, hence, it was not possible for New Delhi to accept the proposal for de-nuclearisation, Mr. Khan merely said that Pakistan had always called for a nuclear-free South Asia.

He claimed that things had, however, changed after the Indians tested a nuclear device in May 1998, impelling Pakistan to follow suit for "defensive purposes". But Pakistan, he said, had acted responsibly in its new status, its nuclear command and control structure was impeccable and had been duly recognised by the world community.

On the latest missile testing by India, the spokesman said that everyone knew the increasing progress of New Delhi's missile programme. To a query on allowing over-flight rights to India, he said the two countries had announced resumption of air links and that the matter could be discussed in a meeting between aviation officials from both sides.

Asked whether there was U.S. pressure on Pakistan and India to resume dialogue, he recalled the recent remarks of the U.S. Deputy Secretary, Richard Armitage, that his country was not exerting any pressure on either country.

On the Indian allegation of

cross-border movement, he said Pakistan's position of stationing neutral observers on the Line of Control was reasonable and could help verify any claim to that effect. Whatever was happening in Kashmir was "an indigenous struggle" and it was for the people of Kashmir to decide on the strategy that want to follow.

However, Pakistan would continue to extend its "moral and diplomatic support" to the struggle.

About the proposed visit of the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, to the U.S., he said the dates had not yet been finalised. All matters of bilateral interest as well as regional and international concern, including Pakistan-India relations and Kashmir, would come up for discussion.

Tariq Anwar criticises Rabri

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI MAY 12. The NCP general secretary, Tariq Anwar, has criticised the Bihar Chief Minister, Rabri Devi, for walking out of the Chief Ministers' conclave organised by a news magazine. It is surprising that she has shown concern for the "humiliation of Bihar", because "she and her husband's regime were responsible for all that", Mr. Anwar said in a statement.

He accused the RJD and the Congress regimes of halting all developmental work, and pushing the State to its worst-ever position.

He also criticised the Central Ministers from the State for remaining silent spectators to the "deterioration" in Bihar.

THE HINDU

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'IT IS FOR INDIA TO ASSESS PAK. ACTIONS'

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Armitage hopeful of 'step-by-step' process

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, MAY 10. It is for India to make up "her own mind" about what "she thinks" of the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf's statement that terrorist training camps, if any, would be gone "by tomorrow", the United States Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, said here this evening.

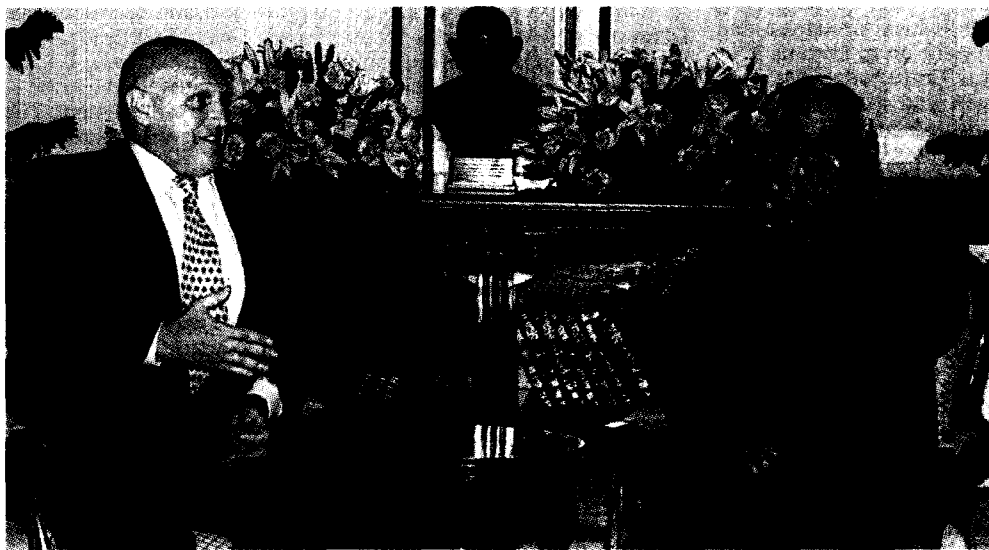
Mr. Armitage, who had day-long meetings with the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, and senior members of his Cabinet, including the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, said that it was not his job to give assurances.

Indicating that it was for India to assess Pakistani actions and intentions on the issue of cross-border terrorism, he, however, told presspersons that all violence must be brought to an end. In response to a question, Mr. Armitage made it clear that he had made no "specific request" for the deployment of Indian troops in Iraq "or anything of that nature" while saying that there would certainly be a role for India in the reconstruction of Iraq.

At a separate briefing, the Foreign Office spokesman clarified that it was India's policy to participate in peacekeeping operations only under the United Nations' umbrella.

Asked what was "new" about the "message" that Mr. Armitage had brought from Islamabad this time around, the spokesman claimed that this theory of "bringing, carrying" messages was "quite misplaced".

The spokesman said India had heard claims and declarations before, but these had not been translated into action. And, New Delhi would judge Is-



The visiting U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, with the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, at his residence in New Delhi on Saturday. — Photo: S. Arneja.

lamabad by what it does, not what it says. Pointing out that India had received assurances before on the issue of cross-border terrorism, he said: "every season was a new season". India had taken a new initiative with Pakistan hoping to see an "appropriate" response on this all-important issue.

Asked whether India had presented "evidence" to Mr. Armitage about terrorist training camps, he said New Delhi's "latest assessment" on training camps, launching pads and communication networks was shared with Mr. Armitage.

On whether India had pointed out that action by Pakistan on U.S. concerns had led to the arrest of high-profile leaders of the Al-Qaeda while the leaders of the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Muhammad roamed freely, he said: "This is a self-evident duality".

Would Mr. Armitage's visit

create a more conducive environment for India-Pakistan talks? "There is no place for mediation, no intention of mediation," the spokesman said.

For his part, Mr. Armitage said on re-engagement between India and Pakistan: "I remain cautiously optimistic that the process begun by the act of statesmanship (shown) by the Prime Minister of India could possibly lead to a step-by-step process that would eventually resolve all issues."

"We would like to see two great nations — India and Pakistan — living side by side, in peace, stability and harmony," he said adding that the U.S. wanted to develop relations "separately" with India and Pakistan without having to take into account "other interests".

On the levels of cross-border infiltration, he said it was a "terrible thing" to reduce the death

of a person to a statistic.

"I concentrate on the fact that all violence must end," he stressed.

An invitation for Mr. Advani to visit the U.S. (in June) on behalf of the U.S. Vice-President, Dick Cheney, was also communicated by Mr. Armitage.

Maleeha Lodhi's name on the list?

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 10. A day after Pakistan gave the green signal to the proposed appointment of Shiv Shankar Menon as India's top envoy to Islamabad, there is intense speculation that the Jama'at Government has finalised its choice for the post of its High Commissioner to India.

The names mentioned include those of the former Minister of State of Foreign Affairs, Inam-ul-Haq, Pakistan's former U.S. Ambassador, Maleeha Lodhi, and the Foreign Office spokesman, Aziz Ahmed Khan.

Dr. Lodhi, who has won accolades for her two stints in Washington as Pakistan's Ambassador, recently figured in the media as Pakistan's new High Commissioner to Britain. But she is reported to be keen on serving in India. It is quite possible that Pakistan has already sent the relevant papers of its proposed candidate to New Delhi as the Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri, left for New York this morning to preside over the United Nations' Security Council special session on May 13.

Bush supports PM's initiative

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MAY 10. In what is being held out as yet another proof of the deepening of the relations with India, the United States President, George W. Bush, met India's National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra, at the White House on Thursday.

During the brief meeting, Mr. Bush is said to have been supportive of the recent steps taken by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, in the context of the relations with Pakistan. It is being pointed out here that Mr. Bush did not "drop by" the meeting between Mr. Mishra and his counterpart, Condoleezza Rice. Rather, Mr. Mishra was "taken" to the

Oval Office to see the President.

"I conveyed the greetings of the Prime Minister to President Bush and reminded him of the invitation that is pending..." He did say some supportive things of the initiatives taken by the Prime Minister," Mr. Mishra told presspersons at the Embassy of India on Friday evening. "He said he would love to visit India," Mr. Mishra said, adding that the timing of this would have to be worked out.

"He (Mr. Bush) expressed an interest in the continuation of the dialogue which has been going on between India and the U.S. and the deepening of the friendship between our two countries," Mr. Mishra said.

Another report on Page 8

Trade promotion after resolving political issues, says Pak.

9/20/01
Pak

By B. Muralidhar Reddy 11/11

ISLAMABAD, MAY 8. As the suspense on the question of over-flight facilities and controversy over the 78 additional items added by Pakistan in the India import list continues, the Pakistan Commerce Minister, Humayun Akhtar, has asserted that Pakistan and India could exploit their 'trade potential' only after resolution of political issues.

Speaking at a luncheon hosted in his honour by the London Chambers of Commerce and Industry here today, he said the promotion of commercial relations between two countries were linked with progress on the political issues.

Comments of the Minister came even as there was no effort by Pakistan to clear the

air on the issue of over-flight facilities and 78 items put on the 'positive list' ostensibly to further the SAARC process. The External Affairs Ministry spokesman on Wednesday had said that India expected a clarification on both the issues.

In the aftermath of the December 13, 2001 Parliament attack, India had not only snapped air links but also suspended over-flight facilities to Pakistani aircraft. Islamabad reciprocated the measures and ever since the air space of each other's country is not available.

In June last year, India said it was willing to lift the ban on over-flight facilities on a reciprocal basis.

However, the suggestion was turned down by Pakistan on the ground that it was

'self-serving and deceptive.' The argument here was that many more Indian flights were affected on account of the ban than the Pakistani aircraft.

Efforts to get a clarification from the Pakistani authorities proved to be futile. It appeared no one from the Government had got in touch with the Indian High Commission either.

Mr. Akhtar, who is an ardent advocate of resolution of the Kashmir issue before trade relations, was believed to be at loggerheads with the Foreign Ministry some months ago on the question whether or not Pakistan should send a delegation to participate in the South Asian Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA) talks at Kathmandu. Ultimately the Foreign Ministry prevailed.

SHIV SHANKAR MENON TO BE NEW ENVOY

Pak. needs to take credible steps: India

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, MAY 7. In a measured official response to the proposals made by Pakistan last night, India today announced that it had sought an agreement (Agreement in diplomatic parlance) for the appointment of a new High Commissioner to Islamabad. The response, contained in a statement read out by the Foreign Office spokesman, was more in tune with the overall objective of keeping the process of rapprochement with Pakistan on track.

It is learnt that Shiv Shankar Menon, a 1972 batch Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, currently Ambassador in Beijing, will be the new Indian High Commissioner to Islamabad.

"We welcome the fact that Pakistan has responded to the initiatives of our Prime Minister. It is quite clear that several specific steps would need to be taken by Pakistan to move this process meaningfully forward..."

After official sources described the Pakistani Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali's "statement" as "completely inadequate" last night, the spokesman today welcomed the nod given by Mr. Jamali to resume the civil aviation links. Even here, there was a qualification: "Our understanding is that such links would

include direct air services and overflights. We have sought a specific confirmation from Pakistan in this regard. The Pakistani authorities have indicated that this issue could be discussed further between the civil aviation authorities of the two countries."

On trade issues, India continued to describe the SAARC-related proposals by Mr. Jamali as "clearly inadequate" given the "mandate" of the last summit of the grouping in Kathmandu. "We have repeatedly made it clear that substantive progress on trade and economic cooperation should take place to make the next summit meaningful," the spokesman said.

Referring to Mr. Jamali's statement, formally handed over by the Pakistani side to the Ministry of External Affairs today, he said the Pakistani leader had also proposed the resumption of road and rail links as well as sporting contacts.

Making it plain that there was no immediate acceptance of these enhanced proposals from Pakistan, the spokesman maintained: "These measures can be considered in due course as we see progress on the steps announced by our Prime Minister, and there is evidence of Pakistan taking firm and credible action against cross-border terrorism and to dismantle the infrastruc-

ture of support to terrorism."

On the issue of terrorism, India, the sources said, wanted credible steps from Pakistan such as the arrest of leaders belonging to the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Muhammad, as well as dismantling of the Lashkar's Muridke "launching pad". Other linked steps, such as snapping communication links from Pakistan to terrorist groups in Kashmir, would also be welcome in New Delhi.

As far as the possible resumption of dialogue was concerned, the spokesman said: "We remain committed to resolve all issues between India and Pakistan bilaterally, as provided for in the Simla Agreement and the Lahore declaration." "Prime Minister (Vajpayee), in his statement to Parliament on May 2, had made it clear that a sustained dialogue would necessarily require an end to cross-border terrorism and the dismantling of its infrastructure." Regarding the issue of talks on "nuclear and strategic stability" raised by Mr. Jamali last night, the spokesman remarked that talks on nuclear and other confidence-building measures could be held in the context of the "composite dialogue" (agreed upon in June 1997) which has the specific agenda item of peace and security, including CBMs.

Asked to respond to the remarks made by the Pakistani Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri, to press reports that the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, had travelled to Africa to keep Pakistan out of the Commonwealth, the spokesman said Mr. Sinha did not react to Mr. Kasuri's comments. The less "we talk" the better it was for the process (of detente) between India and Pakistan, the spokesman said. It was, he added, "not helpful to get personal".

As India and Pakistan cautiously approach each other, engagement with the United States will also be a key factor in this process. Informed sources said that India had already "sensitised" the U.S. to its concerns during the meeting between the National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra, and the American Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, in London.

Our CBMs 'far larger': Pak.

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 7. India's description of the confidence building measures (CBMs) announced by the Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, as "inadequate" has not gone down well here.

Before New Delhi's official statement, the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri, maintained that it was not 'fair' to quantify or qualify the CBMs unveiled by Mr. Jamali. However, the Minister could not be reached after the External Affairs Ministry spokesman made known the detailed Indian reaction.

Mr. Kasuri said Pakistan's CBMs were "far larger" than those announced by Mr. Vajpayee. It did not augur well for the nascent peace process if one were to sit down to analyse every move and word. "We appreciate the statesmanship shown by the Prime Minister of India and expect that the people of India and the Government display a greater degree of generosity towards what the Prime Minister of Pakistan has said," Mr. Kasuri said. A formal response to the Indian reaction is expected tomorrow or the day after as the Foreign Office is busy with the visit of the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage.

JAMALI PROPOSES DIALOGUE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES

Pak. to restore diplomatic ties; road, rail and air links

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 6. The Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali tonight unveiled the much-awaited confidence building measures (CBMs) to pave way for a dialogue with India by agreeing to the proposals made by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee last week. Among other things he has sought diplomatic status quo as it existed between India and Pakistan prior to the December 13, 2001 Parliament attack and dialogue on nuclear and security-related issues.

At a hurriedly-convened news conference here, Mr. Jamali read out from a carefully-drafted statement outlining the CBMs. These included six directly related to India and Pakistan and two in the field of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

Mr. Jamali's announcement came hours before the U.S. Secretary of State, Richard Armitage along with the Assistant Secretary of State, Christina Rocca's arrival to discuss bilateral and Indo-Pakistan issues.

The India-centric measures announced by Mr. Jamali are: immediate restoration of the

snapped rail and road links on a reciprocal basis; restoration of air links as proposed by Mr. Vajpayee; release of all Indian fishermen in Pakistani jails, besides 20 Sikh youths and 14 members of the Rajhalaxmi cargo boat as a goodwill gesture; proposal for resumption of sporting ties to begin with in the fields of cricket and hockey and proposal for restoration of the staff strength of India and Pakistan missions to pre-December 2001 level and suggestion for dialogue between the two countries on nuclear security-related issues as agreed in the Memorandum of Understanding in the Lahore Declaration.

The SAARC-related CBMs which would have a bearing on India-Pakistan ties are the decision by Pakistan to add 78 more items on the list of items that could be imported from India; decision to approach the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu proposing dates for the SAARC Summit scheduled in Islamabad and the decision of Pakistan to hold the thrice-postponed South Asian Federation (SAF) games.

In his opening statement Mr. Jamali sought to address the

two issues uppermost on the agenda of New Delhi — cross-border infiltration and dismantling of terrorism infrastructure. The Pakistan Prime Minister declared that his country was opposed to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and would not lag behind anyone in tackling the menace. However it came with a rider.

"Pakistan condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and would continue to cooperate with the international community to eliminate this scourge. Of equal importance is the promotion of regional peace and security in regions of the world, suffering from tensions and unresolved conflicts", he said in an obvious reference to Kashmir.

Mr. Jamali said he appreciated the recent moves of Prime Minister Vajpayee and said the measures sought to be taken by his Government were aimed at 'setting the stage' for a meaningful dialogue with India on all outstanding issues, including Kashmir. "We should begin talks from where they were left off at Agra and work out an agenda for a tiered dialogue, including Summit-level interaction".

He made it a point to refer to Kashmir as the 'core issue' and had a 'special message' for Kashmiris. "I want to tell the Kashmiris and the people of Pakistan that at all stages, their interests would be supreme". Mr. Jamali talked about his consultations with all parties and said he enjoyed the fullest support of the people and all major parties. "With this national consensus we are ready to engage in a serious and substantive dialogue with India", he said.

When a reporter wanted to know from Mr. Jamali if the omission of reference to the United Nations Resolutions on Kashmir signalled a shift in the traditional stand of Pakistan, he sought to make light of the question. "It has figured so many times". In response to another question if he apprehended that 'hard-liners in India would sabotage the latest peace move like they did in Agra', he merely said that "that would be bad luck".

Answering another question whether he has had any contact with the Deputy Prime Minister, Lal Krishna Advani in recent days, Mr. Jamali replied in the negative. "I would very much like to meet Mr. Advani. From my side there would be no problem". In response to another question about whether he was hopeful of resolution of differences between India and Pakistan before the 2004 general elections, he quipped "Well, they are Indian elections, not Pakistani elections".

Mr. Jamali said he was hopeful that India would come forward to address all outstanding issues in a sincere and sustained dialogue. "I hope we would be able to put aside the past acrimony and move towards resolution of all problems, including Jammu and Kashmir". He said both the countries could pick up from where they had left off at Agra.

Better chance for peace, says Kasuri: Page 11

Inadequate, says India

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, MAY 6. India today described as "completely inadequate" the Pakistani Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali's response to the hand of friendship extended by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Official sources said that Mr. Jamali had not addressed India's concerns on the issue of cross-border terrorism. On trade issues, it had only put 78 items on the positive list, while some 146 other items remained on the "negative list." This, they said, was violative of the SAARC summit in Kathmandu that had even re-

ferred to a free trade area proposal.

The sources said that while Pakistan had agreed to restore civil aviation links, Mr. Jamali had been totally silent on the issue of "overflights." How could direct flights be restored while nothing was said on the question of overflights? They maintained that Mr. Jamali's remarks were not in keeping with the spirit in which Mr. Vajpayee had taken the initiative to mend fences with Islamabad.

On the issue of trade, the sources said that placing 78 items on the positive list was redressing the issue raised by round three of SAPTA, while

146 of a total of 200 items proposed by Pakistan in SAPTA-IV remained on the negative list of trade with India. They made it plain that as far as India was concerned concrete measures against the menace of terrorism were critical. The whole Pakistani effort was to take the situation to pre-December 13, 2001, without saying anything on what steps it would take on the terrorism question. While the Indian initiative remained on the table, it was evident that New Delhi is feeling a trifle let down by the Pakistani response. Clearly, India wants more than what Pakistan has offered.

07 MAY 2003

Russia opposes Pak. move to raise Kashmir issue at U.N.

NEW DELHI, MAY 6. Russia today opposed Pakistan's reported move to rake up the Kashmir issue in the U.N. Security Council saying the Council president cannot impose any issue as the majority of its members were against it.

"This issue is not on the agenda of the world body", the visiting Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, Yuri V. Fedotov, told reporters when asked about reports that Pakistan, which recently took over as president of the UNSC, proposed to raise the Kashmir issue.

Mr. Fedotov, who had

meetings with the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, and Foreign Secretary, Kanwal Sibal, said the Security Council president "cannot impose" any issue and the majority of the Council members were against raising of the Kashmir issue.

The "central problem" was not Kashmir but that of terrorism and training camps for terrorists operating in Pakistan, he said.

Welcoming the recent initiatives taken by both India and Pakistan, he said Russia was trying its best to

"encourage and stimulate" this trend.

He said his country was looking forward to the visit of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, later this month.

The visit will be another step towards strengthening and consolidating relations between India and Russia," Mr. Fedotov said.

Mr. Vajpayee will travel to St. Petersburg for the 300th year anniversary celebrations of the historic city and also hold annual summit-level meetings with the President, Vladimir Putin. — PTI

India, Pak. officials' visit unlikely to attract attention

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MAY 5. Even as the attention is focused in the sub-continent on the visit of the United States Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage, and the Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Christina Rocca, the likely visits of the Chief of the Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Ehsanul Huq, and the Principal Secretary to the Indian Prime Minister and the National Security Advisor, Brajesh Mishra, to Washington, though considered significant, may not attract the front pages of the media here.

Though Lt. Gen Huq's visit is yet to be officially announced, he is likely to call on officials of the State Department and the White House and also take him to the headquarters of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and a meeting with a top spy of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mr. Mishra, who is arriving here in the middle of this week, will also be visiting the State Department and the White House. He would hold talks with his counterpart, Condoleezza Rice. During the course of the visit,

Lt. Gen. Huq is also slated to meet the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, Dr. Rice and the Secretary of Homeland Security, Tom Ridge.

Lt. Gen Huq's visit to Washington is generally believed that it has more than the United States-Pakistan-Afghanistan angle, even if the visit could primarily revolve around this. It was also felt that though the ISI chief may not raise the Kashmir issue, the U.S. intelligence agencies and the Bush administration had been demanding an end to infiltration from Pakistan across the Line of Control and no one is naive enough to believe that the ISI does not have a hand.

The fact that India and Pakistan are on the way to restoration of bilateral ties adds an element of urgency and importance. The Bush administration, given the context of the 'newly evolved relations,' has given a clear impression that while it was willing to lean on Pakistan against infiltration, there is going to be no public rebuking of Islamabad or indulge in any largescale Pakistan bashing on this score.

Whatever is said, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, is going quiet and private. Staying in the realm of the U. S. -Pakistan relationship, the Bush administration had praised Islamabad for the recent turn of events that included the capture of at least six Al Qaeda terrorists and thwarting a plan to ram a small plane or helicopter into the American Consulate in Karachi.

The law enforcement authorities here have been pointing to the arrests and foiling of the plan to attack the consulate as proof of international cooperation on the terrorism front.

But the U. S. has yet another critical aspect to talk to Lt. Gen Huq about—the sudden spurt in activities of the Al Qaeda and the Taliban along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, and in the general, concern for the increasing sympathy inside Pakistan for the Al Qaeda and the Taliban.

In fact, one perception here is that the finer aspects of Lt. Gen Huq's talks in Washington would be with the Head of the FBI, Robert Mueller and the Chief of the CIA, George Tenet.

U 6 MAY 2003

ICE HAS MELTED, SAYS JAMALI

Pak. for dialogue on all issues including Kashmir

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 5. The all-party meeting being held here to consider the response to the Vajpayee peace initiative began on a positive note with a statement by the Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, that the "ice has melted between India and Pakistan".

Talking to presspersons in Chakwal town in the Punjab province, hours before the meeting began, Mr. Jamali said efforts were under way to create a "congenial atmosphere" to begin talks between the two countries.

It is not clear if Mr. Jamali had in mind (when he used the expression congenial atmosphere) the desire expressed by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, for a "proper groundwork" before starting a dialogue at the highest level.

The Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri, told *The Hindu* that after the interaction with representatives of the political parties, Mr. Jamali would announce "measures to help normalisation" of relations with India. He declined to elaborate on the plea that it would be appropriate for Mr. Jamali to spell out the details.

Asked if it would address the two chief concerns of India — infiltration across the Line of Control and the existence of terrorist infrastructure — Mr. Kasuri said: "Please be rest assured that if Mr. Jamali could pick up the phone and talk to Mr. Vajpayee, obviously he has thought through the process. The Pakistan Government is committed to the process of normalisation of relations with India."

Mr. Jamali told correspondents that all issues would be settled with India on the nego-

tiating table. He referred to the all-party meeting and said the aim was to take everyone into confidence on the coming talks on India. The Government wanted to start talks with India after taking the entire nation into confidence first.

Leaders of all major parties are taking part in the meeting being held at Mr. Jamali's residence. Most parties in Pakistan have welcomed the peace initiative. However, the religious parties have cautioned the Government against any attempt to sideline the "core issue" of Kashmir.

Reflecting the general mood in the county, the Foreign Office described Mr. Vajpayee's letter to Mr. Jamali in response to the invitation to visit Islamabad as a "positive response". Its

spokesman, Aziz Ahmed Khan at the regular briefing said, "Pakistan has received a positive response... I can't go into the details".

Reiterating Pakistan's position, he said, "we have always called for a composite dialogue, on all issues, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir". "Pakistan wants a meaningful and positive dialogue on all issues".

Regarding the "composite" dialogue, he said Pakistan had been calling for a dialogue to discuss all issues including the core Kashmir dispute. "It never meant exclusively discussing Kashmir".

He further elaborated that "composite means all issues, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir".

Solve Kashmir, sign no-war pact: Musharraf

ISLAMABAD, MAY 5. Amid fresh peace overtures by India and Pakistan, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has said his country could work for a no-war pact with India followed by mutual reduction of troops and denuclearisation of South Asia if the Kashmir issue was resolved.

If the Kashmir issue was resolved and there was peace and security in the region, South Asia could be denuclearised mutually by India and Pakistan, Gen. Musharraf said in an interview to a Pakistani TV channel, ARY Gold.

"Our concern is our security. We have been saying that if there is no problem to our security, Pakistan and India can move to mutual reduction of forces and have a no-war pact — this has been our stand," he said. He was quoted as saying that the Pakistan Army could cut its size if the Kashmir issue was resolved. Gen. Musharraf also dismissed reports that India and Pakistan agreed for a dialogue process following pressure from the international community. Gen. Musharraf said the new peace move was initiated due to the prevailing impression in India and Pakistan that issues could be resolved through a dialogue. "I think that there can be realisation in the minds of the Pakistanis and Indians that the talks should be restarted and all the disputes should be resolved in the mutual interest of the two countries and the region. I think that may be this realisation is developing in their minds." — PTI

The earlier Foreign Secretary-level talks had identified eight different areas on which to start talks and these included Kashmir.

Mr. Khan said it was Pakistan's responsibility to positively respond to all the gestures made by India.

"We want to enter the dialogue process with a positive frame of mind. We are ready to hold talks with India at any place, anytime, anywhere at any level," he said.

Asked to comment on Mr. Vajpayee's statement that groundwork must precede the dialogue process, he said, "Pakistan will also make a careful analysis of the ground situation."

Pakistan wanted that the dialogue process started in earnest and was sustained. About opening up of the air space, he said, "all matters are under consideration".

To a question on reports of a CIA map about Kashmir, he said he had checked the website and found that it showed the area as "disputed territory".

Asked to comment on the statement by the Hurriyat leadership, he attributed it to some "misleading and tendentious reports".

Pakistan stood side by side with its Kashmiri brethren and would continue to provide "moral, diplomatic and political" support to their just cause till the issue was resolved in accordance with the wishes of the people of Kashmir.

To a question on the "continued firing" from India across the LoC and heavy casualties in "Azad" Kashmir, Mr. Khan hoped that the firing would stop soon. About the SAARC, he said the dates for holding the summit would be worked out and announced soon.

06 MAY 2003

India wants 'official' word from Pak.

By Amit Baruah

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NEW DELHI, MAY 1. India today said it would respond to the Pakistani Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali's "offer" to visit New Delhi once it heard something "officially".

The Foreign Office spokesman reiterated that the issue of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, going to Pakistan or Mr. Jamali coming over had figured in a very general way in Monday night's telephone conversation between the two leaders. As India and Pakistan make efforts to come out of an intense period of acrimony, the spokesman also responded to the latter's effort to convene a meeting of the U.N. Security Council on March 13 under Chapter VI of the U.N. Charter that relates to the "pacific" settlement of disputes.

According to official sources, this Pakistani effort, which has been in the pipeline for some time, would raise the Jammu and Kashmir issue as part of outstanding international questions such as Palestine and Cyprus.

Pakistan took over as chairman of the Security Council for a month from today as a non-permanent member. The sources said that India was maintaining a close watch on the proposed discussion. The spokesman said that it was for Islamabad to decide whether or not this effort was "compatible" with New Delhi extending the hand of friendship. On the positive references to Pakistan in the latest U.S. State Department report on global terrorism, the spokesman said he had "no comment" on the issue since it involved an American assessment of Pakistan. But, he went on to say that the report confirmed what had been evident to India for a long time — that infiltration had been fuelled from across the Line of Control (LoC).

Taking the argument forward, the spokesman said the report contradicted Pakistan's claims to the contrary. He maintained that this recognition of the Pakistani role in infiltration needed to be

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followed up with a resolution of this problem.

He said this was where the international community had not been able to meet with "as much success" as it should have. India, he stated, was aware of the realities of cross-border infiltration, the nature of these groups and where they drew their sustenance from.

The spokesman rejected the view that India was working on any kind of pressure as far as the incipient rapprochement process with Pakistan was concerned. "India does not work under pressure on these issues... the presumption of pressure should be discounted once and for all."

'Let's go back to pre-Dec. 13 status'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 1. Pakistan today said India and Pakistan should go back to the pre-December 13, 2001 status vis-a-vis diplomatic relations between the two countries to create a conducive atmosphere for a composite dialogue on all outstanding issues.

The Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri, told the State-run Pakistan Television in an interview that Islamabad would take up the matter with New Delhi. "Yes, we are taking up the matter with India", he said in response to a question.

However, he hastened to add: "there are many things we can suggest. Already these issues are being taken up. Some directly and some through backdoor diplomatic channels. It must be remembered that it takes two to tango. We believe the Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, is serious about the talks offer and hopefully these things would materialise."

PAK. MAY ANNOUNCE CBMs

Ready to go to Delhi, says Jamali

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 30. To give a filip to the peace initiative of the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, Pakistan is likely to announce a package of confidence-building measures (CBMs) in the next few days.

According to sources in the Pakistan Government, these could include opening up its skies to the Indian flights, appointment of its High Commissioner in New Delhi, announcement of dates for holding the SAARC Summit and liberalisation of the visa regime.

The eagerness of Pakistan to carry forward the latest peace initiative was also evident from the statement made by the Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, that in case Mr. Vajpayee was unable to travel to Islamabad, he was prepared to go to New Delhi for a dialogue.

It is believed that the Pakistan Foreign Office has prepared a panel of names for being considered as Islamabad's chief diplomat in New Delhi.

Of course, Pakistan could consider posting a High Commissioner in New Delhi only if there is an agreement with India to restore the status of the mission. India downgraded the mission in Pakistan following the December 13 attack and six months later asked Islamabad to withdraw its then High Commissioner, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, on grounds of 'parity'.

As for the SAARC summit, the

Pakistan Foreign Minister, Kasuri, has already announced that new dates would soon be communicated to the SAARC Secretariat and the member-states.

Islamabad had originally proposed the summit in the second week of January but postponed it indefinitely due to Indo-Pak tensions.

Ironically, even as the talk on the new peace initiative becomes intense, Indian Airlines is sticking to its decision to shut down the Lahore office.

Though air links were snapped from January 1, 2002, Pakistan and India continued with their airline offices.

However, over a month ago IA decided to close down its establishment in Lahore while retaining the set-up in Karachi.

The General Manager of the Lahore Office was summoned to Delhi for consultations on closure operations and it appears there is no change in the decision.

In another development the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf has said that foreigners were not a threat to Pakistan, but the major danger to its integrity was from religious extremists, which were involved in the politics of hatred.

He said that Pakistan came into existence in the name of Islam and it was the fortress of Islam.

He was addressing a darbar of the Air Defence Regiment in Sarogodha town on Tuesday.

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