

UN resolution vital to solve J&K row: Pak PM

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 21 DECEMBER

PAKISTAN'S backtracking on Gen Pervez Musharraf's remarks on dropping the plebiscite call was complete today with prime minister Mir Zafarullah Jamali insisting that the UN resolutions remained the basis for finding a solution to the vexed Kashmir issue.

"The basis of the whole solution lies in the UN resolution. That has to be kept in mind. You cannot overlook it," Mr Jamali told an Indian news channel. His stand is in sharp contrast to President Musharraf's remarks in an

interview to Reuters on Thursday that Islamabad was ready to set aside its demand for settlement of Kashmir issue through UN resolutions advocating plebiscite and favoured both sides adopting a flexible approach and meeting "halfway."

The President's remarks, though welcomed by the US and later India, met with stiff criticism from political parties as well as hardliners in his home constituency. Hardline Islamist party Jamaat e Islami accused Musharraf of entering into a "bargain deal" over Kashmir with India and pursuing a dangerous policy. Pakistan Muslim

around" as an attempt to appease his "foreign masters."

Even Mr Jamali was reported to have been caught off-guard by Gen Musharraf's remarks.

The indignation with which the President's remarks met in his home country seemed to have forced the foreign office to do some damage control the very next day.

It started with a clarification from Pakistani foreign minister Sheikh Rashid that Gen Musharraf "had not dropped the call of plebiscite."

"He is saying that we can think of certain other things, we have some alternative propos-

als," he said without elaborating on what exactly these alternative proposals were.

The backtracking mode continued today with prime minister Jamali claiming that what Musharraf probably meant when he said the demand for plebiscite could be set aside was that "the resolutions have to follow."

"The UN resolutions will be carried through. They have to come up," he told the television network and warned that if the UN resolutions were abandoned, it would make things "difficult to work" between India

and Pakistan.



PERVEZ: BACKTRACK

League-N, headed by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, termed the President's "turn-

✓ 'BASIS OF SOLUTION IN UN RESOLUTIONS'

Jamali differs with Pervez

9/20/12
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Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Dec. 21. — The Pakistani Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, appears to be contradicting and even backtracking from his President's suggestion that Pakistan was willing to give up its insistence on the UN resolutions for a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir. In an interview to an Indian TV channel today, Mr Jamali said: "The basis of the whole solution lies in the UN resolution.... You cannot overlook it."

President Pervez Musharraf's suggestion on Thursday that Islamabad was willing to meet India "halfway" by setting aside its insistence for settlement of the Kashmir issue through UN resolutions, that have formed the basis of Pakistan's Kashmir policy for over five decades, seems to have thrown the Pakistani establishment out of gear. Gen. Musharraf favoured both sides adopting a flexible approach. The statement prompted widespread criticism in his country.

As the countdown to the Saarc summit in early January has begun, the Pakistan foreign office is struggling to provide explanations for General Musharraf's statement.

Both India and Washington have 'welcomed'



Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali

the shift in stance. After a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security on Friday, the external affairs minister, Mr Yashwant Sinha, said "if there was a change or modification" in Islamabad's stance, India 'welcomed' the move.

Trying to clarify what the President meant, Mr Jamali said: "When President Musharraf said 'set aside', he probably meant 'yes they have to follow'".

Mr Jamali also said: "The UN resolutions will be carried through," adding that if they were abandoned, it will make things "difficult to work" between India and Pakistan.

Indian officials declined comment on Mr Jamali's statements.

Another report on page 4

Five ultras shot along LoC

JAMMU, Dec. 21. — Five ultras, who were trying to infiltrate from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, were killed by Indian jawans in Poonch district today.

This is the first major operation against militants near the Line of Control since the guns fell silent on both sides of the LoC following Pakistani Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali's peace initiatives.

Mr Anil Magotra, DSP, police control room, Jammu, said that around 4.30 a.m. today the Army personnel detected a group of militants moving along the LoC in the Balakote area of Poonch district.

The troops cordoned off the area and launched an operation against the ultras. The militants started firing and lobbing grenades at the defence personnel. In the gun-battle that followed, three militants were killed, while two jawans received minor injuries. Later, the police also joined in the operation and two more terrorists were killed, said the DSP.

The operation is continuing, as more militants are holed up in the cordoned area. Five rifles, 23 magazines, 21 grenades, nine UBGL grenades, five IEDs, three radio sets besides medicines and documents were seized from them. — SNS

KASHMIR MOVES

9/11/03
Burying the UN ghost 21/12

GENERAL Musharraf's offer to drop the demand for a UN plebiscite on Kashmir may be more symbol than substance, but deserves to be explored nonetheless to find out whether they betoken increasing flexibility in Islamabad's position. The accompanying rhetoric about India being an intransigent and arrogant power attempting to coerce Pakistan can be dismissed as a sideshow for the benefit of domestic hawks, but more germane is information minister Sheikh Rashid's clarification that the plebiscite demand has not been dropped per se, rather alternative proposals could be examined in lieu of it. What alternative proposals? Rashid does not enlighten on this point, suggesting that they will only be revealed when, and if, Prime Minister Vajpayee meets Musharraf on the sidelines of the SAARC summit in January. Optimism may be misplaced, as the alternative proposals that Islamabad has in mind could be even worse than the 1948-49 UN resolutions on Kashmir that the world, including the UN, has given up on since. If one looks at the wording of the resolution, it asks Pakistan to withdraw all troops from its side of the LoC in Kashmir before a plebiscite can be held (it does not make a similar demand on India). It is inconceivable that Islamabad will accede to this, which makes the resolutions a dead letter even from its point of view. That it stuck to the demand was mainly for rhetorical purposes, that it is withdrawing it could also be a rhetorical device — evening the PR points earned by Delhi after its peace proposals.

While it is important to elicit what Islamabad may have in mind, expectations should not be raised too high in the absence of evidence that it is actually beginning to dismantle the terror infrastructure on its side of the border. Till that point a Vajpayee-Musharraf meet during SAARC is okay, talks between officials on both sides are okay, but another "summit" to officially settle outstanding disputes between India and Pakistan may pave the way for another Agra-style fiasco. There have been Pakistani suggestions about an "imaginative" response to Musharraf's offer such as reduction of Indian troops in Kashmir, the latter should however be pegged strictly to the levels of violence in Kashmir stemming from support to *jehadi* separatists from the other side of the LoC. Musharraf's move should be viewed as a confidence-building measure, which could set the stage for other confidence-building measures to follow.

THE STATESMAN

21 DEC 2003

Don't get Musharraf wrong: Pak minister

Islamabad: A day after Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf offered to set aside the UN resolutions on plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir for a flexible dialogue with India, his government claimed the General's statement was being misinterpreted.

According to information minister Sheikh Rashid, "He (Musharraf) is not dropping the call for plebiscite, he's saying that we can think of certain other things, we have some alternative proposals."

The minister declined to outline the "alternative proposals", saying that Musharraf would raise them with Indian leaders when "serious talks" are held. "He has them (alternatives) in his mind, when there's serious talks he will talk," Rashid said.

Musharraf's statement has caused a flutter in the political circles here. Even prime minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali, who normally reflects the views of the president, was apparently caught off-guard.

Foreign office spokesman Masood Khan claimed

Musharraf did not delink the UN resolutions from the Kashmir issue. "Both India and Pakistan should find a midway to resolve the issue for durable peace in the region, but only which is acceptable to Kashmiris," he said, quoting Musharraf.

While Musharraf's remarks evoked strong reactions from Islamic and moderate political parties, the Pakistani media was divided, with one section terming it "a new Kashmir paradigm" and another calling it "shocking".

The main opposition came from the hardline Jamat-e-Islami, considered to be a patron of militant groups like Hizbul Mujahideen.

Accusing Musharraf of entering into a "bargain deal" over Kashmir, Jamat chief Qazi Hussain Ahmad said the General was pursuing a dangerous policy.

He said Islamist parties would not allow the military ruler to reverse Pakistan's Kashmir policy. But the US and J&K CM M M Sayeed welcomed Musharraf's statement as a positive development. Agencies

Pervez drops demand for plebiscite

KPI 19/12

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HTC & Reuters
Islamabad/New Delhi,
December 18

Sena digs up pitch again

HT Correspondent
Agra, December 18

SHIV SENNA activists on Wednesday dug up the pitch at the Eklayva Sports Stadium here to disrupt a cricket match between Indian and Pakistani veterans.

Five people who were allegedly involved in the incident were arrested and security tightened at the stadium. The match is scheduled for December 24.

About a dozen Sena men caught the organisers and security staff off guard and entered the stadium at night, probably by scaling a boundary wall. They dug up the pitch and poured oil over it. They left behind a few iron rods. The sainiks said they were acting on the directions of their chief, Bal Thackeray.

Efforts are being made to restore the pitch. The organising committee has asked for improved security. "We are determined to hold the match as per schedule," said Sameer Chaturvedi, the media in-charge of the organising committee.



REUTERS

SAARC SIGNAL The General's move is seen as an 'important signal' before the Saarc summit, where Atal Bihari Vajpayee may grant him a meeting

FIRE AT HOME Major political parties are fuming at the General's proposal, saying he is 'destroying' Pakistan's case on Kashmir

From UN to Simla



IS THIS A SHIFT?

Yes, but a symbolic one. The world has said the UN resolutions are irrelevant. But Pakistan has never publicly said this until now

WHY NOW?

Musharraf needs to bring Kashmir back on the agenda. This will force a response from India. He is also signalling a desire for a full dialogue

proposition that "sustained dialogue requires complete end to terrorism".

Though Musharraf also accused India of being an "intransigent and arrogant" power, which attempted to "coerce" Pakistan, that's being dubbed as normal tactics aimed at his domestic

audience. Political parties in Pakistan have reacted angrily to Musharraf's statement and blamed him for "destroying" Pakistan's case on Kashmir.

While Benazir Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party alleged Musharraf has negated Pakistan's old stance, Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League (N) said it has destroyed Pakistan's "moral, legal and principled standing on Kashmir".

"The UN resolutions are the basis of the Kashmir dispute. Now the General wants to negate our stance. This is not right and will not be acceptable," PPP secretary general Raja Pervez Ashraf told *Hindustan Times*.

"Musharraf is destroying Pakistan's case on Kashmir. We feared he might ditch Kashmir and he did it on December 17. He not only ditched Kashmir, but also betrayed the Pakistani nation. This is a grave injustice," said PML(N) chairman Raja Zafarul Haq.

Former Indian Foreign Secretary J.N. Dixit said Musharraf's offer marked an "important shift in policy". According to Dixit, "He is signifying there will be flexibility in the Pakistani negotiating position."

More reports on Page 5

Bilateral talks depend on Pak's position on trade

By Priya Ranjan Dash
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The possibility of Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee holding bilateral talks with Pakistani leaders on the sidelines of next month's Saarc summit hinges to a large extent on the outcome of a meeting of senior South Asian trade officials in Islamabad on December 22, official sources said here.

The trade officials will make a last-ditch effort to ready a framework agreement for establishing the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) for approval by the Saarc summit in the Pakistan capital on January 10-14. Pakistan's ambivalence on trading with India is the main factor that has held up the agreement, trade diplomats say.

"Much would depend on Pakistan's attitude to free trade with India. In case Islamabad comes around, the prospects for Vajpayee holding bilateral parleys there would be bright indeed," an official said.

Trade diplomats agree that Mr Vajpayee, who envisioned a common currency and borderless common market in South Asia last week, has made no secret of the emphasis he places on Indo-Pak economic ties. A Pakistani gesture, even if made under the SAFTA regional framework, instead of bilaterally, is bound to have a positive impact.

For Pakistan, giving its sworn enemy India the status of a "most favoured nation" (MFN), loosely translated to mean 'sabse pyara mulk,' has been an absolute no-no ever since the 1971 war. Yet, if Islamabad is to take a single important initiative today towards early resumption of the Indo-Pak dialogue, it is giving India the MFN status in trade that could perhaps do the trick.

In international trade, MFN simple means non-discrimination. If Pakistan gives India MFN status, something India has been doing since 1973, it will ensure that goods imported to Pakistan from India are not treated any worse than similar products imported by Pakistan from another country. At present, Pakistan restricts imports from India to a narrow list of 685 items.

"You cannot agree to have a FTA among the South Asian seven, if the second largest economy does not treat goods from the largest even on par, forget giving special FTA concessions," a diplomat said. SAFTA is doomed if Pakistan remains unwilling to free trade with

Vajpayee may meet Musharraf in Islamabad

Islamabad: Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf may have face-to-face encounters at least twice during the three-day Saarc summit to be held here from January 4 to 6, according to the programme being worked out by Pakistani officials in consultation with Saarc member countries.

As per the tentative programme, Mr Vajpayee would arrive in Islamabad on January 3 and leave for home on January 6. Mr Vajpayee and his Pakistani counterpart Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali may come face-to-face from the time the Indian leader lands in Islamabad as the Pakistani Premier is likely to receive him at the airport.

Mr Vajpayee may also have direct encounters with Gen Musharraf during the dinners planned to be hosted for Saarc leaders by the Pakistani President and Prime Minister on January 4 and 5, respectively. PTI

India, he said.

The contradiction in Pakistan's trade policy towards India bilaterally and under the South Asian Preferential Arrangement (SAPTA) cannot be carried forward to SAFTA.

India has extended to Pakistan import duty concessions on 393 items upto the third round of SAPTA, but Pakistan has provided to India similar concessions on only on 248 items. Even among these, 73 are banned from being imported from India.

Officials here have sensed a change in Pakistan's attitude, making possible the recent progress on the fourth round of duty concessions under SAPTA. Pakistan has offered India duty concession on an additional 250 items. But even here, 146 of those items are still not allowed to be imported from India.

Trade diplomats agree with the perception shared by business leaders on both sides of the border, that the Indo-Pak trade volume could touch even \$ 5 billion in a few years in case Pakistan opens up trade. It is at about \$ 250 million a year now. The "informal" trade volume that is indirect trade through third countries like the UAE or Singapore and cross-border smuggling is estimated at \$ 1.5 billion a year.

Test Pak rulers on peace: Benazir

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, December 13

FORMER PAKISTAN Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said on Saturday that Indo-Pak tensions can be reduced only if Pakistan gets a genuine democracy. She urged caution over the "overt" peace statements by Pakistan's military rulers.

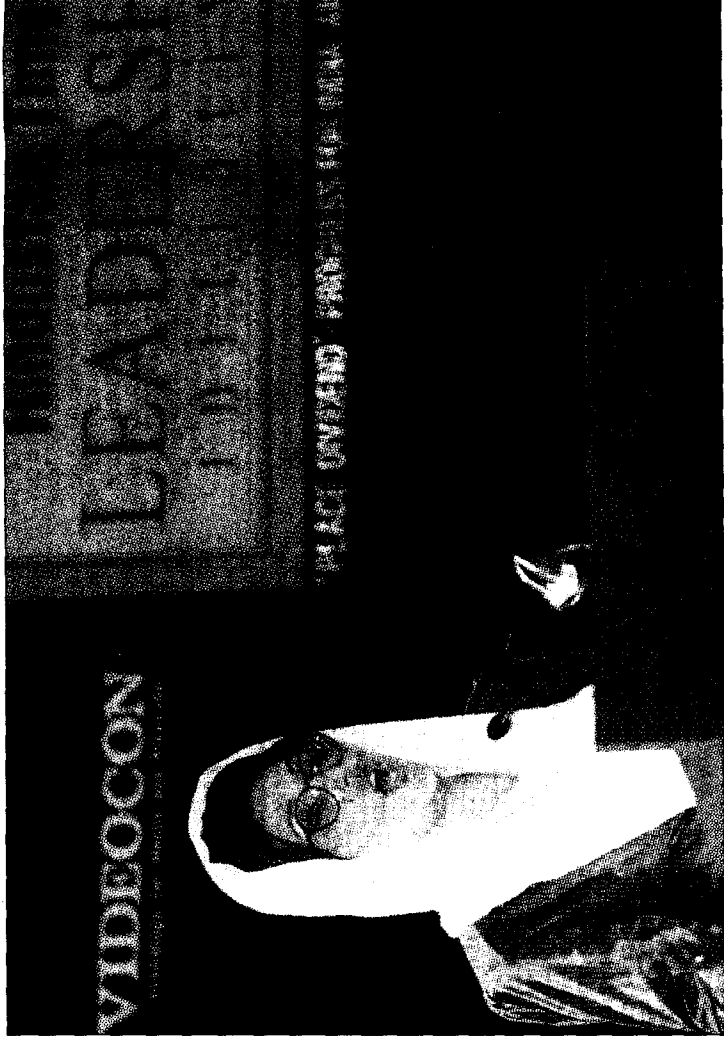
"I'm one of those who believes that democracies do not go to war against other democracies," Benazir said in her keynote address at the "Peace Dividend — Progress for India and South Asia", a conference organised by the *Hindustan Times* Leadership Initiative here. This session of the conference was moderated by Karan Thapar.

Benazir based her observation on the historical record of war between India and Pakistan. "Since Independence, the three wars that took place between India and Pakistan took place under military dictatorships. And since the destabilisation of the democratic government that I led in 1996, India and Pakistan have come close to war three times," she pointed out while claiming credit for initiating landmark steps for peace during her tenures as PM.

She suggested that peace overtures by the military leadership cannot be taken at face value and a dialogue is necessary to test their intentions.

"We believe the military rulers' overt statements for normalisation of relations must be put to test. If it (their intent) is false, they will be exposed before the bar of public opinion. If it is true, the benefit will go to the people in the region," she said.

But while urging caution, Benazir made it clear that her Pakistan People's Party welcomes talks between New Delhi and Islamabad "despite the military



Former Pakistan PM Benazir Bhutto at the *Hindustan Times* Leadership Initiative in New Delhi on Saturday.

dictatorship in my country". People are not happy, she said, with the festering confrontation.

She said the Pakistan Prime Minister's position is presently ceremonial and that the man who wields real power is Pervez Musharraf. She advanced this reasoning to suggest a meeting between Prime Minister Vajpayee and Musharraf when the former visits Islamabad for the Saarc summit. But Benazir refrained from launching a personal attack on the General.

On Kashmir, she said the territorial dispute should not be allowed to hold the Indo-Pak relationship to ransom. This, incidentally, has also been the Indian proposition for a long time. She suggested that there were

Continued on Page 6

Business-speak at the meet



Leadership has to walk in tandem with business and the people at large in order not to end up as specks of radioactive dust. Every unit created enhances economic value by as much as seven times

Anil Ambani
Vice-chairman, Reliance Industries

This is the time for India to take bold decisions. Our financial health is better than ever before. For the next 10 years, India will not face any constraint whatsoever. We are self reliant

Bimal Jalan
Former governor, RBI



If we were to build an integrated supply chain across the region — from cotton bush to shirt — it would do wonders to enhance India's international competitiveness

M.S. Banga
Chairman, Hindustan Lever

The border situation has to be de-escalated. This would change the investment outlook for the region. At present, investors hedge their bets, for there is a risk premium attached to the region

N.K. Singh
Member, Planning Commission



Jamali rebuff

PAKISTAN PRIME Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali said on Friday night that Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee's proposals on a common currency and open borders in South Asia were unrealistic. "It took Europe a long time before they settled for the euro. It is not so easy to do and will take time," he said. Pakistan is pursuing a positive approach towards India to try and settle various issues, including Kashmir, he said.

HTC, Islamabad

SUNIL SAXENA/HT

INTERVIEW | *Benazir Bhutto*

'Peace is not just between govts, but between people'

HP-5

12/12

FORMER PAKISTAN Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has been away from her country for a long time. She wants to return to her country, but is looking for an opportune time. Benazir believes that even out of power, she has a role to play in the peace process. "After all, peace is not just between governments," she told *Yashwant Raj*.

Good to have you back in India again.

Good to be back here. So much has changed since my visit in 2001; that visit was quite controversial. I gave an interview in which I said it was time for Pakistan to ban groups like the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba. That statement of mine was criticised in Islamabad. Subsequently, General (Pervez) Musharraf banned Lashkar. On a personal level, it gives me happiness to be here. I walked into the hall and I found I knew so many people from my last visit. I hope we can all meet in Islamabad.

When is that going to happen?

I hope it happens soon. The politics of exile and imprisonment has been divisive for Pakistan. I believe that this politics of confrontation is leading to instability in the country. Politics of pluralism where dissent is valued and respected gives much more strength to a nation.

You've asked the Pak govt to let you return for the Saarc summit in January. Have you heard from them yet?

I am waiting to hear from the regime. There have been many newspaper articles and intellectuals believe that if peace is truly to be achieved, it needs political legitimacy. I believe I have a role to play



PTI

PEACE PRAYER: Benazir Bhutto at the *mazar* of late Indian President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed in New Delhi on Saturday.

After all, peace is not just between governments; it is between people at large. To create that consensus and domestic legitimacy for the process, my return and that of Nawaz Sharif is important.

Is peace possible without democracy in Pakistan?

History tells us that whenever there has been a military dictatorship, India and Pakistan have gone to war. All the three wars we have fought were during military dictatorship in Pakistan. Since my government was overthrown in 1996 and democracy was destabilised, India and Pakistan have come close to three

conflicts. Yet, I ask myself should I be influenced by history or should I put my hope in the present and the future. Here is an opportunity for dialogue and I think it's important to keep the dialogue process open. It is important to test what the rulers in Islamabad are prepared to do.

Is the military in Pakistan prepared for peace?

This is a very tough question to answer. If you look at Musharraf's statements, he is saying he is ready for peace. Even if the General is sincere, we've seen that in the last four years, our countries have come near to conflict.

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ISI agent held in Delhi *on*

By Our Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI, DEC. 7. An agent of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) of Pakistan has been arrested by the Crime Branch of the Delhi police on the charge of trying to set up a base for terrorists in the Capital. According to the police, the Military Intelligence tipped-off the Crime Branch about the presence of an ISI agent in northwest Delhi. Following investigations, a police team arrested the accused, identified as Rashid Qureshi (45) from Samaipur Badli on December 5. A fake passport, which had the visa stamp of Pakistan, and some other incriminating documents were recovered from his possession.

During his joint interrogation, Rashid, a permanent resident of Uri in Jammu and Kashmir, revealed that he had earlier worked at Subzi Mandi here for several years since 1978 and hence had

a good knowledge of the Capital. In the course of time, Rashid went back to Kashmir and began working as a guide to people crossing the border. He also began working for terrorists and helped them in smuggling arms and ammunition.

The police said Rashid had worked for the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HuM), Tahrik-ul-Jehad and other militant outfits. The Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime), Deependra Pathak, said Rashid, an illiterate, managed to make quite a name for himself among the terrorist outfits for his resourcefulness and went on to meet ISI officers. Rashid told the police that he had a huge consignment of arms and ammunition dumped somewhere in Kashmir and was looking for a motivated group which could come to Delhi and utilise it for attacking vital installations. Mr. Pathak said a team was being sent to Kashmir to unearth the consignment.

Pak C'wealth re-entry not easy: PM

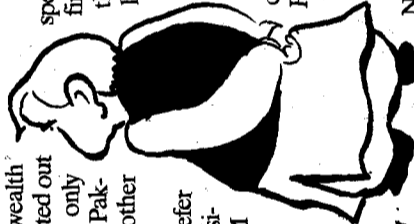
KAMLENDRA KANWAR
ON BOARD THE PM'S AIRCRAFT,
DECEMBER 5

JUST hours after he confirmed his participation in next month's SAARC summit in Islamabad, Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee on Thursday opined that it would be difficult for Pakistan to gain re-entry into the Commonwealth.

While speaking to newsmen just before taking off from New Delhi for Nigerian capital Abuja to

attend the Commonwealth summit, Vajpayee pointed out that India wasn't the only country opposed to Pakistan's re-entry. Many other countries felt the same.

Asked if he would prefer to meet Pakistan President Musharraf or PM Jamali when he goes for the SAARC summit next month, Vajpayee skirted the question and said, "It depends on them."



A Foreign Office spokesperson said Vajpayee confirmed his participation in the SAARC summit in a letter to Jamali which was delivered to the Pakistan Foreign Office. The PM's letter was in response to an invite he received on August 6. The PM, his spirits buoyed by the BJP's Assembly feat, attributed it to people's acceptance of the NDA's policies.

Earlier Vajpayee, in a statement, said the Abuja summit provides an opportunity for the Commonwealth to ponder on important developmental questions that today engage developing democracies as they grapple with the challenge of globalisation.

"Though I will not be in Abuja for the entire duration of the summit, I expect to have the opportunity to interact with a fairly wide cross-section of Commonwealth leaders," he said.

The PM said he was happy

Nigeria was hosting the summit. "Nigeria is one of India's most important friends in Africa besides being our largest trading partner in the continent. We have a longstanding association in the NAM and in the struggle against colonialism and Apartheid."

We share the political values of democracy, human freedom and the rule of law. As democracies, we face similar transnational threats from terrorism, drug-trafficking, arms smuggling and money laundering."

Vajpayee's experiment with Pakistan

By C. Raja Mohan

The best way for India to take the peace process forward is to focus on unilateral actions.

AS THE Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee rolls the dice a third time on building peace with Pakistan, many questions about the renewed peace process are being raised. Is Mr. Vajpayee determined to let his quixotic hopes triumph over experience? Has he learnt nothing from the past failures at Lahore in 1999 and Agra in 2001? On what basis has Mr. Vajpayee decided to trust the President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf, all over again? Any number of people, including his Cabinet colleagues, are urging Mr. Vajpayee not to be starry-eyed about his second trip to Pakistan as Prime Minister. While prudence must indeed be part of Mr. Vajpayee's baggage to Islamabad, there is no reason why he should give up his penchant for the bold and the instinctive in dealing with Pakistan. It is the willingness to gamble that has made Mr. Vajpayee such an exciting foreign policy strategist and has allowed him to produce so many breakthroughs in Indian diplomacy in recent years.

Caution and boldness are competing imperatives. But if he can combine them in the right amount, Mr. Vajpayee may finally come up with that elusive formula for sustainable progress towards normalisation of relations with Pakistan. Mr. Vajpayee knows that too much caution will degenerate into political timidity and too rapid a pace could make one trip over oneself. He is convinced that he must continue to experiment with Pakistan. As he often says, "you can choose your friends but not your neighbours". Therefore, his logic continues, "you must try and make friends with your neighbours".

The Indian decision to re-engage Gen. Musharraf again after the failure of the Agra summit in July 2001 is based on one simple judgment. That the Army in Pakistan remains the only force capable of delivering on a sustainable peace process. But can India really bank on the Pakistan Army and its current leadership that was responsible for sabotaging the peace process initiated at Lahore and which refused to clinch a reasonable deal in Agra? Mr. Vajpayee's decision to play ball with Gen. Musharraf is obviously based on the changed international environment after September 11 and the new constraints on using terror as an instrument of state policy. It is also perhaps rooted in the assumption that Gen. Musharraf is fighting too many battles and some respite with

India might indeed be welcome. What matters now is whether the process moves forward and not the sagacity of the Indian judgment.

Just as the presumed tension between caution and boldness can often be over-stated, the debate on Gen. Musharraf's intentions could be an unproductive one. To the sceptics in New Delhi, the President of Pakistan is merely demonstrating tactical flexibility in responding positively to Mr. Vajpayee's peace initiative. While the question on what drives Gen. Musharraf may be important in an academic sense, it is not of much help in shaping India's immediate approach to Islamabad. And in any case, this question cannot be answered definitively. Those in the security establishment who prefer a 'do-nothing' policy towards Pakistan would insist the shift is not strategic. And those who suggest it might be otherwise will find it difficult to prove their case.

The discussion in New Delhi about reading Gen. Musharraf's positive response can never be resolved to the satisfaction of the sceptics. The emphasis of the optimists, then, must lie not in certifying Gen. Musharraf's intentions. It must rest on the argument that India must pursue its interests without a reference to individual or institutional intentions on the other side. If New Delhi focusses on a set of outcomes of interest to itself, and Islamabad is willing to respond to them positively, there is no reason to debate until death the question of intentions of the interlocutor. Indian strategy towards Pakistan must now move decisively on the basis of actions on the ground but not proclaimed intentions.

The judgment on whether the new signals from Pakistan are opportunistic or genuine can only be made half way through the process rather than at the beginning. Meanwhile, every advance in Indo-Pakistani cooperation, however minor it may be, creates conditions for additional movement forward. The Indian stress in the next few weeks must be on making progress on small steps that will generate the mutual confidence necessary to take more substantive steps. Until recently there was very little trust to go by.

As new proposals for confidence-

building measures fly fast and furious in the next few weeks and media hype about Mr. Vajpayee's trip to Islamabad begins to build up, it is important that Indian decision-makers maintain a cool head. The emphasis in New Delhi must be on an unsentimental engagement intensely focussed on outcomes rather than on expectations of goodwill. India must also be fully prepared for surprises that could derail the process at any moment. New Delhi needs to keep an eye on the complex political dynamics within Pakistan and understand the limitations on the leadership in Islamabad.

And the best way for India to take the peace process forward is to focus on unilateral actions. Any suggestion of unilateral initiatives raises hackles among diplomatists. After all, reciprocity and measure for measure are the bread and butter of traditional diplomacy. But unilateralism has always been part of the tool kit of diplomacy. Although it is rarely used, it can be effective in clearing clogged channels of communication and generation of minimal trust so necessary to conduct any normal business between nation-states.

Mr. Vajpayee's unilateral decision to offer the hand of friendship to Pakistan certainly cleared the air in April. While the emphasis on a step-by-step process almost derailed the initiative, the renewed package of confidence-building measures offered by India in October injected a fresh momentum. After rejecting the initiative, Pakistan resorted to unilateral actions on putting in place a ceasefire along the frontier in Jammu and Kashmir and in offering overflight rights broke the stalemate. So long as the idea of ceasefire was a proposal to be negotiated, India did not accept it. When Gen. Musharraf proposed the ceasefire last August and before that when the idea was mooted by the Anglo-American powers in March, New Delhi pooh-poohed it. But once it was implemented unilaterally by Pakistan, India had no choice but to respond positively. Similarly the two sides could have gone on carrying unproductive negotiations on restoration of air links. Gen. Musharraf saw the virtue in avoiding this trap and unleashed a diplomatic coup by uni-

laterally and unconditionally restoring the air links.

Can this unilateralism be taken forward in the next few weeks before Mr. Vajpayee arrives in Islamabad? One good unilateral step should lead to another. It is India's turn now to come up with a new set of proposals and actions that could further ease the tension between the two nations. Sceptics would argue that the political traffic between New Delhi and Islamabad might not be able to bear such a load. But the reality is that India and Pakistan have so thoroughly institutionalised cussedness in their bilateral dealings that it is possible to make a series of competitive unilateral actions on a range of issues. The easiest place for such a 'race in CBMs' lies in returning badly needed civility to our bilateral relations. Whether it is the treatment of each other's diplomats or the citizens, India and Pakistan have covered themselves with extraordinary disgrace. Greater connectivity, relaxation of visa procedures and creation of humane conditions at the border crossings could create the atmosphere for a more substantive discussion of more difficult issues. Unilateral actions are also easy on the economic front. Without insisting on reciprocity or the granting of minimum trading privileges, India could unilaterally open up its market for the import of Pakistani goods and services.

In focussing on CBMs, India should make sure to avoid the impression that it wants to sidestep the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir. As it prepares to move the peace process forward in the next few days, New Delhi must lay special emphasis on Kashmir-related CBMs. A range of measures like the unilateral reduction of troops in Jammu and Kashmir linked to the progress in the reduction of violence could make a big impact on both sides of the divide in Kashmir. India could also offer to open up additional transportation links across the Line of Control in the State. Many imaginative ideas on creating cross-LoC linkages in Jammu and Kashmir between peoples and institutions that can help improve the conditions of the people in the State are indeed feasible. These could relate to environment and water management to state only a few. By putting across such an agenda, India will ensure that its interlocutors in Pakistan have a real stake in sustaining the current peace process.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2003

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SURPRISING TURNAROUND

3/12

THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN India and Pakistan to revive direct air links and overflights from January 1 on a reciprocal basis is significant not only for the effect it will have on the process of normalisation of relations but also for the manner in which it was accomplished. The accord on air travel has set the tone for purposeful discussions on restarting the Samjhauta Express and generated some momentum behind proposals for a ferry service between Mumbai and Karachi and a rail or road link between Sindh and Rajasthan. New Delhi also appears ready to respond positively to Islamabad's proposals for an increase in the capacities on its flights to New Delhi and Mumbai and for adding new destinations. While the substantive follow-up to the air accord will occur only over time, it was significant that the two countries displayed a rare willingness to resolve swiftly a dispute that had appeared intractable till the eve of the talks. For more than a year, Pakistan had quite unreasonably been insisting on an Indian guarantee that it would not unilaterally suspend overflight facilities. India could not surrender its sovereign rights over airspace but it was in no position to force Pakistan to open its skies either. In these circumstances, it appeared that the second round of talks on Monday would suffer the same fate as the unsuccessful negotiations held in August. However, the meeting turned out to be cordial once Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf had made the surprising but welcome decision to drop that condition.

Pakistan's abrupt turnaround can be interpreted in three ways. A cynical view would be that Pakistan has little to lose and much to gain by adopting a pro-peace posture at the current juncture. Its decision on air links and overflights came mere days after its unilateral offer of a ceasefire along the Line of Control and after it indicated a willingness to explore the feasibility of a bus ser-

vice between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad. These positive signals were made at a time of the year when Pakistan's ability to assist militants in Kashmir is restricted because of adverse weather conditions. The Pakistan Government stands to win the approbation of the international community even if it declines to take pro-active measures against militant groups. A Vajpayee Government that will be readying for elections next summer will not be in a position to offer concessions in this period. These circumstances would enable Islamabad to reinvigorate the militancy after the Himalayan snow melts even as it attributes any future deterioration in the situation to Indian obduracy. The second assessment, which cannot be ruled out, is that Pakistan has finally concluded it can no longer afford the costs of constant confrontation with India. General Musharraf's call for joint ventures between entrepreneurs of the two countries could indicate a genuine change in attitude. Thirdly, Pakistan might have taken on board the advice from friendly countries that its entrenched animosity towards India is not in its interest.

Whatever the driving force, the developments augur well for the SAARC summit in Islamabad next month. Pakistan, which has vested much prestige in this event, hopes that the measures it has taken will make for more than a problem-free summit. Its leaders have repeatedly expressed the hope that recent developments will induce Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to initiate talks on substantive issues when he meets them on the sidelines of the summit. Their hopes might not be fulfilled. However, India must do its bit to broaden the relationship with Pakistan since it has always recognised that the establishment of mutual confidence and trust will create the conditions in which the contentious issues can be addressed.

THE HINDU

3 DEC 2003

2003

AIR LINKS, OVERFLIGHTS FROM NEW YEAR

India, Pakistan reach accord

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, DEC. 1. India and Pakistan have agreed to resume simultaneous air links and overflights from January 1 on a reciprocal basis, a joint press statement issued by the two sides said this afternoon.

Status quo on the civil aviation front will be restored exactly two years after the ban imposed by India on overflights and direct air links from January 1, 2002 to convey its displeasure to Pakistan over the December 13, 2001 terrorist attack on the Parliament House.

The agreement was reached on the very first day of what were supposed to be two-day "technical level" talks between civil aviation officials of the two countries. The statement issued after the meeting said the talks were held in a "cordial and friendly atmosphere."

"In pursuance of the announcement made by the President of Pakistan [Pervez Musharraf] on November 30, 2003, the two sides agreed to resume simultaneous air links and overflights with effect from January 1, 2004 on a reciprocal basis.

"This also completes the operationalisation of the proposal

made by the Prime Minister of India in May this year for resumption of civil aviation links between the two countries," it said.

According to the statement, India agreed to a Pakistani request to use larger aircraft, up to Boeing 747 capacity, by the carriers of the two countries. "Both sides also agreed to hold further discussions to update the exist-

ing bilateral Air Services Agreement at a mutually convenient date."

The Pakistani side is said to have proposed increasing the frequency of flights that are permitted at the moment between India and Pakistan as well as adding another point of destination. Chennai is the additional destination proposed by the Pakistanis.

Let's pull out troops: Musharraf

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 1. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, has said that his country was ready to withdraw its 50,000 troops from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) if India pulled out its 70,000 forces from Kashmir.

He was answering questions in a BBC Radio programme 'Talking Point' tonight.

Gen. Musharraf said nothing was going to happen overnight following the recent peace moves by India and Pakistan. "The steps both the countries have taken recently are just a beginning towards establish-

ing a long-lasting peace in South Asia."

He said he had no objection to meeting the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, on the sidelines of the SAARC summit. To another question, the President said he would consider conferring the country's highest national award Nishan-e-Pakistan on Mr. Vajpayee if any progress was made on the Kashmir issue. He denied that Pakistan was harbouring any terrorists sought by India, saying if New Delhi had any substantive evidence on the presence of terrorists on Pakistani soil it should provide details.

THE HINDU

2003
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India should resume dialogue on all issues, says Pakistan

gwpk 10.11 2/12

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 1. Pakistan asserted today that after its two unilateral goodwill gestures — ceasefire and the lifting of the ban on overflights — India should not have any excuses on resumption of the dialogue on all issues, including the “core” issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman, Masood Khan, told reporters at the weekly news briefing that the objective behind the unilateral gestures by Islamabad was to “jump start” the dialogue process. At the same time there was neither “any assurance nor guarantee” from India on coming to the negotiating table.

When journalists wanted to know why Pakistan reversed its stand on ceasefire and overflights, he asked: “What is the principal stand of Pakistan that has been reversed?” His contention was that Islamabad had to change the “prism” in view of India’s “rigid stand.”

Asked whether Pakistan had been given any assurance that India would respond in kind to what he called “gestures of goodwill,” Mr. Khan said no assurance had been given. However, he said Islamabad hoped New Delhi would reciprocate the gesture and come to the negotiating table. He said

his country wanted the confidence-building measures to lead to a composite dialogue.

However, while responding to a question whether the ceasefire was against the interests of “freedom fighters”, he said Pakistan would never compromise on its principled stand on the Kashmir issue.

“Yes, the recent peace initiatives are hopes and not guarantees,” he said. When asked why Parliament was not taken into confidence, he said that it was not necessary that the President should consult every step with Parliament.

“The President took the decision on behalf of the federation of Pakistan.”

Mr. Khan said that Pakistan had not set any duration for the ceasefire being observed, as it wanted it to be indefinite.

He denied reports that Pakistan agreed to the ceasefire after a lot of “persuasion” and said he was not aware of the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s statement to that effect.

He did not agree with the suggestion of a journalist that the move to lift the ban on overflights unilaterally was a concession but said it was “gesture of goodwill”. “Had President General Musharraf not taken this decision, the technical-level talks between air officials of the two countries held in New

Delhi on Monday would have collapsed.” Mr. Khan rejected the suggestion that the United States had been putting pressure, as the ban was creating a problem for Washington to directly engage India in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. “I can tell you there was no pressure whatsoever from any quarter and we don’t yield to pressures,” he said.

On SAARC, Mr. Khan said that there were indications that Mr. Vajpayee would attend the coming summit to be held in Islamabad in January.

About the “bugging” of the Pakistan High Commission in London by British MI 5, the spokesman said that no progress had been made, as the British Government was still tight-lipped about it. He said that if the British Government did not respond to Pakistan’s concerns it would have to “face the consequences”.

He refuted the statement by the Afghanisthan President, Hamid Karzai, that the exclusive leader of the former Taliban regime, Mullah Muhammad Omar, was recently sighted in Quetta.

The Afghan Government should desist from issuing such statements and if they had any evidence regarding the presence of Al-Qaeda and Taliban elements they should provide it to Pakistan.

THE HINDU

2 DEC 2003

INDIA MUST SHOW DESIRE TO MOVE FORWARD: MUSHARRAF

Pakistan to allow overflights

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, NOV. 30. On the eve of the second round of talks between India and Pakistan scheduled in New Delhi on the resumption of overflight facilities and airlinks, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, announced here today that as a "gesture of goodwill" Pakistan would allow Indian flights over its air space.

The declaration by Gen. Musharraf ends the 17-month row between Islamabad and New Delhi. India suspended overflight facilities and airlinks with Pakistan from January 1, 2002 in the wake of the December 13, 2001 Parliament attack.

The revival of airlinks was one of the two proposals first mooted by the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, in his statement to Parliament days after his Srinagar peace initiative on April 17/18. But Pakistan remained unmoved at the first round of talks held in the last week of August in Rawalpindi.

The announcement by Gen. Musharraf today is the third in the series of confidence-building measures (CBMs) vis-à-vis India, and should go a long way in creating the feel-good factor before the SAARC sum-

mit scheduled here from January 4 to 6. Earlier measures were the ban on proscribed militant and sectarian outfits and the unilateral ceasefire along the Line of Control.

The Pakistan President chose to make public the gesture on overflights at an interactive session he had with a group of young Indian businesspersons. He reiterated that CBMs should lead to a concrete dialogue and the recent thaw between the two countries should lead to the resolution of all disputes including Kashmir.

He told the businesspersons that the recent CBMs by Pakistan and India should be a starting point and not an end point of the process that must be taken to its culmination in the interest of peace and development of South Asia.

He said Pakistan would formally convey its agreement on resuming overflights in Monday's talks on the subject between the Pakistani and Indian officials in New Delhi. Gen. Musharraf told them that the visiting delegation would be the first to fly out of Pakistan to India.

The delegation, which arrived via the Wagha border on Saturday, is scheduled to visit Karachi tomorrow.

Gen. Musharraf said that at the first stage, the two countries should start a dialogue. At the second, they should accept the importance and centrality of resolution of the Kashmir issue.

At the third, the two countries should eliminate whatever was unacceptable to Pakistan, India and the people of Kashmir. At the fourth and last stage, they should solve the dispute in a way which was acceptable to the three parties, he said. "This is Pakistan's approach and it is flexible."

Focus on modalities: Page 13

India hails announcement

By Our Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI, NOV. 30. India has welcomed the announcement by the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, that Islamabad will agree to both overflights and landing rights for Indian aircraft. The External Affairs Ministry spokesman said late tonight that India looked forward to the success outcome of the "technical talks" between civil aviation officials of the two countries on Monday and Tuesday.

Vajpayee willin' if Jamali proposes

New Year date for flights to restart

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Dec. 1: India and Pakistan today agreed to resume air links and allow overflights after a two-year halt, laying the ground for Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to travel to Islamabad next month for a Saarc meeting.

Air links between two estranged neighbours will resume from January 1, 2004. The two nations also agreed to lift restrictions on the type of passenger aircraft to be flown and will hold another round of talks to update their existing bilateral aviation agreement.

The pact — hammered out at a four-hour-long meeting between officials of the two nations — follows Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's offer yesterday to end a ban on Indian flights over Pakistani territory. Air links between India and Pakistan were severed in January last year after the December 2001 attack on Parliament.

Earlier this year, talks on resuming air links had snapped over Pakistan's refusal to grant India overflight facilities. Indian officials had been afraid that Pakistan would remain intransigent over this issue and the current round of talks, too, would turn into a flop show.

However, Pakistan seems to have decided to go along with India's demand to smooth the way for Vajpayee's travel to Islamabad for the Saarc summit being held from January 4 to 6.

"Both sides agreed to hold further discussions to update the existing bilateral air services agreement at a mutually convenient date," a statement issued at the end of today's meeting said.

Indian officials were led by Satinder Singh, the director-general of civil aviation, while the



Director-general of civil aviation Satinder Singh with Pakistani Major General Mohammad Ashraf Chaudhry ahead of their meeting in Delhi. (Reuters)

Pakistanis were led by Major General Mohammad Ashraf Chaudhry.

Before the decision to halt flights snapped aviation ties between the two countries, Indian Airlines (IA) used to operate a flight connecting Mumbai with Karachi. IA also used to operate a Delhi-Lahore flight in the past.

Negotiations later this month will decide which routes will be re-opened or whether both routes and possibly new routes to Indian cities like Hyderabad and to the Pakistani capital

Islamabad will be allowed.

An IA official spokesperson said: "We never shut down our Karachi office and our man in Lahore is still there."

Top civil aviation ministry officials said India had stressed on resumption of overflight facilities to connect Afghanistan and Delhi-Lahore flight in the past. Ministry officials said they have ordered IA to be ready to resume operations to Pakistan from New Year's Day.

Pakistan had more to lose if this pact had remained elusive

as all its flights to the Southeast and East Asia turn costlier by avoiding India and flying over Sri Lanka. "But till now they had been willing to lose money to spite us," officials said.

Analysts feel Pakistan has consistently refused to agree to overflight facilities, fearing India will increase its influence over Afghanistan by opening direct trade through the air route. Pakistan currently denies India direct road links to the Central Asian nation, affecting trade and relief work.

Delhi tempers fallout of meet

PRANAY SHARMA AND IMTIAZ GUL

New Delhi/Islamabad, Dec. 1: Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and his Pakistani counterpart Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali might meet for an exclusive session during next month's Saarc summit in Islamabad if the host country makes such a request.

"After all, Pakistan will be the host nation and if it makes such a request it will be improper on our part to turn it down," sources in Delhi said.

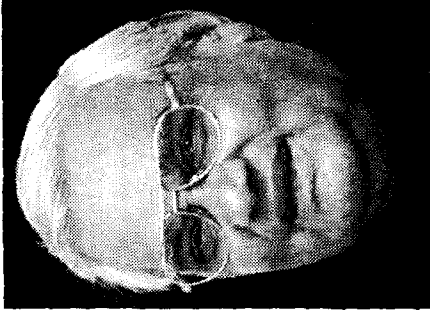
The sources, however, stressed that such a meeting should not be seen as the beginning of the stalled dialogue between the neighbours. "If the two leaders meet, they would probably discuss when official-level talks between India and Pakistan could begin," they said.

Delhi also said that if such a meeting does take place, it would not be at the highest political level.

Traditionally, South Asian leaders meet each other on the sidelines of the Saarc summit. A few days ago, Vajpayee had said he would meet "everybody in Pakistan".

Although no decision has been taken on the meeting, the slight shift in India's position has come after Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf yesterday indicated that Islamabad would lift the ban on Indian flights through Pakistani airspace. Delhi has been saying that successful completion of the talks on air links would be the first test of Pakistan's desire for peace with India.

Air links between the two countries, snapped since the December 2001 Parliament attack, would resume from January 1. This was informally decided between Indian and Pakistani civil aviation officials who began two-day talks here this morning. The two sides are to work out the modalities of flight landings and overflight facilities.



Vajpayee, Jamali

"It is a breakthrough after months of inaction," Pakistan foreign office spokesman Mansoor Khan said. But he added that Islamabad has dropped the proposal "for a mechanism that would ensure unilateral or abrupt suspension of overflight facility in future by India" to find out a "mutually acceptable ground for resumption of air links". Suspension of the facility had caused inconvenience to travellers besides huge financial losses to airlines, asserted the spokesman.

The question bothering South Block is how relations between the two sides would progress once the summit is successfully held.

Ceasefire helps intensify fencing work along the Line of Control

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By Shujaat Bukhari

LALPUL (URI), NOV. 30. The Id ceasefire has not only brought relief to the thousands of residents living along the Line of Control (LoC). It has also come as a boon to the Army in intensifying the fencing work.

The Uri sector covers 54 kilometres of the LoC of which fencing work has been completed in 32 kilometres. The rest of the work is likely to be completed by spring.

The Armymen have been braving bullets to take the material to the mountainous border. Now the work is going on in broad daylight in full view of the Pakistani posts across the border. Unlike the International Border (IB), which has taken a number of casualties during fencing, the work on the LoC which started in May this year has been going on without fanfare. Senior Army officers admit

that the ceasefire has come as a relief as far as the work is concerned. "Due to continuous shelling from across the border, it was difficult to carry on the work smoothly," an officer said. Now that the situation is different, the workers are taking the fencing material on to the heights without any problem.

This is one of the most challenging tasks, as the terrain is difficult in the LoC and the line is not straight like the IB. Initially, the idea of fencing the LoC seemed to be impracticable but when it was drawn at the cost of Rs. 5,000 crores and work started in some areas, the Government decided to go ahead.

"This was the most objectionable project for Pakistan and they have been making all efforts to derail it by resorting to shelling almost everyday in the entire area of the LoC," the officer told *The Hindu*.

But with ceasefire in place at least for next two months (till the SAARC summit is held), the work will pick up pace and "we will be ahead of the schedule."

The General Officer Commanding of the Northern Command, Hari Prasad, also maintained that the work was on without any delay. "It will be completed by June 2004 except in the Gurez sector where the work could be stretched up to December next year."

The Army is confident of preventing infiltration from the other side. It is not only the fencing, which is being put in place to keep the Pakistan-trained militant at bay, but also the thermal images and ground sensors, which, according to reports, have been imported from the United States. The thermal images are of great help to the Army in tracking the movement of infiltrators. It can detect movement of men up to three kilometres in complete darkness. Ground sensors, installed last year, are also of great

help to thwart infiltration. The fencing is likely to be done in 80 percent of the 778 kilometres of the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir. The work is on the verge of completion on 198 kilometres of the IB. However, there is no proposal to put any fencing along the Actual Ground Position Line, which runs through 110 kilometres, mostly on the Siachen glacier in Ladakh region. The fencing on the LoC, the officials say, is going to be different from the IB in Rajasthan, Punjab and Jammu, where it is 10 to 16 feet high. Here the maximum height is not going to cross eight feet and will not have three layers with a large amount of Constantine wire in between. Interestingly, a militant organisation has blamed Pakistan for facilitating the fencing from the Indian side on the LoC by announcing the ceasefire. This is aimed at stopping the movement of Mujahideen between the two parts of Kashmir, a statement from the outfit said.

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INDIA WELCOMES ANNOUNCEMENT ■ VAJPAYEE-JAMALI MEETING CONFIRMED

Musharraf lifts overflight ban

SNS & Agencies

NEW DELHI, Nov. 30. — The thaw in relations between India and Pakistan appears to be happening almost faster than either of the principals can handle.

On the eve of the scheduled India-Pakistan technical talks on the resumption of air links in New Delhi, Pakistan's President Gen. Pervez Musharraf announced in Islamabad

today that Pakistan would end a ban on Indian flights over its territory while the Indian external affairs minister, Mr Yashwant Sinha, said Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee would meet his counterpart, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, when in Islamabad.

"As a gesture of goodwill, Pakistan will agree to the resumption of overflights with India in the talks being held in New Delhi," APP quoted Gen. Mushar-

raf as saying. Gen. Musharraf expressed the hope that the "recent thaw" between India and Pakistan would "culminate in the resolution of all disputes between the two countries."

The announcement comes a week after Mr Jamali offered a ceasefire along the LoC. India responded positively, and a ceasefire has been in place since Wednesday all along the LoC, the International Border and the actual ground posi-

tion line at Siachen in J&K.

In an interview to a private TV channel today, Mr Sinha confirmed that Mr



Vajpayee would meet Mr Jamali in Islamabad when he visits that city in January for the Saarc summit. But,

he clarified, this would not be a "summit" on bilateral issues as India wants the composite dialogue with Pakistan to commence bottom up not top down.

According to senior officials, India's position is that any serious composite bilateral dialogue would commence from the official level upward. The level at which talks would be held has yet to be decided, officials said. Any movement forward on a bilater-

al dialogue would depend on action taken by Pakistan to curb cross-border infiltration and terrorism, officials said.

Today's announcement of an end to the ban on overflights, essentially agreeing to India's demand, would place some pressure on Delhi to agree to begin talks across the table, analysts said. It is also intended to create the "correct positive ambience" for a successful Saarc summit. It

would also allow civil aviation officials of both countries to work out details like when to commence aviation links, suspended after the attack on Parliament two years ago.

A six-member Pakistani delegation is already in Delhi for the second round of technical talks. India tonight welcomed Gen. Musharraf's announcement that Pakistan will lift the ban on Indian flights over its airspace.

1 DEC 2003

Ceasefire monitor 'in good faith'

Watchdog to tail finger on trigger

SUJAN DUTTA

New Delhi, Nov. 29: A structure to monitor the ceasefire along the Line of Control with Pakistan is being shaped "in good faith" in the absence of an independent authority to keep a check on activities across the boundary.

This is, in a sense, the second time in three years that a ceasefire effort is on along the LoC. In November 2000, the Indian Army had stopped firing under a plan called NICO (non-initiation of combat operations).

A highly placed source in the defence establishment said Delhi has approached the ceasefire with a "patient outlook". The directors-general of military operations of India and Pakistan are understood to have been told that "one or two" minor incidents of firing should not be treated as a violation of the ceasefire. The DGMOs would be asked for an assessment after two weeks.

As of now, in the three days since the guns fell silent on the LoC, barring a solitary incident of small-arms firing from the Mumtaz border outpost (Pakistan's) on the Jammu border, there is no report of a transgression.

On the Indian side, the Border Security Force's 14 battalions on the Line of Control have been placed under the operational command of the army.

This is a technicality since the BSF battalions on the LoC have almost always acted in consort with the army. The army has an estimated 90 infantry battalions along the 740-km LoC.

BSF director-general Ajai Raj Sharma said here today that flag meetings between commanders on the field can be held with the

DGMO's permission if questions arose from an incident of firing. The Indian position is that its forces will fire on infiltrators and such action should not be seen as a violation of the ceasefire.

"Personally, I am a bit more optimistic about it (the ceasefire) this time," Sharma said. "If peace talks have to take place in January, the ceasefire will have to continue even though the past is not really very encouraging."

The BSF will continue to remain a nodal agency in counter-insurgency operations in the Kashmir Valley. He estimated that there were between 2,500 and 3,000 armed militants inside Jammu and Kashmir.

Sharma also said that within hours of the ceasefire coming into effect, the BSF moved men and materiel to work on a fence along the International Boundary in Jammu. Part of the boundary here is disputed by Pakistan, which refers to it as a "working boundary".

The fencing work was earlier entrusted to the Central Public Works Department, which cried off because of the firing. During the ceasefire, Sharma said, it would be possible for the BSF to work on the fence at thrice the speed.

Of the 180 km earmarked for fencing, only 87 km have been done so far. Part of the stretch has also been floodlit like the borders in Punjab and Rajasthan.

EU nudge

New Delhi, Nov. 29: India's largest trading partner, the European Union, today said tensions with Pakistan are an obstacle to Delhi playing a bigger role in world politics, reports our special correspondent.

Welcoming the ceasefire and other steps the neighbours have proposed to normalise relations, the EU has urged India and Pakistan to sort out their problems. The EU stand indicates that there is widespread expectation that the current peace process would soon lead to resumption of dialogue.

"India is a giant, not only in terms of its growing economy but also in terms of the role it could play in world politics," EU president Romano Prodi said. But he added: "India's lingering tension with Pakistan is one of the biggest obstacles to the role Delhi could play in strengthening regional cooperation and peace in the Asian continent." (See Page 6)

Indian troops to shoot at infiltrators

Sinha puts Pak on firing test

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PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, Nov. 28: India said today while it would not fire at Pakistani troops to maintain the ceasefire agreed to by the two sides on Wednesday, it would not hesitate to shoot at infiltrators from across the border. If and when that happens, India expects Pakistan not to return fire to maintain peace along the Line of Control.

"Infiltration is also violation of the LoC. And we would do everything to maintain the sanctity of the LoC," foreign minister Yashwant Sinha told **The Telegraph**.

He added: "We hope that when the Indian security forces deal with such violations there will be no retaliatory fire by Pakistan."

Sinha expressed hope that this time the ceasefire would hold. "But when I say this I mean that the Indian security forces would hold their fire against the Pakistani troops on the other side and not the infiltrators who are trying to sneak in."

He pointed out that it was not the infiltration figure that was important, but to see on the ground whether or not Pakistan was taking steps to stop militants from crossing over.

If the next five to six weeks pass smoothly without any major violence in Kashmir and Pakistan takes verifiable steps to dis-



include all outstanding issues, including Kashmir
PERVEZ MUSHARRAF

The composite dialogue, when it starts, will be at the official level — joint or foreign secretary. And then we will move on to the summit



KANWAL SIBAL

tance itself from militants based on its soil and active in Kashmir, there is a possibility that the Indian and Pakistani Prime Ministers would meet in Islamabad in early January.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee is scheduled to travel to Islamabad for the Saarc summit from January 4 to 6. Yesterday, the Prime Minister did not rule out the possibility of a one-to-one meeting with his Pakistani counterpart Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali.

Foreign secretary Kanwal Sibal wound down expectations.

The recent peace overtures must lead to a composite dialogue between the two countries to

"I don't think one should read too much into what has been said because no one in government has said that the resumed dialogue with Pakistan would be at the summit level," he told a TV channel today.

Foreign ministry officials said India-Pakistan relations were fraught with "unpredictability" and, therefore, developments during the next month or so were extremely crucial.

The first test of Pakistan's intention to normalise relations will occur during the civil aviation talks scheduled to begin in Delhi on December 1. Technical experts will discuss restoration of air links that were snapped in the wake of the attack on Parliament on December 13, 2001.

The first round of talks collapsed because Pakistan refused to give overflight facilities to India without Delhi's commitment that in the future it would not take unilateral steps to snap air links.

If the aviation talks are completed successfully, India is likely to announce some more proposals to normalise relations, provided that Kashmir and the LoC are quiet.

In the winter months, the passes along the LoC get blocked by heavy snowfall and infiltration drops. It picks up again after the snow melts. But Indian officials said though infiltration reduces, it does not altogether cease.

29 NOV 1971

'Indo-Pak fire won't cease for 15 yrs'

Special Authority in New Delhi

Nov. 28. — Peace with Pakistan in our time? Hopes raised by the Id cease-fire find little reflection in the Indian armed forces' assessment of the subcontinental situation. The defence forces' long-term perspective plan foresees war-like situation for another decade-and-a-half.

The plan, which attempts to show what India's threat perceptions will be in 2017, is being looked at by the three chiefs of staff. Once the Chiefs of Staff Committee accepts it, the plan will be placed before defence minister Mr George Fernandes and other members of the government.

Senior armed forces officials said the Pakistan problem cannot be wished away as Islamabad will re-

main India-centric. According to them, though Pakistan's economy lags behind India's, it has never been short of money for arms.

The perspective plan suggests that the Kashmir problem will continue for another 5-7 years, again clearly because of Pakistan's involvement. With the low intensity conflict continuing, the Army will need the necessary weapons — surveillance devices, night-fighting systems and, of course, better protection and firepower for the soldiers.

Two other possibilities are being envisaged vis-a-vis Pakistan. Or rather, the plan suggests that India be prepared for such eventualities. The first is "limited" war. This means a war that is not "full-scale" and perhaps "area specific" but can expand into a larger conflict. There is a belief that a limited war could

quit Pakistan as it will not involve the full might of India, in terms of Army, Navy and Air Force.

It would suit India to have a full-scale war, but such a possibility in the current era, remembering the international situation, is difficult to envisage. If, however, a full-scale war does take place, the Army could make gains in the plains. The war may be limited in time, but not in scope.

The long-term integrated perspective plan looks at conventional firepower — the nuclear issue is not looked at in detail. What it suggests is that India's edge in conventional military strength, vis-a-vis Pakistan, has declined since 1971 and efforts have to be made to modernise, either through the purchase of new equipment or by upgrading older weapon systems. This includes tanks, artillery, hi-

Four militants killed in J&K

JAMMU, Nov. 28. — Four ultras, including district commander of Hizbul Mujahideen Parvez Ahmad, were killed and two civilians injured in separate militant-related encounters in Poonch, Udhampur and Doda districts in Jammu division, officials here said here today.

Army troops, supporting a group of militants crossing the Poonch river in the wee hours today, exchanged fire and in the subsequent encounter shot dead three of them at Dornail — the confluence of the Poonch river and Betar Nullah.

The slain militants, who were trying to infiltrate, have been identified as Panch Sher Ali, the district commander of HMPPH and his associate Saikujah and Nasir Hussain. Ali and Saikujah hailed from Turthal area of Poonch, while Hussain, a local lawyer's assistant of Poonch district, they said.

Reports from Udhampur district said BSF has gunned down another ultra of Lashkar-e-Tehzeeq in Narmada village of Darnkur area this morning taking the life of militants killed in the area to five since yesterday.

Two ultras, including area commander of L&F and two militants of Hizbul Mujahideen group were killed in a gunbattle in the same area yesterday. One BSF inspector was also injured in the encounter. — PTI

tech devices like UAVs, better sensors and more force-multipliers and also, a stronger air force. Once the plan is accepted, modernisation to meet the requirements will follow.

LoC sans gunfire

QURAN

The first military CBM

59-8
26/11

Regardless of the extent to which India and Pakistan exploit the latest window of opportunity to give a positive direction to their strained relations, the holding of a cease-fire along the entire Line of Control — Siachen included — in Jammu and Kashmir is significant. Soldiers of both sides could do with some respite and, there would be a high degree of relief for the people living between Akhnoor and Turtuk if they were spared their staple diet of artillery, mortar and small-arms fire. It caused them more than chronic indigestion.

Just because such firing had become routine, and hence of little consequence in both New Delhi and Islamabad, did not diminish its impact on the daily lives of people living within the firing zone. Now the farmers might be able to work their land, children play and go to school, and cattle taken out to graze without the fear of falling victim to the frequent duels that the two armies fought. Small mercies perhaps when viewed against the so-called “bigger picture”, but which could bring genuine comfort to those who have been suffering so much in recent years. The human dimension of the bilateral bitterness is seldom factored into policy formulation.

It would be easy, perhaps cynical, to contend that Pakistan’s holding its fire along the LoC is no big deal. After all the Srinagar-Leh highway (which attracts the bulk of the fire in the Kargil-Ladakh sector) has already been closed for the winter. And with the passes getting blocked with snow there is little scope for inducting militants in such large numbers that covering-fire is essential to their successful ingress. Suspicion and distrust is mutual, particularly among the soldiers who have been under fire for so long, that offers to de-escalate the situation will not be taken at face value easily. More so when the real headache in J&K is caused by militant activity — which persists — rather than big guns booming across the frontier.

Yet the acceptance of a cease-fire has to be viewed as the first military confidence building measure for quite some time. It would now be necessary for a series of meetings to be arranged between the Directors General of Military Operations of both armies to work out of ways of implementing what their governments have cleared. An ideal follow-up would be meetings of sector commanders down the line, to try and sort out their local problems. There are so many pinpricks that can be avoided if communication channels are established. Let it not be forgotten that soldiers can also be effective peace-makers. But that will require more than one-off goodwill gestures such as sharing sweets on festivals. A cool LoC is not an end in itself, it’s spin-off will prove positive.

28 NOV 2003

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2003

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AT LAST A CEASEFIRE

THE FORMAL AGREEMENT between the armies of India and Pakistan to observe a ceasefire along the Line of Control, the Actual Ground Position Line in the Siachen Glacier and a segment of the international border is a positive development in itself. That it creates the potential for a qualitative improvement of relations between the two countries adds to its value. In unilaterally proposing a ceasefire along the LoC, Pakistan signalled that it would refrain from providing covering fire to militants as they try to infiltrate into Jammu and Kashmir. Islamabad has not categorically promised that it will proactively block infiltrators. However, transgression of the LoC will decline considerably if it is unsupported by the Pakistan army. For its part, India has pledged that it will not direct fire at Pakistani military posts even while it uses force against militants attempting to cross over. The agreement became feasible after Pakistan dropped the condition attached to a similar offer, articulated by President Pervez Musharraf a few weeks ago, that India should wind down its operations against militants inside the Valley. Quite surprisingly, Islamabad did not back off from the proposal even after India suggested that the ceasefire be extended to the Siachen area as well. This represents a significant shift from Islamabad's longstanding position that it was entitled forcibly to eject Indian troops from the glacier as they occupied the area in violation of previous pacts.

The process of re-engagement received a further boost with Pakistan deciding to re-examine the Indian proposal for a bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad. While clarifications are awaited, it would appear that Pakistan has moved at least a little from its initial position that the United Nations must issue documents to passengers on this route and man the crossing points on the LoC. The Government of Pakistan had been criticised by the media and

public in that country for its unimaginative response to a humanitarian proposal for enhancing contacts between people living on either side of the LoC. Islamabad has now offered to host talks on the modalities and other related matters to explore the feasibility of this proposal. It also appears ready to set aside its reservation on Indian proposals for the revival of a ferry service between Mumbai and Karachi and for the reopening of a road or rail link between Sindh and Rajasthan. Apparently, Islamabad no longer insists that these proposals should be taken up in the course of a revived composite dialogue.

A desire to make a success of the SAARC summit in January 2004 might have contributed to the softening of Pakistan's stand on these issues. If this is part of the motivation, there is nothing wrong with it. The summit will be a non-starter if Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee does not attend. While the incentives recently provided should reinforce the decision that Mr. Vajpayee has taken to attend the summit, India must resist the temptation to rush into a bilateral dialogue on the sidelines. A bilateral meeting without adequate preparation is likely to be counter-productive. It will also divert attention from many serious regional issues. It is possible that Pakistan's positive attitude is shaped by more than the need to make the summit a success. Islamabad's friends have repeatedly advised it to restrain sectarian outfits and work for a reconciliation with India on a sound basis. Several sectarian outfits, including two offshoots of the Jaish-e-Mohammad and a branch of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, were recently proscribed. This does not amount to a firm enough indication that Pakistan has decided to stop backing militancy in Kashmir. However, the terms of the ceasefire offer hope for the future, assuming the pact will have a life beyond the winter when infiltration across the LoC is always at a minimum.

LoC truce gives peace a chance

Villagers shell-shocked by silence

TIMES NEWS NETWORK & PTI

Nov 27 11
Indi Pak

Srinagar\New Delhi: At the stroke of midnight on Tuesday, the guns along the volatile Line of Control fell silent. With the mutually agreed Indo-Pak ceasefire becoming effective, all sectors of the contentious border line that runs from the plains of Jammu to the mountainous heights of the Himalayas were quiet and so was the Siachen glacier. It was for the first time since 1984 that not a single gun echoed at the glacier.

Army troops, as has become standard practice, were alert and had their guns cocked, but did not find a single reason to fire. There was no infiltration attempt. The Indian troops are under instructions to target infiltrators or to break the peace only if the Pakistani troops happen to do so first.

"No firing incident has been reported from anywhere along the 778-km LoC, the 198-km international border and the 150-km stretch of the actual ground position line in Siachen since the truce came into effect," an army spokesman said in New Delhi on Wednesday.

In Islamabad, Pakistan's defence spokesman, Maj. Gen. Shoukat Sultan, said, "the ceasefire is holding. There has been no violation from either side."

In Pallanwala village near the LoC, people celebrated Eid-ul-Fitr without fear of mortar shells and gunfire ruining the party. Ecstatic villagers poured into the streets beating drums since morning. "We are celebrating Eid freely and without fear just half a kilometre from the LoC for the first time in 14 years of turmoil in J&K," Din Mohammad, a 72-year-old Gujjar, told a visiting PTI correspondent near Gakrial hamlet.

He said the villagers "could not sleep last night as we had become ha-



One-to-one possible with Vajpayee: Jamali

Islamabad: In the midst of a thaw between the two countries, Pakistan's Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali on Wednesday said the chances of a one-to-one meeting with his Indian counterpart could not be ruled out when the latter attends the Saarc summit in January here.

Meanwhile, in his first public comments on the border ceasefire, Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee on Wednesday said at an election rally in Raipur that Pakistan had agreed to it "after long persuasion" and expressed confidence that the truce would last and cross-border terrorism would end. PTI

bituated to shelling and firing".

Seventy-something Gain Dev said the villagers who witnessed 1,000 to 1,200 rounds of firing and several shell bursts every day, were unable to "believe their eyes and ears".

Nund Lal, who lost his daughter in Pak shelling, said the border villagers, "who see blood and death each day", were overjoyed at the new development. "There should be a permanent truce along the Indo-Pak border.

Pakistani bank pumps in fake notes via Nepal

Haidar Naqvi
Kanpur, November 25

IT IS a rejection that may cost the Indian government dear — if it has not already.

Five years ago, the Royal Himalayan Bank of Nepal (RHBN) had offered India facilities to open bank branches there, but the offer was declined with Indian banks seeing no feasibility in the tie-up.

A year later, RHBN offered similar facilities to Pakistan's Habib Bank, which jumped at it. That deal has now become a headache for India, with the Pakistani bank using its Kathmandu branch to smuggle in fake Indian currency, which then finds its way into India.

A report prepared by UP's Intelligence unit shows how this alliance has reduced the level of risk involved in the

CBI concerned

VOICING CONCERN over counterfeit operations, CBI director P.C. Sharma on Tuesday said the increased circulation of fake Indian notes and its ever-increasing sophistication are getting direction and boost from criminals based overseas who have direct links with terror outfits and drug mafia.

PTI, New Delhi

supply, delivery and circulation of fakes in the past two years. "The arrangement is perfect for the ISI in its proxy war against India and we've no mechanism to block these fakes from entering our territory," says a source.

Habib Bank's move to open

a branch in Nepal was all the more mystifying given the distance between Pakistan and Nepal and the almost non-existent trade between the two countries. The real motive, according to the report, surfaced when fake Indian currency, considered legal tender in Nepal, started flowing out of Nepalese bank counters, catching the eye of Indian intelligence.

Further monitoring revealed Habib Bank's hand in money laundering. Its modus operandi was simple — hold back legitimate Indian currency and pump in fakes. The bank was using Nepalese branches nestled on the fringes of the porous 1,751-km India-Nepal border to circulate fakes in Indian markets. And the recent arrest of a Pak embassy official in Kathmandu was an eye-opener.

ID HALT TO GUNS BOOMING ACROSS INDIA-PAKISTAN BORDER, LoC AND SIACHEN

Midnight's children cease fire, seize peace

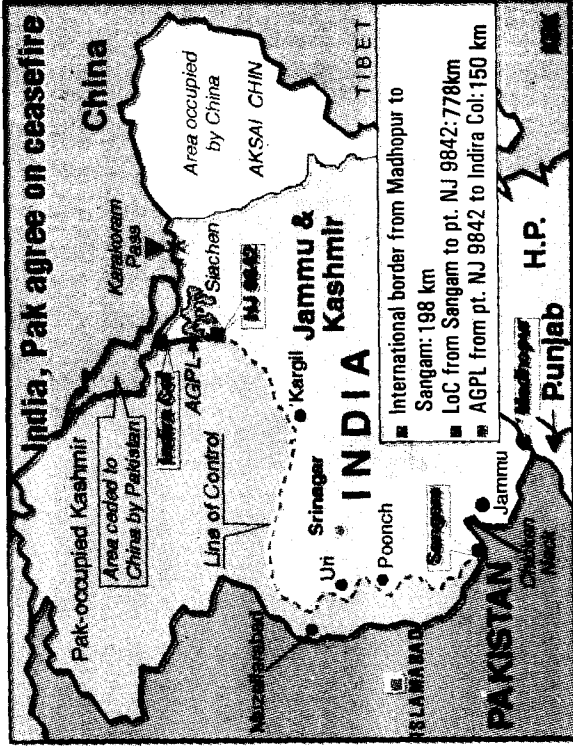
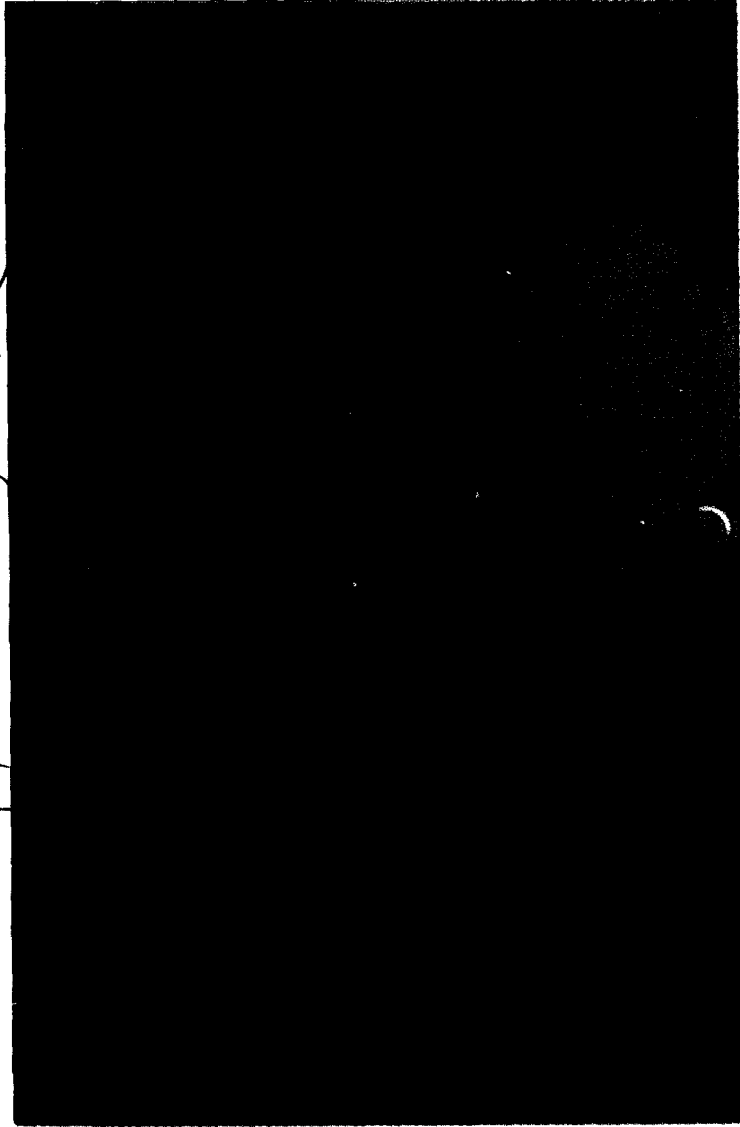
Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Nov. 25. — Guns will stop booming between India and Pakistan from midnight after the Directors-General of Military Operations of both countries agreed to observe a ceasefire along the international border (IB), the line of control (LoC) and the actual ground position line (AGPL) at Siachen in Jammu and Kashmir.

A significant step forward in the process of normalisation of bilateral ties, the DGMOs decided to cease fire after their weekly conversation today, the spokesman of the external affairs ministry said. The DGMO, Lt-Gen BS Takhar, and his Pakistani counterpart, Maj-Gen Mohammed Yusuf, spoke on the hotline at 10 a.m. and worked out the details.

For the Army, the ceasefire along the IB, the LOC and also in the Siachen area, will be a respite, not only from the stress of constant shelling and casualties, but it will also reduce infiltration. And for peace between the estranged-since-birth neighbours, it is a very positive sign.

Army officials said a lot of shelling along the 750-km long Line of Control had been to entice Indian soldiers in the bunkers keep their heads down while militants cross over. As a result, the militants entering India from Pakistan or Pakistan Occupied Kashmir could go



to "perform" on its commitment to the international community to end cross-border terrorism.

"We are looking for a dialogue with Pakistan. It is in Pakistan's hands. They are the ones who have to perform (to stop cross-border terrorism). They have made a commitment (in this regard) to the USA," he said on the sidelines of the India Economic Summit. "We welcome Pakistan's positive response," Mr Sibal said, adding that "cross-border terrorism has to stop to allow the ceasefire to hold."

The ceasefire, besides reducing military casualties, would be a great boon for locals living along the IB and the LOC. It would reduce civilian casualties and allow movement and farming in the

areas close to the border in Punjab and also, the LOC — the peace dividend, as it were.

Powell calls Sinha

General Colin Powell, the US Secretary of State, called the external affairs minister, Mr Yashwant Sinha, on the telephone this evening and expressed the Bush Administration's appreciation of the positive developments between India and Pakistan.

PDP plea: Mainstream political parties, including the PDP, in J&K demanded today that the cease fire decision by Pakistan along the LoC be followed by a process of dialogue for the resolution of the Kashmir issue.

A PRAYER FOR PEACE: A man raises his hands in prayer after viewing the new moon that marks the end of the holy month of Ramzan in Islamabad on Tuesday. — AFP

through the forward defences and attempt to find the trails that lead to the interiors.

Pakistan Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali on Sunday had unilaterally offered a ceasefire along the LoC from Id.

Responding positively to what officials termed the first "serious offer" of a ceasefire from Pakistan, India yesterday offered to extend the ceasefire to the AGPL in Siachen. In fact, even during the previous ceasefire be-

between November 2000 and May 2001, there was some firing in the Glacier, which has a front of about 150 km, but which this time has been specifically mentioned by the outgoing foreign secretary, Mr Kanwal Sibal, today described Pakistan's decision to observe a ceasefire on the LOC as "encouraging," and said India was ready and looking for a dialogue with Islamabad, but made it clear that Pakistan would have



26/11
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India offers to hold its fire on Siachen glacier

But asks Pakistan to end infiltration first

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India on Monday promised to "respond positively" to Pakistan's announcement of a unilateral ceasefire along the Line of Control with effect from Eid, but insisted that the establishment of "a full ceasefire on a durable basis" would require an end to cross-border infiltration.

For good measure, New Delhi threw another ingredient into the ever-bulging pot of proposals and counter-

proposals that have been simmering for the last few months—a ceasefire in Siachen. In a terse statement, external affairs ministry spokesman Navtej Sarina said that in order to "take (the) process (of a ceasefire along the LoC) further, we also propose a ceasefire along the Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) in Siachen".

Although there are no official statistics, India and Pakistan are thought to have lost several thousand soldiers between them in the glacial wastes of Siachen, the world's highest—and coldest—battlefield. New Delhi had earlier proposed a ceasefire along the AGPL in 1988 and 1989, but Islamabad had rejected it on the grounds that India's military presence on the gla-

cier would then be frozen in place. It wants both sides to pull back to their respective positions circa 1972. Pakistan maintains that India's occupation of Siachen in 1984 was a violation of the 1972 Simla agreement—a charge New Delhi rejects since the LoC was left indeterminate in the glacial region.

As far as Pakistan's decision—also announced by Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali on Sunday—to work for the expansion of transportation links, Mir Sarina said India was proposing "immediate technical-level talks for early implementation of these proposals".

The proposals include the Mumbai-Karachi ferry, a Lahore-Amritsar bus service and the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad

bus link which Pakistan has until now said could only be operated on the basis of travel documents provided by the UN.

So far, seven rounds of bilateral talks at the defence secretary level have taken place on the Siachen issue. At their meeting on June 17, 1989, the two sides issued a joint statement noting that "there was agreement by both sides to work towards a comprehensive settlement, based on redeployment of forces, avoidance of future conflict and determination of future positions on the ground so as to conform with the Simla agreement".

Although Pakistan says the 1989 statement provided a basis for withdrawal of forces, India denies there was any

agreement to this effect.

PTI reports from Islamabad: Pakistan said on Monday that its ceasefire offer extended to the entire Kashmir region, which also includes the Siachen glacier. Expressing happiness over India's response to Pakistan's offer, foreign minister K.M. Kasuri said here that he presumed there was no need for a separate ceasefire offer for Siachen as Pakistan's offer included the glacier.

25 NOV 2003

THE TIMES OF INDIA

ALL CONFIDENCE

Tactics could be the first glimmerings of strategy. The confidence-building measures proposed by Pakistan may not indicate a strategic shift in its India policy, but Islamabad has taken the trouble to sound positive, if only for tactical reasons. In return, it makes good tactical and political sense for India to take the proposals seriously. Of greatest moment is the announcement of Pakistan's prime minister, Mr Zafarullah Khan Jamali, that Pakistani troops are ready to observe a ceasefire along the line of control from Id, likely to fall on November 26. The change is really in Pakistan's readiness to observe a ceasefire unilaterally. Earlier, it had always insisted that India reciprocate, and that there be international monitoring along the LoC. If Pakistan means what it says, this will help India to check cross-border infiltration. Terrorists coming into India were often protected by distracting fire from the Pakistan army. They would find it difficult to move about in Jammu and Kashmir if this firing ceases completely. Such fire also hindered the Indian army from fencing the border. Tactics may be Pakistan's driving consideration, and the fact that infiltration drops during winter may be part of its calculations. Yet New Delhi should be seen to support the gesture, especially since the impetus to the latest round of confidence-building was provided by the Indian prime minister, Mr Atal Bihari Vajpayee, in April.

Among Mr Jamali's proposals was the revival of the bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarbad, and a bus or train service between Sindh and Rajasthan. This time, surprisingly, Pakistan's prime minister said that Islamabad was ready to discuss these proposals without mentioning at the same time that Kashmiris would travel only with United Nations documents. That had been Pakistan's earlier stand. Mr Jamali re-floated Pakistan's proposal of reviving the Samjhauta Express and said his country was ready for talks on starting a ferry service between Karachi and Mumbai. He has talked of another kind of exchange too. The interior ministries of both countries should work out a solution to the problem of prisoners from across the borders in each other's jails. Coming as they do, just before Pakistan hosts the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation summit in January, the proposals are of utmost importance. They provide an occasion for a possible revival of the India-Pakistan dialogue — at least such is the feeling in Islamabad. Even if that does not come about, India has no reason not to support confidence-building measures. It should be seen to be as positive as Pakistan appears to be.

Delhi proposes Siachen ceasefire to Islamabad

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part

Statesman News Service

75/11

NEW DELHI, Nov. 24. — Welcoming the proposed Id ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) offered by the Pakistani Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, India carried the thaw forward today by proposing a ceasefire along the Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) in Siachen, the world's highest battlefield.

The official statement also said India would "respond positively" to the announcement of a "unilateral ceasefire with effect from the holy occasion of Id." According to senior officials, this is probably the first time Pakistan has made such a "serious offer" of a ceasefire along the LoC, unilaterally.

In the statement, the MEA spokesperson, however, said: "In order to establish a full ceasefire on a durable basis, there must be an end to infiltration from across the LOC." Asked if today's announcement indicated India would also initiate a ceasefire from Id, he said: "I am not sure when that comes into effect. But we will respond positively".

The government welcomed the "decision of the Pakistan government to work for expand-

ing communication links," and proposed "immediate technical-level talks" to help "early implementation" of the additional road, rail and sea links envisaged between the two countries.

According to agency reports from Islamabad, in a swift reaction, Pakistan foreign minister Mr Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri told a TV channel: "Pakistan has made the offer (of unilateral ceasefire) that India has accepted, so it is a step forward," while claiming it had done all that it could to check cross-border terrorism or infiltration. Seeking to address India's reticence to hold bilateral dialogue on the sidelines of the Saarc summit here in January, he clarified today that Pakistan asked for no such meeting.

In a statement yesterday, Mr Jamali announced that the Pakistan army had already been ordered to stop firing from Id, while positively reacting to some of India's proposals made on 22 October, to initiate additional transportation links. Hailing the announcement, the moderate faction of the Hurriyat today urged New Delhi to respond positively and start negotiations for resolving the Kashmir tangle.



THE STATESMAN

25 NOV 2003

49-1
'READY TO DISCUSS BUS, TRAIN LINKS'

Pak. offers ceasefire along LoC

24/11 By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, Nov. 23. The Pakistan Prime Minister, Zafarullah Khan Jamali, tonight said Pakistani troops were ready to observe a ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) from Id, likely to fall on November 26.

In an address to the people of Pakistan on the occasion of the completion of one year of his Government, Mr. Jamali said that he expected India to respond positively to the ceasefire proposal. "Otherwise our move would remain incomplete," he said.

Significantly he also revived the proposals on a bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad, capital of Pak-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and bus or train link between Sindh and Rajasthan and said that Pakistan was ready for discussions with India on them.

The ceasefire announcement made by Mr. Jamali assumes significance, as Pakistan is to host the SAARC Summit in the first week of January and has been urging the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, to utilise the occasion for revival of the stalled Indo-Pakistan dialogue.

Since August Pakistan has mooted the ceasefire proposal twice but there is a difference in the manner it has been portrayed today and in the past. The proposal made by the President, Pervez Musharraf, was conditional and was subject to acceptance by India. New Delhi rejected it as a non-starter on the ground that it cannot let its guard on the LoC down when there is no let-up in infiltration. Mr. Jamali today seems to suggest that Pakistan would observe a ceasefire irrespective of

the Indian position.

Mr. Jamali dwelt at length on the confidence building measures by India and Pakistan since the April peace initiative of Mr. Vajpayee and said that Pakistan had responded positively to India's proposals. He said it was not difficult for Pakistan as most of these proposals had already been presented by Islamabad.

He asked India to come forward to implement these proposals without attaching any conditionalities to them. Mr. Jamali said Pakistan looked forward to the participation of Mr. Vajpayee in the coming SAARC Summit and said it would open a new chapter of regional cooperation.

Mr. Jamali said Pakistan was ready for talks on the re-opening of the Khokhrapar-Monabao route that remained closed since the 1965 war. When India mooted the proposal in October Pakistan said that it could be discussed as part of the composite dialogue.

The Pakistan Premier said his country was willing to start a bus service between Muzaffarabad and Srinagar but made it clear that Jammu and Kashmir remained a disputed territory in accordance with the U.N. resolutions and the LoC was a temporary line dividing the state of Jammu and Kashmir. In response to the Indian proposal earlier Islamabad had said the service was possible only if U.N. personnel manned the check posts and people on either side were allowed to travel with U.N. documents.

Mr. Jamali invited India to initiate talks on the modalities and other related matters for starting the bus service and offered to host a meeting in this regard. To

facilitate issuance of visas, the Prime Minister proposed that both Pakistani and Indian high commissions, after mutual agreement, should look into the possibilities of opening visa camps.

He said Pakistan was in favour of the resumption of air links between the two countries and negotiations between the two civil aviation authorities were extremely important. Mr. Jamali hoped that these negotiations would lead to the revival of air links between Lahore-Delhi, Karachi-Mumbai and Karachi-Delhi.

Mr. Jamali also re-floated Pakistan's proposal of reviving the Samjotha Express, saying, "we think that a decision in this regard should be reached by the end of this year". Similarly, he said, Pakistan was also ready for talks on starting a ferry service between Karachi and Mumbai.

He also proposed that the Interior Ministries of Pakistan and India should find ways to resolve the problems of prisoners jailed in each other's countries.

Indian response today

Amit Baruah reports from New Delhi:

A formal Indian response to Mr. Jamali's unilateral ceasefire offer is likely to come on Monday.

Highly-placed Government sources told *The Hindu* tonight that while Mr. Jamali's response to the Indian offer for new and enhanced transport links was positive, the ceasefire offer had to be seen in perspective. "We will come out with a formal response tomorrow," they said.

THE HINDU

24 NOV 2003

Talking the talk

The Simla and Lahore agreements are a good foundation to build the Indo-Pak peace initiative

PAKISTAN'S official spokesman is reported to have stated that the Simla Agreement as well as the Lahore formula are still a valid basis for dialogue to resolve outstanding issues between the two countries, but that the UN resolutions remain on the table as well. He affirmed that UN resolutions are "valid, legal and operative". Perhaps he had not familiarised himself with these UN resolutions. The fact is that they had required Pakistan to withdraw its army from J&K before any other step could be taken. The problem why the implementation of UN resolutions could not move forward was that Pakistan never implemented the provisions of those resolutions to withdraw from the state that had legally acceded to India. Obviously the UN recognised India's sovereignty over the state through those resolutions. And China, even 15 years later, accepted Pakistan's control over what is Occupied Kashmir as provisional in its treaty of March 1963.

At the same time, Pakistan's willingness to start the dialogue on the basis of the Simla and Lahore agreements is refreshing and welcome. But the problem is that unless there is some credible evidence beyond mere promises that Islamabad is willing to respect the provisions of previous agreements, entering into future dialogue appears meaningless, and could easily become

counter-productive. For example, the 1972 Simla Agreement — which incidentally was a precursor to the Helsinki Accords of 1975 — commits both countries to the sanctity of the mutually accepted Line of Control (LoC). Para 4 (ii) specifically states, "Neither side shall seek to alter it (LoC) unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations." But the terrorism sponsored from across the LoC for the past 15 years is an obvious attempt to alter the line, and the military aggression in the Kargil sector in 1999 was an unabashed violation of that agreement. It also destroyed the harmony that had been achieved at Lahore a few months earlier.

So how then do we move forward toward a dialogue that would be meaningful and not another exercise in verbal gymnastics? The past gives us sufficient starting points in Simla and Lahore. But the future need to recognize that a dialogue would be useful only if Pakistan is committed to the idea of such an initiative. There are very real threats to the process, with peace being disturbed on a daily basis by the violence perpetrated from across the frontier. Even the United States and the People's Republic of China — Pakistan's long-time allies — acknowledge that cross-border violence must stop and peaceful solutions must be sought through bilateral dialogue.

INDIAN EXPRESS

19 NOV 2003

Pakistan will accept only Geelani-led Hurriyat

New Delhi
13 NOVEMBER

PAKISTAN on Thursday made it very clear that it recognised only the Hurriyat Conference led by firebrand leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, even as the Iftar party hosted at its mission saw a dearth of Kashmiri separatist leaders, with the faction led by Abbas Ansari boycotting it and Jamaat-e-Islami skipping it.

"We recognise only the Hurriyat led by Geelani and no one else. Rest all are Kashmiri leaders ... After all Geelani's group has been recognised by the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC)," Pakistani information minister Sheikh Rashid told reporters at the Iftar party hosted by Pakistani high commissioner Aziz Ahmed Khan.



PAK-ED SHOW: Pakistan information minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed (centre) with members of the Geelani-led Hurriyat faction at an Iftar party in New Delhi on Thursday. — AP

To a suggestion that Pakistan was responsible for getting the Geelani faction recognised by the OIC, Mr Rashid offered no comments. He said the Kashmir issue needs to be solved at the earliest in order to forge lasting peace in the sub-conti-

ment. Mr Geelani could not attend the party as no flight took off from Srinagar on Thursday because of bad weather. However, for the first time in the last one decade, the Iftar party saw bare minimum presence of Kashmiri leaders.

Senior separatists leaders like Shabir Shah and Yaseen Malik also stayed away from the Iftar party. An embarrassed Mr Rashid ducked all questions from the media about the absence of a majority of Kashmiri separatists leaders while Mr Khan avoided reporters altogether. Mr Ghulam Nabi Sumji, Ghulam Mohammed Hubbi, Aga Syed Hassan Badgami and G.N Shaheen were among the seven Kashmiri separatist leaders present at the party. Mr Shaheen told him that the people of Kashmir want to solve the Kashmir issue at the earliest. — PTI

9/22 Pak
11/11
12/11

Our hopes lie with Vajpayee: Pakistan

By Our Special Correspondent

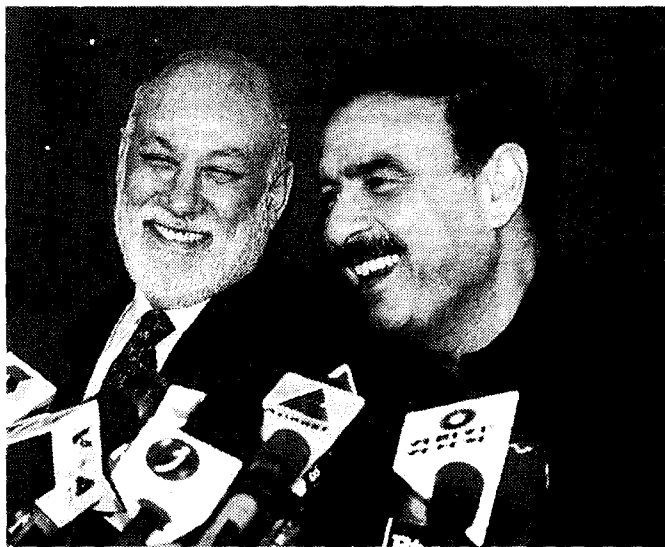
NEW DELHI, NOV. 12. The Pakistan Information Minister, Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed, said today that the "non-resolution of the Kashmir dispute" hampered the normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan and eclipsed cooperation within the region.

Mr. Ahmed, who is here to attend the SAARC Information Ministers' Conference, said: "the continued hostility between the two largest countries in the region — Pakistan and India — had adversely affected the growth of trade, economic and cultural relations in South Asia". And, for the second time this week, he reiterated Pakistan's confidence in the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee's ability to break the 50-year-old political impasse.

In a statement circulated at the press conference, he said: "We, in Pakistan, have great hopes from the statesmanship of Prime Minister Vajpayee to start a new chapter of friendship and amity between the two countries".

More than once, he showered praise on Mr. Vajpayee. "He is a man of vision; he is a bold man; he can take decisions," he said adding that Pakistan saw Mr. Vajpayee as the one person who could break the deadlock on the Kashmir issue.

Mr. Ahmed said the doors of dialogue should always remain open. Pakistan had a bold lead-



The Pakistan Information Minister, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed (right), addressing a press conference in New Delhi on Wednesday. The Pakistan High Commissioner to India, Aziz Ahmed Khan, is seen next to him. — Photo: Shanker Chakravarty

ership which would be willing to reciprocate one step forward by India with two. However, he was quick to add that Pakistan was left with little option but to reciprocate in like fashion whenever India went arms shopping and tested its firepower.

The "enormous groundswell for peace at the popular level" in both countries should be reason for making a "new beginning in bilateral relations by addressing all outstanding disputes bedevilling our relations".

Referring to the suspension

of the Delhi-Lahore bus service and the ban on TV channels, he said India fired the first salvo and Pakistan had to reciprocate "though I kept urging India to reconsider".

Mr. Ahmed said India had recently become the "blue-eyed boy" of the United States. While America changed its preferences, the harsh reality of prevailing times was that the superpower could and would intervene as it pleased. "There can be no denying the fact that the superpower has a say in international affairs," he added.

Pak hums J&K tune at Saarc meet

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 12 NOVEMBER

INDO-PAK issues dominated the Saarc information ministers' meeting, which saw few tangible results but a lot of rhetoric. As matters relating to the conference (which ended here on Wednesday) went into the background, the focus shifted to the man from Islamabad who continued to trumpet the Kashmir issue at the meeting.

Addressing a crowded press conference, Pakistan information and broadcasting minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed did not rule out the possibility of Indo-

Pak tensions being raised at the Saarc summit in Islamabad in January.

"I can't say. Let's see," was his answer when asked about the



RASHID: ALL PRAISE FOR ATAL

summit. Although the minister admitted that "good initiatives" had been taken at the conference, he said Pakistan was fully conscious that economic co-operation among regional countries could flourish only in an atmosphere of peace and amity.

He said that although he had come to New Delhi with an "open mind, high hopes and expectations," Saarc had been "unable to realise even a fraction of the potential" of the region.

"The continued hostility between the two largest countries

of the region — Pakistan and India — has adversely affected the growth of trade, economy and cultural relations in South Asia. Pakistan stands for tension-free, co-operative and friendly relations with India. It is in our mutual interest," he said.

Making tongue-in-cheek remarks about India, he boasted that Pakistan would take "two steps" forward if New Delhi took "one step" towards normalisation of relations. But he stuck to his country's stand on all issues, including Kashmir, US mediation and terrorism. He said it was the Kashmir dispute that had hampered relations between the two countries. "Let us muster the political will to address this once and for all," he said.

The Pakistani minister praised Mr. Vajpayee, saying he was the only "bold man with a vision who can take bold decisions," but he blamed India for taking the first step in stopping air and road links as well as television channels. Mr. Rashid, who claimed that he had never seen a Hindi film so far although "he was

ready to do so," assured his listeners that he would discuss the issue of the ban on Indian cinema with the culture minister after he returned to Islamabad. He said the ban on Indian television channels would also be discussed between the two countries.

Wanting India to give up its demand to hand over 20 fugitives, including Dawood Ibrahim, he said: "If you talk of lists, then we will also have to go into old lists where in an FIR in Karachi names the second and third political leadership of India." Asked if he implied deputy prime minister L.K. Advani, Mr. Rashid said: "Akaltmand ko ishara kafi hai (a hint is enough for a wise man)."

To questions on his country seeking US mediation to resolve the Kashmir issue, he said: "The fact is, when a superpower gets involved, automatically things start moving as it ensures that the rivals do not go to war, pull back armies and get to talk. Practical is different from theory."

He said Pakistan was open to the expansion of Saarc to include China and Iran.

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Pakistani ministers speak in two voices

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI/ ISLAM-
ABAD, Nov. 11. - Two
Pakistani ministers spoke in
two voices at two different
venues today. But, the com-
mon refrain was unbridled
praise for Mr Atal Behari
Vajpayee.

While Pakistani informa-
tion and broadcasting minis-
ter Mr Sheikh Rashid said in
Delhi that General Pervez
Musharraf was "very posi-
tive" on the peace process
initiated by India and had
apparently a very high opin-
ion about the Indian Prime
Minister, Pakistan's foreign
minister Mr Khurshid
Mahmud Kasuri accused
India at a press conference
in Islamabad of making
peace overtures "periodical-
ly" due to "pressure from
international community as
a result of Pakistan lobbying
hard". And he added that
the reason behind the Indian
leadership's announcement
of confidence building mea-

asures was partly because a
"friendly policy towards
Pakistan made a positive
impact in elections to some
Indian states. A positive
remark about Pakistan and
Muslims sells in some states
while it works negatively in
other provinces".

Mr Kasuri also insisted
that Pakistan could not com-
pletely seal the LoC. "No
country in the world can do
that... You cannot seal a bor-
der as big as that. The only
guarantee to seal the border
is to make sure there is no
incentive for people to cross
the border... that can come
through negotiations... we
want peaceful dialogue with
India, that is the only way."

He, however, was on the
defensive when asked to
comment on reports of
banned militant groups
resurfacing with new names
and collecting funds: "I do
not know how accurate they
(media reports) are."
However, Mr Kasuri too
found a "man of peace" in

Mr Vajpayee and said he
had demonstrated "flexibili-
ty" in the past, even as he
alleged the Agra summit was
"sabotaged" by "hardliners
in the Indian Cabinet".

Speaking about Kashmir
and the US national security
adviser's recent statement
that Pakistan should do
more to stop cross-border
terror, Mr Rashid said the
Bush administration appre-
ciated Pakistan's role in the
global fight against terrorism
and as for J&K "let the dia-
logue start... We can (then)
discuss everything together".

On the proposed bus ser-
vice between Srinagar and
Muzaffarabad, Mr Rashid
said: "There is only one dif-
ference on who is going to
give the visa." But Mr Kasuri
said: "On the one hand
India says that Pakistan is
indulging in cross-border
terrorism, on the other hand
they are suggesting a bus
service... probably they want
the terrorists to travel in
style and comfort."

Islamabad should grab the latest opportunity provided by Delhi's twelve points

The hint shows the way

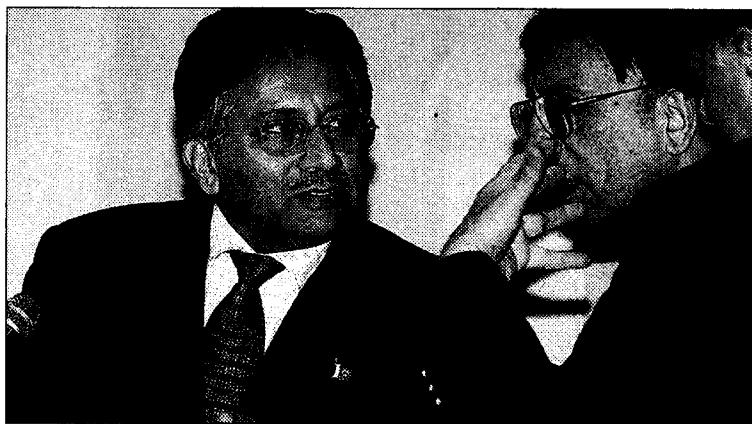
BY ANAND K. SAHAY

IT IS heartening to see that India's twelve points that aim to widen the scope of contacts between the people of the two countries fairly dramatically have been received well by established civil society fora in Pakistan. Fora such as these have worked against odds to expand the notion of democracy within Pakistan, and have propagated the idea of peace with India even when times were difficult. The proposals are of such a nature as to command the attention of democracy-minded, reasonable people anywhere. The interest of the liberal sections of the Pakistani media, often sceptical of Indian intentions, has also been aroused.

The truly ground-breaking proposal in the package is for bus travel to connect Srinagar with Muzaffarabad in PoK. The people in the Valley have been especially enthusiastic about this, particularly those who live near the LoC and feel the agony of families divided by militarised frontier-lines the most. In another era, after the signing of the Simla agreement in 1972, it was Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's expressed hope that the LoC might one day be converted into a 'Line of Peace' and be imbued with the 'attributes' of an international border.

Since then, many — including political personalities from Pakistan and international peace and security professionals — have adverted to the need for a 'soft border' in place of the heavily fortified LoC. The LoC's softening, it was felt, might help evolve a plan for resolving the Kashmir question by removing conceptual straitjackets. The overhang of the painful history of Partition and the unbounded war-ridden bitternesses of later times ensured, however, that ideas such as these were not permitted to mature.

Given such a distorted past, it is a surprise that a bus link for Kashmiris living on two mutually hostile sides came to be made at all in Yashwant Sinha's package. Until not so long ago, similar suggestions made by those seeking to finesse the developing stasis used to be laughed out of court in New Delhi. The security-related risks associated with such plans at a time of rampaging terrorism were thought to far outweigh any likely gains. It is just possible that the true gauge of the political temper of Kashmiris, as evidenced in the successful conduct of assembly elections in the face of



TENNIS WITH INDIA? I CAN'T EVEN PLAY THE GAME! Pervez Musharraf

heavy costs inflicted by Pakistan a year ago, helped shift the weights.

Whatever the thinking behind the proposal for a bus service to PoK, in its official form the idea is a novel one and holds positive implications of a turn to relative peace between the two countries. At any rate, it will lighten burdens on both sides of the Kashmir divide, and permit ordinary people considerable latitude in their everyday life. As such, one would have thought, the plan mooted under Vajpayee eminently merited consideration.

But look who the nay-sayers are: the VHP on the Indian side, and the *jehadi* outfits and the Musharraf regime on Pakistan's. It doesn't take long to realise that none of them is a representative entity. Unlike the VHP, however, the Pakistani opponents of the bus-link are entrenched in positions of influence and power.

It is plain to see that hate-mongers and purveyors of terror would be put out of business if people on both sides of Kashmir began to move across to each other with a measure of some freedom. Who, for instance, would then give the Muzaffarabad-based United Jihad Council, controlled by the ISI, a second thought? Indeed, the possibilities are infinite as to what can happen next if the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus connection takes off. Direct links to Rawalpindi may then follow, and ordinary tourists and business visitors from both countries may just find it worth their while to use the links that become available in Kashmir, besides those in Punjab, Rajasthan or Mumbai, as offered by India.

Alas, steps such as these are almost guaranteed to lower the tem-

perature as social relations are established between the two sides. And nothing can disconcert Pakistan's military dictatorship more. Let's face it, dictators only flourish in conditions of maximum or imagined hostility. More than anything else, they fear the breaking out of peace. Little wonder that the Musharraf regime took its time to reply to India's twelve points. Eventually, its answer was not as direct as that of the VHP or of the *jehadis*, but it was just as disruptive in its import. Pakistan's thirteen points were not so much a response as a retaliation.

No one is fooled that the reference in it to handling of the bus passage under UN auspices is meant to irritate India and scuttle the plan, since this country cannot possibly agree not after the laying down of the principle of bilateralism in the Simla agreement of 1972 and its reiteration 27 years later in the Lahore documents. These protocols bury prospects of any further UN involvement in respect of Kashmir.

Musharraf, we know, has made it amply clear that he has no use for either Simla or Lahore. But he is not so naïve or so unwise as not to know that the UN has worked out few political problems in our time unless the parties concerned were themselves amenable (or could be coerced by superior force). The gratuitous UN reference, then, is calculated to be a deliberate obstruction to ever sorting out the Kashmir imbroglio. And that suits the dictators just fine. In the absence of the Kashmir issue they can hardly justify their own impossibly privileged existence to their countrymen.

In sum, unlike the people of India

or Pakistan, Islamabad's military rulers do not have any interest whatever in the blooming of peace and for that reason any allusion by them to the UN is a decoy, a well-rehearsed trick to ensure that a real discussion on Kashmir never gets going but international opinion is kept humoured.

Well-meaning folks who are taken in by Islamabad's incessant UN-related chatter might do well to recall the past. They would then appreciate that the UN has already had a go at Kashmir, and has nothing to show for it. It tried hard for nearly a quarter of a century to crack the Kashmir puzzle before the Simla accord, stressing bilateralism, was signed. Its efforts came to nothing because Pakistan simply refused to observe the UN conditions for a plebiscite in the Maharaja's erstwhile domains (that embraced PoK and the Northern Areas, annexed by Pakistan).

In any case, the Pakistan associated with those discussions isn't the same country now, after the secession of Bangladesh. As such, Pakistan's ideological case (it never, anyway, had a historical one on Kashmir) for demanding the Kashmir Valley — based on its self-professed claim of being the home of the subcontinent's Muslims — also has no leg to stand on.

By bringing up the bus proposal for PoK, India's twelve points have already put Kashmir up for discussion, if anyone is seriously interested. The path chosen bypasses the framework of either 'composite dialogue' or 'core issue' which have got us nowhere all these years. It is surprising this nuance has been missed even in influential comments. But the generals, for their part, have not missed anything, and have brought up the ante-diluvian UN reference to stall the Indian proposal from getting to the discussion stage.

Why are they paranoid? A bus crossing at the LoC cannot institute that line as the border if the two sides do not agree; Simla guarantees that. The agreement was explicit that any bilateral discussion on the issue will be without prejudice to the views of either side. Indeed, the bus proposal would suggest that India is looking for creative ways to reinvigorate a discussion without letting its Parliament resolution — on PoK being an integral part of Indian territory — be an obstruction. More the reason why Pakistan should come forward with seriousness.

'OUR INITIATIVE IS MEANT FOR PEACE-LOVING ELEMENTS'

PM rules out talks till Pak. acts to end infiltration

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, NOV. 1. India's Deepavali peace initiative is meant to encourage those elements in Pakistan who recognise the folly of permanent hostility towards their eastern neighbour, the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, told a conference of the country's top military commanders here today.

India had taken the lead in restoring bilateral ties through a combination of initiatives aimed at promoting greater people-to-people interaction, cultural exchanges and economic cooperation. However, he ruled out a dialogue with Islamabad till it displayed sincerity in stopping cross-border infiltration and dismantling terrorist training and launch-pads in its territory.

This is the first time the Prime Minister has expressed his views on the 12 confidence building measures and the prospects of across-the-table discussions with Pakistan.

Describing the present phase of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir as being fuelled by 'jehadis' rendered unemployed by the Russian retreat from Afghanistan, the Prime Minister said there should be no let-up in military action to curb cross-border infiltration. "We will continue to deal firmly with cross-border terrorism and a meaningful dialogue with Pakistan is only possible when we see sincerity in its efforts to stop

cross-border infiltration and to dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism," he said.

Referring to China with which India also has differences on the border question, Mr. Vajpayee said that the situation remained "largely peaceful" and his recent visit to Beijing had raised bilateral ties in general and economic cooperation to a "qualitatively higher level". The decision to appoint Special Representatives to discuss the boundary question from a political perspective was a "particularly significant measure". A final resolution of the boundary question would release considerable military energies and finances for other more purposeful activities. "It is, therefore, a strategic objective and to achieve it, we should be willing to take some pragmatic decisions," he said.

India also remained committed to playing a larger role in its extended neighbourhood. Rejecting Pakistan's implied claim on Afghanistan, Mr. Vajpayee said that India would firmly withstand "crude threats" being made against its consulates in Kandahar and Jalalabad.

India was also reaching out to its extended neighbourhood on the eastern side as well as fostering closer ties with Europe and the United States. Cordiality with the U.S. had been restored, strategic partnership with Russia strengthened and summit-level dialogues established with the European

Union and the ASEAN. These measures had brought India into the top international league and the returns were visible. "We have almost lost count of the number of countries that today publicly support India's candidature to the permanent membership of the U.N. Security Council."

New Delhi was also playing an active part in promoting multi-country partnerships. "We have played an important role in the G-20 efforts at Cancun (WTO meeting). We have had discussions on India-Russia-China trilateral cooperation, and on an entirely different plane — an India-Brazil-South Africa dialogue. We are developing other regional and sub-regional linkages in Asia, Latin America and Africa," he said.

The firmness displayed by the military was one of the three pillars that had brought India to the centre-stage of international politics. The other two were diplomatic repositioning and economic resurgence.

Insurgency in the northeast was a cause for concern mainly due to the safe sanctuaries for terrorists in neighbouring countries. The Prime Minister suggested a two-pronged strategy — use various means to deny bases to terrorists in neighbouring countries and focus strongly on economic development. The Defence Minister, George Fernandes, and the Finance Minister, Jaswant Singh, also addressed the military commanders.

Joshi breaks ice with Pak envoy

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Nov. 3: Pakistan's high commissioner Aziz Ahmed Khan met Lok Sabha Speaker Manohar Joshi today. The interaction, coming close on the heels of last week's meeting with commerce minister Arun Jaitley, is to be followed by an audience tomorrow with Rajya Sabha deputy chairperson Najma Heptulla.

The meetings mark the first interaction Khan is having with important Indian leaders. Till now, his requests to meet senior ministers have gone unheeded as Delhi follows Islamabad's lead — Pakistan has not allowed India's high commissioner Shiv Shankar Menon to meet senior Pakistani leaders.

Since arriving in India in end-June, Khan has only managed to present his credentials to President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam on July 10 and call on foreign minister Yashwant Sinha.

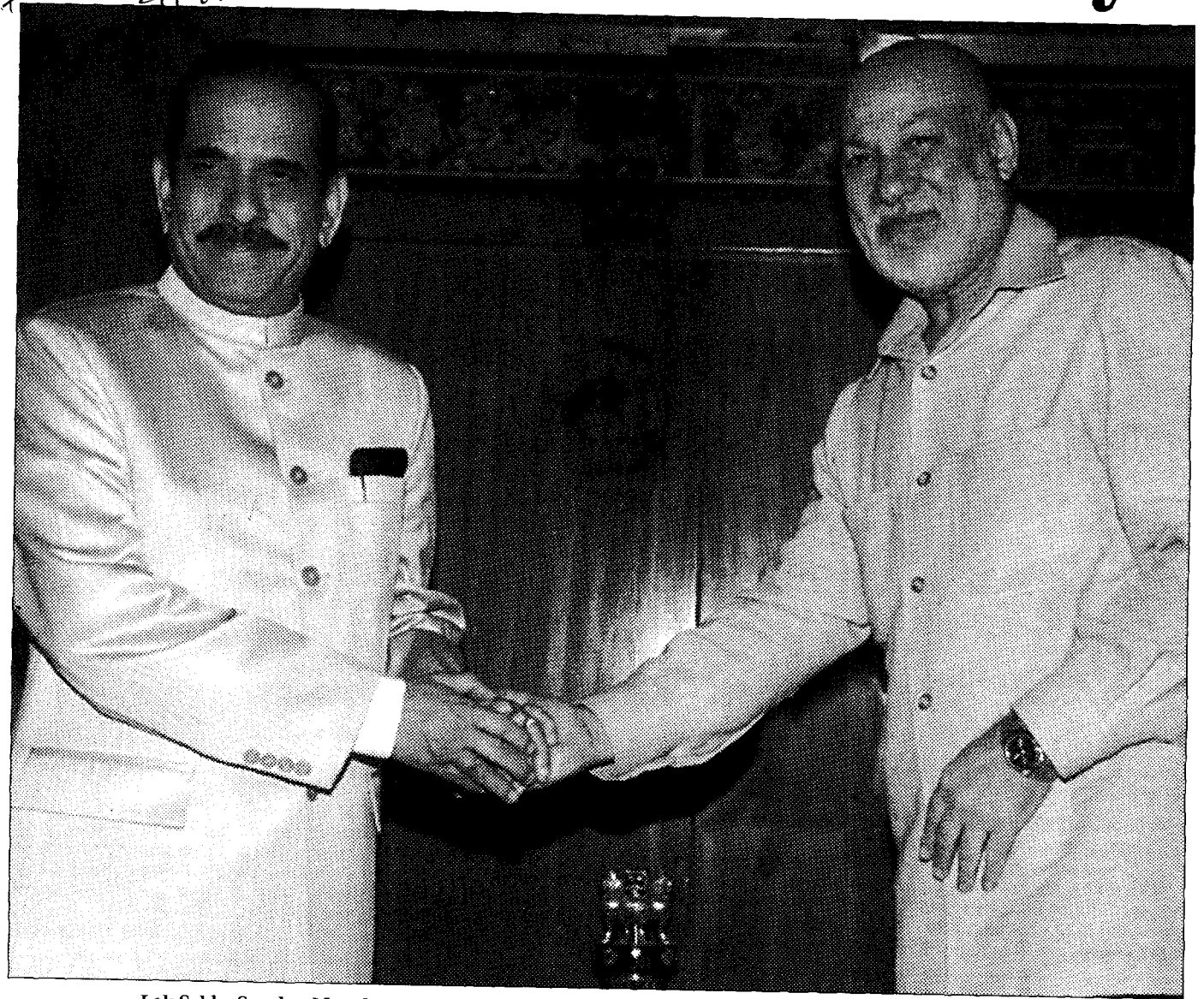
Khan and Joshi had, what an aide to the Speaker described as, an extremely cordial meeting, during which both agreed that South Asia needed peace. The Speaker praised Atal Bihari Vajpayee's April peace initiative and said India had given a push to the process by announcing 12 conciliatory Diwali gestures.

The high commissioner said Pakistan appreciated the Prime Minister's gesture and had responded positively. He felt the steps taken by the neighbours would ensure peace in the region. Khan added that resumption of rail and air services would increase people-to-people contacts.

Joshi asked the high commissioner about reservation for women in Pakistan's National Assembly and in local bodies. Khan said 21 per cent of Assembly seats were reserved for women, adding that the government is considering an increase to 33 per cent soon.

Pakistan wants Khan to meet Vajpayee, his deputy L.K. Advani, defence minister George Fernandes, national security adviser Brajesh Mishra and other notables, but there is no indication that Delhi is ready to oblige.

Considering India has insist-



Lok Sabha Speaker Manohar Joshi with Aziz Ahmed Khan in Parliament on Monday. Picture by Rajesh Kumar

ed that normality can be restored only step by step, it could be a while before the high commissioner is granted access to top National Democratic Alliance leaders.

India says it has taken its cue from Pakistan. Menon has only been allowed to meet Wali Khan, son of Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan. He travelled to Mardan, near Peshawar, to meet the son of Frontier Gandhi.

Amid the mind games being played by the South Asian rivals, there are some positives: later this week, India and Pakistan will free a new batch of fishermen who have strayed into each

other's territorial waters.

Flight immunity plea

Pakistan has linked progress at next month's aviation talks to a condition which snarled the first round as it was unacceptable to India, reports our correspondent.

Islamabad has said a headway could be made if India accepts a mechanism that will prevent unilateral withdrawal of air links and overflight facility by either country in the future.

"Abrupt suspension of the facility by India in December 2001 adversely affected economic and other interests of the two coun-

tries," foreign office spokesman Masood Khan said.

He said only mutual guarantees could ensure continuation of the facility, adding that resumption of air links and overflights is in the interest of both Islamabad and New Delhi.

A fresh round of the talks is scheduled on December 1 and 2. India had earlier suggested November 3 and 4 or November 10 and 11 for technical-level talks but Pakistan had proposed the first week of December.

The spokesman questioned statements by Indian officials that, he said, held Pakistan responsible for delay in comm-

encement of the talks.

"We are not delaying the talks. The process is slow-paced because of India, which has not agreed yet on devising a mechanism to prevent unilateral suspension of air links and overflights facility," he said.

Pakistani and Indian officials had failed to achieve a breakthrough on such a mechanism in the first round of talks in Islamabad in August this year.

The talks hit a dead end when the Indian delegation objected to the Pakistani demand, saying it was out of the four-point agenda that had been circulated and required perusal.

Not desperate for talks: Pak.

By B. Muralidhar Reddy 11/11/44

ISLAMABAD, NOV. 3. Pakistan said today that it was not desperate for a dialogue with India but asserted that there was no contradiction in its repeated offers to New Delhi for a composite dialogue.

At his weekly news briefing, the Foreign Office spokesman, Masood Khan, said that Islamabad was of the firm view that talks were a must to resolve the issues between the two nuclear-capable states, including the long-standing Kashmir dispute.

However, he saw a "tone of condescension" in India's attitude at times and in its attempt to give an impression as if the talks would be a reward for Pakistan. "What we are saying is that the talks are the beginning of a process and after beginning the process, we will have to take several steps." Mr. Khan said Pakistan had made it clear that it wanted talks but on the basis of sovereign equality and in the interest of peace. "We want talks, but we are not desperate for it."

Mr. Khan rejected India's allegation of cross-

Line of Control movement and termed it New Delhi's 'fiction' to evade a composite dialogue to resolve all outstanding issues. He was answering a question on the statement made by the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, on the continuing "cross-border movement" in his weekend address to India's military commanders.

On the contrary, the spokesman said "repression in Indian-held Kashmir during the past six months had been intensified and terrorism against civilians increased". India should give a serious thought to dismantling its 'state-terrorism' infrastructure in Kashmir, he said.

On Pakistan's suggestion about the proposed Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus service under a United Nations mechanism, Mr. Khan said India should reconsider its rejection of the offer. "Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory as has been recognised by the U.N. Security Council. You cannot just close your eyes and pretend that it is not a disputed territory." Mr. Khan said the U.N. was the best impartial mechanism to facilitate travel among the Kashmiris.

Envoy calls on Lok Sabha Speaker: Page 11

Pak envoy meets Jaitley on trade

Saurabh Shukla
New Delhi, October 31

A DAY after India expressed its disappointment with Pakistan for its response to India's peace overtures, there is some forward movement in the Indo-Pak ties.

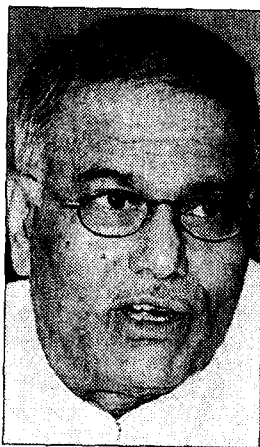
Breaking the deadlock of official contacts with India, Pakistan High Commissioner Aziz Ahmed Khan has been allowed to make official calls with Indian leaders, opening channels of communication between the two countries.

On Friday, the Pakistani envoy met Commerce Minister Arun Jaitley and they reportedly discussed ways to expand Indo-Pak bilateral trade, besides discussing reduction of trade barriers in the framework of the Saarc.

The official call by Khan is significant as is the first call for by a Pak envoy after the chill in the ties following the December 2001 attack on Parliament. Sources say in the coming days Khan will make more calls. Meetings for the envoy with the Speaker of Lok Sabha Manohar Joshi has been fixed for Monday, followed by a meeting with the Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Najma Heptullah, on Tuesday.

During his meeting with Jaitley, the two discussed the low volumes of trade between the two neighbours. The two countries have an official bilateral trade of \$250 million but the unofficial trade is close to \$2 bil-

Sinha hits out at Pak 'obsession'



Yashwant Sinha

ACCUSING PAKISTAN of politicising humanitarian measures India suggested in its latest peace proposals, External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha on Friday said it reflected Islamabad's "negative mindset" and "obsession" on Kashmir. Pakistan has attached conditions to India's proposals, which they knew would not be acceptable, Sinha said. "We are familiar with Pakistan's negative mindset and none of their actions come as a surprise, Sinha said.

PTI, New Delhi

lion, which is routed through third countries such as UAE and even some European countries. While the two countries discussed ways to reduce trade barriers, India hoped that Pakistan would respond positively and expand the list of 600 items that India can send to Pakistan through official channels. Khan had met External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha shortly after presenting his credentials, but that was a courtesy call and since then New Delhi had not cleared his official calls with the Indian leaders.

Indian High Commissioner Shiv Shankar Menon has also called on Pakistani leaders. Sources say while Del-

hi wants that the channels of communication should be open through the two envoys, it will not come to the negotiating table till Pakistan sheds its negative mindset and stops supporting cross-border terrorism.

UN terror resolution

Backing India's initiative, a key UN committee has adopted a resolution urging member states to support international efforts to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. The resolution, which received the support of 10 other countries was adopted by the UN on October 29.

'POK ONLY HINDRANCE TO FINAL SETTLEMENT OF J&K'

India hits out at 'impractical' Pak

SNS & Agencies 8/10

NEW DELHI, Oct. 30. — Expressing disappointment that Pakistan has attached "impractical, extraneous and delaying" conditions to some of its 12-point peace initiative, India today dismissed Islamabad's offer to help widows and rape victims in Jammu and Kashmir.

Pointing out that the suffering of people in Kashmir is the result of the low intensity conflict Pakistan is waging in J&K, the external affairs spokesman said: "If Pakistan's concerns are really sincere, it should take immediate steps to end infiltration, dismantle the infrastructure of support to terrorism and offer compensation to those affected by the terrorism it has sponsored."

The strongly-worded response included a pointed reply: J&K is not disputed territory and the only hindrance to the final settlement of J&K "is the question of Pakistan's illegal occupation of a portion of the state". The talk about "repression" by Pakistan was "obviously only a ploy for its failed attempt to camouflage its sponsorship and support of terrorism."

Defence minister Mr George Fer-

Rocca blow for Islamabad

WASHINGTON, Oct. 30. — US assistant secretary of state Ms Christina Rocca has said that India is a victim of terrorism and Pakistan should "redouble" its efforts to curb cross-border infiltration. She, however, blamed both India and Pakistan for the impasse over Kashmir.

Speaking after her at the meeting of the House Committee on International Relations Sub-Committee on Asia-Pacific and International Terrorism yesterday, chairman Mr James A. Leach said: "More needs to be done by Pakistan to prevent jihadis from carrying out attacks in Afghanistan and Kashmir." — PTI

nandes added his bit to the Indian response as he told the BBC that Pakistan was not a threat to India as it was "too small a country".

In Islamabad, Pakistani Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali today accused India of adopting "double postures". Reiterating that Kashmir was the core issue, he said: "India wants negotiations. We also want a solution through negotiations."

India was not happy with Pakista-

n's offer of 100 scholarships for people of J&K either. Without turning it down, the MEA spokesman said relations would improve if "offers are not targetted at any particular region of India... India has never adopted a selective approach for Baluchistan, Sind or North-west Frontier Provinces or for any particular community."

He noted Pakistan had turned down the idea of having more buses on Delhi-Lahore route and proposals of links between Mumbai-Karachi, Khokrapar-Munabao and Srinagar-Muzaffarabad. "Holding up such simple steps and making them part of the Composite Dialogue process means delaying them." About the idea of UN staff monitoring the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus link, he said India's offer emanated from humanitarian considerations, but "it is unfortunate that Pakistan has instead opted to politicise and disrupt this by attaching conditions they knew would not be acceptable." BJP spokesman Mr Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi also rejected the proposal for UN observers.

But Delhi welcomed Pakistani proposals like allowing senior citizens to cross Wagah on foot, initiating links between the Coast Guards and talks for resuming the Samjhauta Express.

Pak joins peace game with pinch

quark 11
20/10

IMTIAZ GULAND
SEEMAGUHA

Islamabad/New Delhi, Oct. 29: Pakistan today responded to India's dozen peace proposals, accepting some, sidestepping the tricky ones and springing traps of its own.

"We carefully studied the proposals and decided to respond positively in the hope that the latest reciprocal steps taken by the two countries will lead to resumption of meaningful dialogue," foreign secretary Riaz H. Khokhar said.

Delhi's proposals like resumption of aviation talks and sporting relations were among the eight items to receive warm acceptance.

Khokhar said: "We have accepted the Indian proposal to hold the second round of talks on the issue of resumption of air links on the revised dates of December 1-2."

India had suggested November 3 and 4 or November 10 and 11 for technical talks but Pakistan had sought dates in December. Khokhar said Islamabad has also proposed resumption of talks to revive rail links in the second half of December.

The other four proposals were not rejected, but either met with counter-offers or made part of what Pakistan calls composite dialogue, including Kashmir.

Among these, the clever move India had made by proposing a bus service between the capitals of the two Kashmiris — Srinagar and Muzaffarabad — was matched with an equally smart play that is booby-trapped for Delhi.

In proposing the bus service, Delhi's motive was to lead Pakistan into accepting the Line of Control as the international border, an act that would mean

drawing the curtain down on the Kashmir controversy.

Islamabad replied with a welcome but suggested that UN officials should man the checkpoints and passengers should travel with UN documents. This India can never agree to because it would mean accepting a dispute over Kashmir and bringing in a third party.

The proposal created the desired effect in Delhi. Though the external affairs ministry did not react formally, in private officials were fuming.

"This is a deliberate attempt to provoke India and shows that Pakistan's mindset has not changed. It indicates Pakistan's unwillingness to carry forward the peace move initiated by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee," an official said.

Defence minister George Fernandes called the proposal "meaningless".

Foreign ministry officials dubbed Islamabad's counter-proposals "too clever by half".

Some were more than a match for Delhi's gestures. India had offered free medical treatment to 20 Pakistani children. Khokhar said: "We are also ready to provide such treatment to 40 Indian children in Pakistan."

Former foreign secretary J.N. Dixit described the exercise thus: "They (Pakistan) are playing the same game that we are playing, all this hype and noise are tactical ploys used by both countries to impress the international community. I can categorically predict that these proposals and counter-proposals will not take off because neither side is sincerely looking for solutions."

Khokhar, however, acknowledged that the Indian proposals have created some "excitement" in world capitals. He said they figured in the talk between US

SMIRK AT FOUR, SMILE AT EIGHT



INDIA PROPOSES

- 1. Let us talk in December
- 2. Yes. We made the offer first
- 3. No problem in accepting this
- 4. Good idea but not possible with current staff strength
- 5. Yes. Let us go back to pre-December 2001 level of 110
- 6. We can treat 40 Indian children
- 7. Welcome. We told you so first
- 8. Yes. This is a humanitarian issue

INDIA PROPOSES

- 1. Welcome. But UN officials should supervise checkpoints and passengers should travel on UN documents
- 2. Sorry, no linkages. But train talks can also start in December
- 3. The Samjhauta will be more convenient. But we propose a bus between Lahore and Amritsar
- 4. This and a bus or rail link between Rajasthan and Sind can be part of a composite dialogue

PAK STALLS

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KASHMIR PACKAGE

- Scholarship for 100 Kashmiri students
- Treatment for disabled Kashmiris
- Help those — like widows and rape victims — affected by security operations

Graphic: RAJ

secretary of state Colin Powell and foreign minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri yesterday.

He hoped India would respond positively to Pakistan's proposals. Observers expect the game of one-upmanship to continue.

There is certainly no scope for a "positive" Indian response to proposals Pakistan made with the intent of getting blood pressures up in Delhi.

Khokhar, who has been high commissioner in Delhi and was known as a hawk, announced an offer of free treatment and assistance to disabled people, widows and rape victims "affected by the various operations launched by security agencies" in Kashmir.

He said India should allow Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch to select the victims.

the victims.

"These references were unnecessary and show that Islamabad is out to foil the peace initiative," said an Indian official.

There was also an offer of scholarships to 100 Kashmiri students.

Pak response reveals negative mindset

9/20/03

A DESPERATE ACT TO MATCH INDIAN OFFER, SAY EXPERTS

Saurabh Shukla
New Delhi, October 29

PAKISTAN'S RESPONSE to the 12 proposals made by India on October 22 to improve bilateral ties is being seen as a desperate act to match India's approach — albeit with a negative mindset.

India will issue a response on Thursday after External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha returns from Brussels. Even as the two play the game of one-upmanship, analysts believe that Pakistan's riders and pre-conditions indicate the military regime's mischievous intention.

"They are forcing us to say no to these proposals. They have deliberately brought issues such as UN travel documents and the issue of treating Kashmiri widows and rape victims to irritate India. This is not the way serious negotiations are conducted," remarked former Foreign Secretary S.K. Singh. Pakistan's pre-condition that the proposed bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad (PoK) should be monitored by officials of the United Nations, and the travellers should have UN documents, will be rejected



REUTERS
Pak foreign secretary Riaz Khokhar at a news meet in Islamabad on Wednesday.

by India, sources say. India considers Kashmir a bilateral issue and sees no role for the UN. India is also not in favour of any role for the UN military observer group for India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). New Delhi believes the proposals for a ferry service between Mumbai and Karachi, and a bus/rail link between Khokrapur in Rajasthan and Munnabao (in Pakistan's Sindh province), can be resolved by technical talks, not a composite dialogue process.

India also may not agree to Pakistan's proposal for increasing mission strength to 110. Intelligence agencies are opposed to it for fear that Pakistan will flood its mission with ISI agents.

Snatching glory blow to key CBM

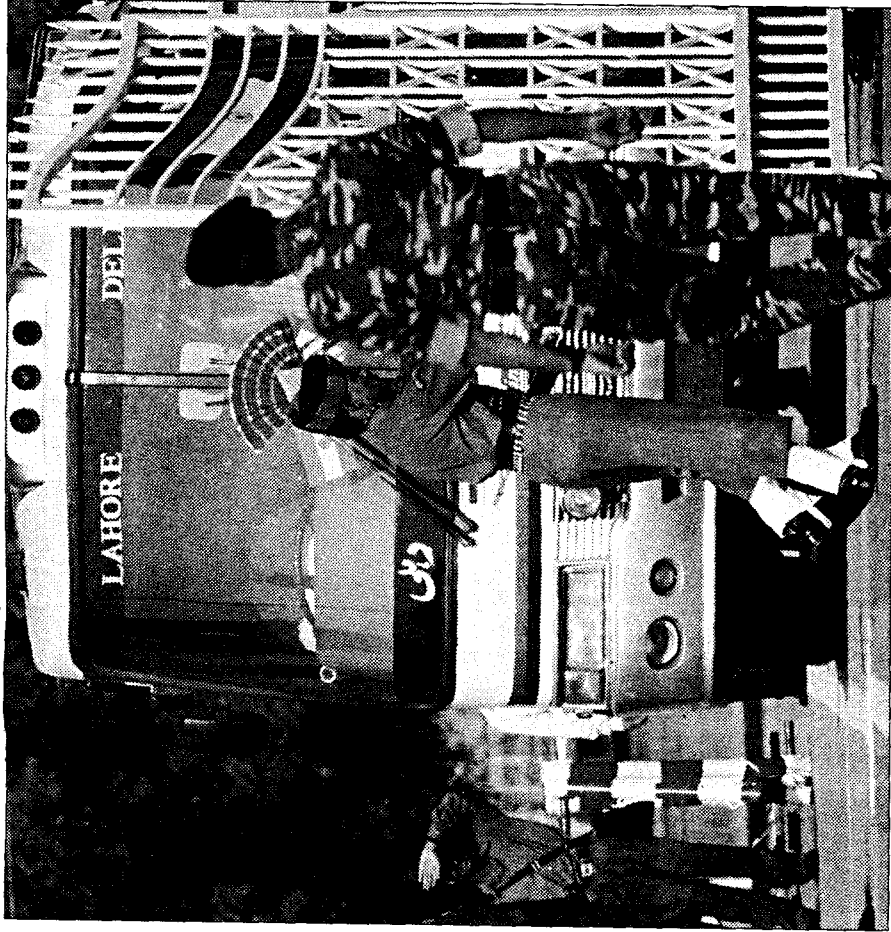
Vinod Sharma
New Delhi, October 29

PAKISTAN'S FEARS of enhanced people-to-people contact and its utter disregard of bilateralism, as enshrined in the Shimla pact, are manifest in its less than "positive and robust" response to India's 12-point package for peace.

In a conscious attempt at being one up on New Delhi, Islamabad, while claiming authorship of a couple of Indian proposals it found acceptable, has virtually rejected the most important CBM — that of a bus link between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad.

As if to add insult to injury, inflicted by its support of cross-border terror, Pakistan has proposed UN manned checkpoints on the LoC, not to mention the use of the world body's travel documents for the bus ride between Srinagar and PoK. To borrow the phrase, Foreign Secretary Kanwal Sibal used at the recent UNGA, Islamabad's formulation is another manifestation of its annual itch to internationalise Kashmir.

Curiously, Pak Foreign Secretary Riaz Khokhar, while taking exception to New Delhi's bid to link a deal on civil aviation with the resumption of the Samjhauta Express, has predicted an



REUTERS
WHEELS WITHIN WHEELS: The opening of the Delhi-Lahore bus route in July faced fewer roadblocks than the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad service.

agreement on visa camps on the restoration of the pre-December 2001 staff strengths of the two missions.

The result: Senior citizens of divided families will be allowed to cross Wagah on foot. But for securing visas, they'd still have to undertake back-breaking journeys from Karachi to Islamabad and

status quo ante on the question of mission strengths.

The Pak government's refusal to respect bilateralism, to approach issues with a spirit of give and take, is writ large in its expectation that India restore Samjhauta rather than asking for an extra bus to ply between Delhi and Lahore.

India implements 3 peace proposals

Saurabh Shukla
New Delhi, October 28

INDIA ON Tuesday took forward its policy of unilateral engagement with Pakistan by announcing the implementation of three out of the 12 proposals it had made on October 22, even as the war of words continued with New Delhi terming as "unfortunate and not in keeping with the spirit of the peace efforts" the remarks made by the Pakistani foreign office spokesman on Monday that the new peace initiative was a rehash of offers made by Islamabad earlier.

India has moved on running of additional Delhi-Lahore buses, allowing senior citizens of age 65 and above to cross the Wagah border checkpoint on foot and providing free medical treatment to the second lot of 20 Pakistani children. Delhi Transport Corporation chief has written to the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation for running of additional buses in convoy on already agreed upon days on the Delhi-Lahore-Delhi route, the spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs said on Tuesday.

He said instructions had been is-

sued to the Indian immigration authorities to allow those above the age of 65 years to cross the Wagah border on foot. These elder citizens now need not go by the Delhi-Lahore bus and could choose their own mode of travel up to the border point, he said while replying to questions. Steps had also been initiated for free medical treatment of the second lot of 20 Pakistani children in India, he added.

New Delhi believes it has retained the initiative for peace measures and the world community realises India is making "genuine" efforts for peace, despite a lack of reciprocity from Pakistan. As External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha was briefing EU leaders on the recent peace initiative in Brussels, US Secretary of State Colin Powell called Sinha to compliment him on India's peace efforts, and hoped that the chill in the Indo-Pak ties would be reduced following India's efforts. Officials here believe these are "incremental steps" that will only increase goodwill for India. On restoring of civil aviation links, officials say it will not buckle under pressure from Pakistan for a guarantee that air links will not be snapped.

29
Pak

India offers Pak airlink talk dates

SFA
29/10

NEW DELHI, Oct. 27. — The announcement of probable dates for talks on the issue of resuming air links between India and Pakistan might not be helpful in breaking the stalemate between two countries.

As the ministry of external affairs today suggested 3-4 November and 10-11 November as dates for talks on the matter between the two countries, senior officials in the civil aviation ministry remained sceptical about the resumption of air links in view of the "unjustified stand taken by the Pak government on the issue."

A senior official in the civil aviation ministry said the conditions put forward by Pakistan in this regard are not acceptable. After the recent peace initiatives of Prime Minister Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee just prior to Diwali, the Pakistani officials had asked for a guarantee that air links will not be disrupted abruptly in the future.

India had disallowed flights from Pakistan after an attack on Parliament on 13 December, 2001. Pakistan had retaliated by disallowing flights from India to enter its skies.

Senior officials in the civil aviation ministry said that India is interested in resuming air links as it would be beneficial for both the countries but no headway is expected if Pakistan does not remove such conditions. — SNS

SPORTS TIES AMONG PROPOSALS

Delhi dozen

for peace with Pak

9/22/03
5:1
23/10

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Oct. 22. — In keeping with the on-again, off-again nature of the Prime Minister's "hand of peace" initiative to Pakistan, the government today proposed a slew of confidence-building measures aimed at "normalising" bilateral relations, fractured after the 13 December 2001 attack on Parliament. The CBMs, which include Mumbai-Karachi ferry service and restoration of all bilateral sporting links, were decided upon at a Cabinet committee on security meeting, chaired by the Prime Minister this morning.

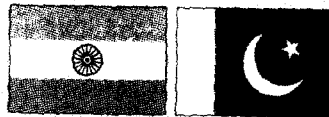
The reason behind the sudden "festival bonanza" (Ramzan begins a day after Diwali) of 12 proposals remains unexplained, with foreign minister Mr Yashwant Sinha saying nothing had happened behind the scenes or elsewhere to warrant the initiatives, nor had infiltration or cross-border terrorism declined. In fact, he said, the war on terror will continue with "no let up".

The proposals were conveyed to Pakistani high commissioner Mr Aziz Khan this afternoon.

They include some first time proposals such as links between the Coast Guards of both countries and non-arrest of fishermen in a certain band of the sea. A ferry service between Mumbai and Karachi has been proposed. The Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service was proposed more in the context of additional border (LoC) crossing checkpoints before the Agra summit of 2001.

The proposal for 'visa camps' to move from the high commissions in the capitals to other cities would help those who could not travel to apply for visas.

A proposal for the next round of talks on the resumption of air



Highlights

- Technical talks to restore air links and resume the 'Samjhauta Express' rail link
- Resumption of bilateral sporting links
- Visa camps in cities other than Delhi and Islamabad
- Senior citizens (aged over 65) can cross over at Wagah
- Free medical treatment for an additional 20 children
- Further accretion of staff strength in missions;
- Ferry service between Mumbai and Karachi;
- Bus services between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad, and between Khokrapar (Rajasthan) and Munabao (Sind).

links, both point-to-point and overflights, has been made, but with a rider that "there's no question" of India giving any guarantees demanded by Pakistan. Technical talks on train links will be discussed once the air links have been restored.

Citizens above 65 years would be allowed to cross the Wagah border by foot, a facility earlier enjoyed only by troops.

India has also offered to increase the number of convoys of buses. After the phenomenal popularity of the Noor Fatima case, 16 Pakistani children have availed of the free medical treatment offered, so an additional 20 children will now be treated free of cost. The staff strength at both high commissions can be raised proportionately.

A step in the right direction,
page 12

DEMAND FOR SELF-DETERMINATION IN J&K ASSAILED

Pak. must vacate occupied territory, says PM

By Rajesh Ahuja

PANIPAT, OCT. 18. Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India and its people have willingly joined the country, the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, said here today.

Referring to the recent Organisation of Islamic Conference meet held in Kuala Lumpur, Mr. Vajpayee assailed "those" advocating the right of self-determination in Jammu and Kashmir and called upon Pakistan to vacate the occupied territory. Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir was an integral part of India and "whenever talks are held, we will make it an issue."

He was addressing a gathering here after laying the foundation for the Rs. 10,000-crore Panipat refinery expansion and related projects.

Questioning Pakistan's credentials for demanding the right of self-determination in Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Vajpayee asked: "Does Pakistan have democracy? Does it have an elected Government? I am an elected Prime Minister and will be there so long as I enjoy the people's mandate but

in Pakistan everybody knows that the people who captured power at gunpoint are at the helm of affairs. How can they raise this demand for self-determination for the people of Jammu and Kashmir?"

The Prime Minister said India did not want anybody's land but it "will not part with even an inch of ours." The issue of one-third part of Kashmir was still alive. "We want peace and I took the initiative thrice to mend fences with Pakistan but the neighbouring country was not even interested in trading with India or forging friendship. How could talks be held with Pakistan when they only want to talk about Kashmir?"

He said it was a positive signal that the world's thinking was changing in favour of India. Today, instead of pressuring India on talks with Pakistan, world leaders were merely saying that there should be a dialogue.

While seeking international support for the extradition of terrorists, Mr. Vajpayee said that India had been fighting terrorism in the last 20 years but regretted that some

other countries were engaging in "double peak" and they generally applied "double yardsticks" to terrorism. "Why don't they help us? Why don't they stop helping those who foment terrorism in India?"

India was at a crossroads, but efforts were on to accelerate development. The industrial and education policies were being modified to open up new avenues for employment. Panipat, the city of handlooms and handicrafts, could play a vital role in this. The Centre had brought about economic changes in cooperation with the State Governments and several countries, which had earlier boycotted India, were now offering their hand of friendship.

Mr. Vajpayee praised the Haryana Chief Minister, Om Prakash Chautala, for the accelerated pace of development in the State.

Paying tributes to the Haryana-born U.S. astronaut, Kalpana Chawla, he urged the youth to take inspiration from her life. If China could send a manned spacecraft, why not India, he asked.

We will crush terrorism, says Advani: Page 10

Musharraf told a big lie on Dawood: Advani

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, Oct. 18. — Deputy Prime Minister Mr LK Advani today said Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf was forced to tell a "big lie" about Dawood Ibrahim at their meeting during the Agra summit. "I thought he (Musharraf) was like an armyman and politics might not be in his heart. I felt he would be interested in developing friendly relations like we want," Mr Advani said while addressing a function here.

Recalling his meeting with Gen. Musharraf, Mr Advani said he told the Pakistani leader that with Prime Minister Mr AB Vajpayee being in power, there was a possibility of ending the acrimony between the two countries. "I asked him to make up his

PAK DENIAL

ISLAMABAD, Oct. 18. — Pakistan has, expectedly, denied that Dawood Ibrahim, declared by the USA as a global terrorist, is in Karachi. "Dawood is neither a Pakistani citizen, nor does he live in Karachi," Pakistani information minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed said here. — PTI

mind. I brought the reference of Turkey where I had signed an Extradition Treaty," he said. Gen. Musharraf was told that India needed the treaty with Pakistan more than Turkey. "Extradition Treaty between India and Pakistan will have good results," he said.

"He didn't realise where I was taking him and said 'why not, why not'," Mr Advani said. When

Gen. Musharraf was asked to hand over Dawood, the General had termed it as "not a big thing", but "I told him that he did not realise how the common people in India would react if Dawood was handed over. Then Gen. Musharraf had said that Dawood was not in Pakistan," Mr Advani said. "A top Pakistani official who was present at the meeting then told me that I forced him to speak a big lie in front of all the officials," the Deputy Prime Minister said.

Red Fort case: A RAW officer has told a Delhi court that the main accused in the December 2000 Red Fort attack case, who is an alleged Lashkar-e-Toiba terrorist, had stayed at his apartment for over two months prior to the incident.

Let Dawood pay for his crimes, India tells Pak

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi/Washington:



Dawood

India on Friday welcomed the US decision to designate Dawood Ibrahim a "global terrorist" and renewed its demand that Pakistan stop harbouring the underworld don and hand him over for prosecution. An elated deputy PM L.K. Advani told reporters that despite General Pervez Musharraf's denial during the Agra summit and elsewhere that Dawood was not in Pakistan, the "facts are before the world".

The US Treasury Department, which announced Dawood's terrorist designation late on Thursday, cited his Pakistani passport number (G869547) in its notification.

"This designation signals our commitment to identifying and attacking the financial ties between the criminal underworld and terrorism," Juan Zarate, deputy assistant secretary for terrorist financing and financial crimes, said in a statement accompanying the notification. The designation freezes any assets belonging to Dawood within the US and prohibits his transactions with US nationals.

Welcoming the US decision, the ministry of external affairs said on Friday, "The designation recognises Dawood's underworld and terrorist connections, his efforts to destabilise India, his involvement in the 1993 Mumbai bombing and his support to the Lashkar-e-Toiba." The MEA renewed its demand that Pakistan "hand over Dawood to India so that he can be prosecuted for the crimes committed by him" and also appealed to other states to disallow his transit or relocation from his current residence.

The US said it was calling on the international commu-

nity to "stop the flow of dirty money that kills". For the Dawood syndicate, said Mr Zarate, the business of terrorism formed part of its larger criminal enterprise, which must be dismantled." The Treasury Department notification, under Executive Order 13224, will be requesting that the UN list him as well.

The US notification did not allude to the role of Pakistan and the ISI in Dawood's activities, but said the don "has been helping finance attacks by LeT in Gujarat".

City police still sceptical

By S. Balakrishnan
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The city police is sceptical of an early deportation of Dawood Ibrahim from Pakistan despite the latest move by the US government.

The expectation is that the Bush administration will now mount pressure on Gen. Pervez Musharraf to deport Dawood to India, where he is wanted in several criminal cases, including the Mumbai serial bomb blasts of March 1993.

But, a section of the police force and the intelligence community here are unsure of an expeditious extradition. Sources said the don was sought to be ejected from Pakistan by the mafia in Karachi, where he is currently operating from, since he is majorly cutting into its narcotics trade. "But more importantly, jihadi elements within the ISI are averse to his extradition since he has generously helped fund militant organisations like the LeT," an official observed.

● Detailed report on Page 3

Jamali reacts sharply to Phalcon deal

17/10 110-8
By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, OCT. 11. In a sharp reaction to India inking a deal with Israel and Russia to buy strategic airborne radar systems, the Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, has said that the country's armed forces were prepared to face any eventuality.

Addressing the passing out parade of the 108th Long Course at the Kakul Military Academy this morning, Mr. Jamali did not take the name of India but said: "Our neighbouring country is entering into all kinds of defence pacts. From this platform, let me declare categorically that Pakistan's armed forces are prepared to face any eventuality."

The deal has caused a media sensation in Pakistan. Strategic and defence experts have been quoted as saying that the acquisition of Phalcon radars would tilt the conventional balance in favour of India. *India's Park*

In the last few weeks, the growing imbalance in South Asia as a result of the "arms acquisition spree" of India has been the constant theme in every forum. This was one of the main complaints made by the Pakistan President,

The Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri, told a press conference that Pakistan would not beg India for talks if it did not want a dialogue.

The comments by the Minister on talks reflect an assessment that with the announcement of election schedule for the five States, India had gone into election mode. Once the Assembly elections were over, the parties would start preparing for the general elections due in September.

India urges Gen to get rid of K-itch

By Chidanand Rajghatta
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Washington: When India and Pakistan get going at an international forum, the going gets ugly. As sure as the arrival of fall here, the two sides went after each other in their annual sideshow at the UN General Assembly session with tough postures and harsh words that put further distance between the two countries.

After Pakistan's military leader Pervez Musharraf reverted to his familiar Kashmir theme from the moment he set foot in New York, Indian officials fired back, using unprecedented language while asking the Pakistanis to get over their "annual Kashmir itch" and suggesting they should go on a fast before coming to the UN sessions to cleanse themselves of the Kashmir obsession.

That was just the beginning. Asked about Gen Musharraf's complaint in an interview that Pakistan's efforts at peacemaking had yielded zero returns from India, foreign secretary Kanwal Sibal had this to say, "It has yielded zero return because they have made zero investment. In fact, they should get negative returns because they have wasted all their capital on terrorism."

Gen Musharraf, a former commando, wasn't shy of sniping at India either. At a Pakistani community dinner on Sunday evening, he taunted New Delhi's indigenous defence establishment, saying how it had failed to produce an acceptable battle tank and fighter plane after years of trying while Pakistan has knocked together "world class" equipment.

Yeah right, Indian officials sneered in return, reminding everyone of the General's bragging about how Pakistan's space programme was so much better than India's on the basis of a "primitive,

rented, used satellite" that has since packed up.

The Indian verbal offensive follows an MEA decision actively and aggressively to counter Pakistani propaganda. As part of this decision, every time Pakistan raises the issue of self-determination or repression in Kashmir, India will point out the need for self-determination, democracy and human rights in the military-ruled Pakistan itself.

Despite this decision, India stayed away from a major conference on terrorism on the UN sidelines, organised by Norway on Monday and attended by more than 20 heads of state and government, including Gen Musharraf, and in the process ceded ground to him to pitch the Kashmir issue as a freedom struggle.

Delhi: Let's have bigger missions

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Continuing with its step-by-step fence-mending approach with Pakistan, India on Tuesday proposed an increase in the staff strengths of the respective high commissions. New Delhi also told Islamabad it would organise a Pakistani team's visit to the Baglihar hydro-power project in Jammu and Kashmir next month.

"The government proposed to Pakistan an increase in the staff strengths of the high commissions in Islamabad and New Delhi to 55 from the present level of 47 on a reciprocal basis," said an MEA official.

Once the requisite visa-issuing officers are in place, New Delhi is likely to announce the resumption of the rail link between Amritsar and Lahore.

DECISION ON IRAQ WILL TAKE TIME'

No talks with Pak now: PM

Nilova Roy Chaudhury in New York

Sept. 26. — What began as an initiative for peace and friendship with Pakistan in Srinagar has not exactly ended in New York, as the Prime Minister underlined that though he was "saddened" by the developments, he did not think peace initiatives were over. There is, however, "no question of a dialogue" with Pakistan now; "the environment is not right," Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee pointed out. "It will have no effect."

"They (peace process) will continue," Mr Vajpayee told a press conference at the end of his week-long visit to New York. But, the Prime Minister did not think his peace initiatives were "a sign of weakness," nor did Pakistan consider it as much. "They tried attacking us in Kargil and saw the results," he said. "One result (of his peace initiative) has been that the world realises that India is honest in its pursuit of peace and genuinely seeks peace. Few people trust Pakistan's words."

When asked to respond to the Pakistani permanent representative to the UN, Mr Munir Akram's allegation that "India was the mother of all terrorism," the Prime Minister asked: "Do I have to answer that? The mother of 100 crore Indians (India), we have always opposed the concept of terror, and thrice have I extended the hand of friendship to Pakistan". But, "now they (Pakistan) only say that peace efforts began at Agra. Why do they ignore Lahore?" came the pointed query.

Grand Bay
"Until Pakistan does away with its terrorist training camps, there is no question" of a dialogue, the Prime Minister said, responding to a question on whether the USA was exerting pressure on India to have a dialogue with Pakistan.

The "significant" thing about his meeting with President Bush was that the Americans conceded that "cross-border terrorism was continuing and indeed rising", Mr Vajpayee said.

The most pressing problem before the world in the present times, he said while alluding to his conversations with the US President and the Russian President, Mr Vladimir Putin, was the matter of Iraq's future. "We want that the governance of Iraq be swiftly handed over to the Iraqis," Mr Vajpayee stressed. India had informed its various interlocutors of its views on Iraq, which, at the moment requires "not peace-keeping" but "peace-enforcing". India would help in the reconstruction of that war-ravaged country, but on the question of sending troops, "our internal, domestic security considerations" are

a key consideration. "I think a decision on Iraq will take time," the Prime Minister said. He also made it clear that the matter was linked to what was the "pressing" problem of UN reforms and its role. "What happened in Iraq clearly shows the need for major reforms in the UN system," Mr Vajpayee said.

He stressed that reform just by way of an enhanced Security Council would not do but was needed in the functioning of the world body.

They (Pakistan) say that peace efforts began at Agra. Why do they ignore Lahore? The Americans conceded that cross-border terrorism was continuing and indeed rising

Question mark also over Islamabad visit

PM rejects Pak talks in January

K.P. NAYAR

New York, Sept. 26: Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee is unlikely to travel to Islamabad for the South Asian summit in January if the experience in New York in Indo-Pak amity is any guide.

India and Pakistan tore into each other at the General Assembly yesterday after their respective leaders attacked one another in their annual speeches to the UN body, marking a new low in India-Pakistan ties.

Vajpayee said at a press conference shortly before leaving for home that he regretted what happened in New York. "But I do not think the peace initiative is dead."

In the same breath, he categorically said there were no plans for any bilateral talks with the Pakistani leadership during his visit to Islamabad, that is, assuming he does go to Pakistan.

"The atmosphere is not conducive to talks. There is no point in having a dialogue," the Prime Minister said.

Members of his delegation explained that there was a basic divergence between New Delhi and Islamabad on what was meant by a resumption of dialogue.

Pakistan wants summit-level talks. India's view is that any resumption of dialogue should be step by step, starting at the lower levels and graduating up. They alleged in background briefings that Pakistan wants summit talks to exploit the atmospherics for Pervez Musharraf's dubious political ends, as happened in Agra.

India, on the other hand, feels that a bottom-to-top approach will be productive.

An official pointed out that the Prime Minister had not yet agreed to go to Islamabad. All that has happened at the recent Saarc foreign secretaries' meeting is that they agreed on dates for the next South Asian summit.

Yesterday, Pakistan's permanent representative to the UN, Munir Akram, described India as the "mother of terrorism" and said the world's first suicide bombers had come from training camps for Sri Lanka's Tamil sep-

arartists in Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh run by the Indian army and India's external spy agency, the Research and Analysis Wing, many years ago.

Exercising his right to reply to references to Pakistan in Vajpayee's UN address yesterday, Akram launched an inflammatory attack on the BJP, describing the party as fascist, one of whose members had killed Gandhiji.

He described riots in Gujarat last year as a "state-managed massacre of 2,000 Muslims" and abused Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray, somewhat to the bewilderment of General Assembly delegations, most of whom had no idea who Thackeray was.

India lost no time in responding. Exercising its right to reply to Akram's reply to Vajpayee, Indian delegate Harsh V. Shringla accused Islamabad of "creating political fiction about its anti-terrorist credentials".

Shringla was as merciless as Akram in his repartee. He said the contents of Akram's reply were "not surprising for a country whose history and policies have been rooted in political fiction".

The Indian delegation's drafting skills matched Pakistan's venom. "Pakistan's combat against international terrorism is based on 1 per cent intentions and 99 per cent pretensions. The ratio needs to be reversed."

Vajpayee was asked by a correspondent about Akram's description of India as the "mother of terrorism".

"Do I have to answer that?" He regretted the level at which bilateral exchanges were taking place and added: "I took the initiative for peace three times and now Pakistan talks of peace!"

He dismissed suggestions from correspondents that George W. Bush had asked India to start talks with Pakistan during his luncheon meeting with the US President here two days ago.

"The US President has been talking of a dialogue for long. My response was that terrorism across the border is increasing. There are training camps in Pakistan where terrorists are being trained. Now the Americans have acknowledged it, too."

■ See Page 6

Home and abroad

to
Musharraf plays his looney tunes again

The performance put up by General Musharraf while addressing the UN General Assembly indicates there has been no change whatever in Islamabad's mindset and that his intended audience remains the corps commanders and military top brass at home. Besides directing his usual venom at India for allegedly suppressing the Kashmir "freedom struggle", he also offered to stop cross-border terrorism provided Delhi begins a "sustained" dialogue with him. The offer is noteworthy on two counts. Since Musharraf also claims in the same breath that the separatist movement in Kashmir is purely indigenous, it follows that in the General's logic there is no cross-border terrorism, hence Musharraf's offer is null and void. That cover, of course, has long been blown, given innumerable Pakistanis who have crossed the LoC and have been captured or killed. Rhetoric aside, it is more important to look at the terms of dialogue as conceived by Islamabad. If the terms for stopping cross-border terrorism are that Delhi has to engage Islamabad in dialogue, it's easy to see that if the dialogue doesn't go Islamabad's way it will feel free to blame Delhi and crank up its terror machine once again. Entering dialogue on such terms looks like a particularly obvious waste of time.

One reason Musharraf is sounding so strident may be the domestic difficulties he's facing, where the national assembly and senate are paralysed on the issue of whether he can continue to be both President and army chief at the same time. The issue is fundamental because if Musharraf has his way, the nation's elected assemblies will be subordinate to a council appointed by him. There is a lot of domestic opposition building, and Musharraf has failed to bring either the Muttaḥida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) or the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD) on board his plans for the country. Even as he addressed the UN, the combined opposition staged a protest and a token hunger-strike saying that he was a "disputed person", who did not represent the country. The MMA is threatening a mass movement to depose him and restore the country's 1973 Constitution, which gives elected government supremacy over the military. His position is growing increasingly untenable at home, and if he keeps sounding off on Kashmir as he is doing now, it will be in Delhi's interest to simply bide its time and not make any throwaway concessions that he can use to curb dissent at home. It will be able to charge Musharraf later with trying to suppress Pakistan's freedom struggle.

Atal turns tables on Musharraf, says no negotiations with terror

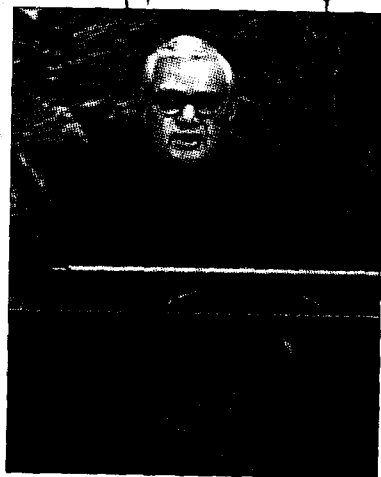
S. Rajagopalan
New York, September 25

PRIME MINISTER Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Thursday turned President Pervez Musharraf's words against him, terming the General's "offer" to encourage cessation of violence in Kashmir as an admission that he sponsored terrorism. Vajpayee rejected the offer — which Musharraf had tied to "reciprocal obligations and restraints" — saying New Delhi will not negotiate with terrorism or give in to blackmail.

Addressing the UN General Assembly in Hindi, Vajpayee poured scorn on Musharraf's speech at the same forum on Wednesday. He characterised the General's address as a public admission that Pakistan was sponsoring terrorism in Kashmir. After the claims about an "indigenous struggle" for freedom, the Pakistani leader was now talking of ending violence in return for reciprocal obligations, Vajpayee scoffed.

"We totally refuse to let terrorism become a tool of blackmail. Just as the world did not negotiate with al-Qaida or the Taliban, we shall not negotiate with terrorism," the Prime Minister said.

He summarily rejected Pakistan's demand for resumption of dialogue for the present. "When cross-border terrorism stops — or when we erad-



AFP
Vajpayee delivering his speech at the UN.

icate it — we can have a dialogue with Pakistan on the other issues between us." Vajpayee questioned Pakistan's credentials as a partner in the campaign against terror, saying: "No state should be allowed to profess partnership with the global coalition against terror while continuing to aid, abet and sponsor terrorism. To condone such double standards is to contribute to multiplying terrorism."

If the successes in the war against terrorism have remained confined to Afghanistan, it is because some of

PMspeak

- ▶ Pervez offer to end violence in J&K is an admission that he sponsors terror
- ▶ Just as the world didn't negotiate with al-Qaida or Taliban, we won't negotiate with terrorism
- ▶ Talks with Pak on 'the other issues between us' only when cross-border terrorism stops — or when we eradicate it
- ▶ Some partners in the war on terror are themselves part of the problem
- ▶ The attempt (to block India's bid for a permanent Security Council seat) by some states with weak claims should be countered with strong political will

the coalition members are themselves part of the problem, Vajpayee said in yet another unmistakable reference to Pakistan. He attacked Islamabad's word play over the definition of terrorism and its search for "imaginary freedom struggles".

The Prime Minister's no-holds-barred attack on Pakistan came just a day after US President George W. Bush had pointedly asked Musharraf to stop cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

■ Page 4: Bush and Vajpayee walked tightrope on Iraq, terror

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

26 SEP 2003

ISI plotted Akshardham attack: police

TIMES NEWS NETWORK AND PTI

Indi Pak
Ahmedabad: Claiming to have solved the Akshardham temple attack case on its first anniversary, the city crime branch on Wednesday said the sensational strike was a conspiracy hatched by Pakistan's ISI and executed by joint modules of the Jaish-e-Mohammad and the Lashkar-e-Toiba.

"The attack was a joint operation conducted by several modules of the Jaish-e-Mohammad and the Lashkar-e-Toiba with a network stretching from Riyadh in Saudi Arabia to Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and other cities," joint commissioner of police (crime) P.P. Pandey told reporters here.

"The ISI is the mother of all these banned outfits and is the brain behind terrorist attacks in the country. It gives separate tasks to each module located in different states," he said.

He made the claim on the basis of "documentary evidence" available with them and "precise information" revealed during the interrogation of arrested Lashkar-e-Toiba terrorist Chand Khan.

But the claims failed to establish how the two terrorists landed in Ahmedabad.

The announcement came a day after Chand Khan's lawyer alleged that the latter was being tortured in custody.

Chand Khan, who was arrested by the Jammu and Kashmir police, had claimed that the Akshardham attack had been hatched in that state and that the original plan was to attack Gujarat CM Narendra Modi's "Gaurav Yatras".

Khan's statement had raised a storm as they came a day after the Gujarat police claimed it had cracked the Akshardham case following the arrest of five people, including two Muslim clerics.

The joint commissioner of police (crime) said: "Khan had taken all the blame on himself because he was afraid for the safety of his wife and daughter who are still in Anantnag."

THE TIMES OF INDIA

25 SEP 2003

India declares CBMs with Pak

Saurabh Shukla
New Delhi, September 23

THE STAGE is set for the Indo-Pak diplomatic ping-pong at the UN General Assembly session in New York even as India announced another set of measures aimed at building confidence with Pakistan and to steer people-to-people contacts with its neighbour.

Pakistan's Deputy High Commissioner Munwar Saeed Bhatti was called to the Foreign Office on Tuesday and informed about New Delhi's proposal to increase the staff strength of the respective high commissions from 47 to 55 in order to meet the demand for visas in the two high commissions. The move stems from an increase in the demand for visas following greater people-to-people contacts between the two countries.

Pakistan has also been informed that a visit by a team from the Pakistan Indus Waters Commission to Baglihar project in Jammu and Kashmir would be organised in October this year in response to a request from Islamabad for a site visit. The proposal is also a clever diplomatic move, made a day before General Musharraf's address to the UN General Assembly Session on Wednesday. The staff strength of the two High Commissions was reduced from the initial level of 110 to 47 after the December 13, 2001 attack on Parliament.

Informed sources here say that, despite External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha's assertion that Pakistan should not use international forums to rake up bilateral disputes and the



External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha addresses a United Nations General Assembly special session at UN headquarters in New York.

UNGA will be "the test", New Delhi does not expect any change in the "negative Pakistani mindset."

That Pakistan is unlikely to shed its "obsession" of Kashmir was also stated by the Pakistani Foreign Office spokesperson and is likely to be the focus of General Musharraf's address on Wednesday.

Diplomatic sources told HT that Musharraf's speech on Wednesday would be spiked up with a volley of allegations against India on human rights abuses in Kashmir, on addressing the root causes of terrorism, besides pinning down India on the rise of Hindu fundamentalism with reference

to Gujarat. Musharraf is also expected to seek a greater role of the international community to resolve



Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf at the UN meet on fighting terror on Monday.

the Kashmir issue and press India for a dialogue, besides stressing on nuclear CBM's in South Asia.

While South Block is preparing its response to be added to Prime Minister Vajpayee's speech on Thursday to counter Musharraf, it also wants to demonstrate a degree of maturity and may not get into a game of direct pot shots.

While the Indian focus will be to expose General's doublespeak and to prove that the West's ally in the war against terror runs the epicentre of terrorism, the bottomline is that UNGA will again become a diplomatic battlefield for the two South Asian neighbours.

PERVEZSPEAK

- ▶ Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has accused India of failing to respond to his country's peace initiatives
- ▶ Musharraf said it was imperative to look at the root causes that bred terrorism and to address them with the utmost priority
- ▶ He referred to the Kashmir and Palestine issues in the same light
- ▶ Musharraf said Pakistan devised a two-prong strategy to root out terrorism
- ▶ Dealing with the Taliban and the al-Qaida was the short-term strategy
- ▶ The long-term one pertains looking at the root cause that contributed to, and bred, terrorism
- ▶ Pakistan is committed to making the world a safer place, he said, and assailed the West's perception that Islam had anything to do with militancy and terrorism

Sinha earns 'discourteous' label

Snubbed Pak calls off trip

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IMTIAZ GUL

18/9

Islamabad, Sept. 17: Pakistan foreign minister Khursheed Mehmood Kasuri has dropped his plan to visit Delhi after "inappropriate remarks by the Indian foreign minister Yashwant Sinha" as relations between the two countries took a dip from the earlier optimism about a resumption of dialogue.

Kasuri had intended to come to Delhi to deliver an invitation to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee for a summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (Saarc) scheduled to be held in Islamabad in January.

On the day Pakistan announced Kasuri's plan, India responded by indicating that he would be an unwelcome guest. Foreign secretary Kanwal Sibal said on Monday India had already accepted the invitation and there was no need for a visit by Kasuri — though he did not name names — to "reinforce" it.

If that were not enough, Sinha said foreign ministers do not go around delivering invitations to heads of government because other diplomatic channels are available.

"Inappropriate remarks by (the) Indian foreign minister, objecting to Kasuri's visit to Saarc capitals in complete disregard to the eastern traditions of hospitality, forced (the) Pakistan gov-

PHOTOGRAPH BY AP/WIDEWORLD



Pak foreign minister Kasuri

The Indian minister's remarks were not only discourteous but also reflected his utter contempt for South Asian cultural values, traditions of hospitality and established Saarc practice

PAKISTAN

ernment to do away with the proposed visit," foreign office spokesman Masood Khan said.

"It is regrettable...the letter of invitation to the Indian Prime Minister will now be sent through diplomatic channels as suggested by Mr Sinha," Khan said.

Kasuri has already visited Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka and delivered invitations to the respective heads of government. He was planning to visit India, Bhutan and Maldives in the second half of October.

Pakistan and India re-embar-

ked on a normalisation process in April after Vajpayee offered a hand of friendship and vowed to end the tensions which mounted to an unprecedented level following an armed attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001, bringing the two countries to the verge of military conflict.

Observers believe that the Saarc summit may well be in the doldrums because India might again boycott the meet as it did twice — first in 2000 when the summit was to be held in Colombo and in 2002 when Pakistan was to be the host.

Islamabad appears to fear as much. The foreign office said Sinha's statement "confirmed the apprehensions of all Saarc countries that India was not only disinterested in the Saarc process but also had no intention of engaging Pakistan in a dialogue to resolve all outstanding disputes, including the core issue of Jammu & Kashmir".

Pakistan's announcement of Kasuri's plan to visit Delhi and India's immediate snub came in the backdrop of a rash of militant strikes in Kashmir. Acceptance of the trip in the context might have been seen as a sign of weakness on the part of Delhi domestically.

In any case, by allowing a high-ranking Pakistani leader to come, India does not want to give the impression — or permit Islamabad to claim — that talks have resumed.

India rejects talks with Pak in NY

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 15 SEPTEMBER

IN a clear toughening of its stance, India on Monday, categorically ruled out any Indo-Pak contact at the highest level in New York next week, on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly session, even as it seemed non-committal about Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's visit to Islamabad early next year for the Saarc summit.

Foreign secretary Kanwal Sibal, while briefing the media on the Prime Minister's visit to Turkey and the US, said a curt "no" when asked if any interaction was on the cards between Mr Vajpayee and Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf, in New York. Mr Vajpayee, though, will be holding talks with President George Bush and Russian President Vladimir Putin, besides, heads of states of Mauritius, Srilanka and Nigeria, he said.

The hard stance, even as it comes in the backdrop of the thaw in Indo-Pak relations following Mr Vajpayee's hand of friendship initiative, indicates that New Delhi is unwilling to make moves at the highest level until Pakistan makes some tangible moves on cross border terrorism. The cold response on Monday, over Mr Vajpayee's Islamabad plans also suggested this line of action, even though Mr Sibal did not rule out anything while maintaining that

for the summit to happen, Pakistan would have to keep up with its promise of hastening the economic agenda of Saarc. "We have said that for the summit to be meaningful, economic agenda has to move forward" he said. The foreign secretary underpinned the importance of moving ahead on both SAPTA and SAFTA, issues on which New Delhi has been accusing Pakistan of dragging its feet by deferring crucial meetings.

Additionally, New Delhi gave clear indications that it was clearly unimpressed with Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri's current missive to visit each Saarc member country to personally extend invitations for the summit.

Maintaining that the Saarc Standing Committee of Foreign Secretaries had already finalised the dates, which were known to all member countries, he said: "It is not as if under the SAARC Charter or on the basis of established practice personal handing over of invitation is required. It is a different matter that X, Y or Z may choose to do so. But this is not a requirement," he said.

On the Prime Minister's engagements in New York, Mr Sibal said a host of issues, including terrorism, developments in Iraq including UN resolution for a multinational force in the war torn country, Afghanistan as well as the role of the UN were expected to be discussed with world leaders.

16 SEP 2003

The Economic Times

India-Pakistan Inc. charts roadmap to boost trade

Indo-Asian News Service

NEW DELHI, Sept. 15. — Captains of industry from India and Pakistan on Monday agreed to step up business ties in a wide spectrum of sectors in order to give a major boost to the present insignificant bilateral trade.

Businessmen from the two countries decided to focus on five sectors, in the initial phase, for mutual cooperation, said a statement issued after the first meeting of the India-Pakistan CEO's Business Forum.

The forum, a joint initiative of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Young President's Organisation (YPO), an international network of business leaders with chapters in 75 countries, was launched on Sunday.

"We have decided to take up sugar, textiles, automobile, chemicals and pharmaceutical industries immediately for mutual cooperation," said Mr Amin Hashwani, co-chairman of the India-Pakistan CEO's Business Forum.

"These are the sectors where India and

Pakistan have great complimentary skills and resources," Mr Hashwani, who is also the managing director of Karachi-based Hashwani Group of Companies, told a press conference here.

He said there were exceptional technical skills in both countries that complemented each other but they were not being leveraged to their full potential, restricting the trade volume between India and Pakistan.

Mr Hashwani, however, admitted there were many hurdles in the way of enhancing trade ties between India and Pakistan.

"The air, road and rail links are very vital for conducting business. The absence of these links does create hurdles, and these are ground realities. But we are hopeful things will improve as we move forward," he said.

New Delhi discontinued rail, road and air links with Islamabad after a terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001 for

which India blamed Pakistan. Relations between the two countries have begun to improve after the Indian Prime Minister, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, offered a "hand of friendship" to Islamabad five months ago.

On the prospects of increasing trade in the absence of a positive political environment, Mr Hashwani said: "Businessmen in both the countries can actually act as catalyst and complement the political dialogue process."

"But progress at the government level will certainly give a big boost to our endeavour. Whatever progress we make through this increased business-to-business contact will be long-term and sustainable."

Agreed Mr Anand Mahindra, president of CII. "At the very best, we can begin to think differently. We are not here to create hype. We are basically at a base camp.

"But the fact that the thought leaders in the two countries are coming together and discussing ways and means to boost trade is a big achievement in itself. We need to continue with the dialogue process."

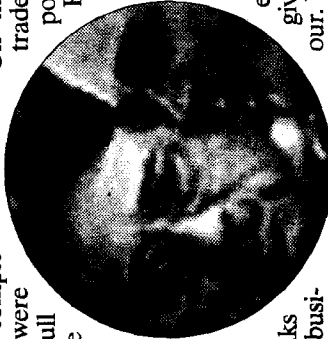
Mr Mahindra said the members of India-Pakistan CEO's Business Forum had agreed on setting up a "sustained and committed" process and target substantial increase in trade in coming years.

The forum will continue discussion on four key initiatives — trade and investment, manufacturing, services (health, education and entertainment) and communication for building positive perceptions — in its future meetings.

The next meeting of the forum will take place in Pakistan within six months, said Mr Mahindra.

Bilateral trade between India and Pakistan is currently less than one percent of their global trade.

Pakistan maintains a "permissible list" of 600 items like chemicals, minerals, metal products, cardamom and tyres that may be legally imported.



Delhi springs UN test for Islamabad

Saurabh Shukla
New Delhi, September 14

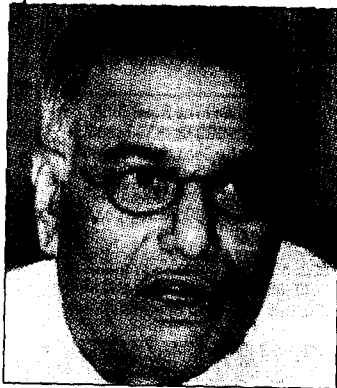
FOR PERHAPS the first time, India has decided to put its bilateral relations with Pakistan on trial at the United Nations. All the judging, though, will be done by New Delhi and not the world body.

India and Pakistan should end the practice of turning every international and multilateral forum into "a battleground to attack each other", External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha said on Sunday. The test case could be the upcoming meeting of the UN General Assembly in New York, he suggested.

Sinha said the two countries' attempts to use international platforms to settle scores "lower the standard of debate of the entire forum in which they take place and are a major source of embarrassment to all those forced to witness this unseemly spectacle. Let us put an end to this practice. The forthcoming UNGA will be a test of this."

Sinha was speaking at the launch of the India-Pakistan CEO's Business Forum organised by the CII. His remarks came soon after Pakistani high commissioner Aziz Ahmed Khan had beaten Islamabad's old theme on Kashmir, labelling the "failure" to address this "single issue" as the source of all bilateral problems.

New Delhi's position is that Indo-Pak issues are bilateral, and Pakistan should stop using every occasion, from UNGA to Saarc to small business conferences like the CII meet, to demand the reso-



Yashwant Sinha
Point of order

lution of the Kashmir dispute. India's move is also aimed at exposing Pakistan's doublespeak, for Islamabad cannot afford to jettison the K-word from forums, especially at the UNGA, which Islamabad has been using to tom-tom its agenda.

The Pakistani tactic has led to India being "hyphenated" with Pakistan, Sinha felt, affecting the country's worldview and hobbling economic progress. "I feel diminished as an Indian when we are hyphenated with Pakistan."

Sinha said that while New Delhi's policies were not Pakistan-centric, he hoped that Pakistan will shed its obsession with India.

Yet Sinha couldn't help taking a dig at Islamabad for stalling people-to-people contacts. He said a tea trade delegation and a team of jurists were denied visas for mysterious reasons. Khan hit back by blaming non-operational rail and air links as hurdles to economic cooperation.

HEF
9.15 PM 15/9

'India avoiding peace talks'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, Sept. 13. — Accusing India of trying to avoid peace negotiations, General Pervez Musharraf said there was no danger to "our borders whether India keeps its forces at the border for 10 months or so."

Urging New Delhi to start dialogue without any delay he said: "The ball is in India's court and it is up to them to sit across the table for resolving all outstanding issues including the core Kashmir problem."

"Pakistan has always given positive response to any call for dialogue, and I believe the talks must start without any delay," he said adding, India, however, was trying to avoid coming to the negotiating table to press ahead with peace process in South Asia.

Observing that the Indo-Israel "nexus" carried a "lot of danger" for Pakistan, the President said that a strategy is being evolved to ensure that it is not used against his country.

"The India-Israel nexus carries a lot of danger and we are concerned about it," Gen. Musharraf said in an interview published in *The News* daily today, while responding to questions on the recent visit of Israeli Prime Minister Mr Ariel Sharon to India.

He said Pakistan is evolving a strategy to ensure that

Kasuri on Saarc summit

KATHMANDU, Sept. 13. — The Saarc process should not be held hostage to bilateral issues, Pakistan's foreign minister Mr Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri has said and expressed confidence that Mr Vajpayee would take part in the 12th summit of the regional grouping to be held in Islamabad in January.

"They (India) will be accorded a warm welcome there," Mr Kasuri, who is here on a two-day visit to extend a letter of invitation to Nepalese Prime Minister Mr Surya Bahadur Thapa for the Saarc meeting, said yesterday. — PTI

this Indo-Israeli nexus does not damage the national interest. "We would try that this nexus should not be used against Pakistan, and both India and Tel Aviv may carry on with their bilateral relations."

Gen. Musharraf said if this Indo-Israeli nexus would "harm and damage us, we have to turn it around in our advantage."

Gen. Musharraf said he would focus on the anti-terrorism debate during his visit to the UN, which will also be addressed by Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Indo-Israeli ties threaten Pak, says Musharraf

Islamabad: President Pervez Musharraf has described as "extremely" threatening the emerging friendship between India and Israel but declined to term conjectures of an emerging India, Israel and US axis as an anti-Muslim alliance.



P. Musharraf

Asked if he believed Israeli Prime minister Ariel Sharon's recent visit to India was potentially threatening to Pakistan, Mr Musharraf said on BBC's Talking Point programme, "Well it's extremely (threatening)—the people here are taking it very seriously.

"We are watching whatever is happening and whatever statements are coming from across the border and I think it's a very sensitive issue. I only hope that the leadership of Israel, Prime Minister Sharon, understands the sensitivity of Pakistan to whatever happens between Israel and India.

"And I hope he is a straight man enough to understand the sensitivities of Pakistan and take all measures to address our sensitivity and maintain a degree of balance in relationships," Mr Musharraf said.

Asked whether the India, Is-

rael and US axis could be described as an anti-Muslim alliance and whether it was time to build a Muslim military-political alliance to counter it, he said, "No, no not at all. I don't think they are meaning to create an anti-Muslim alliance. And if Israel and the United States are doing that it's extremely sad I would say."

He denied that there was any attempt to counter it with a Muslim military alliance. "Not at all, I think what we are trying to do is to bring this two-pronged strategy that I spoke of, that is the route forward and that is the part that we would like to take", he said referring to his remarks on cementing relationships between Muslim countries and the West.

He said the attacks on churches and Christian institutions in Pakistan last year were a fallout of happenings in the world. "I think this is a most unfair comment that we haven't done anything (to prevent attack on Christians). First of all, attacks on Christians in Pakistan never happened before, they only happened in roughly about one year ... they were a fallout of whatever is happening around the world Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine," he said adding that almost all the persons involved in the attacks were apprehended. 711

Place called Freedom

9/2/2003
11-14
SC orders release of Pakistanis held in Indian jails

Munir was lucky. The 13-year-old Pakistani boy was arrested in June this year after he accidentally strayed into Indian territory while grazing cattle. For over a month, he was held in a police lock-up before being transferred to a juvenile home. Eventually, he was released on August 1 after a special intervention by Atal Behari Vajpayee. On the bus to Lahore, Munir said, "I love your India, everybody is nice and behaved well with me." C Ibrahim, who has not been so lucky, might not agree. The 55-year-old Indian-born Pakistani passport holder faces deportation from his native Kerala back to a Pakistan he does not wish to go to. Ibrahim's saga began 33 years ago when en route to the Gulf, he landed up in Karachi. After nine years in Pakistan, he managed to get a passport and a visa to get him back to India. Now, like some 300-odd 'foreign' nationals in Kerala, he faces forcible expulsion from what he considers to be his home and where he has a family. "Permit me to stay in my land, or hang me," is Ibrahim's impassioned plea to a stony-faced bureaucracy. Though the Union minister of state for home has said that the case of such unfortunates could be sympathetically considered if the Kerala government made a formal request, the state authorities have yet to act on the matter.

Such individual stories give a human face to the recent Supreme Court directive to the government to release Pakistani civilians, who have already served their sentences, from the Indian jails where they are languishing. There are reportedly some 400 such cases. The government's argument in continuing to hold these victims of circumstance is that there are an equal number, if not more, of Indians who are in Pakistani prisons. If we release their prisoners, how can we ensure that they will release ours? Such hard-nosed logic misses the point that there is a fundamental difference between India and Pakistan: We are a democracy, with all that that over-reaching term implies, and they are not. The release of Pakistani prisoners will do much more than further the attempts at having better relations with Islamabad; it will help in some small measure to restore our faith in our system which, flawed though it often is, is at least capable of correction. And that is the real litmus test as to whether ours truly is an open society, a place called freedom.

NO. 10
29

BENEFITS OF RESTRAINT

THE PRIME MINISTER, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, is showing both equipoise and insight in guiding the efforts for re-engagement with Pakistan. Mr. Vajpayee preferred a tone of sadness and pain to one of harshness when recent events forced him to comment on Pakistan's lack of sincerity in combating terrorism. He has restrained most of his ministerial colleagues from reacting in a strident fashion to the terrorist outrages perpetrated in Mumbai and Srinagar. The Deputy Prime Minister was the sole member of the Union Cabinet to use strong language; his intervention was evidently judged to be necessary as a subsidiary theme. Official Pakistan's nexus with terrorist groups is so well established that its prompt condemnation of the Mumbai outrage cannot persuade or satisfy India. Pakistan has so structured its linkages with terrorist groups that it believes that the disavowal of a connection will be credible. This makes it all the more imperative that incidents of terrorism be thoroughly investigated. Any evidence of the ties between the perpetrators and their alleged controllers across the border must be made public. At the same time, New Delhi must persist with its programme of engaging with Pakistan in a positive mode on measures that benefit the people of the two countries. Mr. Vajpayee's policy of appealing to Pakistan's civil society over the heads of die-hard India-baiters has begun to acquire momentum.

Positive initiatives taken in the recent past have been welcomed by the people on both sides of the border. Among the notable measures are the restoration of full diplomatic relations, the appointment of High Commissioners, the resumption of the New Delhi-Lahore bus service, and the reinvigoration of Track II interactions. Constituents of Pakistani society who want peace and good relations with India have become more vocal in expressing their feelings. The

desire for a more normal relationship is also manifested in the demand made by Pakistan fans of Indian teleserials that their Government should lift the restrictions imposed on cable operators. A reaffirmation of the diverse links between the people of the two countries will not by itself persuade Pakistan to change its position on the core issues. But the development of people-to-people contacts in various spheres can lead to the correction of misconceptions and misperceptions that complicate efforts at normalisation. Such an attitudinal change must be effected so that the people of Pakistan will progressively open their minds to the long-term benefits of engaging with India. For its part, India should affirm on a consistent and reliable basis that it is interested in friendship, not merely co-existence, with Pakistan.

India's effort to break the deadlock on resuming direct flights between the two countries must be re-examined from this perspective. Too much need not be read into the 'failure' of civil aviation experts to resolve the issue during the recent two-day meeting in Rawalpindi. They have agreed to meet again and it will be hoped the two countries will agree on a resumption of air links soon. Pakistan maintains that it will allow the restoration of air links only if India gives a commitment that it will never again resort to a unilateral suspension of over-flight facilities. Official Pakistan, it appears, is intent on making India pay for the 'coercive diplomacy' it practised over much of 2002 and into this year. Pakistan also wants to delay the restoration of over-flight facilities since it resents the improvement of relations between India and Afghanistan. While India should not unthinkingly forgo any part of its sovereign right over its air space, it should not lock itself into a dispute over issues of secondary importance since its broad spectrum approach has begun to work.

THE HINDU

SFP 2003

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