

Going beyond words

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One of the outcomes of the visit of the prime minister, Manmohan Singh, to The Hague for the India-European Union summit earlier this month was that the two entities entered into a "strategic partnership." The summit has been described as "historic" and the strategic partnership as symbolizing "a qualitative transformation" of the relationship.

A fine weave of words but perhaps slightly far from the truth. There is a feeling among the Europeans that India still has little perception of the EU's emergence as a new pole in international relations. The security concerns of India and Europe, they argue, border on the same region — from the Hindukush to the Mediterranean. These concerns are not only about nuclear, chemical and biological weapons but also about terrorism and relations with Islam. Yet, they think that India does not relate with the EU as a security entity.

The EU is the largest economic grouping in the world but it has not yet emerged as a unified security entity. India, therefore, relates with it essentially as an economic bloc. The EU is India's largest trade and investment partner. But it is also quite protectionist. It has been raising difficult environment and labour issues at the WTO that go against India's interests. It has also launched the largest number of anti-dumping investigations against India. There are some who believe that the EU is deliberately bloody-minded in entangling India in anti-dumping and anti-subsidy web.

Although the votaries of the EU complain that India still prefers to deal with its constituents on a bilateral basis, they also make use of the incompleteness of the federation to their advantage. "They shuttle you between Brussels and the national capitals on tricky issues" is the common perception in New Delhi.

Foreign policy essentially remains a national policy in the EU despite some coordination. India cannot deal with the EU as a state because it does not have a common foreign and security policy. India also prefers to deal with France and Britain, not because they are smarter but because they are permanent members of the United Nations security council. In the security council, their views are derived from their membership of that body and not as EU members. The other EU constituents, especially Germany, do not

TWENTY-TWENTY

BHARAT BHUSHAN



Tied loosely

think of the present security council as a democratic or representative body. The six-monthly rotating presidency of the EU has also contributed to the security council's unsatisfactory relationship with the EU.

The new constitution of the EU envisages a foreign minister for the European Commission and the European Council of Ministers. Meanwhile, the differing views among the constituent countries have meant that the policy that emerges is the lowest common denominator on each issue. This may not be congenial to New Delhi's interests.

That the EU is not a unified security organization becomes clear on the issues of nuclear proliferation. New Delhi finds it more pragmatic to deal with Britain and France on these issues, as they are nuclear weapon states. The other EU members, in India's perception, end up taking an ideological position on nuclear weapons.

In the case of frontier technologies, especially the global positioning satellite project, Galileo, the EU would like India to invest nearly \$300 million but refuses to share the military codes for the project. It claims that such codes have also not been provided to China. China may be a potential adversary but that cannot be the case with India. New Delhi is, therefore, right in trying to explore a similar GPS project Glonass

with Russia, which is more likely to share information. The project could, therefore, be more participative.

India is interested in participating in the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor project (nuclear fusion technology) but what good is it if the EU is going to remain bound by the Nuclear Suppliers Group? The technology may not be supplied to India at all.

There seems to be an apparent convergence of Indian and European interests on multipolarity. But Britain does not believe in multipolarity. It also does not see itself as European. Britain has always kept Europe divided and even today does not want it to become strong so that the continent remains digestible for its ally, the United States of America. France disagrees but its notion of multipolarity is different from Germany's. Germany in fact seeks to work with the US and has no desire to make the EU a counterweight to Washington.

EU's east European countries have a very pro-US mindset. They had a harrowing time during the Cold War and still suffer from the mindset of victims. They are not inclined to the re-emergence of Russia as a major power and do not believe in multipolarity. There is no consensus on the issue within the EU, despite the Franco-German leadership in the matter.

Under these circumstances, what

does strategic partnership mean? It means that Europe is finally taking note of the conventional wisdom that in the next decade India will emerge as a regional and global power. Aware of their small size, both geographically and economically, the members of the EU see the economic potential of dealing with a population of over one billion and with an economic growth rate of 5 to 6 per cent becoming a huge market. The EU is developing a stake in that market.

Behind this, of course, is the fact that all the major players in EU support India's membership of the security council — Britain and France directly, and there is an agreement with Germany of mutual support for each other's candidature. There also seems to be a recognition that India's nuclear capability means that it will have an important role to play in any non-proliferation regime, though not necessarily in the treaties.

Europe also feels the need to engage India, which has a huge Muslim population, on Islam. Europe is caught in the contradiction of building walls against Islam and mulling Turkey's entry to the EU at the same time. It will be eventually unavoidable and perhaps Europe will realize that it is better to have a moderate state structure in Turkey than to leave the country to fend for itself. But to come to that unambiguous conclusion, Europe needs a dialogue with Islam to understand how its moderate tendencies can be encouraged.

However, New Delhi also has to reciprocate the logic of the relationship by giving content to the strategic partnership. However, it does not seem to be making the choices it needs to make to develop the special relationship it seeks with Europe. Concerns other than strategic seem to determine whether or not orders should be placed for Airbus or French Mirages and Scorpene submarines. Commercial and often corrupt considerations then supersede the strategic relationship that we seek.

New Delhi, therefore, must also take the blame for not giving Europe a stake in the relationship. Otherwise, how can the strategic partnership with EU provide a balance to the US and Russia? If real content is not lent to the relationship, the annual India-EU summits are likely to remain only public relations events for the prime minister of the day. We Indians are superb with working on the basis of vocabulary. What is needed is action.

8/8
17/11

Big boy

gandhi
kumar

Strategic partnerships mark enhancement of EU ties

At the fifth India-EU summit held at The Hague this year, relationships have been upgraded to a "strategic partnership". Not bad for our global ambitions — as long as it carries the tag of a "developing country" instead of a world power, it will be patronised rather than listened to. Delhi has been lectured at past summits on Kashmir and nuclear non-proliferation, omitted this time. One of the more risible areas in which Indo-European cooperation is suggested is a dialogue on Islam. Despite its record of communal strife the EU thinks India has some tips to offer: the prospect of Muslim-majority Turkey joining soon must be boggling its mind. That apart, the EU is one of the world's biggest markets as well as a potential source of capital and technology. That this potential is vastly under-utilised. European businesses outsource far less to India than the USA or the UK do. There is the language barrier, but all areas of outsourcing are not as language dependent as, say, call centres. Manmohan Singh has raised these issues.

Delhi, however, must aim further. The strategic partnership must break down protectionist barriers that "fortress" Europe puts up around itself for Indian goods and services. No doubt Brussels will demand its pound of flesh in terms of more reforms and less red tape at the Indian end, a desirable goal that Delhi ought to pursue in any case. Delhi must also negotiate norms by which Indian citizens find it easy to travel and work in Europe. On the political front, both India and Europe agree on the desirability of a multilateral order and cooperation against terrorism. Delhi can make a play for European support for a permanent Indian seat on the UN Security Council. A strengthened relationship with Europe would indeed mark India's arrival on the world scene.

12 NOV 2004

THE STATESMAN

India should cash in on EU goodwill, says Manmohan

On Board PM's Special Aircraft: Describing as politically and economically significant the India-EU Summit in The Hague that finalised a strategic partnership between the two, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday said it was now upto the country to take decisions to move ahead.

"I am satisfied with the outcome of the summit in The Hague. It has far exceeded the earlier meetings in Lisbon and other venues.

This summit has shown that all the countries have a lot of respect and admiration for India," he told reporters accompanying him on his return home from The Netherlands.

Singh later told reporters on his arrival in Delhi that the international environment for India's development was "highly favourable" and there was "tremendous goodwill" for the country in the outside world. "Now it is up to us to take necessary decisions which will get our country moving again," he said. Describing the summit as "very useful", Singh said momentous decisions have been taken to give institutional shape to the mutli-faceted relationship between India and the EU.

"Decisions taken at the meeting will create more favourable environment for India's development," Singh said, terming EU as India's largest trading partner and the biggest source of foreign investment.

"Wide-ranging decisions have been taken to give new momentum to our relations in the fields of cooperation in counter-terrorism, environment, energy security, science and technology, outsourcing and trade," Singh

said, adding satisfactory conclusions have been reached on all these issues.

India and the European Union entered a strategic partnership to upgrade their ties and pledged to bolster cooperation to combat international terrorism at the summit.

He said the stage has been set for next year's summit, "where we will devise a concrete action programme to implement what is contained in the 'strate-



Manmohan Singh chats with reporters on board the return flight to New Delhi

gic partnership document'." Singh refused to join issue with Left parties on their criticism of the last week's decision to increase prices of petroleum products.

"I have already explained (the rationale behind the decision). I have nothing more to add. I will explain my position to my colleagues too," he told reporters. He was asked to comment on the serious reservations expressed by the Left parties.

Singh also parried a question on the possibilities of a cabinet expansion.

He rejected Advani's criticism over talks with Naxalites and said the decision on the dialogue was taken after discussions with chief ministers of states affected by Left wing extremism. "I do not accept Advani's criticism of the talks (between the Congress-led government in Andhra Pradesh and the Naxalites)." P71

HINDUSTAN TIMES

India Europe *H.T. 6 11/11*

Indo-European language

THERE MUST be relief in New Delhi and Brussels at the successful conclusion of the India-EU summit in The Hague. The positive atmospherics of the meeting were perhaps more significant than the actual agreements arrived at. It is no secret that the last two summits have been somewhat of a disaster. Last year's summit at Copenhagen almost collapsed because the EU wanted to raise the subject of Gujarat. But the fault has not always lain with the Europeans. India, too, has not found it easy to get an intellectual grip on the idea of an integrated Europe.

In such circumstances, the proof of the pudding could be in the eating, and in this case, the two areas of focus: India's participation in the Galileo and the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) projects. The Galileo programme, an analogue of the Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) system of the US, has great economic and military significance. But it remains to be seen whether the Europeans are willing to allow India to access the highest-level coded signals of the satellites that can have military applications, or only

signals that are useful for navigation and location as provided by the GPS. The success of the ITER, on the other hand, has enormous economic implications because of its potential to provide an almost endless source of cheap energy using nuclear fusion.

While India would like to see a pay-off from this relationship in a reasonable time-frame, it must resist the temptation of seeing this relationship as some kind of a counter-poise to the US. More than India, Europe has close military, economic and cultural ties with the US. The Americans, who have non-proliferation concerns over the project, are also partners in the ITER, along with Russia, China, South Korea, Canada and Japan. If movement on the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) with the US helped spur the negotiations with the EU on Galileo and ITER, success with the Europeans will in turn have a beneficial impact on the NSSP Phase II dialogue. What we are really witnessing is the leading countries of the world architecting a cooperative new world order based on open markets and economic competition, which has little room for any kind of extremism or angularity.

11 NOV 2004

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

SUMMIT THRUST ON COMBATING TERROR

EU, India seal strategic ties

9/11 SFI
IANS & PTI



Dr Manmohan Singh with foreign minister Mr Natwar Singh before interacting with the media on board the special aircraft on his way to The Netherlands. (Above) The Prime Minister alights at Amsterdam airport on his way to The Hague on Sunday. — PTI

THE HAGUE, Nov. 8. — Forming a new “strategic partnership” that seeks to expand bilateral trade and investment flows, India and the European Union today pledged to take “sustained measures” to combat terrorism. India is the sixth nation with which the EU has a strategic partnership after the USA, Canada, Russia, Japan and China.

“We stress that strengthening cooperation in combating terrorism is a priority area for the EU-India action plan for a strategic partnership,” a joint statement issued at the end of the India-EU summit attended by Dr Manmohan Singh said. The statement issued after the Prime Minister’s meeting with his Dutch counterpart and EU President, Mr Jan Peter Balkenende, and European Commission President Mr Roman Prodi, also vowed to reduce the terrorists’ access to financial resources.

Describing India and EU as “natural partners”, Dr Singh said: “Our strategic partnership symbolises a qualitative transformation in our interactions based on trust and mutual confidence.” Describing the move as a “landmark” in India-EU relations, Indian officials said it reflected a clear endorsement of India’s emergence as a regional and global leader.

The 10-page statement resolved to enhance collective action to fight the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and also the means of delivery following international concerns over the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

On Indo-Pak ties, EU welcomed “the positive evolution” of the relationship between the two neighbours and said the bloc looked forward to its consolidation through ongoing composite talks in an atmosphere free from terrorism and violence.

Observing that their partnership was based on a “sound foundation” of shared values, both sides agreed to encourage holding of regular, institutionalised parliamentary exchanges, promotion of cooperation between political parties, trade unions, business associations, universities and civil societies, exchange of views and possible cooperation in conflict resolution.

PM promises dual citizenship

Dr Singh has announced that people of The Netherland will be eligible for dual citizenship. “We are now working hard to realise it,” he said at a reception hosted by the Indian ambassador Ms Shyamala Cowsik last night. In an interview to *Financial Times* of London, the Prime Minister broke his silence over Mr LK Advani invoking the Ram Temple issue and said the BJP’s intention to return to Hindutva was “worrisome”.

Another report on page 4

India & Europe enter into 'strategic partnership'; Muivah in peace talks punch

Delhi walks into EU elite club

BHARAT BHUSHAN

The Hague, Nov. 8: India and the European Union today decided to crank up their relationship by entering into a "strategic partnership" to deepen cooperation on key international issues of globalisation, terrorism, proliferation, energy, environment and regional security. Only five other countries — the US, Japan, Canada, China and Russia — have strategic partnership with the EU.

The status given to India, therefore, is recognition of its market, technological and political potential.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh summed up his expectations from the new partnership at the India-EU summit, saying: "International diplomacy is about identifying areas of common ground between differing positions. A strategic partnership should imply more. There should be recognition that both sides respect concerns, even those that may not be fully shared, and make efforts to develop policies and take steps consistent with that awareness."

Prime Minister Jan Peter Belkenende of the Netherlands, which holds the current EU presidency, shared Singh's sentiments. He described the pace of the India-EU relationship as "fast and dynamic".

He hoped that the strategic partnership would take the relationship to a higher level, lead to cooperation in areas of mutual concern and address the question of instability extending from Western Balkans to Afghanistan.

The two sides committed themselves to dealing with issues that hamper their

bilateral trade.

Although the EU is India's largest trade and investment partner, Singh noted: "We have agreed that the volume of trade and flow of investment between India and EU is far below their true potential. We have an obligation to see that both the volume of trade and the flow of investment are taken to their optimal level."

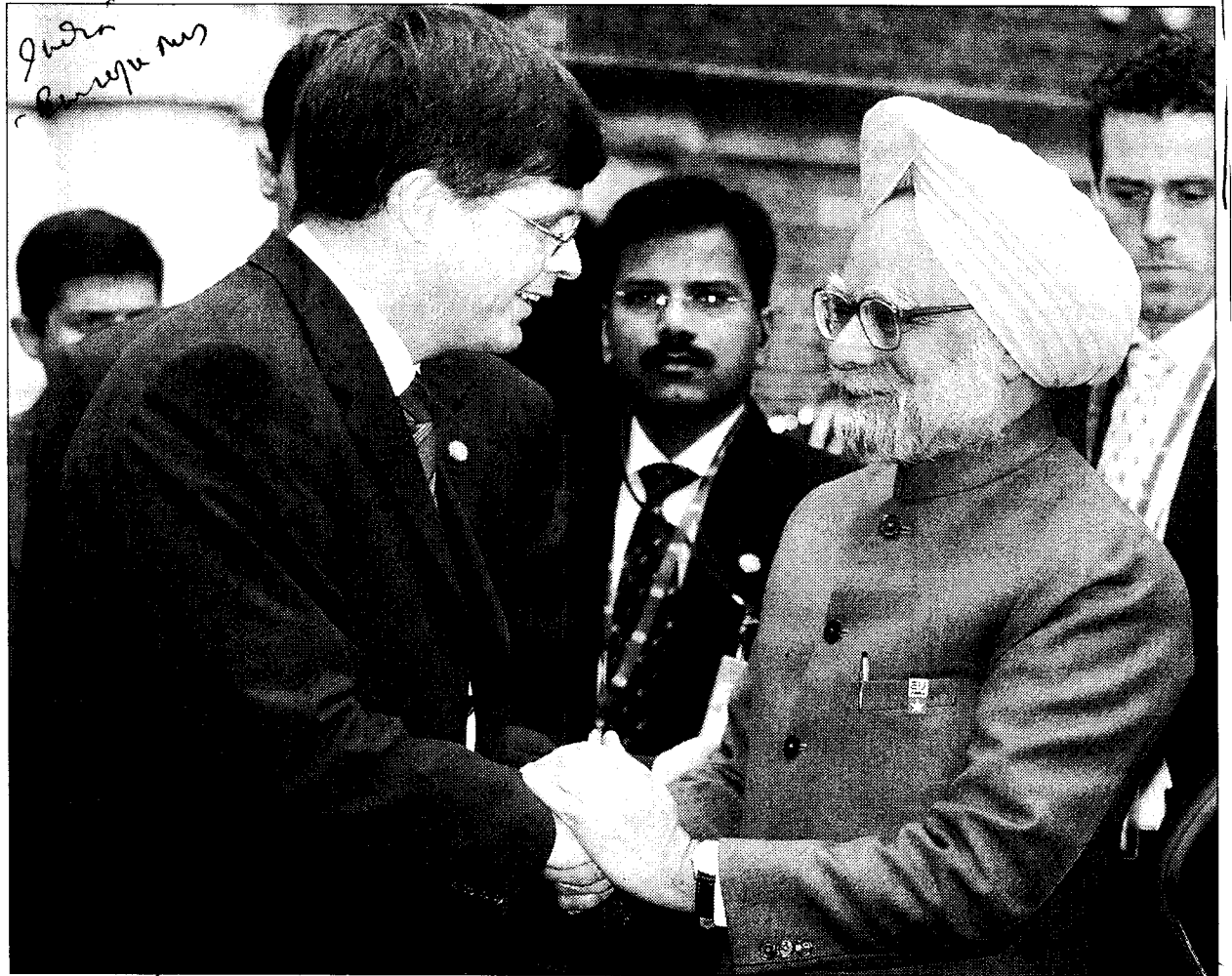
Both India and the EU showed special concern for the emerging energy scenario with prices rising and the demand for oil being fuelled by China and India.

Romano Prodi, chairman of the European Commission, said: "In my opinion, this is an emergency."

He held that the development of no country in the world should be held up because of energy supply problems and called for international scientific, technical and political cooperation. He suggested the setting up of an international energy panel to deal with the situation.

India and the EU have also decided to extend their cooperation in frontier technology areas — India has decided to collaborate in principle with the EU's Galileo Satellite Navigation System and shown interest in participating in its international thermonuclear experimental reactor or nuclear fusion technology for generating power.

At the summit, India was led by Singh, who was accompanied by external affairs minister K. Natwar Singh and commerce minister Kamal Nath. European Council president, Belkenende, Prodi and EU high representative Javier Solana represented the European Union.



Singh shakes hands with Belkenende before the India-EU summit in The Hague on Monday. (Reuters)

EU Proposes Strategic Partnership Recognising India's Growing Stature

PM welcomes EU proposal...

New Delhi
7 NOVEMBER

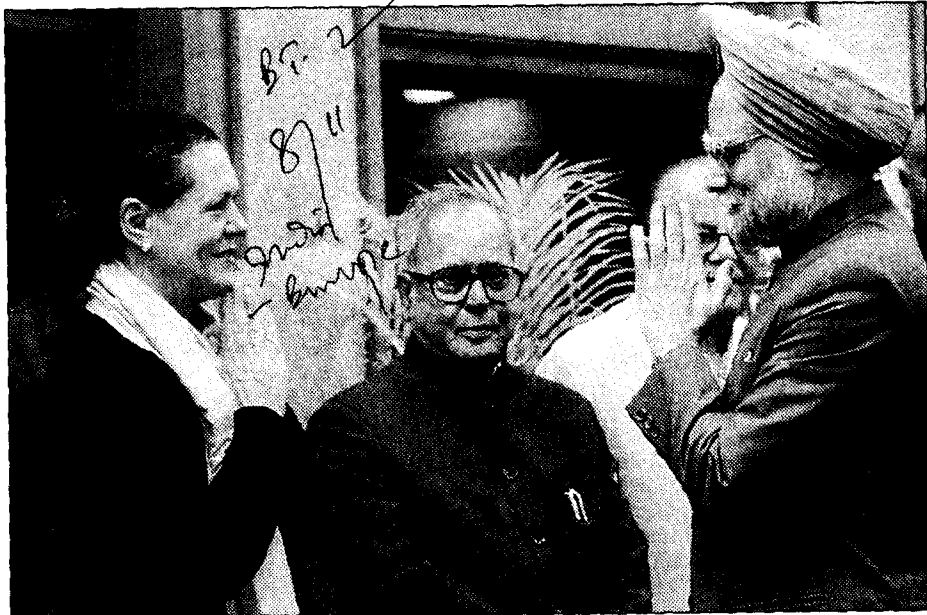
PRIME Minister Manmohan Singh on Sunday welcomed the European Union's proposal for strategic partnership with India to be finalised at the summit in the Hague on Monday.

"In recognition of India's growing stature and influence, the European Union has proposed a strategic partnership with India. This will be formalised during the Hague summit. We warmly welcome the development," he said in a statement here before leaving for the Hague. The Prime Minister said his discussions with the EU leadership would be reflected in a comprehensive joint statement that would be issued at the conclusion of the summit.

He said Europe is an important political and strategic factor in the international sphere, adding recently the EU increased its membership from 15 to 25 erasing the vertical fault line that divided the European continent for over a century. The EU is emerging as a politically influential, economically powerful and demographically diverse regional entity in the world, the Prime Minister said. The EU is not only India's largest trading partner but also the largest source of foreign direct investment, he said.

"It is an important source of technology and home to a large and influential Indian diaspora," Dr Singh said.

"India and the EU are natural partners. Our relations are based on shared values — democracy, pluralism, rule of law, free press and independent judiciary. Our partnership has evolved over the years from economic development and cooperation to broad-based engagement on a wide



ALL FOUR ONE: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh greets Congress president Sonia Gandhi as senior Cabinet ministers Pranab Mukherjee and Arjun Singh look on at the Prime Minister's residence on Sunday. — PTI

range of issues — globalisation, terrorism, proliferation, energy and environment," he said.

The Prime Minister is visiting

the Hague to attend the Fifth Indo-EU Summit hosted by the Netherlands Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende.

During his stay at the Hague, Dr Singh will address an interactive session of prominent CEOs of EU business and industry and senior representatives of Indian industry with the purpose of identifying and utilising opportunities for ties for greater trade and investment.

He will also call on Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands.

The Prime Minister was seen off at his 7, Race Course Road residence by UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Union ministers including Pranab Mukherjee, Arjun Singh, Kapil Sibal, Mani Shankar Aiyar, Oscar Fernandes and Dayanidhi Maran.

Planning Commission deputy chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia, chiefs of the three services besides senior officials including Cabinet secretary, defence secretary and Delhi Police chief were also present. — PTI

... avoids questions on Cabinet reshuffle

New Delhi
7 NOVEMBER

PRIME Minister Manmohan Singh, parried questions on whether a reshuffle in the council of ministers was on the cards. "I will answer all your questions after I return," he said before leaving on a two-day visit to the Hague for the India-EU summit.

He was responding to questions at his 7, Race Course Road residence where he was seen off by UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, Cabinet ministers including Pranab Mukherjee and Arjun Singh, chiefs of the three services and senior officials. The talk of a Cabinet reshuffle is doing the rounds in view of vacancies in the council of ministers after the resignation of Shibu Soren and K. Rehman Khan. — PTI

Indo-German ties enter strategic plane

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Oct. 7. — The "landmark" visit of the German Chancellor, Mr Gerhard Schroeder, has raised the bilateral Indo-German relationship beyond cooperation on admittance to a "reformed and expanded" United Nations Security Council, to a "strategic" plane. India attached "special importance" to its relations with Germany and was eager to expand and intensify bilateral relations to a level befitting the strategic relationship between the two countries.

According to the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, with whom Mr Schroeder met today, his visit underlined the mutual interest in building a strategic partnership between India and Germany, and, "we have decided to continue meeting every year". "As a key member of an expanding European Union and as a member of the G-8, we value our interaction with Germany," the Prime Minister said.

The decision to support each's candidature for permanent membership in an enlarged UN SC was proof of their resolve to work together in the larger interest, the Prime Minister said. "India, like Germany, has the will and the capacity to take on the responsibility of a permanent member of the Security Council," he said.

Jointly addressing the press after their detailed talks at Hyderabad House, Mr Schroeder, when asked whether Germany was willing to support India's involvement in the G-8,

ing a new strategic dimension to the relationship. India views Germany as an important interlocutor for it in G-8, the European Union and other international forums, including the UN. Germany is the largest economy in the EU and third largest in the world. Germany is also India's second largest trading partner within the EU, and a major source of technology and investment.

Cooperation against terror

Delivering the Seventh Memorial Lecture at the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, Mr Gerhard Schroeder today spoke at length of cooperating against terrorism, saying, however, that there was need to tackle the "root causes of violence and terrorism." New Delhi is uncomfortable with this or any formulation that provides a justification for terrorist acts. Normally used in the context of West Asia and the Palestine issue, India does not accept any cause that could justify acts of terrorism.

No NPT signing

Dr Manmohan Singh, today firmly ruled out India signing the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), saying it was discriminatory in nature. Responding to a question, Dr Singh said India was itself a "victim" of proliferation in the region, but declined to name the disgraced Pakistani nuclear scientist, Dr AQ Khan. "We have seen for example the clandestine export of nuclear materials in our region", Dr Singh said, without taking names. "We are a responsible nuclear power...we have a nuclear doctrine of 'no first use' in place."



German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder with Dr Manmohan Singh at in a reception in New Delhi on Thursday. — AFP

said: "I will lend my support to any effort that devises a mechanism that makes it possible for India to have a closer relationship with G-8. That is part and parcel of our strategic partnership."

Indian officials said the visit had provided an opportunity to review bilateral progress made on the agenda for the Indo-German partnership in the 21st century, (which both countries adopted in May, 2000) envisag-

8 NOV 2004

THE STATESMAN

NPT must wait: Manmohan

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Press Trust of India
New Delhi, October 7

ASSERTING THAT India was a responsible nuclear power acting with due restraint, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Thursday said that "circumstances" were not ripe for the country to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) now.

"We are a nuclear power. We are a responsible nuclear power. We act with restraint. We have 'no first use' doctrine in place. We have an impeccable record of export control so that any unauthorised use of sensitive nuclear materials can be effectively prevented," he said at a joint press conference with visiting German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder.

Observing that India was a "victim" of the gaps that exist in the present non-proliferation arrangements, Manmohan said: "We have seen for example the clandestine export of nuclear material in our region". India, he said, was interested in working with like-minded countries to strengthen the non-proliferation system.

Observing that Schroeder's visit underlined the mutual interest in building a

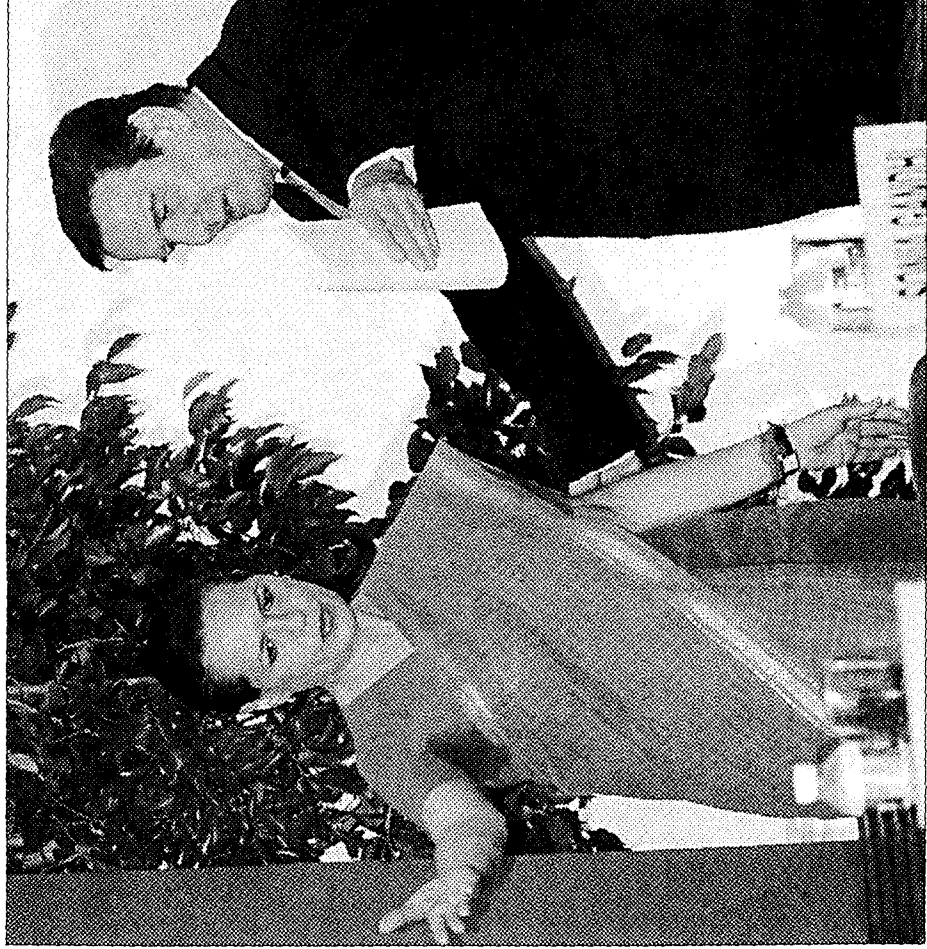
strategic partnership between India and Germany, Manmohan said, "We have decided to continue meeting every year. As a key member of an expanding European Union and as a member of the G-8, we value our interaction with Germany."

The decision to support each other's candidature for permanent membership in an enlarged Security Council was proof of their resolve to work together in the larger interest, he said. "India, like Germany, has the will and the capacity to take on the responsibility of a permanent member of the Security Council," the Prime Minister added.

Asked whether Germany was willing to support India's involvement in the G-8, Schroeder said: "I will lend my support to any effort that devises a mechanism that makes it possible for India to have a closer relationship with G-8. That is part and parcel of our strategic partnership."

The German Chancellor added that he had "deep respect" for the government's role, particularly that of the PM, in achieving a rapprochement with Pakistan and in bringing the two countries closer.

PTI



Sonia Gandhi motions to German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder to address the Rajiv Gandhi memorial lecture organised by the Rajiv Gandhi foundation in New Delhi on Thursday.

27 feared killed in rain rampage

HTC and Agencies
Kolkata/Guwahati, Oct 7

A DEPRESSION in eastern India has triggered record rainfall in Assam, West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Tripura and Jharkhand, leaving at least 27 people dead.

Assam bore the brunt of the downpour, receiving 141 cm of rain, with 19 feared dead in landslides at hilly Odalbari on Guwahati's outskirts, SP Hiren Nath said. Two bodies had been recovered till late in the evening, with the other 17 still trapped under the debris.

In Bengal, which received 134 mm of rain, there were seven deaths in house collapses and lightning.

The rain kept the Assembly poll turnout to a record low of 60 per cent in Arunachal Pradesh. In Jharkhand, continuous rain for the past three days disrupted normal life. The overflowing Subarnarekha river swept away a rickshaw, killing a woman passenger. In Meghalaya, seven villages were flooded in the Garo Hills region.

B OCT 2004

India-European Union strategic alliance mooted

Handwritten notes: 11, 28/6

By Our Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JUNE 22. The European Commission has called for a strategic alliance to promote an effective multilateral approach between the European Union and India, suggesting that the two entities coordinate their positions on a number of issues concerning security, trade, environment, development and human rights.

The Commission, which is the executive body of the E.U., has sent a communication on these lines to the European Council as well as the European Parliament, in the form of a document entitled "An E.U.-India Strategic Partnership" that was released to the press here.

The E.U. Ambassador in India, Francisco Da Camara Gomes, said at a press conference today that this document, still to be adopted by the Council, should receive Indian attention in the form of comments and suggestions. The idea is that after the European Council comes up with a final view,

it could be presented for consideration at the Fifth E.U.-India Summit in October 2004.

This new strategy could take the form of an "action plan" and a new joint E.U.-India "political declaration" to be adopted at the Sixth Summit in 2005.

"The E.U. and India should ... hold continuous dialogue on organisational and institutional restructuring and reform of the United Nations, in particular as regards the U.N. High-Level Plan on Threats, Challenges and Change and on the implementation of its likely outcome," the document said.

According to the paper, the E.U. was strongly committed to peace and stability in South Asia. "It has consistently encouraged dialogue between India and Pakistan, condemned all forms of terrorism and violence and expressed its readiness to support a peace process."

While Kashmir is primarily a bilateral issue with international implications, the E.U. can offer its own unique experience as

an example of building peace and forging partnerships." In addition, the E.U. should develop a regional approach to relations with South Asia. "A South Asia strategy paper could be formulated, which should set out how the E.U. could contribute to peace, security and prosperity and support regional integration."

The paper said that India had become an increasingly important international and regional power. "It has considerably strengthened relationships with the U.S., China and ASEAN. Its huge size and economic and military clout make it the major power in South Asia. Peace talks with Pakistan will, if successful, bring enormous benefit to the whole region."

"India's economic growth has also been impressive, and the economy has benefited greatly from market-oriented and open policies. But these benefits have not been spread evenly amongst its citizens — the large majority of the population still live on less than \$2 a day..."

E.U. team meets Lok Sabha Speaker

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JUNE 21. The Lok Sabha Speaker, Somnath Chatterjee, today emphasised that Jammu and Kashmir was an integral part of India and would remain so. Pressure of the people would ultimately lead to solutions to the problem and cited the Punjab case.

Mr. Chatterjee said this while responding to a pointed query from a member of the European Union Parliamentary delegation, led by John Cushnahan, that called on him here.

The Speaker said that in Punjab people were fed up with terrorism and decided their fate for the better through the democratic process.

"People of Kashmir also are beginning to react in a similar fashion and the situation there is becoming normal," he said, a Lok Sabha Secretariat release said.

The seven-member EU Parliamentary delegation is on a visit to study the situation in Jammu and Kashmir from June 22 to 24.

It had earlier visited Pakistan-occupied Kashmir during December last year.

Modi writes to PM on misleading Pakistani maps

GANDHINAGAR, JUNE 21. The Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, today drew the attention of the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, to the misleading depictions in various Pakistani government publications, terming the erstwhile princely states of Junagadh and Manavadar "disputable territories."

In a letter to the Prime Minister, Mr. Modi pointed out the seriousness of the issue and urged Mr. Singh to "neither tolerate nor ignore it."

Mr. Modi also requested Mr. Singh to register a protest with the Pakistani Government at the ongoing Secretary-level talks between the two countries.

"Gujarat being a bordering state, the issue is very sensitive and, therefore, such attempts should be sorted out at the earliest," the letter added. — UNI

E.U.-India partnership

By Chris Patten

IT HAS long been my ambition that before stepping down as European Commissioner for External Relations, I should see the European Union's relationship with India put on a footing that properly reflects the importance and ambitions of these two emerging global actors. Yesterday, the European Commission has set out proposals for just that.

In a Communication to the 25 countries of the E.U. and the European Parliament, we suggest a host of ways in which the E.U. and India could step up political, economic, social and cultural cooperation in order to give our relations greater clarity, strategic edge and purpose. For too long, this partnership has been under-shooting its potential. It's time to put that right, and I very much hope India will respond with suggestions of her own.

In this increasingly interconnected world, the E.U. and India face common challenges and opportunities. These two giants of democracy often have a similar take on the problems that face us all. How much greater would our leverage be in the world, if we joined forces more consistently and voiced our shared views jointly more often?

We are not starting from zero. Every reader knows our shared historical ties, and we all benefit from the very healthy trade relationship between India and the E.U. We also share a deep commitment to democracy as India's recent elections have once again amply demonstrated. But there is so much more that we can do together, if we so choose.

Firstly, while trade has been, and continues to be, central to our relations, both the E.U. and India are learning to flex their muscles on wider issues promoting peace and security in our own immediate neighbourhoods and further afield. We could be even more effective if we systematically consulted each other and worked together to promote multilateralism and the role of the United Nations. We can only gain by

strengthening our cooperation in conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction, and in addressing global concerns such as non-proliferation and terrorism. Why not develop joint training for the civilian components of peace-keeping missions? Certainly, the E.U. and India should step up discussions on human rights and democracy, bilaterally and inter-

nationally. In our own regions we are each important players. The E.U. has applauded the thaw in India-Pakistan relations and congratulated India's Prime Minister and Foreign Minister on the commitments they have made to the 'composite dialogue'. The E.U., which was created to bring about peace between warring neighbours, has a lot of experience to offer, and we would be happy to support Indian efforts for the development of South Asia, not least the proposed South

Much more could be done to tap the full potential of the E.U. and India's trade and investment relationship.

Asian Free Trade Association. We recognise the pivotal role that India plays in the region, and would welcome the chance to cooperate even more closely in the areas where the E.U. is contributing to peace and reconstruction, such as in Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. The E.U. and India share a vision of prosperity for all created through free and fair markets. One can only be impressed by the levels of growth that India has already achieved. As like-

vigorously pursue the fight against poverty is therefore very welcome. The E.U., as the world's largest donor, will continue to work closely with India to meet the Millennium Development Goals and we hope our cooperation can be strengthened in other areas too. For example, India might find it helpful to hear our insights into tackling social and economic cohesion, which has been a cornerstone of joint E.U. action over many years with notable success stories such as Ireland.

Last, but certainly not least, we should do more to bring our people closer. Although India already enjoys close ties with some E.U. member-states, we should promote mutual understanding across all countries and sections of society. Understanding each other better, our similarities and differences, is a vital part of a maturing relationship. I am therefore, particularly pleased about a planned E.U. university scholarship programme for India. Nothing does so much to promote a real appreciation of another culture as the experience of having lived and studied abroad. The countries of the E.U. and India in all their diversity should welcome each other with open arms.

I very much look forward to reactions from interested parties — governments, business and civil society — to these and all the ideas in our Communication. Above all, I hope to hear India's own suggestions so that we can together — truly — reach our full potential.

(The author is the European Commissioner for External Relations.)

India's ties with the EU will help it reinforce its relations with Europe

Reaching out

DIPLOMACY

K.P. NAYAR

This is not how it was meant to be. The night had been planned for months as something that would be remembered for the next decade: much like the celebrations across central and eastern Europe a decade-and-a-half ago, when the Iron Curtain came down, ringing in what promised to be a new era of freedom.

But on the eve of Europe's formal embrace of the former Soviet satellite states in the Eastern bloc last weekend, missing from Prague's Wenceslas Square were the huge crowds that celebrated their liberation from communism in 1989. At an arena not far from the historic Square, 17,000 people had squeezed in to watch the Czech team playing against Austria in the world ice hockey championships.

Attendance at the public celebrations to mark the Czech Republic's accession to the European Union was by far fewer. It was the same story in Bratislava, capital of neighbouring Slovakia, which broke away from Czechoslovakia after the fall of communism, but now joins the Czechs in the EU.

A huge gap exists between the spin that the end of Marxist rule has opened up opportunities for the "liberated" people of eastern and central Europe to achieve the capitalist dream and the reality that in day-to-day life, they are worse off than they were 15 years ago. Why would the Czechs flock to Wenceslas Square to celebrate their country's membership of the EU when every eleventh member of the country's workforce is out of work? Under communism, unemployment was a mere 0.7 per cent.

In Hungary, estimates are that nearly half the adults under the age of 25 have never worked even for a single day: the capital, Budapest, and nearby pockets of affluence are exceptions.

EU membership brings little cheer to the unemployed in the former Eastern bloc. Until they joined last weekend, free movement of labour was one of EU's cherished principles. Not any more. In most of the rich, Western EU countries, citizens from the new, former Marxist states will be prohibited from taking up employment for upto seven years. The restrictions are less stringent only in Ireland, Sweden and Britain.

Bratislava, Slovakia's capital, gives the impression of a city with promise, clearly growing in affluence. Unemployment there is only 4 per cent. But this is explained by Bratislava's proximity of less than an hour's drive to Vienna, the flourishing capital of Austria.

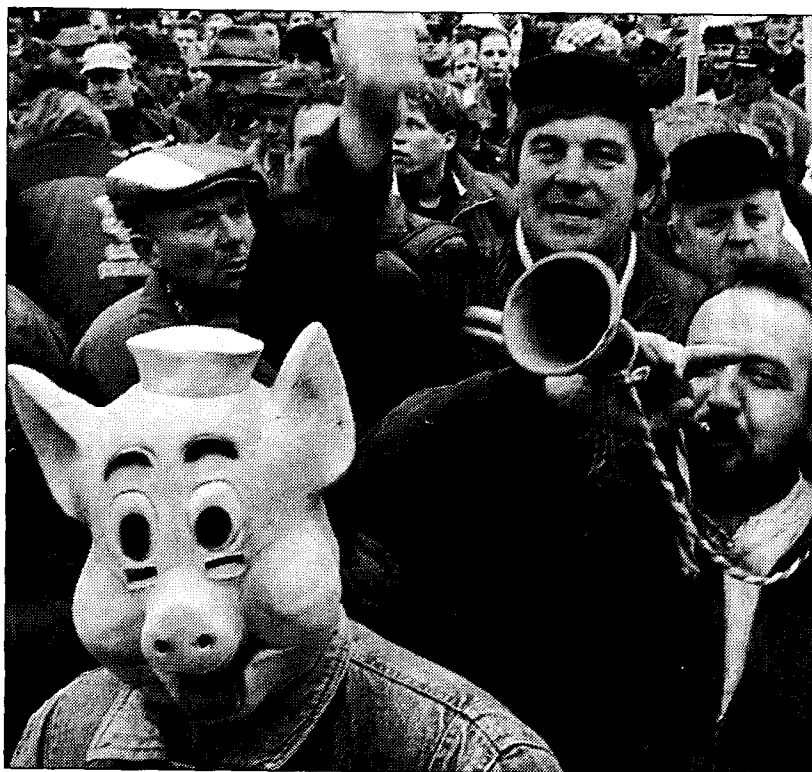
Bratislava's location and infrastructure, combined with Slovakia's low wages, have helped it draw businesses and investment from the West. But drive out of the island of prosperity that is Bratislava and the devastation since the end of communism ap-

pears extensive. In many towns, more than 60 per cent of the work force have lost their jobs; in some towns, which had one giant industrial plant providing employment, there is no hope that its middle-aged or older workers will ever find work in their lifetime.

The biggest problem in the former Soviet satellites which have just got into the EU is that most of these states

under what passes for democracy.

So what will happen now that the EU's population has shot up by 74 million, making it the world's biggest trading bloc of 455 million consumers? The experience of Germany, which absorbed its communist east through unification in 1990, offers the best possible clue. The former Federal Republic of Germany, the affluent Western



are still run by the very communists who were responsible for a different kind of mess which brought about the collapse of those governments 15 years ago. Not just the presidents or prime ministers, but the steel frame of the civil service. In some of these former Eastern bloc states which have now joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the situation is so critical that at Nato's urging, serving ambassadors — who are former communist *apparatchiks* — are no longer authorized to access cipher telegrams arriving at the embassies they head, or read classified files.

In much of eastern and central Europe, ardent Stalinists who ran these countries quickly became free-marketters and democrats once the tide changed. In the process of privatizing the state's wealth, many of them became millionaires. Now these people hope that a united Europe will open up new opportunities for them to do what they have been doing for a lifetime, first under Marxism and then, for the last 15 years,

EU membership brings little cheer to the unemployed in the former Eastern bloc countries

half of the country, has pumped in 50 billion euros annually into its poorer eastern *landers* — or states — since unification. Yet big disparities remain between the country's eastern and western parts. Unemployment in the former German Democratic Republic is still twice as high as in the western *landers*. Brussels will pump in 20 billion euros each year for the next two years into the economies of EU members who joined on May 1.

The eastern states of Germany have a population of less than a quarter of the EU's new members. If two-and-a-half times the funding for this significantly smaller population over a period of 14 years has produced less

than ideal results, then it needs little more than common sense to divine what the future is likely to be for what Donald Rumsfeld, the secretary of defence of the United States of America, takes pride in describing as "new Europe".

What economists in the EU probably have not taken into account in working out the bail-outs for its new members is the corruption in the former Soviet satellites: a large share of the money from Brussels will simply end up in the private accounts of the apparatchiks who still control eastern and central Europe one way or another.

In addition to corruption, the new EU members suffer from severe political instability, caused in part by their alienation from their people. On Iraq, for example, eastern and central European governments support the US; but their people are totally opposed to the war in Iraq. Such contradictions are also inheritance from the Soviet days. In Prague, Warsaw or Budapest then they simply took orders from Moscow. In changed circumstances, the rulers in these capitals believe that the right thing for them is to similarly do Washington's bidding.

It is, therefore, perhaps in the fitness of things that within a day of joining the EU, Aleksander Kwasniewski, the president of Poland, the largest of the new EU members, chose as his new prime minister, Marek Belka, a man who is already tainted by his service as economic adviser to the occupation authority in Iraq.

India, however, is quickly reaching out to the reconstituted EU in a variety of ways. It needs to do so since Europe, as a single political entity, now has the potential of being one key pole in a world which is fast returning to multipolarity as a result of the rapid erosion of America's diplomatic and moral power as well as Washington's military ineffectiveness demonstrated by recent events in Iraq.

The Indian co-chairman of the EU-India Roundtable lost no time in visiting Brussels to lay out a time-table for deepening bilateral interaction, particularly in the area of business. A similar initiative to deal with bilateral political issues will follow when India's foreign secretary visits Brussels before the end of this month.

India had very strong links during the Soviet era with most of the countries which became EU members on May 1. These ties have fallen into disrepair largely because relations between India and these countries were deprived of their substance in the post-Soviet world. India's existing ties with the EU offer an opportunity to reinforce relations with eastern and central Europe. It is a matter of satisfaction that New Delhi is taking steps to do just that.

Breaching 'Fortress Europe'

Government will have to ease up on its policy framework and Indian businesses will have to reposition themselves to take full advantage of the opportunities posed by the world's largest economic block, says **Mythili Bhushurm**

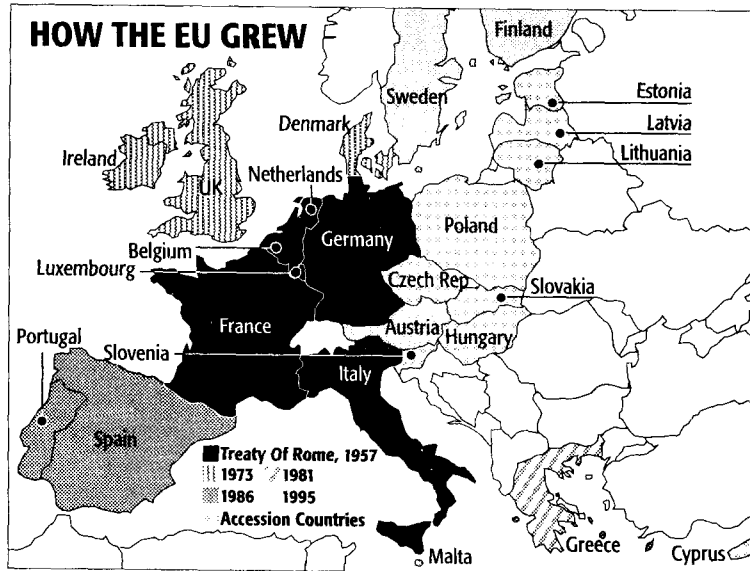
If the euro currency note looked anything like the Indian rupee, we might all need bigger wallets on future visits to Europe. Reason? On 1 May 2004, ten new countries — Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Cyprus, Malta and Slovenia — acceded to the European Union, raising the number of official languages from 11 to 20. Fortunately, official languages don't find a place on the euro bill. Moreover, it will be a while before the accession countries, (usually referred to as ACs) adopt the euro.

But the face of the euro is about the only thing that will remain unchanged after last Saturday's cataclysmic events. For the EU, as for the rest of the world, nothing will ever be quite the same.

For India, for whom the EU is the largest trading and investment partner — accounting for 25% of the country's total trade and 13.8% of all foreign direct investment into the country — the most important question is: will removal of trade barriers among the 25 EU members result in more trade or less? In the jargon of trade economists, will it be trade creating or trade diverting?

Enlargement will lead to trade diversion if India's exports to the EU15 are displaced by suppliers from ACs or if Indian exports to the ACs are displaced by EU exports after enlargement. On the other hand, it will lead to trade creation if India's exports to the EU25 increase after enlargement. So which will it be?

On paper, we should gain; at least on the trade front. After all it ought to be much easier to deal with one common market with a single set of trade rules, a single tariff, and a single set of administrative procedures rather than with a motley collection of countries, each with its own tariffs, procedures and other regulations. Enlargement will extend the EU's trade policy regime to the ACs. The current system, featuring one trade regime for the EU and a different one for each of the ACs, will disappear. As against 379 million earlier, our exporters and industrialists will now



have 455 million potential EU customers who together account for 28% of world GDP, up from 26.7% earlier.

To be sure, India's total trade with the ACs is minuscule at present — just \$500 million in 2002-03. But as accession quickens the pace of integration and leads to faster growth — and here the transformation of the Irish economy is the best example of what accession can do — it should lead to more demand for Indian exports. According to the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development, the average ratio of trade (exports plus imports) to GDP measured in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms for these countries was already up from 35% in 1995 to more than 50% in 2002. This trend is bound to accelerate with formal accession. Meanwhile, removal of quota restrictions for textiles and clothing from January 2005 should also work to India's advantage since it will reduce the protection presently available to AC exports in the EU market.

That's the plus side. But as two studies,

one by DMI Associates, Lyon, France and another by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Ficci) point out, it's not all a bed of roses. Sure there are advantages that will flow from the fact that the average tariff rate in these 10 countries at 9% is currently higher than the EU average of about 3.6%. And to that extent access to the AC markets will be easier. However, once trade barriers between ACs and the original EU15 disappear completely (they have already been dismantled to a considerable degree), the relative competitive advantage of many of our exports to the EU15 will come down. Today, imports from the ACs accounts for only about 1% of the EU15 GDP. But that is bound to change. India and Poland, for instance, compete in the EU market for 46 of the top 100 exports from India to the EU.

Enlargement has implications for our trade with the rest of the world as well. The reason is that the EU has about 30 free-trade agreements (FTAs) with countries outside the region. And once the ACs

become part of the EU, they will also be party to these FTAs, in which case India's exports to third countries might lose their existing competitive advantage vis-à-vis the ACs.

There are two other concerns. One is that even after dismantling the quota regime, tariff barriers will be imposed so that, in effect, India may not benefit much. The second relates to non-tariff barriers especially in the area of agriculture exports — standards, testing, labelling and certification requirements are a major cause of concern. As the DMI Associates report puts it, the "EU operates a sophisticated system of non-tariff and trade defence measures". In contrast to the ACs, which rarely invoke anti-dumping measures, the EU does so frequently. Upon enlargement, the existing EU anti-dumping measures will cover the ACs too. There is a plethora of EC legislation relating to sanitary and phytosanitary and food safety issues which are applied in the most stringent manner on imports from developing countries such as India.

As far as the impact of enlargement on FDI flows into India are concerned, the picture is less worrisome. According to DMI Associates, FDI from the EU has been driven more by the search for markets than by the lure of cheaper labour and hence is unlikely to be affected by enlargement. However, to the extent that three ACs, Poland, Hungary and Czech Republic, feature among the top ten most attractive destinations for FDI (along with India), and they will become even more attractive post accession, India will have to look sharp. It will have to spruce up its policy regime and more importantly, its cumbersome procedures at the grass-roots level if it is to retain its ranking in the FDI league tables.

Both government and industry have their work cut out for them. Government will have to ease up on its policy framework and Indian businesses will have to reposition themselves to take full advantage of the opportunities posed by the world's largest economic block.

EU keen on Indo-Pak. dialogue

By Sushma Ramachandran

NEW DELHI, APRIL 29. The European Union today said it was seeking to encourage both India and Pakistan to pursue the dialogue process for resolving bilateral disputes.

According to the Irish Ambassador, Philip McDonagh, top EU officials have also visited India recently expressing their willingness to help create an enabling environment for this purpose.

Addressing a press conference, he described India as an "extremely strong" candidate for the U.N. Security Council if it is enlarged. He declined to comment, however, on the decision of the U.S. to give major non-NATO ally status to Pakistan.

On the impact of the enlargement of the EU, he said the expansion from 15 to 25 members should be beneficial for developing countries like India. The EU is undergoing a major expansion from May 1 with 10 new members joining, including the Czech Republic, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, Malta and Cyprus.

The European Commission Ambassador, Francisco da Camara Gomes, said the EU's enlargement is likely to give the benefit of access to an even larger market to countries such as India.

A single set of tariff rules, administrative

procedures and a single currency are expected to be some of the advantages for trading partners of the EU.

He pointed out that the EU would become an even larger market with a population of nearly 455 millions, accounting for 18 per cent of world trade. On the adoption of the Euro currency in the new member-countries, he said it would take some time as they would have to fulfil the various Maastricht criteria and it would also have to be a voluntary accession of the new currency.

Agricultural subsidies

Asked about the high agricultural subsidies in the EU, he said this was an issue that had to be negotiated at a multilateral forum like the World Trade Organisation rather than bilaterally.

Regarding the impact of an enlarged EU on the existing level agricultural subsidy, he told *The Hindu* that it may go up but estimates are not yet available of the extent to which the subsidy may be increased. Farmers in the new member-states are already being seen on television filling out subsidy forms, he said.

He said the EU was making efforts to push for an agreement on agriculture under the Doha development round. An agreement had been reached on the subsidy issue with the U.S. but this had not

been found acceptable.

Internally, he said, the EU had been reducing subsidies since 1992 and only this week announced new measures to cut back on trade distorting subsidies on several commodities.

He said nothing could be farther from reality than the common myth in India that the EU was a "fortress" and enlargement would accentuate it. "Enlargement, on the contrary, will bring larger welfare gains for the EU member-states as also for the rest of the world," he said.

Describing India and the EU as natural partners, he said they were similarly of a continental size, large population and were based on the similar principles of diversity and unity. Huge opportunities would open up for enhanced economic and trade ties, especially with the expanded market of the EU.

Mr. McDonagh who referred to the "excellent relations" between India and the EU, said the India-EU Summit held annually since 2000, had given a strategic dimension to relations between the two sides, which had always been underpinned by strong economic exchanges.

The EU continues to be India's biggest trading partner, accounting for one fourth of its total imports and exports, and the source of the largest actual FDI flows to India.

India, France aero-naval exercise begins

By Anil Sastry

PANAJI, APRIL 6. The 10-day Indo-French aero-naval exercise, Varuna 2004, began today off the Goa Coast.

The biggest-ever aero-naval exercise, it is the culmination of a series of Indo-French naval exercises initiated in 1998.

The exercise has enabled the two navies, which are of comparable size, to undergo an advanced training and operations together. Varuna 2004 is unique in its duration.

The exercise, which began with the French fleet moving out of the Arabic-Persian Gulf, to be met by the Indian fleet, will end on April 15.

It will also be unique for the number of aircraft and vessels involved. A fleet of six vessels each are participating and they will be placed alternately under French and Indian commands.

The French task force is being represented by a large aero-naval group. The 40,000-ton nuclear powered aircraft carrier, Charles de Gaulle, which can carry up to 40 aircraft and equipped with the anti-missile system, Aster, an anti-air

mission Rafale aircraft, a Super Etendard aircraft for land strikes, an early warning aircraft, Hawkeye E-2C, helicopters, Puma and Dauphin, is a part of the group.

The fleet also includes a destroyer, Montcalm, for anti-submarine warfare, two missile destroyers for anti-air warfare, a nuclear powered attack submarine, Amethyste, and a tanker, Meuse.

Varuna 2004 covers the entire spectrum of naval exercises — anti-air warfare, anti-submarine warfare and air combat. During the exercise, there will be an exchange of naval officers; cross-deck landings of aircraft will also take place.

Far from being individual demonstrations of know-how, the exercise will bring the two navies in full-fledged combat display.

The last day would witness the visit of the French Ambassador, Dominique

Girard, Vice-Admiral Rolin, Commander-in-Chief of the French Maritime Zone in Indian Ocean, and Rear Admiral Mazars, Commander of the French Task to the Mormugao Port and the vessels.

THE HINDU

7 APR 2004

India, Poland deepen defence ties

By C. Raja Mohan

WARSAW, MARCH 19. When the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Khurshid Mohammad Kasuri, came here recently, the Polish Government told him that there would be no arms supplies to Islamabad. As it saw blossoming Indo-Polish defence ties, Pakistan had good reason to embark on this fishing expedition.

"It is our policy that as we establish a high-level military-technical cooperation with India, we do not intend to develop a similar relationship with Pakistan," the Deputy Defence Minister of Poland, Janusz Zemke, told a visiting Indian delegation here.

Pakistan was apparently interested in acquiring anti-tank missiles from Poland. "We cannot supply you tanks and then sell anti-tank missiles to Pakistan," Mr. Zemke said.

"We know Russia and Israel are major arms suppliers to India; yet, we think we can play a role," Mr. Zemke added. Native strengths in some high technology areas, such as optoelectronics, and its experience in modernising the Soviet equipment have positioned Poland as an important new defence partner for India.

As it sought to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1999 and integrated its defence systems with those of the West, Poland wisely decided not to junk all Russian equipment. Using indigenous resources it successfully upgraded Russian equipment to the performance levels of the Western military equipment at one-third the cost.

New Delhi and Warsaw signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Cooperation in February 2003 during the visit of the Polish Prime Minister, Leszek Miller, to India. Contracts worth \$600 m. are currently in play. These include the modernisation of tanks and the acquisition of air defence missiles.

The issues relating to the T-72 modern-

isation in India have all been sorted out, according to Mr. Zemke. At home, Poland has replaced the 800 horsepower engines of the T-72 with 1000 hp machine. The tanks have also been fitted with modern fire control systems and night vision equipment.

Poland, Mr. Zemke said, "is not looking merely at a buyer-seller relationship in the defence field with India." Poland sees India as a long-term strategic partner in Asia and is keen to build an enduring defence relationship that could include joint research, development and production of weapons systems.

Some headway has already been made in this direction. Poland, for example, sells armoured personnel carriers around the world. The engines for these are now being made in Bangalore, Mr. Zemke said. Look-

WARSAW JOURNAL

ing to the future, he said more joint defence ventures are a possibility.

Pointing to Poland's capability in producing landing vessels for ships, Mr. Zemke said Warsaw is willing to transfer technology in this area. Poland's strengths in optoelectronics and radar systems are acknowledged worldwide, and India is already looking for collaborations in this area.

The real focus of cooperation over the long-term, according to Mr. Zemke, lies in establishing joint defence research centres. Meanwhile, as India and Poland both consider privatisation of their defence industries, there might be good prospects for mutual investments in each other's military sectors.

As India and Poland celebrate this year the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, the defence sector forms only one dimension of the opportunities that beckon the two nations. During the Cold War, both Warsaw and

New Delhi were close to the Soviet Union and took their ties for granted. Since the end of the Cold War, both have focused their energies on improving ties with the Western nations.

Having achieved its major national objectives of joining the NATO and the European Union, Poland is now turning its attention to Asia and other parts of the world. Polish troops are today deployed in 17 countries as part of international peace-keeping missions.

This is a reflection of the conscious policy here to look beyond Europe and intensify the engagement with the wider world. Poland has also become an important member of the global non-proliferation regimes with which India is trying to find political accommodation.

Poland is also hosting a meeting in May to mark the anniversary of the Proliferation Security Initiative announced by the U.S. President, George W. Bush, in Krakow last year. Poland, as an important partner of the U.S., has also begun to raise its profile at the United Nations and other multilateral forums.

India, too, after establishing balanced relations with all the major powers is looking at penetrating regions it has tended to neglect in the recent past. Eastern and Central Europe, in general, and Poland, in particular, must necessarily form an important component of India's global diplomacy.

Despite the historic changes in both the countries over the last decade, Poland has remained India's biggest economic partner after Russia in Eastern and Central Europe. More importantly there is a fund of goodwill that has survived the Cold War.

Besides being a stepping-stone to the expanded European Union, Poland could form a base for India to penetrate the markets of Ukraine, Belarus, Slovakia and the Baltic states. It is that geopolitical location of Poland that India will try and exploit in the coming years.

(Concluded)

স্পেনে ভারতীয় 'আল কায়দা', বাজপেয়ী উদ্দিগ্ন

জয়ন্ত ঘোষাল • নয়াদিল্লি

১৪ মার্চ: মাদ্রিদের সাম্প্রতিকতম ট্রেন বিস্ফোরণে জড়িত সন্দেহে গ্রেফতার পাঁচ আল কায়দা জঙ্গির মধ্যে তিন জন মরক্কোর মানুষ হলেও বাকি দু'জন ভারতীয়। আরও দু'জনকে জিজ্ঞাসাবাদের জন্য আটক করা হয়েছে। তাঁরাও ভারতীয় বংশোদ্ভূত স্থানীয় বাসিন্দা। আজ কূটনৈতিক সূত্রে এই খবর পেয়ে প্রধানমন্ত্রী অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী উদ্দিগ্ন। কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার জানতে পেরেছে, গ্রেফতার হওয়া দুই ভারতীয়ের এক জন সুরেশ কুমার ও অপর জন বিনয় কোহলি। কাশ্মীরের সঙ্গে এদের কোনও সম্পর্ক নেই। প্রাথমিক খবরে মনে করা হচ্ছে, এরা স্পেনেরই অপরাধজগতের সঙ্গে যুক্ত, আল কায়দা এদের ভাড়া করেছিল। স্পেনের পুলিশ ও গোয়েন্দারা আটক পাঁচ জনকে জেরা করছে। কূটনৈতিক সূত্রে ভারতকে জানানো হয়েছে যে, তিন জন মরক্কোর জঙ্গিই মূলত এই ট্রেন বিস্ফোরণের ষড়যন্ত্রে যুক্ত ছিল, কিন্তু দুই ভারতীয় অন্য তিন জনকে ষড়যন্ত্রে সর্বতোভাবে সাহায্য করেছে।

গত বৃহস্পতিবার স্পেনের রাজধানী মাদ্রিদের রেলস্টেশনে পর পর ১০টি বিস্ফোরণে ২০০ মানুষ প্রাণ হারান এবং আরও দেড় হাজারের বেশি মানুষ আহত হন। গোড়ায় স্পেন সরকার ওই বিস্ফোরণের জন্য বাস্ক বিচ্ছিন্নতাবাদী সংগঠন ই টি এ-র জঙ্গিদের দায়ী করছিল। কিন্তু আল কায়দা বিবৃতি দিয়ে বিস্ফোরণের দায় স্বীকার করার পরে তদন্তের মোড় ঘোরে। বিস্ফোরণ স্থলের আদুরে টেপে ইসলামিক জঙ্গিদের বিবৃতিও পাওয়া যায়। এরই মধ্যে মরক্কোর তিন ব্যক্তির সঙ্গে দুই ভারতীয়কেও গ্রেফতার হয়। স্পেনের স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী অ্যাঙ্কেল মোলানোস দু'জন ভারতীয়কে গ্রেফতার করার কথা বলেন। যাদের গ্রেফতার করা হয়েছে তাদের কাছ থেকে একটি মোবাইল ফোন পাওয়া গিয়েছে। এই ফোনটির সাহায্য নিয়ে আরও তথ্য জানার চেষ্টা করছেন গোয়েন্দারা। মরক্কোর এক স্থানীয় জিহাদি জঙ্গি সংগঠন আল কায়দার সঙ্গে যৌথ ভাবে এ কাজ করেছে বলে মনে করা হচ্ছে।

এত দিন পাকিস্তানে বসবাসকারী জিহাদি জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠীর সঙ্গে আল কায়দার ঘনিষ্ঠ সম্পর্কের প্রমাণ পাওয়া গেলেও আল কায়দা কার্যকলাপে কোনও ভারতীয়ের যুক্ত হওয়ার কোনও প্রমাণ পাওয়া যায়নি। সে জন্যই স্পেনের খবরে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার যথেষ্ট চিন্তিত। প্রধানমন্ত্রী এই ঘটনার তদন্ত করার নির্দেশ দিয়েছেন 'র' ও আই বি প্রধানকে। ভারতীয় গোয়েন্দারা এ ব্যাপারে মার্কিন গোয়েন্দাদেরও সাহায্য নিচ্ছেন।

কিন্তু ভোটের মুখে স্পেন বিস্ফোরণের এই ঘটনায় আল কায়দার সঙ্গে ভারতীয়দের নাম জড়িয়ে যাওয়ায় কেন্দ্র যথেষ্ট অস্বস্তিতে পড়েছে। বিদেশমন্ত্রকের এক মুখপাত্র আজ বলেন, এ ব্যাপারে আমরা এখনই কিছু বলতে চাই না। কেননা, এমন তো হতে পারে যে জঙ্গিরা ভারতীয় বলে দাবি করলেও আসলে তারা অন্য কোনও রাষ্ট্রের নাগরিক। বিষয়টি আগে তদন্ত করে দেখা হোক। তাছাড়া, ভারতীয় হলেও এটি কোনও বিচ্ছিন্ন ঘটনা হতে পারে। ভাড়া করা অপরাধী বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে বিভিন্ন দেশে নানা ভাবে কাজ করে কিন্তু আল

এর পর চারের পাতায়

AMADABAZAR PATRIKA 15 MAR 2004

বাজপেয়ী উদ্ভিগ্ন

প্রথম পাতার পর
কায়দা সংগঠনের কোনও 'বেস' এখনও
ভারতে তৈরি হয়েছে তার কোনও প্রমাণ
নেই। পাকিস্তান থেকে বহু আল কায়দা
জঙ্গি এ দেশে আসছে কিন্তু তারাও
ভারতীয় নয়।

এক দিকে স্পেনের বিস্ফোরণের এই
ঘটনা নিরঙ্কশন বাজপেয়ী সরকার
উদ্ভিগ্ন ঠিক সেই সময়ে পাকিস্তানের
কাশ্মীর নিয়ে অনমনীয় মনোভাবেও
ভারত ক্ষুব্ধ। গত কাল এক ভারতীয়
সংবাদ সংস্থার অনুষ্ঠানে ভিডিও বক্তৃতায়
পারভেজ মুশারফ কাশ্মীর নিয়ে আবার
বেশ কট্টর মনোভাব প্রকাশ করেছেন।
তিনি বলেছিলেন, ক্রিকেট থেকে
অর্থনীতি, সব ক্ষেত্রেই আত্মবর্ধক
পদক্ষেপ যাই নেওয়া হোক কাশ্মীর
সমস্যার সমাধান না হলে স্বাভাবিক হতে
পারে না। আজ বিদেশমন্ত্রকের পক্ষ
থেকে পারভেজের এই বক্তব্যের কড়া
সমালোচনা করা হয়। ভারতের বক্তব্য,
শান্তি প্রক্রিয়া এখন যে ইতিবাচক পথ
ধরে চলেছে তাতে এ ধরনের মনোভাব
সেই পরিবেশকে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে
সাহায্য করবে না। ফলে ডোটের মুখে
এক দিকে পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে দ্বিপাক্ষিক
সম্পর্কের বিষয়টিকে শক্ত হাতে
মোকাবিলা করা, অন্য দিকে স্পেনের
বিস্ফোরণে দুই ভারতীয় জঙ্গির সঙ্গে
আল কায়দা জঙ্গির সম্পর্কের বিষয়টি
বিস্তারিত ভাবে তদন্ত করা, আপাতত
প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সামনে এই দুই বিষয় নিম্নেই
উদ্ভেগ আছে।

নয়া দিল্লি, ১৪ মার্চ— লালকেল্লার
ভিতরে ও আশেপাশে বেআইনি
দখলদার উচ্ছেদের জন্য আজ কেন্দ্রকে
অনুমতি দিয়েছে সুপ্রিম কোর্ট। সেইসঙ্গে
শীর্ষ আদালত একটি কমিটি গঠনেরও
নির্দেশ দিয়েছে। এই কমিটি লালকেল্লার
সংরক্ষণ ও সংস্কার-সংক্রান্ত কাজকর্ম
দেখাশোনা করবে।— পি টি আই

India rules out EU role in talks with Pakistan

17/2
New Delhi
16 FEBRUARY

INDIA on Monday voiced optimism over the outcome of the three-day official level talks with Pakistan and ruled out any mediation by the European Union (EU) or any third party in bilateral issues between the two countries. "I am quite optimistic over the outcome of this round of talks (from Monday in Islamabad). These are a preliminary round of discussions on issues relating to the agenda, the level of talks and the time-frame in which the talks will be held," external affairs minister Yashwant Sinha told reporters after the India-EU troika ministerial meeting.

Observing that New Delhi was "grateful" to the EU for the offer to play a role in resolving Indo-Pak issues, he said it has been made clear that "as far as the role of EU or any third party is con-

cerned, these are best resolved bilaterally between India and Pakistan." The EU Troika meeting was attended by Irish foreign minister Brian Cowen, Dutch foreign minister Bernard Rudolf Bot and the EU commissioner for external relations Chris Patten. The meeting comes ahead of the 5th India-EU Summit to be held in the Netherlands in the second half of this year.

The Dutch side has suggested dates in November and December for the summit which would be worked out through diplomatic channels. On the Indo-Pak parleys, Mr Sinha said work has already been done in the past years on the dialogue and that it should not be a difficult task to reach a conclusion during the present round.

If some issues were left over during the discussions between the Indian delegation led by external affairs ministry joint secre-

tary Arun Singh and the Pakistani side headed by director general for South Asia Jalil Abba Jilani, foreign secretary Shashank and Riaz Khokha would meet on February 18 to resolve them, he said. Aske about the EU's response to the televised admission by Pakistani scientist A.Q. Khan that he was involved in proliferation of nuclear secrets to North Korea, Libya and Iran, Mr Cowen said this was an "international issue in which "very many nationalities" were involved.

Mr Cowen said steps have to be taken to ensure that weapons of mass destruction do not reach the wrong hands. On the EU's demand that India should sign the non-proliferation treaty, he said it was important to pursue a dialogue on the issue. Mr Sinha also briefed the EU leaders on the recent positive developments in Indo-Pak relations. — PTI

European Union puts faith in outsourcing

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Feb. 16: The European Union today made it clear that it had "no problem" with outsourcing services to India.

"The EU had no problem with outsourcing. It is good for you and good for us," European commissioner for external relations Chris Patten said. The EU is India's largest trading partner and one of the major foreign investors.

Patten, however, pointed out that certain areas, particularly more access for European business to Indian markets, needed more discussions between the two sides.

He is part of the EU troika, also including Irish foreign minister Brian Cowen and his Dutch counterpart Bernard Rudolf Bot, which held wide discussions with foreign minister Yashwant Sinha this afternoon.

The EU committed 5 million euros for providing technical as-

sistance in the creation of the South Asian Free Trade Area (Safta), scheduled to come into force by January 2006.

The Safta, the EU felt, could be a "win-win situation" for all seven countries of South Asia as the region had "huge potential".

"We welcome the positive outcome of the recent Saarc summit in Islamabad, in particular the decision made to reinvigorate the organisation...EU is ready to increase its support to Saarc by providing technical as-

sistance for implementation of the free trade area," Patten said.

The EU fund would be used to extend help in areas such as customs in which it has had years of experience.

Patten described the setting up of Safta as "extremely exciting" and appreciated India's leading role in the process. He took the opportunity to say that Delhi should also take a fresh look at some trade issues.

The trio, which discussed regional and bilateral issues, also

indicated that the next India-EU summit would be held in Holland at the year-end.

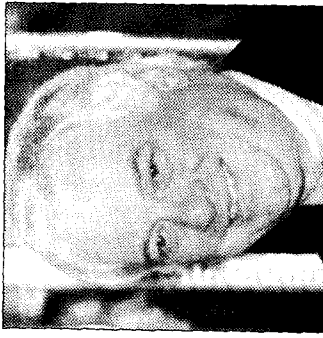
Sinha observed there was a mutual desire to expand bilateral partnership.

"We expressed interest in exploring new vistas of cooperation with the EU in biotechnology, nano-technology, space, IT and genome research for mutually beneficial spin-offs," Sinha said.

The two sides, he added, discussed the proposal of joint

collaboration in the development and operation of the Galileo satellite navigation system, which signified growing partnership in niche areas of technology.

"We are hopeful that our partnership in diverse areas will be carried forward for our mutual benefit," the foreign minister said, indicating the growth potential of agreements for trade and investment and customs co-operation signed at the last India-EU summit.



Patten: Backing Delhi

THE TELEGRAPH

17 FEBRUARY

Salem extradition ray

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Feb. 5: A Portugal court has ordered the extradition of Bombay blasts accused and underworld don Abu Salem.

An Indian external affairs ministry spokesperson termed yesterday's court order "positive" and appreciated Lisbon's "excellent cooperation".

Delhi "would like to express appreciation for the excellent cooperation of the Portuguese government and pay tribute to the efficiency of the Portuguese judicial process which has accepted and upheld the veracity of our claims in this case", the spokesperson added.

The CBI said it had learnt of

the order and had requested the Indian embassy in Lisbon to obtain a copy. A senior bureau officer said the CBI would be able to react only after it obtains a copy.

Bureau officials have also learnt that Portugal's attorney-general is going to file an appeal. But they do not know what the appeal will say.

In November, a court had also ordered the extradition of Salem's wife Monica Bedi, who appealed against the order.

However, the CBI will not get hold of Salem right away as he will challenge the order.

Also, it has not yet been settled if Salem will first serve time in Portugal for offences that he has committed there before

he can be sent back to India.

Salem and Bedi have already been handed jail terms by Portuguese courts for entering the country on forged documents. The two were rounded up in Lisbon on September 21, 2002.

Salem was sentenced to four-and-a-half-years' imprisonment on three counts — entering Portugal on forged documents, causing injury to a policeman performing his duty and perjury. But the Portuguese government dropped one charge against him — marrying a local girl to get a resident permit.

A close associate of Dawood Ibrahim and his brother Anees Ibrahim Kaskar, Salem is thought to be one of the prime conspirators in the 1993 blasts.