

# Brows raised over Hasina visit

PRANAY SHARMA

**New Delhi, July 26:** A series of meetings between Awami League chief Sheikh Hasina and the Indian leadership barely five days before Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is slated to meet his Bangladeshi counterpart Khaleda Zia has raised a few eyebrows in both countries.

The question doing the rounds is whether the United Progressive Alliance government is trying to revive its old links with the Awami League and keep its options open while dealing with its neighbour.

Hasina, who arrived today, met the Prime Minister and defence minister Pranab Mukherjee. She also attended a dinner hosted by foreign minister Natwar Singh at the Maurya Sheraton Hotel. Former Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral will host a lunch for her tomorrow.

The former Bangladesh Prime Minister is here on a private visit and apart from meeting leaders in Delhi, she is scheduled to visit Ajmer Sharif before returning to Dhaka on Thursday.

"She is leader of the Opposi-

tion in Bangladesh. The courtesy being shown to her is nothing unusual but something which we do with other leaders of her rank and stature," a senior South Block official said. "We don't have any favourites in Dhaka. We want good relations with Bangladesh and whichever party comes to power there, we are willing to deal with it."

The Prime Minister is scheduled to hold a meeting with Khaleda on the sidelines of the Bimstec meet in Thailand on

July 31. The meeting — the first since the Congress-led coalition came to power in Delhi — gathers significance as it gives both sides the opportunity to reassure each other about their intentions of strengthening ties.

Keen to build its relations with Delhi, the Bangladesh National Party government had sent foreign minister Morshed Khan as the Prime Minister's "special envoy" to convey Khaleda's intentions to the UPA when it came to power in May.

However, Hasina's interaction with the Indian leadership is likely to make the BNP jittery.

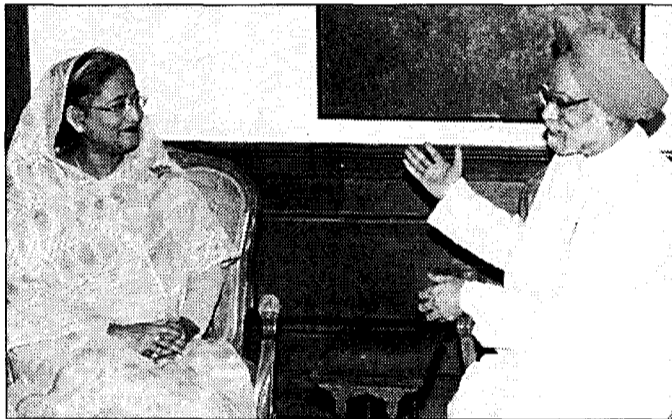
India, careful not to ruffle feathers, is trying not to hype Hasina's visit. The foreign minister, and not the Prime Minister, hosted today's dinner.

Moreover, to make it clear that it was not official-level talks that India was interested in, but an informal interaction, the dinner was held at a five-star hotel and not Hyderabad House — the venue for most officials banquets.

The Awami League has failed to pose itself as an effective opposition in Bangladesh. After threatening to bring down the BNP government by April 30, Hasina and her supporters lost steam. At the moment, her party seems directionless and bereft of an effective agenda.

But Awami League workers are spread all over Bangladesh and they can be mobilised with a proper and attractive political programme.

Hasina may take the opportunity to highlight the lack of law and order and security in her country.



Hasina and Singh in Delhi on Monday. (PTI)

## Kashmir central to CBMs, says Musharraf

ISLAMABAD/NEW DELHI, July 23. — Ahead of his meeting with Mr Natwar Singh, President Musharraf said there can be no headway in the CBMs without resolution of the Kashmir issue. He was addressing army officers at the concluding ceremony of the wargames Sabit Qadam-III here last night.

The statement coincided with the conclusion of the Saarc ministerial meeting in which the 'thaw' in India-Pakistan relations held centre-stage. "Warm, frank and realistic," was Mr Singh's description of his 90-minute meeting with Gen. Musharraf. And, while all outstanding issues between India and Pakistan, including Kashmir, would be resolved through dialogue, this is "not a hundred metre race", and cannot be artificially rushed into, Mr Singh said. "India and Pakistan are committed to discussing and settling all bilateral issues, including Kashmir, to the satisfaction of both sides."

— SNS & PTI

## Mehmood dead

MUMBAI, July 23. — The uncrowned monarch of slapstick comedy, Mehmood Ali, died in his sleep at Pennsylvania in the USA today, family sources said. He was 72 and is survived by his wife, two daughters and six sons. His body will be brought to India. — PTI

Obituary on page 4

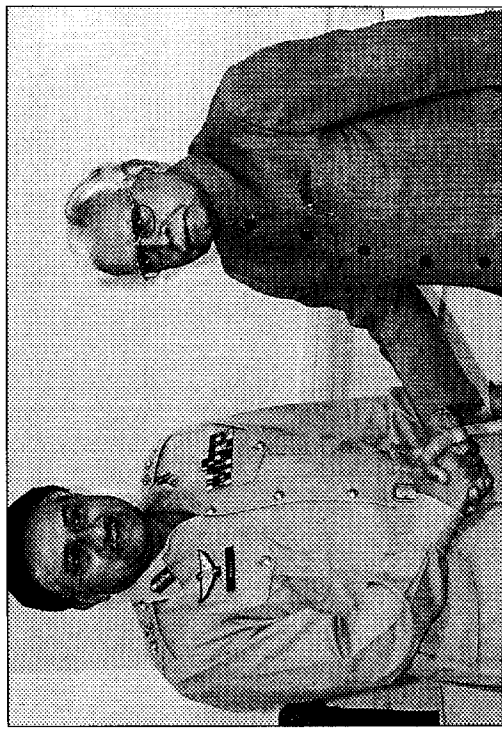
THE STATESMAN 24 JUL 2004

# Natwar plainspeak to Pervez on terror

HTC & Agencies  
Islamabad, July 23

ASSERTING THAT he was committed to the success of Composite Dialogue Process (CDP) with India, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf today said that there should be simultaneous progress on all issues including Kashmir within a time-frame.

External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh told India was committed to a "sustained and steady" dialogue process on all issues with Pakistan, but has demonstrated its concerns on the issue of continued terrorism from Pakistan. Singh said, "We will continue the dialogue in an atmosphere free of violence and tackling the scourge of terrorism with renewed vigour."



AFP

Pervez Musharraf greets Natwar Singh in Rawalpindi on Friday.

During their meeting, Musharraf has conveyed to Singh Pakistan's commitment to make the composite dialogue process a success, said a Pakistan Foreign Office statement, adding, "the President emphasised the need for 'simultaneous' progress on all issues and most notable on the central issue of Kashmir."

"It was important to address this issue with sincerity with a view to reaching a final settlement that accorded fully with the legitimate aspirations of the Kashmiris within a 'reasonable time frame', the statement quoted Musharraf as telling Singh.

"It was also important to provide comfort to the Kashmiris as they had the most important stake in the success of the process," Musharraf said. "It was

also important to provide 'comfort' to the Kashmiris as they had the most important stake in the success of the process", he said.

The Indian Foreign Minister did some plainspeaking on the issue of terrorism, while assuring Musharraf that he was committed to discuss all issues including Kashmir to the satisfaction of both sides. "No aspect including J&K was left out of our frank-discussion," Singh said.

Singh, sources say, pointed out to the existence of terrorist infrastructure and shifting of the infiltration from the Punjab border.

Singh said that the two sides reviewed the progress in the composite dialogue process. "I leave Pakistan with a renewed determination to work with Pakistan bilaterally to improve relations."

The two also met with each other amidst a sense of nostalgia.

Singh's meeting took place in his office in Rawalpindi. Musharraf told Singh that how he still remembered Singh's lecture at the National Defence College, while Singh was India's Ambassador in 1980s. Although Musharraf himself has said on several occasions that good Indo-Pak relations were in the interest of Pakistan, there is still a section in the Pakistani establishment which believes that terrorism has forced India to the negotiating table, which is not the case.

Although the meeting created the right atmosphere, the real test of the relationship will lie in the other six meetings of the composite dialogue process that are scheduled for August.

## SETTLEMENT OF KASHMIR ISSUE

# Musharraf for 'reasonable' time-frame

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JULY 23. Striking a tough posture, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, today told the External Affairs Minister, K. Natwar Singh, about the need for a final settlement of the Kashmir issue within a "reasonable" time-frame and "simultaneous" progress on all subjects, including the "central issue" of Kashmir.

According to a press statement by the Pakistan Foreign Office, Gen. Musharraf conveyed to Mr. Singh during his 90-minute interaction at the Army House in Rawalpindi that it was important to provide "comfort" to the Kashmiris as they had the highest stake in the success of the process.

Surprisingly, none of these elements was reflected in the three-and-a-half page "departure statement" Mr. Singh read out at the end of his five-day visit to Pakistan essentially in connection with the SAARC Council of Ministers conference.

### Only common point

The only common point in the statements of Mr. Singh and the Pakistan Foreign Office is the commitment made during the interaction on making the composite dialogue process a success.

Since the peace process gained momentum in January, after the meeting between Gen. Musharraf and the then Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, on the sidelines of the SAARC summit, the Pakistan President has repeatedly emphasised the need for simultaneous progress on Kashmir and other issues. However, it is for the first time

he has talked about a "reasonable" time-frame for a resolution of the Kashmir issue.

### 'Not a 100-metre race'

Mr. Singh indirectly responded to Gen. Musharraf's comments when he told reporters in New Delhi that India and Pakistan were not engaged in a 100-metre race to set deadlines for a resolution of the Kashmir issue.

According to the Pakistan Foreign Office, Gen. Musharraf's comments were in the context of the commitment to making the composite dialogue process a success. "In this context, the President emphasised the need for 'simultaneous' progress on all issues and most notably on the central issue of Jammu and Kashmir. It was important to address this issue with sincerity with a view to reaching a final settlement that accorded fully with the legitimate aspirations of the Kashmiris within a 'reasonable' timeframe," it said.

### 'Steady dialogue needed'

Mr. Singh said he spoke to Gen. Musharraf about India's intention to carry on a "sustained and steady dialogue" with Pakistan and reviewed several significant aspects of our relations.

"Both sides reiterated the importance of continuing the dialogue process in an atmosphere free of violence, and of tackling the scourge of terrorism with renewed vigour," he said.

Mr. Singh said no aspect of bilateral relationship, including Jammu and Kashmir, was left out of the "warm, frank and realistic discussions."

Photo on Page 14



# Natwar off Simla peak

**PRANAY SHARMA**

**Islamabad, July 21:** Taking care not to rake up the Simla agreement again or place any roadblock, foreign minister Natwar Singh today assured Pakistan he was committed to "carry forward" the peace process started by Atal Bihari Vajpayee in January this year.

"I can assure you that the process started in January will be carried forward by us," he said after a breakfast meeting with Pakistan counterpart Khurshheed Mehmood Kasuri.

Singh had ruffled diplomatic feathers on both sides of the border shortly after taking charge by referring to the Simla Agreement as the "bedrock" of bilateral relations. Pervez Musharraf had then dialled former Prime Minister Vajpayee to seek clarification.

On January 6 this year, Vajpayee and Musharraf had agreed that progress on bilateral issues would not be possible unless there was forward movement on Kashmir, which in turn was not possible until Pakistan stopped exporting terror from its soil. But Singh had given the impression that the Congress-led government would bypass the statement.

Singh clarified his position again in the evening at a reception in Indian high commissioner Shiv Shankar Menon's residence. Meeting with Pakistani leaders from across the political spectrum, he iterated the Manmohan Singh government was as committed to peace with Pakistan as the earlier BJP-led regime.

"We are a coalition government, but there is unity across the board to take the process forward," Singh said. He also called on



Natwar Singh with Khurshheed Mehmood Kasuri at a hotel in Islamabad on Wednesday. (AP)

interim Pakistani Prime Minister Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain.

Singh and Kasuri will meet again in Delhi on September 5-6. Before that, the foreign secretaries will review the dialogue process and submit their recommendations to the foreign ministers.

Pakistan, too, assured that it was committed to the peace process and was willing to negotiate with Delhi beyond September. "We have mutually agreed that we will speak more after our meeting in Delhi. We hope there

will be continuity and greater progress after that," Kasuri said.

Kasuri's statement is being seen as significant in the light of Musharraf's a few days ago that he would be forced to pull out of talks if there was no meaningful progress in bilateral relations, particularly Kashmir. Musharraf had set off speculation that the peace process could end soon.

The mood in both camps, however, seems to have lifted after the breakfast meeting where "all

issues of concern" were discussed in a free and frank atmosphere. "The meeting went on for nearly two hours and we could not have discussed only the weather.

"In diplomatic jargon, free and frank often means unfriendly. But we discussed all issues in a friendly atmosphere that were of concern to us," Kasuri said.

Singh was unwilling to give out further details. "With great respect, I understand that you are looking for a story, but we are looking for a solution."

# Natwar, Kasuri gloss over irritants

Saurabh Shukla  
Islamabad, July 21

THE ATMOSPHERICS were warm, but the areas of disagreement on issues such as the Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus service, terrorism, and conventional CBMs continued to stick out like sore thumbs as the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan met to review the progress in the composite dialogue process and purge the irritants.

India expressed its concerns over continued infiltration from Pakistan as External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri met for 75 minutes in a bilateral session on the sidelines of the Saarc meet. "We raised the issue of infiltration and terrorism ... we discussed reopening of the Karachi and Mumbai consulates and other CBMs," Singh said. While both were tightlipped, diplomatic sources told HT that India had raised the issue of infiltration by Lashkar militants.

"The talks were frank and held in a friendly atmosphere. We discussed all issues...in diplomatic jargon, 'frank' is sometimes 'unfriendly' but we had friendly talks... we will speak more after our meeting in Delhi," Kasuri said. What Kasuri did not say is that

armed services of the two nations. Singh said that the two foreign ministers would meet on September 5 and 6 in New Delhi following a meeting of the foreign secretaries on September 4. "We hope that there will be progress on the talks and we will be able to announce greater progress after the talks in September," Kasuri said.

Sources said that the issue of a bus service between Lahore and Amritsar had come up at the meeting and there was also agreement on starting the Munabao-Khokrapar train service. Significantly, both conveyed that they had the confidence of the entire political spectrum in their countries to take the talks forward. In fact, it was agreed between the two sides that since the Saarc meeting was clouded by bilaterals and the "K-word", efforts should be made to present a united face. Although Islamabad did not say much when India raised the issue of continuing terrorism and infiltration, it stuck to its old line that there were no camps in Pakistan.

The meeting was marked by some bonhomie with Kasuri telling his Indian counterpart that he was all for continuity in the peace process, while Singh told him that the UPA would maintain a steady course in ties with Pakistan.



AP  
**BONHOMIE BUZZ** Natwar Singh with Pak counterpart Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri on the sidelines of the Saarc meet in Islamabad on Wednesday.

he had told Singh that Pakistan would not accept passports as travel documents for the bus service.

Pakistan also proposed a meeting of Foreign Office officials on the bus service ahead of a technical-level meeting where it would not welcome officials from J&K as part of the Indian delegation. Sources said the CBMs had been put in the cold storage and that Pakistan had proposed a meeting of experts on conventional CBMs such as hotlines between the

# India, Pakistan agree on 'sustained dialogue'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

**ISLAMABAD, JULY 21.** The Foreign Ministers of India and Pakistan will meet in New Delhi on September 5 and 6, at the end of the first round of the talks on the eight subjects identified under the resumed composite dialogue process.

The External Affairs Minister, K. Natwar Singh, and his Pakistani counterpart, Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri, agreed this morning on the new dates for their bilateral meeting during an interaction over breakfast on the sidelines of the SAARC Council of Ministers conference here. Originally, they were scheduled to meet on August 25 but it has been postponed due to scheduling problems.

The meeting in Delhi will be preceded by a one-day confer-

ence between the Foreign Secretaries on September 4. By then they would have the benefit of the outcome of official-level meetings on all subjects of the composite dialogue.

Mr. Kasuri emphasised that the talks were "free, frank, friendly and honest." "Frank talks could also mean unfriendly," he said at a joint media appearance with Mr. Singh.

According to official sources, there was a clear understanding on both sides that the dialogue would have to be a "sustained process" and that there could be no quick fix to the complicated problems between India and Pakistan that have evaded answers for over five decades. Implied in it was the suggestion that it would be unrealistic to set any deadlines on the concerns of each other.

At the end of the interaction they had no new agreements to offer. Perhaps, both sides are looking at each other's package and there is a possibility of some announcements after the Delhi round of talks. The focus of the interaction was on the need to "stay engaged" rather than on the nitty-gritty of the proposals related to peace and security and Jammu and Kashmir. The Pakistan Prime Minister, Chaudhary Shujaat Hussain, echoed the same views when Mr. Singh called on him and reviewed the current state of bilateral relations.

Mr. Singh raised New Delhi's concerns over cross-border terrorism and fresh reports of a spurt in infiltration from across the border. Reiterating its position that there was no terrorist infrastructure on the soil under

its control, Pakistan did not choose to go into an instant 'denial mode'.

Mr. Kasuri apparently told Mr. Singh that Pakistan had done all it could to rein in the "freelance *jihadi* elements." At the same time, there were "limits" to what it could do. He talked of the need for a steady progress to resolve the Kashmir problem. There was a view that while terrorism and infiltration should be a matter of legitimate concern, terrorists should not be allowed to get away with the impression that they exercised the veto over India-Pakistan relations. Mr. Singh told the media that he raised the subject of cross-border terrorism prompting Mr. Kasuri to comment that every subject relevant to India and Pakistan were touched upon.

Mr. Kasuri said that Islamabad was encouraged by the continuity in the peace process adding that all segments of Pakistani society were behind the process. Mr. Singh told him that though his was a coalition government, the peace process had the backing of all parties in India.

Both the Ministers told journalists that they discussed fundamental issues, including Kashmir besides various confidence-building measures (CBMs) such as launching a bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. However, it appears that differences on the issue of travel documents persist.

The two sides spoke of the need to speed up the process of restoring the staff strength in

their missions in New Delhi and Islamabad as agreed upon.

"The process started in January will be carried forward," Mr. Singh said referring to the joint statement issued on January 6 after a meeting between the then Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, on the sidelines of the SAARC Summit here.

Asked by a Pakistani journalist whether a solution to Kashmir and issues related to conventional CBMs were discussed, Mr. Singh said: "You are looking for a story, we are looking for a solution." "We discussed everything, no issue was untouched ... You cannot just be talking about weather (during the 90-minute breakfast meeting)," Mr. Kasuri added.

**SAARC resolve: Page 11**

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Singh and Kasuri

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## Peace in pipeline, not bus link

PRANAY SHARMA *MS*

**Islamabad, July 20:** The proposed Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus might not bridge the gulf between the two Kashmirs, at least not in a hurry. But it looks as if the "peace pipeline" — the overland route through Pakistan to ferry Iranian gas to India — might see the light of day sooner.

The South Asian neighbours have clarified their positions ahead of the meeting between K. Natwar Singh and Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri tomorrow. The Pakistan foreign minister is slated to host a breakfast meeting for his Indian counterpart.

No specific proposal has yet been made on the gas pipeline, but of late Pakistan has been stressing on energy as the key area of cooperation.

"We welcome the emphasis being given to develop closer collaboration among Saarc states in the field of energy," Kasuri said. "Pakistan has proposed the creation of a South Asia energy forum and the setting up of a Saarc energy centre."

Singh is scheduled to meet Pervez Musharraf on Friday. He called on the Pakistan President today along with Saarc foreign ministers, but Friday's meeting will be an exclusive session.

■ See Page 5

# India, Pakistan share 'ideas'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JULY 19. Agreeing to carry forward the composite dialogue process, India and Pakistan today exchanged some "ideas" on confidence building measures (CBMs) on peace and security and Jammu and Kashmir. Both sides reiterated their desire to push the dialogue process at a meeting of the two Foreign Secretaries on the sidelines of the SAARC Standing Committee conference here this morning.

The Foreign Secretary, Shashank, and his Pakistani counterpart, Riaz Khokhar,

were upbeat about the progress made.

But neither was willing to spell out details of the proposals on the ground that it was for the Foreign Ministers to decide on them when they meet in the next couple of days on the sidelines of the two-day SAARC ministerial meeting beginning tomorrow.

## Natwar optimistic

The External Affairs Minister, K. Natwar Singh, who arrived here from New Delhi to take part in the SAARC conference in a statement said he would do his best to use the opportunity

to contribute further to creating a better climate for taking forward the composite dialogue process. Indian and Pakistani Foreign Secretaries said the proposals discussed at their bilateral breakfast meeting centred on CBMs related to peace and security and Jammu and Kashmir exchanged at their last meeting in New Delhi in the last week of June. At the meeting, both sides had submitted a set of Kashmir-specific proposals on transport links, trade, cultural cooperation, people-to-people contacts and nuclear CBMs.

Indications are that after

their bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the SAARC conference, India and Pakistan could sign an agreement on pre-notification of flight-testing of missiles. At the June 28 meeting in Delhi, both sides had exchanged draft agreements on missile tests.

The Indian Foreign Secretary told a news conference here that the two sides also held discussions on how to go further on the implementation of the decisions taken last month. Dates had been fixed for discussing six subjects, three in Delhi and three in Islamabad.

**Meet on terrorism: Page 14**

20 JUL 2004

চাপে হরিয়ত ও পাকিস্তান

# সব বিষয়েই নতুন করে কথা চায় দিল্লি

জয়ন্ত ঘোষাল • নয়াদিল্লি

১৭ জুলাই: সন্ত্রাসবাদ থেকে শুরু করে হরিয়তের দাবি, প্রতিটি বিষয়েই মনমোহন সিংহের সরকার পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে নতুন করে আলোচনা শুরু করতে চায়। অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী এই বিষয়গুলি নিয়ে আলোচনাকে বেশ খানিকটা এগিয়ে নিয়ে গিয়েছিলেন। পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে বন্ধুত্বের সেই মূল ধারাটিকে অস্বীকার না করলেও নয়াদিল্লির নতুন সরকার বিষয়গুলি নতুন করে খতিয়ে দেখতে চাইছে।

মনমোহন সিংহ সরকারের এই অবস্থানে পাকিস্তান প্রশাসন ও হরিয়ত নেতৃত্ব বেশ চাপের মধ্যে পড়েছে। কাল সন্ধ্যায় মন্ত্রিসভার নিরাপত্তা বিষয়ক কমিটির বৈঠকে এ বিষয়ে সরকারের রণকৌশল চূড়ান্ত করা হয়েছে। বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ সার্ক সংক্রান্ত বৈঠকে যোগ দিতে ১৯ জুলাই ইসলামাবাদে যাচ্ছেন। পাক বিদেশমন্ত্রী কাসুরির সঙ্গে তাঁর পৃথক বৈঠকও হবে। তার পরই এ মাসের শেষে কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী শিবরাজ পাটিল হরিয়ত নেতাদের সঙ্গে বৈঠকে বসছেন। ঠিক হয়েছে, বন্ধুত্বের লক্ষ্যে এগিয়ে গেলেও পাকিস্তানের সন্ত্রাসের বিষয়টি নিয়ে খোলামেলা আলোচনা হবে। এক কেন্দ্রীয় মন্ত্রীর কথায়, “সেটিও আলোচনার পরিধির মধ্যে আছে।”

স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী শিবরাজ পাটিল এবং প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়ের কাছে যে সব গোয়েন্দা রিপোর্ট আসছে তা থেকেও জানা যাচ্ছে, প্রথমত, পাক অধিকৃত কাশ্মীরে এখনও জিহাদি গোষ্ঠীগুলি বেশ কিছু প্রশিক্ষণ শিবির চালু রেখেছে। এগুলি বন্ধ করার বিষয়ে ফের কথা বলা প্রয়োজন। দ্বিতীয়ত, নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখা দিয়ে পাক জঙ্গি অনুপ্রবেশ কমেছে। কিন্তু সেনা-গোয়েন্দাদের রিপোর্ট অনুসারে কয়েক হাজার জঙ্গি সীমান্তে অপেক্ষারত। তারা সুযোগের অপেক্ষায়। বরফ গলার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে এই জঙ্গিরা ভারতীয় ভূখণ্ডে প্রবেশের চেষ্টা করবে। তৃতীয়ত, কাশ্মীর উপত্যকায় একের পর এক সন্ত্রাসের ঘটনা ঘটছে।

ঠিক হয়েছে, নটবর সিংহ ইসলামাবাদে গিয়ে আস্থাবর্ধক পদক্ষেপ নিয়ে আরও বিস্তারিত আলোচনা করবেন, কিন্তু এখনই কাশ্মীর সমস্যা সমাধানের সুত্র খোঁজার বিষয়টি নিয়ে কোনও কথা হবে না। পাকিস্তান অবশ্য সেটাই চাইছে। পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফের প্রিন্সিপাল সেক্রেটারি তারিক আজিজ দিল্লি এসে জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা পর্যদের প্রধান জে এন দীক্ষিতকে বলেছিলেন, বিগত সার্ক সম্মেলনের সময় ইসলামাবাদে এই বিষয়গুলি নিয়ে ব্রজেশ মিশ্রর সঙ্গে আলোচনা হয়ে গিয়েছিল। সে সময়ে দু'দেশের সরকার বেশ কিছু সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েও নিয়েছিল। যার মধ্যে জঙ্গিদের সঙ্গে সংঘর্ষ-বিরতি, জেল থেকে রাজনৈতিক বন্দিদের মুক্তি বা হরিয়ত নেতাদের পাকিস্তানে পাঠানোর মতো বিষয়গুলিও ছিল। মনমোহন সিংহ সরকার কিন্তু মনে করছে, প্রতিটি সরকারই সার্বভৌম। ভারত-পাক দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্কের ধারাবাহিকতা রক্ষা করেও বিষয়গুলি নিয়ে নতুন করে আলোচনা প্রয়োজন। এমন কী স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রক দাউদ ইব্রাহিম ও তার সঙ্গীদেরও এক নতুন তালিকা তৈরি করেছে যারা পাকিস্তানে আছে।

দু'দেশের আলোচনা কী ভাবে এগোবে, তা নিয়েও একটি সময়সূচি তৈরি করা হয়েছে। ঠিক হয়েছে, ২৫ অগস্ট দু'দেশের বিদেশমন্ত্রীর আলোচনায় বসবেন। ১১-১২ অগস্ট ইসলামাবাদে দু'দেশের বাণিজ্যমন্ত্রীদের বৈঠক হবে। ১০-১১ অগস্ট দু'দেশের স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রীদের বৈঠক। ৫-৬ অগস্ট প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী, ৩-৪ অগস্ট সংস্কৃতিমন্ত্রী এবং ২৮-২৯ জুলাই জলসম্পদমন্ত্রীদের বৈঠক হবে।

এই আলোচনাগুলি শেষ হওয়ার পরে সনিয়া গাঁধী ইসলামাবাদ সফরে যেতে পারেন। এ বার পাকিস্তানে নটবর সিংহ এই সফর নিয়ে আলোচনা করবেন।

হরিয়ত নেতৃত্বের সঙ্গে আলোচনার বিষয়েও দিল্লি 'ধীরে চলো' নীতি গ্রহণ করেছে। হরিয়ত নেতাদের ভিতরেও বিবাদ চরমে উঠেছিল। চেয়ারম্যানের পদ থেকে আকবাস আনসারি ইস্তফা দেওয়ার পরে পরিস্থিতি কিছুটা নিয়ন্ত্রণে এসেছে। তবে এর আগে প্রাক্তন উপ-প্রধানমন্ত্রী লালকৃষ্ণ আডবানী হরিয়তের বেশ কিছু শর্ত মেনে নেন। এর মধ্যে জেল থেকে বন্দিদের মুক্তি দেওয়া থেকে শুরু করে সেফ প্যাসেজ দেওয়া বা সংঘর্ষ বিরতির বিষয় পর্যন্ত। কিন্তু এখন স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রকও আলোচনা সম্পূর্ণ নতুন করে শুরু করতে চাইছে। এ ব্যাপারে হরিয়ত নেতৃত্ব খুশি নয়। তবে হরিয়ত-কেন্দ্র আলোচনাকে ত্বরান্বিত করতে পাকিস্তান সরকারও এখন সক্রিয় ভূমিকা নিয়েছে। পাক বিদেশসচিব সম্প্রতি দিল্লি এসে নানা গোষ্ঠীর হরিয়ত নেতার সঙ্গে আলোচনায় বসেন। বিদেশ মন্ত্রক সুত্রে বলা হয়েছে, সময় লাগলেও মনমোহন সরকার ভারত-পাক সম্পর্কের প্রক্ষে ইতিবাচক পথ ধরেই এগোতে চাইছে। সেপ্টেম্বরে মনমোহনের সঙ্গে পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট মুশারফের বৈঠক। তার আগেই দু'দেশের ভিতর চলতি বিতর্কের অনেকটাই অবসান হবে বলে মনে করা হচ্ছে।

## কাসুরির সঙ্গে বৈঠকে কাশ্মীর নিয়ে 'বাস্তববাদী' কূটনীতি চান নটবর

জাকার্তা, ২ জুলাই: দু'সপ্তাহের মধ্যে এই নিয়ে দ্বিতীয় বার পাকিস্তানের বিদেশমন্ত্রী খুরশিদ মেহমুদ কাসুরির সঙ্গে বৈঠক করলেন ভারতের বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ। এশিয়ান রিজিওনাল ফোরামের বার্ষিক সমাবেশে যোগ দিতে জাকার্তায় এসেছেন নটবর। সেখানেই তাঁর সঙ্গে কাসুরির বৈঠক হয়। মার্কিন বিদেশ সচিব কলিন পাওয়েলের সঙ্গেও আজ কথা বলেছেন নটবর। সম্প্রতি রেগনের অন্ত্যেষ্টি উপলক্ষে ওয়াশিংটন সফরের সময় পাওয়েলের সঙ্গেও বৈঠক করেছিলেন নটবর। ঘন ঘন এই কূটনৈতিক সাক্ষাৎগুলিতে সহজেই বোঝা যায়, তথাকথিত 'কট্টরপন্থী' নটবর সিংহ ভারতের বিদেশনীতিতে তাঁর মুন্সিয়ানার ছাপ রাখতে বদ্ধপরিকর।

আজকের সমাবেশের পাশাপাশি ১০ মিনিটেরও কিছু বেশি সময় কাসুরির সঙ্গে একান্তে কথা বলেন নটবর। চিন সফরকালে ২১ জুন নটবর ও কাসুরির আলোচনা যথেষ্ট সফল হয়েছিল। সেই আলোচনাকেই আরও এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়া হয়েছে বলে তিনি সাংবাদিকদের জানিয়েছেন। পরবর্তী আলোচনা শীঘ্রই ইসলামাবাদে অনুষ্ঠিত হবে। কাসুরিকে অগস্ট মাসে নয়াদিল্লি আসার জন্য আমন্ত্রণ জানিয়েছেন নটবর। সেখানে এই আলোচনা আরও পরিণত রূপ পাবে বলে নটবর জানিয়েছেন। তিনি ভারত-পাক শান্তি প্রক্রিয়া সম্পর্কে কতটা আশাবাদী তা জানতে চাওয়া হলে নটবর বলেন, "আশা বা নিরাশার প্রশ্ন নয়, আমাদের এখন বাস্তববাদী হতে হবে।"

কাসুরি বলেন, "রাজনৈতিক সদিচ্ছা থাকলে যে কোনও বিষয়েরই সমাধান করা সম্ভব..... দীর্ঘমেয়াদি শান্তি আনতে গেলে কাশ্মীরের মানুষের মতামত নিয়ে আমাদের এগোতে হবে।" তাঁর মতে, দু'দেশের বিদেশসচিব স্তরেও আলোচনা যথেষ্ট সদর্থক হয়েছে। এর থেকেই বোঝা যায় পারস্পরিক আস্থা অর্জনের দিকেই

সাম্প্রতিক প্রবণতা। দু'দেশের মধ্যে প্রধান সমস্যা কাশ্মীর তা ফের উল্লেখ করে কাসুরি এ দিন বলেন, "আমাদের মধ্যে কাশ্মীরের মতো সমস্যা রয়েছে ....৫৭ বছরেও তার কোনও সমাধান হয়নি, দু'একটি বৈঠকে তার সমাধান সম্ভব নয়। কিন্তু আমরা পারস্পরিক আস্থা অর্জন করতে পেরেছি। সেটাই বড় কথা।"

পাওয়েলের সঙ্গেও প্রায় বারো মিনিট কথা বলেন নটবর। তাঁদের আলোচনায় মনমোহন সিংহ সরকারের বিদেশনীতি থেকে শুরু করে ইস্তানবুলের নেটো গোষ্ঠীভুক্ত দেশগুলির সম্মেলন, ইরাক ও আফগানিস্তানের সাম্প্রতিক পরিস্থিতি প্রভৃতি অনেকগুলি বিষয় উঠে এসেছে। ইন্দোনেশিয়া, মায়ানমার ও অস্ট্রেলিয়ার বিদেশমন্ত্রীদের সঙ্গেও আলোচনা চালিয়েছেন নটবর।

পাকিস্তানের এ আর এফ সদস্যপদ। আজকের সমাবেশে পাকিস্তানকে সংগঠনের সদস্য হিসেবে স্বীকৃতি দেওয়া হয়েছে। আঞ্চলিক নিরাপত্তার গুরুত্বপূর্ণ এই মঞ্চের সদস্যদের তালিকায় ২৪ নম্বরে পাকিস্তানের নাম যোগ করা হল। পাকিস্তানকে সদস্য হিসেবে স্বীকৃতি দেওয়ার ব্যাপারে দীর্ঘ দিন ভারতের আপত্তি ছিল। বর্তমানে এশিয়ানের প্রধান দেশ ইন্দোনেশিয়া এ ব্যাপারে উদ্যোগ নেয়। ভারত-পাক দ্বিপাক্ষিক বিষয়গুলি যাতে পাকিস্তান এই ফোরামে না তোলে সে জন্য তারা পাকিস্তানের কাছ থেকে কথা আদায় করে। তার প্রেক্ষিতে ভারত এই আপত্তি প্রত্যাহার করে নেওয়ায় এ ব্যাপারে সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া সহজ হল।

দক্ষিণ এশীয় শান্তি প্রক্রিয়ায় এই সদস্যপদ একটি অনুঘটকের কাজ করবে বলে পাক বিদেশমন্ত্রকের মুখপাত্র মাসুদ খান সংবাদসংস্থাকে জানিয়েছেন। অনেক আগেই পাকিস্তানের এই সদস্যপদ পাওয়া উচিত ছিল বলে মনে করেন বিদেশমন্ত্রী খুরশিদ কাসুরি। সম্মেলনে উপস্থিত অনের বিদেশমন্ত্রীই সে কথা উল্লেখ করেছেন বলে তিনি জানান।

—পি টি আই

# Peace with Pak 'moves a step ahead'

JAKARTA, July 2. — Foreign minister Mr K Natwar Singh held talks here today with his Pakistani counterpart Mr Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri for the second time in less than a fortnight. "We've taken it further here, we'll take it further in Islamabad and then when he (Kasuri) comes to New Delhi in August," Mr Singh said after the meeting on the sidelines of the ARF session.

Asked if he was optimistic about the peace process, the minister said: "I don't term it as optimistic or pessimistic. One has to be realistic."

Mr Kasuri, on his part, said Pakistan had the political will to carry forward the peace process. "I feel that given the political will even difficult issues can be re-

solved... For us to have durable peace, we need to involve the people of Kashmir" to resolve the issue. Terming his talks with Mr Singh as "good", Mr Kasuri said the two sides had excellent meeting in China. The foreign secretaries of both countries too had successful talks. "That shows the trend of the discussions."

As Pakistan today became the 24th member of Asean Regional Forum, India hoped that Islamabad would not raise any bilateral issues at the Asia Pacific's only security grouping. Indonesia, the current Asean chairman, had sought and obtained an explicit assurance from Pakistan that it would not raise bilateral issues at the forum, Mr Singh said in an interview to *Jakarta Post*. — PTI



Pakistan's foreign minister Mr Khurshid Kasuri and Mr Natwar Singh at the Asean Regional Forum meeting in Jakarta on Friday. — AFP

## Anti-terror MoU with Indonesia

NEW DELHI, July 2. — Foreign minister Mr K Natwar Singh today met US secretary of state Gen. Colin Powell for discussions on the situation in Iraq and other issues. This was on the sidelines of the ARF summit in Jakarta.

Mr Singh also met Mr Hassan Wirajuda, Mr U Win Aung and Mr Alexander Downer, foreign ministers of Indonesia, Myanmar and Australia respectively. An MoU on combating international terrorism with Indonesia is on the cards. — PTI

JUL 2004

Handwritten note: July 2004



# Natwar, Kasuri to push for normalising ties

Agencies  
Jakarta, July 2

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS Minister K. Natwar Singh today met his counterparts from several countries, including Pakistani Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri and US Secretary of State Colin Powell, on the sidelines of the Asean Regional Forum summit here.

Powell and Natwar had wide-ranging discussions on various issues, including the recent Nato meeting in Istanbul, the UPA government's foreign policy and stand on Iraq, and the recent developments in the South Asian region and Afghanistan. This was their second meeting within a month.

During his meeting with Kasuri, the second in less than a fortnight, the two leaders reviewed the peace process between their countries. As Pakistan today became the 24th member of ARF, In-

dia hoped that Islamabad would adhere to its commitment of not raising Kashmir or any other Indo-Pak issues at the Asia Pacific's only security grouping.

Indonesia, the current chairman of Asean had sought and obtained an explicit assurance from Pakistan that it would not raise bilateral issues at the forum. This assurance paved the way for a consensus on Pakistan's admission to the ARF.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Natwar said India would continue to push ahead with steps to normalise its relations with Pakistan. "We continued the discussions we had in China on June 21. Kasuri and I will meet again in two weeks. I have also requested him to come to Delhi in August. We will carry the talks further."

Asked if he was optimistic about the peace process after today's talks, the External Affairs Minister said: "I

don't term it as optimistic or pessimistic. One has to be realistic." Natwar is scheduled to visit Islamabad later this month to attend the Saarc foreign ministers' conference.

Kasuri said Pakistan had the political will to carry forward the peace process. "I feel that given the political will even difficult issues can be resolved.... For us to have durable peace, we need to involve the people of Kashmir to resolve the issue." He termed his talks with Singh as "good". "Basically, you can't make a significant progress on issues, which have defied solutions for 57 years, in one single meeting, but the fact that we did develop a level of trust is helpful."

Natwar also met Indonesia's Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda, Myanmar's U. Win Aung and Australia's Alexander Downer. Later in the day, he is expected to meet the foreign ministers of China and Laos.

# India, Pakistan to sustain dialogue

By P. S. Suryanarayana

**SINGAPORE, JULY 2.** The External Affairs Minister, K. Natwar Singh, and the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, today agreed to "continue" the latest bilateral-dialogue process and even take it "forward."

This was indicated by top officials on both sides after the two Ministers met, for the second time in less than two weeks, on the sidelines of the 11th annual meeting of the Association of South East Asian Nations' Regional Forum (ARF) in Jakarta. Their first meeting, after the formation of the new Government in New Delhi, took place at Qingdao in China on June 21, on the margins of the Asia

Cooperation Dialogue.

Today's meeting followed Pakistan's admission to the ARF as its 24th participant-country. India welcomed Islamabad's entry.

The Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokesman, Masood Khan, later told *The Hindu* here over telephone from Jakarta that the two Ministers had indicated to each other that the current "momentum of dialogue process will be kept up." Taking note of the "successful" meeting that the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries had recently held, Mr. Kasuri and Mr. Singh looked forward to the possibility of a further diplomatic engagement at their own level ahead of a formal meeting between them in August, Mr.

Khan said. When contacted from here, a top Indian official summed up the mood of the exclusive meeting between Mr. Singh and Mr. Kasuri in similar terms.

In brief remarks to journalists in Jakarta, Mr. Singh reportedly said that "one has to be realistic" about the India-Pakistan dialogue process and that he would not look at it from the perspective of being "optimistic or pessimistic." At the same media stakeout, Mr. Kasuri underlined that Pakistan possessed the necessary "political will" to engage India in this diplomatic endeavour.

The Indonesian Foreign Minister, Hassan Wirajuda, later said, in his capacity as the current ARF Chairman, that the fo-

rum, while welcoming Pakistan as a new "participant," took note of Islamabad's "commitment to help achieve the ARF's key goals and to abide by and respect fully the decisions and statements already made by the ARF."

Pakistan's entry was facilitated by its undertaking not to raise purely bilateral issues as part of the ARF agenda, the ASEAN Secretary-General, Ong Keng Yong, told this correspondent prior to the latest development.

The Pakistani spokesman, in his comments over phone from Jakarta today, said Mr. Singh was the first leader to welcome Mr. Kasuri after the ARF Chairman formally invited Islamabad to join the forum.

## বরফ গলিবে কি

আশা ছিল। আশঙ্কাও ছিল।  
আশা: পারভেজ মুশারফের  
সহিত অটলবিহারী

বাজপেয়ীর নাটকীয় বোঝাপড়ার পর একই ধরনের নাটকীয়তায় ভারত-পাকিস্তান দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্ক আর একটি উল্লেখ্যের মুখে। আশঙ্কা: দিল্লিতে পালাবদল হয়তো বরফ-গলনের প্রক্রিয়াকে মধ্যপথে রুদ্ধ করিয়া আবার দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্কে তুষার যুগ ফিরাইয়া আনিবে। শেষ পর্যন্ত আশা বা আশঙ্কা, কোনওটিই পুরোপুরি বাস্তবায়িত হয় নাই। বিদেশ সচিব পর্যায়ে দুই দেশের বৈঠক আগেকার ধারাবাহিকতাই রক্ষা করিয়াছে। তাহা করিতে গিয়া বাজপেয়ীর সূচিত আপস-প্রক্রিয়াকে বানচাল করার চেষ্টা করা হয় নাই। বরং তাহার এবং মুশারফের যৌথ অঙ্গীকারে যে সব প্রশ্নে সহমত ছিল, তাহা পুনরুচ্চারিত হইয়াছে। পাকিস্তান তাহার মাটিকে ভারত-বিরোধী সন্ত্রাসবাদের সূতিকাগার হইতে দিবে না বলিয়া যে শপথ লইয়াছিল, তাহা বহাল থাকিয়াছে। ভারতও জম্মু-কাশ্মীর বিরোধের মীমাংসাকে দ্বিপাক্ষিক সমস্যার কেন্দ্রীয় বিষয় হিসাবে স্বীকৃতি দিয়াছে। ইহার মধ্যে কেহ কেহ দরকষাকষির টানাপোড়েনে নয়াদিল্লির কূটনৈতিক পশ্চাদপসরণের আভাস পাইয়াছেন। তবে ভাবের ঘরে চুরি করার আত্মপ্রত্যারণায় অটল থাকিতে না চাহিলে কাশ্মীর সমস্যাকে দ্বিপাক্ষিক বিরোধের ভরকেন্দ্র বলিয়া মানিয়া লইতে অসুবিধা হওয়ার কথা নয়। একই সঙ্গে পরস্পরের আস্থা অর্জনের জন্য সড়ক, রেল, জল ও আকাশ পথে সংযোগবৃদ্ধির প্রস্তাবগুলি লইয়া স্পষ্ট সিদ্ধান্তের অভিমুখেও দুই দেশই কতকটা অগ্রসর হইয়াছে। করাচি ও মুম্বইয়ে পূর্ণ শক্তির বাণিজ্য দূতাবাস চালু করার বিষয়টিও এক প্রকার পাকা। ইসলামাবাদকে জিমা-হাউস ফিরাইয়া দিতে নয়াদিল্লি অবশ্য এখনও অসম্মত।

বিরোধী দল বিজেপি সচিব পর্যায়ের এই বৈঠকের সিদ্ধান্তগুলির মধ্যে নূতন সরকারের পরাজয়বাদী মানসিকতার প্রতিফলন খুঁজিয়া পাইয়াছে। বিশেষত ইসলামাবাদের পারমাণবিক শক্তি অর্জনের মধ্যে দক্ষিণ এশিয়ায় পারমাণবিক ভারসাম্য অর্জিত হইয়াছে— ভারতের এই স্বীকৃতি বিজেপি নেতৃত্বকে বিচলিত করিয়াছে। ইহার ফলে পাকিস্তানকে পরমাণু শক্তিদর করিতে চিন ও উত্তর কোরিয়ার ভূমিকা লইয়াও অতঃপর ভারত প্রতিবাদমুখর হইতে পারিবে না। কেননা তখন চিন বলিবে, ভারত নিজেই তো পাকিস্তানের পরমাণু অস্ত্রসজ্জাকে দক্ষিণ এশিয়া রণনৈতিক পরমাণু ভারসাম্যের অনুকূল ঘটনা

রূপে একপ্রকার স্বাগতই জানাইয়াছে।  
সিমলা চুক্তির উল্লেখও বিজেপি নেতৃত্বের কাছে আপত্তিকর। কিন্তু বিজেপি বা অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী ক্ষমতাসীন হওয়ার আগেও ভারত-পাক সম্পর্ক লইয়া জটিলতা ছিল, তাহার মীমাংসায় বিভিন্ন চুক্তি বা বোঝাপড়াও ছিল। বাজপেয়ী সরকারের আপস-উদ্যোগ কোনও স্বয়ম্ভূ উদ্যোগ নয়, পূর্ববর্তী উদ্যোগগুলির ধারাবাহিকতা মাত্র। এবং বাজপেয়ী সরকারের আমলেও দীর্ঘ সময় ধরিয়া দুই দেশের সেনার যুদ্ধ করিতে পরস্পরের মুখোমুখি দাঁড়াইয়া ছিল, ইহা আদৌ নিপাট সমঝোতার যুগ ছিল না। বিরোধী পক্ষ হিসাবে শাসক গোষ্ঠীর প্রতিটি কাজে: খুঁত ধরায় অস্বাভাবিকতা নাই। কিন্তু তাহা করিতে গিয়া 'শত্রু-রাষ্ট্রের বিরুদ্ধে উগ্র জাতাত্তিমান উস্কাইবার চেষ্টা করিলে মিত্রতার ভাবনায় উদ্দীপ্ত সমঝোতায় বাজপেয়ীর নমনীয়তার সাফল্যকেই নাকচ করা হয়।

কূটনীতি কোনও স্থূল বিষয় নয়। তাহার অনেক সূক্ষ্ম মাত্রা ও স্তর থাকে। এ জন্যই দেশের নবনিযুক্ত বিদেশ মন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্ক লইয়া মুখ খুলিলেই তাহার প্রগলভতায় দুই দেশের কূটনীতিকরা প্রমাদ গনিতেন। তাহার ধাতস্থ হইতে কিছুটা সময় লাগিয়াছে। ওদিকে পাকিস্তানের প্রেসিডেন্ট প্রচণ্ড চাপের মুখে। তাহার প্রধানমন্ত্রী ইস্তফা দিয়াছেন, মোল্লাতন্ত্র তাহার রক্ত চাহিতেছে এবং জেহাদি জঙ্গি সংগঠনগুলিও নয়াদিল্লির কাছে আত্মসমর্পণ না করার জন্য চাপ দিতেছে। এই অবস্থায় ভারতের এমন কিছু বলা বা করা উচিত নয় যাহাতে মুশারফের পক্ষে নমনীয় হওয়া কঠিন হওয়া ওঠে। মুশারফ যদি জেহাদি সন্ত্রাস বন্ধ করিতে আন্তরিক আগ্রহী হন (মার্কিন রণনীতির অংশীদার হিসাবে না হইয়া তাহার উপায়ও নাই), তবে সে কাজে তাহার হাত শক্ত করা কেবল আমেরিকার কর্তব্য নয়, জেহাদি সন্ত্রাস কবলিত ভারতেরও কৃত্য। তাই পাক বিদেশ সচিব যদি সর্বদলীয় ছরিয়ত সম্মেলনের নেতাদের আশু পাকিস্তান সফর সুনিশ্চিত করেন বা কাশ্মীরিদের বাদ দিয়া কাশ্মীর সমস্যার মীমাংসা অসম্ভব বলিয়া পাকিস্তানের মনে হয়, তবে তাহা লইয়া ভারতের গৌঁসা করা অনুচিত। বাস্তবিকই কাশ্মীর সমস্যা কাশ্মীরিদের মতামত বা অভিপ্রায় নির্বিশেষে মীমাংসার চেষ্টার মধ্যেও তো এক ধরনের তঞ্চকতা আছে। ভারত বরং প্রসঙ্গত অধিকৃত বা আজাদ কাশ্মীরের নির্বাচিত জনপ্রতিনিধিদেরও এই দ্বিপাক্ষিক আপস-প্রক্রিয়ায় शामिल করার দাবি জানাইতে পারে। তাহা এক দিকে গণতন্ত্রের সঙ্গে মানানসই, অন্য দিকে বুদ্ধিমান কূটনীতি।

INDIA-PAKISTAN TALKS/ 'PETTY POLITICAL MINDSET'

## Lahore Declaration ignored, says Yashwant Sinha

By Neena Vyas

NEW DELHI, JUNE 29. The former External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, today charged the new Government with displaying a "petty political mindset" by ignoring the significant Lahore Declaration in the India-Pakistan joint statement issued yesterday at the end of the Secretary-level talks between the two countries.

The matter was one of the issues discussed today at a meeting called at his residence by the Bharatiya Janata Party president, Venkaiah Naidu, which was attended, among others, by the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Leader of Opposition, L.K. Advani, the former Finance Minister, Jaswant Singh, and Mr. Sinha.

Briefing reporters later, Mr. Sinha said the BJP had noted with satisfaction that the Secretary-level talks had taken place in accordance with the decision taken by the Vajpayee Government in February. The party was "happy" that there was an agreement on a time-frame for discussing other issues and taking the dialogue forward.

However, he expressed the

party's concern that the Lahore Declaration had been completely ignored; the January 6, 2004, Islamabad joint statement was mentioned only in passing although there, for the first time, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, had explicitly undertaken not to allow the Pakistani soil to be used for terrorist activity against India; the new statement had "diluted the stand on terrorism"; and finally, the Charter of the United Nations and the Shimla Agreement were mentioned in one breath in one sentence.

The party's view was that the Government should not ignore what had happened since the Shimla Agreement. The Lahore document and then the January 6 document were important as they set the parameters for the composite dialogue taking place now.

Mr. Sinha said that the Government had "encouraged" the Hurriyat leaders to meet the Pakistani delegates. "Later, the Pakistan Foreign Secretary spoke as if his country was representing Jammu and Kashmir, saying that what will satisfy Pakistan will satisfy the Kashmiris."

His charge was that the mention of the United Nations

Charter could open a door for Pakistan to bring in the old U.N. resolutions on Kashmir into the bilateral dialogue. While Mr. Sinha admitted that the Vajpayee Government was also unable to prevent the Hurriyat leaders meeting Gen. Musharraf when he was here for the Agra Summit, he added: "If we made some mistakes when in office, it need not happen again."

To a question, Mr. Sinha said the BJP was "not making a mountain of a molehill," and that it had not decided to play a negative role on the issue of India-Pakistan relations. "We started the process; we would like to see it move forward in a positive manner," he said and denied that the Vajpayee Government had made a flip-flop on the India-Pakistan dialogue issue. "There were certain events to which we responded," he said, when asked of Mr. Vajpayee's call for a fight to the finish (*aar paar ki ladayi*) and then his offer of a "hand of friendship" without any change in the situation on the ground. "The general direction of the Vajpayee Government's policy towards Pakistan was that we wanted friendship between the two neighbours," Mr. Sinha said.

THE HINDU

US ACTION COMES TWO DAYS BEFORE SCHEDULE

# Iraq regains sovereignty

Associated Press

BAGHDAD, June 28. — The US-led coalition transferred sovereignty to an interim Iraqi government two days earlier today in a surprise move that apparently caught insurgents off guard, averting a feared campaign of attacks to sabotage the highly symbolic step toward self-rule.

Legal documents transferring sovereignty were handed over by US Governor Mr L Paul Bremer to Chief Justice Mr Midhat al-Mahmood in a small ceremony attended by about a dozen Iraqi and coalition officials in the heavily guarded Green Zone. Mr Bremer took charge in Iraq about a year ago.

"This is a historical day ... a day that all Iraqis have been looking forward to," Iraqi President Mr Ghazi Al-Yawer said. "This is a day we are going to take our country back into the international forum." Two hours after the ceremony, Mr Bremer left Iraq on a US Air Force C-130 plane, said Mr Robert Tappan, an official of the former coalition occupation authority. Mr Bremer was accompanied by coalition spokesman Mr Dan Senor and close members of his staff. Mr Bremer's destination was not given but an aide said he was "going home."

The interim government was sworn in six hours after the handover ceremony, which Western governments largely hailed as a necessary next step. The Arab world voiced cautious optimism and asked the US military to leave quickly.

Interim Prime Minister Mr Iyad Allawi delivered a sweeping speech sketching out some of his goals for the country, urging

people not to be afraid of the "outlaws" fighting against "Islam and Muslims," and assuring them that "God is with us."

"I warn the forces of terror once again," he said "We will not forget who stood with us and against us in this crisis."

Members of Mr Allawi's Cabinet each stepped forward to place their right hand on the *Quran* and pledged to accept their new duties with sincerity and impartiality. Behind them, a bank of Iraqi flags lined the podium.

"Before us is a challenge and a burden, and we ask God almighty to give us the patience and guide us to take this country whose people deserve all goodness," Mr al-Yawer said after taking his oath.

The Nato alliance quickly said it would begin training the Iraqi military, which faces a daunting task in putting down the growing insurgency threatening the country. Mr Bush was briefed yesterday that the Allawi government was ready to take power early.

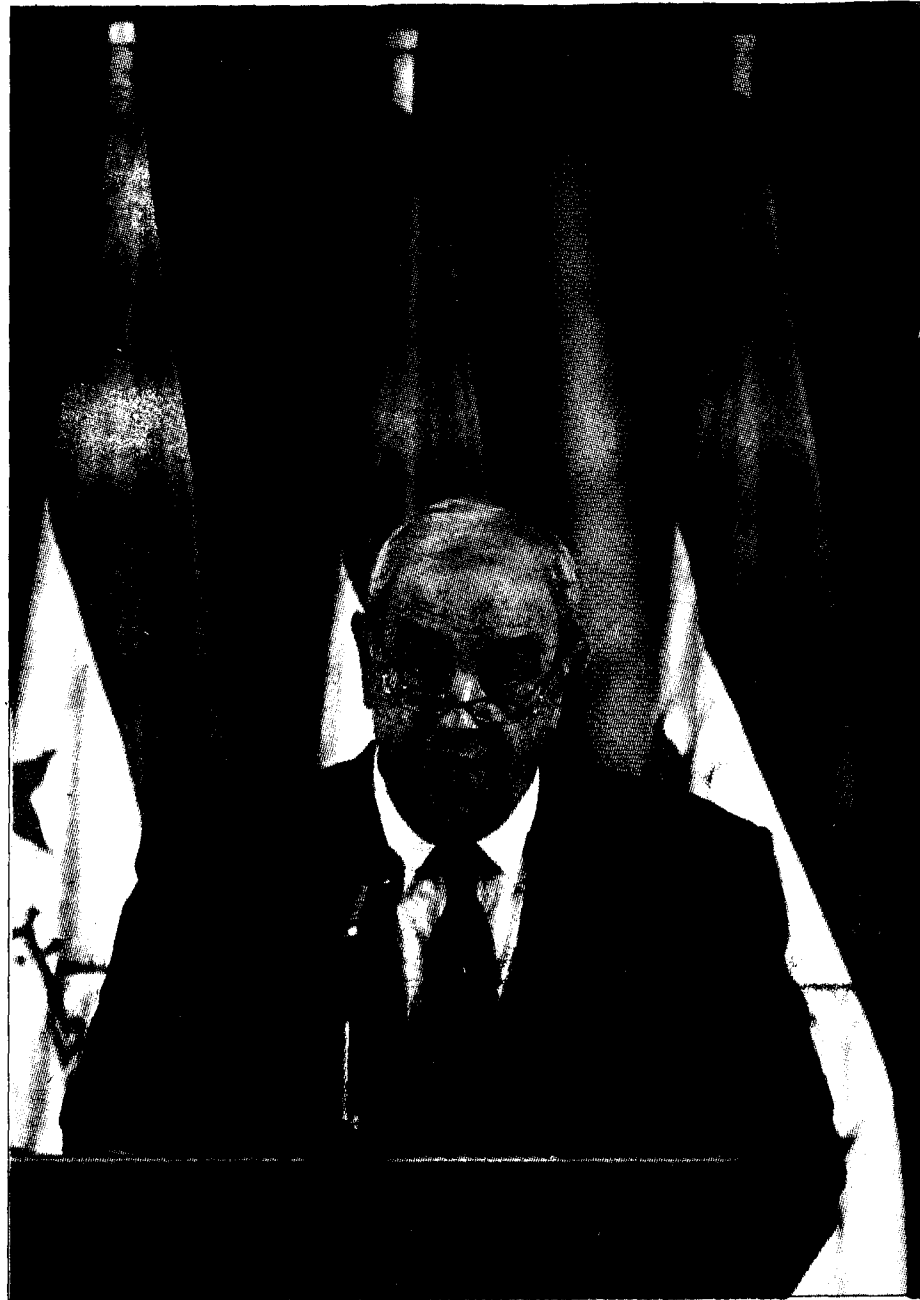
The transfer took place as Mr Bush met Mr Blair, French President Mr Jacques Chirac, German Chancellor Mr Gerhard Schroeder and other world leaders. The early transfer had been under discussion between Mr Allawi and US officials for at least a week, a senior administration official said.

Mr Bremer's last moments in Iraq were spent in a meeting with Lt.-Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, the top American commander in the country. Although the interim government will have full sovereignty, it will operate under major restrictions, some of them imposed at the urging of the influential Shi'ite clergy.

More reports, photographs on page 2



US administrator in Iraq Mr Paul Bremer signs the document on transfer of power. — AFP



MILESTONE ON A BLOODY ROAD: Iraq's Interim Prime Minister Mr Iyad Allawi delivers a speech during the swearing-in of the sovereign government in Baghdad on Monday. — AFP

# Pakistan hints at involving Kashmiris

Statesman News Service

## PM writes to Musharraf

NEW DELHI, June 28. — Despite both India and Pakistan expressing "satisfaction" with the foreign secretary-level talks that ended today, it is clear that the Kashmir issue is and will be a stumbling block on the road to durable peace, with Islamabad clearly attempting to speak for the people living in J&K.

Most Indians won't accept two statements made by Pakistan's foreign affairs spokesman Mr Masood Khan. "What will satisfy Pakistan will ultimately satisfy Kashmiris," he said. He went on to add that three people were out there — Indians, Pakistanis and Kashmiris. Since Kashmir is the issue, it would be "advisable and sagacious" to consult and involve Kashmiris in the peace process.

Mr Khan also said there were no terror camps in Pakistan, a point India has been disputing for long. The talk of camps in Pakistan and PoK, he said, was part of a "disinformation" campaign. MEA spokesman Mr Navtej Sarna said that during the meetings between Mr Shashank and Mr Riaz Khokhar, India had "underscored that terrorism was not good for India and Pakistan". The joint statement said: "The foreign secretaries reiterated the hope that the dialogue will lead to peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues, including J&K, to the satisfaction of both sides." The statement made an unexpected reference to the UN Charter: both sides reiterated their commitment to its principles and purposes. This was clubbed with an affirmation that both sides would implement the Simla Agreement.

The foreign secretaries will meet in August to review the progress achieved in the composite dialogue and work for a meeting of the foreign ministers.

India will be allowed to have a consul-general in Karachi and Pakistan in Mumbai. Indian fishermen held by Pakistan will be released immediately and vice-versa. Asked if troops would be reduced in PoK and J&K, Mr Masood Khan said: "We haven't gone that far."

Photograph, another report on page 4

# Walk the Talk

11-14  
Indo-Pak dialogue ends on  
a promising note 23/6

In the recent years, the good old bus seems to have emerged as the metaphor for peace between India and Pakistan. In 1999, the then prime minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, rode a bus to Lahore to ink a historic agreement with Pakistan premier Nawaz Sharif. The bus was shunted to the shed when war broke out on the Kargil heights. With the thaw on the Indo-Pak front, the Delhi-Lahore bus has returned. Will a bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad in PoK usher in peace in the Valley? The talks between the two foreign secretaries in New Delhi ended on Monday sans any dramatic pronouncement. The bus proposal did figure in the talks, but, it seems, broke down over the issue of passengers' passports. The positive thing is Pakistan too, in principle, has agreed to the Kashmir-to-Kashmir bus. A Pakistan foreign office spokesperson has been quoted as saying a technical level group would soon meet to work out the modalities of the bus service. The just-concluded talks, held at this level after six years, gave paramount importance to enhancing people-to-people contact. Be it restoring staff strength at the high commissions and reopening consulates in Karachi and Mumbai or initiating steps for the early release of civilian prisoners, such measures are always welcome.

New Delhi should now engage Kashmiri groups to walk the talk of peace. The government has made it clear that it is ready for a dialogue with anyone who is willing to have one. It is time to transcend fixed gazes. Let the numerous Kashmiri groups — including those in Pakistan — talk among themselves to formulate their demands. The Mirwaiz, when he visits Pakistan next week as part of a 'fact-finding mission' to probe his uncle's killing, could make a beginning. New Delhi should enable interested parties to travel across the border. With an elected government in place in Srinagar, the separatists should realise that it is futile to argue that they alone represent Kashmiri opinion. The future of Indo-Pak talks, as always, will depend on the flow from the terror tap. Current goodwill withstanding, New Delhi needs to insist that Islamabad continues its crackdown on militants. Recent weeks have witnessed an increase in violence in the Valley. The killings in Surankote on the eve of Riaz Khokhar's arrival was a reminder that all is not well in the border districts of J&K. The bonhomie seen in New Delhi could disappear before the two foreign secretaries meet next in August if more blood is shed in the Valley.

# India, Pakistan to find a 'final' solution to J&K

By Amit Baruah

**NEW DELHI, JUNE 28.** India and Pakistan said today that the Foreign Secretaries, Shashank and Riaz Khokhar, had held a "detailed exchange" of views on Jammu and Kashmir and agreed to continue their "sustained and serious" dialogue to find a peaceful, negotiated and "final" settlement of the issue.

In a departure from the past, New Delhi submitted to Islamabad a set of Kashmir-specific proposals on transport links, trade, cultural cooperation, tourism, environment and people-to-people contacts.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- India, Pakistan agree to open consulates in Karachi, Mumbai.
- To restore with immediate effect the strength of the High Commissions to 110 each.
- To pre-notify the flight-testing of missiles.
- All of each other's fishermen to be released; early release of all civilian prisoners to be worked out.

A joint statement issued after two days of talks said the strength of the High Commissions would be "immediately restored" to 110 and that the two sides had agreed, in principle, to re-establish the consulates in Karachi and Mumbai, the modalities for which would be worked out by the two Governments.

"All apprehended fishermen in each other's custody would be immediately released and a mechanism put in place for the return of unintentionally transgressing fishermen and their boats from the high seas without apprehending them. Steps would be initiated for early release of civilian prisoners," it said.

"The two sides proposed a comprehensive framework for conventional CBMs [confidence-building measures] aimed at initiating and enhancing communication, coordination and interaction. These would be discussed further." According to the statement, the Foreign Secretaries reiterated their commitment to the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter and their "determination to implement" the

Shimla Agreement in letter and in spirit — the language lifted from the February 1999 Lahore Declaration.

"Recalling the reassurance contained in the joint press statement of January 6, 2004, they exchanged views on carrying the process forward in an atmosphere free from terrorism and violence," the statement noted. "The Foreign Secretaries reiterated the hope that the dialogue will lead to peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, to the satisfaction of both sides."

The Foreign Secretaries approved the measures recommended by the expert-level meeting that took place on June 19-20 to discuss nuclear confidence-building measures. They agreed to conclude an agreement on pre-notification of flight-testing of missiles and asked the experts to work towards this goal.

The remaining six issues of the composite dialogue on Siachen, Wullar barrage/Tulbul navigation project, Sir Creek, terrorism and drug trafficking, economic and commercial cooperation as well as promotion of friendly exchanges would take place between the third week of July and the first half of August.

Mr. Khokhar and select members of his delegation also called on the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, the External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, and the National Security Adviser, J.N. Dixit, before returning home.

Invitations were extended by Mr. Khokhar to the President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the Prime Minister, and the Congress president, Sonia Gandhi, to visit Pakistan, the statement added.

Officials said that while India raised the issue of terrorism and infiltration in Jammu and Kashmir, the Pakistani side called for an end to "human rights violations" and reduction of the troops in the State.

When presented with India's concerns on cross-border terrorism, the Pakistani side demanded evidence and pointed out that Islamabad was tackling the problem of terrorism head on as shown by the launch of military operations in the North-West Frontier Province.

Text of statement: Page 12

# Peace by piece W

India and Pakistan at last sort out the agenda  
for durable cooperation 25/6

**T**HE foreign secretary talks in New Delhi this weekend have added substance and depth to India-Pakistan relations. Both countries demonstrated great maturity and the desire to reshape bilateral ties by negotiating a series of agreements. Both governments would have reasons to feel satisfied with the progress achieved. For Pakistan, the Kashmir issue has been central, and India has agreed to a separate working group at the foreign secretary level for discussions. India, for its part, had sought to bring the problem of terrorism and the broader issue of peace and security into the fold of bilateral dialogue. What may surprise many is the prominence given to the Shimla agreement, insisted upon by External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh soon after assuming office, in the joint statement. India and Pakistan have iterated their "determination to implement the Shimla agreement in letter and spirit and hope that the dialogue would lead to a peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, to the satisfaction of both sides."

Given the nature of bilateral relations, especially since 1989, this qualifies as a major breakthrough. That it comes on the fiftieth anniversary of the Panchsheel, which emphasises the five principles of peaceful co-existence, is fortuitous. But given the complexities of the issues in-

involved, normalisation of relations between the two countries leading hopefully to permanent peace is still going to be a difficult process, though not necessarily an impossible task. The two foreign secretaries are to meet in late August to review the progress of the composite dialogue and to prepare for the meeting between the Indian and Pakistani foreign ministers. A number of outstanding issues on the agenda are ripe for closure to the satisfaction of both sides.

But new opportunities are also present. Both sides should lengthen their gaze and focus on how to build a cooperative and enduring relationship. This of necessity would have to go beyond dispute settlement to creating interdependence and would need to be future-oriented rather than being bogged down in the past. Only such an approach can eradicate mistrust over time, making relations less vulnerable to emotional reactions and domestic politics. Pakistan's economy has shown a remarkable turnaround during the past two years. The move to have a professional economist as prime minister, as in India, also indicates a resolve to give economic and social development high priority. This promises greater opportunities for peace and prosperity. We need to ensure that both sides make haste slowly without oscillating between undue euphoria and cynicism.



# We have to move forward: India

By Our Diplomatic Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, JUNE 28.** "I do not want to project an idea of what is ours or theirs," the External Affairs Ministry spokesman, Navtej Sarna, said when asked what was New Delhi's understanding of the term "final" settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir issue that finds mention in the joint statement issued by India and Pakistan today.

"The idea is that both the countries are now engaged in a process, in a composite dialogue, in which there are several subjects and Jammu and Kashmir is one of them and both countries are committed to resolving all these issues bilaterally and peacefully," he said.

Taking questions after reading out the joint statement, Mr. Sarna said that terrorism was discussed in today's meeting, as it was part of earlier statements and discussions. "It was understood that terrorism is not good for the region, it is not good for India, it is not good for Pakistan and we must work together to remove this scourge from our midst..."

Asked if the issue of "terrorist infrastructure" in Pakistan was specifically raised, he said that it was a long discussion. "I am not going to go into the diplomatic give and take of the discussions. I have given you a broad idea of what was discussed. Let me retain the confidentiality of diplomatic exchanges."

On the problems that confronted the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service, Mr. Sarna clarified that the proposal was still on the table. "This was not a technical level meeting so we did not go into the technicalities of each of the proposals. Those proposals on which there was

immediate agreement, the Foreign Secretaries have agreed to, the rest of the proposals are on the table."

"We hope this process will move forward. There will be technical level meetings not only on this [the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus] but other subjects that may require them, and those will be the correct fora for working out these details." Is India concerned with the Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Riaz Khokhar's meetings with several Kashmiri separatists? "Have you seen any expression of con-

cern" the spokesman asked. On the "plans" of some Kashmir separatists to visit Pakistan in the near future and New Delhi's views on the issue, Mr. Sarna said, "the Government of India is a very wide body and I am not the spokesman for the entire Government of India."

Asked how much flexibility the two sides had shown on Kashmir, the spokesman said the mood was constructive. "The exchanges have been extensive and so we have to move forward. This is the beginning of a process."

The Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman, Masood Khan, claimed that there was no glitch in starting the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service.

The issue of travel documents, he said, would be taken up at the technical level talks. India and Pakistan had moved in the right direction both on the issues of peace and security as well as Jammu and Kashmir.

Asked if there was any dead-line for addressing the Kashmir issue, Mr. Khan said this was a very complex issue and the two

sides had not been able to solve it for the last 50 years.

The "satisfaction of one party does not mean a solution. You have to satisfy all the parties. That spirit and understanding is emerging very rapidly ... you have to involve all the parties to satisfy their concerns," he said.

Denying that there were any terrorist training camps in Pakistan, Mr. Khan said in response to a question on the "status" of the Line of Control and the International Border.

## Talks held in cordial atmosphere

**NEW DELHI, JUNE 28.** This is the text of the joint statement issued today by India and Pakistan at the conclusion of the two-day Foreign Secretary-level talks:

The Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan met in New Delhi on 27-28 June 2004 to resume the composite dialogue. They discussed 'Peace and Security including CBMs' and 'Jammu and Kashmir'. The talks were held in a cordial and constructive atmosphere, and with the objective of taking the process forward.

They reiterated their commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, and their determination to implement the Shimla Agreement in letter and spirit.

Both the sides expressed satisfaction over the ongoing process of dialogue and confidence building between the two countries. They approved the measures recommended by the expert level meeting on Nuclear CBMs in New Delhi on 19-20 June 2004. They agreed to conclude an agreement on pre-notification of flight testing of missiles, and entrusted the experts to work towards finalising the draft agreement. Both sides reaffirmed the elements in the joint statement of 20th June on the need to promote a stable environment of peace and security, recognising the

nuclear capabilities of each other constituting a factor for stability, working towards strategic stability, and the call for regular working level meetings to be held among all the nuclear powers to discuss issues of common concern. The two sides proposed a comprehensive framework for conventional CBMs aimed at initiating and enhancing communication, coordination and interaction. These would be discussed further.

Recalling the reassurance contained in the Joint Press Statement of January 6, 2004, they exchanged views on carrying the process forward in an atmosphere free from terrorism and violence.

The Foreign Secretaries reiterated the hope that the dialogue will lead to peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, to the satisfaction of both sides. They held detailed exchange of views on Jammu & Kashmir and agreed to continue the sustained and serious dialogue to find a peaceful negotiated final settlement.

It was agreed that the strengths of the respective High Commissions would be restored immediately to the original level of 110; it was also agreed in principle to

re-establish India's Consulate General in Karachi and Pakistan's Consulate General in Mumbai. Modalities would be worked out by the two Governments. All apprehended fishermen in each other's custody would be immediately released and a mechanism put in place for the return of unintentionally transgressing fishermen and their boats from the high seas without apprehending them. Steps would be initiated for early release of civilian prisoners.

The Foreign Secretaries also agreed that the meetings of the remaining six subjects of the composite dialogue on Siachen, Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation Project, Sir Creek, terrorism and drug trafficking, economic and commercial cooperation, and promotion of friendly exchanges in various fields, would take place between the third week of July and the first half of August 2004.

The Foreign Secretary of Pakistan conveyed invitations from the President of Pakistan to the President and Prime Minister of India, and to Smt. Sonia Gandhi. The Foreign Secretaries will meet again in the third week of August to review progress achieved in the composite dialogue and prepare for the meeting of the Foreign Ministers, which will immediately follow.

# কাশ্মীর-কথা আজ, সুর চড়া ভারত-পাকিস্তানের

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২৭ জুন: পাক প্রধানমন্ত্রীর ইস্তফার ছায়া পড়ল না ৬ বছর পরে ভারত-পাক বিদেশ সচিব বৈঠকের প্রথম দিনে। বরং কাশ্মীরে ১১জন মেম্বারালককে হত্যার পরে ভারত পাকিস্তানের উপরে সন্ত্রাস বন্ধে আরও চাপ সৃষ্টি করবে। কাল এই মঞ্চে কাশ্মীর নিয়ে চিরাচরিত টানাপোড়েন সামনে আসবে। তার আগে, আজ বিশ্বাসবর্ধক ব্যবস্থার মতো নরম বিষয়গুলি নিয়ে আলোচনা সারা হল। বৈঠকের শেষে কাল যৌথ বিবৃতি দেওয়া হতে পারে। পরে কালই দেশে ফিরে যাবেন পাক বিদেশ সচিব রিয়াজ খোঙ্কর। বিদেশ মন্ত্রক বলেছে, কাশ্মীর সমস্যা সমাধানে দিল্লি পাকিস্তানের কাছে আগে হিংসা বন্ধের স্পষ্ট ব্যবস্থা দেখতে চায়। পাকিস্তান বলে চলেছে তারাই সন্ত্রাসের শিকার। পাক বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের মুখপাত্র মাসুদ খান আজও বলেছেন, কাশ্মীরিরা এই বিবাদের অন্যতম প্রধান পক্ষ। কাশ্মীর সমস্যা মেটাতে হলে রাজ্যের মানুষের ভাবাবেগ মাথায় রাখতে হবে। কাশ্মীর নিয়ে কালকের আলোচনা শুরুর আগে আজ দু'দেশের মধ্যে বিশ্বাসবর্ধক পদক্ষেপগুলি নিয়ে আলোচনা হয়েছে। এর মধ্যে রয়েছে, দু'দেশের দূতাবাসের কর্মী সংখ্যা বৃদ্ধি করা ও মুম্বইতে ভারত ও পাক কনসুলেট খোলার ব্যাপারেও কথা এগিয়েছে। সপ্তাহ খানেক আগে দিল্লিতে পরমাণু ক্ষেত্রে যে সমঝোতা হয়েছিল, আজ বিদেশ সচিবেরা তা নিয়েও আলোচনা করেন। বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের মুখপাত্র নভতেজ সারনা বলেছেন, অনেকগুলি বিশ্বাসবর্ধক ব্যবস্থা নিয়ে কথা চলছে, তার মধ্যে পরমাণু ক্ষেত্রের বিষয়গুলিও রয়েছে। দু'দেশের মধ্যে আরও ভাল যোগাযোগ এবং মানবিক প্রয়োজনগুলি মেটানোর প্রক্ষেপে ইতিবাচক কথা হচ্ছে। আজকের অন্যতম আলোচ্য ছিল দুই দেশের মধ্যে বাস ও রেল যোগাযোগ বাড়ানো। শ্রীনগর ও মুজফফরাবাদ বাস চলাচল শুরু করতে আগ্রহী দুই পক্ষই। পাকিস্তানের খোঙ্করাপাড় ও রাজস্থানের মুনাবাওয়ার মধ্যে বাস ও রেল যোগাযোগ চালুর জন্য টেকনিক্যাল স্তরের কথাবার্তা দ্রুত যাতে আরম্ভ করা যায়, তা নিয়েও কথা হয়েছে। বিদেশ মন্ত্রক সূত্রের খবর, জম্মু ও কাশ্মীর ভাগলিগড় জলবিদ্যুৎ প্রকল্প নিয়েও কথা হয়েছে। এই প্রকল্পের ব্যাপারে আগে আপত্তি জানিয়েছিল পাকিস্তান। তুলবুল 'নেভিগেশন প্রকল্প' থেকে শুরু করে সিয়াচেন পর্যন্ত বিভিন্ন বিষয় এর পর কবে কী ভাবে আলোচিত হবে, বিদেশ সচিবেরা তার সময়-সারণিও তৈরি করবেন।

বিদেশ মন্ত্রক সূত্রে বুনিয়াদে দেওয়া হয়েছে, পাক প্রধানমন্ত্রীর পদত্যাগ এই বৈঠকে ছায়া ফেলবে না। ভারত বহু দিন বলে আসছে, সন্ত্রাস বন্ধ না হলে কাশ্মীর সমস্যার সঠিক সমাধান অসম্ভব। পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে আলোচনা চালিয়েও সন্ত্রাসের প্রক্ষে ভারত যে কঠোর অবস্থান নেবে তা স্পষ্ট করতে কাশ্মীর যাচ্ছেন প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়। পাক মুখপাত্র অবশ্য বলেছেন, সন্ত্রাসবাদ শুধু ভারত বা পাকিস্তানে নয়, সারা পৃথিবীতে রয়েছে। কাশ্মীরিদের আলোচনায় টানার চেষ্টাও চালাচ্ছে ইসলামাবাদ। আজ খোঙ্কর হরিয়তের বিক্ষুব্ধ নেতা সাবির শাহের সঙ্গে দেখা করেন। মৌলানা আনসারি-সহ হরিয়তের অন্য নেতাদের সঙ্গেও পাক নেতৃত্বের সাক্ষাৎ হচ্ছে। হরিয়তের বিভাজন মেটাতে চাইছে পাকিস্তান। খোঙ্কর কাল মনমোহনের সঙ্গে দেখা করবেন।

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

ISLAMABAD HARPS ON KASHMIRI WISHES

# Talks firm up trust moves

SNS and Agencies

<sup>26/6</sup>  
**Aziz vows to make Pak an Asian tiger**

NEW DELHI, June 27. — Despite major progress on confidence-building measures, the Kashmir problem expectedly remained an area of dissonance as India and Pakistan concluded the first round of discussions today.

Some forward movement was apparent, especially in the nuclear weapons area, but Pakistan asserted that there has to be a "viable and just solution" to the Kashmir issue, keeping in mind the "aspirations of Kashmiris". Pakistani foreign office spokesman Mr Masood Khan said: "Kashmiris are the principal party to the dispute. A viable and just solution has to be based on aspirations of Kashmiri people." Tomorrow's discussions will include J&K. Pakistan foreign secretary Mr Riaz Khokhar today met Hurriyat leaders Mr Mirwaiz Omar Farooq and Mr Shabir Shah. Pakistan defended the meeting, saying it was a tradition to do so.

Both sides said there was place for optimism after talks between Mr Shashank and Mr Khokhar. Dialogue at this level is being held after six years.

Foreign ministry spokesman Mr Navtej Sarna said "the discussions focussed on peace and security, including CBMs." The result could be evident tomorrow as the staff strengths of the missions in Islamabad and here could go up to 110. Decisions on bus links between the neighbours are also likely to be taken tomorrow. There may as well be an agreement on, among others, missing defence personnel.

Mr Khan said the ceasefire along LoC, in Siachen and along the border was holding since 25 November. Now, political will and responsible stewardship are necessary to resolve contentious issues. A joint statement could be issued tomorrow. Asked about terrorism, he said: "Under peace and security all issues were



ISLAMABAD, June 27. — Former Citibank executive Mr Shaukat Aziz, who will take over as Pakistan's next Prime Minister in about two months, vowed today to make the country an Asian tiger. "Pakistan is facing many challenges today.

It's my firm belief that this country has potential to rise," he told reporters after Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Jamali resigned yesterday. "If we resolve our problem through conciliation and consensus, there's no power which can stop Pakistan from achieving its potential..." — PTI

discussed and no issue was excluded." Taking a tough stand on Kashmir, he said Pakistan had not gone back on the 6 January joint statement, issued after talks between Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and Gen. Pervez Musharraf. "Pakistan's position is very well known. We also know what is India's position."

Mr Sarna told reporters several CBMs were ready. But when asked whether any understanding had been arrived at, he said: "Let me not characterise anything in the middle of the meeting." Were there any hiccups? "Talks were friendly, very positive and held in a constructive atmosphere."

Mr Khokhar will call on the Prime Minister, foreign minister and National Security Adviser Mr JN Dixit tomorrow.

Following the political developments in Islamabad, Mr Khokhar is curtailing his visit and returning home by tomorrow evening. He was earlier scheduled to leave on Tuesday.

Another report on page 4

# India, Pakistan discuss peace and security

● Talks on Kashmir, joint statement today

By Amit Baruah

**NEW DELHI, JUNE 27.** The Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan, Shashank and Riaz Khokhar, discussed a wide range of subjects, including terrorism and the reduction of troop levels, under the broad rubric of peace and security in three-and-a-half hours of talks at Hyderabad House here today.

A joint statement on a number of points of agreement such as raising the staff strength of High Commissions, reopening of consulates and a calendar to discuss other issues such as Siachen, Sir Creek, economic cooperation and cultural exchanges is expected after the Foreign Secretaries talk on Jammu and Kashmir tomorrow.

It is the first time in recent history that the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries have met with guns silent along the Line of Control (LoC).

The ceasefire, agreed to between the two countries on November 26 last year, continues to hold.

Though the spokesmen of the External Affairs Ministry and the Pakistani Foreign Office, Navtej Sarna and Masood Khan, briefed presspersons separately, the opening statements made by both of them were identical — indicating that both sides were in broad agreement on how to approach the talks.

Both spokesmen said the Foreign Secretaries "met today to commence the composite dialogue. They discussed the subject of peace and security, including confidence-building measures. Ideas and proposals were exchanged to take the process further. Discussions were held in a positive and constructive atmosphere. Talks tomorrow will be on Jammu and Kashmir."

## Bus service discussed

A proposal to hold technical talks on commencing the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service was also discussed. "There was a general exchange of views. Decisions, if any, will be announced tomorrow," Mr. Khan said at his briefing.

Asked whether Pakistan had raised the issue of the handing over of Jinnah House in Mumbai to which Islamabad had previously linked the reopening



**BONHOMIE ALL AROUND:** Foreign Secretary Shashank with his Pakistani counterpart Riaz Khokhar at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Sunday. — Photo: V. Sudershan

of consulates, he said: "Our known positions were reiterated. The subject was discussed. Decisions will be taken and you will come to know about them tomorrow."

## 'No going back on statement on Kashmir'

In response to repeated questions on "what" was the Pakistani position on Kashmir, the spokesman said the issue should be resolved in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people. Pressed further, he said Pakistan was not going back on the January 6 press statement that referred to Jammu and Kashmir as one of the bilateral issues between the two countries.

"Kashmiris are a principal party to the dispute and a viable, just solution has to be based on the aspirations of the Kashmiri people," Mr. Khan stated, adding that Pakistan wanted the issue discussed at the level of the Foreign Minis-

ters. Asked whether the conclusions of experts on nuclear CBMs were discussed by the Foreign Secretaries, Mr. Sarna said: "Both sides were appreciative of the work done by the experts on the nuclear CBMs and by the results that have been achieved. As regards the draft agreement [on prior notification of missile tests] ...that is a draft and needs further work. It

**Khokhar cuts short visit:**  
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needs comments from the other [Pakistani] side and further work before these things can be finalised ..."

On whether the issue of cross-border terrorism was discussed, Mr. Khan said his country opposed terrorism of every kind. Terrorism, he suggested, was not a problem that confronted India and Pakistan alone, but the whole world.

Asked whether Pakistan had given an explanation for contin-

uing acts of cross-border terrorism in India, he gave a sharp response. "We owe explanations to nobody, we don't give explanations. These are talks taking place between two sovereign states. They state their positions and try to resolve issues between them." On whether the question of infiltration from Pakistani-controlled territory had come up, Mr. Khan said the issue was discussed, but chose not to give any details. The Foreign Secretaries would come out with their decisions tomorrow, he promised.

Islamabad, he said, supported national, regional and international efforts to combat terrorism and specifically referred to the SAARC additional protocol to the convention against terrorism that was agreed to in January by the seven-member grouping.

Calling for a sustained dialogue, Mr. Khan said the talks should be a "continuous curve"

and not a spurt. The Foreign Ministers, he said, would review the current round of talks, August, as per the agreed calendar, and there could be summits in future if political direction was required.

Reiterating that the dialogue process was moving in a positive direction, he added: "This is a historic moment. Our political leaderships are trying to come up with solutions that are acceptable to the people of India, Pakistan and Kashmir."

## 'Talks will not be affected'

Turning to the resignation of the Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, on Saturday, Mr. Khan said it would have no bearing on the composite dialogue process with India. "This is an internal political dynamic. A transition is taking place. It has had no impact on the talks between the two Foreign Secretaries."

THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 2004

29/6  
**BUILD ON THE RAPPORT** 9/20/04 #10-10

WHILE THE NORMALISATION of relations between India and Pakistan will require hard and painstaking effort, the smoothness with which the dialogue was resumed after the change of government in New Delhi is most reassuring. External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri have promised to discuss all the issues in contention between the two countries in a positive and sustained manner. The two Ministers are scheduled to meet several times in the coming weeks. This will enable them to provide political guidance as well as specific inputs to the series of official-level discussions on different subjects that are to take place on parallel tracks. Officials from the two countries have already held talks on the methods to control trafficking in narcotics and on confidence building measures (CBMs) in the field of nuclear weapons. While the two neighbours decided to persist with the moratorium on nuclear weapon tests, they made no more than modest progress towards the goal of establishing mechanisms and procedures that will help reduce the risk of nuclear war. They decided to set up a hotline between the Foreign Secretaries and to upgrade the existing communication links between the Directors General of Military Operations. Both sides also agreed that they would try to reach an accord, with technical parameters, on pre-notification of missile test-flights. Incremental improvements of this nature are welcome but much more will need to be done before the two countries can live up to the claim of being responsible nuclear weapon powers.

Pakistan has shown interest in India's proposal jointly to evolve a common nuclear security doctrine. (While Mr. Singh had suggested that Beijing should participate in such an exercise, that does not appear very likely since China is in a different league from India or Pakistan as a nuclear weapon power). However, Islamabad and New Delhi have barely begun to explore common ground let alone work on a practical agenda to reduce nu-

clear risk in South Asia. In editorialising on this issue, *The Hindu* (June 19) referred to the eminently sensible recommendations made by two physicists, M. V. Ramana and R. Rajaraman, in an article published earlier in this newspaper. They recommended that New Delhi should offer not to deploy nuclear weapons and that it should stop installing early warning systems; given a sub-continental context in which the response time was dangerously short, such systems increase the risk of an accidental or unauthorised nuclear war. Since the two countries have apparently inducted nuclear weapons into their defence establishments but apparently not deployed delivery platforms armed with warheads, the recommended measures could serve to initiate a de-escalation breakthrough.

An interesting aspect of the current India-Pakistan interaction on nuclear issues is the joint acknowledgement that both countries are on the same, disadvantaged side of the discriminatory global nuclear bargain: thus the joint appeal for holding "regular working-level meetings... among all nuclear powers to discuss issues of common concern." A similar sense of realism should inform their approach to the other contentious issues that obstruct normalisation. Pakistan is not inclined to de-link negotiations on Kashmir from the other issues on the agenda of the bilateral dialogue. However, Islamabad does appear to have set aside its policy of blocking forward movement in other spheres until it saw progress on talks relating to Kashmir. New Delhi too should look beyond its concerns over security as it re-evaluates the proposal for a gas pipeline from Iran that will run through Pakistan. The expansion of the points of engagement with Pakistan will not only help normalisation but also promote India's national and democratic interests. With the political leadership of India and Pakistan striking a rapport, the Foreign Secretaries can begin serious discussions on Kashmir and security issues when they meet later this month.

24 JUN 2004

## Make N-haste Slowly

Good move, now take  
it forward

When the West still hasn't shed its paranoia about South Asia's status as a potential nuclear flashpoint, it is significant that India and Pakistan last week declared that each other's nuclear capabilities "constitute a factor for stability". When two nuclear-armed adversaries have experienced so much bitterness and bad blood since testing as India and Pakistan have — including one brief war and one prolonged near-war — there is considerable merit in them formally recognising the right of the other to acquire atomic weapons. The clock cannot be turned back. Nuclear weapons in the subcontinent are a fait accompli. This fact provides a realistic baseline from which the two countries can discuss substantive confidence-building measures. It was just as well that the officials from India and Pakistan who met last week for technical talks on nuclear CBMs chalked out a modest agenda for themselves. A sustained dialogue may narrow the gap, or at least help each side understand the other's compulsions better, but it is important that these differences not come in the way of adopting CBMs which are long overdue.

India and Pakistan will now set up a dedicated and secure hotline between their two foreign secretaries. And the undertaking on pre-notification of missile tests will be formalised into an actual agreement. After the current round of composite dialogue concludes in August, there will doubtless be further technical talks on nuclear CBMs. Questions that can then be taken up would include mutual assurances on the non-mating of nuclear weapons — i.e. on keeping the warheads and missiles separate — as well as on the non-deployment of short-range nuclear-capable missiles like Prithvi and Hatf-1 near the international border. India would do well not to flaunt its declaratory policy of no-first-use. Pakistan's counter-offer of a no-war pact is something which the international community finds intrinsically appealing. One aspect of last week's joint statement which needs active follow-up is the common request by India and Pakistan for regular working-level meetings with the other five declared nuclear-weapons states. Amending the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty may be impossible but so is the prospect of India and Pakistan voluntarily relinquishing their nuclear arsenal in the absence of disarmament by the others. Regular meetings between the seven on issues of common concern could be one way of bridging the gap between the textual rigidity of the NPT and the nuclear reality.

এই গ্রীষ্মে অনুপ্রবেশ কম, বললেন প্রণব

# চিনে নটবর-কাসুরি কথা কাশ্মীর নিয়েও

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২১ জুন: কেন্দ্রে নতুন, সরকার আসার পরে এই প্রথম ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের বিদেশমন্ত্রীরাজীরা নিজেদের মধ্যে বৈঠকে বসে পারস্পরিক সম্পর্কের অগ্রগতি নিয়ে কথা বললেন। যদিও বিদেশমন্ত্রী পর্যায়ে ভারত-পাক এই বৈঠক সে অর্থে আনুষ্ঠানিক নয়, পূর্ব চিনের গিংদাও শহরে ২২টি এশীয় দেশের সহযোগিতার বিষয়ে সম্মেলন উপলক্ষে হাজির নটবর সিংহ ও পাক বিদেশমন্ত্রী খুরশিদ মেহমুদ কাসুরি। ওই সম্মেলনের প্রথম দিনেই তাঁরা মধ্যাহ্নভোজনে নিজেদের মধ্যে দ্বিপাক্ষিক বৈঠক সেরে ফেললেন। দেড় ঘণ্টার ওই মধ্যাহ্নভোজের প্রথম দিকে দুই দেশের কূটনীতিকরা হাজির থাকলেও পরে নটবর ও কাসুরি ২৫ মিনিট একান্তে কথা বলেন। পরমাণু অস্ত্র নিয়ে পারস্পরিক আশঙ্কা কমাতে মাত্র কালই দিল্লিতে দু'দেশের বৈঠকে বিদেশসচিবদের মধ্যে হটলাইন যোগাযোগ-সহ একগুচ্ছ ব্যবস্থা নেওয়ার সিদ্ধান্ত হয়েছে। ক'দিন পরেই দু'দেশের বিদেশসচিব পর্যায়ে বৈঠক শুরু হবে। তারই মধ্যে আজ চিনে বসে ভারত ও পাক বিদেশমন্ত্রীর দ্বিপাক্ষিক বৈঠক হল এবং দু'দিনেই বৈঠক শেষে আশ্বাস দিলেন, বাজপেয়ী সরকারের জমানায় দু'দেশের সম্পর্কে যে অগ্রগতি শুরু হয়েছে, তা মনমোহন সরকারের আমলে আরও এগিয়ে নেওয়া হবে। নটবর তা বলেছেন, বর্তমান সরকার দু'দেশের সম্পর্কের উন্নতির প্রক্রিয়ায় আরও গতি আনবে।

বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহের সঙ্গে পাক বিদেশমন্ত্রী খুরশিদ মেহমুদ কাসুরির এই বৈঠককে 'ফলপ্রসূ' বলে বর্ণনা করেছে বিদেশমন্ত্রক। প্রথম বৈঠকে কাশ্মীর নিয়েও আলোচনা হয়েছে। ভারত-পাক আলোচনার প্রক্রিয়া যখন এগিয়ে চলেছে, তখন জম্মু ও কাশ্মীর সীমান্তেও অবস্থার কিছুটা উন্নতি দেখা দিয়েছে। সাম্প্রতিক কালের মধ্যে এই প্রথম কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার জানিয়েছে, অন্যান্য বছরের তুলনায় গ্রীষ্মে সীমান্তে অনুপ্রবেশ কিছুটা কমেছে। সাউথ ব্লকে প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় বলেছেন, "এখন অনুপ্রবেশ কম।" প্রণববাবুর মতে, ভারতীয় সেনার সতর্ক প্রহরার জন্যই অনুপ্রবেশকারীরা ঢুকতে পারছে না। অনুপ্রবেশ রোধে পাকিস্তান কিছু ব্যবস্থা নিয়েছে কি না জানতে চাওয়া হলে প্রণববাবু বলেন, "এখনই এর সঠিক পর্যবেক্ষণ করা যায় না।"

হংকং থেকে চিনের সম্মেলনে যোগ দিতে একই বিমানে গিয়েছিলেন নটবর ও কাসুরি। সংবাদসংস্থা পি টি আই জানিয়েছে, বিমানে উঠে তাঁরা করমর্দন করেন ও শুভেচ্ছা বিনিময় করেন।

কিংদাও শহরে আজ এশীয় দেশগুলির সম্মেলনের মধ্যেই 'ওয়াকিং লাঞ্চ'-এ কাসুরিকে আমন্ত্রণ জানান নটবর। ওয়াকিং লাঞ্চ হলেও কাসুরির জন্য চিনের বিখ্যাত রান্না 'বেজিং ডাক'-এর রোস্ট-সহ অনেক আয়োজনই ছিল। মধ্যাহ্ন ভোজ আলোচনার শেষে কাসুরি বেরিয়ে এসে সাংবাদিকদের বলেন, কাশ্মীর সমস্যার সমাধান খুঁজতে হবে এমন ভাবে যাতে কোনও পক্ষেরই মর্যাদা ক্ষুণ্ণ না হয়। এ ব্যাপারে কাশ্মীরের মানুষকেও সঙ্গে পোতে হবে। তবে এ কথা বলার সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই সতর্ক কাসুরি জানিয়ে দিতে ভোলেননি যে, ভারত-পাক শান্তিপ্রক্রিয়ার মধ্যে তিনি কোনও পূর্বশর্ত যোগ করছেন না। এবং তিনি এটাও জানিয়ে দেন যে, ভারতের বিদেশমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গে দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্কের বিভিন্ন দিক নিয়েই তাঁর

কথা হয়েছে, এবং বিভিন্ন সমস্যা মেটানোর বিষয়ে দু'জনেই অভিন্ন মত পোষণ করছেন।

নতুন সরকার গঠনের পরে এই প্রথম মুখোমুখি সাক্ষাৎ ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের বিদেশমন্ত্রীর। এর আগে দুই বিদেশমন্ত্রীর ফোনে একাধিকবার কথা হয়েছে। কংগ্রেস ক্ষমতায় আসার পরে ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের রাজনৈতিক নেতৃত্বের মধ্যেও এটাই ছিল প্রথম মুখোমুখি দেখা। নয়াদিল্লিতে বিদেশমন্ত্রকের একটি সূত্রে ব্যাখ্যা, জম্মু-কাশ্মীর-সহ সমস্ত বিষয়ে ভারত যে আলোচনায় রাজি, তা ফের বুঝিয়ে দিতেই নটবর কাশ্মীর নিয়েও কথা বলেন। বিদেশমন্ত্রক সূত্রে বলা হচ্ছে, দুই বিদেশমন্ত্রীর বৈঠক হয়েছে 'উষ্ণ' পরিবেশে। দেড় ঘণ্টার আলোচনায় আসে পাকিস্তানি রেঞ্জার্স ও বি এস এফের সাম্প্রতিক বৈঠকের বিষয়টি। দু'দেশের মাদক প্রতিরোধ বিভাগের কর্তারাও সম্প্রতি আলোচনা করেন, সেই প্রসঙ্গেও কথা হয়েছে নটবর ও কাসুরির। ভারত ও পাকিস্তান



চিনে দুই বিদেশমন্ত্রী, বৈঠকের ফাঁকে। — পি টি আই

প্রস্তাব দিয়েছে, সমস্ত পরমাণু শক্তিধর দেশ নিজেদের মধ্যে নিয়মিত বৈঠকে বসুক। যাতে বিভিন্ন দেশের আশঙ্কা বা সমস্যার বিষয়গুলি নিয়ে আলোচনা করা যায়। দুই পক্ষই জানিয়েছে, ২৭-২৮ তারিখের বিদেশসচিব পর্যায়ে বৈঠকের দিকে তারা তাকিয়ে আছে। আশা করা হচ্ছে, ওই বৈঠকে প্রকৃত কিছু ফল হবে, যার সুবাদে ভবিষ্যতে আলোচনা এগোতে পারে। দুই মন্ত্রী ঠিক করেছেন, পারস্পরিক যোগাযোগ বজায় রেখে চলবেন।

এ দিকে আজই দিল্লিতে পাকিস্তান থেকে একটি উচ্চপর্যায়ের প্রতিনিধিদল এসে পৌঁছেছে। জম্মু ও কাশ্মীরের নির্মীয়মান বাগলিহার জলবিদ্যুৎ প্রকল্প নিয়ে পাকিস্তানের আপত্তি রয়েছে। চম্পভাগা নদীর উপর ৪৫০ মেগাওয়াট ক্ষমতাসম্পন্ন ওই জলবিদ্যুৎ প্রকল্পকে ঘিরে বিবাদ মেটাতে একসময় পাকিস্তান বিশ্ব ব্যাঙ্কের মধ্যস্থতা চেয়েছিল। এখন দ্বিপাক্ষিক আলোচনা করতে সে দেশের জল ও বিদ্যুৎ মন্ত্রকের সচিব আসফাক মেহমুদের নেতৃত্বে ওই প্রতিনিধি দল এসেছে। কাল বৈঠক শুরু হবে।

# Natwar, Kasuri strike positive note

Press Trust of India

QINGDAO, (East China), June 21. — Striking a positive note in the first high-level political contact, external affairs minister Mr K Natwar Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Mr Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri today discussed Jammu and Kashmir and all other aspects of bilateral ties during talks described as "warm and productive." Mr Singh had a 100-minute working lunch meeting with Mr Kasuri at which officials from both sides were also present followed by a 25-minute one-to-one "intimate" parley in the plush Shangri-la hotel, sources said.

The two ministers, who



India's foreign minister Mr Natwar Singh with his Pakistani counterpart Mr Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri at the Asia Cooperation Dialogue in Qingdao, China, on Monday. — AFP

are here to attend the 22nd Asian Cooperation Dialogue, "reviewed the progress in all aspects

## Violence in Valley... Hurriyat waits

SRINAGAR, June 21. — Security forces killed five militants on Monday even as the All Party Hurriyat Conference has decided to wait for the outcome of the Indo-Pak foreign secretary-level talks before taking any decision about the third round of negotiations with New Delhi.

Before leaving for New Delhi, founder chairman of the Hurriyat Conference, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, who also heads the diplomatic cell of the conglomerate, said they are closely watching the developments. The Hurriyat Conference is particularly very keen to see the outcome of the foreign secretary level talks. "This will form the basis for the future round of talks with New Delhi. We want that both the governments should take concrete steps for the resolution of Kashmir issue and we hope they will do that. After analysing the outcome of these talks we will decide over the third round talks with New Delhi which will be the first with new government," he said. A delegation of Members of European Parliament (MEPs) will visit Srinagar from tomorrow to assess situation in Jammu and Kashmir. — SNS & Agencies

of bilateral relations in-  
cluding Jammu and Kash-  
mir, and implementation of  
secretaries," sources in the  
delegation said.

## Sino-Indian ties strengthened

Press Trust of India

QINGDAO, East China, June 21. — The foreign ministers of India and China today decided to step up cooperation to further deepen bilateral ties as "identical views" emerged during their discussions on issues of mutual interest.

Emerging out of a 35-minute close-door meeting, external affairs minister, Mr K Natwar Singh and his Chinese counterpart, Mr Li Zhaoxing told reporters that they had identical views on all issues.

"Before this, we had a very good conversation. We have identical views on all issues. We will work together for the further promotion and enhancement of the good relations and cooperation between our two good neighbours and two good peoples," Mr Li said.

Natwar meets Jaykumar: Singaporean foreign minister Mr Jaykumar, who met Mr K Natwar Singh today in Qingdao, expressed support for greater/inter-action between India and Asean.



# Natwar Singh, Kasuri meeting 'productive'

By P S. Suryanarayana

**SINGAPORE, JUNE 21.** The External Affairs Minister, K. Natwar Singh, and the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, today agreed to "provide continuous political guidance" to the latest process of bilateral parleys.

Assessing the "progress" made in these "discussions" so far as "positive," the two leaders, who held a "warm and productive meeting" at the Chinese city of Qingdao on the sidelines of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue there, welcomed the new confidence-building accord that the two sides had reached on Sunday on the nuclear risk-reduction issue.

Mr. Singh and Mr. Kasuri, who met for the first time since the assumption of office by the new Government in New Delhi, "reviewed the progress on all aspects of bilateral relations, including Jammu and Kashmir," according to a press note issued by the Indian Embassy in Beijing. Also reviewed was the "implementation of the framework for the dialogue process" that was worked out in February by the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries.

The two Ministers agreed to "remain in regular touch" and voiced expectation that

they would meet each other on several occasions over the next two months.

Commending the outcome of the expert-level dialogue on nuclear CBMs, the two Ministers noted that "India and Pakistan have also called for regular working-level meetings... among all the nuclear powers to discuss issues of common concern."

Mr. Kasuri later told *The Hindu* here over telephone from Qingdao that the new accord on nuclear CBMs could herald a process of détente in India-Pakistan relations. "We are responsible countries. Nobody should talk down to Pakistan and India. We are interested in non-proliferation." Disclosing that Mr. Singh showed him the text of the nuclear CBMs accord, Mr. Kasuri characterised it as "a good development." Responding to questions on the details of today's meeting, Mr. Kasuri said that no in-depth specifics were discussed on Jammu and Kashmir or the nuclear issue. He said Mr. Singh's reported proposal for a common nuclear security doctrine among India, Pakistan and China did not figure in today's talks. However, Pakistan was "prepared to discuss, look at this new idea," Mr. Kasuri said.

Commenting on the happy augury that today's meeting took place on Chinese soil,

he said there was, of course, no facilitation by Beijing in the traditional diplomatic sense of the term. It was Mr. Singh who invited him to a "working lunch" today and the meeting took place in a "very cordial, friendly and warm atmosphere." The Cassandra-like "fears" about a possible breakdown of the India-Pakistan dialogue process, expressed in some quarters in both countries following the assumption of office by a Congress-led Government in New Delhi, were nullified. Mr. Kasuri said he received "total assurances" from Mr. Singh that the new Government would not only continue the current peace process but also carry this even further.

Pakistan, too, was "very serious about the peace process" and the "only way out" of the impasse was to evolve solutions "acceptable to Pakistan and India." Islamabad wanted "long-term peace, durable peace," Mr. Kasuri said.

On Jammu and Kashmir, he wanted a solution acceptable to the people there. The Ministers said they "looked forward to the meeting of the Foreign Secretaries scheduled for June 27-28 and to concrete outcomes from that meeting." That would take the "present process forward."

**India, China to enhance ties: Page 11**

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# India, Pakistan agree on hotline for nuclear issues

By Amit Baruah

**NEW DELHI, JUNE 20.** India and Pakistan today agreed to put in place a "dedicated and secure" hotline between their Foreign Secretaries to prevent misunderstandings and "reduce risks relevant to nuclear issues."

In a joint statement issued at the end of two days of talks between experts on nuclear confidence-building measures (CBMs), both countries claimed that their nuclear capabilities, based on "national security imperatives," constituted a "factor for stability."

Aware of the fact that both nations remained outside the exclusive nuclear club of the Permanent Five members of the U.N. Security Council, they sought a dialogue with the P-5 on issues of common concern.

It is for the first time that India and Pakistan have jointly called for such a dialogue. "Both countries called for regular working level meetings

to be held among all the nuclear powers to discuss issues of common concern." The statement, which breaks some new ground in the uncertain India-Pakistan nuclear equation, however, had nothing to say on the all-crucial issue of nuclear disarmament, a principle to which both parties attach considerable importance in international fora. They agreed that the existing hotline between the Directors-General of Military Operations (DGMOs) would be upgraded, secured and dedicated and

**Text of statement; 'Too early for summit': Page 12**

that they would work towards concluding an accord with technical parameters on pre-notification of flight-testing of missiles, a draft of which was handed over by India to the Pakistani side.

A senior official explained that a "hotline" between the Foreign Secretaries had existed till it fell into disuse in the 1990s and India had actually proposed its revival to Pakistan in October 1998. Now, however, it has been specified that the hotline would be used to prevent misunderstandings on nuclear issues. The official told this correspondent that by putting in place a "dedicated" hotline between the DGMOs it would

be possible for these officers to speak to each other with ease whenever they wanted and not keep their conversation restricted to every Tuesday as is the practice. Currently, it is a dial-up (hotline).

## Moratorium on tests reaffirmed

The statement also had each side reaffirming their "unilateral moratorium on conducting further nuclear test explosions unless, in exercise of national sovereignty, it decides that extraordinary events have jeopardised its supreme interests."

In a clear indication that the two-day, expert-level talks that concluded today were not going to be a one-off affair, the statement said India and Pakistan would continue their discussions and hold further talks on implementing the Lahore Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of February 1999.

"Both countries will continue to engage in bilateral consultations on security and non-proliferation issues within the context of negotiations on these issues in multilateral fora. Both sides agreed to report the progress of the talks to the respective Foreign Secretaries who would meet on June 27-28 2004."

A set of principles has been identified that would enable

specific measures to be taken: these include putting in place a hotline between the Foreign Secretaries to tackle risks pertaining to nuclear issues.

Both sides, the document said, were conscious of the need to promote a stable environment of peace and security between the two countries and their obligation to "their peoples and the international community."

India and Pakistan also committed themselves to "strategic stability" and to national measures to reduce the risks of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons under their respective control and to adopt bilateral notification measures and mechanisms to prevent misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

The ability of the two sides to state their differences on the "old issues" of "no-first use" of nuclear weapons and the Pakistani desire for a strategic restraint regime and yet move towards taking small step towards reducing nuclear risks is being seen as a positive development.

Clearly, while the two sides remain suspicious of each other, they have shown the political will to move towards taking CBMs that will send out a message to the international community that they are engaging each other on nuclear-related issues.

THE HINDU 21 JUN 2004

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# Text of joint statement

By Amit Baruah *Handwritten initials*

**NEW DELHI, JUNE 20.** *This is the text of the joint statement issued by India and Pakistan today after the expert-level talks on Nuclear Confidence Building Measures:*

In accordance with the agreement between the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan in February 2004, Expert Level talks on Nuclear Confidence Building Measures were held in New Delhi from 19-20 June 2004.

Dr. Sheel Kant Sharma, Additional Secretary (IO), headed the Indian delegation and Mr. Tariq Osman Hyder, Additional Secretary (UN and EC) led the Pakistan side. The visiting Pakistani delegation also called on the External Affairs Minister, Shri K. Natwar Singh, the National Security Adviser, Shri J.N. Dixit and the Foreign Secretary, Shri Shashank.

The talks were held in a cordial and constructive atmosphere.

Both sides:

Conscious of the need to promote a stable environment of peace and security between the two countries,

Recognising that the nuclear capabilities of each other, which are based on their national security imperatives, constitute a factor for stability,

Committed to national measures to reduce the risks of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons under their respective controls and to adopt bilateral notification measures and mechanisms to prevent misunderstandings and misinterpretations,

Conscious of their obligation to their peoples and the international community, Committed to work towards strategic stability,

Agreed on the following:

\* The existing hotline between the DGMOs would be upgraded, dedicated and secured.

\* A dedicated and secure hotline would be established between the two Foreign Secretaries, through their respective Foreign Offices to prevent misunderstandings and reduce risks relevant to nuclear issues.

\* Both countries will work towards concluding an Agreement with technical parameters on pre-notification of flight testing of missiles, a draft of which was

handed over by the Indian side.

\* Each side reaffirmed its unilateral moratorium on conducting further nuclear test explosions unless, in exercise of national sovereignty, it decides that extraordinary events have jeopardised its supreme interests.

\* Both countries would continue bilateral discussions and hold further meetings to work towards the implementation of the Lahore MoU of 1999.

\* Both countries will continue to engage in bilateral consultations on security and non-proliferation issues within the context of negotiations on these issues in multilateral fora.

\* Both countries called for regular working level meetings to be held among all the nuclear powers to discuss issues of common concern.

Both sides agreed to report the progress of the talks to the respective Foreign Secretaries who would meet on 27-28 June 2004.

New Delhi  
20 June 2004

# ভারত-পাক সম্পর্কে বরফ গলছে, হটলাইন বসছে বিদেশসচিবদের দফতরে

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২০ জুন: ভুল বোঝাবুঝিতে যাতে পরমাণু অস্ত্র ব্যবহৃত না-হয়, তা নিশ্চিত করতে ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের বিদেশ সচিবদের মধ্যে একান্ত হটলাইন চালু হবে। আজ এক যৌথ বিবৃতিতে দুই দেশ বলেছে, পরমাণু পরীক্ষার উপর এক তরফা নিষেধাজ্ঞা আগের মতোই বজায় থাকবে। ভারত সফররত পাক বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের মুখপাত্র আজকের ঘোষণাকে 'তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ অগ্রগতি' বলে মন্তব্য করেছেন। তবে দু'দেশের প্রধানমন্ত্রীদের মধ্যে শীর্ষ বৈঠকের সময় এখনও আসেনি বলে তিনি জানিয়েছেন।

এত দিন পরমাণু অস্ত্র সংক্রান্ত নিরাপত্তা বজায় রাখতে দু'দেশের ডিরেক্টর জেনারেল অফ মিলিটারি অপারেশনস (ডি জি এম ও) পদাধিকারীদের মধ্যে হটলাইন চালু ছিল। পরমাণু ক্ষেত্রে বিশ্বাস-বর্ধক ব্যবস্থা নেওয়ার জন্য দু'দেশের বিশেষজ্ঞদের দু'দিনের আলোচনার শেষে এই হটলাইন আরও উচ্চপর্যায়ে নিয়ে যাওয়ার সিদ্ধান্ত হয়েছে। এর উদ্দেশ্য হিসাবে বলা হয়েছে, 'পরমাণু সংক্রান্ত বিষয়ে বিপদ ও ভুল বোঝাবুঝি' কমানো।

পরমাণু পরীক্ষানিরীক্ষা আর না-চালানোর বিষয়ে দুই দেশই আগে নিজের নিজের উপর 'নিষেধাজ্ঞা' জারি করেছিল। এখন সেই বিষয়টিরই পুনরাবৃত্তি করে বলা হয়েছে, এর ব্যতিক্রম হতে পারে যদি সার্বভৌম দেশ হিসাবে কেউ মনে করে যে তার সর্বোচ্চ স্বার্থ ক্ষুণ্ণ হতে চলেছে। এই একই কথা ১৯৯৯ সালে দুই দেশের প্রধানমন্ত্রীদের মধ্যে স্বাক্ষরিত লাহোর সমঝোতাপত্রেরও বলা ছিল।

তবে দুই দেশই যে অন্যের পরমাণু ক্ষমতা এবং শান্তি ও নিরাপত্তার বাতাবরণের প্রয়োজন সম্পর্কে অবহিত, তাও যৌথ বিবৃতিতে স্পষ্ট করে জানানো হয়েছে। আকস্মিক ভাবে ভুলবশত যাতে পরমাণু-বোতামে হাত না-পড়ে তার জন্য দুই দেশই যথেষ্ট সতর্কতামূলক ব্যবস্থা নেবে বলে স্থির হয়েছে। এর জন্য কে কবে কোথায় কী ধরনের ক্ষেপণাস্ত্র পরীক্ষা চালাচ্ছে তার নোটিসও দিয়ে দেওয়া হবে।

এর পাশাপাশি দুই দেশই যে নিজেদের মধ্যে আলাপ-আলোচনা লাগাতার চালিয়ে যাবে, সে কথাও যৌথ বিবৃতিতে জানিয়ে দেওয়া হয়েছে। বলা হয়েছে, আলোচনা হয়েছে অত্যন্ত হৃদয়তাপূর্ণ পরিবেশে। ভারতের পক্ষে আলোচনায় নেতৃত্ব দেন বিদেশমন্ত্রকের অতিরিক্ত সচিব শীলকান্ত শর্মা। পাকিস্তানের তরফে নেতৃত্ব দেন সে দেশের বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের অতিরিক্ত সচিব তারিক ওসমান হায়দার।

পরে পাক বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের মুখপাত্র আসাদ খান যৌথ বিবৃতিকে তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ অগ্রগতি বলে মন্তব্য করে বলেন, "আরও খানিকটা এগনো গিয়েছে। উন্নতি হয়েছে আরও। আলোচনার দিকে, আস্তা বাড়ানোর পথে এবং গঠনমূলক ভাবে একে অপরের সঙ্গে মত বিনিময়ের উদ্দেশ্য সাধনের দিকে আরও অগ্রগতি সম্ভব হয়েছে।" এখন নীতিগত স্বচ্ছতাও দেখা যাচ্ছে বলে তিনি মন্তব্য করেছেন।

তবে দু'দেশের মধ্যে শীর্ষ বৈঠকের সময় এখনও আসেনি বলে খান স্পষ্ট করেই জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন। তিনি বলেন, ভারতে নতুন সরকার আসার পর খানিকটা অনিশ্চয়তা দেখা দিয়েছে বলে তাঁদের মনে হয়েছিল। কিন্তু এখন তা কেটে গিয়েছে। পাকিস্তান প্রস্তাবিত 'নো ওয়ার প্যাক্ট' থেকে শুরু করে ভারতের বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহের প্রস্তাবিত 'সাধারণ পরমাণু নীতি', সব কিছু নিয়েই প্রাথমিক ভাবে কথাবার্তা হয়েছে বলে খান জানিয়েছেন।

শান্তি, নিরাপত্তা ও স্থিতি সূনিশ্চিত করার লক্ষ্যে আজ ঐকমত্য হয়েছে। বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের মুখপাত্র নভতেজ সরনা জানিয়েছেন, ভুল বোঝাবুঝি মেটানো ও পরমাণু অস্ত্র সংক্রান্ত ঝুঁকি কমানো নিয়ে দু'টি দেশই সহমত পোষণ করেছে। দু'টি দেশই জানিয়েছে, সার্বভৌমত্ব ক্ষুণ্ণ না হওয়া পর্যন্ত কেউ আর পরমাণু অস্ত্র পরীক্ষা করবে না। আজকের বৈঠকে দু'টি দেশ এ কথাও বলেছে যে, প্রত্যেকের পক্ষেই উদ্বেগের এমন বিষয় নিয়ে পরমাণু শক্তিধর দেশগুলির মধ্যে নিয়মিত আলোচনা, বৈঠক হওয়া প্রয়োজন। ২৭-২৮ জুন দু'দেশের বিদেশ সচিবরা দিল্লিতে বৈঠকে বসবেন। আজকের বৈঠকের অগ্রগতির রিপোর্ট দু'তরফই বিদেশ সচিবদের হাতে তুলে দেবেন।

মাসুদ খান জানিয়েছেন, ভারতের বিদেশ মন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ পাক বিদেশমন্ত্রী মহম্মদ কাসুরির দেখা হবে আগামী মাসে, ইসলামাবাদে। সার্ক বিদেশমন্ত্রী সম্মেলনের ফাঁকে দু'জন কথা বলবেন। তার আগে কালই অবশ্য চিনে নটবরের সঙ্গে কাসুরির দেখা হবে, হয়তো কিছু কথাও। এশীয় উন্নয়ন আলোচনা'য় অংশ নিতে দু'জন বেজিং গিয়েছেন। নটবর কাসুরিকে লাক্ষে আমন্ত্রণ জানিয়েছেন। বেজিং-বৈঠকের ফাঁকেই দু'জনে লাক্ষে কথা বলবেন, এমন সম্ভাবনা যথেষ্ট। জাপান-চীন-দক্ষিণ কোরিয়ার বিদেশ মন্ত্রীদের সঙ্গেও নটবর বিদেশমন্ত্রী হওয়ার পর প্রথম দেখা হবে।

জঙ্গি প্রশিক্ষণ শিবির ফের খুলেছে। দিল্লি থেকে পি টি আই জানিয়েছে, সম্প্রতি ধৃত সন্ত্রাসবাদীদের জিজ্ঞাসাবাদ করে জানা গিয়েছে, পাক গোয়েন্দা সংস্থা আই এস আই পাক অধিকৃত কাশ্মীরে আবার একাধিক জঙ্গি প্রশিক্ষণ শিবির খুলেছে। দিল্লি তাই আশঙ্কা করছে, জম্মু ও কাশ্মীরে আবার ব্যাপক অনুপ্রবেশ হতে পারে।

স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রকের ৩০ পাতার তথ্যে বলা হয়েছে, সব থেকে বড় জঙ্গি প্রশিক্ষণ শিবিরটি খোলা হয়েছে জঙ্গল-মঙ্গল এলাকায়। সেখানে কিছু কমবেশি ৩০০ জন জঙ্গিকে, বেশির ভাগই ভাড়াটে-বিদেশি, জঙ্গি কাজকর্মের প্রশিক্ষণ দেওয়া হচ্ছে। এর পরেই রয়েছে এলাগ-ই-যের। সেখানে প্রায় ২০০ জন জঙ্গিকে নাশকতামূলক কাজকর্মের প্রশিক্ষণ দেওয়া হচ্ছে।

জম্মু ও কাশ্মীরে সম্প্রতি ধৃত জঙ্গিদের জেরা করে এবং জঙ্গিদের বেতারবার্তায় আড়ি পেতে এ সব তথ্য জানা গিয়েছে। লিপা উপত্যকায় লক্ষর-ই-তৈবার ঘাঁটি ফের খোলা হয়েছে।



## আস্থা বাড়ানোর লক্ষ্যে



- বিদেশসচিবেরা হট লাইনের মাধ্যমে যোগাযোগ রাখবেন।
- ডিরেক্টর জেনারেল অফ মিলিটারি অপারেশনসদের মধ্যে হট লাইনকে আরও উন্নত ও নিরাপদ করা হবে।
- ক্ষেপণাস্ত্র পরীক্ষার খবর আগাম জানানোর ব্যাপারে চুক্তি চূড়ান্ত করা হবে।
- দুই দেশই একতরফা ভাবে পরমাণু পরীক্ষা বন্ধ রাখবে, যদি না তাদের জাতীয় সার্বভৌমত্ব বিঘ্নিত হয়।
- লাহোর চুক্তি কার্যকর করার লক্ষ্যে দ্বিপাক্ষিক আলোচনা চালিয়ে যাওয়া হবে।
- আন্তর্জাতিক চুক্তির প্রেক্ষিতে দুই দেশ নিরাপত্তা ও পরমাণু প্রসার রোধ নিয়ে দ্বিপাক্ষিক আলোচনা চালিয়ে যাবে।
- দুই দেশই পরমাণু শক্তিধর দেশগুলির মধ্যে নিয়মিত বৈঠকের দাবি জানাচ্ছে।
- বিদেশসচিব পর্যায়ের বৈঠক হবে ২৭ ও ২৮ জুন।

# Towards a 'result-oriented' move on N-CBMs

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, June 19. — An atmosphere of guarded optimism pervaded the first-ever expert-level dialogue on Nuclear Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) today, with India and Pakistan choosing to identify areas of convergence, including the multilateral forums, on this sensitive issue, and exchanging views on their respective security concepts and nuclear doctrines. They also agreed to move towards a 'result-oriented' approach to the CBMs.

An "agreed" (jointly approved) press statement issued at the end of the first round of discussions said: "Both sides approached the talks in a positive framework aimed at taking the process forward and making them result-oriented." The first session of talks lasted well over two hours.

"The two delegations identified areas of convergence including in the context of multilateral fora," the statement said. "They also exchanged views on their respective security concepts and nuclear doctrines and agreed to elaborate and work towards CBMs," the spokesman for the Indian external affairs ministry said. The discussions are scheduled to conclude tomorrow.



**Foreign minister Mr Natwar Singh gestures as he talks to Pakistani additional secretary Mr Tariq Usman Haider as Pakistan High Commissioner Mr Aziz Ahmed Khan looks on. — AFP**

The Pakistani delegation called on the external affairs minister, Mr K Natwar Singh, the national security adviser, Mr J N Dixit, and the foreign secretary, Mr C Chachank, after their talks that went on

over a working lunch.

The spokesman said Mr Singh, Mr Dixit and Mr Shashank welcomed the talks on nuclear CBMs and encouraged the two delegations to continue their work in a "result-oriented framework."

According to official sources, New Delhi's approach at the talks was to understand Pakistan's nuclear doctrine and assure Islamabad that there was scope for the two countries to cooperate at multilateral forums, like the United Nations, on the nuclear issue. Before going into the talks at the Hyderabad House this morning, leaders of both delegations, Dr Sheel Kant Sharma, additional secretary in the MEA, and his Pakistani counterpart, Mr Tariq Usman Haider shook hands and posed for photographs.

The Indian delegation includes Ms Meera Shankar, Mr Arun K Singh and Mr TCA Raghavan from the MEA and representatives of the Department of Atomic Energy and Defence Research and Development Organisation.

The Pakistani delegation includes, besides members of the foreign office, Capt. Khalid Banuri, Deputy Director, Strategic Plans Division of the Pakistan Strategic Command.

## CCS DISCUSSES INDO-PAK TALKS

NEW DELHI, June 19. — The focus of the India-Pakistan composite dialogue process was discussed at some length in the first meeting of the reconstituted Cabinet Committee on Security chaired by the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, today. The external affairs minister, Mr Natwar Singh, will leave for China tomorrow to participate in the Asian Cooperation Dialogue meeting in Qingdao.

The CCS is believed to have reviewed the status of bilateral relations, the way the ceasefire along the Line of Control and international border (and Siachen) is holding and options for a positive direction in which bilateral ties can progress. The two countries are scheduled to remain intensively engaged with each other at various levels to carry the structured, eight-point composite dialogue forward. The CCS reviewed the security scenario in the country and the situation along its borders. The meeting was attended by the defence minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, the home minister, Mr Patil, the finance minister, Mr P Chidambaram and Mr Natwar Singh. The National Security Adviser, Mr J N Dixit, the chief of Army staff, General N C Vij, the newly-appointed cabinet secretary, Mr B K Chaturvedi, and the IB chief, Mr K P Singh and RAW head, Mr C D Sahay attended the meeting. — SNS

# Positive signals as India, Pakistan begin talks on nuclear issues

By Amit Baruah

*India Pak* *110-1 20/6*  
**NEW DELHI, JUNE 19.** India and Pakistan today discussed specific nuclear confidence-building measures (CBMs) including the upgrading of the communication channels towards reducing nuclear risks in South Asia. In their first-ever expert level talks, both countries looked at the possibility of putting in place a hotline dealing with nuclear issues in addition to the existing hotline between the Directors-General of Military Operations (DGMOs) used by them weekly. Further discussion on specifics is expected tomorrow.

Sheelkant Sharma, Additional Secretary in the External Affairs Ministry and his Pakistan counterpart, Tariq Osman Haider, led the talks, which began at Hyderabad House. A joint communique on the outcome of the dialogue is likely to be issued tomorrow.

A statement issued by the External Affairs Ministry said the discussions were held in a cordial and constructive atmosphere. "Both sides approached the talks in a positive framework, aimed at taking the process forward and making them result-oriented."

"The two delegations identified areas of convergence, including in the context of multilateral fora. They also exchanged views on their security concepts and nuclear doctrines, and agreed to elaborate and work towards CBMs. The discussions will continue tomorrow," it said.

Pakistan reiterated the need for strategic restraint and stability in the discussions — a formal proposal first made by it during the talks between the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries in Islamabad in October 1998 — while India is said to have referred to its proposal of no-first use of nuclear weapon as part of its "doctrine".

The signals emanating from the talks appeared positive with both sides ready to continue the expert-level talks and come out with recommendations for the Foreign Secretaries when they meet here to discuss the issue of peace and security,

including CBMs, on June 27-28.

The two sides also took up the implementation of specific CBMs mentioned in the Lahore Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of February 1999, officials told this correspondent.

"We looked at where we were in 1999 and where we are today," the officials said. For instance, they discussed the institutionalisation of "prior notice" to be given by either side before conducting ballistic missile tests — a point of accord contained in the Lahore MoU.

As anticipated, Pakistan reiterated its proposal for strategic restraint — both on the nuclear and conventional fronts. Islamabad has for some time been of the view that India should exercise "restraint" in the purchase of conventional weapons as well — apart from arguing since the May 1998 tests that New Delhi should not proceed with further developing its nuclear arsenal.

In October 1998, India had proposed the extension of the hotline between the DGMOs, the revival of the hotline between the Foreign Secretaries, the extension of the existing arrangement on non-attack on nuclear installations close to population and economic centres, an increase in information exchange in the nuclear field to facilitate greater transparency and the setting up of a consultative machinery to review and implement CBMs.

At the meeting, Pakistan presented its proposal for a "strategic restraint regime in South Asia." As part of this "regime," it had called for the prevention of a nuclear and missile race, an agreement on risk reduction measures, non-induction of air-based and sea-based missile systems and a nuclear doctrine of minimum deterrence capability. On the conventional front, Islamabad had suggested a mutual and balanced reduction of forces and armament levels.

The Pakistani delegation called on the External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, the National Security Adviser, J.N. Dixit, and the Foreign Secretary, Shashank.

# Pakistan team arrives for talks on nuclear CBMs

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, JUNE. 18. A six-member team from Pakistan, led by Tariq Osman Haider, Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, arrived here today for a wide-ranging, two-day dialogue on nuclear confidence-building measures (CBMs) from Saturday.

"We are coming with a positive spirit and positive suggestions. We are here for result-oriented talks," Mr. Haider said on arrival at the Indira Gandhi International airport. As responsible nuclear States, both India and Pakistan have a responsibility to their people," he said.

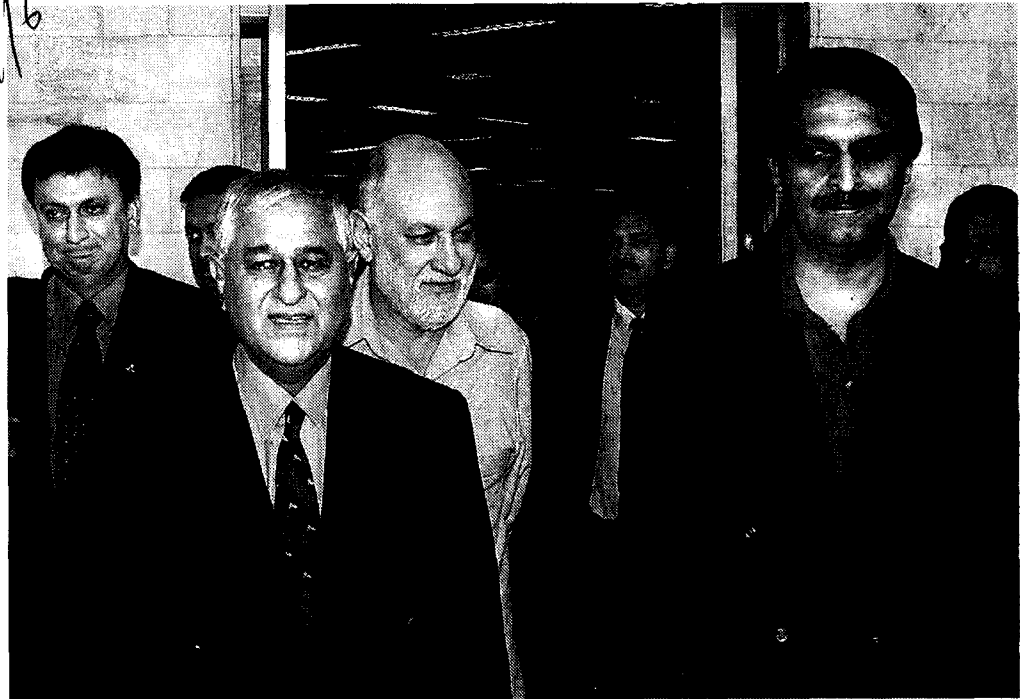
On Pakistan's expectations from the talks, Mr. Haider said they would not be negotiating through the media and hoped that the results of the talks would speak for themselves.

The delegation would call on the External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, the National Security Adviser, J.N. Dixit, and the Foreign Secretary, Shashank, after the first session of their talks at Hyderabad House on Saturday morning.

The Indian delegation is led by Sheel Kant Sharma, Additional Secretary (International Organisations) in the Ministry of External Affairs, and will comprise the Joint Secretary (Pakistan), Arun Singh; and representatives from the Department of Atomic Energy and the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO).

For its part, the Indian side hoped that this would be the first in a series of talks between experts of the two countries on formulating and implementing nuclear CBMs. Sources in the South Block pointed out that the timeframe for the dialogue had held despite the change in government in New Delhi.

They felt that the talks had to be taken forward in a systematic, slow and graduated manner, with the two countries focussing on trying to build on points they had agreed upon.



The Pakistan delegation, led by Tariq Osman Haider (left, foreground), Additional Secretary in the Foreign Ministry, Jallil Abbas Jilani, Director-General, South Asia, and Aziz Ahmed Khan (centre), High Commissioner to India, arrive at the Indira Gandhi International airport in New Delhi on Friday. — Photo: Shanker Chakravarty

The Indian side would like to hear how the Pakistanis approached their nuclear weapons' capability — in essence, their view of a nuclearised South Asia.

## Agenda from Lahore MoU

It was evident that the agenda of the talks would flow from the Lahore Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) agreed to by the Foreign Secretaries in February 1999. "The two sides are fully committed to undertaking national measures to reduce the risks of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons under their respective control. The two sides further undertake to notify each other immediately in the event of any accidental, unauthorised or unexplained incident... the two sides shall identify/establish the appropriate communication

mechanism for this purpose," the MoU said.

Asked whether putting in place such a nuclear hotline would form part of the talks' agenda, the sources said this could happen as the dialogue moved forward.

However, they indicated that India would like the issue of early warning systems to be on the agenda of the expert-level talks in due course.

Asked if Pakistan had been informing India in advance about its missile tests as per the Lahore MoU, the sources said they had been doing it for most part — even during the military mobilisation in 2002.

The easier thing to do for the two countries was to pick up commonalities. For Pakistan, it was not possible to give a no-first use (NFU) commitment like India on the use of nuclear weapons while New Delhi could

not give its assent to the Pakistani proposal for a strategic restraint regime.

The talks were intended to remove misperceptions each side held about the other. They now had to reach a plateau of understanding and reduce the possibility of nuclear danger in South Asia.

Stating that both sides should take steps to lower the temperature, the sources said India did not accept the proposition that South Asia was a nuclear flash-point. India's nuclear doctrine was not country specific, they said, adding that it was certainly not directed at Pakistan.

On whether India proposed to raise the issue of A.Q. Khan's nuclear weapons' proliferation exercise in the bilateral talks, the sources replied in the negative, pointing out that it was a matter of international concern.

Editorial on Page 10

# Pak nuclear talks, minus baggage

OUR SPECIAL  
CORRESPONDENT

**New Delhi, June 18:** India has said it is approaching talks with Pakistan on nuclear confidence-building measures without any preconceived notions.

Delhi is instead hoping the two-day talks that begin here tomorrow will help to improve relations with its neighbour.

Nothing remarkable is expected from the talks, which are likely to be more exploratory in nature. With a new government taking over at Delhi, Indian and Pakistani officials will try to get to know each other's security and nuclear doctrine better over the two days.

The idea is to reduce any accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons.

Sheel Kant Sharma, the additional secretary heading the disarmament and strategic affairs division in South Block, will lead the Indian team, which will also have Arun Singh, joint secretary in charge of the Pakistan-Iran-Afghanistan division.

The Pakistani delegation will

be led by Tariq Usman Haider, additional secretary in the foreign ministry; it will also have Jalil Abbas Jilani, director-general of the ministry's South Asia division, who was expelled in February last year when he was charge d'affaires at the Pakistani mission here.

The delegation is likely to call on foreign minister K. Natwar Singh and national security adviser J.N. Dixit.

Delhi will have a brick-by-brick approach in order to lay the groundwork for dispelling any "misconception" that Pakistan may have about India's intentions towards its western neighbour.

But some arrangements like the prior notification on test-firing ballistic missiles - which was part of a memorandum of understanding - could be discussed and formalised.

A joint statement can be expected on Sunday if all goes well



Jilani: Back

and the two sides agree to continue discussions on nuclear issues.

The neighbour lifted its veil on its nuclear capability through a series of tests in May 1998.

But this will be the first official-level discussion between the two sides on an issue that has often caused alarm within and out-

side the region, even leading some in the West to dub the subcontinent "a nuclear flashpoint".

India's foreign policy establishment agrees there is a need to "douse the flame" and "reduce the temperature" in South Asia, but criticises those Western powers which put the "nuclear flashpoint" tag on the neighbours.

Officials say this description stems from the West's "double standards" on the issue and its policy that weapons of mass destruction are safe in their hands, but not in that of India and Pakistan.



# The track to success

By K.K. Katyal

**Given the complexities of the India-Pakistan relationship, back-channel diplomacy needs to be employed on a sustained basis.**

110-186  
IN THE absence of an official denial, the report of the visit of the Pakistani President, Pervez Musharraf's top aide to India earlier this month is to be taken as correct. The significance of this move, intended to establish personal contacts with the major decision-makers in the new Indian Government, is not to be under-rated. Coming as it does in the wake of the External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh's positive statements on dealings with Pakistan, notably his stress on vigorous pursuit of the peace process initiated earlier in the year, it augurs well for the upcoming confidence-building measures by the additional secretaries and later on peace and security and Jammu and Kashmir by the Foreign Secretaries.

Tariq Aziz, though belonging to Pakistan's revenue service, was Gen. Musharraf's contemporary during their early years and enjoys the President's total confidence. In the run-up to the SAARC summit in Islamabad in January, Mr. Aziz and Brajesh Mishra, Principal Secretary to the then Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, were responsible for hammering out the joint statement issued by the two leaders on January 6.

The foreign office spokesman parried questions on Mr. Aziz's mission and his talks with his counterpart in India, J.N. Dixit, the newly appointed National Security Adviser, saying he had "no knowledge of such a visit." The Pakistani Press reports were however, categorical. Two reports of June 9 in the Pakistani Press on Mr. Aziz's visit are reproduced.

According to the Lahore-dated line story in the daily *The News*, "National Security Council Secretary Tariq Aziz has met his Indian counterpart, National Security Adviser, J.N. Dixit, in New Delhi to discuss the future prospects of Indo-Pak peace initiatives. It is learnt Tariq Aziz was sent by President Musharraf with a special message for the new Indian setup a couple of days back. Aziz was accompanied by Indian High Commissioner in Pa-

kistan Shiv Shankar Menon. It was the first one-on-one high-level contact between the two countries after the inception of the Congress-I government in India. Dixit has replaced Brajesh Mishra, the former National Security Adviser, who visited Pakistan with the former Indian PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee early this year.

"Sources disclosed Tariq Aziz was rushed to India with a view to ensuring the continuity and success of the ongoing peace process. Recent diplomatic statements by the Indian hierarchy, especially President Abdul Kalam and Foreign Minister Natwar Singh, had evoked concern on this side of the divide. Aziz's visit is considered yet another effort by President Musharraf to ensure peace in the region.

"Sources revealed Aziz took up various aspects of the peace initiatives with Dixit, including the possible agenda of future contacts at various levels. The two officials encompassed the peace process in its entirety, exchanging notes on the developments in the past and future prospects. The Pakistani High Commissioner in New Delhi facilitated the Secretary NSC's engagements. Mr. Aziz returned home on Tuesday evening by road. No official version and details on this count were available."

The report of the *Daily Times* was as follows: "Tariq Aziz, Principal Secretary to President Pervez Musharraf, and Shiv Shankar Menon, Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan, travelled to India via Wagah border by car on Tuesday afternoon, government sources told *Daily Times*. Sources said that Mr. Aziz met a senior government official in Amritsar and returned to Lahore alone at around 3-30 p.m. Sources said that President Musharraf phoned Mr. Aziz and Mr. Menon late on Monday, discussing some important issues with them.

Both men flew into Lahore from Islamabad in the morning and then travelled to India by car. Sources described the Aziz-Menon trip as an important but a mysterious development.

Given the complexities of the India-Pakistan relationship and the intractable nature of some of the problems, back-channel diplomacy needs to be employed on a sustained basis. As a matter of fact, there is a need to have a new look at the format of dealings at various levels. The plans for formal, grandiose meetings of the top leaders may be necessary but they need to be supplemented by close informal contacts at other levels. In Europe, for instance, the Foreign Ministers are in frequent telephonic touch and even their meetings in any one of the capitals or elsewhere take place without much fanfare. It is, normally, a business-like matter without elaborate protocol formalities. All that is unknown in the case of India and Pakistan.

Tried seriously on one occasion in the past — in 1998-99 — back-channel diplomacy promised to yield concrete results but was interrupted, first, by Kargil and, then, by the coup in Islamabad. There are any number of capitals where the envoys of India and Pakistan have cordial personal relations. The potential in such cases could be exploited for quiet, informal but close contacts, without catching the media gaze and arousing undue expectations. In the 1998-99 case, the interlocutors from the two sides began addressing the core of a solution — division of the valley. They were nowhere near an agreement on the dividing line, with the Indian side opposing the idea of a division on communal basis, but there was evidence of a serious engagement to find a way out of the imbroglio.

In the next few weeks, the focus

will be on the two meetings of officials and one at the level of Foreign Ministers, as envisioned by the Foreign Secretaries, in keeping with the January 6 mandate. This process is loosely called a road map. Given the objective reality this may be a misleading description. As a former Foreign Secretary, Salman Haider, explained — in a different context, not in relation to the upcoming meetings — a road map, is an attractive idea "as it tells you where you are going and how to get there," but he did not think that "that level of clarity, that degree of joint understanding of the issues exists between India and Pakistan to permit the framing of the road map. What we need to look for today is to identify elements that we have agreed and to try and build on those without trying to define, at this stage, where we might reach through engagement with each other."

All that has been settled so far is the time-table of the meetings and the subjects to be taken up. There is nothing to suggest a narrowing down of the gaps in the positions of the two Governments on most sensitive issues. The new atmosphere may facilitate the search for solutions in some cases, but that is another matter.

Meanwhile, care has to be taken to guard against unhelpful comments or unilateral interpretations of the delicately-balanced joint statement by Mr. Vajpayee and Gen. Musharraf. For instance, Pakistan could do well to avoid the type of statements, recently emanating from Islamabad, seeking to establish a linkage between the confidence-building measures (on nuclear issues) and the progress of talks on Kashmir. In the past, this approach of Pakistan was responsible for preventing an agreement on a no-war pact. On its part, India will need to avoid wrong signals on Kashmir. In particular, its readiness for early talks on Kashmir will need to be reiterated, even if it means stressing the obvious. The stakes are too high for the two sides to indulge in the luxury of thoughtless utterances.

# কাশ্মীর প্রশ্নে ভিন্ন মত

## নটবর, মুশারফের

নয়া দিল্লি ও ইসলামাবাদ, ১০ জুন: দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্ক উন্নত করার ইচ্ছা রয়েছে দুই প্রতিবেশী দেশের সরকারেরই। তবু কাশ্মীর-প্রসঙ্গে তাদের মতের ফারাক আবার স্পষ্ট হয়ে গিয়েছে দু'তরফের বক্তব্যে। বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ বলেছেন, ৫৭ বছর ধরে কাশ্মীর-প্রশ্নকেই কেন্দ্রীয় বিষয় ভেবে আসায় ভারত-পাকিস্তান সম্পর্কে উন্নতি হয়নি। দিল্লিতে নতুন সরকার ক্ষমতায় আসার পরে এ বার দু'দেশের সম্পর্কে 'নতুন অধ্যায়' শুরু করার আহ্বান জানিয়েছেন নটবর। অন্য দিকে পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফ বলেছেন, ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের যাবতীয় বকেয়া সমস্যা সমাধানের এটাই আদর্শ সময় এবং কাশ্মীরই সেখানে মূল বিষয়।

বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ একটি টি ভি চ্যানেলকে দেওয়া সাক্ষাৎকারে বলেছেন, "পাকিস্তানকে বলব, ৫৭ বছর ধরে যে-রাস্তায় হাঁটছি, সেখানে আপনাদের প্রত্যাশিত ফল মেলেনি। আমাদের কাঙ্ক্ষিত ফলও পাইনি। আসুন, নতুন করে যাত্রা শুরু করি।" নটবরের মতে, কাশ্মীরের পরিবর্তে পরমাণু অস্ত্রের বিষয়টি দ্বিপাক্ষিক আলোচনায় মূল বিবেচ্য হওয়া উচিত।

দু'দেশের সরকার কাশ্মীর-প্রসঙ্গে আটকে থাকলেও সাধারণ মানুষ সেই ভাবনার শরিক নন বলে তিনি মনে করছেন। কংগ্রেস যখন ১৯৯৬ সালে ক্ষমতায় আসে, তখনও ভারত পরমাণু শক্তিদ্র হইনি এবং সেই জন্য এখন বিষয়টি নিয়ে কথাবার্তা সেরে নেওয়া উচিত।

মনমোহন সিংহ প্রধানমন্ত্রী হওয়ার পরে পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে সুসম্পর্ক বজায় রাখার কথা আগেই ঘোষণা করেছিলেন। পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফও সেই একই ইচ্ছাপ্রকাশ করেছিলেন। এ বার পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট বলেছেন, দু'দেশের অমীমাংসিত সমস্যা মিটিয়ে ফেলার এটাই আদর্শ সময়।

তাঁর বক্তব্য, সমাধান খুঁজে বার করার লক্ষ্যে আন্তরিকতা, নমনীয়তা ও সাহসিকতা দরকার। কাশ্মীর-প্রসঙ্গই মূল সমস্যা এবং যুক্তিগ্রাহ্য একটা সময়সীমার মধ্যে সেই সমস্যাও মিটিয়ে ফেলা যায়। কাশ্মীরকে আদৌ জটিল সমস্যা বলে মনে করেন না মুশারফ এবং দু'দেশের সরকারের মনোভাবের উপরেই তার সমাধানসূত্র নির্ভর করছে বলে তাঁর মত। — পি টি আই

1 1 JUN 2004

# Nuclear talks top Natwar list

*Handwritten: 11/6*  
*Handwritten: Singh*  
New Delhi, June 10 (Reuters): Foreign minister Natwar Singh has said nuclear security must be the top priority during talks with Pakistan, although Kashmir will also be on the agenda.

Singh has told the BBC that Delhi wanted to make "a new beginning" with Pakistan but appeared to want to deflect Islamabad's insistence that Kashmir should be the core issue under discussion in order to resolve decades of hostility.

"To me personally, the most important thing on our agenda should be nuclear dimension because when we remitted office in 1996 we were not a nuclear power," the BBC quoted Singh as saying in its *Hardtalk India* programme due to be telecast tomorrow.

The foreign secretaries of the two countries are due to meet on June 27-28 to discuss nuclear confidence-building measures and Kashmir as part of a peace process that began last year.

"Well, I would only say that we will appeal and request them that this road we have travelled over 57 years has not produced the results that you want, the results that we want. Let us make a new beginning," Singh, a former envoy to Islamabad, said.

There was no immediate reaction from Pakistan, but President Pervez Musharraf has repeatedly warned India not to sideline the Kashmir dispute and expect ties to improve without progress on resolving it.

THE TELEGRAPH

*Handwritten: 27*  
*Handwritten: June 2003*

# Kasuri tells Natwar to rein in rhetoric

HTC and Agencies  
Islamabad, June 6

PAKISTAN FOREIGN Minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri today virtually asked Indian External Affairs Minister Natwar Singh to stop shooting off his mouth, saying he hoped New Delhi would observe a "rhetoric restraint regime (RRR)" to avoid misunderstandings with Islamabad.

Kasuri was speaking to reporters after a phone conversation with Singh, during which the Indian told him he had never made a particular statement that the media had attributed to him. "I was misquoted," Singh reportedly told his counterpart.



Natwar Singh

Kasuri said he was surprised to read about Singh's purported statement, because the two ministers, during a phone conversation just three days ago, had agreed to continue the RRR policy. "Natwar Singh said he held President Pervez Musharraf and me in the highest esteem," Kasuri said. "He also said India would continue the policy of not conducting diplomacy

through the media."

Singh has made a series of controversial remarks since becoming foreign minister last month. During Thursday's talks, he and Kasuri had agreed to avoid publicising their differences ahead of the peace talks this month.

## Pak visit

Pakistani officials said Singh is likely to visit Islamabad on July 20 for the two-day Saarc foreign ministers' meeting and could have bilaterals with Kasuri. They said the two may meet also at the June 21-22 Asian Cooperation Dialogue in Beijing. But New Delhi declined to comment on the claim.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

7 JUL 2004

## Foreign secretaries of both nations to meet on June 27 and 28

After five years of flip-flop with India, Pervez Musharraf is suddenly up against a team that may be new to office but has long — and not always friendly — memories of his country. SUMIT MITRA reports on how the past is bound to resurface in Indo-Pak relations



**D**iplomacy is serious business of course and it hardly brooks comparison with Hindi cinema. But if last week's exchanges between New Delhi and Islamabad were to set the tone of the future India-Pakistan relations, its players had clearly taken their inspiration from Bollywood with General Pervez Musharraf as the unrelenting villain of the Amrish Puri kind who'd not pass up an opportunity to slam India, and Kunwar Natwar Singh, the newly appointed external affairs minister, who possesses the talent of an A.K. Hangal to say the right things at the wrong time and the wrong place.

Coming so close after India elected a new government, the verbal flare-up did not augur well for the peace process scripted by Musharraf and former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, under the appreciative eyes of the US administration of President George W. Bush.

It began when Natwar Singh, a former IFS officer who left his mark for being more erudite than discreet, went about musing on the imperatives of his new job, a bit too soon after re-entering South Block (Singh had served a term earlier as minister of state). "We want to build closer ties with all our neighbours... India will pursue talks with Pakistan on the basis of the Simla Agreement. We want better relations with our western neighbour."

He used the word "bedrock" to drive home the point that he and his party thought the agreement — based on virtually dividing Kashmir along the Line of Control — was crucial to bilateral relations.

It seems that General Musharraf was waiting for an opportunity like this to go ballistic and give the new rulers of India a measure of his Mogambo-style temper. And he chose the moment carefully, as the first batch of nuclear experts from Pakistan was due to arrive in Delhi on June 19 to start talks on Confidence Building Measures (CBM).

It was to be followed by a meeting of the two foreign secretaries on June 27 and 28. The General's reaction came the same day. "If he (Natwar Singh) means that there will be no movement (after the 1972 agreement), well, I beg to totally differ with him. This is no solution. If the Line of Control is to be made permanent and that is all, this is no solution. If he means we will go by the Simla Agreement, then I don't agree with him."

By then adrenaline levels were racing up across the Foreign Office in Islamabad, not to speak of Musharraf's office. The General, always bolder if he isn't the first to draw, straightaway called Vajpayee at his home, spoke to him for 15 minutes, and got his high commissioner in Delhi, Aziz Ahmed Khan, to pass on the information to South Block.

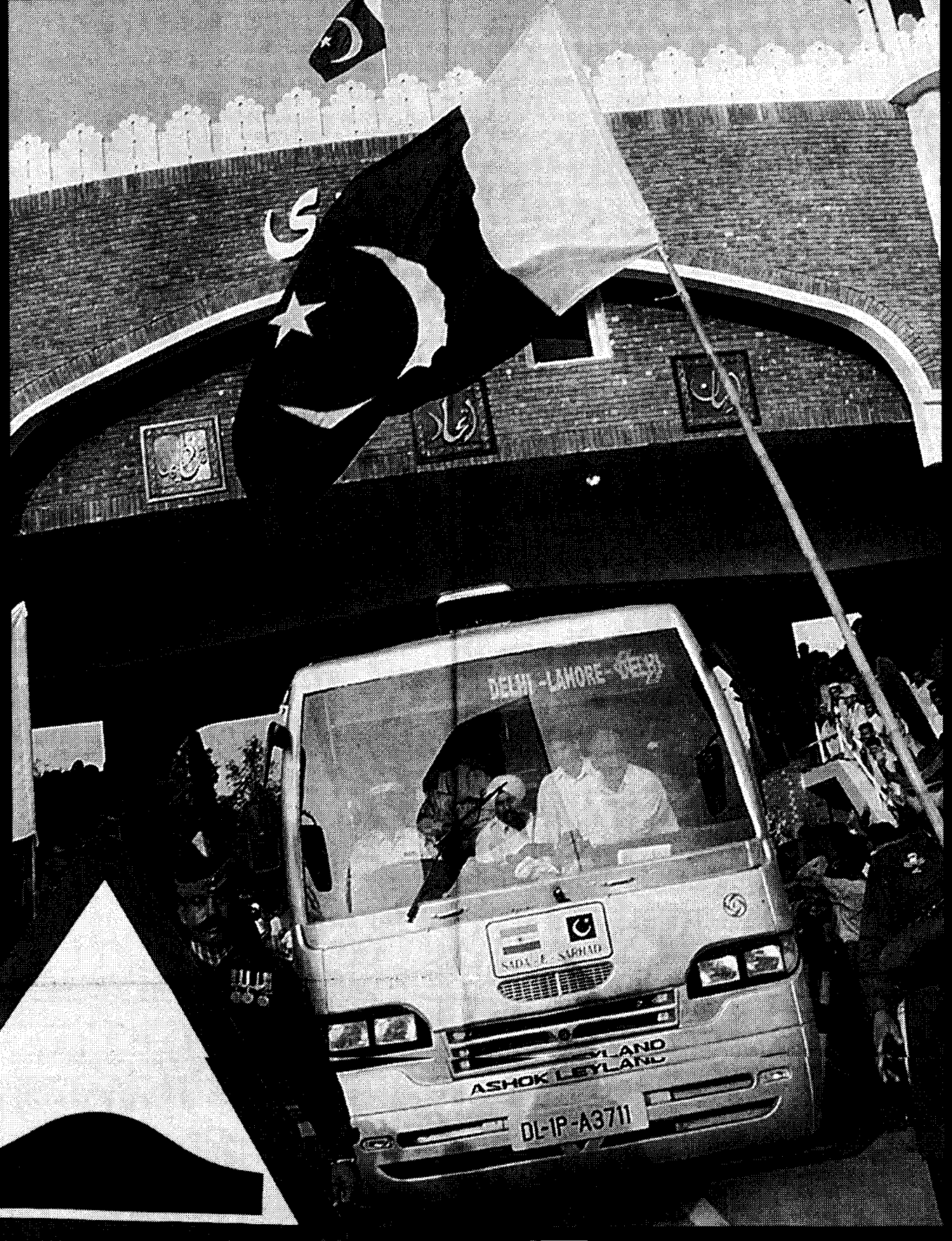
In Islamabad, Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman Masood Khan said that "if invocation of the Simla Agreement was meant to maintain the status

quo, then that is not suggesting a solution, but a way of perpetuating the problem". To this South Block roared, through the voice of Indian foreign secretary Shashank, that the Simla Agreement is indeed the "bedrock" of Indo-Pak relations, and commitment both to dialogue for resolving differences and not to take any unilateral actions". The foreign secretary took the pain to add that his minister had, on all occasions, clearly stated that "we will abide by the framework of the Simla Agreement, all subsequent agreements and declarations and the January 6 joint press statement".

That was the first official admission from Delhi, though, that the new United Progressive Alliance government would honour its NDA predecessor's covenants. Like the La-

**COUNTRY ROADS:** The Delhi-Lahore bus arrives at the Wagah border (right);

file photo of President Pervez Musharraf and Congress president Sonia Gandhi in July 2001 (above). REUTERS/AFP



# CAUTION Bumps ahead

hore Declaration between Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif, and this year's January 6 joint statement by Vajpayee and Musharraf on composite dialogue on all issues, including the nuclear issue, and on laying the roadmap for peace negotiations. It also made amends for having rubbed the subliminal sore in the Pakistani mind about the Simla Agreement.

Signed, as it were, in 1972, in the wake of a humiliating military defeat, the mention of it being the "bedrock" or something may not be pleasant to hear. The foreign secretary's measured statement could well have put the troubled minds in Islamabad at rest but for Natwar Singh and his undying love of the microphone.

Apparently propelled by the altogether reasonable desire to clear the air, Singh took to the

floor at Shastri Bhavan's conference room for nearly two hours, during which the unguided missiles that he again fired are: a common nuclear doctrine for India, Pakistan and China, to the obvious amazement of all three; a hint that the General is upset because the result of the Indian election has destroyed the cosy nexus between him and Vajpayee. Singh quoted a couplet: *Is qadr jo ishq hua, wajah kya thi uski* (What was the reason for the love that blossomed like this?), and said that when the NDA government

couldn't return to power, as Musharraf had hoped, "the game was spoiled"; and, he raised the spectre of Musharraf's assassination, asking, "I'd like the General to live for 150 years but, God forbid, if something happens..."

Finally, it required Congress president Sonia Gandhi's intervention to becalm her greyed protégé (Singh is 73), who, after the meeting with her, and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, returned to his office a changed person. He invited high commissioner Aziz Ahmed Khan over for an unusually long discussion, in course of which he telephoned his counterpart Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri in Islamabad, and told him that "from now onwards, the future of Indo-Pakistan relations would not lie in the past".

Pakistan felt reassured, for the moment at least, and even

arrival ceremonies of the Vajpayee entourage. G. Parthasarathy, the then Indian high commissioner, recalls that the service chiefs made it a point to be without their headgear when they met Vajpayee at a reception in the Punjab governor's mansion.

Two months later, General Musharraf made his views on the Lahore summit even clearer when he described what happened in it as "hot air", called India a "hegemonic power" and significantly added that "low intensity conflicts" with India would continue even if the Kashmir issue was resolved. And all this was happening when, unknown to Vajpayee and his peacenik friends, a few thousand soldiers of Pakistan's Northern Light Infantry were crossing the Line of Control to climb the high peaks of Kargil.

It was an operation masterminded by Musharraf to cut off

Ladakh and the Siachen Glacier.

In October 1999, as Musharraf staged a coup to oust Sharif and take over power, there was no let-up in his anti-India fireworks. He appointed as his foreign minister Abdul Sattar, a former Pakistani high commissioner in India who, during his stint in Delhi, publicly decried the Simla Agreement as unequal. Besides, he belonged to cricket star Imran Khan's Tehrik-e-Insaf party whose prime mover, as everybody in Pakistan knows, is not the glamorous ex-player but General Hamid Gul, a hardline Islamist and former chief of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). Pakistan's home version of the CIA.

Then came the hijacking of IC 814 to Kandahar in which all hijackers turned out to be Pakistani nationals. Vajpayee's equation with Pakistan took a nose-dive since then, as he refused to accord legitimacy to him and forged a widespread consensus to get him excluded from the Council of the Commonwealth (Pakistan has returned to the Commonwealth lately).

However, Vajpayee hadn't given up altogether on the military dictator. He welcomed Musharraf to Agra in July 2001, which was their first meeting since the forcible regime change in Islamabad. Though it produced no agreement, it gave them an opportunity to know each other as men in flesh and blood.

Knowing the General of course didn't help Vajpayee as two things happened changing the course of events: the attack on the Twin Towers on 9/11, and the terror attack on Indian Parliament in December 2001.

The post 9/11 compulsions of the Bush administration in the US, and Musharraf's readiness to be a willing accomplice, turned Pakistan again into a strong US ally, this time against terror. However, the attack on the Indian Parliament, for which the NDA government held Pakistan responsible, began a long winter in bilateral relations.

Troops were amassed on both sides of the border. Diplomatic ties were cut off. Vajpayee repeatedly declared that there would be no talks with Pakistan unless it stopped the low-intensity war.

And suddenly Vajpayee went to Islamabad for the SAARC summit on January 6 and, on its margins, held the hand of Musharraf and smiled.

After five years of flip-flop as far as India is concerned, Musharraf is suddenly up against a team that may be new to office but has long memories of his country. Natwar Singh served as the Indian high commissioner in the Indira Gandhi years. Dixit was among her main advisors in the 1971 war leading to Pakistan's vivisection.

To Sonia, her mother-in-law's moment of pride in 1971 is among the first memories she cherishes after her marriage. The past will no doubt weigh heavily on relations as Pakistani officials begin talking to their counterparts in the Congress-led government in New Delhi. It was so much easier to handle Vajpayee, a newcomer.

**'I'd like the General to live for 150 years but, God forbid, if something happens...'**

described as "innovative" Singh's suggestion for a tri-lateral nuclear doctrine. And it was all quiet on the General's front, suggesting that the turbulence had blown over.

The peace process undoubtedly suffered a hiccup last week but it had a bright side. It surely made the Pakistan administration better aware of the emerging pecking order in post-NDA Delhi, with the Congress president wielding enough authority to fine-tune the foreign policy.

In the NDA government, the central authority rested with Vajpayee, who consulted none other than his principal secretary Brajesh Mishra on foreign policy issues. In the new dispensation decision-making power may be concentrated in 10 Jar path but with inputs from several sources, including the ministry of external affairs and the Prime Minister's Office, particularly from its former-diploma member J.N. Dixit, the experienced national security adviser.

The fact is that Musharraf used to being patted in the West for his smart-alecky posturings, was quite unprepared for the outcome of the Indian poll. Natwar Singh was right when he said that the General had put all his eggs in one basket, though it's doubtful if the statement would have found place in the diplomatic etiquette book.

Caught on the back foot with the Congress coming to power, it took Musharraf quite a while to come to terms with the new reality.

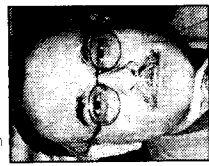
**H**ow will the chemistry work between Musharraf and the new leaders in Delhi? Between him and Vajpayee it was never quite a house on fire. Still, it worked. When Vajpayee took the bus ride to Lahore, in February 1999, at the invitation of erstwhile Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Musharraf, then the army chief, and a rabid India-hater, fumed in protest.

The three service chiefs led by him avoided attending the



# Will the Indo-Pak peace process continue?

**The road from Lahore to Delhi is likely to be more bumpy**



**Nejam Sethi**  
Editor, The Friday Times

Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf last week rang up Atal Bihari Vajpayee and not the real rulers of India, Sonia Gandhi and Manmohan Singh, when he feared the peace dialogue between the two countries might be jolted by precipitous statements from Natwar Singh on the issue of Kashmir and Indo-Pak relations. This says something about the mutual confidence established between Vajpayee and Musharraf on the peace process roadmap and, by corollary, the lack of it between the old government in Pakistan and the new one in India.

Despite continuing provocation in Kashmir, Vajpayee went to Lahore in 1999. Despite Kargil, he braved Agra in 2001. Despite the terrorist attacks on the Indian Parliament he embarked on a peace voyage to Pakistan in 2004 and risked a cricket tour months ahead of the general elections. How can Sonia Gandhi, who declined to be prime minister because she feared a violent Hindu backlash, match up to Vajpayee's courage and statesmanship? Indeed, for a host of reasons,

and visionary politician in their place might have demonstrated. Finally, the BJP in opposition under the ascendant Advani is going to be a different kettle of fish than the BJP in power. Hard-line Hindu ideologues appear set to whip up storms to set the stage for an electoral comeback as soon as possible. Talking with Pakistan about changing the sum-zero game in Kashmir in this environment is going to prove difficult.



**Ayaz Amir**  
Columnist, Dawn

natural to fear that without him this process would stall. But the new man in South Block, Natwar Singh, has been quick to dispel this im-

pulsion. True, his suggestion that Kashmir should not hold up progress on other issues, prompted his Pakistani counterpart, Khurshid Kasuri, to warn that megaphone diplomacy was best avoided. In the old days, this exchange would have led to a major bilateral sulk. In today's climate, it leads to a friendly gesture: Singh calling Pakistan's man in Delhi, Aziz Khan, to his office for a chat and in his presence calling Kasuri in Islamabad.

Normal elsewhere, between India and Pakistan, with their history of irrationality, such civility is dramatic. Some time ago, no Indian foreign minister would have dared propose a common nuclear doctrine for China, India and Pakistan. By doing so Natwar Singh brings fresh thinking to a sensitive subject.

As startling as Singh's proposal is Pakistan's reaction. Far from shooting it down, it says the idea needs more consideration. The Congress-led government is not just beginning from where the BJP left off but adding creative dimensions of its own.

Let's not forget that in his last avatar as peace-maker Vajpayee was not so much taking a bold step forward as returning to the situation

pursuing. What should Pakistan prefer? A bit of honesty or obfuscation on the BJP scale?

Perhaps Singh should not have spoken so soon or so plainly. Otherwise, what he's said about Pakistan and India following the China-India model of talking about their border dispute but not letting that hamper progress in other fields, is no different from the line the BJP was pursuing.

What should Pakistan prefer? A bit of honesty or obfuscation on the BJP scale?

## SUNDAY DEBATE



Neelabh

# সন্ত্রাস বন্ধ হবে কবে, নটবর

## প্রশ্ন করবেন পাকিস্তানকে

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ৫ জুন— পাকিস্তান ভারতের বিরুদ্ধে সন্ত্রাসবাদ কবে বন্ধ করবে? এই প্রশ্নটা পাক সরকারকে সরাসরি জিজ্ঞাসা করতে চান নতুন বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ। অগস্ট মাসে দুই দেশের বিদেশমন্ত্রীর দেখা হবে। আর তখনই সন্ত্রাসবাদ বন্ধের ব্যাপারে জানতে চাইবেন বলে আজ ঘোষণা করে দিলেন নটবর। বস্তুত, বিদেশমন্ত্রী হিসাবে দায়িত্বভার গ্রহণের পরে পাকিস্তানের বিষয়ে ইতিমধ্যেই একপ্রস্থ জলঘোলা হয়েছে নটবরকে ঘিরে। যখন পাকিস্তান সম্পর্কে বেফাঁস মন্তব্য করে দলের ভিতরে ও কূটনৈতিক মহলে সমালোচনার মুখে পড়েছিলেন প্রবীণ রাজনৈতিক নেতা। কিন্তু এর পরেও আজ যথেষ্টই কড়া চালে মন্তব্য করেছেন নটবর। তিনি সম্ভবত বোঝাতে চেয়েছেন, পাকিস্তানের প্রশ্নে তিনি শক্তপোক্ত অবস্থানকেই শ্রেয় মনে করছেন।

নটবর নিজেই সম্প্রতি একটি সাক্ষাৎকারে বলেছেন, বিদেশনীতি ও কূটনীতির মধ্যে ফারাকটা বাজপেয়ী সরকার ঘুলিয়ে ফেলেছিল। তাঁর ব্যাখ্যা ছিল, বিদেশনীতি হচ্ছে দেশ কী চায়। আর কূটনীতি হচ্ছে, কী ভাবে সেই লক্ষ্যপ্রাপ্তি হচ্ছে। দ্বিপাক্ষিক সমস্যার সাময়িক পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে আলোচনার পথ ত্যাগ করা হবে না, নয়া সরকারের এই কূটনৈতিক পথনির্দেশিকা নটবর প্রথম দিনেই স্পষ্ট করে দিয়েছিলেন। কিন্তু দ্বিতীয় দফায় (সরকার বদলের পরে) সেই আলোচনা শুরু আগের নটবর যে ভাবে বিবৃতি দিতে শুরু করেছেন, তাতে বোঝা যাচ্ছে, সন্ত্রাসবাদের প্রশ্নে অত্যন্ত কড়া মনোভাব নিয়েই পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে বৈঠকের টেবিলে বসবে ভারত। দিন কয়েক আগে, পাক হাইকমিশনার আজিজ আহমেদ খান যখন সাউথ ব্লকে বিদেশমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গে দেখা করতে আসেন, তখন বিশেষ সৌজন্য দেখিয়ে নটবর নিজেই পাক বিদেশমন্ত্রীকে ফোন করেন। আর এখন কার্যত কূটনৈতিক বৈঠকের তোয়াক্কা না-করে নটবর বলেছেন, “পাকিস্তানের বিদেশমন্ত্রী খুরশিদ মেহমুদ কাসুরির সঙ্গে আমার অগস্ট মাসে দেখা হবে। তখন আমি পরিষ্কার জানতে চাইব, ওরা কখন সন্ত্রাসবাদ বন্ধ করার পরিকল্পনা নিয়েছে।” একটি সাময়িকপত্রে নটবরের এই কথা প্রকাশিত হয়েছে। সেখানে তিনি এটাও বলেছেন, “সন্ত্রাসবাদের প্রশ্নে কোনও সমঝোতা হবে না। ভারতে সন্ত্রাসবাদের বেশিরভাগটাই আসে

(পাক) সীমান্তের ওপার থেকে। যদিও পাকিস্তানের এই নীতি কোনও কাজ দেয়নি।”

কূটনৈতিক মহল মনে করছে, এটা নতুন বিদেশমন্ত্রীর ‘পজিশনিং’। বিশেষত, শিমলা চুক্তি নিয়ে তাঁর সাম্প্রতিক মন্তব্যে পাকিস্তান তীব্র প্রতিক্রিয়া জানিয়েছিল। বিশেষজ্ঞদের মতে, পাকিস্তানের ওই রকম প্রতিক্রিয়ার বিরুদ্ধে স্ফোভ প্রকাশের রাস্তাই এ ভাবে বেছে নিতে চেয়েছেন প্রবীণ বিদেশমন্ত্রী। কিন্তু এই রকম বিবৃতির লড়াইয়ে শান্তি প্রক্রিয়া ও দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্কে বিশেষ প্রভাব পড়বে না বলেই মনে করছে কূটনৈতিক মহল। কারণ, এই ধরনের তরজা ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের মধ্যে নতুন কোনও ব্যাপার নয়। আলোচনার টেবিলে তাই এর আলাদা করে কোনও ছাপ পড়ে না। নটবর যে ক্ষুদ্র, তা সাক্ষাৎকারেও বলেছেন। তাঁর কথায়, “আমি পাকিস্তানের প্রতিক্রিয়া দেখে অবাক হয়ে গিয়েছি। বিশেষত পারভেজ মুশারফের প্রতিক্রিয়ায়। উনি ইসলামাবাদে আমাদের হাই কমিশনারকে ডাকতে পারতেন। বা দিল্লিতে ওদের হাই কমিশনের মাধ্যমে ব্যাখ্যা চাইতে পারতেন। তা না-করে উনি সোজা টিভিতে চলে গেলেন!”

তবে নটবর পাশাপাশি এটাও জানিয়েছেন, কাশ্মীর নিয়ে ভারত পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে আলোচনা করতেও রাজি আছে। তা ছাড়া, ইরান থেকে পাকিস্তান হয়ে প্রস্তাবিত গ্যাসলাইনের ব্যাপারেও ভারত বিবেচনা করতে রাজি আছে। তবে পাকিস্তানকে আন্তর্জাতিক চুক্তি মানা সংক্রান্ত নিশ্চয়তা দিতে হবে। ইরানই প্রথম এই গ্যাস পাইপলাইনের প্রস্তাব দিয়েছিল। কিন্তু ভারত প্রথমে উৎসাহ দেখালেও পরে তাতে জ্বল ঢেলে দেয়। কেন্দ্রের যুক্তি ছিল, ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের মধ্যে কোনও উদ্বেজনা সৃষ্টি হলে সেই অজুহাতে পাক প্রশাসন গ্যাস লাইন বন্ধ করে দিতে পারে। তাতে ইরান থেকে গ্যাস পেতে ভারত সমস্যায় পড়বে।

নটবরের বক্তব্য, ভারত পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে ‘ঘনিষ্ঠতম’ সম্পর্ক চায়। কিন্তু তা ‘বাস্তবিকতা’ এবং ওপক্ষের ‘সদিক্কা’র উপরে নির্ভরশীল। অন্য ভাবে বলতে হলে, পাকিস্তানের দাবি মেনে কাশ্মীর যে কোনও ভাবেই ছেড়ে দেওয়ার প্রশ্ন ওঠে না, সেটা ঠারে ঠারে আর এক বার বুঝিয়ে দিতে চেয়েছেন নটবর।

ANIL-BAZAR PATILKA

6 JUN 2001

# Indo-Pak debate

## Not hostage to history

5-8  
11/6  
Convulsions that are gripping Pakistan's foreign policy managers are no mere over-reaction as South Block would have us believe. That the latter's attempt at damage control have met with limited success is established by Musharraf taking the extreme step of seeking Vajpayee's help in keeping things on track. Entirely justified are Islamabad's doubts about the new Indian government's continuing with the bilateral initiatives. The stress Natwar Singh places on the Simla Agreement suggests that in his book the developments over the last three decades are of no consequence. In Pakistani eyes the Simla Accord was one between a victorious and defeated nation never mind that many Indian strategists lament that at Simla India's politicians/bureaucrats frittered away the gains the soldiers secured. So to keep harping on it will not endear him to Islamabad, though it might cement his links with 10 Janpath.

For political reasons Natwar Singh might not want to pick up the threads that Vajpayee/Sinha left dangling, yet it would be a pity if the upturn in people-to-people contact witnessed in the spring of 2004 was short-lived. Would it be proper to draw the line at Simla and not take into account the rather solid, if un-dramatic, work of the Narasimha Rao era? That would not attract the charge of superficiality and inconsistency that sections of the Congress have levelled against the NDA's Pakistan-policy. To be fair, the NDA disregarded neither Simla nor what Rao attained. But it is essential to keep moving, preferably forward. The ambience in which the Simla Accord was reached no longer exists. The cold war is over, and to India's discomfort perhaps, the Soviet umbrella is no longer available. The subcontinent is nuclear and balance of conventional military strength does not tilt in India's favour to ensure decisive results. The international climate would not permit full-fledged war, instead tremendous pressure is being exerted to work out a solution in Kashmir. Natwar Singh is too seasoned a diplomat to have to be reminded of such elementary realities, but his trying to revive NAM suggests that he needs to scrape off the rust. When he was first elected to parliament he had quipped that to occupy an office in South Block would be tantamount to incest. Hopefully the policy he now scripts and implements will not suffer the inherent weaknesses of in-breeding.



# Natwar speaks to Kasuri

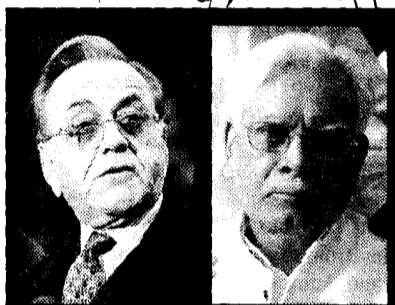
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 3

**S**IGNALLING India's commitment to pursue the peace process, External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh today called up his Pakistani counterpart Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri and told him from now, the future of Indo-Pak relations "would not lie in the past".

The telephonic conversation touched on all issues of bilateral interest and was conducted in a "spirit of friendship, cordiality and bonhomie", External Affairs Ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna told reporters here.

Kasuri conveyed his regards to Congress president Sonia Gandhi and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh while Natwar Singh sent his regards to Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali.

Natwar Singh made the call to Kasuri in the presence of Pakistan High Commissioner Aziz Ahmed Khan who had come to the foreign office to meet Foreign Secretary Shashank. "As a special gesture... (Singh) also agreed to receive the high commissioner and had a very friendly discussion with him lasting more than an hour," Sarna said.



**Pak foreign office says both ministers agreed 'not to talk to each other through the media' for the sake of peace process**

During the conversation, Singh told Kasuri: "From now onwards, the future of India-Pakistan relations would not lie in the past." They touched on issues of bilateral interest, the spokesman said.

The high-level contact comes close on the heels of the two sides deciding to

hold foreign secretary level talks later this month to discuss peace and security including confidence building measures and Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting will be preceded by expert-level talks on nuclear CBMs.

A statement issued by the Pakistan foreign office in Islamabad said both ministers agreed "not to talk to each other through the media, but to talk personally in the interest of Pakistan-India relations and the ongoing peace process". The statement said the two leaders agreed to "remain in close touch". Kasuri felt the two governments could create conditions for peace and security, leading to stability in the region.

Singh's call was also aimed at clearing the air following statements from Pakistani leaders, raising doubts about the future of the dialogue process. In his first press conference after assuming office, Singh had underlined the importance of replacing "mistrust with trust".

The minister had also reinforced the UPA government's commitment to continue the peace process with Pakistan. His suggestion of a common nuclear doctrine for India, Pakistan and China was responded to cautiously yesterday by Kasuri who said it requires "careful consideration".

# Next round of Indo-Pak talks set for June 27-28

By Siddharth Varadarajan  
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

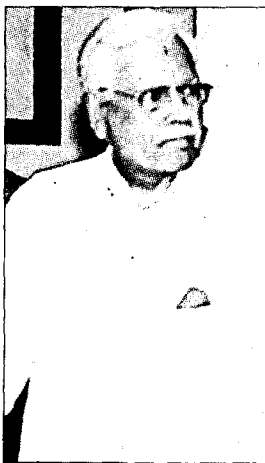
**New Delhi:** Seeking to put an end to the ongoing war of words with Pakistan, India on Tuesday finalised the dates for the formal resumption of the long-awaited composite dialogue process between the two countries.

Making the announcement at a press conference here, external affairs minister Natwar Singh said the two foreign secretaries would meet in Delhi on June 27 and 28 to discuss peace and security issues as well as Kashmir. The previously announced expert-level dialogue on nuclear confidence building measures would precede this meeting on June 19-20.

Referring to the controversy surrounding some of his own statements and those of Gen Pervez Musharraf and the Pakistani foreign office, Natwar said that "a great deal of excitement has been engineered in the last few days". He said he was familiar with "the intricacies, complexities, emotions and suspicions" of the India-Pakistan relationship and that the first dictum of a diplomat is "to think carefully before saying nothing". "I am confident the future of the relationship does not lie in the past. The PM, Sonia Gandhi and I have said we want good neighbourly, amiable, cordial relations with Pakistan". The relationship had to be based on trust, "on frankness, not fear".

Terrorist incidents would not be allowed to derail the peace process, he said, adding that any militant who tried to cross the border would be "dealt with". "But the dialogue will not be stalled at all. I don't want to give them (terrorists) any comfort and encouragement."

Waxing lyrical about the future of the relationship, Natwar said he was in favour of a Saarc cricket team and even "a common nuclear doctrine". "India, China and Pakistan should get together and work out a common nuclear doctrine," he said in response to a question on the new situation



## TIMETABLE OF TALKS

- ▶ **January 6, 2004:** India and Pakistan agreed to resume composite dialogue
- ▶ **February 19:** Two foreign secretaries meet in Islamabad to draw up timetable
- ▶ **June 18-19:** Expert-level talks on nuclear CBMs
- ▶ **June 27-28:** Foreign secretaries to discuss peace and security, including CBMs, and Jammu and Kashmir
- ▶ **Late June:** Technical talks on drug-trafficking and smuggling
- ▶ **July:** Official-level talks on Siachen, Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation Project; Sir Creek; Terrorism and Drug-trafficking; Economic and commercial cooperation; and Promotion of friendly exchanges in various fields
- ▶ **August:** Foreign minister of Pakistan and external affairs minister of India to meet to "review overall progress". To be preceded by one-day meeting of foreign secretaries.

## Atal does not like what he hears

**New Delhi:** Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Tuesday cautioned that the statements on Indo-Pakistan ties from both sides of the border did not augur well for the on-going peace process.

Vajpayee's comment came in response to questions from journalists who quizzed him on what transpired between him and Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf when the latter called him on Monday. While Vajpayee denied that Musharraf had complained about the statements from New Delhi, he conceded that Pakistani president was anxious that the peace process stayed on the rail.

He also said that recourse to rhetoric on both sides was fraught with the potential of creating complications for attempts to restore normal ties between the neighbours.

The statements of the foreign minister K Natwar Singh and Shivraj Patil, while causing concern to those tracking the progress

of the peace attempt, has led to a sort of reversal of roles. So far, it was the Congress which jeered the BJP for not being conversant with the nuances of diplomacy.

BJP leaders like ML Khurana were roundly attacked for their bellicose statements, with the Congress saying that the BJP lacked the finesse of governance.

Little wonder, therefore, that many felt surprised that foreign minister and defence minister resorted to muscular rhetoric against Pakistan with the foreign minister even going to the extent of advising Pervez Musharraf to take tips into diplomacy from his foreign minister. The sense of puzzlement is all the more because unlike the BJP ministers who launched into aggro talk when the tension between the neighbours was quite high, the Congress ministers have lashed out at Pakistan even when the relations are widely perceived to be much better. TNN



created by India having become a nuclear power. When pressed on this proposal, the minister said it was for the national security advisor and cabinet committee on security to discuss these issues.

Though he was obviously seeking to lower the temperature of the past few days, Natwar firmly denied the Pakistani charge that the government of India had queered the pitch by making official announcements of policy.

"They say we have said borders cannot be altered. But no

public announcement has been made...They say we said the relationship will be guided by the Simla agreement, full stop. But I have always held that all subsequent agreements and declarations are equally relevant."

Although he admitted speaking to the press about the 'India-China model' of relations, whereby the Kashmir issue could be set aside for the moment, he denied this was the government's position. "I only said people have talked about this model. I was not

making a policy statement, which I am not authorised to do."

He added that he wished to tell "our friends in Pakistan" that "we are deeply committed to talks on all issues. We were not in favour of stopping the trains and planes in 2001...We will discuss everything in a friendly manner". However, he called upon Pakistan to think again about its plan to introduce resolutions on Kashmir at the forthcoming meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference.

## Talking terms

Indo-Pak ties are dogged by a lack of trust.

We need to get over this to move on.

AFTER some rather sharp pre-dialogue exchanges, the process of composite dialogue to normalise bilateral relations between Pakistan and India appears to be on track despite the change of government in New Delhi. Except for the meetings on restarting the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus travel, it was the meeting on nuclear CBMs (confidence building measures) — scheduled to take place in the third week of May — that had to be postponed. This became necessary because the Manmohan Singh government was still in the process of being formed. It is good that the rescheduling has been given the priority it deserved so that lost time could be made up in the weeks that lead up to the foreign ministers' meet in August.

But we also need to be pragmatic and not start killing the process by overly unrealistic expectations. India-Pakistan dialogue has a long history — almost as long as the tensions and conflicts that have marked interaction between the subcontinental neighbours. What we tend to forget is the enormous quantum of agreements and confidence building measures that have already been agreed to by both sides over the decades. It is in this context that both nations need to bear in mind the reality that the greater the movement toward normal relations, the greater the scope for arriving at mutually agreed solutions to outstanding issues and disputes. What has dogged

bilateral relations is as much a lack of trust — or rather the existence of a near pervasive mistrust — as the reality of differences and disputes.

For example, the mere mention of the 1972 Simla Agreement as the basis of bilateral relations seems to have raised objections across the border. But the agreement committed both sides to meet and discuss the modalities and arrangements for the establishment of a durable peace and normalisation of relations, including a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir. It appears that Pakistan was either unwilling or unprepared to discuss the J&K issue. It was only after militancy assumed serious proportions in the state in the '90s that Islamabad discovered that Kashmir was the "core issue" and must be resolved first before any normalisation can be envisaged. In the meanwhile, the problem is that both sides now have extremely limited negotiating space to even move toward a solution of outstanding issues, especially those related to J&K. Common sense would tell us that any negotiating space would require substantive mutual trust and the reshaping of bilateral relations across the board rather than holding them hostage to a single issue, however important it is perceived by one side or the other. Let both countries then steer ahead in this process of normalisation through dialogue — with hope, commitment and good sense.

# Putting the veil back on Shimla

By C. Raja Mohan

*The recent debate on the Shimla Agreement highlights the importance of preserving certain political ambiguities about final outcomes even as a clear road map is laid out.*

PAKISTAN HAS given the new Congress-led coalition its first reality check on foreign policy. After implying in recent days that he might want to recast the negotiating framework with Pakistan developed by the previous Government last January, the External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, has wisely chosen to signal New Delhi's unambiguous commitment to continuity. Foreign policy, after all, is not a shirt you discard everyday. Evolution rather than discontinuity, according to Mr. Singh, is likely to characterise the approach of the new Government.

In reversing the rhetoric on Pakistan, Mr. Singh has quickly arrested the potential damage to the fragile peace process between India and Pakistan. As his statements on the centrality of the Shimla Agreement threatened to bring down the shaky edifice of India-Pakistan engagement, Mr. Singh had no choice but make a rapid course correction. A unilateral attempt to rewrite the previously agreed rules of engagement with Pakistan would have created big problems for the Manmohan Singh Government across a broad front.

But the questions raised by Mr. Singh on the relevance of the Shimla Agreement are not likely to go away. While it might have been an error of diplomatic judgment to initiate public sparring with Pakistan on Shimla, the substantive questions relating to the 1972 Agreement will continue to haunt the Congress-led Government's negotiation with Pakistan on Kashmir.

Mr. Singh's denial that he ever meant that the Shimla Agreement must be the sole basis for engagement with Pakistan, will be seen for what it is — a damage limitation exercise. The fact, however, is that his remarks can easily be traced back to the Congress documents on foreign policy issued during the elections.

In its manifesto and the vision document on foreign policy, the Congress raised substantive questions about the India-Pakistan engagement under the Islamabad framework negotiated by Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pervez Musharraf in January. It implied that the press statement issued by the two leaders on January 6 was a departure from the Shimla Agreement and that it "reopened the territorial question" on Jammu and Kashmir.

Congress leaders before and after the elections hinted that they needed to review all the agreements signed by non-Congress governments with Pa-

kistan since 1996, when P.V. Narasimha Rao completed his tenure as Prime Minister. Complicating matters, the new leaders also seemed to offer the so-called "China model" of bilateral engagement to Pakistan. Implied in the "China model," was the Indian suggestion that Kashmir should not become the main focus of bilateral negotiations.

Pakistan, surprised like everyone else at the turn of the electoral dice in the Indian general elections, held its peace for a few days. But once it chose to respond, Pakistan did not mince words. From Gen. Musharraf to the Foreign Office spokesman in Islamabad, the message was clear — that the Shimla Agreement cannot be the sole basis of bilateral engagement. Islamabad also made it clear that the "China model" might make sense for New Delhi and Beijing, but that it had little relevance for the India-Pakistan dialogue.

With the war of words escalating, the Government fielded the Foreign Secretary, Shashank, to bring the controversy to a close. In prepared remarks to the press on Monday, Mr. Shashank affirmed that while the Shimla Agreement remains the bedrock of bilateral relations, New Delhi would "abide" by "all subsequent agreements and declarations and the January 6 Joint Press Statement, when the Prime Minister of India had visited Islamabad, and after his meeting with the President of Pakistan." If there were any doubts left that the Government was restoring *status quo ante* in the approach to Pakistan, Mr. Singh sought to remove them at his press conference on Tuesday.

But the recent debate on the Shimla Agreement has some valuable lessons. It highlights the central paradox in any peace process — the importance of preserving certain political ambiguities about final outcomes even as a clear road map is laid out for the journey. Shredding those ambiguities could kill the peace process even before it begins to take off.

Mr. Singh has surely discovered that attempts to lift the veil on carefully constructed ambiguities in the agreements between nations is a risky

business. But the underlying problems in India-Pakistan relations revealed by the recent debate on Shimla are not likely to go away.

For many Congressmen, the Shimla Agreement is sacrosanct for it was negotiated by Indira Gandhi after her finest triumph — the 1971 war against Pakistan that created Bangladesh. That sense of Shimla, of course, was not shared by many of Mrs. Gandhi's political opponents. The Jan Sangh, the earlier incarnation of the Bharatiya Janata Party, then argued that India gave away too much to Pakistan at Shimla and that Mrs. Gandhi let Zulfikar Ali Bhutto off the hook.

In Pakistan too, there are differences over Shimla. While many elements of the political class in Islamabad, in particular those of the Pakistan People's Party, do claim ownership to Shimla, there are others who see it as a victor's agreement that was "imposed" on Pakistan in 1972. This view is particularly strong among Pakistan's armed forces and Gen. Musharraf has made no secret of his distaste for the Agreement.

He has consistently sought to move Pakistan away from the political odium that is attached to the Shimla Agreement. Therefore it was not surprising that Mr. Singh's statements on Shimla evoked such intense negative reaction from Gen. Musharraf. Some diplomats on both sides see ways of living with the Shimla Agreement; but there is one fundamental difference that marks the Indian and Pakistani interpretation of the 1972 Agreement.

Article 1(ii) of the Shimla Agreement, the operative part on Jammu & Kashmir, states that "the two countries are resolved to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them." For India, this implied an emphatic focus on "bilateralism," which would replace the previous involvement of the United Nations and other third parties in the Kashmir question.

While India underlined the first part of Article 1 (ii), Islamabad highlighted the second, which referred to the option of "any other peaceful

means." For Pakistan this implies the possibility of third party involvement. India points out that other means "will have to be mutually agreed."

Unlike the Shimla Agreement, the Islamabad framework of Mr. Vajpayee and Gen. Musharraf is unambiguously in favour of "bilateralism" on Kashmir. It states: "The two leaders are confident that the resumption of the composite dialogue will lead to peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, to the satisfaction of both sides."

Some analysts have seen this as the best formulation on bilateral engagement that India had ever negotiated with Pakistan. It was based on give and take: Pakistan has agreed to deal with Kashmir in a bilateral framework as well as create a peaceful environment by ending terrorism and violence. India in return offered to negotiate seriously on Kashmir. This is the political hinge of the current peace process.

The moment India begins to implement its side of the bargain, the ghosts of Shimla will reappear. There is a strong view in India that Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Bhutto had agreed to settle the Kashmir question with the Line of Control as the international border. Gen. Musharraf says he will not accept territorial *status quo* as the basis for a final settlement. No Indian leader, from any party, will offer additional territory in Kashmir to Pakistan.

The character of the final settlement over Kashmir, and the nature of the linkage between the talks on Kashmir and the rest of the relationship, will be at the front and centre of the India-Pakistan dialogue as it unfolds in the next few weeks and months. The first round of talks between the two Foreign Secretaries on Kashmir will now take place at the end of June.

For now, the Government has wisely chosen to put the veil back on Shimla. That had to be done quickly to restore the mutual trust and confidence shaken by the recent rhetoric.

But there is a bigger challenge awaiting the Manmohan Singh Government — to demonstrate seriousness of purpose in engaging Pakistan over J&K, while ensuring that the normalisation of bilateral ties proceeds.

This demands creative diplomacy and political skill of the highest order. The recent shenanigans on Shimla will look like a minor caper when the two Foreign Ministers meet and review the peace process in a little over two months.

# Natwar's proposal on nuclear doctrine innovative: Pakistan

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JUNE 2. Pakistan has said that the proposal mooted by the External Affairs Minister, Natwar Singh, for a "common nuclear doctrine" among India, China and Pakistan was "new and innovative" and said it needed further and deeper examination.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman, Masood Khan said that the issue could be discussed at the meeting of India-Pakistan experts on nuclear confidence-building measures (CBMs) on June 19 and 20 and at the meeting of the Foreign Secretaries of both sides on June 27 and 28.

Indications are that Mr. Singh's proposal has come as a surprise as the consistent position taken by the Vajpayee regime to suggestions made by Islamabad for a strategic restraint regime was that India's defence preparedness was not Pakistan-centric.

Pakistan does not have a

stated nuclear doctrine. However, the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, told a conclave organised by an Indian magazine in March that his country did have a nuclear doctrine. But, he did not spell out the details.

Observers say that Islamabad, an ally which calls itself an all-weather friend of China, would not make any commitment on the proposal without consulting Beijing.

At the talks on nuclear CBMs, Pakistan could reiterate its suggestion for a strategic restraint regime. Talks on nuclear CBMs are a follow-up to the road map for peace talks worked out by the Foreign Secretaries in February. Nuclear and strategic experts from both sides would meet to suggest ways to reduce risks of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons and discuss concepts and doctrines with a view to elaborating measures for CBMs in the nuclear and conventional fields as

per the understanding in Lahore.

At Lahore, both Governments had committed to "take immediate steps for reducing the risk of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons and discuss concepts and doctrines with a view to elaborating measures for confidence-building measures in the nuclear and conventional fields, aimed at prevention of conflict."

Right now, the understanding between India and Pakistan on nuclear-related issues is confined to exchange of lists of installations and facilities on the first day of every year. Both sides also notify each other in advance about ballistic missile tests and military exercises.

Under the road map for composite dialogue finalised by the both the countries in February, the Foreign Secretaries would meet in May/June this year for talks on peace and security, including CBMs and Jammu and Kashmir.

# Talks with Pak to resume this month

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 1 JUNE

**I**N a clear indication that the peace process initiated by the Vajpayee regime would be taken forward, India and Pakistan on Tuesday finalised the timetable for foreign secretary level talks as well as expert level parleys on nuclear confidence building measures.

External affairs minister K. Natwar Singh, whose assertion that the Shimla accord was the bedrock of any future dialogue with Pakistan, had stirred a controversy and almost threatened to trigger a rhetorical war of words, on Tuesday announced that the talks at the level of foreign secretaries would be held on June 27-28, while the discussions on nuclear CBMs would take place on June 19-20.

Security Advisor J.N. Dixit would replace Brajesh Mishra as India's interlocutor with China on border issues. Mr Singh made it clear that the controversy that began with his comments in a newspaper interview, was a closed chapter. "The future of Indo-Pak relationship no longer lies in the past. We cannot forget the past but neither can we be prisoners of the past," he said.

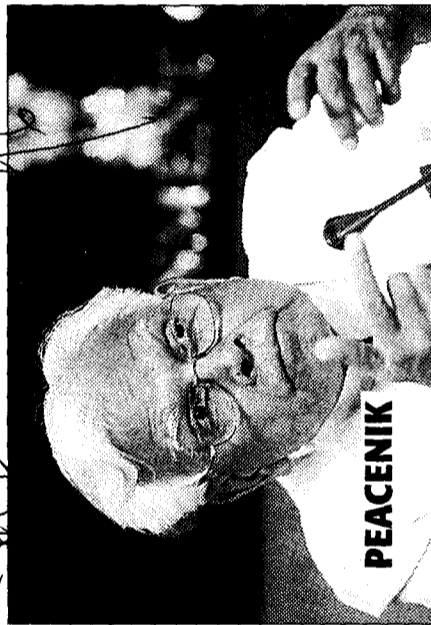
He pointed out that India supported the re-entry of Pakistan into the Commonwealth and its admission to Asean's ARF. "So, I am sorry to disappoint those who thought that the dialogue was not going ahead," he said.

The external affairs minister, however, cautioned that the road ahead was difficult. "The path is strewn with booby traps and high tension wires and we want to put an end to that," he said.

He added that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi favoured amicable and cordial relationship with Pakistan.

Mr Singh said the relationship between India and Pakistan should be based on trust and not mistrust, frankness and not fear so that the two countries could be mutually benefited by addressing issues of poverty.

Clarifying his remarks on the Shimla Agreement that generated controversy in Pakistan, Mr Singh maintained that he had said India's relations with Pakistan would now be governed by the Shimla pact, the Lahore Declaration of 1999 and the joint statement issued on January 6 this year. "We are not conducting a static or sterile foreign policy but we are conducting it in a pragmatic manner," he stressed.



Addressing his first press conference, Mr Natwar Singh also denied that there would be any shift in India's policy of seeking good relations with the United States. Pointing out that the first foreign representative he had received after taking over was the US ambassador, he maintained New Delhi would like to base its ties with Washington on mutual understanding, accommodation, co-operation and consultations. He also announced that National

# Natwar stresses trust in ties

NEW DELHI, June 1. — Setting the record straight on some of the "engineered" disharmony that has crept into the Indo-Pak dialogue process in recent days, foreign minister Mr K Natwar Singh today said bilateral relationship should be based on "trust and not mistrust".

Commenting on the Pakistani foreign minister's statement in Islamabad yesterday — in which he replied to the four points reportedly raised by Mr Singh — Mr Singh said he had not made any such statement.

Maintaining that India is willing to talk to Islamabad on all issues, including J&K, he said the 1972 Simla Agreement, the Lahore Declaration and the Joint Statement issued by the two countries in

January formed the "bedrock" of bilateral ties. He also said the government would work out a mechanism to avoid any protocol problems for Mrs Sonia Gandhi, should she visit Pakistan.

He urged Pakistan to refrain from introducing any anti-India resolution at the forthcoming Organisation of Islamic Conference meeting in Islamabad, saying India had supported Pakistan's entry into the Asean Regional Forum and re-entry into the Commonwealth.

Mr Singh said India, Pakistan and China should sit together to work out a common nuclear doctrine to ensure that all negative speculations on the issue disappear.

He stressed the need to "strengthen

## Dates for talks

NEW DELHI, June 1. — Expert-level talks with Pakistan on nuclear CBMs will be held in New Delhi on 19 and 20 June, while foreign secretary-level talks will be held on 27 and 28 June, Mr Natwar Singh said today. National security adviser Mr JN Dixit has been appointed special representative for border talks with China. — SNS

relations with the USA and asserted that India's relations with Israel would not be at the expense of the legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinian people.

The Cabinet Committee on Security and the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs will be appointed shortly, he said. — SNS

ভূমিকা নিন : অটলকে মুশারফ

ভারত-পাক বৈঠক

এ মাসেই : নটবর

আজকালের প্রতিবেদন: দিল্লি, ১ জুন— দেশে নতুন সরকার এলেও ভারত-পাকিস্তানের সম্পর্ক উন্নয়নের ব্যাপারে বাজপেয়ীর সাহায্য চাইলেন পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট পরভেজ মুশারফ। গতরাতে ফোন করে মুশারফ দু-দেশের সম্পর্ক উন্নয়নের জন্য বাজপেয়ীর উদ্যোগের প্রশংসা করেন। অনুরোধ করেন পরবর্তী পদক্ষেপের ক্ষেত্রেও যেন বাজপেয়ী ভূমিকা নেন। দিল্লিতে বাজপেয়ীর ঘনিষ্ঠ মহল সূত্রে জানা গেছে, ফোনে মিনিট পনেরো কথা হয়েছে তাঁদের। আজই সাংবাদিক বৈঠকে নতুন বিদেশমন্ত্রী কে নটবর সিংহ জানিয়েছেন, পারস্পরিক বিশ্বাস ও আস্থার ভিত্তিতেই ভারত-পাক আলোচনা চলবে। যে সব বৈঠকের জন্য অপেক্ষা করা হচ্ছিল, তার দিনক্ষণ ঘোষণা করে নটবর জানিয়েছেন, পাক-ভারত বিদেশ সচিব পর্যায়ের বৈঠক হবে ২৭-২৮ জুন। পরমাণু আস্থা-অর্জন সত্রাস্ত বিশেষজ্ঞ বৈঠক হবে ১৯-২০ জুন। দুই বৈঠকই দিল্লিতে। পাকিস্তান এই দিনক্ষণে রাজি হয়েছে। নটবর জানিয়েছেন, পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে ভারতের শান্তিপ্রক্রিয়া অব্যাহত থাকবে। কমনওয়েলথে পাকিস্তানের পুনঃঅস্তিত্বের ব্যাপারে ভারত সমর্থন জানাবে। নটবর বলেন, কেন্দ্রের ইউ পি এ সরকার চায় পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে বন্ধুত্ব। বাজপেয়ী সরকার যে শান্তি উদ্যোগ নিয়েছিল, তা অব্যাহত রাখা হবে, এ কথা জানিয়ে নটবর বলেন, আমরা কখনও পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে আলোচনা বন্ধ করতে চাইনি। এমনকি সংসদে জঙ্গি হানার পর আলোচনা বন্ধ, ট্রেন, বাস চলাচল বন্ধেও আপত্তি করেছি। প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিং, ইউ পি এ-র চেয়ারপার্সন সোনিয়া গান্ধীও বারবার বলেছেন সুপ্রতিবেশীসুলভ বন্ধুত্বপূর্ণ সম্পর্ক চায় ভারত। ভারত-পাক সম্পর্কের ক্ষেত্রে অতীতের বৃষ্টিপ ও বিদ্যুৎবাহী কাঁটাতারের উত্তেজনা, আতঙ্ক থেকে আমরা যেতে চাই শান্তিপূর্ণ ভবিষ্যতে। সুবক্তা, কূটনীতিতে সুদক্ষ, বিদেশ বিশেষজ্ঞ নটবর সিং আজ তাঁর প্রথম সাংবাদিক বৈঠকে ছিলেন আত্মবিশ্বাসী ও সপ্রতিভ। পাকিস্তানের প্রতি মিঠে, আমেরিকার প্রতি কড়া বক্তব্যে তিনি বুঝিয়ে দেন, ভারতের বরাবরের যে বিদেশনীতি এন ডি এ আমলে টাল খেয়েছিল, সেই মার্কিন-ঘেঁষা নীতি আর নয়। বললেন ভারত-মার্কিন সম্পর্কও হবে পারস্পরিক সম্মান, সহযোগিতা ও শুভেচ্ছার ভিত্তিতে। প্রশ্ন উঠল গোষ্ঠী নিরপেক্ষ আন্দোলন নিয়ে। নটবর বললেন, বিশ্ব বদলেছে। সাম্রাজ্যবাদ, বর্ণবিদ্বেষ উপনিবেশ আর নেই। এসবের জন্যই গোষ্ঠী নিরপেক্ষ আন্দোলন গড়া হয়েছিল। এখন তা তাৎপর্য হারিয়েছে। কিন্তু নতুন বিশ্বে সন্ত্রাসবাদ, দারিদ্র, এইডস রয়েছে। তৃতীয় বিশ্বের ওপর চাপ রয়েছে আই এম এফ, বিশ্ব ব্যাঙ্কের। আমেরিকার প্রতি কড়া মনোভাব বুঝিয়েই নটবর বললেন, নতুন বিশ্বে ওয়ারশ চুক্তি উঠে গেছে, কিন্তু ন্যাটো রয়েছে কেন? কেনই বা ন্যাটোর আরও বিস্তার হল? নটবর বললেন, এই পরিস্থিতিতে হাতে হাত মিলিয়ে কাজ করতে হবে রাশিয়া, চীন, ভারতের মতো দেশগুলির। পারস্পরিক সহযোগিতা, ঘনিষ্ঠতা বাড়াতে হবে সার্ক দেশগুলির। সোনিয়া গান্ধীর পাকিস্তানে যাওয়া নিয়েও প্রশ্ন ওঠে। নটবর বলেন, সোনিয়া যাবেন, তবে দিনক্ষণ এখনও স্থির হয়নি। তিনি জানান, সোনিয়া যাবেন, সরকারের প্রধান যে মর্যাদা পান, সেই মর্যাদাতেই। ইউ পি এ-র চেয়ারপার্সন হিসেবে সোনিয়া এই মর্যাদা পাবেন। জম্মু-কাশ্মীর বিষয়ে নটবর বলেন, প্রকৃত নিয়ন্ত্রণ রেখাকে সীমান্ত হিসেবে মেনে নেবে না ইউ পি এ সরকার। নটবর জানিয়েছেন, নেপালি প্রধানমন্ত্রী সূর্যবাহাদুর থাপার আমন্ত্রণে ৪ জুন তিনি দু-দিনের সফরে নেপাল যাচ্ছেন। বিদেশমন্ত্রী হওয়ার পর এটাই তাঁর প্রথম বিদেশ সফর। নটবর জানিয়েছেন, চীনের সঙ্গে সীমান্ত আলোচনায় জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা জে এন দীক্ষিতই হবেন ভারতের প্রতিনিধি। ইসলামাবাদের খবর, ভারতের বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিং পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে সব সমস্যা মিটিয়ে নেওয়ার কথা বলায় পাকিস্তান কাশ্মীর নিয়েও আলোচনা চায়। আজ পাক বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের মুখপাত্র মাসুদ খান বলেছেন, আলোচনাসূচিতে মীমাংসার জন্য যে ৮টি বিষয় ছিল, তার অন্যতম কাশ্মীর। গত জানুয়ারিতে ইসলামাবাদে সার্ক সম্মেলনে বাজপেয়ীও কাশ্মীর নিয়ে আলোচনার আশ্বাস দিয়েছিলেন, সে কথাও উল্লেখ করেছেন মাসুদ। ইসলামাবাদে আজ ইসলামি রাষ্ট্রগুলির সংগঠনের এক সেমিনারের উদ্বোধন করে পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট মুশারফ ফের তুলেছেন কাশ্মীর প্রসঙ্গ। কাশ্মীর ও প্যালেস্টাইন সমস্যাকে একই রকম আখ্যা দিয়ে প্রেসিডেন্ট মুশারফ চেয়েছেন দু-ক্ষেত্রেই পশ্চিমী দেশগুলির হস্তক্ষেপ।



## GETTING IT WRONG

**I**t is unfortunate that a new war of words between India and Pakistan is being played out before the media. This fresh tension, caused largely because of misperception and misunderstanding on both sides, must be contained before it blows out of proportion. It is critical, therefore, that the top political leadership in both countries takes immediate steps to clear the air and give a fresh impetus to the peace process. The latest controversy seems to have been created by Pakistan taking umbrage to the Union minister of foreign affairs, Mr Natwar Singh, over-emphasising the importance of the Shimla Agreement in his conversations with the media. Mr Singh is believed to have indicated that the dialogue with Pakistan would be within the framework of the Shimla Agreement. Pakistan seems to have interpreted the minister's remarks as suggesting that that the *status quo* should prevail in Jammu and Kashmir. This inference is based presumably on the belief that the prime ministers, Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, had arrived at a secret understanding in Shimla to settle the issue of Jammu and Kashmir along the line of control. Similarly, Pakistan reacted strongly to Mr Singh's assertion that the China-India model for conflict resolution should guide India-Pakistan relations. As is obvious, the application of this model would mean that the issue of Jammu and Kashmir is kept on the back-burner while relations are normalized in other areas.

Indeed, Pakistan's foreign minister, Mr Khurshid Ahmed Kasuri, was so charged that he declared the need for a regime of rhetorical restraint in south Asia. Predictably, Mr Kasuri also asserted categorically that any solution based on the line of control was not acceptable, and that the status quo was part of the problem and not of the solution. In addition, Pakistan's foreign minister also dismissed the idea of the China-India pattern of normalization being suitable for India and Pakistan. New Delhi has now reacted by suggesting that Pakistan had deliberately ignored Mr Natwar Singh's clear statement that the new government of India was committed to all post-Shimla agreements and declarations as well.

This latest heightening of tension is unfortunate and unnecessary. Misunderstanding and tension have been generated even before the new government in New Delhi has got its act together. Nor has there been any formal contact between Islamabad and New Delhi since the elections. It is vital, therefore, that instead of exchanging views through the media, the political leadership in India must begin the task of immediately setting a timetable for the resumption of a dialogue with Pakistan. It would be useful if New Delhi and Islamabad were to demonstrate sensitivity to each other's concerns. Otherwise, given the fragility of India-Pakistan relations, it would not be at all surprising if bilateral relations derail once again. It would then require a tremendous effort to get them back on track once again.

# When in need, Pervez calls Atal

OUR BUREAU

**May 31:** At the first hint of heat in exchange of rhetoric, the President of Pakistan tonight called not the current but the former Prime Minister of India.

Pervez Musharraf spoke to A.B. Vajpayee to seek his help in furthering the peace process, a few hours after the new Indian government issued its first statement critical of Pakistan.

Musharraf took time off to call Vajpayee, the architect of the Srinagar peace process that led to a breakthrough in India-Pakistan relations, despite being caught up in a bombing crisis in Karachi. (See Page 3)

The President, who shared a good rapport with the former Prime Minister even at the height of tensions between the two countries, said Vajpayee should use his experience for the good of the people in India, as well as to improve bilateral ties.

During the 15-minute conversation, both Musharraf and Vajpayee stressed that unnecessary statements should be avoided to preserve the peace process.

The reference to unnecessary statements came against the backdrop of India and Pakistan taking potshots at each other.

Delhi this evening admonished Islamabad for "deliberately" ignoring the intent of foreign minister Natwar Singh's remarks on bilateral ties and trying to create a controversy. But it was quick to add that India remained committed to friendship and cooperation with Pakistan.

Since assuming office, Singh has been saying the 1972 Simla Agreement should be the bedrock for bilateral relations. He also suggested the two sides follow the Chinese model and keep the most contentious issue of Kashmir on the backburner till progress is made on trade and economic cooperation.

Islamabad has over the last few days iterated its well-known position that ties cannot be improved unless the Kashmir problem is resolved. Pakistani foreign minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri today urged Singh to avoid rhetoric on Kashmir and use statesmanship. "We should observe (a) rhetoric restraint regime to avoid misunderstanding..." Kasuri said in a statement issued in Islamabad.

Indian foreign secretary Shashank clarified that the mention of the Simla pact did not mean subsequent agreements, especially the Lahore Declaration of February 1999 and the joint statement between Vajpayee and Musharraf earlier this year in Islamabad, will be ignored.

# 'Pak got it wrong on Simla Pact, Jan 6'

JYOTI MALHOTRA  
NEW DELHI, MAY 31

**T**HE Centre today accused Pakistan of "deliberately ignoring" remarks by External Affairs Minister K. Natwar Singh and taking them out of context, even as Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri proposed a "rhetoric restraint regime" on the part of both the governments.

"This has worked well in the recent past and should work after the transition of the Government of India," said Kasuri said.

Meanwhile, in the wake of accusations by Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokesman Masood Khan — that New Delhi's emphasis on the Simla agreement had "logical fallacies" — Foreign Secretary Shashank today in turn accused Islamabad of "erroneous" interpretations.

He insisted that Simla was the "bedrock" of the bilateral relationship, but New Delhi would abide by all "subsequent agreements and declarations and the January 6 press statement" between former PM Vajpayee and President Pervez Musharraf.

"We are somewhat surprised at the reactions in Pakistan to some of the External Affairs Minister's recent articulations of consistent policies of the government," said the



Natwar Singh with his Lankan counterpart Lakshman Kadirgamar on Monday. Express photo

Foreign Secretary, "suggestions or inferences that there are differences in intent" between Simla and January 6 are "obviously erroneous".

As the controversy over Singh's remarks escalated, the Pakistani spokesman took potshots at New Delhi, saying it had still not offered new dates for talks on nuclear confidence-building measures or a Foreign Secretary dialogue.

Indian officials insisted talks on both counts would be held in June. "We have clearly laid out a framework for the composite dialogue in the coming months. That process would provide us the opportunity to discuss all these issues and any unnecessary apprehensions in detail," he said.

And while Shashank

asked for keeping the media out of bilateral negotiations, saying India's approach was one of "friendship and cooperation" and that New Delhi hoped its "sincerity and seriousness" would be reciprocated by Islamabad, back in Pakistan, Kasuri said his piece on the value of Simla and the invalidity of the "China model" for Indo-Pak ties.

"If the Simla agreement is invoked to move forward and find solutions, then we do not have any problem. However if it's being suggested for the purpose of freezing the Kashmir issue, it will not work or lead to durable peace in South Asia... We must use statesmanship to resolve all issues. And I believe we are in the process of doing that," said Kasuri.

# Pervez SOS to Atal on peace process

NEW DELHI, May 31. — On a day when the foreign offices of India and Pakistan were verbally sparring on the need to apply a "rhetoric restraint regime", Pakistani President Gen. Pervez Musharraf called former Prime Minister Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee on the phone tonight and urged his good counsel to calm the waters, sources close to Mr Vajpayee said.

In what was termed an "informal chat" that lasted over 15 minutes, General Musharraf — busy grappling with the fallout of a blast at a Karachi mosque — told Mr Vajpayee that the efforts begun by them to bring peace to the region must continue. General Musharraf said the steps taken in the last six months were extremely positive, and nothing should be done to impede that progress. During the telephonic

discussion, both the leaders strongly felt that the atmosphere created in the recent past to carry forward the dialogue process needed to be maintained and unnecessary statements avoided.

Both reiterated the need for the confidence-building measures, initiated by India and Pakistan in the past few months, to be carried forward and strengthened. Earlier today, while India expressed surprise over Pakistan's reaction to recent statements on Indo-Pak relations by the Manmohan administration's external affairs minister Mr Natwar Singh, Islamabad urged the new Indian leadership to observe a "rhetoric restraint regime" and avoid controversy in the bilateral peace process.

Pakistani foreign minister Mr Khurshid Mehmud Kasuri was referring to a number of statements by Mr



Singh and other leaders, including suggestions for the Line of Control (LoC) to be made a permanent border, and adherence to the Simla Agreement to guide bilateral ties. The desire to mould

Indo-Pak ties on the Sino-Indian model and ruling out a plebiscite in Kashmir has also apparently irked Islamabad. Mr Kasuri said making the LoC the permanent border was not acceptable.

"The status quo is part of the problem." Urging Delhi not to conduct diplomacy through the media, he said: "This restraint worked well in the past."

Countering this, foreign secretary Mr Shashank said: "We're somewhat surprised at the reactions to some of the external affairs minister's recent articulations of consistent policies of India... We hope the sincerity with which we're committed to the dialogue process will be respected and an atmosphere free from terrorism created."

India has sent a proposal for fresh dates for expert-level talks on nuclear confidence-building measures, earlier scheduled for 25 and 26 May, but postponed at New Delhi's request. Pakistan, meanwhile, has urged the government to set an early date for foreign secretary-level talks. — SNS

9/10/07  
Gauri

# Ghauri test escalating arms race: Patil

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**BANGALORE, MAY 30.** The Union Home Minister, Shivraj Patil said today that the testing of nuclear-capable "Ghauri" missile by Pakistan was "escalating the arms race." "It [Ghauri test] is escalating the arms race," Mr. Patil told reporters here in reply to a question. "If they [Pakistan] are doing it [missile test], well India will have to take note of it," Mr. Patil said.

He said the Government had taken note of the missile test and added "we can't be concerned on every issue."

"Our policy is to strengthen our country... We have to take note of it and have to do what we should do," Mr. Patil said.

The Minister was on a two-day private visit here. He visited Sri Sathya Sai Baba at his Whitefield ashram here.

Answering a question, Mr. Patil said the Government had not changed the policy on the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and that the ban on the organisation would continue.

"Our stand is already there, what is there will remain," Mr. Patil said. "It is Vaiko's view," he said, when asked about the remarks of the Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam leader, on Saturday that there was no need for the ban in the present circumstances. Mr. Vaiko was clarifying that he had not made any demand for lifting the ban on the LTTE.

Asked whether the Government would consider reviewing the ban, Mr. Patil said "we will decide whether we will continue or discontinue...it [ban] is there now. We have not changed our policy towards them [LTTE]." He said the UPA

Government would strengthen laws if necessary.

## POTA repeal

On the Prevention of Terrorism Act, he said the UPA's Common Minimum Programme had not set a time-frame for its repeal and added, in response to a query, that "if POTA is repealed, it cannot remain in existence in Jammu and Kashmir."

Asked about the message India is sending to the world by



**Shivraj Patil**

repealing POTA, he said: "The international community understands that we are against terrorist activities because we have suffered. Because of our internal compulsions, if some modifications are to be done, it will be done."

"The international community would understand our stand," he said.

On the spate of terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir after the UPA Government took charge, Mr. Patil said the Centre would not be bogged down by the attacks and would fight them. "You think the Government will be afraid of these type of actions?" he asked. — PTI

# 'China model not relevant in India, Pakistan relations'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 30. There is a sense of unease in Pakistan over comments attributed to the External Affairs Minister, K. Natwar Singh, that India would like Pakistan to emulate "Chinese model" in resolution of differences even as Islamabad taking every opportunity to establish contacts with the new Government in New Delhi at the highest level.

This was evident from two separate developments. The Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, telephoned the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, as Foreign Ministry joined issue with Mr. Natwar Singh on "Chinese model" and that Pakistan should not prioritise Kashmir to the exclusion of all other issues.

On his return from a trip to Saudi Arabia, Mr. Jamali chose to establish telephonic contact with Dr. Singh and reiterated his Government's resolve to bring about durable peace between the two countries and forge cooperative relations with all countries of the region. According to a statement, Mr. Jamali told the Prime Minister that Pakistan sincerely believed that peace and tension-free relations were important for the prosperity and progress of both the countries.

The leadership of both the countries had to play a vital role in overcoming hurdles that may come during the process, he said while adding peace was the need and desire of the people of both countries. Pakistan looked forward to an early resumption of Foreign Secretary level talks so that the process of dialogue could move forward.

The statement added that Dr. Singh thanked Mr. Jamali for his letter of felicitation and told him that India would move forward with a positive approach for improvement of relations. "We should continue to move forward with confidence-building measures as this would facilitate and pave the way for discussions on Kashmir," the Prime Minister reportedly told Mr. Jamali.

Dr. Singh appreciated Pakistan's unilateral decision of ceasefire along the Line of Control which had augured well and said: "We should continue this" as it helped in creating an atmosphere for purposeful dialogues.

Dr. Singh also lauded Mr. Jamali's interest in sports and emphasised the importance of continuing sporting contacts between the two countries.

Separately, the Foreign Ministry has rejected reported comments of Mr. Natwar Singh on "Chinese model" and argued that

Kashmir issue "cannot be swept under the carpet." A spokesman claimed that the status quo on Kashmir dispute was not a solution rather it would perpetuate the problem between Islamabad and New Delhi.

"The Indian External Affairs Minister's talk about the advisability of modelling India-Pakistan engagement along the lines of Sino-India negotiations is filled with "logical fallacies," said the statement.

The spokesman said the Jammu and Kashmir "dispute" was neither a border issue nor it was about empty spaces, saying the dispute pertains to the aspirations and political future of the 13 million Kashmiri people living in a territory of roughly 85,000 square miles. Thus the two models referred by India were not comparable, the statement said, adding the Sino-India model may be good in its own right.

The statement said the Kashmir issue was not required to look into perspective of putting the dispute on the backburner or the front burner, as the underlying object lesson was that it could not be swept under the carpet. "The challenge is to inject vision and statesmanship into the dialogue process, invest it with strong political will, and pursue it on the basis of reciprocity in order to break the deadlock and find lasting solutions."

THE HINDU 31 MAY 2004

# India, Pakistan N-talks vital for stability

C Uday Bhaskar  
NEW DELHI 23 MAY

THE forthcoming talks between India and Pakistan on May 25-26 in New Delhi on nuclear and missile related confidence-building measures come six years after the sub-continent acquired an overt nuclear profile and are important both for their political salience and the grave responsibility that devolves upon states with nuclear weapons (SNW).

The political import is reflected in the fact that a new government with Manmohan Singh at the helm has assumed office in New Delhi on May 22 and this is the first official interaction with Islamabad. The current talks will take forward the Jan 6 Vajpayee-Musharraf agreement that marked the resumption of the composite dialogue between India and Pakistan and these official level talks will lay the ground for the next round of talks at the foreign secretary level.

The Congress, the major partner in the new governing alliance, has already indicated that the fundamental continuity in India's foreign and security policy orientation under the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) dispensation will remain in place and to that extent the roadmap agreed to in February between the two countries will be adhered to. The core relevance of the May 25-26 talks will be to formally commit India and Pakistan to a framework that will nurture strategic stability between the two countries that declared their nuclear weapon capability in May 1998.

In February 1999, India and Pakistan signed what is referred to as the Vajpayee-Sharif Lahore Declaration and the central element here was to recognize the nuclear dimension of the securi-

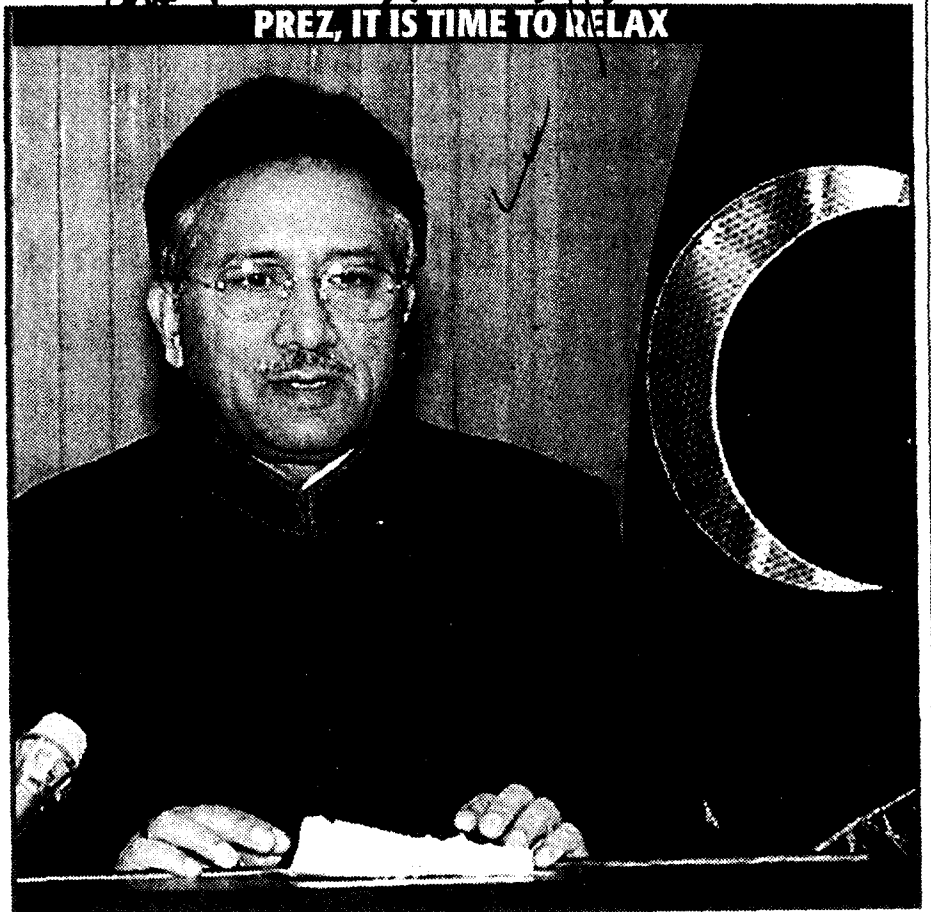
ty environment and the added responsibility this new status imposed for the avoidance of conflict between the two countries.

In this declaration, the two sides pledged to "take immediate steps for reducing the risk of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons and discuss concepts and doctrines with a view to elaborating measures for confidence building in the nuclear and conventional fields aimed at prevention of conflict."

The MOU attached to the Lahore Declaration identifies ten points that both sides agreed to and significantly nine of them pertain to the nuclear-missile domain that include inter alia advance notification of missile tests, nuclear signaling to avoid misinterpretation, et al.

However the Lahore bonhomie was completely negated by the Kargil war a few months later and India-Pakistan ties went into a cold freeze. Kargil was followed by the military coup in Pakistan that brought General Pervez Musharraf to power in October 1999 and a new low was reached in bilateral ties after the terrorist attack on the Indian parliament in December 2001.

Regrettably Pakistan indulged in nuclear sabre-rattling in 2002 which evoked a robust Indian rhetorical response, much to the consternation of the world, and the anxiety about the lack of nuclear stability in the Indian sub-continent was not unfounded. The January 2004 thaw between India and Pakistan was important in restoring some semblance of formal contact between two nuclear capable states and the primary objective now would be to resurrect the spirit of the Lahore MOU and demonstrate the sincerity to realize the objectives, for this will be a long and contested road to achieve the requisite degree of strategic stability.



Apart from the formal political commitment to keep this part of the composite dialogue going and abiding by the tangibles - such as advance notification of missile tests and a moratorium on further nuclear testing - the dialogue on doctrinal aspects is vital for the success of the larger India-Pakistan peace process.

India, which is a reluctant nuclear power, is committed to the policy of 'no-first-use' and may be described as the status quo power - in that it perceives the nuclear weapon as having only one purpose - namely to deter the nuclear

weapon of a potential adversary. Pakistan, on the other hand, has tended to behave in the manner of a revisionist power -- in that the Pakistan military which has control of the nuclear weapon has tried to use this capability to seek tactical or territorial advantage or stoke global anxiety about South Asia as a nuclear flash-point. This was evidenced in 1999 and later in 2002 and the Pakistani penchant to practice both revisionist and petulant deterrence is at the heart of the potential for strategic (nuclear-missile) instability in the region. This

doctrinal mismatch needs to be redressed to the mutual satisfaction of both sides and will be the principal challenge to both countries.

The current round of talks is only the beginning - the proverbial 'alaap' before the main 'raaga' or central tenor (using an Indian musical metaphor) is identified. Both perseverance and quiet professionalism are called for on both sides to achieve this. — IANS

(C UDAY BHASKAR IS  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE  
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STUDIES, NEW DELHI)

# Musharraf congratulates Manmohan

Islamabad, May 22 (Agencies): Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf sent "heartiest congratulations" to Manmohan Singh today, saying his government was committed to resolving all disputes, including Kashmir.

"I wish you a great success in the fulfilment of your important responsibilities as well as progress and prosperity to the people of India," Musharraf said in a message to the new Prime Minister. "I wish to assure you of our sincere commitment to find a just and peaceful solution of all outstanding issues including Jammu and Kashmir," the President said in a greeting that was echoed by Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali.

"Please accept my heartiest congratulations on your assuming the office of the Prime Minister of India... We in Pakistan welcome your government's resolve to improve relations between our two countries," Musharraf added.

Jamali said Islamabad was confident that under Manmohan's leadership bilateral relations "will continue to develop and the process of composite dialogue for the resolution of all outstanding issues including Jammu and Kashmir will be productive".

"I look forward to working with you towards the realisation of the common goal of assuring peace and progress for the people of South Asia," the Prime Minister added.

Musharraf had expected still to be dealing with Manmohan's predecessor, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who was a prime mover behind the peace process.

But the new Prime Minister vowed he would place top priority on improving ties with Pakistan. The neighbours agreed in February on a basic plan to resolve all disputes, including Jammu and Kashmir.

Officials of the two countries are due to meet in Delhi on Tuesday and Wednesday to discuss nuclear confidence building measures, agreed by their foreign secretaries three months ago.



# India not to block Pak's C'wealth return

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, May 21. — India, which is part of the eight-member Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG), the final arbiter in the matter, will not oppose Pakistan's re-entry into the Commonwealth. Primarily as a goodwill gesture, indicative of the thaw in bilateral relations especially since the beginning of the year, but also partly because there is no government to direct otherwise, sources indicated.

The CMAG is meeting in London this weekend to consider the case of Pakistan's re-entry into the Councils of Commonwealth, from which it was expelled after General Pervez Musharraf seized power from the elected government of Mr Nawaz Sharif in October 1999. India, which has chalked out a rough road map for a composite bilateral dialogue with Pakistan, also did not oppose Pakistan's admittance to the Asean regional forum (ARF) this month.

While India does not agree that democracy has been restored to that country, it does not want to be seen as blocking Pakistan's prospects with the rest of the international community.

According to Reuters from London, the 53-member association of mostly former British colonies is one of the last international bodies to hold out against Pakistan while the USA has supported the emerging power thanks largely to its help in the

## Manmohan's remarks very positive: Pak

NEW DELHI, May 21. — Pakistan today described Prime Minister-designate Dr Manmohan Singh's remarks on improving Indo-Pak relations as "very positive, constructive and forward-looking" and hoped the two countries would be able to reach agreements on Kashmir and other outstanding issues acceptable to all.

"We are encouraged by all the positive statements by these (Congress) leaders and we feel that the dialogue process will continue," Pakistan's High Commissioner here Mr Aziz Ahmed Khan told NDTV 24 x 7.

"He (Dr Singh) is a well respected, well known personality in Pakistan," Mr Khan said. — PTI

'war against terror'.

Don McKinnon, the Commonwealth Secretary General, said the Commonwealth ministers were obliged to base their decision on the extent of Pakistan's democratic reforms, but noted that ministers were also aware of the country's acceptance by other nations.

Pakistan has in the last few months been named a major non-Nato ally, sealed a commercial pact with the European Union and joined the ARF.

The outcome of the weekend meeting is far from certain with several Commonwealth sources saying the situation looks finely balanced. One option may be to readmit Pakistan but with conditions attached.

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THE STATESMAN

22 MAY 2004

# Pak tune: Bye bye Atal, hello Sonia

# Ties with India will grow under new govt: China

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD, May 13. — Surprised at the ouster of the Vajpayee government, Pakistan said today that it would endeavour to seek a peaceful settlement of all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, and hoped that the new Indian government would continue with the process of normalisation of ties.

"Pakistan desires peaceful and cooperative relations with India and looks forward to renewing the quest for promoting peace and stability in South Asia with the new government in India," the foreign office said in a brief statement.

"Pakistan will endeavour to seek a peaceful settlement of all outstanding issues between the two countries, including Jam-

mu and Kashmir," the statement said without making a direct reference to the composite dialogue process agreed to by Prime Minister Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and President Pervez Musharraf.

Foreign office officials here, who had strongly hoped for the return of Mr Vajpayee, said they were surprised by the scale of NDA defeat and were eagerly watching the composition of the new government to establish contacts with its leadership.

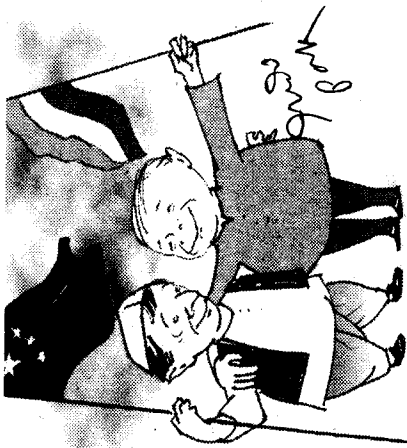
Earlier, reacting cautiously to the Indian poll results, information minister Sheikh Rashid said Pakistan believed the change of government in India will not affect peace process as it had the backing of the people of both the countries. While officials here monitored the results of polls on local

and international channels, a number of politicians, diplomats and media personnel attended an open house organised by Indian High Commissioner Mr Shivshankar Menon at his residence where they watched live coverage of ballot counting by Indian TV channels.

Indo-Pak relations have witnessed a series of ups and downs during Mr Vajpayee's tenure since 1998, with the bilateral ties touching a new low in 1999 due to Kargil conflict.

President Musharraf travelled to India in July 2001 for the bilateral Agra summit which turned out to be a failure.

The bilateral ties reached their lowest ebb after the December 13, 2001 terrorist attack on Indian parliament following which the two countries came close to a war.



Press Trust of India

BEIJING, May 13. — China today expressed confidence that its ties with India will continue to develop further under a new government that will be formed there.

"No matter who takes office, I hope China-India relations will continue to enjoy further development," foreign ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said when asked to comment on the implications of the electoral defeat of the BJP-led NDA government of Prime Minister Mr Atal

Behari Vajpayee.

The relations between the two countries witnessed an upswing after the landmark visit to China by Mr Vajpayee in June last year. As part of confidence building measures, China recently stopped showing Sikkim as an "independent country" in its official maps and presented it as a part of India.

"The elections in India is an internal affair of the Indian people. I will not comment on that," Liu said here.

"However, I know that the Indian government and Indian people and the Chinese government and people share the common spirit for furthering the relations between our two great countries — India and China," he said. Analysts here firmly believe that there is "consensus" in both countries that Sino-India relations should be further improved and developed for mutual benefit and that changes in the political scenario in either country should not affect the deepening of bilateral ties.

Since Mr Vajpayee's historic China visit in June last year, Sino-India relations have witnessed constant improvement and development and frequent exchange of high-level visits, including those by senior defence officials, analysts noted.

# No change in peace process: Pak

Reuters

Islamabad, May 13

PAKISTAN EXPRESSED confidence on Thursday that India's next government would press ahead with a peace process promoted by outgoing Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee.

Pakistani politicians privately regarded Vajpayee as one of the few Indian leaders they were comfortable talking to. But, with Sonia Gandhi's Congress about to take power in New Delhi, Islamabad quickly pointed out that the desire for peace between the nuclear-armed

neighbours was bigger than any single personality.

Foreign Minister Khurshed Mehmood Kasuri said Pakistan acknowledged Vajpayee's contribution towards initiating the peace process between the two countries and pledged to work with his successor to resolve longstanding differences. He added: "I'm confident this process will be carried forward by the next government of India. "The process initiated by Pakistan and India enjoys the support of the people and the political parties of both countries, including the Congress".

## VERDICT IN 2004 POLLS

"Pakistan looks forward to seriously and closely engaging with the next government in India to promote this process of peace and resolution of differences", Kasuri told reporters.

He said the change in government should not affect the timetable for a roadmap to peace agreed to by the two countries. "Even if there's some delay...I don't think it's going to be too long", he told a news briefing.

It was Vajpayee who took the initiative last year in seeking to resurrect talks between countries that have fought three wars since Independence in 1947 and came close to a fourth in 2002.

India's incoming rulers quickly pledged to sustain the dialogue begun with Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf.

"We've consistently supported the dialogue between the two countries ... there's no question of any change", Congress spokesman Anand Sharma said.

"We, in the Congress, have always held that the only

way to resolve issues with our neighbours is through dialogue", Congress spokeswoman Ambika Soni said. But, as yet, Gandhi lacks the personal rapport Vajpayee established with Musharraf at a meeting in January.

Fahmida Ashraf, a South Asia specialist at Islamabad's state-funded Institute of Strategic Studies, said the peace process would continue, although the pace could slow. "Continuation of the peace process isn't only linked with the change of the government in India, but also the whole international environment", she said.

# India accepts dates for talks

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, April 21.— Conveying a sense of continuing engagement with Pakistan, despite the ongoing election process, the government today okayed a set of dates proposed by Pakistan for expert-level talks on nuclear confidence-building measures (CBMs) agreeing to hold them on 25 and 26 May.

(Pakistan tonight welcomed India's decision to agree to its proposal for expert-level talks on nuclear confidence-building measures on 25 and 26 May, a report from Islamabad said. These are very important talks and Pakistan looks forward to Indian participation, Foreign Office spokesman Mr Masood Khan was quoted by Radio Pakistan as saying. "We are happy that India accepted our proposals for dates and we are looking forward for fruitful talks," Mr Khan said.)

India has also conveyed to Islamabad its readiness to hold a meeting of the Committee on Drug trafficking and Smuggling on 15 and 16 June. The venue for both sets of talks will be worked out "through diplomatic channels," official sources said.

Dates for both the meetings were proposed by Islamabad, after the meeting of the foreign secretaries of the two countries in Islamabad on 18 February. "We have today conveyed our acceptance of these dates," the spokesman for the external affairs ministry said.

**'Well-deserved win':** Flying for the first time over India after the two countries restored air links, Pakistani Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali today congratulated Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee for the "well-deserved" victory of the Indian cricket team.

# India-Pakistan peace pangs

By K.K. Katyal

20-10

*In the final analysis, a formidable challenge will be posed by the differences on Kashmir.*

CONTRARY TO the general perception, the balance sheet of the developments since the India-Pakistan summit in Islamabad in January is far from depressing — it is weighted on the credit side, though the entries in the debit column are not to be ignored. In other words, the positive has an edge over the negative. The two leaders, the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, who made a new beginning through a joint statement, had not bargained for an adverse trend within a matter of weeks. While its emergence should be a cause for worry, the peace process, happily, has stayed its course. It is important to have a holistic rather than a segmented view.

Let us take up the negative factors first. 1) The two statements by Gen. Musharraf, one at the *India Today* conclave and the other on the Pakistan television, giving what was seen in India as a unilateral — and, as such, misleading — interpretation of the joint statement; 2) the cancellation of the technical-level talks, at Pakistan's instance, for a bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad in Pakistan held Kashmir; 3) lack of action to dismantle the terrorist infrastructure, notably the training camps for operations across the Line of Control; and 4) domestic pressures, tending to force the ruling establishment in Islamabad to take a tough line in relation to India.

As against that, the positive factors or the entries on the credit side are larger in number and far more significant. These are: 1) continuation of the ceasefire along the LoC and the international border; 2) low level of infiltration; 3) political consensus in India in support of the peace process with Pakistan; 4) muted Indian reaction to Gen. Musharraf's statements; 5) the Pakistan Government's clarification of their President's remarks; 6) increase in non-official contacts; and 7) new look at the Wagah border.

This is the situation as of now. The outcome of the discussions in the next four months will be crucial. One of the bilateral contacts, visualised by the two Foreign Secretaries in pursuit of the Islamabad joint statement, had materialised. This was between the top functionaries of the Border Security Force and Pakistan Rangers who, apart from discussion on other issues, decided to give a

"friendly" look to the daily exercise at Wagah, till now marked by display of mutual hostility. Another major contact — talks on nuclear confidence-building measures (CBMs) — is scheduled towards the end of next month when the new government would be in office in India. What happens at these talks, at the level of Additional Secretaries, would be important by itself as well as for setting the tone for the subsequent contacts — between the Foreign Secretaries in July and the Foreign Ministers in August.

The difficulties in the way of an agreement on nuclear CBMs are not to be underestimated. The two sides will be picking up from the MoU signed in Lahore in February 1999 during Mr. Vajpayee's bus journey, which could not be followed up for various reasons — chiefly because of the change of regime in Islamabad after the military coup. The MoU sought to address secondary problems. For instance, it committed the two Governments to "national measures to reduce the risks of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons under their respective control." Also, they agreed to "abide by their respective unilateral moratorium on conducting further nuclear test explosions" — with a caveat that sought to release them from this obligation when "extraordinary events have jeopardised the supreme interests" of either side. On the substantive aspects, the two sides were known to hold sharply different views. Pakistan does not subscribe to the doctrines, enunciated by India — of no-first-use of nuclear weapons — while New Delhi has reservations about Islamabad's plea for "strategic restraint" and its proposal for nuclear-free South Asia. The May-end round of talks will provide the first indication of the new Indian Government's style of dealing with Pakistan. Miracles should not be expected from the first interaction on the subject.

Gen. Musharraf's one-sided interpretation of the joint statement, as was natural, was received here with surprise and shock. The talk of the primacy of the Kashmir issue and his insistence that there had to be a

movement forward on it during the Foreign Ministers' meeting for him to stay in the peace process were regarded as an uncalled-for threat, totally out of tune with both with the letter and the spirit of the joint statement. New Delhi's reaction was in a low key not because the political bosses were preoccupied with the election but because it wanted to give Pakistan the benefit of doubt (seeing the General's statement as a response to domestic sensitivities). The muted Indian reaction led to helpful second thoughts in Pakistan. Both the establishment and non-official commentators realised that their side had gone too far — and tried to restore the balance. This was evident, on the one side, from the clarification by the Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Riaz Khokhar, that no deadline was sought to be imposed, and, on the other, from the tenor of non-official comments.

Here is a sample from a writer in *Daily Times*, Ijaz Hussain. Criticising India for its Pakistan policy and finding justification for Gen. Musharraf's fears regarding New Delhi's "irremediable tendency to sideline Kashmir," he, nonetheless, regards the President's statements premature. "Musharraf," he says, "is undoubtedly a brave man who has taken great risks on Kashmir in order to get the dispute settled. Raising the kind of concerns that he is doing at this stage could nullify the good work he has done towards the resolution of the dispute. If Musharraf persists in his outbursts, he may be accused of scuttling the ongoing process. He has earned kudos from the international community for his courageous moves on Kashmir. Let him not squander them through his impetuous and untimely utterances."

There is a sharp contrast in the domestic political setting in the two countries as regards the peace process. In India there is a remarkably high degree of consensus in its support. This at a time when the inter-party confrontation is at its fiercest. The significance of the all-round agreement has not been grasped either by Pakistan or the world community and big powers. The great "facilitator" does not appear to have

noticed this development.

In Pakistan, on the other hand, the political fallout of the Government's operations in the tribal area, to flush out Al-Qaeda and Taliban cadres, has created a strong compulsion for Gen. Musharraf to take a tough stance on Kashmir. This action is extremely unpopular in Pakistan, with vast sections, especially the religious parties, blaming the Government for having acted at the bidding of the Americans. For Gen. Musharraf, there could not have been a better way of deflecting the attacks than by taking a hard line on Kashmir. This theory has been repeatedly propounded in the last few days and, as such, there is nothing original about it. What is new is the contrast between the support for the peace process in India and the pressure exerted on it in Pakistan.

In the final analysis, a formidable challenge will be posed by the differences on Kashmir. The maximum that India may offer would fall short of the minimum Pakistan is prepared to accept. However, the search for a solution will be facilitated if the two sides address each other's concerns. New Delhi would do well to dispel the prevailing impression in Pakistan that India's view of peace begins and ends with the CBMs, like the people-to-people contacts and trade relations, and does not extend to the resolution of the Kashmir problem. On its part, Islamabad will need to take credible measures to dismantle the infrastructure for terrorist operations. This, by itself, would not settle the Kashmir issue but would go a long way in removing suspicious. It would be worthwhile resorting to the back channel diplomacy of the type tried in 1998-99, which was interrupted by Kargil. At the same time, the constituency for peace, which has emerged as a major positive factor as a result of increased contacts, could be extended and strengthened. Pakistan could have avoided last-minute cancellation of the talks for a bus service between the two parts of Kashmir. When major initiatives are to be launched, there is no point in entertaining fears that the bus service would weaken Pakistan's stand, treating Kashmir as a disputed territory. These are in-built incentives — in the current situation, viewed in its totality — to pursue the peace process which could be usefully tapped by two sides.

# Vajpayee hints at 'new initiatives' to improve bilateral relations

By Manas Dasgupta

**AHMEDABAD, APRIL 16.** The Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, today hinted at "new initiatives" by India to further improve its relations with Pakistan and thanked the people of that country for their "sportsman spirit and excellent behaviour" with the players of the Indian cricket team and Indian spectators.

Addressing a public meeting in the constituency of his Deputy, L. K. Advani —Gandhinagar —this evening, Mr. Vajpayee advised the people of India to "learn a lesson or two" from the good behaviour demonstrated by the people of Pakistan.

Congratulating the Indian team for its victory over Pakistan, the Prime Minister said it was not easy to digest defeat, but the people of Pakistan accepted defeat in true sportsmanship.

Mr. Vajpayee cautioned people against raising "undesirable issues" and said the elections were an very important aspect of democracy and must be fought in a clean atmosphere and in a sportsmanship spirit. Many objections were raised when the Centre decided to send the Indian team to Pakistan and doubts were aired about the fallout of the tour. But the excellent atmosphere prevailing all through the tour had strengthened the bonds between the two countries. "We want to further strengthen our relations with Pakistan and take

new initiatives in this direction" after the elections.

He said he was not sure how much success the new initiatives would pay but India's efforts for peace with its neighbour had been appreciated by all the countries in the world. All the countries now admitted that India was ready to go to any extent for peace and good neighbourly relations with Pakistan.

Mr. Advani and the Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, also referred to the "feel good" atmosphere in cricket following India's win over Pakistan and they made particular references to the contributions made to team's victory by the two Gujarat players, Parthiv Patel and Irfan Pathan.

## 'Court being dragged into many issues'

While congratulating Mr. Modi for the Supreme Court's judgment earlier in the day rejecting a plea for a stay on the construction of the Narmada dam, Mr. Vajpayee said that it was particularly a day of victory for the people of Gujarat. Without referring to any particular issue, he said the Supreme Court was now being dragged into many issues which need not go to the judiciary. "I am not criticising the judiciary, it has a special place in democracy and it is better the courts decide some of the things where no decisions could be reached other-

wise," he said. *Indu Park*  
Mr. Vajpayee stressed the need for further reform in the electoral system and said his Government, if voted back to power, would ponder seriously how the election system could be further cleaned that truly reflected people's aspirations and democratic rights. Asking people to cast their votes in large numbers, he said it should be treated as a "national consciousness" and pointed out that in some of the countries people were penalised for not casting their votes.

India, he said, was proud of being the biggest democracy in the world and the coming elections would be yet another test of the people's democratic aspirations. The elections must be fought in "clean and transparent atmosphere" devoid of any "undesirable issues." There should not be any place for the money and muscle powers to win an election.

## 'J&K did India proud'

Repeatedly congratulating the people of Jammu and Kashmir for participating in the last elections ignoring threats to their lives by the terrorists, Mr. Vajpayee said they had made the people of India proud for fulfilling the democratic aspirations. Referring to the recent killings in Uri in an attack on an election meeting, the Prime Minister expressed the confidence that despite all efforts to spoil the atmosphere in that State, the people

would again come out in large numbers to participate in voting. Mr. Vajpayee said the coming elections would be the first in the country to be held "without any tension." Expressing full confidence at the BJP's victory in the hustings, Mr. Vajpayee said the issue was not how many seats his party would win, but with what margin. He advised the people in all the polling booths to start a "competition" among themselves as to who ensured the largest turn out.

## Controversy over meeting venue

Mr. Vajpayee's meeting at the Sardar Patel cricket stadium here, however, has sparked a controversy over the alleged violation of election code of conduct. The state Congress has submitted a complaint to the election commission claiming "unauthorised use" of the stadium for the Prime Minister's public meeting.

According to the Pradesh Congress spokesman, Shaktisinh Gohil, the Ahmedabad municipal corporation, which owned the cricket stadium, had adopted a resolution disallowing permission for using the ground for any purpose other than a sporting activity. He alleged that the ruling party had misused its powers to force the Municipal Commissioner to allocate the stadium for Mr. Vajpayee's meeting without seeking clearance from the elected wing.

'CANNON BALLS HAVE BEEN REPLACED WITH CRICKET BALLS'

# Vajpayee for permanent peace with Pakistan

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By Luv Puri

**JAMMU, APRIL 14.** The Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, said today that the peace process between India and Pakistan was on the right track.

Addressing a public rally here, Mr. Vajpayee said, "We want permanent peace. India

and Pakistan are neighbours and have to live together. Weapons cannot solve problems between the two nations; cannon shells have now been replaced with cricket balls. The world is looking at us and both countries have to move forward. There is no way except peace and we have to try again

and again. We have fought wars that did not resolve any problem. India is earnest in pursuing peace."

The Prime Minister said he saw a sea change in the attitude of the Pakistan establishment and termed the peace process "a new chapter between the two countries." Pakistan had

made a commitment that it would not sponsor cross-border terrorism and "I term it a big development. Some people do not realise its importance." If the Pakistan leadership had agreed to this during the Agra summit, valuable time would not have been wasted, he said.

When he had gone to Lahore, there was speculation that the trip would not prove successful. It turned out to be true because when he was talking to his Pakistani counterpart, they were preparing for the Kargil aggression, he said.

Mr. Vajpayee said a new chapter had started between India and Pakistan and hoped it would continue uninterrupted. "I have always been stressing that every contentious issue should be resolved by a dialogue process. Fortunately, our neighbour has agreed to it and both nations are moving ahead. India has always supported peace but whenever there was aggression, it has always defended its integrity."

Indirectly referring to the All-Party Hurriyat Conference, he said, "They say that they believe in democracy but also add that they do not have faith in elections. From where will we hold separate elections for them? The democratic process is the same in every part of the coun-

try. Let the people elect their representatives in a peaceful and impartial way. We have played it in the past. The elections were free and fair in 1977 and thereafter, complaints started coming. But again those who asserted that elections could never be free in the State were proved wrong during the last Assembly elections. Democracy does not mean a mere transfer of power. It is a system that opens the door of progress and everybody becomes a partner. In the Lok Sabha polls, Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh will choose their representatives." Mr. Vajpayee said that there were some elements who believed in violence and were taking support from outside the country. They wanted to create a new future with outside support but they would not succeed. "Attacking election candidates like in the incident in Uri is no way to solve problems."

## Appeal to Jethmalani

**JAMMU, APRIL 14.** The Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, today hoped that the former Law Minister, Ram Jethmalani, would reconsider his decision to contest the Lok Sabha elections from Lucknow, assuring him that he [Mr. Vajpayee] would continue to address the issues of concern to him, such as the security and welfare of the minorities and the freedom of the press.

"Mr. Ram has filed his nomination to contest for the elections from the Lucknow constituency from where I am also seeking re-election. Since this is likely to be the last election in which we will be active participants, I expect that he will reconsider his decision," Mr. Vajpayee said in a statement here.

"The issues that are of concern to him — particularly with regard to the security and welfare of the minorities and the freedom of the press — have always been important to me as well. I assure him that these will continue to be addressed, if I am returned

to office after the elections," he said. The Prime Minister said that he was a witness to Mr. Jethmalani's many contributions and continuing commitment to the country's political and social causes, including Jammu and Kashmir and India-Pakistan relations. His advice and counsel in these matters would always be valued.

Regretting that certain "totally uncalled for" statements of a personal nature had been made against Mr. Jethmalani during this campaign, Mr. Vajpayee said: "These are inconsistent with what I have always stood for in my public life. They are regrettable and should not have been made." — UNI

PTI reports from New Delhi: Asserting that contesting the Lok Sabha elections from Lucknow was a "national duty and not a matter of sentiment," Mr. Jethmalani said over telephone from Mumbai that he would decide on Mr. Vajpayee's appeal only after consulting the supporting political parties.

THE HINDU

THE HINDU

15 APR 2004

# People's Diplomacy

## Pak politicians on Indian goodwill mission

In this season of cricket diplomacy, the news of a Pakistani political delegation arriving in the country on a goodwill mission was, perhaps, destined to be a sideshow. But that shouldn't detract from the importance of the visit by a seven-member parliamentary delegation led by Pakistan People's Party (PPP) president, Makhdoom Amin Fahim. The parliamentary contingent, which arrived in New Delhi at the invitation of a civil rights campaigner, met and shared notes on issues of bilateral interest with their Indian counterparts. Kashmir, expectedly, was among the topics that came up during the discussions. A meeting with the Left parties stressed the need for a sustained dialogue and people-to-people contact. As the J&K unit secretary of the CPM, Mohammed Yusuf Tarigami, pointed out, there was a case for stepping out of the "rigid frame" to make an honest bid for peace. A sentiment that the ruling BJP also seems increasingly to share. The party's Vision Document has shown a welcome change in its position on Article 370, which bestows a special status on J&K. Arriving as the nation gets ready to go to the polls, the Pak delegation would also have had a ringside view of our democratic process. Warts and all, Indian democracy has been like the good old ambassador — an aesthetic eyesore perhaps, but solid enough to carry us on an arduous journey, potholes and all.

For our friends from Pakistan, whose encounters with democracy have been disappointing, the Indian experience will, hopefully, prove rewarding. Democracy has been the centripetal force which has held the heterogeneous commonweal together. The presence of a vibrant civil society, the right to dissent, and the constitutional guarantees for the minorities, are as much responsible for 'India Shining' as a liberalised economy. It is in the overall interest of the subcontinent that such a democracy finds its feet in the neighbourhood as well. Social forces that open polities nurture and encourage will have a greater stake in peace. Peace is too important an issue to be left to the mandarins of the state. Be it visits by politicians or academics or sportspersons, any people-to-people contact should be encouraged; for that is diplomacy by other means. Journeys can rectify the distortions of received notions of history, especially in the case of people of India and Pakistan who continue to bear the burden of Partition politics. A border-less subcontinent may be too distant a dream, but it is a dream worth striving for.



# Peace process: the bumps ahead

By C. Raja Mohan

*Whatever might be the motivations of Gen. Musharraf, New Delhi must resist the temptation to press the panic button.*

**D**ESPITE THE unprecedented popular enthusiasm on both sides of the border for improved bilateral relations between India and Pakistan, the peace process has begun to hit a big bump on the road. While the formal negotiations on the full range of bilateral issues are a few weeks away, the answer to an uncomfortable question can no longer be avoided. Will the political framework for the peace process, which was announced in Islamabad last January by the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and the President of Pakistan, Pervez Musharraf, survive the scorching summer that lies ahead in the subcontinent? At the heart of the challenge to the peace process, no surprises there, is the question of Jammu and Kashmir.

The divergence of approach on Kashmir has already begun to manifest itself in the decision to postpone official-level talks between the two sides scheduled for this week on the launch of a bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad across the Line of Control. While there might be polite noises about continuing these talks in future, it is becoming clear that Pakistan is not yet ready to soften the LoC and allow movement of people across the border.

The Indian proposal late last year for such a bus service had electrified the people of Kashmir across the LoC. The inability of Pakistan to agree to the bus service might be presented as a disagreement with India over the modalities of organising movement of people across the LoC. India and Pakistan certainly differ on the kind of documents that the people must carry. But at the root of the disagreement is a political apprehension in Pakistan. Permitting people-to-people contact across the LoC, with all the necessary customs and immigration formalities, sections of the Pakistani establishment believe, will weaken Islamabad's position that Kashmir is a "disputed state" and might make the LoC look like a regular border.

Even more important, the recent emphasis by Gen. Musharraf on the primacy of Kashmir in the Indo-Pakistan dialogue has begun to cast a dark shadow over the peace process. In recent remarks, Gen. Musharraf made it amply clear that the current bonhomie across the border, reinforced by an exciting cricket series, could easily be reversed if in the perception of Islamabad there is no progress towards the resolution of the Kashmir question. The comments

have been downplayed in Pakistan and made light of in India. But there is no running away from the fact that the General has raised fundamental questions about the future of the peace process.

"We have to move forward on Kashmir. We have to resolve it," Gen. Musharraf said in a broadcast over Pakistan Television a few days ago. "The Foreign Ministers will meet in July/August. If we don't move forward, I am not in the process," he emphasised. These remarks were interpreted in the Pakistani media as setting a deadline for resolving the Kashmir question. Pakistani officials were quick to reject the notion that the peace process with India was in jeopardy even before it began to take off. The Pakistani Foreign Secretary, Riaz Khokkar, underlined that Pakistan was not setting any "deadline" for a solution to the Kashmir question and that Gen. Musharraf did not use the word.

The Indian side, too, was quick to dismiss the fear that the peace process might be in danger. The Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, with a reputation of being a hardliner on Pakistan, gave the benefit of the doubt to Gen. Musharraf. He suggested that the remarks might only be about posturing to the domestic audience. Sections of political opinion in Pakistan have accused Gen. Musharraf of softening Pakistan's stand on Kashmir.

The Defence Minister, George Fernandes, insisted that the India-Pakistan peace process was moving in the right direction and that there was no reason for New Delhi to be perturbed by Gen. Musharraf's remarks. He pointed out that a road map has been drawn for India-Pakistan engagement, which will address all bilateral issues, including Kashmir. The Vajpayee Government, having taken credit for engineering a successful peace process with Pakistan, is in no position during an election campaign to get into an extended verbal spat with Gen. Musharraf on what seem to be disconcerting signals that Pakistan might be backtracking from the Islamabad deal.

But the problem arising from Gen. Musharraf's remarks is not about setting a deadline for the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. It is about reo-

pening the questions about the nature of the linkage between key issues in the peace process. Most people believed that they had been sorted out in Islamabad.

The joint statement issued in Islamabad on January 6 by Mr. Vajpayee and Gen. Musharraf had two interconnected deals. The first understanding defines the relationship between cross-border terrorism and India-Pakistan dialogue. At Islamabad, the two sides agreed that the renewed engagement between the two countries would take place in an atmosphere free of violence. Gen. Musharraf would take steps to prevent cross-border terrorism. And India in return would negotiate on all issues, including Kashmir.

The second understanding is about the relationship between normalisation of bilateral relations and the resolution of outstanding issues such as Kashmir. The joint statement in January said: "To carry the process of normalisation forward, the president of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of India agreed to commence the process of the composite dialogue in February 2004. The two leaders are confident that the resumption of the composite dialogue will lead to peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, to the satisfaction of both sides."

Both these issues are of crucial importance and both sides have long argued about them in defining the parameters of a sustainable peace process. At Islamabad, India and Pakistan seemed to have found a way to address them in a reasonable manner. Gen. Musharraf is now suggesting that this framework could unravel if there is no "progress" in the resolution of the Kashmir question. In his comments to the *India Today* conclave last month, Gen. Musharraf said the situation could return to square one, if Pakistan believed that the movement on Kashmir was not adequate.

In other words, violence in Kashmir could resume if there is no satisfaction for Pakistan in the negotiations. This reinforces the suspicion in New Delhi that Gen. Musharraf's offer to end terrorism was merely tactical and that Pakistan would continue to use violence as a leverage in the negotiations over

Kashmir. This would in turn force India to keep its own cards on the Kashmir negotiation close to its chest until the summer months are over, when infiltration is at its peak.

On the relationship between normalisation of bilateral relations and the resolution of the Kashmir question, the past arguments between India and Pakistan centred on what comes first. India used to argue that normalisation of bilateral relations must precede the resolution of the Kashmir question. Pakistan insisted that improvement of ties could only follow a solution to what it sees as the core dispute between the two nations. At Islamabad the two sides finessed their differences by moving from the emphasis on sequential movement to simultaneous progress.

The essence of the understanding at Islamabad was that both normalisation of bilateral relations and the movement towards the resolution of the Kashmir question would begin at the same time. Sane voices on both sides of the border also believed that it might not be possible to proceed at the same pace on all issues. What was important was movement on all fronts, a focus on solving problems, and an effort to address the difficult issues sincerely.

Gen. Musharraf's argument now that if there is no "movement" on Kashmir, he will be out of the peace process runs against that common sense, which seemed to prevail at Islamabad. This is reflected in the signals that Pakistan plans to hold back on the normalisation of bilateral relations — whether it is on trade or contact between the Kashmiris — until there is progress, unilaterally defined by Gen. Musharraf, in the impending negotiations on Kashmir.

Two factors might be compelling Gen. Musharraf to backtrack on the Islamabad framework. One could be the need to deflect domestic pressure arising from the controversial military operations, under American pressure, to root out the remnants of the Al-Qaeda and the Taliban from Pakistani soil. The other could be a miscalculation by Gen. Musharraf that the American decision to designate Pakistan as "a major non-NATO ally" has begun to alter the external environment of the peace process in favour of Pakistan. Whatever might be the motivations of Gen. Musharraf, New Delhi must desist from the temptation of pressing the panic button. While it must be prepared to face all eventualities, India must continue to do its best to sustain the peace process with Pakistan.

# India, Pakistan put off talks on bus service

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By Amit Baruah

**NEW DELHI, APRIL 7.** India and Pakistan today decided to postpone the technical-level talks on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service scheduled to be held in Islamabad on April 8 and 9, the Ministry of External Affairs announced.

"After mutual consultation, technical-level talks on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service scheduled for April 8 and 9, 2004, have been postponed. Fresh dates would be worked out through diplomatic channels," a Ministry statement said.

To ensure that the decision to put off the dialogue was not given a negative spin, an identical statement was released in Islamabad as well.

This, diplomatic sources said, was intended to convey that the decision had the back-

ing of both the parties.

Asked if this meant that the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus talks would now be held after the Indian elections, the sources said this was a distinct possibility.

It would appear that the two Governments have taken this step as considerable ground had to be covered before the bus service could begin. Pakistan, for instance, had expressed reservations about the use of passports as crossing the Line of Control with passports would mean that the LoC was as good as the international border.

India had proposed a Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service on October 22, 2003, as part of a slew of confidence-building measures between the two countries.

The initial response from the Pakistani Foreign Secretary, Riaz Khokhar, to this proposal

was negative, but Mr. Khokhar's statement was superseded by positive remarks made by the Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, on November 23.

On December 31, after the positive response from Pakistan, India proposed that talks on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service be held on January 19. But after discussions with Pakistan, the talks were scheduled for late March, and following an Indian request, pushed back to April 8 and 9.

There is little doubt that there is a world of difference between running a bus service between Khokrapar-Munabao, Delhi-Lahore and Srinagar-Muzaffarabad.

It might be a useful exercise for both countries to agree on broad details and logistics before formal talks are held on the trans-LoC bus service.

# Pak refuses visas to Indian tea delegation

Press Trust of India

KOLKATA, April 4. — The Indian tea industry's effort to make inroads into the Pakistani market through better personal relations has received a temporary setback as Islamabad has refused to grant visas to a 14-member tea delegation.

The Indian Tea Association was planning to lead a delegation to Pakistan from 8 April and had applied for visas last month.

"We have not been issued visas and hence are forced to defer the planned visit to 17 May," ITA chairman, Mr C K Dhanuka said.

Mr Dhanuka said they have been told that Pakistan's interior ministry had refused to grant the visas.

The delegation would hopefully be able to visit Pakistan from 17 May if it receives visas, he added.

The delegation was part of the tea industry's efforts to improve trade between the two countries, following better relations, which had made possible a full-fledged cricket match series.

The refusal of visa to the tea delegation came within a few days of the Pak President, Mr Pervez Musharraf's statement that he would opt out of ongoing peace initiative if there was no forward movement on the Kashmir issue.



This could have been the second high-level delegation, since the first in August last year.

During the earlier visit, ITA had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Pakistan Tea Association which had agreed to lift 10 million kg of tea annually from India.

The MoU had resulted in increased export of Indian tea to Pakistan to about 6.4 million kg during January-December 2003 from a low of three million kg in 2002.

"There was about one million kg of export in January this year to Pakistan and we hope that during the financial year 2003-04, there will be significant increase in total exports," ITA secretary, Mr Monojit Dasgupta said.

A Pakistani newspaper had reported that there was an over 117 per cent increase in import of tea from India during the period April 2003 to February, 2004.

Commenting on the delegation, Mr Dhanuka said it was a regular kind of visit. "It is a normal thing to visit countries which have tremendous market potential as this will improve our prospect. We will meet buyers there through buyer-seller meets to further increase exports to that country."

Pakistan is currently importing a huge quantity of tea from Kenya and Sri Lanka despite consumers there preferring Indian tea, particularly CTC categories.

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THE STATESMAN . 5 APR 2004

# India resents Pak Prez statements

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'Statements based on presumptions will not help efforts'

Press Trust of India  
New Delhi, April 1

DISAPPROVING OF Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's remarks on the peace process, India on Thursday asked him to refrain from making statements on the basis of "presumptions", saying this would not help ongoing efforts.

"Statements based on presumptions won't help the peace process started by Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee", External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha said in Ranchi, while reacting to Musharraf's statement that he would not be party to the peace process if there was no forward movement on the Kashmir issue by July-August this year. "I think we should wait till August-September when the foreign ministers of the two countries meet", Sinha said.

Officials in both countries had chalked out a schedule in February, which would continue till July-August, he recalled. "Only after the officials finish discussions on many points and meetings by foreign secretaries thereafter, will the foreign ministers meet. Till then, we should wait and refrain from issuing such statements", he added.

Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani said Musharraf's remarks stemmed out of "domestic compulsions". "I think Musharraf's statement stemmed out of domestic compulsions. But, so long as he sticks to a course decided upon at the secretary-level meeting, there should be no problem", he told reporters in Himmatnagar in Gujarat on Thursday.

Hoping that differences between the two nations would be resolved through



Pervez Musharraf

dialogue, Advani said the joint statement signed by Vajpayee and Musharraf in Islamabad was a landmark event. At the meetings between the joint secretaries and foreign secretaries of the two countries, it was decided on how to proceed for a dialogue, he said.

The Congress, too, on Thursday asserted that Pakistan President Musharraf's reported threat to withdraw from the Indo-Pak peace process if there was no forward movement on the Kashmir issue would not help the process and asked the government if it had made any attempt to find out the "truth" in the matter.

Terming it as a "serious matter", chairman of the AICC foreign affairs department K. Natwar Singh said, "We wanted to know from the government if it had summoned the Pakistan High Commissioner here in this regard".

"We want the Vajpayee government to explain what the reality is", since India had been making all efforts for peace and friendship with Pakistan and Musharraf had been making controversial statements. Singh, in this context, recalled another such statement by Musharraf at a conclave recently

that Kashmir was the core issue. "Musharraf's attitude will not be helpful" in carrying forward the peace process, he said. Ever since Vajpayee government came to power six years ago, it has 'changed' its policy towards Pakistan four or five times", Singh said.

He agreed with a questioner that the granting of non-Nato member ally status to Pakistan by the US would affect the Indo-Pak peace process.

## Advani rules out ceasefire with militants

DEPUTY PRIME Minister L.K. Advani on Thursday ruled out any ceasefire with militants in Jammu and Kashmir. "There's nothing as such at the moment", he said when asked by reporters if there was the possibility of a ceasefire in J&K following the talks with the Hurriyat Conference. Advani's statement puts to rest all speculation that the Centre is contemplating announcing a step similar to the Non-Initiation of Combat Operations during Ramzan in 2001. Hurriyat leaders had raised the issue of announcing the ceasefire during their first meeting with Advani on January 22.

PTI, New Delhi

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# Pervez threatens to pull out of peace process

Agencies  
Islamabad, March 31

PAKISTANI PRESIDENT Pervez Musharraf has threatened to withdraw from the peace process if there was no progress on Kashmir by July or August.

"We have to move forward on Kashmir. We have to resolve it. If we don't move forward, I am not in the process, they know that. I have told everyone that, unambiguously. If you think I am here to sell Kashmir, you are talking to the wrong man," he said on a state TV current affairs programme, aired on Wednesday.

Musharraf's time limit refers to when the Foreign Ministers of both countries are to meet to

review the talks that were decided on the sidelines of the Saarc summit in January.

Musharraf told reporters in Islamabad that the peace process should come into full gear after elections in India. But he said the Lok Sabha elections in Jammu and Kashmir was a "repeat of the drama" (of Assembly polls) held in the state last year.

Talking extensively on Kashmir, he rejected India's charge of cross-border terrorism and reiterated that militancy in Kashmir was a freedom struggle. And "Pakistan will not hesitate" to provide "moral, political and diplomatic support" to the Kashmiris.

Pakistani officials said Musharraf's comments were an attempt to force the Kashmir issue on the agenda as the two countries prepare to meet across the table. He was also seen as assuring domestic critics that he was not selling out on the emotive issue.

Former Pakistani foreign secretary Tanvir Ahmed Khan said: "There is a school of thought that India would negotiate purposefully on trade and other issues, but just go through the motions on Kashmir. What he probably meant was he'd like to see some concrete results, that the issue of Kashmir gets firmly embedded in the forthcoming India-Pakistan dialogue."

Indian and Pakistani officials held their first peace talks in nearly three years in February, and agreed on a "basic roadmap" to resolve a range of disputes, including Kashmir.

## Why the K-word?



- ▶ US pressure to deliver Al Qaeda gives him excuse to seek forward movement on Kashmir
- ▶ Special ally – MNNA – status, lifting of sanctions have emboldened him to harp on Kashmir once a month
- ▶ Or perhaps he's just lacking in temperament; at the *India Today* conclave he spoke of "going back to square one"

# New ally status might harm Indo-Pak ties, says US Opp

Agence France-Presse  
Washington, March 31

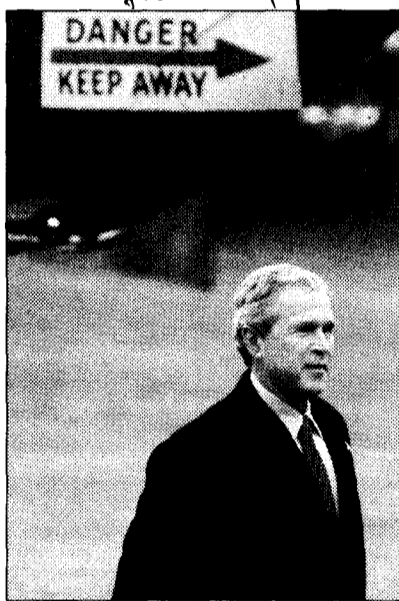
US OPPOSITION Democrats have assailed President George W. Bush's administration for granting Pakistan non-Nato ally status, despite an ongoing probe on possible high-level links in Islamabad to an international nuclear scam. Democratic party legislators said Washington should have waited for the investigations to be completed before rewarding Pakistan the elite military status.

The lawmakers grilled John Bolton, Bush's point man for arms control, at a congressional hearing on Tuesday over the extent of the Pakistan government's involvement in nuclear proliferation following confessions by its top scientist that he had shared nuclear secrets with Iran, Libya and North Korea.

Bolton told the House that the government was continuing to seek information about exactly what Khan's activities were. "Do you think the designation of Pakistan as a major non-Nato ally should wait until we've made that determination?" asked Democrat legislator Gary Ackerman.

Bolton said the granting of the non-Nato ally status was based on "other factors", apparently referring to its cooperation in hunting for al-Qaida members. He said the US would take action if it had information about complicity of top levels of the Pakistani government.

Meanwhile, prominent US Congressman and founder of India Caucus Frank Pallone has described the new major non-Nato ally status to Pakistan as inconsistent with American policies in South-East Asia and expressed fears it could seriously erode the newly improved ties between New Delhi and Islamabad.



**A PENCHANT FOR TROUBLE: US President George Bush walks to the Oval Office, White House, on Wednesday on his return from a trip to Wisconsin.**

Pallone warned that if the floodgates of military aid were reopened through the MNNA device, it would seriously impact efforts to normalise relations on Prime Minister Vajpayee's initiative.

The concerns were expressed by Pallone and 30 colleagues in a joint statement in the House of Representatives. "...Pakistan has a history of abusing military and nuclear equipment, and yet we're allowing them to have access to depleted uranium ammunition, special privilege in bidding for certain US government contracts, radar systems, attack helicopters and airborne early warning systems", Pallone said.

## Now, an India caucus in the US Senate

S. Rajagopalan  
Washington, March 31

A HIGH-PROFILE India caucus has been formed in the US Senate capping years of lobbying by Indian American groups and quiet diplomacy by the Indian establishment.

'Friends of India', as it will be called, the bipartisan caucus will be co-chaired by John Cornyn, Republican Senator from Texas, and Hillary Clinton, Democratic Senator from New York.

Its declared mission is to promote greater understanding and cooperation between the US and India.

Eighteen senators have signed up so far and more are expected to join by the time the new group is formally launched in late April.

Those who have joined include Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist and Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle. Much of the credit for setting up the caucus goes to Senator Cornyn, who made the surprise announcement at a Capitol Hill reception hosted by the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin on Tuesday.

Cornyn, Indian American sources said, had been charged up on this score ever since his visit to India in January. The Senator wanted to do something "because of the incredible experience I had in India and because of the importance of US-India relations".

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## Pakistan MPs discuss Kashmir with Left parties

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, MARCH 29.** A Parliamentary delegation from Pakistan led by the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) president, Makhdoom Amin Fahim, today held a meeting with prominent Left party leaders and exchanged views on issues of bilateral interest.

The Kashmir issue was invariably the subject of discussion with the Left party leaders maintaining that the problem needed to be addressed taking into consideration the views of all sections of the people in Jammu and Kashmir and that it could not be solved through a democratic process in New Delhi alone.

Addressing the seven-member delegation from PPP, the CPI (M) Politburo member, Prakash Karat, said that even when relations between India and Pakistan had taken a downturn, the party had advocated the need to continue dialogue and allow people-to-people contacts.

The party's view on the im-

portance of Article 370 of the Constitution, which bestows special status on J&K, was also reiterated.

He said the Kashmir problem should be addressed by India and by the people of the State. There was sufficient democratic pressure in the country to deal with the aspirations of the people there, he added.

Commenting on the situation in Pakistan, he said the CPI (M) was aware of the kind of system there and the struggle for democracy that was still going on.

Echoing similar views, the CPI national secretary, D. Raja, emphasised that the Kashmir problem should be resolved without any "third party mediation."

He said attempts to internationalise the situation would not be in the interest of either India or Pakistan.

The CPI (M) Jammu and Kashmir unit secretary, Mohammed Yusuf Tarigami, MLA, who organised a luncheon meeting with the delegation, said there was a need for politi-

cal parties to take a leading role instead of leaving the issue to the ruling parties. He suggested that it was time to "step out of the rigid frame and make an honest attempt to restore peace" in the troubled State. Mr. Tarigami said the Kashmir problem should be seen in a broader perspective and it should be turned into a movement for peace instead of leaving it to those with "vested interests."

Earlier, Mr. Fahim said that improvement in ties between New Delhi and Islamabad was good. He emphasised the need to live in peace. People of both sides should have equal participation for the resolution of the Kashmir problem, he added.

The Pakistan delegation, visiting India at the invitation of Nirmala Deshpande, president of the Association of Peoples of Asia, includes Nafees A. Siddiqui, Mohammed Yousaf Talpur, Fozia Habib, Chaudhary Manzoor Ahmed, Senator Anwar Baig and the former Pakistan Foreign Minister, Sardar Asif Ahmed.

# Let's talk, PM tells Pakistan

Sudesh K Verma in Amritsar

March 26. — The Prime Minister today described his recent initiative for peace with Pakistan as the third and last, and called upon Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir issue through dialogue.

"Kashmir per aap daav lagate hain. Aiye baat karen. Aur koi raasta nahin (You stake claim on Kashmir. Let us talk. There is no other way out)," Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee said at a rally while welcoming Deputy Prime Minister Mr LK Advani's *Bharat Uday Yatra*, whose first phase ended today.

The Prime Minister complimented Pakistan for reciprocating his peace initiative, saying that it needed two teams for a game and two countries for

peace. He expressed the hope that a lasting peace could be found this time. "The dangers of war will no longer be there and there'll be peace and brotherhood," he said. Citing the example of Indo-Pak cricketing ties, he said when they were being resumed some people had expressed apprehension, but "I said *kuch nahin hoga* and players would return happily."

He described the Kargil incursion as "betrayal" but pointed out that the government had succeeded in sending the Pakistani army packing and getting every inch of occupied land vacated. The USA wanted India to consider the proposal for partial withdrawal by Pakistanis and full withdrawal later. "We had rejected it."

Mr Vajpayee's tough talk ca-

me in the context of his statement that the NDA had never compromised on national interests and would not do so later.

Pakistan, he said, should know that it had not succeeded in getting an inch of Indian territory through war. Instead it lost Bangladesh. "There is no point in fighting. We want peace. Why should public money be spent on buying arms?"

Mr Vajpayee said he was confident that the NDA "will win, but the decisions will have to be taken by you... What will be the results I don't know." However, he asked people to vote on the basis of the NDA's performance during the last six years.

He asked farmers to be ready for another Green Revolution in which scarce crop would be grown.



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# Cricket tour will help restore ties: Advani

By Our Special Correspondent

**CHANDIGARH, MARCH 25.** The Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, today expressed joy over the victory of the Indian cricket team in the one-day series against Pakistan and said that the ongoing cricket tour had generated "tremendous interest" in the subcontinent. "It is a small but an important step in restoring normal relations between India and Pakistan," he told newsmen here.

Mr. Advani said he had spoken to the Cricket Board president, Jagmohan Dalmia, and captain Sourav Ganguly on

Wednesday and congratulated them.

He said the joint statement by the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, in January "has established a framework for a meaningful dialogue between the two countries."

"Particularly satisfying is the commitment of President Musharraf to prevent Pakistani territory and territory controlled by Pakistan from being used to wage terrorist attacks on India." Harmony between the two countries will have a "tremendous bearing" on peace in

Jammu and Kashmir and "good Hindu-Muslim relations" in the country.

Reiterating his allegation that the Congress was "exploiting" Muslims, Mr. Advani said that since Independence, the community has been exposed to a sustained campaign of hate against the Jana Sangh and the BJP. "Our political opponents painted us as 'anti-Muslim' in the very same way the Muslim League depicted the Congress prior to 1947. A reason for arousing fear in the minds of India's Muslim minority was to perpetuate vote bank politics."

Mr. Advani said that since

1947, the Congress has viewed the Muslim community as a "block vote" and "developed a vested interest in keeping their backward, frightened and aloof." It also encouraged the most regressive forces in Muslim society and prevented the community from sharing the benefits of economic development, he said.

Muslim women, in particular, had suffered the most from the "cynical vote bank politics of the Congress." The reversal of the Supreme Court judgment in the Shah Bano case was a "well-known example" of the "double standards of the Congress."

"Equally notorious was the complicity of the Congress and the CPI(M) in attempting to statutorily disinherit women in Jammu and Kashmir for marrying a non-State subject."

During his ongoing Bharat Uday Yatra, he had detected "an open mindedness" on the part of Muslims towards the BJP. "All over the country various Muslim leaders have joined the BJP. Others have expressed their support for the NDA and Mr. Vajpayee."

"A greater willingness of the Muslim community to engage with the BJP stems from our six-year record." He said the Muslims had a major role to play in making the country a developed economy and a global power by 2020. "And I believe the NDA under Mr. Vajpayee can be the facilitator of this process."

On the Ayodhya issue, Mr. Advani reiterated that the Government had been attempting over the past six months to find a negotiated settlement with the help of the Kanchi Sankaracharya and the Dalai Lama. "A settlement involving both Hindu and Muslim representatives is the most desirable way to resolve the matter."

## 'Political contest already won'

By Sarabjit Pandher

**JALANDHAR, MARCH 25.** Amid unprecedented security arrangements and protests by activists of the Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) and radical Sikh organisations, the 'Bharat Uday Yatra' of the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, crossed into Punjab today.

Mr. Advani resumed his cross-country journey this morning after a night halt in Chandigarh. The yatra, which has now completed 16 days, will culminate in Amritsar at a public rally tomorrow, after having traversed a distance of 8,000 km.

Amid threats from the Akali Dal (Amritsar), whose president, Simranjit Singh, has been detained, the State police laid out an elaborate arrangement of security. At most towns through which the yatra passed, marketplaces were closed and traffic were either diverted or stopped.

Despite the security dragnet and a major crackdown since yesterday, activists of the SAD (Amritsar) staged protests at Khumanon, Samrala and on the outskirts of Ludhiana city. They waved black flags and carried placards which said "Advani go back" as Mr. Advani's entourage passed by. Police resorted to the use of force at Ludhiana. About 500 persons were said to have been detained at different places. Along the

route, Akali-BJP activists organised street-corner meetings.

The former Deputy Speaker and senior BJP leader from the city, S.P. Gossain, accused the Congress State Government of conspiring to prevent the event from becoming a success.

In his short addresses from the rooftop of his 'rath', Mr. Advani profusely mingled similes from the on-going cricket season to predict the results of the "political match" between the NDA and its opponents. He said that even before the first ball was bowled the match had been decided, as the country wanted Atal Bihari Vajpayee to retain the position of Prime Minister. He promised that soon all the six lakh villages of the country would be connected by road and would have proper facilities for health, education and drinking water. Mr. Advani urged Punjab to reclaim its number one position in the country, which according to him had reached the "take off stage" under the stewardship of Mr. Vajpayee. It was his desire to see India as the top country of the world and Punjab return as India's crowning glory. He said Punjab would soon be relieved of the "bekar sarkar" (useless State Government), while calling for a "decisive majority" instead of a "simple majority."

The Akali Dal president and former Chief Minister, Parkash Singh Badal, joined the yatra at Jalandhar.

# Pakistan greets Indian 'invaders' with warmth

LAHORE, MARCH 20. It is an Indian invasion of this historic city of Pakistan.

They are coming by planes, trains and bus loads — the Indians in their thousands to back their national cricket team when it takes on Pakistan at the Gaddafi Stadium here tomorrow and again on Wednesday.

For once the "invaders" are welcome. Wherever they go they are greeted by the Pakistanis with a warmth which does not betray even a trace of the bitter, and mostly hostile, ties that have bedevilled the neighbouring countries.

The Indian Airlines is operating special flights, chartered flights and putting bigger planes on the Delhi-Lahore sector to accommodate cricket fans who are also pouring into Lahore by trains and buses. The airline operated the 200-seat Airbus 300 instead of the 144-seater A-320 yesterday to accommodate the rush.

A special flight is plying on the Delhi-Lahore sector today, followed by a chartered flight carrying some of the top names in the Indian industry and corporate world which will land only hours before the fourth one-day match of the series here tomorrow. Special and additional flights are also being operated by the airline ahead of the fifth one-day, which will also be played here on Wednesday.

The hotels here have never had it so good. The room rates have gone up very substantially but rooms are not available.

The number of Indians, who have come for the match-



Indian cricket enthusiasts wave the Tricolour as the special train enters Wagah on Saturday. Some 4,500 Indian fans, who have travelled by road, rail and air, are en route to Lahore for the fourth and fifth ODI matches between India and Pakistan to be played on March 21 and 24. Pakistan is leading 2-1 in the five match series. — AFP

es vary, depending on whom you talk to. Some put the figure at 10,000, but most estimate them at about 7,000.

It is truly a friendship series. The crowds in the first three one-dayers have been

of whom sporting and good cricket.

The matches at Lahore are expected to be played in the same spirit.

Shoaib Akhtar has a fantastic following in his homeland, which is no surprise, but for

many a youngster here the favourite cricketer is Sachin Tendulkar for his class as a batsman, and for his dignity both on and off the field.

Music stores carry video discs of some of the greatest innings of the Indian maestro.

These have been produced in Pakistan and are not available even in India.

For once the "invaders" and the invaded are on the same side. They want to watch great cricket and promote friendship. — PTI

# Feel good crosses LoC, Pak puffs up its chest

Delhi shell-shocked by US move to label Pak non-NATO ally

By Siddharth  
Varadarajan/TNN

**New Delhi:** The American designation of Pakistan as a 'major non-Nato Ally' (MNNA) Thursday morning caught India unawares, and sent the external affairs ministry - more used to basking in the glory of its strategic partnership with the US - quite literally reeling. There was no official reaction but by evening, when the 'feel bad' mood in the government became obvious, the US embassy sent its number two man, Robert Blake, to do some firefighting in South Block.

The announcement was made by US secretary of state Colin Powell at a press conference in Islamabad. "I advised the foreign minister (of Pakistan) this morning that we will also be making notification to our Congress that we will designate Pakistan as a major non-Nato ally for purposes of our future military-military relations", he said, adding, "President Bush and the American people appreciate the sacrifices Pakistan already has made to keep us all safer from terrorism".

"The timing is bad", a senior Indian official told The Times of India, admitting that Powell gave no indication of the proposed decision in



## Implications

Pak becomes eligible for priority delivery of US defense material, despite concerns about its nuclear programmes

## Why Now?

Pak has stepped up operations against Al Qaida and Taliban. US says alliance with Pak crucial for winning the war on terror

## What about Khan?

Powell says it's Pak's "internal matter", but adds that worrying questions need to be answered

**Angst for Delhi..**  
Analysts say it is simply 'recognition of reality'. But govt is upset by the timing

**China is cool..**  
'All-weather' Sino-Pak ties will not be dented: Beijing

his meetings with Prime Minister Vajpayee and external affairs minister Yashwant Sinha on Tuesday.

Pakistan will join the list of MNNA - which includes Israel, Egypt, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, Jordan, Argentina,

military R&D projects. As an MNNA, Pakistan will also become eligible for the expedited processing of export licenses for commercial satellites - something the US is only still promising to consider doing for India.

► Related reports on Pages 10 & 15

Bahrain, Thailand and the Philippines - 30 days after Bush notifies Congress in writing. "In legal terms, I don't think MNNA status will add much to what the US is already doing for Pakistan", the official said, "but it has very strong political significance both domestically, in Pakistan, and in terms of the US administration's future ability to secure various things for Islamabad from Congress". "All told", he said, "this is a label that Pakistan will wear proudly".

The MNNA label is largely symbolic but it does imply a close relationship between the armed forces of the US and the designee. MNNA's do not enjoy the same mutual defence and security guarantees as actual members of Nato but there are a number of tangible military benefits.

These include priority delivery of the US military's "excess defence articles", the right to purchase deadly Depleted Uranium anti-tank armour, as well as participation in cooperative

# Pervez shows impressive grasp of cricket stats

Anil Sharma  
ISLAMABAD 17 MARCH

**A**FTER two nerve-wracking and tall scoring contests, it was the lads day out on Wednesday. And the boys got a chance to have insights from a head of state on their game. Pakistani president General Pervez Musharraf played knowledgeable host to both the cricket teams at a high tea at his residence on Wednesday.

Considering that the trip has its roots in friendship, it's obvious that even heads of state have to take time off for the cricketers, even when someone like US secretary of state Colin Powell is in town.

It was a warm encounter and the players came back impressed that the Pakistani president is a knowledgeable cricket fan who also follows the game with avid passion. He referred to all the stats with military



**GOODWILL GESTURE:** Sourav Ganguly presents a bat autographed by Indian cricketers to General Pervez Musharraf in Islamabad on Wednesday. — AP

precision. According to those present, the general lauded Mohammad Kaif for the running catch that altered the course of the Karachi game. He also praised Romesh Powar and L. Balaji for the way they batted in the last overs last night. Quite clearly, courage and defiance rank high on his list of qualities.

The great maestro Sachin Tendulkar was also appreciated for crossing the 13,000-run landmark as was Pakistan skipper Inzamam-ul-Haq for his great Karachi knock.

The president's handshake with Prime Minister Vajpayee at the Saarc conference in Kathmandu had made great news some years ago. So naturally, there was quite an element of curiosity about it. "It's the handshake of a positive man," said someone privileged enough to have shaken the head of state's hand on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, amid the feel-good

hoopla about cricket being the winner, and off-field bonhomie, Team India's CEO Saurav Ganguly is facing a few problems. And as was almost to be expected, he obliquely hinted at a problem with local hero Shoaib Akhtar's bowling action.

For the sake of political correctness, Ganguly avoided a direct reference to Shoaib's action, but then, created enough room for doubt at last night's post-match press do. When asked to comment on the speedster's bowling, Ganguly simply asked: "Aren't all of us seeing that on television?"

The more immediate problem on hand for the skipper is the drought of ODI centuries. With a tally of 22 tonnes, he's only No. 2 to Tendulkar's No. 1. But the fact is, he got most of those hundreds while opening the account for India. "That used to give me the required time to build the innings," he admitted.

## Alliance Plans Of Party Come Unstuck

# BSP finally says no to Cong

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 17 MARCH



**READY FOR BATTLE:** Mayawati releases the BSP manifesto in New Delhi on Wednesday. — AP

**E**NDING days of uncertainty, the Bahujan Samaj Party has finally turned down a proposal for a pre-poll alliance from the Congress in the politically crucial state of Uttar Pradesh, lending a severe blow to Ms Sonia Gandhi's coalition-building plans. BSP chief Mayawati on Wednesday released a list of 205 candidates, including 75 from Uttar Pradesh, while keeping a decision pending on five constituencies, including Lucknow, from where Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee is trying his luck for the sixth consecutive term and Akbarpur, the seat held by Ms Mayawati before vacating it to take over the reins of the state in May, 2002.

The party simultaneously came out with its election manifesto, a practice which had been abjured so far on the ground that it was part of a "Manuwadi" system. It underlined the party's commitment "to eliminate the socio-economic inequalities prevailing in the country and to transform the 'Bahujan Samaj,' which had been at the receiving end of a 'Manuwadi' system, into a prosperous and powerful community."

Besides Uttar Pradesh, Ms Mayawati handed out a list of 21 candidates from Madhya Pradesh, 9 from Haryana, 5 from Punjab, 14 from Rajasthan, 38 from West Bengal and 37 from Bihar. The party also named its nominees for all five seats in Uttaranchal and the lone Chandigarh seat. The BSP plans, she announced, to contest 325 seats all across the country.

The development is certain to come as a big relief to both the BJP and the Samajwadi Party, which had been watching the Congress-BSP alliance talks with trepidation.

# JMM also stays cool

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 17 MARCH

**A**S if the formal announcement of the BSP going it alone in Uttar Pradesh was not enough, there was more bad news in store for the Congress — this time from Jharkhand. The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), which too was being wooed by the principal Opposition party, has, for all practical purposes, decided to limit its alliance options to the CPI, turning down the overtures being made by the Congress-RJD combine.

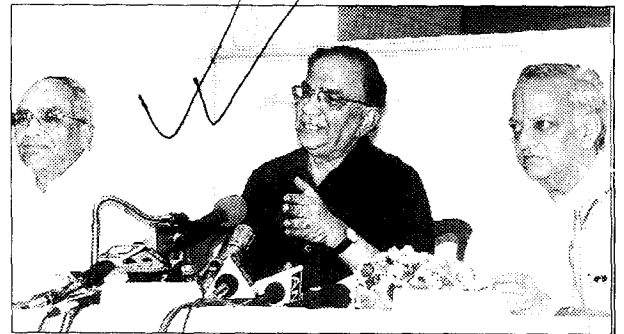
Talks between the two sides broke down on Monday, after the Congress refused to concede the JMM's demand to relinquish its claims on Rajmahal and Koderma, the two seats held by the Congress in the outgoing Lok Sabha. There are altogether 14 Lok Sabha constituencies in the state. While the JMM was represented in the talks by its chief Shibu Soren, his son Durga and the party's legislative wing leader Stephen Marandi, the Congress team was led by Mr R.K. Dhawan and Mr R.K. Anand. The JMM leaders had met Congress president Sonia Gandhi a day earlier.

# Exit polls issue will be re-examined, says CEC

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 17 MARCH

**N**OTWITHSTANDING the Supreme Court's view, laid down in a September 1999 order, that the Election Commission has no jurisdiction to issue guidelines on publication/telecast of opinion and exit polls, Chief Election Commissioner T.S. Krishnamurthy on Wednesday said the poll panel would re-examine the issue in the light of fresh demands that the print and electronic media be restrained from disseminating results of exit polls until the completion of last phase of the coming Lok Sabha election.

"EC was certainly keen that it (exit poll results) should not come till the last phase of election. Some years ago EC had gone to the Supreme Court on this issue," he recalled at a press conference in Kolkata.



**MEN IN THE MIDDLE:** Chief Election Commissioner T.S. Krishnamurthy, flanked by election commissioners B.B. Tandon (left) and N. Gopalswamy (right), addresses the press in Raj Bhawan on Wednesday. — Subhjit Pal

"But we had to withdraw our reference to the Supreme Court as we had found that it may not be possible to enforce it," he said when asked to spell the EC's view on a demand by the CPI(M) for a ban on publication and telecast of exit polls results until the end of last phase of a staggered election.

Stating that the commission had also received petitions from some other political parties urging it to impose the said ban, the CEC said: "We shall re-examine it in the light of the Supreme Court pronouncements and convey our decision soon," the chief election commissioner added.

# CPM ready to sleep with enemy, at the Centre

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 17 MARCH

**T**HE CPM on Wednesday placed on record its willingness to join a "secular" government at the Centre. The Left party, which is fighting a bitter battle with the Congress in its strongholds, on Wednesday formalised its curious "enmity at the states and friendship at the Centre" line when it expressed its willingness to be part of a "secular" government. Admitting that the Left alone cannot achieve the aim of bringing down the NDA government, the CPM said no single party can manage it on its own to bring a change in the existing "coalition of forces".

The 32-page manifesto, which unleashed an attack on the policies of the BJP-led government, let off the Congress with a mild rebuke. It said the main Opposition party was also guilty of advocating economic policies of privatisation and liberalisation on the lines of the BJP.

Having refused to join a pre-poll front led by the Congress due to compulsions in the three states



**COMMUNIST MANIFESTO:** CPM leaders release the party manifesto in New Delhi on Wednesday. — AFP

where it has significant presence, the CPM said it was open to cooperation with all "Left democratic and secular forces". Politburo member Prakash Karat described the BJP's allies as a "mere cover" for BJP rule and said the saffron party was an instrument to fulfil the aims of RSS.

# TEAM INDIA: CAUGHT & BOWLED PERVEZ



TEA TO TANGO: Gen. Pervez Musharraf with Indian cricketers in Islamabad on Wednesday. — AFP

ISLAMABAD, March 17. — Deft at tackling top world leaders, Gen. Pervez Musharraf today clean bowled the Indian cricketers as well, showering praise on Sachin Tendulkar's batting skills and Lakshmpathy Balaji's blitzkrieg against speed-king Shoaib Akhtar in yesterday's match. The occasion was a tea reception the President hosted for the Indian and Pakistani cricketers at the Banquet Hall in the Presidential mansion. The cricketers were ushered into the ornate *aiwan-i-sadar* hall, where Gen. Musharraf, dressed in his usual battle fatigues, shook hands with each of them. He pleasantly surprised them by recalling some of their best performances. Gen. Musharraf, who watched yesterday's match at the Rawalpindi Stadium for over two hours, had special praise for Tendulkar's century. He also recalled some of the master blaster's previous innings. The Indians, in a fitting gesture, presented a bat autographed by the entire team to the President. The Indian and the Pakistani squad later attended a reception hosted by the Indian high commissioner. — PTI

## SC sets stage for cricket telecast on DD

NEW DELHI, March 17. — The Supreme Court (coram, Khare, CJ, Hegde, Kapadia, JJ) today directed Ten Sports to give live feed of the entire Indo-Pak cricket series to Doordarshan. Prasar Bharati was asked to telecast the matches along with the Ten Sports logo and advertisements during the entire match and also 30 minutes before and after the match.

It also asked Prasar Bharati to deposit Rs 50 crore with the court to

cover the financial losses, if any, suffered by Ten Sports' distributors in India, Taj India Pvt Limited, and the sole holder of the telecast rights in India, Modi Entertainment.

Prasar Bharati was also asked to ensure that the satellite footprints don't cover West Asia, and if technically possible, the Far East. The final hearing is on 15 April.

Appearing for Taj India Pvt Limited — the Indian arm of Taj Entertain-

ment, Dubai — counsel Mr Kapil Sibal rejected all claims of DD over the telecast rights. "The original feed is from Pakistan, rights of which have been sold to the Dubai-based Taj Entertainment. This is turn in being beamed via the Pansat Ten to India," he stated. He also rejected any financial settlement with DD over the rights, saying the losses can't be computed. Mr Harish Salve, representing Modi Entertainment, backed the claim.

The court, however, rejected their stand, saying accounting methods have improved significantly to make this possible. Modi Entertainment also offered to have the matches telecast free through 200 Low Power Transmitters of DD and the rest via cable. But the government said it would not be feasible to do so, and that it would deprive a huge chunk of viewers from seeing the matches. — SNS

**DD may bill Ten its losses, page 4**

# India will not crack WTO whip on Pak

## MFN STATUS

INDIA HAS ruled out moving to the World Trade Organisation against Pakistan for not granting it Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status and said it wanted Islamabad to do so without any "external pressure."

India does not want to file an appeal in WTO against Islamabad for not granting MFN status to New Delhi, Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan Shivshankar Menon said yesterday at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) here while speaking on 'Pak-India Trade: Its Present and Future.'

"We want Islamabad to do it without any external pressure," he said. India has already granted MFN status to Pakistan and other SAARC members. He urged Pakistan to respond positively to India's gesture as trade relations through MFN has the potential to boost the trade to \$6 billion a year. "Islamabad's move to a negative list from the current positive list system, if that were to happen, I am sure that our existing complimentaries will create several opportunities for businessmen from both the countries," he said.

Menon, who has been addressing several Pakistan trade bodies in the aftermath of meeting between Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and President Pervez Musharraf on the sidelines of SAARC summit held in January here said opening of direct bilateral trade on MFN basis would result in the expansion of the two-



Shivshankar Menon

way trade to the tune of six billion within a year or so.

To another question, Menon said Pakistan might not become a member of Bangkok agreement until it accorded MFN status to all member countries, including India.

He said granting of MFN status to member countries was the major condition under the agreement. Menon said the present atmosphere of friendship and warmth between two countries can be utilised for transforming the economies for the benefit of the people.

He said Pakistan could export raw cotton, hides and skins, edible oil, nuts, metal, precious and semi precious stones to India while New Delhi could export iron ore and pig iron; medical and pharmaceutical products and chemicals to Islamabad.

PTI, Islamabad



# Pakistan regrets India's reaction to Musharraf's statement

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MARCH 15. In a cautious reaction to the Indian riposte to the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf's statement on the centrality of Kashmir for betterment of relations between India and Pakistan, Islamabad said it "regretted" the statement by New Delhi.

"The statement is regrettable ... the Jammu and Kashmir issue has bedevilled relations between Pakistan and India," the Foreign Office spokesman, Masood Khan, told a weekly briefing from a prepared text. He was remarking on the reaction to the observations by Gen. Musharraf on Saturday via satellite to the *India Today* conclave.

He accused the Ministry of External Affairs of making "erroneous attributions" to Gen. Musharraf and said the President had in his remarks confirmed Pakistan's determination to seek a peaceful solution of all outstanding issues notably the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

"The Jammu and Kashmir dispute is the core issue that has bedevilled relations between Pakistan and India. The need for a peaceful resolution of this dispute, in accordance with legitimate Kashmiri aspirations, is self-evident. Any attempt to portray Kashmir as an issue of terrorism is incorrect," Mr. Khan said.

He said Pakistan stood committed to pursuing the process initiated by Gen. Musharraf and the Indian

Prime Minister, A.B. Vajpayee, on January 6. Mr. Khan said that in pursuance of the agreement reached between the Foreign Secretaries of Pakistan and India on February 18, Pakistan looked forward to a meaningful and sustained engagement on all issues on the composite dialogue agenda in accordance with the agreed schedule.

In response a question, he said it was a good thing that Mr. Vajpayee and the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, had been talking of pragmatism and "this is what we have been saying. There has to be flexibility if we want to make some progress. The two sides should show flexibility and there should be matching reciprocity."

He said there could be peace between the two countries if the issue of Jammu and Kashmir was resolved. The two sides should look for common ground and should seek areas of convergence rather than divergence. The spokesman said the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, would be in Pakistan on March 17 and 18. He will call on Gen. Musharraf and the Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan, and also hold talks with the Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri.

The Under Secretary of Economics, Business, and Agriculture Affairs, Allen Larson, and Christina Rocca would accompany Mr. Powell among others. The two sides will discuss areas of mutual interest, cooperation in the ongoing war on terrorism,

Pakistan-India relations, situation in Iraq, Afghanistan and the recent steps by Pakistan for non-proliferation.

He said the two countries enjoyed friendly relations and both desired mutual broad-based long-term relations particularly in the security field. In response to a question Mr. Khan rejected media reports that Mr. Powell would meet General Kidwai for a briefing on steps taken by Pakistan against nuclear proliferation.

On the reports that Mr. Vajpayee might come over to watch one of the cricket matches in Pakistan, Mr. Khan said there was no such proposal. Asked if Pakistan would provide samples of uranium to the International Atomic Energy Agency to enable it to verify nuclear programme in Iran, Mr. Khan said Pakistan had been cooperating with the U.N. agency and would continue to do so with regard to other countries being investigated.

On the investigation into the nuclear proliferation, Mr. Khan said the probe was continuing. "We are satisfied with the investigation and we will continue to get information with an objective to eliminating the underground network."

Asked about the operation 'Mountain Storm,' he said the U.S. forces on the Afghan side along the Pak-Afghan border would conduct it. The objective was to restore and ensure the political stability for development and reconstruction work in Afghanistan.

THE HINDU

16 MAR 2004

# Delhi rejects Musharraf's core-issue claim

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, March 14. — Reacting to Gen. Pervez Musharraf's statement yesterday, India said his "unilateral interpretation" of the 6 January joint statement would neither build trust nor take the peace process forward.

Yesterday, the Pakistani President had repeatedly stressed that Kashmir was the core issue and if this wasn't settled, the peace process with India would be derailed. In reply, India said "there is no reference to any so-called central or core issue" in the joint statement. Instead, it addresses all bilateral issues, including J&K. The statement clearly "delineates how the process has to be sustained and taken forward." One of the ways is prevention of "violence, hostility and

terrorism".

(Pakistani information minister Mr Sheikh Rashid, however, said in Islamabad that Gen. Musharraf had put forth Islamabad's view on the issue, and "now it's up to the Indians to act judiciously and give impetus to the peace process.")

Gen. Musharraf, India said, had reassured the Prime Minister "that he would not permit the territory under Pakistan's control (Pakistan and PoK) to be used to support terrorism in any manner." This type of unilateral interpretation is bad for the peace process, the government statement said, so is "public rhetoric, which is also contrary to the understandings and restraints observed since January" (a reference to the General's seemingly uncompromising stand on J&K).

India also took offence to the General's "double standards". During his speech, he said the attacks on him were acts of terrorism, whereas the activities in J&K were part of a "freedom struggle".

"Describing the violent attack on him as terrorism, but on the J&K Assembly in October 2001 and on the present chief minister recently as a 'freedom fight' are clearly not tenable," the government statement said.

The peace process, New Delhi said, has created a "vast goodwill", which is being consolidated upon through confidence building measures.

This reality "needs to be acknowledged and built upon. Contrary efforts would not be in keeping with the sentiments of the people in both the countries," the statement said.

## General to have tea with Team India

ISLAMABAD, March 14. — General Pervez Musharraf, patron of the Pakistan Cricket Board, will meet the Indian cricket team over tea here on Wednesday. "We believe it's a get-together over tea. The timing is yet to be confirmed," Indian team manager Mr Ratnakar Shetty said. Indian high commissioner Mr Shivshankar Menon would host a dinner for the team the same day.

Yesterday, Gen. Musharraf had congratulated Sourav's boys during his satellite address to a function in Delhi after the team beat the hosts for the first time on their soil in seven years.

On security, Mr Shetty said Pakistani officials had gone to great lengths to ensure a full-proof security for the cricketers. — PTI



# Atal bats for goodwill & game

Security sermon before takeoff

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, March 10: The Indian cricket team was briefed by security officials on the dos and don'ts this morning, hours before flying out to Pakistan on a special Indian Airlines flight.

Among other things, the cricketers have been told not to accept gifts from strangers.

The team was briefed by Yashovardhan Azad, joint director (security), Intelligence Bureau, and Manoj Lal, Delhi additional commissioner of police.

Azad and Lal are the only members in the four-man security team appointed by the home ministry to have flown out with the cricketers for Lahore.

Dharmendra Kumar, the Intelligence Bureau's deputy inspector-general (security), and additional deputy commissioner of police Prabhakar will replace them on March 19.

Government sources said the officers are being sent in batches of two as they will be needed here during the general elections.

The sources said the cricketers have been told to be cautious and not accept gifts from strangers. They have been asked to seek clearance from the security officers if they do.

The players have also been told not to move alone, but in a group during their 40-day tour, in which they will play five one-day and three Test matches.

On previous tours, team members visited friends and businessmen and accepted gifts — this will be difficult now in view of security considerations.

The security officials will check into the same hotel as the team and cricket board officials so that those visiting the hotel can be monitored.

The Pakistan government has deployed choppers at the National Stadium in Karachi, which hosts the first one-dayer on Saturday, so that the team can be evacuated quickly if required.

## Cricket visas only

The Pakistan high commission here will suspend normal visa operations for a week starting March 15 to cater to the rush of cricket fans seeking papers to cross the border for the Revival Series, adds PTI.



Atal Bihari Vajpayee presents the bat to Sourav Ganguly as his teammates look on during the meeting at the Prime Minister's residence. (Reuters)

## Win hearts too, PM tells team

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, March 10: Even before the first ball of the India-Pakistan series has been bowled, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee hit a six today with his good luck message to the Indian team.

When captain Sourav Ganguly and his boys called on the Prime Minister at his 7, Race Course Road residence four hours before leaving for the historic tour, Vajpayee presented a bat to them with the message inscribed: "Khel mein jeetna hai, lekin dil bhi jeetna hai (Games must be won, but so must hearts)."

Vajpayee told them to play

the game in a spirit of friendship. Team manager Ratnakar Shetty assured the Prime Minister that they would keep his message in mind.

Shetty recalled that during his pre-match visit to Pakistan, he had been struck by the admiration and goodwill the people there had for the Prime Minister.

He said Vajpayee's stock had gone up a great deal after his successful visit to Islamabad during the Saarc summit in January.

The cricketers, dressed in regulation India blazers, tie and grey slacks, arrived in a white air-conditioned bus aptly named Gaarav. Around 200 schoolchildren carrying the Tricolour and placards greeted the team members

as they got off the bus to go through the security drill before walking down to Vajpayee's residence.

The children were from Modern School, Tagore International and Shanti Gyan Ketan School — the schools had been chosen by Delhi BJP leader and minister of state for sports Vijay Goel.

The placards said "Good Luck", "Indian Tiger, Sourav (sic) Ganguly," "Sabse aage honge Hindustani" and "Shanti, gyan, bhaichara, yehi uddeshya hai hamara".

There were a few in praise of the Prime Minister, too — "Atal ne diya cricket ka uphaar, India-Pakistan sadbhavana ka prachar" — referring to the Prime

Minister stepping in after the home ministry had raised doubts about the safety of the players.

The team presented a bat signed by all members to the Prime Minister. Sports minister Vikram Verma and Goel were present when the players came calling. Vajpayee shook hands with each member.

Fruit juice and laddoos were brought in while a Delhi police band played popular Bollywood numbers.

When the Prime Minister called the leader of the band to thank him, he expressed a wish to play a special song for the team. The players lined up on the lawn as the band played *Hum Honge Kamyab*.

## Doordarshan clutches on to govt last straw

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, March 10: With just three days to go before the first India-Pakistan one-dayer of the Revival Series, Doordarshan is hoping that the government intervenes and allows live telecast of the matches.

Information and broadcasting minister Ravi Shankar Prasad met Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee this evening to discuss ways to bring the matches live to millions of Indian homes.

After a lot of talk in the ministry that very little can be done as the television rights of the matches have already been bought by the Dubai-based channel Ten Sports, there is suddenly a change in mood.

The dramatic turnaround has much to do with the threat by cable operators to black out the matches rather than dole out the large amounts demanded by Ten Sports.

There is a growing realisation within the government that the BJP cannot afford to antagonise the public at this crucial time with elections scheduled next month.

This prompted Prasad to personally meet Vajpayee and ask him to talk to his Pakistani counterpart to intercede on Doordarshan's behalf.

The government is likely to step in because it is essential for the BJP that the India-Pakistan matches reach the maximum number of people in an election year. Even if cable operators patch up with Ten Sports, the reality is that a large number of homes do not have access to cable network — especially in smaller towns and rural areas.

But if the government steps in, there is hope for Doordarshan to get a piece of the pie.

"I am very hopeful," Prasad Bharati CEO K.S. Sarma said. Prasad met Sarma and Prasad Bharati director-general Naveen

Kumar to discuss the issue today. He is also in touch with Ten Sports officials in Mumbai.

Although Ten Sports has not hiked charges, it wants cable operators to give an honest figure of the number of households each of them feed. Operators, as a rule, try to shrink this figure as they are charged on the basis of these numbers.

But cable operators are crying foul and have refused to give in. "We certainly want to show the matches live, we know the customers want to see. But there is nothing we can do as we cannot afford to pay Ten Sports the huge amounts they are demanding," Roopa Sharma, who runs a cable business, said.

"If the BJP government cannot ensure that the people of this cricket-mad nation are able to watch the matches, we don't know what to do," shrugged Vicky Chowdhury, president of the National Cable Network Association.



Sachin Tendulkar after his arrival at Lahore airport on Wednesday. (PTI)

# Team India on Pak pitch to win games & hearts

By Nina Martyris  
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

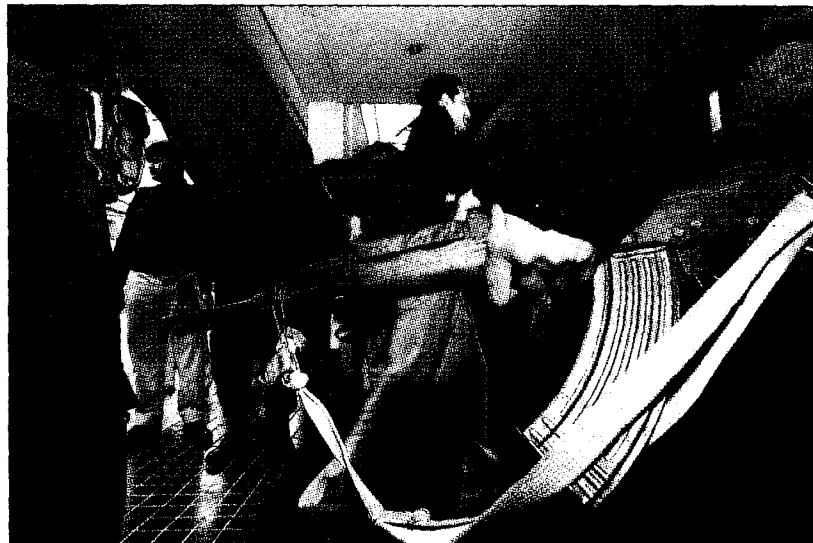
Lahore: The huge reception committee that had swelled excitedly outside the low red brick structure of Lahore's surprisingly swish international airport was given the slip on Wednesday afternoon when the Indian cricket team was whisked out from the departure exit instead of the arrival lounge. This sleight of departure may sound like a trivial thing but it set the tone for the tour—one governed by the security-threat perception.

Indian media persons who took the same flight as the cricket team from Delhi to Lahore, and who emerged on the heels of the cricketers, were a little disappointed at what they thought was a rather tepid reception. There was no sign of excited fans, no hoopla outside. But a Pakistan Cricket Board spokesperson was at pains to explain that at least 700 cricket lovers had gathered at the airport, including two little girls who had come with a big poster "which had something written in Hindi which I did not understand". The police, who were given strict instructions to keep fans at bay, executed their brief with great efficiency.

Security fears, real or imagined, and the volatile relations between the two governments have unfortunately coloured this cricket tour, dampening the fervour and putting all concerned on guard.

The press conference at the Pearl Continental, the five-star hotel at which the Indian team is putting up, was an exercise in political correctness of the most banal kind. When asked who the culprit was for the 14-year hiatus between this tour and the last, manager Ratnakar

## 45 Mins Away, But Such A Long Journey



Armed policemen stand guard as the Indian team arrives at their hotel in Lahore



Sourav is in a hurry to hit Pak turf, Rahul Dravid takes in a moment of history with his camera, Sachin obliges a Pakistani securityman with his autograph

Shetty requested the media to keep the questions to cricket, not politics. Captain Saurav Ganguly more or less stuck to the "we're here to play good cricket" line, refusing to stray from the path of platitudes except to say in a flash of humour that the way to derail the Rawalpindi Express (Shoaib Akhtar) was to "pull the chain". Journalists have come from across the world to cover the series, an indication of the political ramifications of this tour.

A friendly warm-up match will

be held between the two teams at the Gaddafi Stadium in the heart of Lahore on Thursday.

Lahore is a beautiful city with broad roads parted down the middle with thick flowerbeds and with luxurious bungalows on either side. It is a friendly city, soaked in history and has a lot to offer by way of sightseeing, but one doubts whether the Indian team shadowed as it is by security guards, will get a chance to, or be allowed to, take the air of Jehangir's Mughal gardens.

# Sourav targets history in victory

A STAFF REPORTER

Calcutta, March 9: History is on everyone's lips, particularly those of political leaders on both sides of the border. India team leader Sourav Ganguly is also speaking of history, of a different kind.

"We will change it this time" — the words shot out in a sharp burst when the captain was reminded of India's poor record in Pakistan.

Forget goodwill and revival of friendship, when Sourav and his boys take the field on Saturday in the opening one-day match of the "historic" series, the only force driving them will be the desire to win.

"It's good to start an away series as favourites. Our team knows how to handle this pressure," Sourav said at the end of the conditioning camp here.

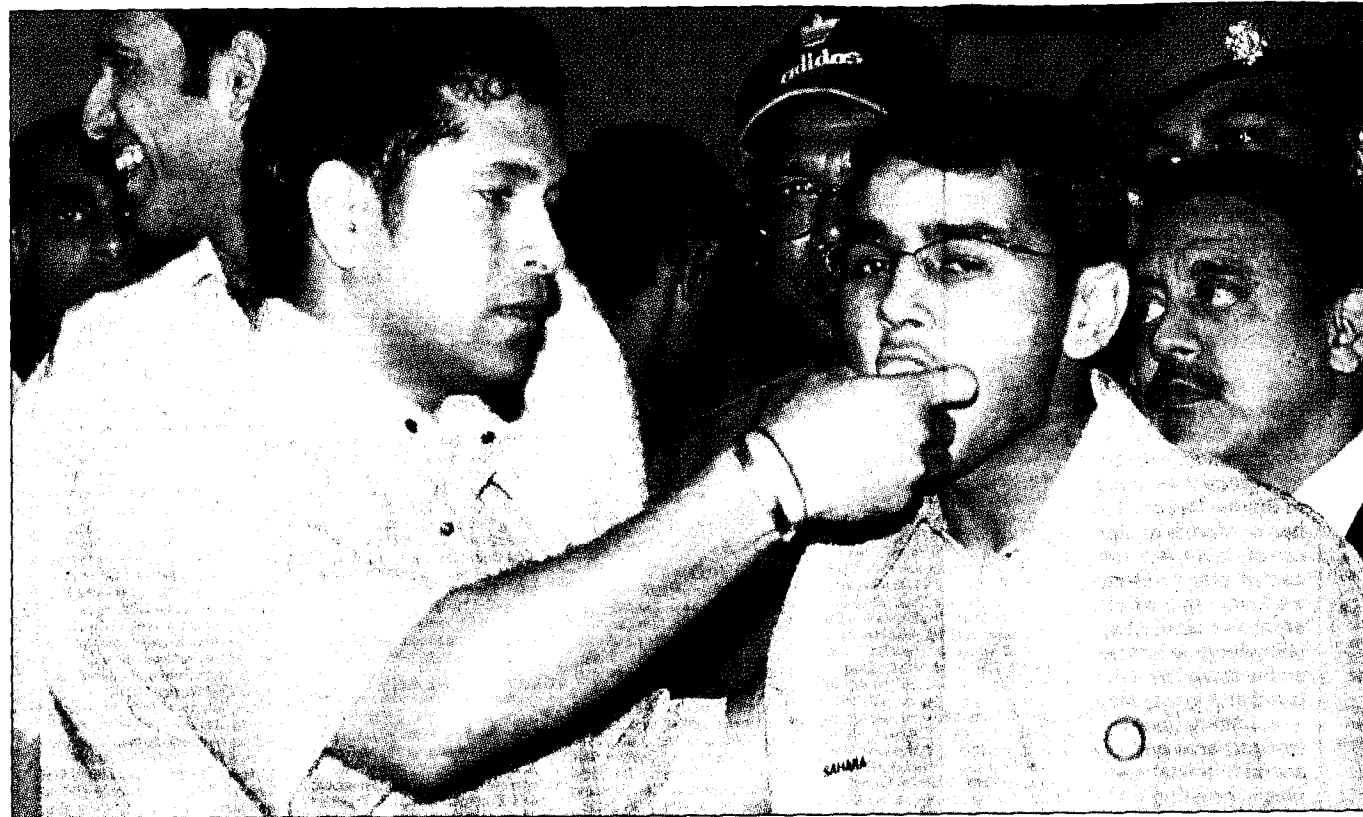
India will tour Pakistan after 15 years to play a full-fledged series (five ODIs and three Tests) as an offshoot of the peace initiative launched by the leaders of the two countries.

If the skipper appeared cool about the favourites tag, coach John Wright went a step farther, saying the pressure will be on Pakistan. "Playing at home means expectations will be high. They have a young batting line-up and some of their bowlers have had to make technical adjustments. The pressure is on them."

"Technical adjustment" is to "chucking" what "wardrobe malfunction" is to "indecent exposure". The coach did not use the C-word, but he was referring to Pakistani fast bowlers correcting their actions following adverse reports from match officials.

The captain chipped in with some of his own series-ave pres-

SWEET ON LIPS, STEEL IN HEART



Sachin Tendulkar feeds Parthiv Patel a piece of cake on his 19th birthday on Tuesday. Picture by Pabitra Das

sure tactics aimed at Shoaib Akhtar. "He is a good bowler. But he was in the shadow of Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis and leading an attack in their absence is a different ball game. Shoaib will be under pressure."

In Karachi, the wildly pacy Shoaib talked with restraint. "I know there are a lot of expectations, but I am more responsible than before and would not run away from my responsibility of being the spearhead," PTI quoted him as saying.

Shoaib and Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul Haq appealed for calm among followers. "I hope the fans take it just as a cricket series," Shoaib said.

Inzamam told Reuters: "This series is more than just cricket. It is about building bridges between Pakistan and India and promoting peace and fraternity."

Sourav was not reading too much into the fact that as captain, he will be viewed as an Indian ambassador to Pakistan.

"We are ambassadors wher-

ever we go. I know when it comes to India versus Pakistan things are looked at differently. But for me, it's nothing different. At the end of the day, it's a game."

He refused to agree that the Pakistan attack is superior. "If you talk about sheer pace, they are ahead. But if you think of containing batsmen and taking wickets, they are not."

The aggression and confidence of the team surfaced again when Wright explained why there is a good chance of win-

ing a series away from home.

"We have started winning Tests abroad, done well in the World Cup and the ICC Champions Trophy. We are coming up as a real force. This is a great opportunity for us to create some history," the coach said.

About Sachin Tendulkar's fitness, Sourav said: "He has a stiff back, not an injury. He looked okay today." Sachin had a long session with the bat in the morning.

■ See Sport

## Revival series for hotels

KAMRAN HAIDER

Karachi, March 9: The countdown to the biggest fight in this part of the world has begun. And with it, a mad scramble not for tickets, not for visas, not for trains but — you got it wrong — for hotel rooms.

With only four days to go before Shoaib unleashes his missile power at Sachin in the first one-day in Karachi, practically all rooms in all hotels have been taken.

"This is the kind of boost the Pakistani hotel industry needed for a long time," said Fakeha Imran, a senior sales executive at the Marriott Hotel.

Till before the Revival Series was announced, the hotel industry in Karachi had been in dire straits. There had been few visitors to the city that was known for its history of ethnic clashes.

But cricket appears to have changed that, even if temporarily. "I have never seen in all my life that you can't find a single room in such a big city, that too with managements asking for full payment in advance," said an employee working for a foreign wire service.

Not that the hospitality people are being very hospitable with the rates: most of the hotels have jacked up room charges and withdrawn all discounts and packages.

Nor have they installed the huge flat-screen televisions yet,

though the electronic scanners are in place.

At the five-star Sheraton, where both the Indian and Pakistani cricket teams will be staying, single and double rooms with complimentary breakfast are selling at Indian rupees 9,600 and Rs 11,200, respectively, plus 15 per cent taxes. In low-budget hotels, like the Regency Plaza, Sarawan and Skyways, rooms for Rs 1,600 are going for Rs 6,400.

"How can we offer discounts or a package to customers when the city is hosting a mega sports event?" asked Shazia Moeen, public relations manager at the Sheraton.

Some hotels denied having raised their rates. However, they admitted they had been virtually auctioning the stray available room: handing the keys to the person willing to pay the most.

Many Indians, without prior reservations, are desperately shuttling between hotels to find a room. Clients walking in and asking for accommodation are not being entertained.

People on business trips are not having an easy time either. Ameer Hassan, a Lahore businessman, said: "I'm not here for the match... so why should I take extra burden on my pocket?"

But the die-hard fan is not complaining. For him, the battle is as big as it had been during the 1987 and 1992 world cups. "For us, it is the World Cup," said an excited Mohammed Ismail.

# Pak lifts Jaish veil off House attack

1-5  
Qadir Pak

**Islamabad, March 7 (PTI):** In the first such statement from the Pakistani establishment, former ISI chief General (retd) Javed Ashraf Qazi has blamed the Jaish-e-Mohammed for the terrorist strike on the Indian Parliament in 2001.

Qazi also held the banned militant group responsible for the recent suicide attacks on President Pervez Musharraf and the deaths of "thousands" of Kashmiris.

Participating in a debate in the Senate on Musharraf's address to the joint sitting of Parliament, Qazi said: "We must not be afraid of admitting that Jaish was involved in the deaths of thousands of innocent Kashmiris, bombing the Indian Parliament, (journalist) Daniel Pearl's murder and attempts on President Musharraf's life."

India has blamed both Jaish and another Pakistan-based militant outfit, the Lashkar-e-Toiba, for the attack on Parliament. The two organisations were subsequently banned by Musharraf.

Qazi, who served as a senior minister in Musharraf's mili-

tary government, said both these outfits have harmed the "Kashmir struggle" the most.

He blamed sectarian group Lashkar-e-Jhangvi for the attacks on Shias in Pakistan.

Both Jaish and Jhangvi were products of a campaign of hatred, Qazi said, adding that "they are producing zombies to kill their Muslim brothers".

Referring to the attack on the minority Shias by Sunni extremist organisations like Jhangvi, Qazi said Pakistan's intelligence agencies were aware of about 10,000 religious institutions that were inciting the two groups against each other.

He denied Opposition allegations that the army alone was the architect of Pakistan's Afghan Policy and had supported the Taliban. Former interior minister Naseerullah Khan Babar of the Pakistan People's Party, led by Benazir Bhutto, had first contacted the Afghan commanders, he said.

"I saluted him for that because it was a correct decision at that time," said Qazi, who described the Taliban as products of circumstances.



Security forces outside Parliament after the attack. (Reuters file picture)



# On the road to peace

By K. K. Katyal

*Jan 4 2001  
HD-10*

**N**OW THAT India and Pakistan have finalised the road map for the composite dialogue, the process for bringing about peace and normality enters a challenging phase. All those who were involved in the "talks for talks" deserve credit but can they afford to rest on their oars? Crucial tasks are ahead of them. There is a strong case, on the one hand, for conscious efforts to contain negative trends and, on the other, to strengthen positive factors. What it means in concrete terms has been made clear by the happenings in the last eight weeks — since the release of the joint statement on the discussions of the two top leaders, the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and Pakistan's President, Pervez Musharraf, in Islamabad on the sidelines of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit.

The list of positive developments during this period, covering political, economic and personal areas, is impressive, howsoever viewed. At least five could be identified. 1) The unprecedented fillip to contacts among various segments of civil society, apart from officials. 2) India's cautious stand on the A.Q. Khan episode. 3) The care taken by New Delhi not to appear obstructionist in the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group during discussions on the re-entry of Pakistan into the grouping. 4) The encouraging noises by the two sides on trade-related and economic issues. 5) The conspicuous absence of the Pakistan issue in partisan controversies and electoral wrangles in India.

As against that, there are three or four negative trends. 1) Loose talk of coordination between the intelligence agencies of the two Governments. 2) A slowdown in the internal dialogue in Jammu and Kashmir — between the Centre and Hurriyat leaders, and the tactless handling of the State situation by the security forces. 3) Over-interpretation of the significance of the engagement between the divided Punjabis.

On the whole, it is not an unmanageable situation but could worsen, if precautions are not taken. The recent attempt on the life of the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, is a warning signal. The two Governments would do well to set up special cells in their respective foreign offices to monitor the trends in the run-up to the com-

mencement of the dialogue in May — after the elections in India — and to take timely correctives.

Let us examine these developments in detail — the negative ones, to start with. The other day, a local daily came out with a story on how the information given by the Research and Analysis Wing to Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) helped forestall another attempt on the life of Gen. Musharraf.

As was reported in these columns soon after the Islamabad summit, Mr. Vajpayee, in his phone call on the last day of his stay in Islamabad, did tell the General to take care of his security (*Apni hifazat ka khiyal rakhiyega*), but to treat it as a prelude to cooperation between the two intelligence agencies is to stretch the point. Such reports, emanating from India, would only enhance the vulnerability of the General to the *jihadi*, fundamentalist outfits, which are certain to step up their campaign against him for "collaborating with Indians." The two Governments did well to promptly deny the "baseless" report. Pakistan's Interior Minister, Faisal Saleh Hayat, forcefully rejected the talk of collaboration, saying that "our security agencies are capable enough to identify" such threats and of taking prevention measures. Though the record has been set straight, some residual damage is unavoidable.

There is no formal or structured linkage between New Delhi's talks with Kashmiri leaders and the dialogue with Pakistan but, in practice, the two are mutually reinforcing exercises. As such, a setback to the internal talks process could cast its shadow on the new beginning between New Delhi and Islamabad. Mishandling by the security forces of their anti-terrorist operations in Bandipora in Kashmir has done considerable damages, serving to give credence to allegations of human rights violations by India. This is a highly sensitive subject in Pakistan, which had been demanding remedial steps.

Positive gestures by India could earn it disproportionately high divi-

dends. But the importance of this simple point was not realised. The meeting of the Hurriyat leaders with the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, sometime ago, promised to reduce the distance between the separatists and New Delhi. Formal discussions, it was clear, could not have continued because of Mr. Advani's preoccupation with the Lok Sabha election. But N.N. Vohra, former Home and Defence Secretary, who was appointed Central interlocutor for contacts with various sections in the State, could have been used to keep up the momentum. This was precisely the type of situations he had to handle. Mr. Vohra's appointment was a sensible move but there was ambiguity about his mandate. What was given by the political masters with one hand was taken away by the other. Or was it a case of intrigues within officialdom? A perfect example of how not to do the right job.

The recent engagement between the Punjabis from the two sides of the border generated tremendous enthusiasm. The way the large groups of Punjabis from India, led by the Chief Minister, Amarinder Singh, were received by their counterparts from the other side had to be seen to be believed. Was it a case of atonement for the sins of the past or a desire to protect and promote the shared cultural heritage? Perhaps both.

But any assumption that it represented a craving by the Punjabis to get together or to unite, first at their level, and, later, on the bigger scale will be both facile and dangerous. That is the problem with some sections in India — they treat any sign of a thaw in bilateral relationship as a precursor to unification. True such a sentiment was not articulated this time but could it be said that it was not nursed?

A rapprochement between the divided Punjabis is to be seen within the existing political framework — between the citizens of two sovereign countries with a shared legacy, signified, among other things, by the Punjabi language. Any other projection

would give a handle to extremists in Pakistan who will be quick to dub the surge of warm, friendly sentiments as the work of "crafty" Hindus or the design of "Akhand Bharatis." That could also be a major setback to moves for engagement and amity between New Delhi and Islamabad. The oversimplified and misleading references to the "German parallel" are to be avoided.

Fortunately, the negative trends are few and far between and are swamped by the positive. There is a sudden spurt in the exchange of visits by people representing various segments — students, lawyers, women activists, traders, journalists, and, of course, politicians. Each such exchange leaves tremendous goodwill in its wake. The climax came with New Delhi's decision in favour of the Indian cricket team tour of Pakistan. At the political level, India has been cautious in its reaction to some of the highly sensitive problems on the other side of the border. The conspicuous restraint by India on the A.Q. Khan affair, both by the Government and the media, has not gone unnoticed in Islamabad.

Think of how New Delhi would have gone to town with demands for declaration of Pakistan as a rogue state by the international community had bilateral relations been as strained as, say, some nine months ago and the significance of the gesture will be clear. The prospects of Pakistan's re-entry into the Commonwealth have brightened as was evident from last week's statement by the Nigerian President (Nigeria is the head of the Ministerial Action Group).

That the stand of India, a member of the group, was not negative could not but have been noted in Pakistan. Then there were soothing voices from the two sides on trade and economic relations. For the first time, there is willingness by New Delhi to examine the possibility of a gas pipeline — from Iran to India via Pakistan.

On its part, Pakistan discussed the idea of importing diesel from India. Pakistan's stand on according India the status of the Most Favoured Nation is less rigid now but whether the decision is taken at the bilateral level or as part of the SAARC process for easing trade restrictions is not clear. Slowly but surely the positive factors are gathering strength. They need to be given a continuous push.

*11/3* **The positive factors in the process of normalisation of relations with Pakistan are gathering strength and need to be given a continuous push.**

# Pak postpones talks

Srinjoy Chowdhury in New Delhi

March 1. — As part of the peace initiative, top Indian armed forces officials were looking forward to defence-related talks with their Pakistani counterparts in April, but the Pakistani military, probably being the last word in their country, appear to prefer discussions at a later stage.

"We were looking forward to talks in April, but there is a difference in political systems. In Pakistan, the army often has the final word. So, they probably want the bureaucrats and diplomats to finish first. They can decide on the final outcome. In India, the government decides," a senior military official said.

A final date is yet to be set, but both sides have agreed on defence talks between representatives of the two armed forces. Currently, there is a Tuesday discussion between the director-general, Military Operations, of the Indian Army and his Pakistani army counterpart. In recent times, after the tensions of Operation Parakram, when the countries were on the brink of war, discussions have been very cordial. The talks could

## Mufti vows to check rights abuse

JAMMU, March 1. — Regretting incidents of human rights abuses that took place during the coalition government's rule despite unambiguous instructions, chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed has said that he has convened a meeting of Unified Headquarters to again discuss this issue and decide upon further measures to prevent them.

"With all powers at my command, I will make sincere endeavours to ensure that no human rights violation takes place at the hands of the security forces and the police while dealing with militancy," Mufti Sayeed said at a function organised to distribute relief cheques to ponywallahs under the Prime Minister's package at Pahalgam last afternoon.

He said that immediately after taking over the reigns of administration, he had made it clear to all wings of the security forces that human rights violations would not be acceptable to the government. — SNS

cleared, officials are talking about a number of issues that could be brought up to ease tensions. Much, of course, depends on the response from Pakistan and the government clearance.

■ There are little areas on the LoC in J&K that need sorting out. These minor differences could be handled at the Army level. A senior official said that in the Samba sector, 'patwaris' helped to clear out the difference some time ago.

■ The possibility of joint patrolling of parts of the international border and the LoC could also be considered. The first steps towards that have already been taken with the Pakistan Rangers and the Border Security Force getting together in Rajasthan for some work.

■ There could be some discussions on Siachen as well, depending on the Centre's views. One view is that the glacier could be made a no-man's zone with troops from both sides being pushed back 30-35 km from the present positions. If that happens, both sides can send patrols and depend on aerial surveillance. For that to happen, levels of trust on both sides would have to be very high.

yield a number of benefits, a senior armed forces officer said.

Though the final agenda is yet to be

# Pakistan considering MFN status for India

Business Standard

NEW DELHI, Feb. 25. — Pakistan is considering to give India the most favoured nation (MFN) status, said Mohammad Siraj, president, Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), who is in India as a head of a 45 member business delegation from Pakistan.

"The authorities in Pakistan have already made up their mind for according MFN status on India in background of improved bilateral climate that the two nations have been witnessing since April last year. It is only a matter of time and the decision is expected any day now," Siraj said today.

Speaking at a seminar on India-Pakistan: Strategic Alliance for Strengthening Economic Relations hosted by The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham), he said the present bilateral trade between India and Pakistan was much below the potential level. He also said that due to the improved political relationship between the two countries, trade and economic relations between the India and Pakistan will reach new levels.

Siraj said that Pakistani industry would also take up the matter relating to conferment of MFN status on India immediately

after the visiting business delegation returns to Pakistan.

The High Commissioner of Pakistan in India, Aziz Ahmed Khan in his address said that in the next few weeks time the commerce secretaries of the two nations would be meeting to further liberalise the trade barriers of the two economies.

Khan also said that the agreement signed today by Assocham and KCCI, will lead to the better economic understanding of the two nation's industry.

According to Assocham president Mahendra K Singh, as per the agreement, both chambers would exchange information to strengthen trade, technological and industrial cooperation between India and Pakistan as also inform each other of all activities that have the potential to further the trade and investments.

In addition, Assocham and KCCI would organise business delegations, exhibitions and trade promotion events. The two chambers will also encourage and develop joint ventures and identify investment opportunities.

India's exports to Pakistan during 2001-02 stood at Rs 686.79 crore which went up to Rs 996 crore in 2002-03. Similarly, the imports from Pakistan for the year 2001-02 was Rs 308.83 crore which fell to Rs 215.44 crore in 2002-03.

‘শেষ পর্যন্ত লড়তে হবে’

# ক্রিকেট এবং কাশ্মীর পৃথক সিরিজ: অটল

লখনউ, ২৩ ফেব্রুয়ারি— ভারত-পাকিস্তান ক্রিকেট সিরিজের সঙ্গে কাশ্মীর-প্রশ্নকে জোড়া যাবে না বলে মন্তব্য করেছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী। তবে ভারতীয় ক্রিকেট দলের পাকিস্তান সফর অবশ্যই দুই প্রতিবেশী দেশের সম্পর্কের উন্নতিতে সহায়ক হবে বলে বাজপেয়ীর বিশ্বাস। জেতা-হারার চেয়েও মাঠে নেমে খেলাটাই বেশি জরুরি বলে স্বরণ করিয়ে দিয়ে ভারতীয় ক্রিকেটারদের শুভেচ্ছাও জানিয়ে রেখেছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী।

সাই-এর একটি সাব-সেন্টার উদ্বোধন করতে এসে আজ এখানে বাজপেয়ী বলেছেন, “পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে সম্পর্কের উন্নতি ঘটানোর সিদ্ধান্ত আগেই নেওয়া হয়েছিল। সেই লক্ষ্যের কথা মাথায় রাখলে প্রস্তাবিত ক্রিকেট ম্যাচগুলি বিশেষ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ হয়ে উঠতে চলেছে।” এর পরেই প্রধানমন্ত্রী যোগ করেন, তাই বলে ক্রিকেট আর কাশ্মীর গুলিকে ফেললে চলবে না। দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্কের উন্নতিতে ক্রিকেট যদি সহায়তা করে, তা হলে ক্রিকেটের পরে কী সিদ্ধান্ত হতে চলেছে? স্বভাবসিদ্ধ রসিকতায় অটলের জবাব, “সেটা এই সিরিজের পরেই বলব।”

ভারতীয় ক্রিকেটারদের জন্য নিরাপত্তা ব্যবস্থায় কোনও ফাঁক রাখা হচ্ছে না, আশ্বস্ত করেছেন অটল। ক্রিকেটারদের জন্য শুভেচ্ছা জানিয়ে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর বক্তব্য, “খেলোয়াড়েরা যখন মাঠে নামেন, গোটা দেশ তাঁদের পিছনে থাকে।” ক্রিকেট-দলের জন্য কিঞ্চিৎ পরামর্শও রেখেছেন বাজপেয়ী। বলেছেন, “জেতার মানসিকতা গড়ে তুলতে হবে। পুরো শক্তি উজাড় করে দিতে হবে মাঠে।”

ক্রীড়াক্ষেত্রের উদ্বোধনী অনুষ্ঠানে প্রধানমন্ত্রী ছিলেন একেবারে ক্রীড়াপ্রেমিকের মেজাজে। সময় পেলে দেশের খেলা দেখতে তিনি যে টিভি খুলে বসে পড়েন, তা কবুল করেছেন। আর পাঁচ জন ক্রিকেটমোদীর ঢঙে বলেছেন, “আমি দেখেছি, খেলার শেষ দিকে ভারতীয়েরা ধৈর্য হারিয়ে ফেলেন। অথচ গোড়ার দিকে তাঁরা তো ভালই খেলেন।” এই সমস্যা কাটিয়ে ওঠার সম্ভাব্য দাওয়াইয়ের কথাও শোনা গিয়েছে অটলের মুখে। তাঁর বিশ্লেষণ, “আরও ভাল প্রশিক্ষণ চাই। তা হলে ভারতীয় খেলোয়াড়েরা বিপক্ষের চেয়ে ভাল ভাবে ম্যাচের চাপ সামলাতে পারবেন।”

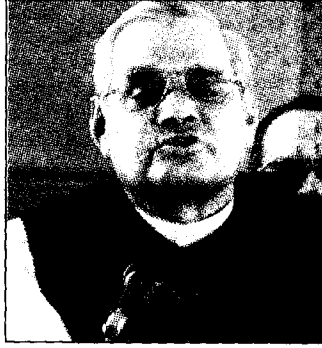
ভোটে মন্দির নয়। বহু আলোচিত ভারত-পাক ক্রিকেট সিরিজ নিয়ে মতামত জানানোর দিন এই শহরে বসেই প্রধানমন্ত্রী পরিষ্কার জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন, লোকসভা নির্বাচনে বিজেপি এ বার অযোধ্যা-প্রসঙ্গ তুলবে না। আর তাঁর নেতৃত্বে ‘ভারত উদয়’-এর বিজ্ঞাপন দেশ ছেয়ে ফেললেও বাজপেয়ী আজ মানতে চাননি যে, বিজেপি-র যাবতীয় প্রচার অটল-কেন্দ্রিক হয়ে পড়ছে। অটলের বক্তব্য, “বিজেপি-তে আমরা একজোট হয়ে কাজ করি। একা একা কেউ কোনও সিদ্ধান্ত নেয় না।”

লোকসভা ভোটে এ বারও বিজেপি অযোধ্যা-প্রসঙ্গ তুলবে কি না, তা নিয়ে যে টুকু জল্পনা ছিল, তাতে আজ কার্যত জল ঢেলে দিয়েছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। নিজের লোকসভা কেন্দ্র লখনউয়ে দু’দিনের সফর শেষে সাংবাদিক সম্মেলনে বাজপেয়ী বলেছেন, “রামমন্দির নির্বাচনের বিষয় নয়। ওটা মানুষের আবেগের ব্যাপার এবং আমাদেরও সেই ভাবে সমাধান বার করা উচিত। মনে হয়, সেই প্রচেষ্টা সফল হবে।” অযোধ্যায় মন্দির নির্মাণ কর্মসূচি দলের নির্বাচনী ইস্তহারে স্থান পাবে কি না, সেট প্রশ্ন রাখা হয়েছিল প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সামনে। উত্তরপ্রদেশের প্রাক্তন মুখ্যমন্ত্রী কল্যাণ সিংহকে (যিনি বাবরি-ধ্বংসের সময় ক্ষমতায় ছিলেন) পাশে বসিয়ে অটল জবাব দিয়েছেন, “ইস্তহার বেরোলে তো দেখতেই পাবেন।”

‘অটল ছাড়া বিজেপি-র আর আছেটা কী’— বিরোধীদের এ হেন আক্রমণেরও নিজের মতো করে জবাব দিয়েছেন বাজপেয়ী। তাঁর ব্যাখ্যায়, তিনি কোনও অবতার হয়ে যাননি। দলে তাঁরা একসঙ্গে কাজ করেন। কোনও ব্যক্তিবিশেষ কোনও সিদ্ধান্ত নেন না। ‘অটলজি কা নাম, অটলজি কা কাম’— এই ধরনের স্লোগানের তবে কী অর্থ হয়? অটলের সাফাই, “দল তো এমন বলছে না।” তা ছাড়া, ওই স্লোগানটাও সম্পূর্ণ নয়, বলেছেন তিনি।

কল্যাণ সিংহ বিজেপি-তে ফিরে আসায় উত্তরপ্রদেশে দলের শক্তি বেড়েছে বলে মন্তব্য করে অটলের আশা, এই রাজ্যে ৮০টার মধ্যে ৬০টা আসন জেতার লক্ষ্য ছুঁতে পারবে বিজেপি। রাজ্য বিজেপি-র অস্তিত্বের প্রসঙ্গকেও বিশেষ আমল দিতে চাননি তিনি। তবে জানিয়েছেন, একক সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠতা পেলেও কেন্দ্রে এন ডি এ-র জোট সরকারই গড়বেন তাঁরা।

—পি টি আই





# The making of the India-Pakistan joint statement

HD-12  
23/2  
By K.K. Katyal

Everything has gone right so far, touch wood — unthinkable in India-Pakistan dealings. Beginning with the quiet, unpublicised contacts of the Principal Secretary, Brajesh Mishra, and Tariq Aziz from Pakistan, the top confidants of the two heads, before the SAARC summit, and ending with the Foreign Secretary-level talks last week, the progress in the moves to settle the modalities for commencing the dialogue was remarkably smooth. The Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, agreed on a balanced joint statement on January 6 that took into account the concerns and sensitivities of the two sides. The two Foreign Ministers had no difficulty in establishing personal rapport — they began calling each other by their first names, “Yashwant” and “Khurshid”. Then there were the commendable efforts of the two Foreign Secretaries, Shashank and Riaz Khokar, in preparing the road map for contacts in terms of the political mandate from the top — and earlier by the Joint Secretary, Arun Singh, and his Pakistani counterpart in setting the ball rolling.

The details of all this are known. What is not known is that the Foreign Secretaries steered clear of divergences on delicate matters and moved forward. The road map prepared by them ends in July this year. The next phase would be crucial.

There were at least two instances where the two sides had differing ideas on modalities — one related to nuclear matters and the other to the situation along the border and the Line of Control. It was a measure of flexibility, spirit of cooperation and readiness to reach an agreement that verbal assurances provided the way out. As such, there was no jarring note, no residual damage. As for the nuclear issue, Pakistan made

a case for specific discussion on the doctrine of strategic restraint and, according to some reports, had prepared a document on the subject. The Indian side, however, felt that the subject was covered by the first item of the eight-point format that was to be the basis of the dialogue — peace and security, including confidence building measures. And if an additional support was needed, it was there in the MoU signed by the two sides during Mr. Vajpayee’s bus trip to Lahore in early 1999. After a brief discussion, the idea of a meeting of experts at an early stage — in the third week of May — was mooted and accepted. Pakistani sources, as quoted by their newspapers, spoke approvingly of the Cold War-days model — the CBMs that were in place between the erstwhile Soviet Union and the U.S. Among the other proposals mentioned by them were 1) a hotline between the Prime Minister of India and the President of Pakistan — to guard against accidental breakout of a nuclear conflict; 2) the offer not to keep the nuclear arsenal in the assembled shape; 3) strengthening of the present system of advance intimation of missile tests to the other side. India had been driving home the point that its nuclear programme was not Pakistan-specific.

As regards the border and the LoC, the Pakistani side readily accepted the Indian suggestion for meetings of the top men of the BSF and the Pakistan Rangers and a hotline between the Directors-General of Military Operations. India would have liked this process to be extended to provide for meetings at the DGMO level so as to consolidate peace and tranquillity in the wake of the ceasefire. Pakistani felt this could be done later after progress under the existing arrangement. India agreed.

Not to be under-estimated is the significance of two other developments — one,

Gen. Musharraf’s address to the country’s ulemas (religious scholars), seeking their help in curbing terrorism and, two, the meeting of Pakistani officials with the leader of the Hizb-ul Mujahideen, Syed Salahuddin, to tell him that “jihad” was no longer a feasible option, no more a good strategy to press for a solution of the Kashmir issue. Gen. Musharraf’s address coincided with the conclusion of the Foreign Secretary-level talks in Islamabad. (He had updated himself on the outcome of their talks), while the officials’ meeting with the Hizb leader was held ahead of the talks. This is not to be seen in isolation but is to be related to the General’s assurance, contained in the joint statement last month — that “he [Musharraf] will not permit any territory under Pakistan’s control to be used to support terrorism in any manner.”

Likewise, the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani’s plea, during a visit to Jammu and Kashmir, for ending human rights violations could not but have struck a cord on the other side of the border.

Mark what Gen. Musharraf told the ulemas — “no individual or political group has the right to issue calls for ‘jihad.’ In Islam, there is great importance of accepting the authority of the government of the day — otherwise if everybody starts working on his own agenda and takes matters of state in his hands, the country will not be able to progress.”

In case Pakistan takes the next logical step and dismantles the infrastructure of terrorism and advises the ‘jihadi’ outfits to stop communicating with the terrorists operating in Jammu and Kashmir, the normalisation process is certain to gallop. So far, Islamabad has merely told the ‘jihadi groups to send their messages in “short bursts”. This is not enough. However, there is an assurance to look into the matter.

# Indian cricket team to head for Pakistan on March 10

● Only one-dayers in Karachi, Peshawar

By S. Sabanayakan

**KOLKATA, FEB. 21.** The Indian cricket team will go on a 40-day tour of Pakistan from March 10 to play five one-day Internationals (ODIs) followed by three Test matches. According to the itinerary released by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) here today, the tour will start with a one-day warm-up game against a first-class side at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on March 11. The five ODIs will be played in Karachi on March 13, Rawalpindi on March 16, Peshawar on March 19, and Lahore on March 21 and 24. Karachi and Peshawar, seen as problematic venues, have been allotted day matches. The other three ODIs will be day-night events.

Multan will host the first Test from March 28 to April 1, Lahore the second from April 5 to 9 and Rawalpindi the third from April 13 to 17.

The BCCI president, Jagmohan Dalmiya, told a packed media conference that Test matches could not be scheduled in Karachi and Peshawar. "We respect the feelings of the cricket-loving people of Karachi and Peshawar. We are sure that the one-day internationals in these two venues will be played in [the] proper spirit and pave the way for the Indian team to play Tests during the team's next tour," he said.

The Indian team will be named here on March 3 and it will assemble in Delhi four days later. There would be no camp prior to the tour since many players were participating in the Duleep Trophy tournament now under way. Mr. Dalmiya said the Home Ministry and the External Affairs Ministry would brief the players on dos and don'ts and on security aspects.



Dalmiya at the Kolkata press conference

Explaining why one-day matches are scheduled ahead of the Test matches, Mr. Dalmiya said limited-overs games could generate excitement and passions among the fans of both countries. Keeping this fact in mind the BCCI wanted the ODIs to be played during the early part of the tour.

He said there was no pressure from any quarter in the preparation of the itinerary, but admitted that the advice of the Government of India, as conveyed through the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, was

taken into account.

He stated that though the entire responsibility for the safety and security of the Indian players and officials would be on the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and the Pakistan Government, the Indian Home Ministry had agreed to appoint a chief and two assistant security liaison officers for the tour. The responsibility of this three-member team would be limited to coordinating matters with the local law-enforcement authority and other agencies looking after the team's security.

## Itinerary

March 10 Arrival at Lahore

March 11 Warm-up one day match, Lahore

## one-day Internationals

March 13 Karachi (day)

March 16 Rawalpindi (day / night)

March 19 Peshawar (day)

March 21 Lahore (day / night)

March 24 Lahore (day / night)

## Test Matches

March 28 - April 1 Multan

April 5 - 9 Lahore

April 13 - 17 Rawalpindi

April 18 Return to Delhi



Graphics by Varghese Kallada

Mr. Dalmiya said that this being a goodwill tour, the Board had decided to allow the wives of the players to accompany them from the beginning. The Board's usual policy was to allow wives to join the players during the second half of a tour.

He said visa rules were being relaxed in order to allow as many Indian fans as possible to be in Pakistan for the matches. The details were being worked out between the two Governments. The team would return to Delhi on April 18.

**Mufti welcomes tour: Page 8**

# Pakistan tour won't be curtailed

Statesman News Service

KOLKATA/NEW DELHI, Feb. 20. — Wait another day, was the reaction of the Board of Control for Cricket in India president, Mr Jagmohan Dalmiya, when he was questioned about the itinerary of the forthcoming Indian team's tour to Pakistan. Nevertheless, he was categorical that the tour would not be curtailed.

"We are close to finalising the itinerary. I have discussed

the tentative dates with the Home and Sports ministries, the Election Commission as well as officials of the Pakistan Cricket Board. The programme will be announced tomorrow," he told a Press conference today.

The much awaited tour - India will be playing in Pakistan after 14 years - has gone through a lot of hiccups, security concerns being of prime importance. Even senior play-

ers were initially reluctant to go.

Mr Dalmiya said the tour might be delayed by four or five days. "It won't be later than say 12 March. Arrangements for printing and distribution of tickets and media accreditation will have to be made."

Senior officials in Delhi have suggested that Peshawar be dropped as a venue as it borders Afghanistan. The Taliban presence in the

town is said to be strong. They also want only a one-day in Karachi, considered a high-risk area.

The memory of the Daniel Pearl killing and the explosion that killed several Frenchmen leading to the quick end of the New Zealand tour is being talked about.

Mr Dalmiya today, however, said there was a possibility of the tour being split in two - with a gap between the Tests and the One-Day Internationals.



# ভারত-পাক আলোচ্যসূচি ঘোষিত পরমাণু অস্ত্র নিরাপত্তা নিয়ে কথা মে'র শেষে

ইসলামাবাদ, ১৮ ফেব্রুয়ারি— দুই দেশের পরমাণু অস্ত্র যাতে দুর্ঘটনাবশত বিপদের কারণ না হয়ে দাঁড়ায় সে জন্য ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের বিশেষজ্ঞরা মে মাসের শেষ দিকে এ নিয়ে বৈঠকে বসবেন। একই সঙ্গে মে-জুন মাসেই দুই দেশের বিদেশসচিব বৈঠকে বসবেন। তাঁরা কথা বলবেন কাশ্মীর, উপমহাদেশে শান্তি ও নিরাপত্তা এবং দুই দেশের মধ্যে পারমাণবিক আস্থা বাড়াবার ব্যবস্থা সংক্রান্ত বিষয় নিয়ে। অন্যদিকে, সিয়াচেন, সন্ত্রাসবাদ ও মাদক চোরাচালান, সার ক্রিক, উল্লার বাঁধ, সহ অন্যান্য বিবদমান বিষয়গুলি নিয়েও সার্বিক আলোচনার দিনক্ষণ ঘোষণা করল ভারত ও পাকিস্তান। আজ ইসলামাবাদে দুই দেশের বিদেশসচিবরা আলোচ্যসূচি, আলোচনার পদ্ধতিগত খুঁটিনাটি এবং সময়সূচি নিয়ে ঐকমত্যে পৌঁছেছেন। সামনেই ভারতে লোকসভার নির্বাচন। তাই চলতি বছর মে-জুন মাসে, ভারতে লোকসভা ভোটপর্ব মিটে যাওয়ার পর, আলোচনা শুরু হবে। সব মিলিয়ে প্রত্যাশিতভাবেই দুই দেশ এবার তাদের নিজেদের বিবাদ মেটাতে সামগ্রিকভাবে আলোচনা শুরু করতে রাজি হয়েছে। প্রায় আড়াই বছর পরে সরকারি স্তরে দুই দেশের আলোচনার ইতিবাচক পরিণতিতে চলতি শান্তি প্রক্রিয়া অনেকটাই গতিশীল হল সন্দেহ নেই।

অগস্টেই আলোচনার অগ্রগতি খতিয়ে দেখতে বৈঠকে বসবেন দুই দেশের বিদেশমন্ত্রীরা। পরমাণু অস্ত্র সংক্রান্ত আস্থাবর্ধক ব্যবস্থা নিয়ে ১৯৯৯ সালের ফেব্রুয়ারিতে ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের মধ্যে একটি সমঝোতাপত্র হয়েছিল। প্রধানমন্ত্রী অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ীর লাহোর বাসযাত্রার সফরে ওই সমঝোতাপত্র স্বাক্ষরিত হয়। এবার সেই সমঝোতাপত্রের ভিত্তিতেই মে মাসের শেষে দুই দেশের বিশেষজ্ঞরা বৈঠকে বসবেন বলে পাক বিদেশসচিব রিয়াজ খোকার জানিয়েছেন। দুই পরমাণু শক্তিধর প্রতিবেশী তাদের পরমাণু অস্ত্রসম্ভারকে নিরাপদে রাখার জন্য ঠিকমতো ব্যবস্থা নিচ্ছে কি না, সেটাই আলোচনার জন্য দুই দেশের বিশেষজ্ঞদের মধ্যে ওই বৈঠক হবে।

অন্য দিকে, সার্বিক আলোচনায় জন্ম কাশ্মীর ছাড়াও সন্ত্রাস, শান্তি, নিরাপত্তা, আস্থাবর্ধক ব্যবস্থা-সহ মোট আটটি বিষয় নিয়ে পাঁচটি ভাগে আলোচনা হবে বলে এ দিন যৌথ ঘোষণাপত্রে বলা হয়েছে। পরমাণু প্রযুক্তির চোরাচালান নিয়ে পাকিস্তান এখন আন্তর্জাতিক দুনিয়ায় প্রবলভাবে সমালোচিত হলেও দুই দেশের মধ্যে আলোচনায় ভারত তা তুলছে না। কারণ, ভারতের বক্তব্য, পাকিস্তান ছাড়াও লিবিয়া, ইরান সহ আরও দেশ এই ব্যাপারে জড়িত। দ্বিপাক্ষিক আলোচনায় তাই এটা তোলা অর্ধহীন।

এ দিন ইসলামাবাদে মুসলিম

ধর্মগুরুদের এক সভায় সার্বিক আলোচনা শুরুর কথা ঘোষণা করেন পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফ। কাশ্মীর প্রশ্নে পাকিস্তান নিজেকে বিকিয়ে দিয়েছে, এই অভিযোগ উড়িয়ে দিয়ে তিনি বলেন, বিদেশমন্ত্রী পর্যায়ে বৈঠকের পরই কাশ্মীর সমস্যা সমাধানে কাশ্মীরিদের যুক্ত করার বিষয়ে সিদ্ধান্ত হবে। অন্য দিকে, রিয়াজ খোকার বলেন, “আলোচনায় দুই পক্ষই সন্তুষ্ট। ভারত খুবই গঠনমূলক ভূমিকা নিয়েছে। তবে সার্বিক আলোচনা শুরু না হওয়া পর্যন্ত আমাদের অপেক্ষা করতেই হবে।”

গত দু'দিন যুগ্মসচিব পর্যায়ে বৈঠকেই সার্বিক আলোচনার সময়সীমা ও খুঁটিনাটি নিয়ে দুই দেশের মধ্যে সমঝোতা হয়েছিল। যুগ্মসচিবরা যে প্রস্তাবগুচ্ছ বিনিময়

মধ্যে যোগাযোগের বিষয়টিও আজ বিদেশসচিবরা খতিয়ে দেখেন। এই যোগাযোগ আরও বাড়ানোর ব্যাপারে দু'পক্ষের মধ্যে ঐকমত্য হয়েছে। সীমান্তে সংঘর্ষ কমিয়ে শান্তি ও নিরাপত্তা বজায় রাখার উদ্যোগ নেবেন ডি জি এম ও-রা। কাশ্মীর সীমান্তে বেড়া দেওয়া নিয়ে নিজেদের ক্ষোভ অবশ্য গোপন করেননি খোকার। তাঁর কথায়, “এটা মোটেই ভাল কিছু নয়। তবে ভারত বলেছে তারা নিজেদের সীমানার অনেক ভিতরে বেড়া দিচ্ছে। এ নিয়ে আরও আলোচনা হবে।”

শ্রীনগর-মুজফ্ফরাবাদ বাস চলাচল নিয়ে খোকার বলেন, আগামী ৯ মার্চ এ ব্যাপারে টেকনিক্যাল স্তরে বৈঠক হবে। সেখানেই আলোচনা হবে প্রয়োজনীয়



সহায় দুই দেশের বিদেশসচিব। বুধবার ইসলামাবাদে। — রয়টার্স

করেছিলেন তা বিদেশসচিবদের হাতে তুলে দেওয়া হয় আলোচনা এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়ার জন্য। সেই সূত্রে ধরেই আজ কথা শুরু করেন ভারতের বিদেশসচিব শশাঙ্ক ও রিয়াজ খোকার। সার্বিক আলোচনার কোনও পর্যায়ে শীর্ষ বৈঠকের প্রস্তাব আছে কিনা জানতে চাওয়া হলে রিয়াজ খোকার বলেন, “দুই দেশের বিদেশমন্ত্রীরাই এ ব্যাপারে সিদ্ধান্ত নেবেন।”

আজ তিন দিনের আলোচনার শেষে পাক বিদেশসচিব খোকার বলেন, “সৌহার্দ্যপূর্ণ পরিবেশে আলোচনা হয়েছে। দু'পক্ষই বুঝেছে যুক্ত কোনও সমাধান নয়। দীর্ঘস্থায়ী শান্তি ও নিরাপত্তার স্বার্থে আমরা সম্ভাব্য সকল দিক খতিয়ে দেখব। আশা করি এই পথ নির্দেশিকা ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের মধ্যে বিবদমান বিষয়গুলির নিষ্পত্তি ঘটাতে সাহায্য করবে।”

সার্বিক আলোচনা শুরুর আগেই মার্চ-এপ্রিল মাসে ভারতের সীমান্ত রক্ষী বাহিনীর ইলপেস্টের জেনারেল ও পাকিস্তান রেঞ্জার্সের ডিরেক্টর জেনারেল নিজেদের মধ্যে আলোচনা করবেন। অনুপ্রবেশ ও চোরাচালান ঠেকানোর ব্যাপারে তাঁদের মধ্যে কথা হবে। দুই দেশের ডিরেক্টর জেনারেল অফ মিলিটারি অপারেশনসের

ব্যবস্থার খুঁটিনাটি নিয়ে। সম্পর্কের বরফ গলার পরে এ বার ভারতের দীর্ঘ দিনের দাবি মেনে পাকিস্তান তাকে বিশেষ সুবিধাপ্রাপ্ত দেশের মর্যাদা দেবে কিনা জানতে চাওয়া হলে খোকার বলেন, সার্বিক আলোচনার যথেষ্ট অগ্রগতি হলে তবেই পাক বিদেশমন্ত্রী এ ব্যাপারে সুপারিশ করবেন। তার পর বিষয়টি নিয়ে সরকারি স্তরে আলোচনা হবে।

দুর্নাম হচ্ছে পাকিস্তানের। পাকিস্তানে ঘাঁটি গাড়া বিদেশি জঙ্গিদের হয় আত্মসমর্পণ করতে না হয় দেশ ছেড়ে চলে যেতে বললেন প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফ। আজ ইসলামাবাদে মুসলিম ধর্মগুরুদের সভায় মুশারফ রীতিমতো কড়া গলায় বলেছেন, সন্ত্রাসবাদীদের জন্য গোটা বিশ্বে পাকিস্তানের দুর্নাম হচ্ছে। মৌলবীদের এটা বুঝতে হবে। সামরিক পোষাক পরে সভায় আসা পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট দেশে জঙ্গি কার্যকলাপ বন্ধ করতে মুসলিম ধর্মগুরুদের সাহায্য চান। পাকিস্তানের মাটি থেকে অন্য কোনও রাষ্ট্রে জঙ্গি কার্যকলাপ চালানো যাবে না বলেও হুঁশিয়ারি দিয়েছেন তিনি। তাঁর আশ্বাস, জঙ্গিরা যদি অস্ত্র ত্যাগ করে সেনাবাহিনীর কাছে আত্মসমর্পণ করে

এর পর ছয়ের পাতায়

## মের শেষে

প্রথম পাতার পর  
তাহলে তাদের ক্ষমা করা হবে। অন্য  
কোনও দেশের হাতেও তাদের তুলে  
দেওয়া হবে না।

আজই কাশ্মীরে বিবদমান  
বিষয়গুলি নিষ্পত্তির লক্ষ্যে সার্বিক  
আলোচনা শুরুর ব্যাপারে ভারতের সঙ্গে  
ঐকমত্যে পৌঁছেছে পাকিস্তান। তার  
পরই মুশারফের ঘোষণা ভারতের সঙ্গে  
সম্পর্কের উন্নতির প্রেক্ষিতে তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ  
বলে মনে করা হচ্ছে।

এর পাশাপাশি, আল কায়দার জঙ্গিরা  
পাকিস্তানে আশ্রয় নিয়েছে বলে  
আমেরিকার অভিযোগ। এ নিয়ে  
মুশারফকে তারা যথেষ্ট চাপে রেখেছে।  
সম্প্রতি আফগান সীমান্ত লাগোয়া  
এলাকা থেকেই বহু বিদেশি জঙ্গিকে  
শ্রেফতার করেছে পাকিস্তান।

এ দিকে, পরমাণু অস্ত্র তৈরিতে  
ভারতের সঙ্গে পাল্লা দেওয়ার কোনও  
অভিপ্রায় পাকিস্তানের নেই বলে জানিয়ে  
দিলেন পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ  
মুশারফ।

লন্ডনের দৈনিক 'ফাইন্যান্সিয়াল  
টাইমস'কে দেওয়া সাক্ষাৎকারে তিনি  
বলেছেন, পরমাণু অস্ত্র তৈরির  
প্রতিযোগিতায় নামার ইচ্ছা তাঁদের নেই।  
তবে, পরমাণু ও ক্ষেপণাস্ত্র প্রকল্পগুলির  
কাজ বন্ধ করা হবে না বলেও জানান  
তিনি। কয়েক সপ্তাহের মধ্যেই পাকিস্তান  
'শাহিন ২' ক্ষেপণাস্ত্রের পরীক্ষামূলক  
উৎক্ষেপণ করবে। পরমাণু প্রযুক্তি পাচার  
সংক্রান্ত বিতর্কের মুখে আজ স্পষ্ট ভাষায়  
মুশারফ বলেছেন, পাকিস্তানের পরমাণু  
পরীক্ষাগারগুলিতে কোনও রকম  
আন্তর্জাতিক পর্যবেক্ষণ চালাতে দেওয়া  
হবে না। — পি টি আই, রয়টার্স

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

FEB 2004

19 FEB 2004

CRICKET & POLITICS OUT OF THE WAY, FOREIGN MINISTERS WILL MEET IN AUGUST

# India, Pak map road to peace

Statesman News Service & Agencies

NEW DELHI/ISLAMABAD, Feb. 18.— India and Pakistan have agreed to tackle outstanding bilateral problems from May, after the business of the cricket tour and the business of politics (read the Indian general elections) are concluded.

Agreeing today to a “basic roadmap” for peace, security and economic development, the foreign secretaries of the two countries decided to meet in May/June to resolve all bilateral contentious issues, including J&K.

Okaying the substance of the talks held by their juniors, Mr Shashank and Mr Riaz Khokhar issued a joint statement, which expressed the commitment of both countries to approach the composite dialogue “with the sincere desire to discuss and arrive at a peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues, including J&K.” There was no mention of a third party, the Kashmiris, that Pakistan had earlier insisted upon. “We’ve now a sort of a basic roadmap for a Pakistan-India peace process,” Mr Khokhar said.

Pakistani foreign minister Mr Khurshed Mehmud Kasuri today described the talks as “very positive”. “There couldn’t have been a better start to these talks,” he told the BBC. He admitted that the Pakistani side had raised the issue of reported human rights violations in J&K. “We had to, not just because it was a matter of rights, but it’s the sensible thing to do.”

The foreign secretaries reviewed and endorsed the agreement — worked out on 16 and 17 February — on the modalities and time-frame for talks on all subjects on the agenda of the composite dialogue

After the foreign secretaries’ meeting in May/June, the foreign ministers will meet in August to review the progress in the talks. The foreign secretaries’ meeting in May/June will cover peace and security, including J&K and confidence-building measures.



SWEEPING AWAY DIFFERENCES? The blind Pakistani cricket team practise in Lahore on Wednesday. They take on India later this week. — AFP

In March/April, technical-level talks will be held between the BSF I-G and the Pakistan Rangers D-G on border management, including infiltration and terrorism. In July, talks will be held, at previously agreed levels of representation, on Siachen, Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Project, Sir Creek, terror, drug trafficking, economic and commercial cooperation, and promotion of friendly exchanges in various fields. Expert-level talks on nuclear CBMs, an addition to the 1997-98 composite dialogue agenda, will be held in the second half of May. The panel on drug trafficking and smuggling will meet in June.

Meanwhile, Pakistan today said it was not averse to the idea of having a “no-

war” pact with India. The step, it said, will be inevitable once the outstanding problems are resolved. “There is no formal understanding on this issue but this is the logical conclusion... understood by both,” Mr Khokhar said.

#### ‘Cricket tour part of CBMs’

Foreign minister Mr Yashwant Sinha today said reviving cricketing ties with Pakistan was part of confidence-building measures. Mr Sinha denied having seen any home ministry note on the reported security concerns. He quoted Mr LK Advani as having said that the home ministry’s stand on the issue was “clearly misunderstood”.

More reports on pages 3 and 5

#### Pervezspeak

ISLAMABAD, Feb. 18. — Stepping up pressure on foreign militants operating out of Pakistan, Gen. Pervez Musharraf today asked them to leave the country or surrender, and pledged not to allow them to carry out their activities against any country. Foreign militants should return to their countries or surrender, he said, apparently referring to the Taliban/Al-Qaida. Addressing a gathering of clerics here, he admitted that some madrasas were spreading sectarian hatred: “... this (perception of us) is not something we can hide.” His speech, aimed at winning the support of the clerics for his reforms, called for a movement against terror and extremism. — PTI

# India, Pakistan outline road map for dialogue

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 18. India and Pakistan have agreed on a road map to carry forward the composite dialogue to resolve all their differences. It will begin at the Foreign Secretaries level in May/June when confidence building measures (CBMs) on peace and security and Jammu and Kashmir will be discussed.

The road map has been sketched keeping in mind the general elections expected in April/May and will cover all the eight subjects identified in the 1998 format for a composite dialogue. The first round is to culminate in a summit of the two Foreign Ministers some time in August to review the progress. A preparatory meeting of the Foreign Secretaries will precede it.

The two sides have also agreed to hold experts-level talks on nuclear CBMs in the latter half of May as agreed in the Lahore Declaration of February 1999. This is the first time the Musharraf Government has incorporated in its official policy any element of the Lahore Declaration, which Pakistan's President, Pervez Musharraf, has criticised for having only a 'passing' reference to Kashmir. On nuclear CBMs, the Lahore declaration had said respective governments "shall take immediate steps for reducing the risk of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons and discuss concept and doctrines with a view to elaborating measures for confidence building in the nuclear and conventional fields, aimed at prevention of conflict."

The Foreign Secretary, Shashank, told Indian correspondents after his meeting with his Pakistani counterpart, Riaz Khokar, that some ideas about the composition of the group of experts were discussed. While maintaining that the composition of the groups would give a fair idea of what both sides wanted, Mr. Shashank declined to go into details.

The Pakistan Foreign Secretary told a news conference that "the modalities and the time-frame for discussions on all subjects of the agenda for the Composite Dialogue" were discussed and "both sides agreed that they would approach the composite dialogue with the sincere desire to discuss and arrive at a peaceful settlement of bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, to the satisfaction of both sides."

The two Foreign Secretaries met to consider the agenda on a composite dialogue finalised by the Joint Secretary-level parleys in the last two days in pursuance of the decision taken after a

meeting between Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Gen. Musharraf in Islamabad on January 6, 2004.

Reading out from a joint statement, Mr. Khokar said both countries were committed to promoting progress "towards a common objective of peace, security and economic development for their peoples and for future generations." Echoing the sentiments, Mr. Shashank said the dialogue should help in promotion of peace and development in the region.

He stressed that to facilitate the peace process it was necessary, as spelt out in the January 6 joint statement, to "remove atmosphere of violence, hatred and terrorism."

Under the programme finalised today, the Foreign Secretaries will meet in May-June for talks on peace and security, including confidence building measures, and Jammu and Kashmir. Talks on Siachen, the Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation Project, Sir Creek, Terrorism and Drug Trafficking, Economic and Commercial Cooperation, and Promotion of Friendly Exchanges in various fields will be held at the already agreed levels in July. Secretaries or senior officials of Ministries/Departments concerned would take part in meetings on these subjects. Besides, technical level meetings at the level of Director-General of the Pakistan Rangers and Inspector-General of the Border Security Force will be held in March-April. There will be an expert level talks on nuclear CBMs in the latter half of May. The Committee on Drug Trafficking and Smuggling will meet in June. Mr. Khokar said today's meeting reviewed the existing links between the Directors-General of Military Operations of India and Pakistan and "agreed to consider further strengthening of these contacts."

To a question whether there was any proposal for a summit level meeting, he said "this will be for the two Foreign Ministers to decide." They will have an opportunity to meet on the sidelines of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation ministerial council meeting here in July.

Mr. Khokar said "there is realisation on both sides that war is not an option. That itself is a very constructive conclusion. Therefore, we will explore every possibility for durable peace, security and resolution of all issues. We hope that this roadmap will lead to the settlement of all outstanding issues between India and Pakistan and contribute to global peace."

Editorial on Page 10; Liberal visas for cricket lovers: Page 12



# US guarding hand for Pak nuclear set-up

## Structure for talks in place

OUR BUREAU

Islamabad, Feb. 17: India and Pakistan today reached a "broad understanding" on a framework for composite dialogue after two days of middle-level meetings.

The agreement on the modalities and time frame to revive dialogue on eight areas of dispute, including Kashmir, comes a day ahead of the scheduled talks between the foreign secretaries.

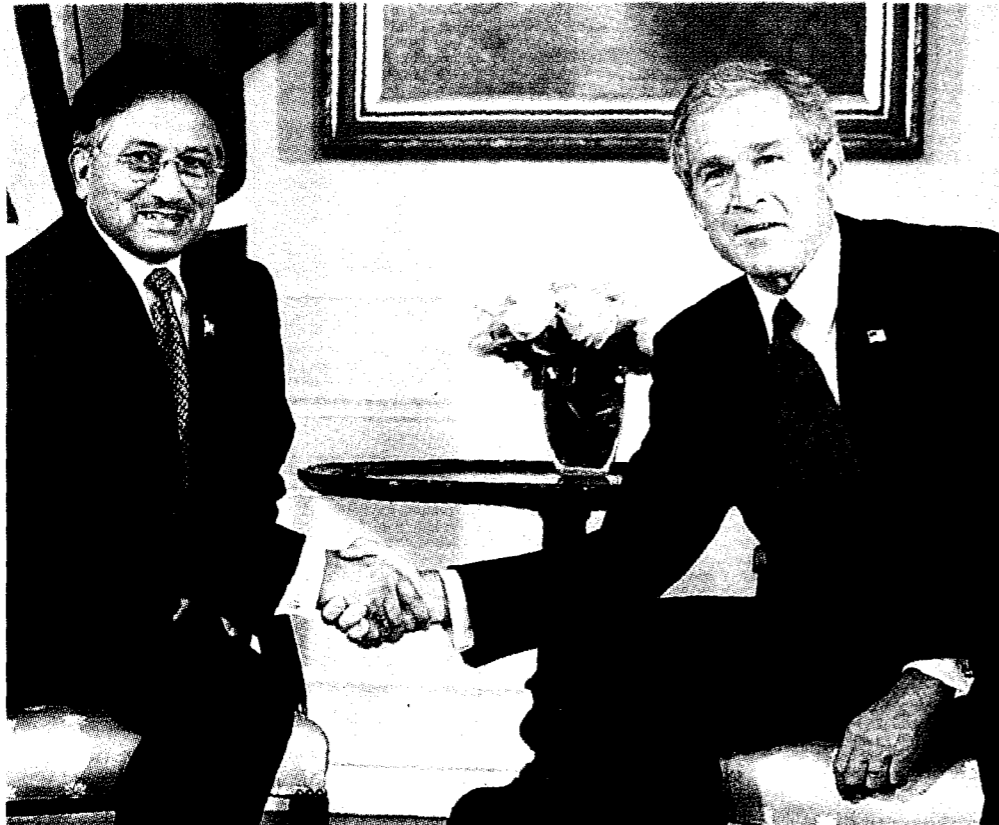
Pakistan Television said the negotiating teams had also considered proposals to add another two items to the agenda, but did not give details.

The teams will tomorrow submit their recommendations to Shashank and Riaz Khokhar, the Indian and Pakistan foreign secretaries, a Pakistan foreign ministry statement said.

"Broadly, we'll carry forward what was agreed in 1998," an Indian official said. Under the formula agreed then, the foreign secretaries would discuss Kashmir and peace and security.

■ See Pages 4 and 6

## WHY MUSHARRAF MUST AGREE TO BUSH TAKING CHARGE



A file picture of Pervez Musharraf and George W. Bush in New York. (Reuters)



- Global nuclear watchdog says father of Pakistani bomb A.Q. Khan's confession is only tip of an iceberg
- Bush calls for coordinated international action to stop the spread of nuclear weapons
- Growing demands in US Congress to hold Pakistan accountable for nuclear free market
- NBC, an American TV network, reports a US Liaison Committee is working with Pakistan to guard its nuclear bombs
- US state department confirms talks with Pakistan on safety of nuclear material

K.P. NAYAR

Washington, Feb. 17: Pakistan, firmly in the dock after the recent exposure of its nuclear black market, has been forced into action to control its nuclear material and technology.

The US and Pakistan, working together to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, have taken steps to prevent Islamabad's knowhow on atomic bombs from falling into the hands of terrorists — especially if General Pervez Musharraf is killed or overthrown.

Richard Boucher, the state department's spokesperson, confirmed that "we have had discussions with them (Pakistanis) about safety of nuclear materials and technology". He cited the talks as "another example of why it is important to safeguard all that expertise and material".

There has been a rash of reports here in the last few days about steps taken by the Americans to impose controls on Pakistan's nuclear assets in the light of the scandal surrounding Abdul Qadeer Khan, the father of Islamabad's nuclear programme.

NBC Television carried a detailed report on how a "US liaison committee" is working to guard

Pakistan's nuclear bombs. "Meeting every two months, they are helping Pakistan develop state-of-the-art security, including secret authorisation codes for the arsenal," NBC said.

Boucher denied the network's report, but would only go so far as to say that talks have been held with Pakistan on securing nuclear material and technology.

"We are prevented by law and the (Nuclear) Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), for that matter, from getting involved in the safety of nuclear weapons, questions involving nuclear weapons," he said.

Experts here believe that if the US and Pakistan are working together to safeguard nuclear material and technology, it is unlikely that actual weapons will not be covered by those steps.

However, because of America's non-proliferation laws and its signature on the NPT, the spokesperson has to walk on a fine line without stepping on the wrong side of domestic legislation and US treaty obligations.

Intelligence assessments here are that Pakistan's nuclear bombs are not kept fully assembled. They are stored with their fissile cores separated from the non-nuclear components.

If such is, indeed, the case, the joint US-Pakistan effort to

ensure the safety of nuclear material could cover the bombs as well.

Technically, the Americans would not be violating the NPT or domestic laws as long as those weapons are not fully assembled.

Sources here said that, despite Musharraf's assertions to the contrary, top Pakistani officials have told the US that Islamabad's nuclear assets are vulnerable.

It is understood that ongoing talks between Pakistan and the US involve — in addition to secret authorisation codes for nuclear material — security of the kind that is enforced at American nuclear installations.

The Americans are expected to encourage Pakistan to disassemble even their assembled nuclear weaponry and store components in separate locations. The effort would ensure that no individual or group can get hold of all the components and put together a nuclear bomb.

It is here that India's role becomes crucial. The Americans believe it would be easier to convince Islamabad to take these steps if the Indo-Pak peace process gains momentum and Islamabad no longer sees it necessary to keep atom bombs in readiness as a deterrent against an attack from India.



# India, Pakistan agree on timeframe for talks

H10-1  
18/2

● Focus now on communication, transport links

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 17. India and Pakistan have arrived at a "broad understanding" on the modalities and timeframe to carry forward the process of a composite dialogue that was interrupted in 1998.

An agreement on the timetable and format was reached today, the second day of Joint Secretary-level talks held in the hill town of Murree, 50 km from here. The Indian and Pakistan Foreign Secretaries, Shashank and Riaz Khokar, are expected to put their seal of approval on the pact at their meeting here tomorrow.

Indications are that the first round of talks on substantive issues identified in the 1998 composite dialogue format will be held some time in May in New Delhi. It is not immediately clear if the May round will cover all the eight subjects.

Under the 1998 agreed format, peace and security, including confidence-building measures (CBMs), and Jammu and Kashmir, were to be discussed at the level of Foreign Secretaries.

The other six subjects and the level in which these were to be discussed (given in brackets) are: Siachen (Defence Secretaries), the Tulbul navigation project (Water and Power Secretaries), Sir Creek (Additional Secretary, Defence/Surveyor-General), terrorism and drug trafficking (Home Secretaries), economic and commercial cooperation (Commerce Secretaries) and the promotion of friendly exchange in various fields (Culture Secretaries).

Pakistan is keen on elevating Kashmir for discussion to the political level though no such indication was given at the talks. The argument is that dialogue on the contentious issue should be at the ministerial level, as progress on it would require political decisions.

This was evident from the comments made by the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri, on the need to quicken the pace of talks on Kashmir.

"The President is wearing two hats for a year and



Pakistan's Foreign Secretary, Riaz Khokar (left), greets India's Ambassador to Pakistan, Shivshankar Menon (right), and Arun Kumar Singh, Joint Secretary in the External Affairs Ministry, before their meeting in Islamabad on Tuesday. — AP

advantage should be taken of that," he said. He argued that it was important not to draw out the process and not give those looking to disrupt the peace process an opportunity to intervene.

Mr. Kasuri said the widespread perception among the people of India and Pakistan was that a political party like the BJP was best placed to deliver peace to the region.

He said that all these factors combined to ensure that the talks proceeded along the desired lines, so that this feeling of *deja vu* arising from the cynical "we have gone through all this before" could be overcome.

Mr. Kasuri said that it would be a good idea if India and

Pakistan began discussions to introduce and implement nuclear confidence-building measures. "If either party ever makes any mistake here, this mistake will be fatal," he added.

He said that there were reasons why the current talks could succeed. One, the situation in South Asia had changed. Two, the phrase "global village" was not a cliché any longer. Both India and Pakistan realised that they could not impose their will on each other and that peace was possible only through a negotiated settlement on all issues, including Jammu and Kashmir.

In the course of the talks in the last two days, India did not raise the subject of

nuclear CBMs. The view is that these could be discussed under the "peace and security" agenda, which already figures in the composite dialogue.

India is not enthused over the Pakistani proposal on a restraint regime as New Delhi believes that its defence preparedness is not Pakistan-centric.

Officials also underlined that the modalities and timeframe of the composite dialogue had to be read along with the January 6 statement. The statement had referred to some reassurances on what needed to be done and the assurances to sustain the process in the context of terrorism.

The Indian assessment so far is that while the ceasefire

has held and that infiltration is considerably down, there is no visible action on dismantling of the terrorism infrastructure, camps, funding and training by Pakistan.

With the modalities and the timeframe for the composite dialogue out of the way, India and Pakistan will now focus on technical-level talks on reviving the communication links between Munnabha (Rajasthan) and Khokharapar (Sindh) and running a bus service between Muzaffarabad and Srinagar.

The Rajasthan/Sindh link talks are scheduled here on March 8 and 9 and these will be followed by parleys on March 29 and 30 for establishing bus services on both sides of Kashmir.

## সময়সীমা ও খুঁটিনাটি নিয়ে ভারত-পাক সমঝোতা

# সার্বিক আলোচনার ভিত্তিতে

১৯৭০

১৯৭০

নয়াদিল্লি ও ইসলামাবাদ, ১৭ ফেব্রুয়ারি— কাশ্মীর-সহ বিবদমান বিষয়গুলি নিয়ে আলোচনা শুরুর পদ্ধতির ব্যাপারে ভারত ও পাকিস্তান আজ এক সমঝোতায় পৌঁছেছে। যুগ্মসচিব পর্যায়ের আলোচনার দ্বিতীয় দিনের শেষে পাক বিদেশ মন্ত্রক এক বিবৃতিতে এ কথা জানিয়ে বলেছে, যুগ্মসচিব পর্যায়ের দু'দিনের আলোচনায় যে প্রস্তাবগুলি বিনিময় হয়েছে, তা এ বার বিদেশসচিবদের হাতে তুলে দেওয়া হবে আলোচনাকে আরও এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়ার জন্য। মূলত বিবদমান বিষয়গুলি নিয়ে ভবিষ্যতে যে সার্বিক আলোচনা শুরু হবে, তার সময়সীমা ও খুঁটিনাটি নিয়েই এই সমঝোতা হয়েছে। বিদেশসচিব পর্যায়ের বৈঠক শুরু হওয়ার ঠিক এক দিন আগে যুগ্মসচিব স্তরের এই সমঝোতা যে কালকের বৈঠককে অনেকটাই ইতিবাচক সুরে শুরু করতে সাহায্য করবে, তাতে কোনও সন্দেহ নেই। দীর্ঘ আড়াই বছর পরে দু'দেশের আনুষ্ঠানিক আলোচনায় এই সমঝোতা হওয়ায় এক দিকে যেমন, চলতি শান্তি প্রক্রিয়া অনেকটাই গতিশীল হল, অন্য দিকে ভবিষ্যতে শীর্ষ স্তরে আলোচনার পথও কিছুটা মসৃণ করে দিল।

আজ পাক রাজধানী থেকে ৫০ কিলোমিটার দূরে মুরী শৈল শহরে পাক বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের দক্ষিণ এশিয়া বিষয়ক ডিরেক্টর জলিল আব্বাস জিলানির সঙ্গে ভারতের বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের যুগ্মসচিব অরুণ কুমার সিংহের বৈঠকের শেষ দিনে এই সমঝোতায় পৌঁছানো গিয়েছে। আগামী কাল বৈঠকে বসছেন ভারতের বিদেশসচিব শশাঙ্ক এবং পাক বিদেশসচিব রিয়াজ খোন্দর। ইসলামাবাদের উড়ান ধরার আগে, নয়াদিল্লিতে শশাঙ্ক বলেছেন, “আমরা খুবই আন্তরিকতার সঙ্গে এই আলোচনার প্রক্রিয়া শুরু করেছি। আমাদের আশা, ভবিষ্যতেও এই প্রক্রিয়া থেমে থাকবে না।”

তবে, বিবদমান বিষয়গুলি নিয়ে সার্বিক আলোচনাকে আগামী দিনে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়া হবে, এই মর্মে কোনও বিবৃতি বিদেশসচিবদের বৈঠকের পরে জারি করা হতে পারে। পাক প্রশাসন সূত্রে জানা গিয়েছে, ১৯৯৭ সালে যে আটটি বিষয় ঠিক করা হয়েছিল, সেগুলিকে ভিত্তি করেই দু'দেশের যুগ্মসচিবেরা প্রস্তাবগুলি বিনিময় করেছেন। ভবিষ্যতের সার্বিক আলোচনার আলোচ্যসূচি কী হবে, আলোচনা কোন কোন ধাপে এগোবে, তার সময়সূচিই বা কী হবে—ইত্যাদি সমস্ত খুঁটিনাটি বিষয় নিয়ে আলোচনার ভিত্তি ছিল ওই আটটি বিষয়ই। এগুলি হল: কাশ্মীর, সিয়ান, শান্তি ও নিরাপত্তা, ভুল্লার বাঁধ, স্যার ক্রিক, সন্ত্রাসবাদ, ড্রাগ চোরালান এবং অর্থনৈতিক সহযোগিতা। পরমাণু অস্ত্র নিয়ে দু'দেশের মধ্যে আস্থাবর্ধক ব্যবস্থা নেওয়ার সম্ভাবনা আছে কি না, সে প্রশ্নে পাক প্রশাসন সূত্রে খবর, বর্তমানে সার্বিক আলোচনার যে কাঠামো নিয়ে বৈঠক চলছে, সেখানে ‘শান্তি ও নিরাপত্তা’

এই বিষয়টির মধ্যেই পরমাণু অস্ত্রকে অন্তর্ভুক্ত করে নেওয়া হতে পারে।

তবে, এখন পর্যন্ত যা জানা গিয়েছে তাতে, জম্মু-কাশ্মীর এবং শান্তি ও নিরাপত্তা—এই দু'টি বিষয় কোনও একটি নির্দিষ্ট পর্যায়ে এবং বাকি ছ'টি বিষয় নিয়ে অন্যান্য পর্যায়ে আলোচনা হবে বলে মেনে নিয়েছে দু'পক্ষই। '৯৭-এর সার্বিক আলোচনার কর্মসূচিতেও বলা হয়েছিল প্রথম দু'টি বিষয় নিয়ে কথা হবে বিদেশসচিব পর্যায়ের। বাকিগুলি নিয়ে বিভিন্ন সচিব ও অন্যান্য স্তরে আলোচনা হবে।

সরকার নিয়ন্ত্রিত পাকিস্তান টেলিভিশন অবশ্য জানিয়েছে, এই আটটি বিষয় ছাড়াও অন্য দু'টি বিষয় সার্বিক আলোচনার কর্মসূচিতে ঢোকানো যায় কি না, সে ব্যাপারেও দু'পক্ষের কথাবার্তা হয়েছে। তবে, সেই দু'টি বিষয় কী, তা তারা জানায়নি।

এর আগে জিলানির সঙ্গে দ্বিতীয় দফার আলোচনা শুরুর আগে পাক বিদেশসচিবের সঙ্গে দেখা করেন অরুণ সিংহ। যদিও, প্রশাসনের তরফে একে নিছক সৌজন্যমূলক সাক্ষাৎকার বলা হয়েছে। পাকিস্তানে ভারতীয় হাইকমিশনার শিবশঙ্কর মেনন, ভারতের পাক হাইকমিশনার আজিজ আহমেদ খানও এই বৈঠকে উপস্থিত ছিলেন।

এ দিকে, আজ থেকে দিল্লি-লাহোর শাখায় চাহিদা অনুযায়ী বাসের সংখ্যা বাড়ানো যাবে। নতুন ব্যবস্থা অনুসারে, যাত্রী-চাপ বেশি থাকলে বেশি বাস চালানো যাবে। এখন সপ্তাহে দু'টি করে বাস যাতায়াত করে দুই শহরের মধ্যে। সকাল ছ'টার সময়ে দিল্লি ও লাহোর থেকে বাস ছাড়ে। অন্য শহরে এসে পৌঁছয় একইদিনে, সন্ধ্যা ছ'টার সময়ে। দিল্লি ও লাহোরের মধ্যে বাস পরিষেবা বাড়ানোর জন্য ভারতের দিক থেকেই প্রথমে প্রস্তাব আসে। ভারত যে বারো দফা শান্তি-প্রস্তাব পাঠিয়েছিল, তার অন্যতম ছিল দিল্লি ও লাহোরের মধ্যে বাসের সংখ্যা বাড়ানো। গত মাসে ইসলামাবাদে দিল্লি পরিবহন নিগমের এক প্রতিনিধিদলের সঙ্গে পাকিস্তান পর্যটন দফতরের বৈঠক হয়। বাস পরিষেবা চলছে এই দু'টি সংস্থার মাধ্যমে। সেখানেই পাকিস্তান রাজি হয়েছে বাস বাড়ানোর ব্যাপারে। ঠিক হয়েছে, যাত্রীসংখ্যা বেশি হলে বছরের কয়েকটি মাস দুয়ের জায়গায় চারটি বাস চলবে। এই ব্যবস্থা এখন থেকেই চালু হয়ে যেতে পারে।

এই সবে মধ্যকার পাকিস্তানের বিদেশমন্ত্রী খুরশিদ মেহমুদ কাসুরি আজ বলেছেন, বিবদমান বিষয়গুলি নিয়ে একটি গ্রহণযোগ্য সমাধানসূত্রে পৌঁছানোর জন্য ভারত-পাক আলোচনায় এখনই আরও গতি আনা দরকার। তাঁর মতে, এ বছরের শেষ পর্যন্ত পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফ সেনা-প্রধান পদেও থাকতে পারবেন। দু'দেশেরই উচিত

এর পর সাতের পাতায়

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

18 FEB 2004

# Kashmir, nuke restraint on table

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**OUR BUREAU**

**Islamabad/New Delhi, Feb. 16:** India and Pakistan opened their first formal peace talks in Kashmir high on the agenda, discussing the structure, modalities and time frame of the composite dialogue that is to follow.

The three days of "talks about talks" between foreign ministry officials were held in what both sides called a "cordial atmosphere and constructive manner". Both sides "expressed satisfaction with the progress" on the first day.

"The two delegations discussed modalities and time frame for resumption of composite dialogue. Some proposals were exchanged," Pakistan's foreign ministry said in a statement.

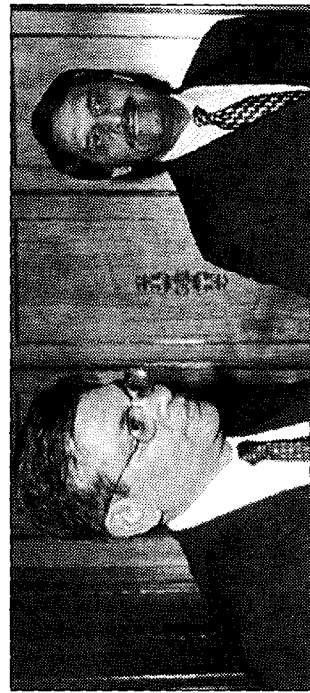
But spokesman Masood Kh-

an declined to give details. "I would not go into details but Kashmir, of course, remains part of the dialogue," he said. A nuclear restraint regime would also dominate talks, he said.

The talks will build on a ground-breaking meeting between Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and President Pervez Musharraf last month, a year and a half after the negotiations came to the brink of a fourth war.

"There is a new momentum. This momentum must be maintained," Khan told a news conference. "You should have a clear time frame and a sustainable process. These talks have to be substantive, structured and sustained."

The two delegations were led by Arun Singh, joint secretary in the Indian external affairs min-



**Jalil Abbas Jilani (right), the director-general for South Asia in Pakistan's foreign ministry, escorts Arun Singh, joint secretary in the external affairs ministry, in Islamabad on Monday. (Reuters)**

istry and Jalil Abbas Jilani, the director-general for South Asia in Pakistan's foreign ministry.

India is believed to have suggested the formation of committees at various levels to tackle the eight areas of disagreement, including Kashmir, Siachen and

Sir Creek. In a goodwill gesture, it decided to release and repatriate eight Pakistani civilians, including four boys, who had been detained after they strayed across the border.

Keeping the momentum going in Delhi, foreign minister

Yashwant Sinha politely turned down the European Union's offer to mediate between the neighbours.

"We are grateful for the offer... as far as the role of the EU or any other third party is concerned, these are best resolved bilaterally between India and Pakistan," he said.

The optimism in political circles was, however, not shared by radical and religious Kashmiri outfits, many of whom questioned if the talks would bring a solution to their liking. They said international pressure had forced Pakistan to agree to "discuss all bilateral issues, including Kashmir".

While some termed this a betrayal by Pakistan, others dubbed it a U-turn. Some even accused Islamabad of compromising their "freedom struggle".

# Over-simplified

## Brownie points for Pakistan

It may not have attracted much of a splash in the newspapers but media monitors across the western border would certainly have latched on to the clean chit that George Fernandes has awarded to Pakistan. His observations on the militant situation in Jammu and Kashmir would prove mighty handy to Islamabad's representatives at the forthcoming meeting to re-launch the dialogue process. In an unprovoked interview to a national news agency the defence minister said that India had "solid information" that the Pakistan government had taken measures to contain terrorism and that infiltration had come down by a "considerable extent." He went on to talk about "autonomous agencies" indulging in terrorist acts but there was no evidence of their being funded by the Pakistani authorities.

That very same day the Chief of the Army Staff had advocated waiting and watching. According to him the fall in infiltration levels could be the combined effect of 'General Winter', more extensive border fencing, greater use of sensors and a revised deployment pattern, the Chief had said. He would wait till the summer re-opened the passes before drawing conclusions. It would have been possible to explain away those differing assessments as the result of the Army not being supplied the "solid information" that the defence minister was talking about. But that would not explain why the view of the external affairs ministry tallies with that of the Chief, not Fernandes'. So was this just another case of George deliberately being sensational? Remember he has not hit the front pages too hard in recent days, and remember also how when the guns were blazing in Kargil he declared that Nawaz Sharif had played no role in that mischief. Issuing good conduct certificates is nothing new to him. There would have been no cause to join issue with Fernandes had the talks not been just a few days away. It is an open secret that the officials of both countries will have to grope their way through difficulty and darkness to come up with even the contours of an acceptable framework for the dialogue. It would be imperative that India speaks in just one voice on any matter that be included in the agenda. Even if that requires the defence minister to hold his peace.

কাল বিদেশসচিবদের কথা

১৭/২

# লাহোর বৈঠক প্রথম দিনেই আশা জাগাল

India - Pak

ইসলামাবাদ, ১৬ ফেব্রুয়ারি— দু'দেশের বিবদমান বিষয়গুলি নিয়ে কী ভাবে আলোচনা এগিয়ে নেওয়া যায়, সে বিষয়ে ভারত ও পাক প্রতিনিধিরা আজ লাহোরে এক গুচ্ছ প্রস্তাব বিনিময় করেছেন। দীর্ঘ আড়াই বছর পরে দুই দেশের মধ্যে আনুষ্ঠানিক ভাবে আজই প্রথম বৈঠক হল। ভারতের বিদেশমন্ত্রকের যুগ্মসচিব অরুণ কুমার সিংহ এবং পাকিস্তানের বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের দক্ষিণ এশিয়া বিষয়ক ডিরেক্টর জলিল আব্বাস জিলানি বৈঠকে অংশ নেন। তিন দিনের এই বৈঠকের শেষ দিনে ইসলামাবাদে আলোচনায় বসে ভারতের বিদেশসচিব শশীকান্ত ও পাকিস্তানের বিদেশসচিব রিয়াজ খোকার। আলোচনার অগ্রগতির সঙ্গে সঙ্গে উপমহাদেশে পরমাণু যুদ্ধ এড়াতে দুই দেশের পরমাণু অস্ত্রের নিয়ন্ত্রণ ব্যবস্থা নিয়ে কথা হতে পারে বলে পাক মুখপাত্র জানিয়েছেন। আলোচনার এই সূচনাকে স্বাগত জানিয়েছে আমেরিকা ও ইউরোপীয় ইউনিয়ন।

আজকের বৈঠকে দু'দেশের তরফেই কাশ্মীর-সহ বিবদমান সব ক'টি বিষয়ে আলোচনা কী ভাবে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়া যায়, তা নিয়ে ভারত ও পাকিস্তান নিজের নিজের বক্তব্য প্রস্তাবাকারে পেশ করে। তাতে আলোচ্যসূচি, আলোচনা কোন কোন ধাপে এগোবে, এবং সামগ্রিক আলোচনা চালানোর জন্য সময়সূচি কী হবে— খুঁটিনাটি বিষয় নিয়ে দু'দেশের তরফে তাদের সুনির্দিষ্ট প্রস্তাব বিনিময় করেছে। আগামী কাল বৈঠক আবার শুরু হওয়ার আগে দু'পক্ষই একে অন্যের প্রস্তাব খুঁটিয়ে পরীক্ষা করে দেখবে। পাক বিদেশ দফতরের মাসুদ খান বলেন, বৈঠক খুবই সৌহার্দ্যপূর্ণ পরিবেশে হয়েছে। কালও কথা হবে। এ দিকে দিল্লিতে বিদেশমন্ত্রী যশবন্ত সিনহা বলেন, তিন দিনের এই দ্বিপাক্ষিক বৈঠকের সাফল্য সম্পর্কে তিনি আশাবাদী। ইউরোপীয় ইউনিয়নের মধ্যস্থতার প্রস্তাব খারিজ করে দিয়ে তিনি বলেন, ভারত ও পাকিস্তান দ্বিপাক্ষিক আলোচনার মাধ্যমেই সমস্যামেটাতে পারবে।

আজ সকাল এগারোটো নাগাদ পাক বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের দক্ষিণ এশিয়া বিষয়ক ডিরেক্টর জলিল আব্বাস জিলানির সঙ্গে বৈঠকে বসেন ভারতের বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের যুগ্মসচিব অরুণ কুমার সিংহ। আলোচনা সম্পর্কে বিস্তারিত কিছু জানাতে অস্বীকার করলেও মাসুদ খান বলেছেন, দ্বিপাক্ষিক আলোচনার বিষয়সূচি, কাঠামো, এস্তিমার ও দিনক্ষণ নিয়ে কথাবার্তা শুরু হয়েছে। বুধবার বিদেশসচিব পর্যায়ের বৈঠকে এ নিয়ে চূড়ান্ত সিদ্ধান্তে পৌঁছানো যাবে বলে তিনি আশা প্রকাশ করেছেন।

আজ কাশ্মীর নিয়েও দু'দেশের যুগ্মসচিবদের আলোচনা হয়েছে বলে খান জানান। পাকিস্তানের আপত্তি উপেক্ষা করে কাশ্মীরে ভারত-পাক সীমান্তে বেড়া দেওয়ার বিষয়টি উঠেছিল কি না জানতে চাওয়া হলে খান বলেন, “আমি বিস্তারিত কিছু বলব না। তবে দু'দেশের যাবতীয় উদ্বেগের বিষয় নিয়েই আলোচনা হবে।” আজ ‘সৌহার্দ্যপূর্ণ পরিবেশে’ কথা হলেও কাশ্মীর প্রসঙ্গে পাকিস্তান অবশ্যই প্রকাশ্যে তাদের সুর নরম করতে এখনও প্রস্তুত নয়। পাক বিদেশ দফতরের মুখপাত্র বলেন, কাশ্মীরে ভারত দমনপীড়ন চালাচ্ছে এবং সেখানে মানবাধিকার লঙ্ঘনের ঘটনা ঘটছে, পাকিস্তান চায় এ সব বন্ধ হোক। অন্য দিকে, ‘জেহাদিদের’ সঙ্গে পাক সরকার সব সম্পর্ক ছিন্ন করুক এমন কোনও দাবি ভারত তুলেছে কি না এই প্রশ্নের উত্তরে খান বলেন, “তেমন কোনও প্রসঙ্গ নিয়ে কথা হয়নি।”

এ দিকে, আজই ভারত এ দেশের জেলে আটক চার বালক-সহ আট পাক নাগরিককে মুক্তি দেওয়ার সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে। আন্তর্জাতিক সীমান্ত পেরিয়ে এরা ভারতে চলে এসেছিল। কাল এদেশে পাকিস্তানে ফেরত পাঠানো হবে। চলতি শান্তি প্রক্রিয়া সম্পর্কে ভারতের এর পর-সাতের পাঠ্য

ANADABAZAR PATEIKA

7 FEB 2004

P. T. O.

## লাহোর বৈঠক আশা জাগাল

প্রথম পাতার পর

ইতিবাচক মনোভাবের পরিচয় দিতেই এই সিদ্ধান্ত, বলেছেন বিদেশ দফতরের মুখপাত্র। অতীতের দ্বিপাক্ষিক আলোচনার ব্যর্থতা সত্ত্বেও এ বারের বৈঠক সফল হবে বলে পাকিস্তানও আশাবাদী। ৫ জানুয়ারি সার্ক সম্মেলন চলাকালীন অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী ইসলামাবাদে পারভেজ মুশারফের সঙ্গে বৈঠকে বসেন। পরের দিন এক যৌথ বিবৃতিতে ফেব্রুয়ারিতে সচিব পর্যায়ে আলোচনার কথা জানানো হয়।

বাজপেয়ী ও মুশারফের কূটনৈতিক বিচক্ষণতার জন্যই আজকের বৈঠক সম্ভব হয়েছে মন্তব্য করে মাসুদ খান বলেন, দুই রাষ্ট্রনায়কের আলোচনার ফলে দ্বিপাক্ষিক

সম্পর্কের ক্ষেত্রে যে নতুন গতির সঞ্চার হয়েছে তা বজায় রাখা প্রয়োজন। আন্তর্জাতিক মহলও শান্তি প্রয়াসের পক্ষপাতী বলে খান জানান। —পি টি আই

### মণীশ-হত্যায় নয় মোড়

মথুরা, ১৬ ফেব্রুয়ারি— প্রধানমন্ত্রীর নাতি মণীশ মিশ্রের হত্যার প্রধান অভিযুক্ত রামজি বর্মাকে হত্যার দায় নিজেদের ঘাড়ে নেওয়ার জন্য পুলিশ ঘুষ দিয়েছিল বলে অভিযোগ করেছেন রামজির ভাই। তাঁর ভাই মহেশ বর্মা জানান, পুলিশ ৫০ হাজার টাকা ও দু'মাস পর জামিনে মুক্তি দেওয়ার শর্তে রামজিকে মণীশ হত্যার দায় স্বীকার করতে বাধ্য করে। —পি টি আই

ADABAZAR PATRIKA

17 FEB 2004

# Talks on Indo-Pak talks begin

*Officials discuss modalities and timeframe for dialogue*

Press Trust of India  
Islamabad, February 16

THE MODALITIES and timeframe for the composite Indo-Pak dialogue on bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, were discussed in a "constructive manner" between officials of the two countries, with India reportedly suggesting the setting up of committees at various levels to tackle various problems.

On the opening day of the three-day officials talks, both sides exchanged proposals and Pakistan described the parleys as being held in a "cordial and constructive manner."

While the Indian side was headed by Joint Secretary in the External Affairs Ministry Arun Singh, the host side was headed by Jalil Abbas Jilani, Director-General in the Foreign Office. The third-day parleys would be conducted by Foreign Secretary Shashank and his Pakistani, counterpart Riaz Khokhar.

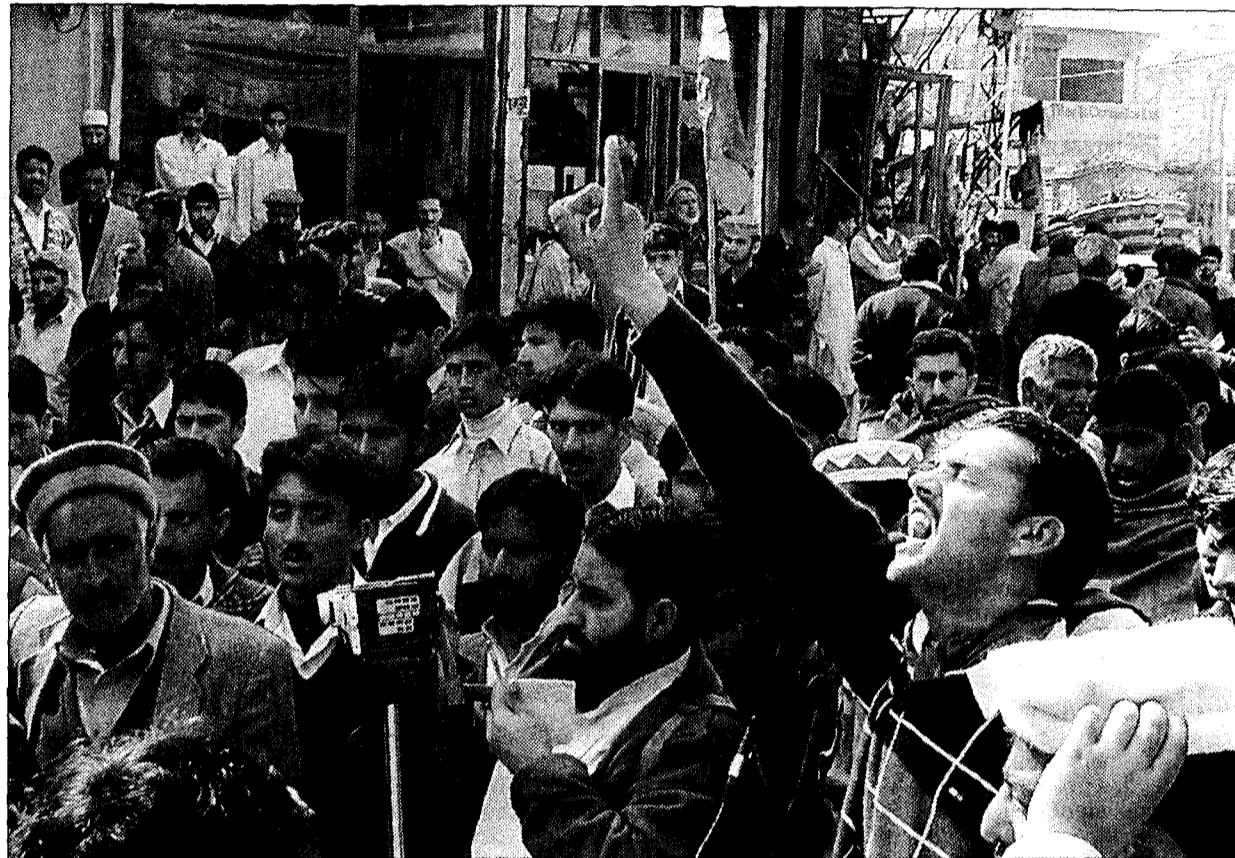
"The two delegations discussed modalities and a time-frame for resumption of a composite dialogue. Some proposals were exchanged in this regard", Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman Masood Khan told reporters.

Khan said both the sides expressed satisfaction on the progress made on the first day and the parleys would continue on Tuesday. Indian officials also expressed satisfaction over the way the talks were conducted on Monday and said there was no substantive issues discussed except the modalities and the time-frame. The modalities included the setting up of different official-level committees to discuss each of the issues.

Both sides refused to divulge details of the talks except saying that the focus was on modalities and time-frame of the composite dialogue, first agreed to by the two countries in June 1997.

Eight issues listed in the 1997 composite dialogue agenda included peace and security, Kashmir, Siachen, Wullar Barrage, Sir Creek, terrorism and drug-trafficking and economic cooperation. Kashmir and peace and security were discussed at the level of Foreign Secretaries in the past, while other issues were slated to be taken up at various other levels.

India reportedly expressed its preference for doing it the same way. The Indian side is also understood to have expressed its



A JKLF supporter chants slogans against Pakistan-India peace talks at a rally in Muzaffarabad, capital of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, on Monday.

## First day, first show...

The official-level dialogue discussed the modalities and a time-frame for resumption of a composite dialogue

Indian officials said the modalities included the setting up of different official-level committees to discuss each of the issues.

Eight issues listed in the 1997 composite dialogue agenda included peace and security, Kashmir, Siachen, Wullar Barrage,

Sir Creek, terrorism and drug-trafficking and economic cooperation. Kashmir and peace and security were discussed at the level of foreign secretaries in the past, while other issues were slated to be taken up at various other levels

Both sides indicated that that these eight points remained the focus of discussions

The talks were held in line with the decision taken

by Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf at their ice-breaking meeting on January 5 on the sidelines of the Saarc summit in Islamabad

The officials of both the countries expressed satisfaction on the progress made on the first day and the parleys would continue on Tuesday

preference to broadly retain the eight-point structure in which issues like confidence-building measures on nuclear issues could be tagged along with peace and security.

Both sides indicated that that these eight points remained the focus of discussions.

The entire structure of the composite dialogue was expected to be crystallised on Wednesday after talks between the two Foreign Secretaries. The talks were held in line with the decision taken by Prime Minis-

ter A.B. Vajpayee and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf at their ice-breaking meeting on January 5 on the sidelines of the Saarc summit in Islamabad.

Briefing the media after the talks, Masood Khan declined to go into the details, but, at the same time, said, "Kashmir, of course, remains part of the dialogue... We're looking for a solution that can ensure peace and stability in the region, justice for Kashmiris and a secure future for the people of South Asia".

Asked what the need to

discuss the agenda again was when the issues between the countries had already been defined, Khan said the objective was to structure the dialogue and make it more "predictable". He said the joint statement issued after the Vajpayee-Musharraf meeting had already provided the necessary political will to carry forward the dialogue. There was a need to maintain this momentum. He said, "The talks should be substantive, structured and sustained".

Khan said there was a "very salutary environ-

ment to kickstart the process, which had been stalled for over two years". The international community, he said, was very supportive of the process and the credit went to the statesmanship of both the leaders.

When asked about Musharraf's recent statements that both sides should demonstrate flexibility, he said that that stage was yet to come. "Flexibility has to be mutual and reciprocal", he said, while maintaining that Monday's parleys only covered modalities and time-frame.

To a question on whether the issue of fencing of the Line of Control (LoC) would be discussed, he said, "All issues would be discussed... The two sides will touch on all dimensions".

He said the talks were the beginning of a composite dialogue process, which deals with integrated issues and to which both the countries had agreed. According to him, the composite dialogue process "collapsed" after the Agra summit.

This time around, he hoped, all issues, including that of J&K, would be taken up. The composite dialogue remained "suspended" since 1998 and what was started on Monday was the process agreed to by Vajpayee and Musharraf.

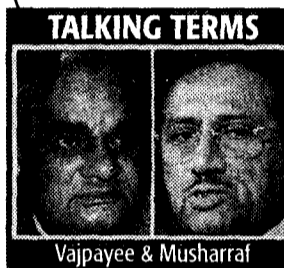
# India not to raise nuclear issue during Pak talks

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 15 FEBRUARY

**E**VEN as it initiates the process of formal talks with Pakistan on Monday, India has decided not to raise the recent nuclear proliferation scandal in its discussions. The government has decided that it is best that the issue that caused acute embarrassment to the Musharraf regime be tackled at the multilateral level.

Although Pakistan has been forced on the backfoot due to revelations of hawking nuclear material, New Delhi is not going to deviate from the script agreed upon by both sides following the Islamabad Saarc summit.

This means that the three-day discussions, beginning with sittings at the joint secretary level and culminating



with talks at the foreign secretary level, will meticulously focus on working out modalities for holding the composite dialogue. It will entail agreeing upon the agenda, a comprehensive time frame as well as sequencing of the discussions over all contentious issues.

"A successful meeting would mean coming out with a broad framework and timeframe for holding a composite dialogue," government managers said. The

Indian team led by joint secretary Arun Singh reached Islamabad on Sunday night.

Foreign secretary Sashank is expected to reach Islamabad on Tuesday evening.

The decision to avoid raising the nuclear controversy at this stage is clearly obligated by various factors. For one, New Delhi does not wish to narrow the issue down to a bilateral platform. It feels that such a move will not only dilute the pressure at the international level on Pakistan but may also provide it with an excuse to derail the talks, besides giving another dimension to the controversy.

New Delhi's has voiced concerns over nuclear proliferation, and its response to the scandal makes it clear that India does not want to view it through the prism of Indo-Pak ties alone.



# Two windows open to new Islamabad

K.P. NAYAR

Washington, Feb. 15: When South Block's joint secretary Arun Singh sits down on Monday for two days of talks in Islamabad with his Pakistani counterpart Jalil Abbas Jilani, he will repeatedly refer in his mind to copious reports he has received in the last six months from the interrogation of jihadis from 42 terrorist cells within the country which have been broken up by Indian counter-terrorism officials.

The interrogation of terrorists from these 42 cells has a common thread, which could change the nature of India-Pakistan engagement. "Hindustan" is still an enemy for these

terrorists, but not "enemy No. 1". That place has been vacated jointly for General Pervez Musharraf and for the US — for the latter particularly after the invasion of Iraq.

A second factor which will guide Singh's discussions in Islamabad is the near-unanimous inter-agency agreement within the Indian government that after three decades of futile lobbying in West Asia and a decade of similar efforts in Central Asia to forge a larger Islamic identity for itself, Pakistan is finally reconciled to its place as a South Asian state.

The Indian delegation is in Islamabad for talks, convinced that these two factors offer an unprecedented opening for stabilising relations with Pakistan.

Singh and the other members of the delegation will talk to Pakistan confident in the knowledge that for the first time in more than a decade, exfiltration — an intelligence term for the practice of luring Indians for religious-military training and return to India for subversion — by Pakistan has almost totally stopped.

New Delhi has the US military onslaught against the Taliban and Washington's pressure on Musharraf to thank for that advantage. Jihadi cells broken up in the last one year have been made up largely of foreigners.

Sources in the Indian delegation to Monday's talks said the flap over India's cricket tour of Pakistan next month was calculated to send a message to Islam-

## ON THE TABLE

❖ **Who and when:** Arun Singh, a joint secretary in the foreign ministry, will hold talks with Jalil Abbas Jilani, the director for South Asia in the Pakistan foreign office, on Monday and Tuesday. On Wednesday, Indian foreign secretary Shashank and his Pakistan counterpart Riaz Khatkhat will meet.

❖ **What will they talk?** The two sides will try to finalise the features to be discussed under the composite dialogue, which has been stalled since 1996. If there is a breakthrough, the dates for resuming the dialogue will be announced.

❖ **What is composite dialogue?** Discussions on a bouquet of eight issues split into two parts. Kashmir as well as peace and security are handled by the foreign secretaries and the six other issues, ranging from Siachen to promotion of friendly exchanges, will be dealt with by other officials.

abad and not solely the result of the Union home ministry's whims as made out in the media. The sources said New Delhi was unhappy that Pakistan had observed "Kashmir Day" on Feb-

ruary 5 with the same vigour and gusto as if there was no peace process under way with India. Cables received in South Block from Indian ambassadors

in countries with large Pakistani expatriate communities painted an unhelpful picture for the peace process.

In Washington, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, Pakistan's information minister — who was dropped as minister-in-waiting to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee during last month's Islamabad summit at India's request — addressed a "Kashmir Day" function at the Pakistan embassy here and spoke at a rally in New York.

In London and the Gulf states, too, the scenario was similar. India believes that such displays are against the spirit of the Vajpayee-Musharraf meeting and they do not contribute to lowering the temperature in bilateral ties.

The cricket controversy, sources said, was a message to Islamabad just before Monday's talks that bonhomie is not a one-way street and that the peace process is not irreversible.

Besides, intelligence estimates are that there are more than 2,000 Pakistan-trained terrorists already in India awaiting the call to jihad.

Cross-border infiltration is next to nil now because the passages are snow-bound and closed and Pakistani sincerity in this regard cannot be verified until the snow melts.

On the positive side is what external affairs minister Yashwant Sinha calls "the most comprehensive ceasefire" between India and Pakistan.

■ See Page 8

16 FEB 2004

THE TELEGRAPH

INDO-PAK JOINT SECYS TO MEET TODAY

# Focus on talks timetable

*9/22/04*

**Nilova Roy Chaudhury in New Delhi**

Feb 15. — Contrary to expectations of a major breakthrough, the talks beginning in Islamabad tomorrow between the joint secretaries of Indian and Pakistani foreign ministries would focus on the sequencing and modalities of the composite dialogue process, and not on fixing the agenda. The agenda and the level at which the eight sets of issues are to be tackled exists in the agreement the foreign secretaries of the two countries signed on 23 September 1998 in New York.

Analysts said the "talks about talks" would be deemed a success if the officials agree on the dates for the talks and the time-frame within which they're to be carried out. On Monday and Tuesday, the joint secretary heading the Pakistan-Afghanistan-Iran division, Mr Arun K Singh, will meet his counterpart, Mr Jalil Abbas Jilani, and decide on the modalities for the composite dialogue. Indian high commissioner in Islamabad Mr Shiv Shankar Menon, deputy high commissioner Mr TCA Raghavan, political counsellor Mr Gitesh Sarma and the under-secretary dealing with Pakistan, Mr Deepak Mittal, would be present at the talks. Foreign secretaries Mr Shashank and Mr Riaz Khokhar are likely to okay the schedule and sequencing set by the officials on 18 February.

Mr Shashank said in Islamabad today: "We're going to start the process agreed

to in the joint statement. That will mean looking into modalities for the dialogue process and see what could be done to sustain the dialogue process." In the joint statement issued after the talks between Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and Gen. Pervez Musharraf in Islamabad in January, both sides agreed to hold a composite dialogue to resolve all outstanding issues, including Kashmir. Gen. Musharraf had also assured that he would not allow Pakistani soil to be used by terrorists.

Asked whether the eight-point composite dialogue agreed to by India and Pakistan in 1997 would be carried forward, Mr Shashank said the process would be started and the likely scheduling of meetings taken up.

The agenda has already been set out for the dialogue. The foreign secretaries are to deal with issues of peace and security, including confidence-building measures, and Kashmir. Home secretaries are to deal with terrorism and drug trafficking, defence secretaries with Siachen, and water & power secretaries with the Wullar barrage and Tulbul navigation project. The additional secretary of defence and Pakistan's surveyor-general are to discuss Sir Creek.

Delhi has also agreed to hold technical-level talks on bus links between Munabao (Rajasthan) and Khokrapar (Sind), and Srinagar and Muzaffarabad (PoK) in March. It also intends to talk to Islamabad about the time-frame for the resumption of the composite dialogue process.

# Reverse swing

57-167 Does govt really think Pak tour's safe?

With the three busiest bees in the Indian bonnet — elections, cricket and Pakistan — buzzing simultaneously, a sting was likely no matter which way the issue of the tour across the border was approached. But it wouldn't have been as sharp had the government not, in effect, conducted an absurdly late-in-the day public debate over the issue and appeared horribly confused.

That the foreign minister, Yashwant Sinha, was picked to formally greenlight the tour is indirect acknowledgement of the fact that government had tried to spin, botched it and then applied the administrative equivalent of the bottlecap to produce the reverse swing. South Block has therefore invited several googlies. The cricket series has been on the agenda ever since the Prime Minister's "hand of friendship" speech. Political clearance came around the time of the SAARC summit. The decision to go for early polls came after the summit but was a matter being considered ever since the BJP won three major state elections in November. Therefore reflections on postponing the tour could have happened at least as early as when the Indian team was touring Australia and certain senior members were feeding news agencies unattributable stories about security fears. Were those concerns serious, the BCCI-home ministry team should not have been sent to Pakistan. With the team certain to give Pakistani arrangements a safety grade, the only way the tour could have been postponed is by saying clearly that the situation in India, not in Pakistan, was the problem.

The government may be wary of admitting this up front. But does that mean it has sacrificed genuine concerns at the altar of diplomatic and public pressures to look and act nice? We will never know. But everyone who has been dewy-eyed about India touring its neighbour should keep that question in mind, as should those who have argued that the tour is an input in the peace process.

They will look foolish, callous and irresponsible should the Indian team find itself at the rough end of some Pakistani *jihadi* enterprise. And so will the government. More so because it would then stand accused of rethinking its rethink. As for the sport and peace argument, the cricket series is a by-product of normalisation, not a building block. Cricketers are not MEA officials in whites, attractive though the option looks considering how diligently dour our diplomats often are. Pakistanis may be understandably anxious that the tour starts as planned. The country needs something positive now that A Q Khan's nuclear entrepreneurship is widely suspected to have had the blessings of the country's establishment and Islamabad has come the closest in its chequered history to being branded a rogue. But that shouldn't matter, more so because India is doing its bit already by virtually pretending Pakistani nuclear proliferation does not exist. Here's hoping a safe tour for the players and also that they read the sport better than their government read the politics.

# Vajpayee catches, cricket wins

## PMO prevails over Advani

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

**New Delhi, Feb. 14: Cricket has won against politics with the government today declaring that India's tour of Pakistan would go ahead.**

The Prime Minister's Office prevailed over the home ministry, headed by L.K. Advani, which wanted the tour to be put off till after the Lok Sabha elections, expected any time between mid-April and early May. The tour is scheduled to start in March.

Although security reasons were cited in a media campaign pressing for postponement, the real fear was that any "untoward incident" during the series would spoil the "feel-good" factor before the polls.

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee allowed the issue to be played out in the public sphere before stepping in. The decision to go ahead with the cricket series, which surprised many, came after a meeting at his 7 Race Course Road residence this morning.

The meeting was attended by deputy Prime Minister Advani, external affairs minister Yashwant Sinha, finance minister Jaswant Singh and national security

adviser Brajesh Mishra.

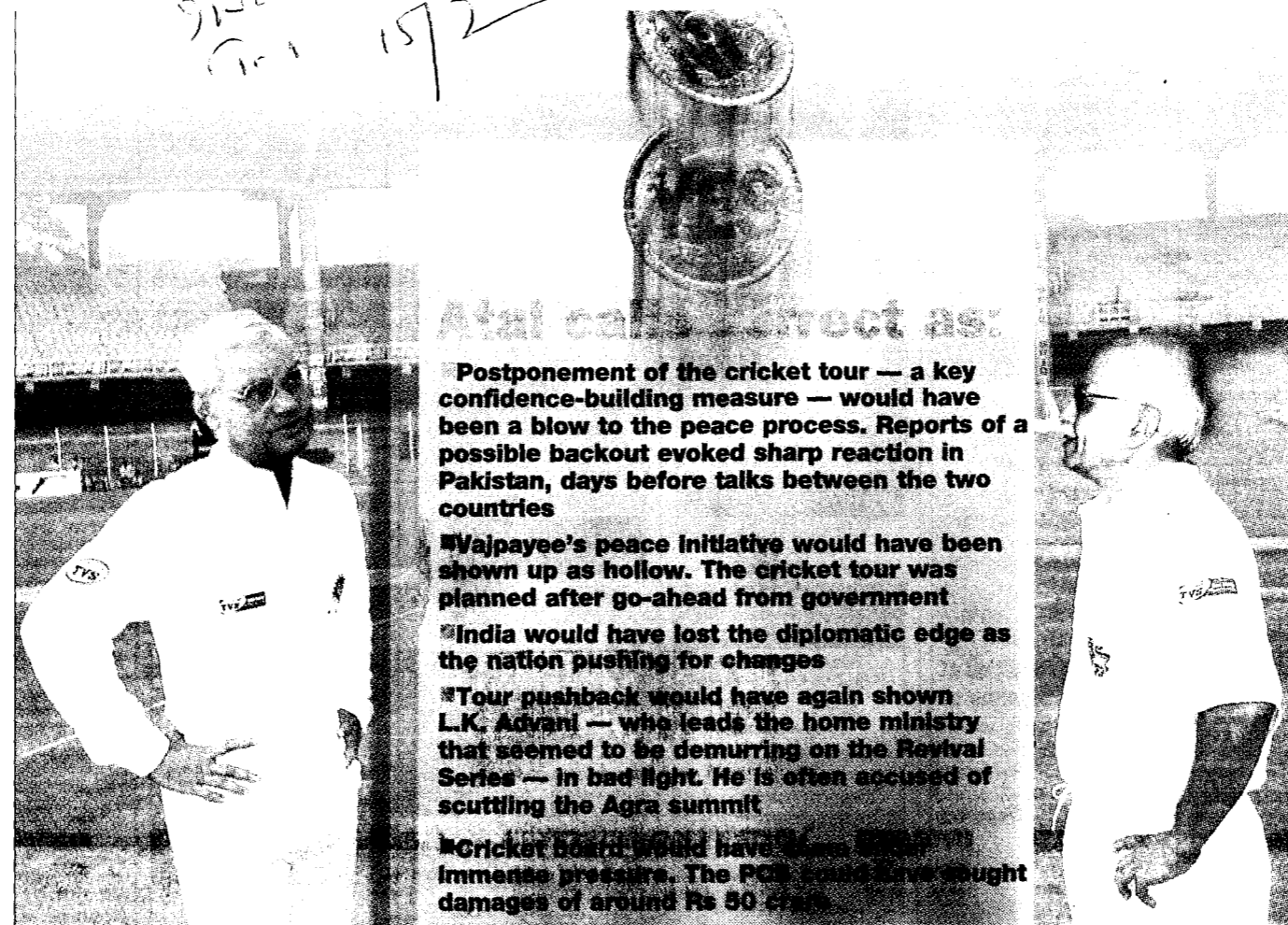
"After taking into consideration all aspects, it was decided that the two countries should go ahead with their cricket matches as proposed," Sinha told reporters after the meeting.

The detailed schedule has not been worked out yet. This will be done only after the three-member recce team of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) returns from Islamabad on Monday. Asked if a decision was taken on the tour itinerary at the meeting, Sinha said it was for the BCCI to fix the schedule in consultation with its counterpart in Pakistan.

Sinha's ministry was in favour of the tour because it feared a postponement would hit the peace process. It would have vitiated the atmosphere ahead of the official-level dialogue between the two countries, beginning on Monday. Calling off the tour would have also taken away the current diplomatic advantage that Delhi has over Islamabad, the foreign

office held.

Restoration of cricketing ties was one of the confidence-building measures the neighbours had agreed on. Going back on any such measure would have invited questions about



Atal calls correct as:

**Postponement of the cricket tour — a key confidence-building measure — would have been a blow to the peace process. Reports of a possible backout evoked sharp reaction in Pakistan, days before talks between the two countries**

**Vajpayee's peace initiative would have been shown up as hollow. The cricket tour was planned after go-ahead from government**

**India would have lost the diplomatic edge as the nation pushing for changes**

**Tour pushback would have again shown L.K. Advani — who leads the home ministry that seemed to be demurring on the Revival Series — in bad light. He is often accused of scuttling the Agra summit**

**Cricket Board would have been under immense pressure. The PCB would have sought damages of around Rs 50 crore**

India's sincerity in improving relations, it believed.

Media reports of a possible postponement had evoked a sharp reaction from Islamabad. Pakistan Cricket Board chief Shaharyar Khan today said the decision to go ahead with the tour would have a "positive impact" but added that he had never thought the series was in doubt. "Only

the media speculated that the tour was in doubt. But we were optimistic as we had not heard anything officially from the Indian government or the BCCL."

BCCI chief Jagmohan Dalmiya thanked the government for a cricket-friendly decision. He added that security considerations were kept in mind while making the decision.

Although sources insisted that both Vajpayee and Advani agreed that cricketing ties between the neighbours should be restored, today's decision is bound to be seen as a loss of face for the home ministry.

Advani's ministry had floated the view that the tour be postponed on security grounds, a theme the BJP and the RSS had

picked up. The deputy Prime Minister had not commented on the issue but his junior ministers, I.D. Swamy and Swami Chinmayanand, appeared on television speaking in different voices. Swamy insisted the tour would take place but Chinmayanand said it would not. He cited Pakistan's involvement in nuclear proliferation as the reason for not going.

## Hint of two-part trip split by poll

LOKENDRA PRATAPSAHI

**Calcutta, Feb. 14:** While the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has got the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government's unconditional okay for the Revival Series, it shouldn't surprise if the Tests and ODIs are scheduled on either side of the general elections.

Of course, one isn't suggesting that the BCCI has struck a deal. However, according to *The Telegraph's* sources, three "factors" can't exactly be discounted.

First, while in Pakistan, the players won't be able to tolerate the siege-like atmosphere beyond a point. Then, they can do without a lengthy (and very taxing) tour within weeks of a hugely demanding one in Australia. And, finally, the BCCI may still make a "gesture" towards the home ministry, which is deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani's fief.

Although everybody in the corridors of power is now singing in unison, it's no secret that Advani favoured a postponement till after the elections.

Nobody will go on record, but indications are the home ministry leaks were actually aimed at sending a message to the BCCI. Essentially, that the Jagmohan Dalmiya-headed body announce a unilateral deferment without seeking a written advisory.

The BCCI didn't play ball as doing so would have exposed it to claims possibly in excess of Rs 50 crore from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). At the same time, it dutifully maintained the government's decision would be respected.

Now that the BCCI has got what it wanted, sources feel it won't be a bad idea if "some regard" is shown to the views initially expressed — albeit unofficially — by the Advani-headed ministry.

However, for that to happen, the BCCI must first initiate a dialogue with Shaharyar Khan and Co. Perhaps, even the PCB won't mind hosting Team India twice over a specified period.

In fact, security agencies across the border should be more at ease with such an arrangement.

Meanwhile, captain Sourav Ganguly has confirmed his availability. He said so during an exclusive chat before leaving for Lucknow this afternoon.

Dalmiya, for his part, declared that "nobody is going to be forced" if he doesn't feel comfortable making the trip. "After all, we'll be playing cricket, not fighting a war," he pointed out.

The itinerary will be ready within a week, after Dalmiya's return from an ICC meeting in London.

■ See Sport

15 FEB 2004

# সরকার না বোর্ড, সফর বাতিগের দায় নেবে কে

**স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি ও কলকাতা**— সরকারি বাতিল করাটা আপাতত পাকিস্তান সফর-বাতির উপরে নিষেধাজ্ঞা বিজ্ঞপ্তির গলায় ঘন্টা বাঁধার মতো হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে। সরকার চায় না সরকারি বাতিল করে দলের সফরের উপরে নিষেধাজ্ঞা জারি করতে। বোর্ডে চায় না সরকারের অননুমোদিত মনোভাব জ্ঞেমেও নিজে থেকে সফর বাতিল করার ঝুঁকি নিতে।

অবশ্যই ভিন্ন ভিন্ন কারণে। রাজনৈতিক মহলের বিশ্লেষণ অনুযায়ী, নিবাচনের আগে সরকারি বাতিল পাকিস্তান যেও না বললে সংখ্যালঘুদের সেন্সিটিভিটি আঘাত করার ঝুঁকি থাকবে। সেই ঝুঁকি আপাতত নেওয়া হচ্ছে না। এবং সে জন্যই আলকুফ আডবাবী নর্থ ব্লকে বৃহস্পতিবার তাঁর মনোভাব পরিষ্কার করে দেওয়ার চর্কিশ ঘটনা পক্ষেও ভারতীয় বোর্ডের কাছে লিখিত নিষেধাজ্ঞা আসেনি।

শুরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রক বরং সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে ক্রিপ্ত কিছু তারা দেবে না। বোর্ডের সবচেয়ে বড়

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি ও কলকাতা— সরকারি বাতিল করাটা আপাতত পাকিস্তান সফর-বাতির উপরে নিষেধাজ্ঞা বিজ্ঞপ্তির গলায় ঘন্টা বাঁধার মতো হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে। সরকার চায় না সরকারি বাতিল করে দলের সফরের উপরে নিষেধাজ্ঞা জারি করতে। বোর্ডে চায় না সরকারের অননুমোদিত মনোভাব জ্ঞেমেও নিজে থেকে সফর বাতিল করার ঝুঁকি নিতে।

অবশ্যই ভিন্ন ভিন্ন কারণে। রাজনৈতিক মহলের বিশ্লেষণ অনুযায়ী, নিবাচনের আগে সরকারি বাতিল পাকিস্তান যেও না বললে সংখ্যালঘুদের সেন্সিটিভিটি আঘাত করার ঝুঁকি থাকবে। সেই ঝুঁকি আপাতত নেওয়া হচ্ছে না। এবং সে জন্যই আলকুফ আডবাবী নর্থ ব্লকে বৃহস্পতিবার তাঁর মনোভাব পরিষ্কার করে দেওয়ার চর্কিশ ঘটনা পক্ষেও ভারতীয় বোর্ডের কাছে লিখিত নিষেধাজ্ঞা আসেনি।

শুরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রক বরং সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে ক্রিপ্ত কিছু তারা দেবে না। বোর্ডের সবচেয়ে বড়

উঠে ফের গভীর জলে ডুবে যেতে চান না। ভারত না এলে গুচও আর্থিক ক্ষতি কবলে পড়বে। খুব সাস্পাইটি আই সি সি-র এমনি এমনি যদি শেষ সময়ে তারা সফর বিক্রম কঠিনতম আইনি যুদ্ধ জিতে বাতিল করে, আই সি সি-র বিরূপ শাস্তির উঠেছেন ডালমিয়া। ডাঙায় কোনও রকমে

ক্রিকেটারদের পাকিস্তান সফর নিয়ে ডামাডোলের এই আবহেই আজ দুইদিনের একটি ক্রিকেট দল এবং একটি কবাডি দল তাদের পাকিস্তান সফর শুরু করেছে। দলের মুখপাত্রেরা জানিয়েছেন, তাঁরা পাকিস্তানে খেলতে যেতে নিরাপত্তার অভাব বোধ করছেন না। এদিকে, ভারতীয় ক্রিকেটারদের পাক-সফরের পক্ষে সওয়াল করল রষ্ট্রীয় স্বয়ংসেবক সঞ্জয়। সঞ্জয়ের মুখপাত্র রাম মাধব আজ বলেন, “ক্রিকেট যদি দু’দেশের মানুষকে কাছাকাছি আনে, তবে নীতিগত ভাবে এই সফরে আমাদের কোনও আপত্তি নেই। সেটা সুনিশ্চিত হলে ভারতীয় ক্রিকেটারদের পাকিস্তান যাওয়াই উচিত। কিন্তু দু’দেশের মধ্যে কোনও একটি সরকার যদি মনে করে, ভারত-পাক ক্রিকেট যদি অন্য কোনও সমস্যার সৃষ্টি করে, তা হলে তাদের সে ব্যাপারে আরও ভারনাম্বা করা উচিত।” ভারতীয় ক্রিকেটারদের নিরাপত্তার দায়িত্ব বি সি সি আইফেরই নেওয়া উচিত, এই মন্তব্য করে তিনি আরও বলেন, “ক্রিকেটারদের পরিবার তাদের নিরাপত্তা নিয়ে এর পর ছয়ের পাতায়

পাকিস্তান পরিদর্শন করে রিপোর্ট জমা দেওয়ার কথা। নামে তিন সদস্যের হলেও এখানে সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ সদস্য হলেন সরকার নিযুক্ত যোগেশ্বর কী মতামত দেন, নিরাপত্তা ব্যবস্থা সম্পর্কে কী মতামত দেন, তা জানার পরেই ভারতীয় বোর্ড হয়ে তো হুভাস্ত অনুমোদন চেয়ে ফের এক প্রস্ত টিটি দেবে স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রককে। আপাতত লভনে আই সি সি-র বৈঠক সারতে রবিবার রওনা হয়ে যাচ্ছেন ডালমিয়া।

সফর শেষ পর্যন্ত না হলে ক্ষতির মুখে পড়তে পারে এশীয় ক্রিকেট কাউন্সিলও। পাকিস্তান বোর্ড আগাম হুমকি দিয়ে রেখেছে ভারত যদি তাদের দেশে না যায়, তারাও এশিয়া কাপে খেলবে কি না ভেবে দেখবে। আর ভারত-পাকিস্তান ষ্ট্রেরখ না হওয়া মানে এশিয়া কাপের জৌলুসও অনেকটা কমে গেল।

বোর্ডের তরফ থেকে সরকারের কাছে এর পর ছয়ের পাতায়

## মরিয়্যা পাক বোর্ড চায় মুশারফ আজি জানান বাজপেয়ীকে

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি ও কলকাতা— ভারতীয় ক্রিকেটারদের পাকিস্তান সফর বহাল রাখতে পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফকে দিয়ে সরাসরি প্রধানমন্ত্রী অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ীকে আজি জানাতে পারে পাকিস্তান ক্রিকেট বোর্ড। ক্রিকেট সফর নিয়ে দৃষ্টি টানাটানিতে মরিয়্যা পাক ক্রিকেট বোর্ড এই রাস্তাও খোলা রাখছে।

পাক ক্রিকেট বোর্ড এই রাস্তা নিলেও তা কতটা ফলপ্রসূ হবে, তা নিয়ে প্রশ্ন থেকেই যাচ্ছে। কারণ, দিনসাতক আগের যে বৈঠকে ক্রিকেটারদের সফর পিছিয়ে দেওয়ার বিষয়টি ঠিক হয়, তাতে উপ-প্রধানমন্ত্রী লালকুফ আডবাবী, বিদেশমন্ত্রী যশবন্ত সিনহা, অর্থমন্ত্রী যশবন্ত সিংহের সঙ্গে উপস্থিত ছিলেন স্বয়ং প্রধানমন্ত্রী অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ীও। বাজপেয়ীর বাসভবনেই ওই বৈঠক হয়েছিল। রাজধানীর রাজনৈতিক মহলের একাংশ এই বিষয়টিকে খেতাবে আডবাবী-বাজপেয়ীর বিরোধ হিসাবে দেখছে, তা ঠিক নয়। ঘটনা হল, প্রধানমন্ত্রীর উপস্থিতিতেই সফর পিছিয়ে দেওয়ার সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া হয়। স্বাভাবিকভাবেই তাতে প্রধানমন্ত্রীও সম্মতি ছিল।

ক্রিকেটারদের পাকিস্তান সফর নিয়ে ডামাডোলের এই আবহেই আজ দুইদিনের একটি ক্রিকেট দল এবং একটি কবাডি দল তাদের পাকিস্তান সফর শুরু করেছে। দলের মুখপাত্রেরা জানিয়েছেন, তাঁরা পাকিস্তানে খেলতে যেতে নিরাপত্তার অভাব বোধ করছেন না। এদিকে, ভারতীয় ক্রিকেটারদের পাক-সফরের পক্ষে সওয়াল করল রষ্ট্রীয় স্বয়ংসেবক সঞ্জয়। সঞ্জয়ের মুখপাত্র রাম মাধব আজ বলেন, “ক্রিকেট যদি দু’দেশের মানুষকে কাছাকাছি আনে, তবে নীতিগত ভাবে এই সফরে আমাদের কোনও আপত্তি নেই। সেটা সুনিশ্চিত হলে ভারতীয় ক্রিকেটারদের পাকিস্তান যাওয়াই উচিত। কিন্তু দু’দেশের মধ্যে কোনও একটি সরকার যদি মনে করে, ভারত-পাক ক্রিকেট যদি অন্য কোনও সমস্যার সৃষ্টি করে, তা হলে তাদের সে ব্যাপারে আরও ভারনাম্বা করা উচিত।” ভারতীয় ক্রিকেটারদের নিরাপত্তার দায়িত্ব বি সি সি আইফেরই নেওয়া উচিত, এই মন্তব্য করে তিনি আরও বলেন, “ক্রিকেটারদের পরিবার তাদের নিরাপত্তা নিয়ে এর পর ছয়ের পাতায়

পাকিস্তান পরিদর্শন করে রিপোর্ট জমা দেওয়ার কথা। নামে তিন সদস্যের হলেও এখানে সবচেয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ সদস্য হলেন সরকার নিযুক্ত যোগেশ্বর কী মতামত দেন, নিরাপত্তা ব্যবস্থা সম্পর্কে কী মতামত দেন, তা জানার পরেই ভারতীয় বোর্ড হয়ে তো হুভাস্ত অনুমোদন চেয়ে ফের এক প্রস্ত টিটি দেবে স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রককে। আপাতত লভনে আই সি সি-র বৈঠক সারতে রবিবার রওনা হয়ে যাচ্ছেন ডালমিয়া।

সফর শেষ পর্যন্ত না হলে ক্ষতির মুখে পড়তে পারে এশীয় ক্রিকেট কাউন্সিলও। পাকিস্তান বোর্ড আগাম হুমকি দিয়ে রেখেছে ভারত যদি তাদের দেশে না যায়, তারাও এশিয়া কাপে খেলবে কি না ভেবে দেখবে। আর ভারত-পাকিস্তান ষ্ট্রেরখ না হওয়া মানে এশিয়া কাপের জৌলুসও অনেকটা কমে গেল।

বোর্ডের তরফ থেকে সরকারের কাছে এর পর ছয়ের পাতায়

১৪/২

# Nuke leaks not internal matter of Pak: Sinha

By Siddharth Varadarajan  
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Breaking its studied silence on the matter, India on Friday said Dr A.Q. Khan's proliferation of nuclear weapons know-how and material to Iran and Libya was not merely an internal matter of Pakistan but a concern for the entire international community.

"Obviously, it appears to me that things will not stop here," external affairs minister Yashwant Sinha told a joint press conference with British foreign secretary Jack Straw. "Pakistan is not a signatory to the NPT (nuclear non-proliferation treaty) but Iran and Libya are. These issues have to be debated at the International Atomic Energy Agency so that we have more responsible behaviour from countries

that have nuclear capabilities," Mr Sinha said, adding, "Dr Khan has been pardoned, but I don't know what the charges are. Our system is different. You have to be charged and convicted before you are pardoned. But obviously they have some charges."

Asked their response to Dr Khan's claim that successive Pakistani governments knew nothing of his transactions, both Mr Sinha and Mr Straw declined to answer.

Mr Sinha's measured comments are a clear reflection of India's decision not to milk the recent revelations—and Dr Khan's confessions—to score political points over Pakistan. Unlike other occasions when Indian officials have jumped at every opportunity to wag a finger at Pakistan, the external affairs minister had to be prompted for his response this time.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

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# No compromise on Kashmir: Musharraf

**Islamabad:** Expressing the hope that a solution to the Kashmir problem could "most likely" be found by the year-end, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf on Thursday made it clear that he would prefer to leave power rather than compromising on the issue.

Addressing Pakistan-occupied Kashmir assembly in Muzaffarabad to mark the 'Kashmir Solidarity Day,' Gen Musharraf said the Indo-Pak dialogue process, scheduled to begin later this month, was expected to pick up steam after the Indian elections.

Contending that India's seriousness about the dialogue would be known after the elections, he said he believed that the Kashmir issue could be resolved most likely by the year-end.

Hitting out at political "opportunists" in Pakistan who tried to raise doubts in the minds of the people that he was heading for a "sell-out on Kashmir," the General said anyone compromising on the Kashmir issue and mis-sile programme would be a "traitor" and he would prefer to leave power in-

stead of doing so.

Gen Musharraf said he decided to address the assembly instead of Prime Minister Zafarullah Khan Jamali to make a detailed presentation on the events leading to thaw in Indo-Pak ties and the agreement between the two countries to begin the composite dialogue process.

Referring to a host of confidence-building measures initiated by both the countries, Gen Musharraf said the CBMS would not be of much help if the dialogue on Kashmir made no progress.

About his comments in an interview that Pakistan was ready to drop the demand for UN resolution on Kashmir, the General said he was quoted out of context. He said Pakistan could show flexibility on Kashmir provided the talks reached a stage where both sides could discuss a solution to it.

"I said if the dialogue process begins, if Kashmir is discussed, if there is progress on talks to find solution, we should show flexibility and come out of stated positions," he said. 71

# Pak talks kickoff at two levels

OUR SPECIAL  
CORRESPONDENT

**New Delhi, Jan. 27:** India and Pakistan today said they would resume talks next month but made sure their announcements did not give the impression that either side had compromised over the level at which the dialogue would commence.

Foreign ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna said joint secretary-level talks on February 16 and 17 will be followed by a one-day meeting of foreign secretaries on February 18 to "commence the process of the composite dialogue". In Islamabad, the venue of the talks, his Pakistani counterpart said foreign secretary-level talks will be preceded by the meeting of the directors-general (joint secretary level).

Despite the wording of the two announcements, the agreement over the level of talks reflects that both are determined to maintain the peace momentum.

Sources said India's "preference" was that modalities should be worked out at the joint secretary-level while Pakistan felt the foreign secretaries should also meet or that it should be held only at that level. "So we agreed on having it at both levels."

**Jobs, Tuesday's supplement, is being distributed with today's paper as Republic Day was a holiday**

Joint secretary Arun Singh will lead the Indian delegation on February 16 and 17. Foreign secretary Shashank will hold talks with his Pakistani counterpart Riaz Khokhar the next day.

The Islamabad meet might fix the dates for the revival of the composite dialogue in March. Sources said next month's talks would help Delhi and Islamabad schedule and focus on the issues likely to be included in the eight agreed subjects of the composite dialogue.

While the foreign secretaries deal with Kashmir and matters related to security, the rest, which include issues like Sir Creek and Siachen, are dealt with by other officials.



সুর বদলে তৈরি মুশারফ

১১/১১/০৪  
২৫/৮

# ভারত-পাক বিদেশসচিব স্তরেই বৈঠক

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২৫ জানুয়ারি— পাকিস্তানের দাবি মেনে নিয়ে ফেব্রুয়ারি মাসে বিদেশসচিব স্তরেই আলোচনায় বসবে ভারত। কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার সূত্রে খবর, ১৬ থেকে ১৮ ফেব্রুয়ারি দিল্লিতে দু'দেশের যে আলোচনা হবে, তাতে বিদেশ সচিবেরাও অংশ নেবেন। এর কারণ হিসাবে বলা হচ্ছে, বর্তমানে দু'দেশের মধ্যে যে ভাল সম্পর্ক রয়েছে, তাতে যাতে টোল না পড়ে, সেই জন্যই ভারত পাকিস্তানের এই দাবি মেনে নিল।

এ দিকে, ওয়াশিংটন থেকে সংবাদ সংস্থা জানিয়েছে, পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফ বলেছেন, কাশ্মীর নিয়ে ভারত ও পাকিস্তানকে পুরনো অবস্থান ছাড়তে হবে, ভবিষ্যতের দিকে তাকাতে হবে। ডাভোসে তিনি একটি মার্কিন সংবাদপত্রকে বলেছেন, “আমরা বরাবর বলে এসেছি, কাশ্মীরে যা চলছে তা স্বাধীনতা সংগ্রাম। এখন সে সব ছাড়তে হবে। সীমান্ত সন্ত্রাস নিয়ে কথাবার্তাও বন্ধ করতে হবে। ভারতের সঙ্গে সম্পর্ক নয়া মোড় নিচ্ছে। এখন দু'দেশকেই পুরনো অবস্থান বদলে ভবিষ্যতের দিকে তাকাতে হবে। দোষারোপের খেলা আমরা অতীতে অনেক খেলেছি। এখন সে সব অতীতই।”

ইসলামাবাদে সার্ক সম্মেলনে যোগ দিতে গিয়ে প্রধানমন্ত্রী অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী দু'দেশের আলোচনা শুরু করায় সম্মতি দেন। তার পর থেকেই পাকিস্তান দাবি জানাচ্ছিল, ফেব্রুয়ারিতেই বিদেশসচিব স্তরে আলোচনা হয়ে যাক। নিদেনপক্ষে তা না হলে পাকিস্তান একটি বিকল্প প্রস্তাবও দিয়েছিল। তা হল, দু'দেশের সদ্য-নিযুক্ত বিশেষ দূতেরা আলোচনায় বসুন। এত তাড়াতাড়ি বিদেশসচিব স্তরে আলোচনা শুরু করতে ভারত আগ্রহী ছিল না। তার মত ছিল, প্রথমে যুগ্ম সচিব বা সংশ্লিষ্ট ডেস্ক পর্যায়ে আলোচনায় বসা যেতে পারে। তার পর বিদেশসচিবদের বৈঠকের মাধ্যমে দু'দেশের শীর্ষ নেতৃত্বের মুখোমুখি বসার পথ মসৃণ হবে।

কিন্তু ইসলামাবাদের লাগাতার দাবি শেষ পর্যন্ত মেনে নিয়েছে দিল্লি। কেন্দ্রের একটি সূত্রের বক্তব্য, ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের মধ্যে বর্তমানে যে সুসম্পর্ক রয়েছে, তা বজায় রাখার স্বার্থে এই দাবি মেনে নিতে কোনও আপত্তি নেই। তবে এর সঙ্গে ভারত নিজের অবস্থান বজায় রাখারও একটা উপায় বার করেছে। তিন দিনের আলোচনার প্রথম দিন, অর্থাৎ, ১৭ তারিখ কেবল যুগ্মসচিব স্তরেই কথা হবে। তার পরের দু'টি দিন বিদেশসচিবেরা আলোচনায় বসবেন। এই ভাবে, নিজেদের অবস্থানও বজায় থাকল, আবার পাক দাবি মেনে বিদেশসচিবদের আলোচনা-প্রক্রিয়াও ত্বরান্বিত হল বলে মনে করছে নয়াদিল্লি।

আমলা স্তরে আলোচনা শুরু হবার মুখেও আজ ভারতের সেনাপ্রধান নিমর্ল চন্দ্র ভিঞ্জ বলেছেন, পাক অধিকৃত কাশ্মীরের মাটিতে প্রায় ৮০টি জঙ্গি প্রশিক্ষণ শিবির এখনও বহাল তবিয়তে রয়েছে। টেলিভিশনে এক সাক্ষাৎকারে ভিঞ্জ বলেছেন, পাকিস্তান প্রশাসন এখনও জঙ্গি-পরিকাঠামো পুরোপুরি ধ্বংস করেনি। জঙ্গি অনুপ্রবেশ বন্ধের ক্ষেত্রেও পাকিস্তানকে এখনই কোনও সংশাপত্র দিতে নারাজ ভিঞ্জ। তাঁর বক্তব্য, শীতের এই সময়ে এমনিতেই অনুপ্রবেশ কমে যায়। জঙ্গিদের আনাগোনা বন্ধ রয়েছে ভারতীয় ফৌজের কড়া নজরদারির কারণেও। ফলে পাকিস্তান সত্যিই অনুপ্রবেশ বন্ধ করতে সাহায্য করছে কিনা, তার প্রমাণ মিলবে এপ্রিল-মে মাসে। যখন বরফ গলে যাওয়ার পরে জম্মু ও কাশ্মীরে ঢোকান বহু পথ তৈরি হয়ে যাবে।

কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার সূত্রে খবর, ছরিয়ত নেতাদের আলোচনার টেবিলে আনার ক্ষেত্রেও পাকিস্তান ইতিবাচক ভূমিকা পালন করেছে। একসময়ে পাকিস্তানই ছরিয়ত নেতাদের

এর পর ছয়ের পাতায়

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA 26 JAN 2004

# Islamabad showing flexibility, says Sinha

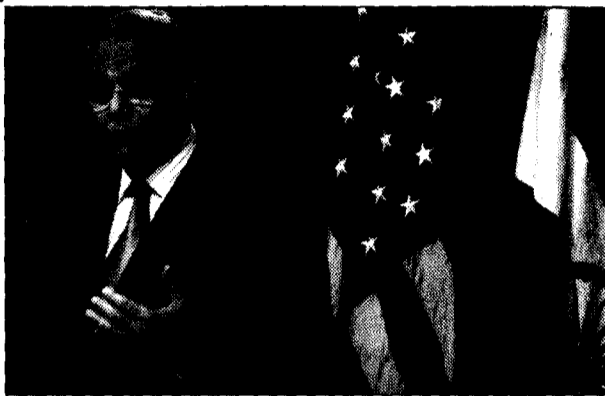
WASHINGTON, Jan. 21. — Pakistan has shown "much greater flexibility and determination" in dealing with Kashmir, external affairs minister Mr Yashwant Sinha was quoted by *The Washington Times* as saying in an interview yesterday.

He said cross-border infiltration is "far less" than it was a year ago, but the real test might come during spring. He said his trip coincided with one of the warmest periods in memory for India-USA ties.

He emphasised there was no US role in "terms of mediation" between India and Pakistan, contradicting Gen Colin Powell's recent remarks that the breakthrough in Islamabad was the result of the USA's efforts. Mr Sinha also met Mr George W Bush and later held talks with Gen Powell.

**Missile defence talks:** India and the USA will "very soon" hold talks to implement "promptly" their agreement on missile defence.

**New precedent:** Mr Sinha set a new precedent of sorts by visiting the White House twice on the same day. He met Mr Bush during the day yesterday and returned in the evening to have talks with Ms Condoleeza Rice.



Mr Yashwant Sinha at the Woodrow Wilson International Centre for Scholars in Washington on Tuesday. — PTI

## 10 steps for peace in South Asia

Following are the ten-points Mr Sinha emphasised for South Asia's progress:

- Advance democracy and strengthen democratic institutions.
- Commit to resolve all disputes peacefully.
- Abjure support and prevent activities of forces seeking to undermine stability of each other.
- Cooperate in combating terrorism and other forms of cross-border crimes.

- Adopt national policies that address concerns of diverse population groups.
- Foster greater people-to-people contacts.
- Invest in cross-border infrastructure for energy, transport and water.
- Invest in programmes for poverty alleviation, health, education and environment.
- Emphasise South Asian identity.
- Work to create a common economic space. — PTI

## PM takes it lightly

NEW DELHI, Jan. 21. — Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee took lightly the criticism hurled at him by Mrs Sonia Gandhi yesterday on his "inconsistent policy on Pakistan". "First she welcomed my peace initiatives with Pakistan and even the talks between India and Pakistan during the Sarc summit," the PM said in an informal conversation at his residence. — SNS

# Allies dwell on threat to Musharraf

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

*Small part Gr 8*

**New Delhi, Jan. 20:** India and Russia are of the view that Pervez Musharraf has emerged as one of the biggest targets of jihadis operating from Pakistan and territory under its control.

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee agreed with visiting Russian defence minister Sergei Ivanov, when the two met in South Block this evening, that Musharraf's threat perception has shot up in the past few months.

Both leaders felt the Pakistan President could not afford to go slow in his fight against terrorists if he was serious about cleaning up his country of the menace and putting it firmly on the peace track with India.

During their 45-minute meeting, the two leaders spoke on bilateral, regional and international developments of mutual interest. Earlier, Ivanov met his Indian counterpart George Fernandes and national security adviser Brajesh Mishra.

Vajpayee, briefing Ivanov on his recent visit to Islamabad and the peace initiative with Pakistan, said: "We are on the right path and if Musharraf keeps his promise, there is every chance of a breakthrough in India-Pakistan relations."

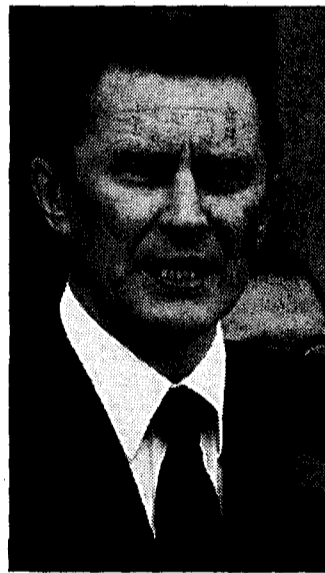
The Pakistan President is high on terrorists' hit list after he initiated serious steps against the re-grouping of Taliban and al Qaida members along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border in the past few months, following complaints from Kabul and the US. The situation worsened for Musharraf after he showed signs of sincerely responding to Vajpayee's peace initiative.

But the peace process notwithstanding, India still be-

lieves Pakistan is the biggest source of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The issue was raised by Ivanov, who told Vajpayee the international community should focus on Pakistan. "If this is a serious concern then we don't have to look anywhere else but Pakistan," Ivanov is reported to have said.

Vajpayee, who had not initiated the discussion, promptly pointed out that India had been talking about Pakistan being one of the worst proliferators of such weapons for a long time and had been trying to draw world focus.

But officials present were a little surprised at Ivanov's decision to bring up Pakistan's proliferation record. It was seen as an attempt by Moscow to embarrass the Americans for not having done much with Islamabad on this score although it has been pointing a finger at others.



Sergei Ivanov at New Delhi. (AFP)

W

Turbulence within Pakistan poses the real problem for closer Indo-Pak ties

# Implosions in Islamabad

BY ANAND K. SAHAY

HP 6 PM 1

**P**ERHAPS ONE may do no better than pick up from where Pervez Musharraf left off. At his Islamabad press conference at the end of the recent Saarc summit, a packed house naturally in view of the obsession of journalists the world over to covet and sniff out a 'breakthrough!', the general told his audience all about his phone conversation with Atal Bihari Vajpayee earlier in the day.

The military president had wished the Indian leader "good health". The democratically elected prime minister had wished for the man in fatigues God's "protection". Thus, a six-para joint statement was born, one that few had bet on. But does a 'joint statement' necessarily portend common endeavour in pursuit of a 'joint purpose'?

Given India-Pakistan vicissitudes, we shall have to wait for an answer though fine words have been written and spoken on both sides and that itself is a gain. Having listened in on the Pervez-Atal phone talk, let's just wish both leaders God speed and good luck with the work they have undertaken to all-round applause. If the sentiments of good faith and optimism survive a critical stretch of time, the people of both countries will be immeasurably enriched. But there is, sadly, ground enough for the sceptic to be heard, and the reasons have mainly to do with Pakistan's inner turbulence, although its people in the main seek normality with India.

As for the Islamabad event itself, Indians can't begin to count their blessings, of course — the PM is back home safe from one of the most dangerous places in the world. Remember, though in Islamabad for barely five hours, President Clinton had to use a decoy aircraft and a look-alike secret service agent as a real-life decoy to deceive *jehadi* mischief-doers in and outside the Pakistani establishment.

Also, as a people who have faced the full brunt of Pakistan-brewed *jehadi* terror, Indians should be relieved that no physical harm has come to Musharraf. With Pakistan's democratic opposition bundled out of the public arena by the military-*mullah* alliance, one may reasonably expect a great deal of political chaos in that country if the dictator with whom we are once again attempting to do business is violently put out of the way.

After the encouraging outcome of the recent Vajpayee-Musharraf en-



THE HANDS SHOW THE GAP: Pervez Musharraf

gagement, both leaders sound very positive. But they would. It is in both their interest to do so, no matter what the future may bring. The Indian prime minister is gearing up for a general election in which the Pakistani tango is to be held aloft as a trophy though the game has only just begun.

For the Pakistan chief, just getting India to talk Kashmir is prize enough, whatever the end result. For him it has been a long haul since the Agra botch-up. He badly needs to show an India-dialogue to earn continued US approval since Washington worries over-much about a nuclear conflagration over Kashmir in a tense region cluttered with the mess of *jehad*.

But, no less significant, Musharraf also hopes to earn goodwill points from his own extremists by showing that he has at last got India to talk Kashmir, and so will they ease up please in order to give him some elbow room? The move he has now made is tactically important. He has let *jehad* down badly on Afghanistan. Now he has to demonstrate that he did so only so that he may be enabled to deliver on Kashmir. So far, he has been good to the *jehadis* bent on Kashmir. Their objectives converged. It is noteworthy that after 9/11, the dictator was not tough on the Jaish-e-Mohammed and the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba, the Kashmir-oriented bands, but only on the extremists concerned with Afghanistan and elsewhere.

It's impossible to tell if the *jehadis* take Musharraf at his word, although he has tried to reassure them in several ways. Only last month he struck a national political deal with the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal, the coalition of fundamentalist parties that hobnob with the *jehadis*, and

cut the moderate opposition out. But the consummate ventriloquist simultaneously promised tough action against *jehadi* extremism.

At the summit itself, going completely against the flow of the deliberations and swimming in an opposite direction from the tone and tenor of India-Pakistan talks on the summit sidelines, Musharraf urged in his banquet speech that 'bilateral issues' (read: Kashmir) should be permitted to be raised under the Saarc charter. This was the only sour note to be struck during Vajpayee's three days in Islamabad. Was it a piece to play later if developments don't work out as planned? When asked about this the Pakistani strongman said he was only articulating a "personal opinion".

Were the *jehadis* listening? After all, they too realise that public opinion in J&K has turned against them and against the thought of joining Pakistan. The assembly election of October 2002 underlined this. From their perspective, then, Kashmir can only be taken by force by the troops of *jehad* and negotiations might have little to offer. The question for them is: is Pakistan's military ruler still on board, or has he jumped ship?

These are complex issues, and the answers lie in the future. If the *jehadis* are confused about Musharraf, what makes us so confident he has made common cause with us? Or that even if he is sincere, the system he presides over will back his altered course, if that indeed is the case? But just look at all the government-fed media hype.

It is useful to remember in this context that while all the recent talk with Islamabad has concerned atmospherics and confidence-building, we have had real agreements in

the past — Simla and Lahore — for which Pakistan has shown contempt. These too had talked about discussing Kashmir in a calm manner without anyone vitiating the atmosphere through hostile acts. Agra failed precisely because Musharraf could not bring himself to accept these basic propositions. As for Saarc, it is not for the first time that a Safta time-table has been set.

The real issue is that an economically and socially exhausted Pakistan is at a crossroads. The political situation is uncertain at best and the country is buffeted by contrary pressures. Seeking normality in their lives, ordinary people desire peace with India and may now be ready to overcome the demons of the past. But the influential *jehad* section, which has developed organic links with the armed forces and the powerful intelligence community, nurses a very different agenda. Then there are US pressures on Musharraf (in that country's own interest) to work out a deal with India. In what manner, then, will the ambiguity break? Which way will Pakistan lurch?

If people's will wins out in the end — even through the agency of a military ruler — the obstacles to peace will have effectively dissipated, and Musharraf would be on his way to historical greatness. But that, at the moment, is a huge conjecture. For his part, other than make some noise, Musharraf has done little to take on the entrenched forces of 'Kashmir *jehad*'.

In such a scenario, it was impolitic of Vajpayee during his Islamabad trip to describe the dictator as the 'best leader' in Pakistan. This can only give Musharraf an internal boost, just as inviting him prematurely to Agra had done, which he may leverage for or against peace, depending on what pressures he succumbs to. After Agra, he had used his new-found leverage against peace and against India.

If the latest Islamabad dynamic misfires and we are back to square one, the despair and cynicism generated all round will make it very hard for anyone to take another shot at peace in the foreseeable future. That is the position of risk we have been taken to. Shielding the principals, it may have been better by far to work out the same CBMs we have at the foreign minister level, as in the case of our Twelve Points — and Yashwant Sinha would have been a perfectly competent instrument.

# Pak deals foreign secretary

card

OUR BUREAU AND PTI

**Jan. 15:** Pakistan has insisted that next month's composite dialogue with India should be at the level of foreign secretaries as talks between lower-ranked officials would send a "negative signal" and cast doubts on the seriousness of the process.

Foreign ministry officials said in Delhi that Islamabad's insistence on foreign secretary-level talks could be an attempt to focus on Kashmir and kick off the dialogue with security-related issues.

In an interview to PTI in Islamabad last night, Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri said a "lot of people" preferred the talks to be at the political level, meaning that of the foreign ministers.

"But a good compromise would be the foreign secretaries level," he added, though Delhi had suggested that joint secretaries should kick off the dialogue.

Kasuri, who hailed the January 5 meeting between Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and President Pervez Musharraf for its "brutal frankness" that set the stage for the dialogue process, said talks at the level of joint secretaries would "really send a negative signal".

"There are people who jocularly suggest that it (the talks) should begin at the section-officer level. Somehow we are cheapening the whole thing. We are de-prioritising — giving an impression that this was not important enough."

Of the eight issues covered by the composite dialogue — last held between the two sides in 1998 — the foreign secretaries deal with two — Kashmir and matters related to security. The rest, which include issues like Sir Creek and Siachen, are either dealt by the secretaries or joint secretaries of the ministries concerned.

Sources, however, said though Delhi was yet to decide on the level of the talks, it could compromise by agreeing to discuss all eight issues, with the foreign secretaries discussing Kashmir and security matters and joint secretaries and other officials the rest.

In Rawalpindi, Musharraf kept up the peace momentum, telling top military officers at a conference that his government would continue efforts to root out extremism and all kinds of terrorism from Pakistani soil.

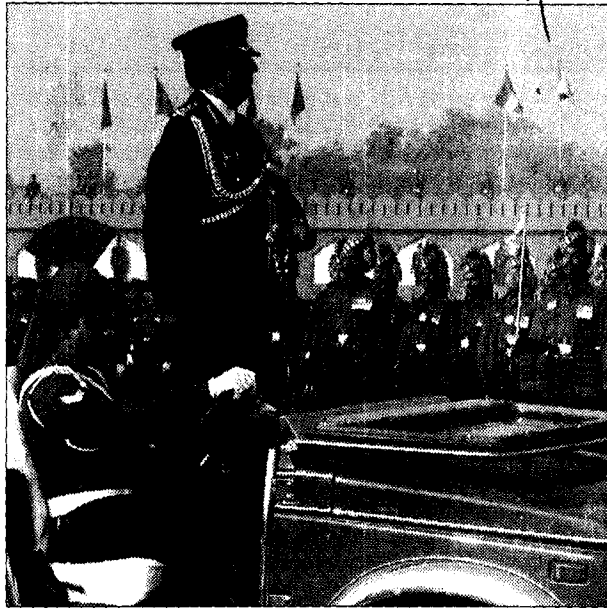
This was the first meeting of top commanders after the recent Saarc summit and Musharraf's meeting with Vajpayee.

■ See Page 6

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

16 JAN 2004

# Terror camps in PoK not wound up: Gen Vij



Gen NC Vij inspects Army Day parade in New Delhi on Thursday. — PTI

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, Jan. 15. — Terrorist camps across the border and the Line of Control have not been shut down and despite the current peace move, work on border fencing will continue, Army chief, General NC Vij, said here today,

A 590-km stretch of the LoC would be ready by May, the Army chief said. The chief added that terrorists were sending 15,000 to 16,000 messages daily, the transmission level being as before the recent India-Pakistan ceasefire. This suggests that the camps exist, he added.

Gen NC Vij said it was too early to assess the situation as usually little infiltration takes place during the winter months and a proper assessment of the infiltration scenario could only be made in the summer months.

By then, the fence, backed by sensors, would be in place and it would make infiltration more difficult. The militants would also have to try to cross the International Border or the difficult Kargil sector in such a situation.

Viewing the peace process as a positive development, the Army chief said that more troops were now posted along the International Border with Pakistan to ensure that

## Only Kashmir on Hurriyat agenda

JAMMU, Jan. 15. — The Hurriyat Conference today announced a five-member negotiating team for holding a broad-based dialogue with the Deputy Prime Minister in New Delhi on 22 January. The team comprises the chairman, Maulvi Md Abbaas Ansari, Abdul Gani Bhat and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Mr Bilal Gani Lone and Mr Fazal Haq Qureshi. The JKLF, People's League and Jamaat-e-Islami didn't attend today's meeting. — SNS

terrorists did not not attempt any misadventure.

In Jammu and Kashmir, the Army had maintained the pressure on terrorists and were eliminating more of them now, with new equipment coming as a great help to them to do so. In the last year alone, over 1,550 terrorists in J&K have been killed, the Army chief said.

There is a similar kind of pressure in the North-east frontier and the Bhutan army's operations have helped, he added. "With peace talks progressing well with NSC-N(I-M), we're indeed looking at North-east with great hope" he said.

Speaking about new weapons, he said T-90 tanks and the artillery being re-modelled are rolling out first.

# Samjhauta Express back on track after two years

Press Trust of India

ATTARI, Jan 15. — With the resumption of the Lahore-Attari-Lahore Samjhauta Express, all the three modes of travel — rail, road and air, snapped between India and Pakistan after the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001, were re-

sumed after two years today. The green and yellow coloured 10 coaches of Pakistan Railways as Samjhauta Express reached the Attari Railway Station here at 12.55 p.m. with 65 passengers while in the return direction about 250 passengers went to the neighbouring country. Immigration and customs formalities were completed by Paki-

stan and Indian officials at Wagah and Attari respectively, in about four hours each. The bi-weekly train will run between Lahore and Attari every Monday and Thursday.

Indian Railways will run a link Attari Special from Delhi on Sunday and Wednesday and from here to the national capital on Monday and Thursday for the benefit of the

to and fro passengers between the two countries.

The fare of the inter-country train has been hiked marginally by Rs 10 to Rs 50 as compared with the 2001 Lahore-Attari fare and the General and Sleeper Class fares between Delhi and Attari have also been hiked to Rs 124 and Rs 200 respectively.

The two neighbours have also agreed to run freight services, which is expected to play a significant role as both India and Pakistan were poised to open up in a big way on the trade front following the signing of the South Asian Free Trade Agreement during the recently held Saarc summit in Islamabad.

THE STATESMAN

16 JAN 2004

# Train to Pakistan, again

Nothing better symbolises improved Indo-Pak ties than the Samjhauta Express's return

**T**HE bus service from Delhi to Lahore has been plying since July. Air services between India and Pakistan were re-established on January 1. Important as these developments are, nothing quite symbolises the marked improvement in relations between the two subcontinental neighbours than the Lahore-bound Samjhauta Express which will flag off from Attari tomorrow. That is because of the multiplier effects that this service has always had, not just in terms of the number of passengers transported but in terms of trade between the two nations.

This is precisely why this train service has always been a fairly accurate barometer of the cordiality levels between India and Pakistan. If the diplomatic breakthroughs during the time of the Shimla Agreement in 1972 had breathed life into it, there were many events that occurred subsequently that have threatened it. Both nations have used it to send out political signals to each other — as indeed the Indian government did in response to the attack on Parliament on December 13, 2001, by stopping the service. All that is history. The merits or demerits of that intervention can be debated ad infinitum but the important point is to avoid being derailed by a contentious past and to move on. What both India and Pakistan need to do at this juncture is to learn from the experiences of the past three decades

and maximise the potential of an indisputably important transportation link between them. This would also mean that care must be taken to ensure that the train is not used by unscrupulous elements on both sides of the border to smuggle contraband or indulge in ruthless profiteering at the expense of the hapless passengers and business people who patronise the service. This had unfortunately been the case earlier.

It's easy to perceive the aggrandisement of popular goodwill through such a link. Many passengers have termed it the "mohabbat di gaddi" and the description is an apt one since it facilitates the reunion of families, the visiting of religious shrines, even as it creates employment opportunities to thousands in this stretch. However, the real test of this train would be in terms of its ability to help improve trade and economic relations between India and Pakistan in substantive terms. As Union Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha had pointed out during the launching of the India-Pakistan CEO's Forum in September, the current trade figure of \$200-250 million is "unnatural". Both India and Pakistan need to better leverage the undoubted potential for business ties and economic cooperation that exist. The Samjhauta Express may actually help the two economies to discover the complementarities that exist between them.



The organization of power in Pakistan needs to be transformed

# Long road to peace

PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

**T**he current improvement in India-Pakistan relations represents a major breakthrough. There is a palpable sense, both in India and in Pakistan, that the shape of this relationship will now change profoundly. A number of things about this round of talks inspire confidence. Unlike summits in the past, that were wrecked by a paradoxical combination of high expectation, sentimentalism and intransigence, the Islamabad declarations are founded on the bedrock of realism. Neither India nor Pakistan has claimed victory or called each other names. There is a better realization that progress on a number of fronts — trade, civil society relations, travel restrictions, sporting links — will be necessary to create the right climate for handling the tougher issues later on. Neither regime has given in to the temptation to grandstand to its domestic audience. And what is significant in Pakistan's case is that the dialogue involves more protagonists than Pervez Musharraf.

It includes significant members of parliament and the chief of Inter-Services Intelligence, suggesting that this outcome represents a wider consensus among Pakistan's elites and is therefore likely to be more enduring. The incentives of all parties are finally aligning: Pakistan has realized that terrorism has extracted a bigger price from Pakistan than it has from India; and India has realized that engaging Pakistan rather than demonizing it will pay dividends. There is great international pressure to sort out this quagmire. If Musharraf acquires the ambition to transform Pakistan, and Atal Bihari Vajpayee the ambition to leave a statesmanlike legacy of peace, we can be confident that enduring progress will result.

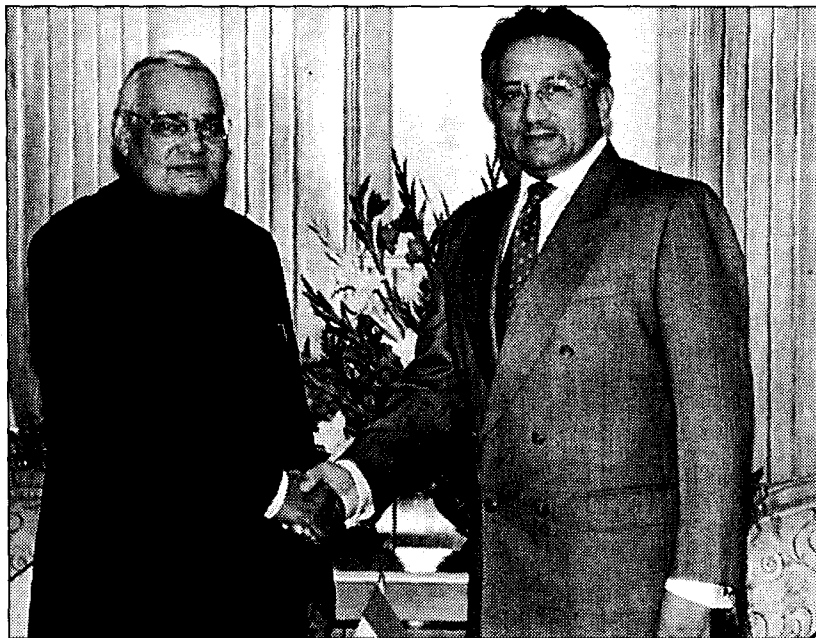
**S**o there is much to be optimistic about. But the road ahead is still likely to be very tough for both Pakistan and India. Let us assume that the dominant sentiment in civil society in Pakistan and even in substantial sections of the elite is in favour of better relations. Let us assume further that Pakistan wants to genuinely emancipate itself from its recent history and become a modern state, not tethered to an assortment of military groups, mercenaries, religious fundamentalists and permanently in the throes of an identity crisis.

This assumption is not outlandish: Pakistan recognizes the hole it has dug itself into. But will this realization be enough? There are two overwhelming difficulties. First, power in Pakistan is

still institutionalized with those who have a stake in violence. Pakistan can become a stable modern state only if the domestic power and influence of the military, the ISI and the violent groups they have supported are considerably reduced. The *raison d'être* of these institutions has come from a rivalry with India; no rivalry, no power for them, no justification for the dominant role they play inside Pakistan.

It is not easy for any institution to liquidate its own long-term power. Even small groups, entrenched in key positions, can block progress if they see progress resulting in their own irrelevance. An enduring peace will require not just the diminution of anti-

sents a victory of sorts for India: no mention was made of Kashmir, there is a commitment to clamp down on terrorism, Pakistan has agreed to India's position that talks can proceed on issues other than Kashmir, and the vision of an open South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation economic zone is more India's than Pakistan's. But India was careful not to present it as such. But India has its task cut out for it in the following sense: as far as anyone can tell, Pakistan is not going to get a single major concession from India. What can India give Musharraf that allows him to say that the terms of any settlement contemplated were not tilted entirely in favour of India? The



**For SAARC to succeed, there will have to be a robust consensus, not just on trade, but also on a basic set of values**

issue is not whether India's claims are just, the issue is whether a settlement can be made politically credible inside Pakistan. And as far as one can tell, there is no clear answer to this question. And this uncertainty could still haunt talks in the future.

There are three related ways of getting around this dilemma. The first option is to go very slow. Stick to de-escalating tensions and a few easy issues, continue talking, but give Pakistan enough time to come to terms with its own institutional dilemmas, so that its leaders are secure enough not to have

to worry about caving in. But this will require patience on both sides. The second option is also long term. Present any settlement not just as a bilateral settlement, but also as part of an attempt to alter the terms of discourse in the region as a whole, away from competitive nationalism. That is why the concept of SAARC is not peripheral to this enterprise.

**I**f the ultimate goal of SAARC is to dissolve the procrustean boundaries, then all kinds of institutional possibilities open up. What would the terms of discourse be like if the region had a greater commitment to the freer movement of goods and people? It would render conflicts born of artificial closure of identity irrelevant. Most important, any settlement within a framework of SAARC allows the possibility of thinking, not in terms of what India and Pakistan can wrest from each other, but in terms of the directions in which the region as a whole should be heading. This is the framework under which all sides can claim victory.

But for SAARC to succeed, there will have to be a robust consensus, not just on the benefits of trade, but on a basic set of values. If SAARC is to be something akin to the European Union, an arrangement, not just for trade but also for the pacification of violence, there will have to be a common ideological commitment. No regional agreement can succeed without a consensus about the value of peace, human rights and a sense that no community should be threatened for simply being who they are. This last challenge is one that Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan and in its own way, India, also face. The point of opening up relations has to be to evolve a commitment to these core values, the third prong in the strategy for long-term peace. But these values, despite the optimism generated over the last year or so, still remain fragile aspirations, and a lot of political hard work, cultural transformation and governmental diligence will have to go into making them possible.

**A**s everyone knows, India-Pakistan relations are not just about India-Pakistan relations; they are premised upon a gamut of assumptions about national identities, about the proper role of governments and have often licensed a violation of human rights and constitutional values on both sides of the border. If we are serious about peace, we ought to be serious about transforming the political culture of south Asia. Vajpayee's transition from master strategist to statesman, and Musharraf's from army commander to peace-broker will depend upon this transformation. The good news notwithstanding, the jury is still out on this one.

The author is professor of philosophy and of law and governance, Jawaharlal Nehru University

TELE  
LEGRAPH

# Pakistan's nuclear deals

By M.R. Srinivasan

*There would appear to be a real risk of sensitive nuclear material or even weapon components falling into jihadi or terrorist hands due to the complicity of functionaries at various levels.*

NEWSPAPERS IN India and abroad are full of stories about Pakistan helping various countries acquire sensitive nuclear technologies, which can help them, over time, acquire the capability to make nuclear weapons. These reports are dismissed as untrue by Pakistani spokesmen who say they have been, and continue to be, committed to nuclear non-proliferation. The American media is full of stories about Pakistan assisting North Korea, Iran and Libya in enriching uranium, an essential step to produce bomb grade nuclear material. Senior U.S. leaders claim that Pakistan's President, Pervez Musharraf has assured the U.S. that no nuclear co-operation between Pakistan and these countries is taking place at present. But the reality is that such cooperation has been going on from the 1980s.

The architect of Pakistan's nuclear weapon programme, Abdul Qadir Khan, had worked for a number of years in Holland at the uranium enrichment plant owned by Urenco, a Dutch-German-U.K. consortium. This was the first commercial scale uranium enrichment plant using the gas-centrifuge process. Earlier plants of that kind used the gaseous diffusion process, pioneered by the U.S. and built thereafter in the USSR, Britain, France and China. These plants produce highly enriched uranium (having a high concentration of uranium-235), which is a bomb grade material. The alternative bomb grade material is plutonium produced from natural uranium in a nuclear reactor. The gaseous diffusion process has the limitation that it has to have a larger size or high throughput and uses large quantities of electrical energy. The gas centrifuge process is suited for smaller scale plants and needs smaller amounts of energy. When Dr. Qadir Khan worked in Holland, he systematically stole the blueprints and specifications of the process and took them with him when he decided to work for the Pakistan programme. Although a Dutch court convicted him of indulging in this unlawful activity, no punishment was imposed on him.

During much of the 1970s and 1980s, Pakistani agents were procuring from European and North American sources various sensitive material and equipment in violation of export control regulations in the countries of origin. These included maraging steel for making centrifuge cylinders, high frequency power supplies to drive the centrifuge rotors at high speed, and plants for making uranium hexafluoride gas. Some persons and companies in-

dulging in this trade were caught by several governmental agencies in Europe and North America and were charged with offences. After lengthy trials and juicy publicity, no punitive action was taken.

Dr. Qadir Khan played a key role in identifying the commercial and industrial entities who could deliver various equipment required for the nuclear weapon programme as he was familiar with these institutions from his association with the Dutch activity. Whatever the economic difficulty Pakistan faced, the nuclear weapon activity was never starved of resources.

While Pakistan made good progress on enrichment of uranium because of Dr. Qadir Khan's Dutch connections, it still needed vital inputs on the design of a nuclear weapon and certain critical hardware. This is where the long established friendship with China proved handy. In agreeing to give Pakistan design information on one of its early nuclear weapons and some hardware, China gained access to gas centrifuge technology for enriching uranium, which Pakistan had by then established. Some years later when Pakistan needed missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons, China once again came to its aid. After the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) came into force in the 1990s at the urging of the U.S., China found it difficult to satisfy Pakistani aspirations on missile acquisition. By that time, North Korea emerged as a source for obtaining missiles and associated technology. It also coincided with a period when North Korea withdrew from the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and began to work on a nuclear weapon programme. Thus Pakistan and North Korea got engaged in a missiles-for-nuclear-weapons-technology transfer. It has been widely reported that Dr. Qadir Khan made over a dozen trips to North Korea in the 1990s.

Now we come to the more recent cases. Iran admitted a few months ago that it had undertaken work on enrichment of uranium though it insisted that this was purely for peaceful purposes. Even in the early 1990s, western media reports alleged that Iran was developing a nuclear weapon programme. I had occasion to visit nearly all the Iranian nuclear facilities in 1991. At that time, Iran had

just one electromagnetic separator of Chinese origin, ostensibly for research and development work. As Iraq found earlier, the electromagnetic separation process of enrichment, which the U.S. had abandoned in the 1940s, was indeed unviable. So the Iranians followed the prospects of a gas centrifuge process. There are reports that Iran had centrifuges similar to those Pakistan had used in the early phase of its programme. Radioactivity levels measured at the Iranian facilities show evidence of highly enriched uranium. Iran explained this as contamination from an earlier location. The needle of suspicion points only to Pakistan. There are reports of Dr. Qadir Khan making frequent visits to Iran and even owning a villa on the Caspian Sea. Iran has now agreed to a more stringent regime of inspections including surprise inspections, from the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The most recent episode is the announcement from Libya that it was suspending all work on weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and opening its facilities to the more stringent inspections of the IAEA. A few years after Pokhran-I test of 1974, Col. Muammar Qaddafi of Libya made a serious offer to India to get nuclear weapon technology in exchange for substantial sums of money, oil and other business. India fended off this proposition in a polite manner. However it appears that in recent years, Libya has sought help from the only source that was available to it, namely Pakistan, to get nuclear weapon technology. There are reports once again of uranium enrichment work in Libya using the centrifuge process, very similar to that in Pakistan.

The country that has probably picked up most of the bills for the Pakistani nuclear weapons is Saudi Arabia. All the rulers of Pakistan in recent decades have cultivated cordial relations with the Saudi royal family. Important Saudi leaders have had access to Pakistani nuclear weapons facilities. Considering that Saudi Arabia does not have the pool of technical manpower or facilities of Iraq or Iran, any transfer from Pakistan may have to be more than mere technology or knowhow. It may involve ready to assemble nuclear weapons, from kits that may be sent across should a need arise.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, who launched the Pakistani nuclear weapon programme, referred to it as an 'Islamic Bomb'. He talked about the goal in civilisational terms and not simply in the context of Pakistani security. He used the religion card effectively to get financial support from the conservative petro-rich Islamic states. At present when mounting evidence of Pakistani complicity in spreading nuclear weapon technology widely has come into the open, there are reports that key aides of Dr. Qadir Khan are being questioned.

It is entirely possible that the *jihadi* mentality pervades several levels of the Pakistani scientific leadership. Two aspects of Dr. Qadir Khan have received public attention; the first is his visceral hatred of India and the second his vainglorious attitude. It is quite possible he himself has engendered a *jihadi* world view among his colleagues. But it will be sacrilege to point an accusing finger at him in Pakistan and we may be certain that no guilt will be heaped on him. But what is of concern to the outside world in general and India in particular is that the claim that Gen. Musharraf makes that he is in full control of the nuclear weapon programme and can promise that only responsible actions will be taken by Pakistan at all times, may only be rhetoric devoid of substance. There would appear to be a real risk of sensitive nuclear material or even weapon components falling into *jihadi* or terrorist hands due to complicity of functionaries at various levels.

Now that a thaw is Indo-Pakistan relations has set in, there is expectation of a return to normality in the relations between the two countries leading to meaningful discussions to resolve the outstanding differences. The 1999 Lahore Memorandum of Understanding signed between India and Pakistan envisages among others nuclear confidence building measures. An impediment to agreement on these CBMs would be Pakistan's track record in assisting nuclear proliferation over the past two decades or more and the general feeling that the controls on dispersal of sensitive nuclear information are porous at best. Furthermore, there is the impression that some scientists, even at senior levels, are acting as conduits in supplying sensitive WMD information to potential terrorists. Pakistan will have to be candid with Indian interlocutors and convince them that whatever may have happened in the past, Pakistan will cease to encourage nuclear proliferation and act as a responsible nuclear weapon state.

(The writer is a former Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission)

# Needed, a touch of realism

THE EFFORTS made at Lahore and Agra to resolve the disputes between India and Pakistan through meetings at the summit level were so swiftly frustrated that only hardcore optimists will be prepared to beat the drums for a euphoric *bhangra* after the Islamabad encounter. Realism has set in on both sides of the border with the leaders and the public having understood that the path to normalisation will be hard and long. Ironically, the level-headed approach now in evidence might accomplish more than the emotional upsurges that marked the two earlier exercises in summity.

Mr. Vajpayee has made no secret of his hope that he will be the Indian Prime Minister who will make a final peace with Pakistan. However, he has never been a member of the over-optimistic fraternity and given his political affiliation there was never a chance that he would let down his guard. While he personally might have occupied a sort of middle ground, his associates in the Cabinet and the BJP were no less driven by ideology and their emotions when it came to the question of Pakistan as were those who were ever ready to make peace with the western neighbour. All along the BJP's ideology and its attitude towards Pakistan were diametrically opposite to that of those who are only too prone to talk of brotherly relations between the two countries.

The ideological and emotional drive to push Pakistan into a corner had led the Indian leadership to adopt an approach that was divorced from any realistic appraisal of the ground situation. At no time was this more evident than in the period following the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001 and the attack on Parliament House on December 13.

The mobilisation of forces on the western border made little military sense after the BJP-engineered nuclearisation of the subcontinent, but was intended more for the diplomatic effect it would have. It was hoped that the threat of war between India and Pakistan would force the international community to focus its attention on this part of the world. It was further believed that once the international community did so it would recognise Pakistan as the hub of global terror.

While the U.S. and other powers did acknowledge the connection between Pakistan and global terror, they were not inclined to press the regime in Islamabad beyond a point. India's efforts to make Pakistan the target of the international community's campaign against terror could make little headway given the realities on the ground.

With the United States having identified the Afghanistan-based Al-Qaeda as the target of its campaign, it could not ignore the geographical importance of Pakistan. It took the Indian leadership well over a year and a half to acknowledge the futility



**TALKING PEACE: The Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, with Pakistan's President, Pervez Musharraf, and Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, in Islamabad.**

of its approach.

India did gain a few advantages over this period. Most significantly, it was able to re-establish its presence in Afghanistan after it had been completely excluded during the period of the Taliban regime. The international scrutiny of the nexus between Pakistan and the Taliban also worked to India's benefit indirectly. In comparison with a military-dominated Pakistan that flirted dangerously with a group of religious zealots, India stood out as a liberal democracy and

*If India and Pakistan are to keep on the new course, those who wish for peace should not push optimism to unsustainable levels, writes Kesava Menon.*

a natural ally of the coalition that had formed against the Taliban-Al-Qaeda combine. Its emergence as a player of potential in the global economy did no harm to the country's cause either. The Vajpayee Government appears to have calculated, at some point last year, that it would do better if it leveraged these advantages

instead of beating its breast over the international community's failure to directly address the terrorist threat posed by Pakistan.

With his speech in Srinagar on April 18, Mr. Vajpayee appears to have reset India's Pakistan policy within the parameters he had first outlined in Lahore. As he enunciated

in his address at the Minar-e-Pakistan on that visit, this policy unequivocally acknowledges that the concept of *Akhand Bharat* has been discarded.

What remained to be done was to find a way by which the two neighbours could live in peace. Steps in this direction were taken with the

travel quite a distance from its ideological moorings to its current position, the space that the Pakistani leadership had to traverse was all the greater.

After the collapse of the erstwhile communist regime in Afghanistan, the Pakistani military had started to believe its own rhetoric that its religious zeal would enable it to conquer all before it. With the Taliban established in power across the Durand Line and the insurgency raging across the Line of Control, the Pakistani military believed that it was about to achieve its territorial ambitions.

While it suffered a setback in the Kargil campaign, the military convinced itself that it would have won if not for the pusillanimity of the Nawaz Sharif Government. General Musharraf apparently believed that it would be possible to revert to the policy of aggression after he had ousted the former Prime Minister. Even when he came to Agra as the new President of his country he seemed to believe that he could convince India to hand over Kashmir for the sake of peace.

General Musharraf has had to undergo a long learning process since then. Afghanistan is never again likely to become a satellite of Pakistan. The rest of the world is not prepared to accept the view that there is a distinction between terrorists *per se* and those who carry out terrorism in the name of a freedom struggle in Kashmir.

While militancy has not died down in the Valley, the last Assembly elections have shown that there are Kashmiris in sufficient numbers who are not completely averse to remaining citizens of India. The Pakistani leadership also appears to have learnt that the tactic of bleeding India to death is not going to work. It also appears to have realised that Pakistan's dreams of economic development will never be fulfilled so long as it remains entangled in a struggle with India.

This realisation has apparently spread well beyond the Pakistan President and his close associates. General Musharraf cannot take momentous decisions unless he is sure that he will be able to carry the Corps Commanders with him. That the religious parties, long the political henchmen of the military, did not put on their usual displays of hatred towards India during the Islamabad summit indicates that they too have been brought on board.

The joint statement issued in Islamabad reflects the manner in which pragmatism has finally overcome emotionalism. India has recognised that it will have to discuss the Kashmir issue while Pakistan has acknowledged that it cannot continue with its support for terrorism. If the once-ideologically driven leadership on the two sides have to be kept on the new course it is necessary that those who wish for peace do not push optimism to unsustainable levels.

If the Indian leadership had to

# Musharraf rules out LoC as border

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, Jan. 10. — General Pervez Musharraf has ruled out accepting the LoC as border to resolve the Kashmir issue. He has indicated that India and Pakistan would hold three rounds of talks at the foreign secretary-level, beginning next month, to work out a step-by-step approach to resolve Kashmir and other issues.

"We've neither accepted the idea of making the LoC a permanent border nor is there any question of accepting it in future," the Pakistani President reportedly told PoK leaders while apprising them of his

meeting with Mr Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Gen. Musharraf also admitted that the methodology for the talks agreed by the two countries was "a re-enactment of the Lahore process," according to the resume of Thursday's meeting published in a local daily today. The general told the PoK leaders that he had not discussed any possible solution of the Kashmir issue with Mr Vajpayee, since both sides had to first make up their minds on the matter.

A leader who attended the meeting said he believed Pakistan had decided to look for a solution without insisting on J&K's "division" on reli-

## Consulates may reopen

ISLAMABAD, Jan. 10. — At a meeting with MQM parliamentarians, Gen. Pervez Musharraf has said confidence-building measures between Pakistan and India could result in reopening of the consulates in Karachi and Mumbai, and also in opening of the road link between Khokhrapar (Sindh) and Rajasthan. — PTI

gious lines. He also quoted the general as having said that during the second round of composite dialogue, the

question of reducing Indian troops in J&K would be addressed. "And if that doesn't happen then there would be no point in holding talks, and also it would become difficult to start the bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad," he quoted Gen. Musharraf as having said.

**Anti-terror law:** Pakistan today tightened its anti-terrorism law, increasing the jail term of convicts to 10 years and making financing of terrorist activities a non-bailable offence.

**Boundary talks:** India and China will hold the second round of boundary talks at the political level in Beijing from Monday.



# Indo-Pak peace on right track, don't derail it now

Both SAARC and India-Pak ties depend on each other to further their goals

RADHA KUMAR

**D**ESPITE the sceptics who predicted the SAARC summit in Islamabad would achieve little, the summit is clearly a roaring success. SAARC has finally galvanised itself to set clear and time-bound goals for economic cooperation; and India and Pakistan have announced they will formally kick-off a "composite dialogue" this February.

Even an obsessive peace process watcher like myself has been surprised by the agreements reached in Islamabad. I expected a framework South Asian Free Trade Agreement but I did not expect it to come in tandem with a Social Charter. I expected a further thaw between India and Pakistan — because of the steps that had preceded it — but I did not expect dates to be set for formal talks, nor that they would take place as early as next month.

South Asia's leaders were remarkably frank to confess that

two sets of measures could go a long way to improve the lives of the subcontinent's 1.5 billion people.

These achievements would not have been possible without a dawning India-Pakistan peace process. SAARC provided the framework for Pakistan to agree to put inter-regional trade on a fast track, and Pakistan played a constructive role in ironing out last minute creases in SAFTA. But Pakistan needed the assurance of formal talks on Kashmir to move forward on trade, which India provided at Islamabad.

In other words, the relationship between SAARC and an India-Pakistan peace process is symbiotic — each needs the other in order to further its goals.

Clearly a lot of behind the scenes' work was done to achieve the results in Islamabad, some of which we saw but did not recognise as laying the tracks of a composite dialogue. India and Pakistan began to move simultaneously on a number of issues some months ago. On the

ment that India and Pakistan will collaborate to investigate any future acts of terrorism.

The two countries will also collaborate in the working group to combat terrorism that SAARC set up at Islamabad, and there is a likelihood that India might also see some action on its list of 20 "most wanted".

In these circumstances the jehadis could find they have only two options — either seek an honourable exit through a cease-fire and talks, or wait to be marginalised by the peace process.

**I**S there a discernible strategy, amounting to a road map, behind the various steps that are being taken? Yes, and in some ways the question ought to be re-

Pakistan's concerns, taking trade and Kashmir first.

This time around, the two countries have made a radical strategic shift — to seek the ties that bind, such as trade, travel and exchange — and make these a kind of protective cocoon in which contentious issues such as Kashmir can be resolved.

Most promising of all, this strategy has yielded a basket of concrete measures that none of the previous negotiations produced, and has added a regional dimension that the previous agreements lacked. In this respect India and Pakistan have borrowed creatively from the experience of the European Union, which found that regional association could help

**India and Pakistan have borrowed creatively from the experience of the European Union, which found that regional association could help break through bilateral hostility, and that open borders can radically alter the terms of dispute**

they had lacked the political will to tackle their people's needs jointly — and to pledge that they would now do so. As token of their pledge, SAFTA has been put on a fast track and will come into force in 2006. At the very least, the agreement will save south Asia billions in smuggled goods and third country transit; at best, it will open markets, especially the vast Indian market, for each others' products, and thereby stimulate industrial and agricultural growth. This should pave the way for, perhaps even hasten, a South Asian Economic Union that was set for 2020.

Meanwhile, the Social Charter that accompanies SAFTA balances freer trade with equitable growth, as the adoption of the SAARC technical committee's plan for poverty alleviation shows. If it is harnessed to SAFTA, it should pave the way for, and perhaps even hasten, a more comprehensive Social Charter that will expand labour markets and harmonise civil and human rights in South Asia.

Implemented together, the

economic track they worked to get SAFTA in place, are likely to agree to gas pipelines from Iran and central Asia through Pakistan to India, and will discuss opening new trade routes.

On "people to people" they have restored travel links, encouraged cultural and civil society exchanges, and are now talking freer access to each other's media. And on Kashmir they have a cease-fire along the LoC, Siachen and the international border, projected talks between the Hurriyat alliance and the Indian government, and soon to begin negotiations on a far-reaching proposal to reopen the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Jammu-Sialkot routes.

True, we still do not have a cease-fire by the jihadi groups, though the Hurriyat alliance called for one during the summit. But General Pervez Musharraf has assured Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee that his government will not allow "Pakistani soil to be used" for terrorism against India; and there seems to be a tacit agree-

ment that India and Pakistan will collaborate to investigate any future acts of terrorism.

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*The author is an adjunct senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and a trustee of the Delhi Policy Group*

## Musharraf: From Gen to President

NAJAM SETHI

**P**RESIDENT Pervez Musharraf should be pleased as punch. In one month, he has had two brushes with death and lived to tell the tale. He has resolved the year-long Legal Framework Order deadlock in the National Assembly by means of a consummate deal with the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal. He has become a constitutional president of Pakistan by a novel but legitimate device.

And, despite the expected hiccups, he has helped open a new chapter

and Kashmir alone.

It was also a different Musharraf from the one who went to Agra in 2001 but walked out in a huff when the Indians insisted on putting a clause on terrorism into the proposed joint statement. On Tuesday January 6, 2004, the joint statement stressed the need for a composite dialogue on all issues and was conspicuous by the insertion of President Musharraf's personal assurances in regard to stamping out terrorism from Pakistani soil.

Well, well, well. We are delighted at the outcome of

status that India seeks for itself in the world.

**T**HE success of the latest initiative has depended on several factors. Flexibility on both sides was, of course, on top of the list. General Musharraf has rightly abandoned Pakistan's maximalist position based on the UN resolutions while Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee has correctly accepted that the issue of Jammu and Kashmir will have to be resolved to the satisfaction of both sides, implicitly admitting Pakistan's right to be part of the equation of any solution.

Thankfully, too, hawkishness was not paraded as a sign of patriotism. Musharraf says this is a great victory for the moderates, suggesting that the tap of militant jihad in Kashmir will finally be turned off. Vajpayee has

The ISI's self-conferred epithet of Invisible Soldiers of Islam is definitely out of fashion in these times.

Finally, the role of the international community, especially the United States, in constantly nudging both sides, should not be underestimated. Strong denials from both countries are perfectly understandable. They are awash in anti-Americanism and it would have been unwise for the US to have been seen as a strong, up-front player.

The US has told New Delhi that if it wants a long term strategic partnership with Washington, it will have to get its act together in the region instead of constantly nuke rattling with Pakistan. And it has told Pakistan that if it doesn't want to be hauled over the coals for proliferating nuclear knowhow, it must wind down the jihad busi-

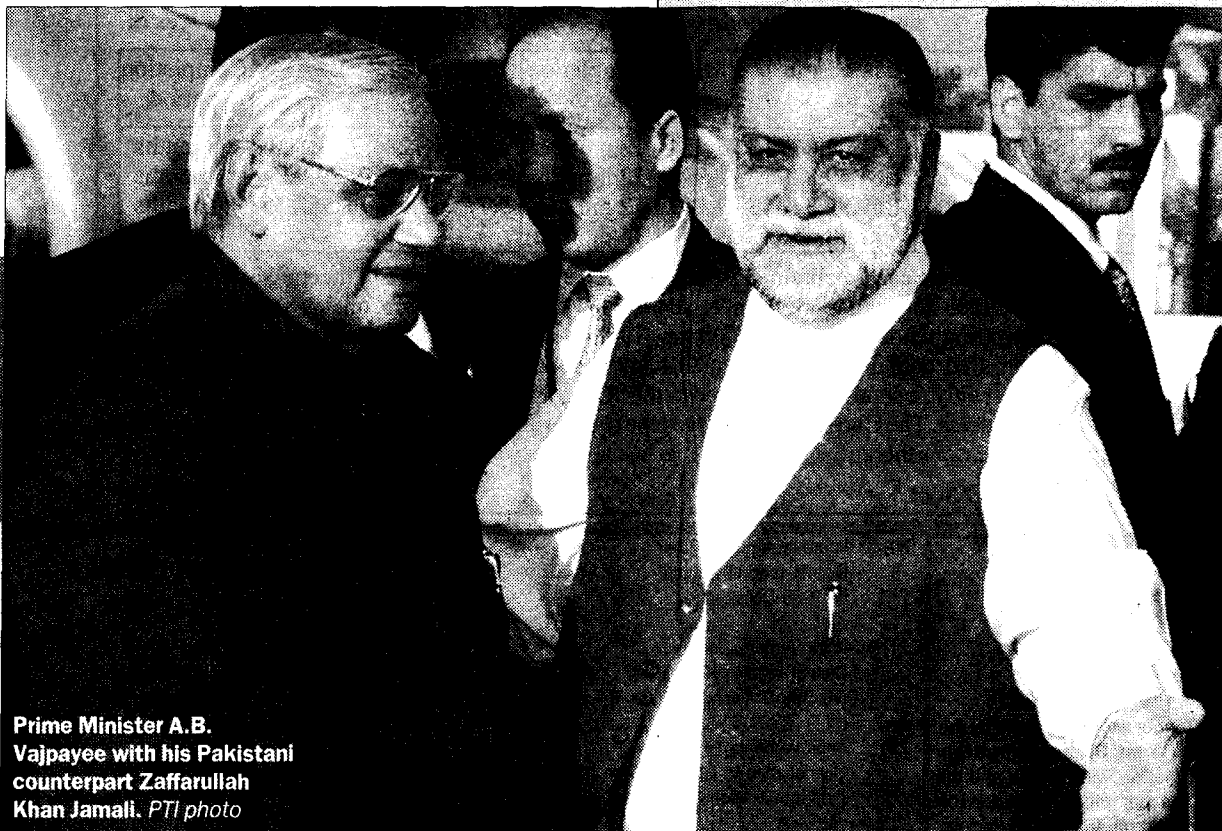
**The one positive factor in the peace process is the rational transformation of the institutional hardliners in both countries — the army in Pakistan and the BJP in India — into self-redeemed and even self-righteous moderates**

ness, turn back the tide of radical Islam and make up with India.

The dividends for India of heeding, and the costs for Pakistan of spurning, American advice cannot be ignored by either. Of course, strong vested interests on both sides will try and derail the proposed dialogue. Pride and prejudice, the weight of history, and stubborn point-scoring bureaucracies will thwart progress at every step.

But if both leaders and peoples persist in their quest, the blocks of peace will fall into place slowly but surely. The one positive factor in the peace process is the rational transformation of the institutional hardliners in both countries — the army in Pakistan and the BJP in India — into self-redeemed and even self-righteous moderates.

Friday Times



Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee with his Pakistani counterpart Zaffarullah Khan Jamali. PTI photo

in peaceful relations with India.

To be sure, the President Musharraf that we saw in a dark suit happily fielding questions from the press at the conclusion of the SAARC summit last Tuesday was a very different man from the aggressive General Musharraf in camouflage green who had pooh-pooed the composite dialogue advocated at the Lahore summit in 1999, who had launched Kargil and who had once said he would never talk to India unless it was prepared to talk about the core issue of Kashmir

the SAARC summit. It has taken Pakistan 15 years to realise that India cannot be bled to concede Kashmir. And it has taken India that long to realise that it cannot hold on to the status quo in Kashmir by force.

It has taken Pakistan's hardliners a long time to realise that a buoyant economy and not war in Kashmir is the lifeline to building a modern nation-state just as it has taken the Indian hardliners a long time to realise that a state of unresolved war with a wronged neighbour is not good for the emerging market-big power

agreed to the peace dialogue with Pakistan beginning next month, only a couple of months ahead of India's general elections, suggesting that Paki-bashing will not be exploited by the BJP to garner votes.

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# Pakistan turns scanner on nuke experts

SHAKEEL ANJUM  
ISLAMABAD, JANUARY 9

A CASE under the Official Secrets Act may be registered against some nuclear scientists, who are alleged to have passed on sensitive nuclear secrets to a third country. Legal experts are examining the evidence an official told *The News* on Thursday.

The government agencies have intensely "debriefed" certain scientists of the Khan Research Laboratories (KRL). The government has already made it clear that any scientist found involved in selling or disclosing nuclear secrets would be made accountable.

The official said the government would proceed against the scientists on the basis of the report of legal experts.

The investigative agencies had detained two KRL scientists Dr Farooq Mehmood and Dr Yasin Chohan, for questioning on suspicion of passing on the nuclear secrets to some foreign countries.

Sources said Dr Farooq Mehmood was reportedly the first scientist to have been picked up from his home on December 7, by the security agencies and questioned regarding the transfer of technology.

However, the authorities terming it as a normal practice in the nuclear-weapons states said, the scientists were only sub-

## Now van cuts into Musharraf convoy



■ ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani security establishment went into a tizzy after a private van tried to break the security cordon around President Pervez Musharraf's convoy as it passed through the Islamabad highway yesterday.

An unidentified van attempted to move out of a petrol station and headed towards the Presidential convoy when it was on a highway connecting the capital with neighbouring Rawalpindi, the Dawn reported today.

"Attempts were made to stop the van and arrest the driver but the vehicle sped away," traffic police official Mohammad Iqbal was quoted as saying by the daily. A manhunt is on for the driver of the vehicle.

— Agencies

jected to debriefing programme.

The security agencies interrogated more than seven scientists including some key scientists and prepared a report to be presented to the concerned authorities for further action, sources said adding, the authorities have forwarded the report for a legal opinion.

From  
The News

## India, Pakistan to enhance mission strength

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 8. In yet another step towards normalisation of ties, India and Pakistan have agreed to enhance the strength of their respective missions from the existing 55 to 75 and permit free movement of each other's diplomats.

Pakistan has also agreed to an Indian proposal for a meeting between the Indus River Water Commissioners for yet another round of talks on the height of the Balighar power project.

After the last round of dialogue ended in failure, Pakistan had threatened to seek third party intervention as provided under the Treaty.

India had made four proposals on December 31 as part of the confidence-building measures (CBMs) for betterment of ties between the two countries. Technical-level talks for starting a bus service between Muzaffarabad, capital of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), and Srinagar and revival of the rail route between Sindh and Rajasthan were the other proposals mooted by India.

New Delhi had suggested January 12 and 19 as possible dates for the technical-level talks. The subject figured briefly at a meeting between the Foreign Secretary, Shashank, and his Pakistani counterpart, Riaz Khokar, when the two met on the sidelines of the SAARC summit here.

Mr. Khokar reportedly told Mr. Shashank that since the entire Foreign Office establishment was busy with the SAARC summit, Islamabad would get back to New Delhi shortly on the feasibility or otherwise of the dates for the technical-level talks. Indications are that Pakistan would apply its mind to the subject only some time next week.

While the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri, has said that he would like the bus service linking Jammu and Kashmir with PoK to start before February, senior officials in the Pakistan Foreign Office seriously doubted such a possibility given the complex issues involved. One view is that the proposals could wait till next month when both sides are committed to meet for commencement of the composite dialogue.

When India originally made the proposal on October 22 last year, the initial reaction of Pakistan was that it could consider it only if New Delhi was willing to allow people to travel in the bus on United Nations documents.

In the face of a categorical no from India, Pakistan revised its position and said it was ready to sit at the table for technical-level talks to discuss the travel modalities.

9 JAN 2004

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## Deja Vu

### Islamabad meet significant, but not historic

History, we are told, was made in Islamabad when Perve Musharraf and Atal Behari Vajpayee followed up their historic handshake with an historic agreement to hold composite talks on all issues, including Kashmir. History was also made a couple of years ago in Agra when the general arrived here to big fuss and fanfare and sort of agreed to go easy on Kashmir, except in the end it didn't quite turn out that way. Before that, history to beat all histories was made in Lahore when Atalji became the first Indian prime minister to inscribe his signature on the visitors' book at the Minar-e-Pakistan. The Lahore Declaration he jointly signed with Nawaz Sharif reiterated their collective faiths in the Simla agreement, promised active efforts to resolve all issues, "including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir", and proposed an "integrated dialogue process for an early and positive outcome of the agreed bilateral agenda". Lahore was so fantastically and flamboyantly historic that scribes and politicians alike — on both sides — shed tears of joy, while many in the Indian entourage were moved to write verses, extolling the newly-forged friendship between the nuclear neighbours.

Kargil, unfortunately, turned that gushing love into a torrent of fury. Indo-Pak camaraderie is certainly worth celebrating, and more so because it is that rarity that comes interspersed with extended periods of open hostility. However, for that very reason, it is best that both sides understand the difference between hope and hype. Cautious optimism rather than excessive anticipation is the key to building mutual confidence. The Islamabad meet was significant, especially in the context of the tacit Pakistani admission on terrorism. The concession obviously comes from a man who has, in quick succession, twice escaped falling to the terrorist gun. This, if anything, underscores the fragile nature of the ongoing process, and the need all the more to avoid hyperbole of the kind that builds up impossible expectations. What matters is where the two sides go from this point. To agree to a dialogue is the easy part. The difficult part will come later when the talks start to meander in the direction of Kashmir. By now it is clear that the Atal-Pervez meet was propelled by more than just good-neighbourly vibes. Even if prime minister Jamali insists he will not name names, we know who he means when he says "the peace process was facilitated by other countries". General Musharraf is under enormous pressure — as much from the jihadis as from Washington — and a single wrong step could mean things going pear-shaped. For his sake and that of the neighbours, let's hope that he can take the peace process forward come February.



THE DEAL WAS OVER STAND ON TERRORISM

# Musharraf's decision led to 'breakthrough'

By Harish Khare

**NEW DELHI, JAN. 7.** It was the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf's critical decision to accommodate the Indian position on "terrorism" that made possible the Islamabad "breakthrough," according to Indian sources deeply involved in the negotiations. At the same time, India is not at all keen on claiming a "victory" of any kind and has instead opted to see the progress in Islamabad as a continuation of the process that began with the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Srinagar peace initiative of April 2003.

As the Indian negotiators saw it, Pakistan was keen on getting New Delhi committed to a "dialogue" whereas the Indian side was committed to bagging Islamabad's promise on "terrorism". "We know what we wanted [terrorism]; we know what Pakistan wanted [dialogue]," the sources noted. The outcome was fair to both sides.

However, there is no definite thinking yet on what level (political/ministerial/bureaucratic), the "composite dialogue" should begin. Both sides would want to do their homework before the dialogue could begin, according to officials.

According to the Indian sources, there is a definite change in the Pakistani "mindset" and it is this assessment that prompted the Indian side to cut the deal. There is also an appreciation that Gen. Musharraf has taken certain risks in giving an undertaking that "he will not permit any territory under Pakistan's control to be used to support terrorism in any manner."

Also, for now India is prepared to give the Pakistan President the benefit of the doubt on his assurance to put an end to cross-border terrorism. It is appreciated that this is the first time in a bilateral context that Gen. Musharraf has committed

himself against "terrorism." For now, New Delhi is quite prepared to live with the possibility of one or two (terrorist) "incidents." "We shall make our own appreciation of Pakistan's sincerity," the sources suggested. The Indian side has its own ideas of how much leverage the Pakistani establishment has with the jihadi outfits operating in Jammu and Kashmir.

As the Indian sources reconstructed the sequence of events in Islamabad, it was at the Vajpayee-Musharraf meeting that the conceptual breakthrough was effected. It was at this meeting that Gen. Musharraf understood that without some assurance on "terrorism," there would be no possibility of a joint statement. It was Mr. Vajpayee who appreciated that Pakistan had responded positively to the Srinagar initiative and impressed on his Pakistani host the need for an open assurance on cross-border terrorism. After the meeting, it was only a matter of negotiations how to word

the "joint statement".

The Indian assessment is that it was after this interaction that "fresh instructions" were issued to the Pakistani negotiators. There was no talk about Kashmir, only about the "composite dialogue." Nor was there any discussion on the "most wanted 20" list.

The Indian assessment is that Gen. Musharraf has the support of his Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, and the Foreign Minister, Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri (as also of the crucial Inter-Services Intelligence).

## Vajpayee commended

The Union Cabinet today felicitated Mr. Vajpayee on the successful outcome of his talks with Gen. Musharraf and Mr. Jamali. The Cabinet commended the development in Islamabad as "the furtherance of the peace process initiated by him (the Prime Minister) in April 2003 at Srinagar."

More reports on Page 11

## The making of the 'joint statement'

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, JAN. 7.** It took six meetings between the Prime Minister's Principal Secretary and National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra, and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf's principal aide, Tariq Aziz, before the Islamabad "joint statement" was worked out.

Mr. Mishra landed in Islamabad on January 1, ahead of the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee's arrival and began the process of back-room negotiations. His principal interlocutor was Mr. Aziz, secretary of Pakistan's National Security Council and after January 4, Hameed Javed of the Pakistan President's staff also pitched in. Negotiators from both sides were keeping their principals informed and were getting instructions.

Mr. Mishra reached the President's Office at 9.30 a.m. on Tuesday and hammered out a possible draft of the "joint statement." But mindful of the "misunderstanding" that derailed the Agra summit, he is supposed to have made it clear to his Pakistani counterparts that it was not "an agreement", only a "draft" which would have to be approved by Mr. Vajpayee and Gen. Musharraf.

Only after he found the "draft" acceptable did Mr. Vajpayee express a desire to speak to Gen. Musharraf over telephone. The two leaders talked about seven minutes and complimented each other. Gen. Musharraf has already made public the details of that conversation in his press conference yesterday in Islamabad.

# 'Films must honour line of control'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Mumbai:** Pakistani foreign minister K.M. Kasuri's statement, that Bollywood's aggressive anti-Pakistan stance is not helping the two nations come closer together, has stirred a hornet's nest. "Such films should not be made and people should not patronise them," he said on Tuesday.

M.S. Sathyu, who directed the deeply moving *Garam Hawa* in 1973, in which Balraj Sahni plays a terribly harassed Indian Muslim who nonetheless chooses not to migrate to Pakistan, agrees with Mr Kasuri. Says Sathyu, "Ever since the BJP has come to power, there has been an accent on anti-Pakistan, anti-Muslim films, including *Gadar*, *Border*, *Fiza*, *Sarfarosh*, *Refugee* and *Pinjar*. The latest film, *LoC*, is about the heroism of our soldiers in Kargil. With the BJP in

power, the censorship of such films is easier. Moreover, the BJP government chose the melodramatic *Pinjar*, which is not even a good film, to inaugurate the International Film Festival of India, because its director Chandraprakash Dwivedi is an RSS man."

Interestingly, director John Mathew Mathan, whose film *Sarfarosh* openly talked about the role of the ISI, in cross-border terrorism, be-

lieves overt Pak-bashing in Hindi films is unnecessary. "This is mainly aimed at raising the film's commercial value." Yet, he insists, "When there is room for friendship, why play around with each other's sentiments? Bollywood should be more sensitive to Pakistan's feelings rather than indulge in open an-

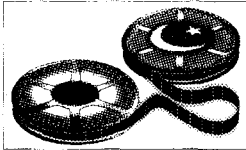
tagonism. I only wanted to look at cross-border terrorism realistically."

Nittin Keni, producer of *Gadar--Ek Prem Katha*, however, feels that entertainment and sports in the Indian sub-continent should be isolated from politics. "Entertainment is mostly fiction and should not be mixed with the political situation between the two warring neighbours," he said. Not a bad opinion

for a producer whose film is aggressively anti-Pakistan and whose hero defeats the Pakistani army single-handed, armed with only a water pump, if you please. Despite this, Keni claims that *Gadar* was one of the biggest hits in Pakistan in recent times. "From the feedback we received, it was obvious that

the film's DVDs/VCDs were available all over Pakistan," he says.

Despite *LoC*'s relatively low-key performance at the box office compared to the industry expectation, Mr Sathyu does not think the tide is turning with a more sensitive sensibility returning to the screen. "There could be many reasons why *LoC* flopped," he says. "Films like *Garam Hawa*, Govind Nihalani's *Tamas* and Ved Rahi's *Darar* were an in-depth analysis of the situation during Partition. The current crop of directors is either anti-Pakistan or confused about the political situation. It is unlikely the earlier sensibility will return because cinema has become so commercialised. I made *Garam Hawa* with a Rs 2.5 lakh loan and was able to repay it only over 15 years. A documentary or ad film costs much more these days."



Stray incidents not to cast  
shadow on progress

# Pak ties get bullet-proof clothing

**BHARAT BHUSHAN**

**New Delhi, Jan. 7: India will not let the normalisation of ties with Pakistan be derailed by stray terrorist incidents. It is convinced that President Pervez Musharraf now understands Indian concerns on terrorism, a senior official said.**

"If we peg this (dialogue process) to any (terrorist) incident, we will not get very far," the official added.

He felt such incidents could not be ruled out as militants were already holed up in Jammu and Kashmir and some had even expressed opposition to the new developments.

"Everything depends on how the process moves and our assessment of Pakistan's sincerity," the official said.

The change in the Indian perception about Musharraf's thinking, the official explained, came after his "crucial meeting" with Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on January 5. There, the Pakistan President seems to have come to the conclusion that a dialogue would not begin unless he gave clear assurances on curbing terrorism directed against India.

"His assurance on terrorism implies a change in his mindset. This was evident in the (Vajpayee-Musharraf) meeting and in the joint press statement," the official said.

The official ascribed the change in the "mindset" from Agra to Islamabad to several events, including 9/11, the attack on the Indian Parliament, mobilisation of Indian forces on the border in 2002 and the attempts on Musharraf's life.

Delhi, he said, believed that Musharraf "needed something in hand" — a dialogue process with India — before proceeding against jihadis.

When Vajpayee's visit to Islamabad was being planned, the maximum that India was willing to do was for him to make a courtesy call on Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, the host of the Saarc summit.

"We had thought that we would meet him only in the multilateral context of Saarc," the official said.

Before explaining how the

meeting with Musharraf took place, the official said he was not attempting to show how one side lost or the other side won. "We are not claiming victory here."

Delhi found that there was no reference to Kashmir or any bilateral issues in Jamali's inaugural address at the summit. Encouraged by this, the official said, Vajpayee decided to make a courtesy call on Musharraf.

The Pakistani side not only wanted a Vajpayee-Musharraf meeting but also a joint statement. "We did not want the courtesy call to be conditioned on a statement. Separately, however, some negotiations were going on about a draft statement but they did not look good," he said.

The meeting with Musharraf was intended to last 25 minutes but went on for an hour. "President Musharraf said every effort should be made to have a joint statement," the official said.

"We found that there was a clear understanding on the part of President Musharraf that unless there was an assurance on terrorism, nothing would move. That meeting was crucial. After that it was merely a matter of drafting the statement."

Once fresh instructions had been issued to Pakistani officials, they had three meetings with national security adviser Brajesh Mishra — two on January 5 evening and another the next morning. His main interlocutors from the Pakistani side were his counterpart Tariq Aziz, who is secretary of the National Security Council, and Lt General Hamid Javed, Musharraf's chief of staff.

The official said India would not have accepted a commitment to curb terrorism only on "Pakistani territory". To take the terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir into account, the phrase used in the statement was: "Any territory under Pakistan's control."

On January 6, Mishra and Aziz cleared a draft but "to avoid the mistake of Agra, both decided that till Vajpayee and Musharraf agreed, there would be no agreement". Their consent was given on telephone and that was how the deal was clinched.

■ See Page 6

9ndu Pak  
1/1/04

# Well done, Mr PM

8/1/04

**A**TAL BIHARI Vajpayee's third and final attempt, to use his own words, to achieve peace with Pakistan appears to be succeeding. When he made his first attempt by journeying to Lahore, he called it a 'defining moment' in history. Now, the saboteur of that initiative, Pervez Musharraf, believes that history is being made as India and Pakistan decide to resume their interrupted dialogue. A resumption of talks is not usually hyped up in such a manner, especially by a military man. But, perhaps, the Pakistani president and army chief has learnt a lesson both from his Kargil misadventure and the recent attacks on his life in his own country. Kargil taught him that Kashmir could not be acquired either by a proxy war or a real war or a combination of the two, while the targeting of his motorcade showed him that terrorism can boomerang on his own self and country.

But if General Musharraf is a wiser (though not necessarily sadder) man today, Mr Vajpayee has proved the old adage: if at first you don't succeed, try, try again. After his first try in La-

hore, Mr Vajpayee tried again in Agra, realising that India couldn't choose who led Pakistan at any particular point of time. When that endeavour, too, failed because Pakistan couldn't forgo the temptation of using terrorism as an instrument of its Kashmir policy, Mr Vajpayee made his celebrated observation of making a third and final attempt.

This time, his chances of success are much better. There are two reasons for this. One is General Musharraf's realisation that the fire of terrorism can singe oneself, and the other is the groundswell of public opinion in both countries in favour of peace. This second factor is crucial because even as acts of terrorism may not taper off immediately, the pressure of public opinion is bound to propel the two leaders towards a settlement. But even as India and Pakistan try to bury their acrimonious past, a major credit for this remarkable turnaround has to go to Mr Vajpayee. He has confirmed an old belief that the best chances of peace are provided by a far-sighted BJP leader in India and a responsive military man in Pakistan.

## Text of PM, Musharraf statement

*gnd PAK*

**ISLAMABAD, JAN. 6.** The following is the text of the joint press statement issued by the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, on Monday's meeting between the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf:

The President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of India met during the SAARC Summit in Islamabad.

The Indian Prime Minister while expressing satisfaction over the successful conclusion of the SAARC Summit appreciated the excellent arrangements made by the host country.

Both leaders welcomed the

recent steps towards normalisation of relations between the two countries and expressed the hope that the positive trends set by the CBMs would be consolidated.

Prime Minister Vajpayee said that in order to take forward and sustain the dialogue process, violence, hostility and terrorism must be prevented. President Musharraf reassured Prime Minister Vajpayee that he will not permit any territory under Pakistan's control to be used to support terrorism in any manner. President Musharraf emphasised that a sustained and productive dialogue addressing all issues would lead to positive results.

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To carry the process of normalisation forward, the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of India agreed to commence the process of the composite dialogue in February 2004. The two leaders are confident that the resumption of the composite dialogue will lead to peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, to the satisfaction of both sides.

The two leaders agreed that constructive dialogue would promote progress towards the common objective of peace, security and economic development for our peoples and for future generations. — UNI

THE HINDU

07 JAN 2004

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 7, 2004

## STABILISING THE PROCESS

THE LEADERS OF India and Pakistan have energised the ongoing process of positive engagement by agreeing to restart the composite dialogue in February. They also exuded a degree of optimism in asserting, in a joint statement issued after the meeting between Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf, that the dialogue would lead to the "peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, to the satisfaction of both sides". Pakistan appears ready finally to abandon a major element of its Kashmir strategy with General Musharraf reiterating that he would not permit any territory under Pakistan's control to be used to support terrorism in any manner. While this declaration of intent has to be substantiated by developments on the ground, the discussions in Islamabad appear to have infused a measure of stability to the process of positive engagement that has unfolded over the past few months. The spasmodic and inconsistent way in which confidence building measures were taken up in the past cast doubts on the sustainability of the process. In reinvigorating the formal mechanism for consultations, the two countries have indicated a political will to work with each other despite serious differences on some vital issues.

In announcing the decision to restart the composite dialogue at the end of Mr. Vajpayee's visit for the SAARC summit, the two sides cast aside the conservatism that marked bilateral exchanges up to that stage. Until then Indian and Pakistani leaders appeared to have been weighed down by the outcomes of the Lahore and Agra summits and seemed apprehensive about raising expectations once again. While the Pakistani leaders have tried to make their people understand that relations with India would not be normalised in very short order, they have to be constantly aware of the political conditions in which the process of engagement will unfold.

With Lok Sabha elections possible by the middle of the year, the Indian leadership might not be able to deal with the contentious issues in a substantive manner. It will not be able to produce any imaginative initiatives on the Kashmir issue or be able to summon the political will to implement any agreements on less vexatious matters such as the Tulbul project or Sir Creek. New Delhi will also need time to gauge whether Islamabad will persist with its efforts to contain cross-border terrorism. Both sides will need to exercise patience to ensure that the process of engagement does not stall since the frustration generated by failure will further erode the prospects of full normalisation.

India will continue to be cautious about dealing with a Pakistani establishment that is ultimately controlled by General Musharraf. It will not be in a hurry to conclude that the military-dominated Pakistani establishment has made an irreversible strategic decision in favour of friendship, cooperation and amity. However, the significance of recent developments on the other side of the border must not be underestimated. The two attempts to assassinate General Musharraf brought home to the Pakistani leadership the dangers inherent in its sponsorship of *jihadi* elements. Pakistan is under intense international scrutiny because of its long association with the *jihadi* movement and because of the latest revelations about its role in clandestine nuclear proliferation. The fear of international isolation could combine forces with the prospect of enhanced economic cooperation within the SAARC framework to move Pakistani policy further in a positive direction. That the leaders of the religious parties did not hesitate to interact with Prime Minister Vajpayee and his delegation perhaps indicates that most components of Pakistan's political spectrum have decided to support the process of engagement and sensible, mature dialogue with India.

THE HINDU 07 JAN 2004

HISTORY HAS BEEN MADE, SAYS MUSHARRAF

# India, Pakistan to begin talks

Nilova Roy Chaudhury in Islamabad

Jan. 6. — One meeting and one phone call was all it took, on the surface, to tie up the loose ends and clinch the “deal”. In the words of Gen. Pervez Musharraf, India and Pakistan had agreed to “commence the process of the composite dialogue in February 2004”. Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee had called on the general yesterday and spoke to him for 65 minutes and also made a phone call after the Saarc summit ended today, “sealing this deal”.

Though Indian and Pakistani delegation members refused to divulge what brought about this dramatic change of heart, Gen. Musharraf was ecstatic at the press conference: “History has been made; we’ve arrived at an agreement.”

Indian and Pakistani leaders and officials spoke in amazing consonance, not quite a usual thing in subcontinental politics. While national security adviser Mr Brajesh Mishra said: “It’s not a victory for any one side, but a win-win situation for everyone”, Gen. Musharraf said it was a victory “for the world, for moderates in India and Pakistan and for the people of Kashmir”.

After the foreign ministers of the two countries, within minutes of each other, read out the joint statement and made very similar comments, it was clear that weeks of well-guarded behind-the-scene and step-by-step efforts aimed at convergence of views between the two sides, had come to fruition in Islamabad.

“We’ve never reached in the past where we’ve reached now,” Gen. Musharraf said. “We’ve realised that the way forward is peace”. While today’s agreement was “a beginning”, the “culmination” would be “resolving all Indo-Pak differences, including J&K,” he said.

Questions from the Pakistani media, however, seemed to indicate that Islamabad had made the concessions. Not only does the six-paragraph joint statement speak of confidence — “that the resumption of the composite dialogue will lead to

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PM thanks Pervez



Gen. Musharraf at Tuesday’s press meet. — AFP

ISLAMABAD, Jan. 6. — Mr AB Vajpayee called Gen. Musharraf today to thank him for the “excellent arrangements” and “conclusion of a successful Saarc summit,” Mr Yashwant Sinha said. Gen. Musharraf said: “Prime Minister Vajpayee and I congratulated each other; and he wished me protection.” — SNS

the peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues, including J&K” (with no mention of the ‘third party’, the Kashmiris) — there’s an entire paragraph on terror, that has long been India’s concern, though Delhi has consciously kept out the term “cross-border terror” from the formulations.

The joint statement reads: “Prime Minister Vajpayee said... violence, hostility and terrorism must be prevented. President Musharraf reassured Prime Minister Vajpayee that he will not permit any territory under Pakistan’s control to be used to support terrorism in any manner.”

At the press meet, Gen. Musharraf spoke of the “simultaneity” of three “linkages” in the joint statement that would lead to a “productive dialogue addressing all issues”. These were: the Kashmir issue needs to be resolved; forward movement of confidence-building measures have led to the ‘thaw’ leading to the ‘composite dialogue’ on all issues, including Kashmir; and Pakistan iterated its resolve to fight terror. “Any terrorism will not be allowed in Pakistan,” Gen. Musharraf said.

More reports, photographs on page 4

THE STATESMAN .

7 JAN 2004

# A phone call, and history is made

**BHARAT BHUSHAN AND IMTIAZ GUL**

**Islamabad, Jan. 6: "Ladies and gentlemen, history has been made," announced Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf.**

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Musharraf today took a historic step to restart the dialogue between the two countries to settle all outstanding issues peacefully.

The composite dialogue will resume next month. This became possible after an assurance from Pakistan that it would not allow any territory under its control to be used for terrorist activities.

"After our meeting yesterday, the Prime Minister (Vajpayee) made a phone call on me this morning which sealed this final deal," Musharraf said.

"We congratulated each other. We both showed resolve to move forward.... I wished him very good health and he wished me protection," he said, laughing.

Even before the enormity of the decision sank in, both sides cautioned against claiming partisan victory.

"There are no winners or losers here. We must not get involved in who won and who lost. This is a victory of the people of India and the people of Pakistan. It is a victory for the people of Kashmir who have suffered for

so long. It is a victory for the moderates in India and Pakistan," Musharraf said.

Indian external affairs minister Yashwant Sinha voiced similar sentiments.

After cautiously denying the possibility of an agreement to resume the talks, the two sides announced the settlement through a joint statement.

"I would like to give total credit to his vision, his statesmanship which contributed so significantly towards this joint statement," a strikingly upbeat Musharraf said of Vajpayee.

Apparently, many loose ends needed to be tied up before a statement could be agreed on. Vajpayee is understood to have consulted deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani after his meeting with Musharraf yesterday.

The statement said the two leaders were "confident that the

resumption of the composite dialogue would lead to peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir".

Vajpayee had raised India's terrorism-related concerns with Musharraf. He felt that "in order to take forward and sustain the dialogue process, violence, hostility and terrorism must be prevented".

Musharraf assured Vajpayee that he would not permit "any territory under Pakistan's control to be used to support terrorism in any manner". The definition of "any territory under Pakistan's control" encompasses Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and this lent a new complexion to the assurance.

The level at which the dialogue will begin is to be decided later.

Emphasising that the discus-

## ONE PACT AND A LOT OF PRAISE

- Pakistan not to allow its soil to be used to support terrorism
- Dialogue to settle issues like Kashmir begins next month
- More confidence building measures to follow



**I would like to give total credit to his vision, his statesmanship**

**MUSHARRAF on Vajpayee**

sion on Kashmir was important, Musharraf said he would take the people of Kashmir into confidence about the joint statement.

He said it had been decided that there would be simultaneous movement on three fronts: sustaining and enhancing confidence building measures, starting a composite dialogue on all issues, including Kashmir; and Pakistan's assurance of preventing terrorism from territory under its control.

As if to underline the simultaneity of progress, Musharraf said: "The effectiveness of my word (on terrorism) will be enhanced if there is a movement forward."

"Certainly, I don't hold a whistle and I can never guarantee ceasefire (in Kashmir). One could facilitate as much as possible. I presume my word carries some weight," he added.

The Pakistan President rejected a suggestion that the decision to restart the dialogue was taken under US pressure. "The deal between India and Pakistan was struck due to the leadership of the two countries. There is no room for any outside force."

Musharraf warned against expecting ready-made solutions. "There is no magic wand or quick fixes to contentious issues."

He felt India and Pakistan had to "move forward harmoniously by focusing on complementarities and convergences

rather than divergences".

Hardly anyone had expected that the breakthrough in Islamabad would be such as to kick off the dialogue so soon. The last composite dialogue was held in October 1998 and was interrupted by the Kargil conflict, of which Musharraf has been called by India as the architect.

The dialogue envisaged mov-

ement along several tracks simultaneously.

These include Jammu and Kashmir, Siachen, Sir Creek boundary dispute, Wullar barrage/Tulbul navigation project, trade and commerce, peace and security and cultural and other exchanges.

■ **Vajpayee in Pakistan, P 6**  
■ **Comment, Page 10**



# India & Pak kill chill, talks from Feb

By Vinod Sharma and Saurabh Shukla  
*AFP*  
*Alleg*  
 Islamabad, January 6

## After Saarc meet: The balance sheet



► Musharraf promises to restrain terrorists. Pakistan also agrees to anti-terror protocol under Saarc

► Pakistan and Bangladesh agree, at last, to South Asian Free Trade Agreement in eight years



### PAKISTAN

► India explicitly agrees to composite dialogue that includes Kashmir on the agenda. Talks in two months, as Pakistan wants

► Musharraf gets meeting with Vajpayee — something he needed to boost his image at home and abroad

## SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY

**Tech centre:** An information centre to be set up in Kathmandu. World-class India can teach its neighbours a thing or two

**Health plan:** Rapid Deployment Health Response System to combat vector-borne diseases in the region

**Food bank:** Food security reserves to be built up



REUTERS  
**WARM SENDOFF:** Jamali bids Vajpayee farewell at the end of the Saarc summit in Islamabad on Tuesday.

INDIA AND Pakistan got over their mutual suspicion on Tuesday to agree to a composite dialogue next month on all issues, including Kashmir. "Today history has been made," President Pervez Musharraf told reporters. "We have agreed to setting a framework for talks to take the normalisation process to its logical end."

The General attributed the progress to the "vision and statesmanship" of the Indian Prime Minister, and said a "historic" phone call Vajpayee had made to him on Tuesday morning had been crucial. "We congratulated each other. We both showed resolve to move forward... I wished him very good health and he wished me protection," Musharraf said. "We accepted the joint statement and sealed the final decision."

The joint statement, released separately by the two foreign ministers — Yashwant Sinha and Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri — quoted Vajpayee as having told Musharraf that violence, hostility and terrorism must be prevented to take the dialogue process forward and sustain it. Musharraf promised that he would not allow any territory under Pakistan's control (which includes PoK) to be used to support terrorism.

Asked whether Musharraf had met India's pre-condition of a complete end to cross-border terror, Sinha replied: "There would have been no joint statement, if there were no such satisfaction. We are proceeding on the basis of (Pakistan's) assurance and the ground situation."

**Complete coverage on Page 5**

## ইরান থেকে গ্যাস পাইপলাইন, বাজপেয়ীকে আশ্বাস জামালির

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, ইসলামাবাদ, ৬ জানুয়ারি—

ইরানের গ্যাস পাইপলাইন পাকিস্তানের উপর দিয়ে ভারতে আনার ব্যাপারে ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রী অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ীকে সবরকম সহযোগিতার আশ্বাস দিয়েছেন পাক প্রধানমন্ত্রী মির জাফরুল্লা খান জামালি। গতকাল পাক প্রধানমন্ত্রীর বাসভবনে সার্ক শীর্ষনেতারা সবাই নিজেদের মধ্যে ঘরোয়া আলোচনার জন্য জড়ো হয়েছিলেন। তখনই অটলকে ইরান গ্যাস পাইপলাইন নিয়ে জামালি এই প্রস্তাব দেন।

আজ সাংবাদিকদের প্রশ্নের উত্তরে জামালি জানান, তিনি বাজপেয়ীকে বুঝিয়েছেন যে পাকিস্তানের এই প্রকল্পে কোনও আপত্তি তো নেইই, আপত্তির কোনও কারণও নেই। পাকিস্তানের মধ্যে দিয়েই ইরানের গ্যাস পাইপলাইন ভারতে যেতে পারে সে জন্য বিবেচনা করতে তিনি বাজপেয়ীকে অনুরোধ করেন। জামালির কথায়, “সম্প্রীতির কারণেই আমি ভারতকে সাহায্য করতে চাই।” উল্লেখ্য, ইরান থেকে পাইপলাইনে ভারতে গ্যাস আমদানির প্রস্তাব নিয়ে অনেকদিন ধরেই টালবাহানা চলছে, কারণ, পাকিস্তানের ভিতর দিয়ে আনলে খরচ কম পড়বে ঠিকই, কিন্তু পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে সম্পর্কের অবনতি হওয়ায় পাকিস্তানকে এড়িয়ে সমুদ্রের মধ্য দিয়ে পাইপলাইন টানার কথা হচ্ছিল।

পাকিস্তান আগেও এ ব্যাপারে আগ্রহ দেখিয়েছিল, কারণ তাতে তাদের আর্থিক লাভ বই ক্ষতি নেই। এ বার সার্ককে ঘিরে দুই দেশের সম্পর্কে যে উষ্ণতা দেখা দিয়েছে তারই মধ্যে ইরান পাইপলাইন প্রকল্প নিয়ে পাকিস্তানের নতুন করে সহযোগিতার প্রস্তাব পারস্পরিক বিশ্বাসের পরিবেশ তৈরির ক্ষেত্রে একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ধাপ বলেই বিবেচিত হবে।

এই পাইপলাইন প্রকল্প চালু করতে ভারতে যে আন্তরিকভাবে আগ্রহী তা গোপন নেই। ভারতের বিদেশমন্ত্রী যশবন্ত সিনহা ইসলামাবাদে আসার পথে আগে ইরানের রাজধানী তেহরান ঘুরে এসেছেন। এখন জামালির কথায় পাইপলাইন প্রকল্প নিয়ে ‘বল এখন বাজপেয়ীর কোর্টে।’

# Baby Talha will see life in Rawalpindi through Indian eyes

**By Swati Das**  
**TIMES NEWS NETWORK**

**Chennai:** A fortnight ago, 15-month-old Mohammed Talha saw the world around him for the first time. Today, he watches Cartoon Network animatedly and seeks to grab anything colourful that holds his eye.

On Friday he will fly back home to Rawalpindi with his parents Khuram and Kanwal Shahzad, taking the first flight between Delhi and Lahore. There he will see his grandparents, uncles and aunts for the first time, thanks to the family of the late Maragatham Venkatesh.

The medical community and ordinary people are turning out to be

the best ambassadors of peace between India and Pakistan. Khuram (30) and Kanwal (23) were told, two days after baby Talha's birth on August 23, 2002, that the child was blind as a result of complications caused by consanguinity.

Mr Shahzad's father, living in Dubai, told them about the Dr Agarwal's Eye Hospital here. Encouraged by the success and warmth shown by Indians for two-year-old Noor Fathima's heart surgery in Bangalore last year, they decided to seek medical advice here.

Dr Amar Agarwal, director, Dr Agarwal's Group of Eye Hospitals, decided to work on the right eye first. But they had to wait for an



**Baby Talha with his parents Khuram and Kanwal Shahzad and Dr Amar Agarwal.**

eye that was in good condition. On December 22, a south Chennai resident R. Venkatesh called up to say his wife Maragatham Venkatesh (60) had died and the family wanted her eyes to be donated.

Immediately, the eyes were brought to the hospital and surgery began at 2 am on December 23. "The baby's cornea was white. It was complicated as the iris was stuck to the cornea. It took us four hours to complete the surgery," explained Dr. Agarwal.

"We must appreciate the Venkatesh family's decision. Not everybody can think of such a donation when a near and dear one dies. Today an Indian eye will blink in Pakistan," said Dr. Agarwal. "My baby was crying when

the bandages were removed. But suddenly he stopped. He started looking all around him. You can not imagine how happy we are," said Mr. Shahzad.

He added, "Everyone in the hospital prayed for us. It was as if we are in our own country."

The experience has convinced this automobile engineer that the enmity between the two countries is politically instigated. "There is a lot of affection between the peoples of India and Pakistan," he said. The Shahzads, who initially thought they would have to return by bus via Wagah, have decided to take the first flight starting between Delhi and Lahore on January 9. They will be back for a check-up after two months.

# Something's cooking on Indo-Pak front

## Brajesh met ISI chief before PM-General meet

By Manoj Joshi  
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

AFP

Islamabad: Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee met Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf for about an hour on Monday morning. External affairs minister Yashwant Sinha, who briefed reporters, did not use the term "courtesy call" that he had on Sunday. "Both leaders welcomed recent steps for normalisation of relations and expressed hope that the process would continue," was his bland update.

It was not a one-on-one meeting and both leaders were accompanied by their foreign ministers, foreign secretaries and high commissioners. Pakistan's finance minister Shaukat Aziz and India's national security adviser Brajesh Mishra were also present.

The other thing Mr Sinha did was to diss Pakistan information minister Sheikh Rashid's earlier statement that "right now the knots are being unravelled for a (joint) declaration". Somewhat theatrically, Mr Sinha said, "At this stage anyone saying anything more than I have said is not doing justice to the cause." Indian officials privately pleaded with journalists to avoid any hype "at this stage".

The operative phrase is "at this stage". Although it may sound like gobbledygook to the lay person, in the arcane world of diplomacy this is the clearest indicator that something is cooking.

That something is an agreed framework to get India-Pakistan relations back on track again. It will involve a continuation of the ceasefire and a dismantling of the infrastructure supporting terrorism on the Pakistani side of the LoC, accompanied by the beginning of a for-



Gen Pervez Musharraf shakes hands with Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee as Pakistani PM Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali looks on during the ongoing Saarc summit in Islamabad on Monday.

eign secretary-level dialogue.

On Sunday night, former Pakistani foreign minister Niaz Naik revealed that among the people Mr Mishra had been talking to was the director-general of Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Lt Gen Ehsan-ul-Haq. Indian officials are tightlipped about this. While Mr Sinha refused to respond to a related question, Mr Mishra has been unavailable to the media.

Undoubtedly, Mr Mishra and Mr Haq have discussed the nuts and bolts of the Indian demand that Pakistan crack down on terrorism, while the foreign secretaries have had discussions on ways to restart

their stalled dialogue.

Both sides are agreed on this framework, but they want it to be synchronised keeping in mind their respective requirements. India will want to wait till July-August to see whether infiltration remains low when the snow melts and the elections are over. Pakistan wants to see an early start to a dialogue. But one thing is clear, India will not just go by declarations of the type Gen Musharraf made on January 12, 2001 but demand concrete, visible and verifiable action.

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# অটল-মুশারফ বৈঠক কাশ্মীর নির্ঘণ্ট প্রকাশে চাপ ৬/১/৫৪ পাকিস্তানের

(ম) নম্বর-১

৬/১/৫৪

সুমন চট্টোপাধ্যায় ও জয়ন্ত ঘোষাল • ইসলামাবাদ

৫ জানুয়ারি: কাশ্মীর নিয়ে আলোচনার নির্ঘণ্ট যৌথ ইস্তেহারের মাধ্যমে ঘোষণা করা হবে কিনা, বাজপেয়ী মুশারফের দীর্ঘ বৈঠকের পরও তা নিয়ে দরকষাকষি চলছে। যৌথ ইস্তেহার প্রকাশের সম্ভাবনা জিইয়ে রেখে পাকিস্তানের পক্ষ থেকে দাবি করা হচ্ছে বাজপেয়ী আগামী কাল দিল্লি রওনা হওয়ার আগে দু'জনের মধ্যে ফের বৈঠক হবে। ভারতীয় শিবির অবশ্য এ ব্যাপারে কোনও মন্তব্য করতে নারাজ।

আজ এখানে আওয়ান-ই-সদরে পারভেজ মুশারফের সঙ্গে বাজপেয়ীর দীর্ঘ এক ঘণ্টা বৈঠক হয়। দুই নেতার মধ্যে অবশ্য কোনও একান্ত আলোচনা হয়নি। পুরো বৈঠকটিই হয়েছে প্রতিনিধি স্তরে। ভারতীয় বিদেশ দফতর এখনও এই বৈঠককে সৌজন্য সাক্ষাৎ বলে চিহ্নিত করলেও, বাস্তবে আজ যে পুরোদস্তুর দ্বিপাক্ষিক বৈঠক হয়েছে তাতে কোনও সন্দেহ নেই। সর্বোচ্চ স্তরের এই বৈঠকের আগে দু'দেশের বিদেশমন্ত্রী ও বিদেশসচিবরা নিজেদের মধ্যে একান্ত বৈঠক করেছেন।

এক ঘণ্টার এই বৈঠক সম্পর্কে ভারতীয় বিদেশ দফতর মুখ খুলতে নারাজ। বিদেশমন্ত্রী যশবন্ত সিনহা আজ বিকেলে এক সাংবাদিক বৈঠকে বাজপেয়ী মুশারফের আলোচনা নিয়ে শুধু একটি মন্তব্যই করেছেন। তা হল, সম্প্রতি দু'দেশের পক্ষ থেকে সম্পর্ক উন্নত করতে যে সব আত্মবর্ধক ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া হয়েছে বাজপেয়ী ও মুশারফ দু'জনেই সেগুলিকে স্বাগত জানিয়েছেন। দু'জনেই আশা প্রকাশ করেছেন, যে এই প্রক্রিয়া অব্যাহত থাকবে। সাংবাদিকদের পীড়াপীড়ি সত্ত্বেও এর বাইরে বিদেশমন্ত্রী একটি শব্দও উচ্চারণ করতে চাননি। বরং তিনি বলেছেন, “এই মুহূর্তে এর বাইরে কিছু বলার অর্থ হল, সম্পর্ক স্বাভাবিক করার প্রক্রিয়াকে ব্যাহত করা। ভারত-পাক সম্পর্ক এতই স্পর্শকাতর বিষয় যে, কারওরই তা করা উচিত নয়।”

‘ভারতীয় বিদেশমন্ত্রী মুখে কুলুপ এঁটে থাকলেও পাক তথ্যমন্ত্রী রশিদ জানিয়েছেন, বাজপেয়ীর সঙ্গে মুশারফের আরও এক দফা বৈঠক হতে পারে। যৌথ ইস্তেহারও প্রকাশিত হতে পারে কাশ্মীর আলোচনার নির্ঘণ্ট নিয়ে।

পাক নেতৃবর্গের সঙ্গে তিনি যে আলোচনা করবেন, সেই সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েই অটল এখানে এসেছিলেন। কাশ্মীর আলোচনার নির্ঘণ্ট চূড়ান্ত করার ব্যাপারেও কথাবার্তা হয়ে গিয়েছিল। কিন্তু এ ব্যাপারে যৌথ ইস্তেহার প্রকাশের প্রক্ষে ভারতের আগেও আপত্তি ছিল, এখনও আছে। ইস্তেহার প্রকাশ করে এ বারের আলোচনাকে আনুষ্ঠানিক দ্বিপাক্ষিক বৈঠকের চেহারা দেওয়াটা ভারতের মনঃপূত নয়। তার চেয়েও বড় কথা, সন্ত্রাসবাদীদের বিরুদ্ধে ব্যবস্থা নিতে পারভেজ প্রশাসন যে আগাম প্রতিশ্রুতি দিয়েছিল তা এখনও পর্যন্ত রক্ষিত হয়নি। পাকিস্তান জানিয়েছিল, বাজপেয়ী ইসলামাবাদে থাকাকালীনই কাশ্মীর জঙ্গিদের বিরুদ্ধে কার্যকর ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের কথা ঘোষণা করবে। এখনও পর্যন্ত তা করা হয়নি। যৌথ ইস্তেহার নিয়ে দরকষাকষির এটা অন্যতম কারণ। অবশ্য এ কথা ঠিক যে, সার্ক সম্মেলনের অন্তরালে বিভিন্ন স্তরে বিভিন্ন জায়গায় দফায় দফায় গোপন আলোচনা চলছে। তাই এ ব্যাপারে কোথাকার জল শেষ পর্যন্ত কোথায় গড়ায়, তা এখনই নিশ্চিত করে বলা যাচ্ছে না।

কাশ্মীরে সন্ত্রাসের প্রশ্নটা যে এখনও দু'দেশের সম্পর্ক স্বাভাবিক করার পক্ষে সবচেয়ে বড় অন্তরায় হয়ে রয়েছে বাজপেয়ী-মুশারফের আজকের বৈঠকেও তা ফের স্পষ্ট হয়ে যায়। সীমান্তপারের সংঘর্ষবিরতির পাকিস্তানি সিদ্ধান্তকে স্বাগত জানালেও, বাজপেয়ী আজ দ্ব্যর্থহীন ভাষায় পারভেজকে জানিয়ে দেন কাশ্মীরে সন্ত্রাস এখনও বন্ধ হয়নি। আলোচনায় উঠে আসে তিন দিন আগে জম্মু স্টেশনে আত্মঘাতী হামলার কথা। তার উল্লেখ করে অটল পারভেজকে বলেন, দুই নিহত আত্মঘাতী জঙ্গির মধ্যে এক জন পাকিস্তানি নাগরিক। এই ঘটনাই প্রমাণ করছে সন্ত্রাসবাদীদের মদত দেওয়া আদৌ বন্ধ হয়নি। এর জবাবে পারভেজ কী বলেছেন তা অবশ্য জানা যায়নি।

যৌথ ইস্তেহার নিয়ে দরকষাকষি চললেও কাশ্মীর নিয়ে আলোচনা শুরু করার সিদ্ধান্ত বাজপেয়ী-মুশারফের বৈঠকের শীর্ষস্তরে আজ অনুমোদিত হয়ে গিয়েছে। বন্ধ আলোচনার প্রক্রিয়া জুলাই মাসের পরেই শুরু হবে এটাও মোটামুটি নিশ্চিত। কিন্তু আলোচনা কোন স্তরে শুরু হবে এবং কারা সেই আলোচনায় অংশগ্রহণ করবেন তা নিয়ে ভারতীয় শিবিরে একাধিক প্রস্তাব বিবেচিত হচ্ছে।

প্রথম প্রস্তাবটি হল, বিদেশসচিব পর্যায়ে বৈঠক শুরু করা হোক। দ্বিতীয় প্রস্তাবটি হল, আমলা স্তরে বৈঠকের পাশাপাশি বাজপেয়ী ও মুশারফ আলোচনা এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়ার জন্য দু'জন বিশেষ দূত মনোনীত করবেন। এই প্রস্তাবের পক্ষে প্রধান যুক্তিটি হল,

এর পর ছয়ের পাতায়

P. T. O.

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

# কাশ্মীর নিষেধ প্রকাশে চাপ

প্রথম পাতার পর  
কাশ্মীরের মতো বিতর্কিত ও স্পর্শকাতর বিষয়ে আলোচনা আমলা স্তরেই সীমাবদ্ধ থাকলে কিছুতেই অগ্রগতি হবে না। সেই কারণেই এই আলোচনাকে রাজনৈতিক স্তরে উন্নীত করা একান্তই প্রয়োজন। প্রসঙ্গত, ভারত-চীন সীমান্ত বিরোধ নিষ্পত্তির ব্যাপারে আলোচনার এই মডেলই অনুসরণ করা হচ্ছে।

এই বিরোধ নিয়ে সচিব স্তরে প্রায় দু'দশক আলোচনা হয়েছে। কিন্তু সন্তোষজনক কোনও ফল পাওয়া যায়নি। বাজপেয়ী বেজিং সফরে গেলে এই সমস্যাটি নিয়ে ভারত ও চীনা কর্তৃপক্ষের মধ্যে শীর্ষস্তরের আলোচনা হয় এবং ঠিক হয় আমলা স্তরের পাশাপাশি রাজনৈতিক স্তরেও আলোচনা শুরু হবে।

তারপরই সেই আলোচনার জন্য অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী মনোনীত করেন প্রিন্সিপাল সেক্রেটারি ব্রজেশ মিশ্রকে। তারপর থেকে ব্রজেশ এই আলোচনা চালাচ্ছেন, এবং তাতে ভালই অগ্রগতি হচ্ছে।

পাকিস্তান শিবিরের বক্তব্য হল, কাশ্মীর নিয়ে আলোচনার ক্ষেত্রে অটল একই কাজ করুন। অর্থাৎ, ব্রজেশকেই তিনি দায়িত্ব দিন আলোচনায় গতি আনতে। অটল ব্রজেশকে মনোনীত করলে মুশারফ মনোনীত করবেন তাঁর প্রিন্সিপাল সেক্রেটারি তারিক আজিজকে।

ব্রজেশ ও আজিজ দু'জনেই দু'দেশের সর্বোচ্চ নেতৃত্বের সবচেয়ে আস্থাভাজন। ব্রজেশ এ বার ইসলামাবাদে এসেছেন এবং আই এস আইয়ের ডিরেক্টর জেনারেল-সহ পাকিস্তানি নেতাদের সঙ্গে যে ভাবে গোপনে শলাপরামর্শ চালাচ্ছেন তা দেখে মনে হয় চীনের অভিজ্ঞতারই পুনরাবৃত্তি ঘটতে চলেছে পাকিস্তানের ক্ষেত্রে।



# Back channel to TV channel: Brajesh-ISI talks spill out

BHARAT BHUSHAN

Islamabad, Jan. 5: Pakistan's former foreign secretary Niaz A. Naik is not the most discreet of diplomats. He had earlier blown the whistle on the back channel diplomacy that he and veteran journalist R.K. Mishra were engaged in before the Lahore bus ride and continuing up to the end of the Kargil conflict.

Now Naik has revealed that national security adviser Brajesh Mishra has had meetings with Lt Gen. Ehsan-ul-Haq, the director-general of the infamous Inter-Services Intelligence. He made the revelation on Pakistan's newest private

TV channel, Geo.

Naik said during a talk show that Mishra and Haq discussed the "security concerns" of the two countries.

For the Indian side, this means how to carry the normalisation and the dialogue process forward by ensuring that the militants in Kashmir keep their guns aside. Naik was of the view that attempts on General Pervez Musharraf's life "have brought India and Pakistan's security people together".

The former foreign secretary also revealed that Mishra had met Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri to explore ways of resum-

ing India-Pakistan interaction on all issues, "including Kashmir".

He said that Mishra and Kasuri talked about the modalities and the architecture of such future interactions — i.e. whether there should be a summit to begin with or whether the two countries

should begin with a dialogue between the foreign ministers or the foreign secretaries. What seemed to have been agreed, however, according to Naik, whatever the process, it must eventually lead to a summit meeting between the Prime



Naik

Ministers of Pakistan and India, and Musharraf.

Naik was also of the view that the dialogue process should take place after adequate preparation in the light of what happened at Lahore and Agra.

He referred to Musharraf's recent interview to Reuters in which the President expressed his willingness to set aside Pakistan's long-standing demand for a plebiscite according to UN Resolutions on Kashmir. "The door has been opened for positive talks on Kashmir. And we

have had a positive response from India," Naik said.

The former foreign secretary felt that it was a good thing that there had not been any negative reaction from hard-line groups like the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) that comprises nine religious parties.

Naik claimed that Musharraf's statement about the plebiscite had taken these groups and the Kashmiri people by surprise and that efforts were underway to make them understand that Pakistan was not going to abandon their case.

"President Musharraf spent three hours with them (the Kashmiri groups) to convince them that these are only modalities for finding a solution," he said.

Naik said one of the key elements of the Nawaz Sharif-Vajpayee meeting at Lahore was their agreement to abandon their old positions — India would not refer to Kashmir as its "integral part" and Pakistan would not insist on plebiscite.

"This does not mean that we are abandoning the right of self-determination" which, Naik said, was a universal human right and towards which plebiscite was only one of the mechanisms. There were many other ways of reaching the same goal, he said.

## Advani and millions with Atal

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Jan. 5: For the first time since Atal Bihari Vajpayee embarked on his peace mission to Islamabad, his deputy L.K. Advani has indicated that he fully backs the Prime Minister's efforts.

Millions of people are praying that the Prime Minister, who is now in Islamabad, is successful in his peace mission. Advani said while speaking at a function in Rashtrapati Bhavan where the Gandhi peace prize was presented to former President of Czechoslovakia Vaclav Havel.

Advani had in the past been publicly held responsible by the Pakistan establishment for wrecking the Agra summit.

In the run-up to the Islamabad Saarc summit, Advani had not said much in public about either Vajpayee's visit to Pakistan or the peace initiative by the Prime Minister.

However, this morning's comment could be seen as the first public endorsement, however indirect, of Vajpayee's visit.

The Prime Minister had consulted Advani at every step of the renewed peace process. Vajpayee had held a three-hour meeting with Advani before visiting Srinagar in April when the Prime Minister made his first peace overture to Pakistan.

Last week, before national security adviser Brajesh Mishra left for Islamabad, he called on Advani and held an hour-long discussion with the deputy Prime Minister. Vajpayee has made it a point to ensure that there is consensus in the top political leadership on the framework to be adopted for talks with Pakistan.

India has been carefully crafting a step-by-step normalisation process with Pakistan. Vajpayee and the Pakistan leadership are expected to set the broad framework for bilateral negotiations at a later date.

In the interlude, Advani will begin talks with the moderate Hurriyat group, led by Maulana Abbas Ansari. The Centre's interlocutor for Kashmir, N.N. Vohra, met Advani today and reviewed the situation in Kashmir.

Vohra updated Advani on last week's meeting of the coordination group set up by the Centre to lay the groundwork for talks.

Besides Vohra, the coordination group includes Union home secretary N. Gopalaswami, cabi-

net secretary Kamal Pande and officer on special duty in the Prime minister's office A.S. Dulat.

The government was keen on holding talks with the Hurriyat on December 27 but the group had sought more time as one of its leaders, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, was hospitalised.

Hurriyat chairman Ansari attached significance to the Prime Minister's meetings in Pakistan but said the key to peace lay in resolving the Kashmir dispute.

His predecessor, Abdul Gani Bhat, saw the developments as a "change in the situation towards a brighter future for Kashmir".

Echoing Advani, the BJP said the meeting between Vajpayee and Musharraf was a "positive step".

"The talks between the Prime Minister and the Pakistan President in Islamabad today was a positive step in the right direction and we hope something concrete would emerge from it," party president M. Venkaiah Naidu told reporters here. He said the party will come out with a formal proposal later.

Union communications minister Arun Shourie said it was a "sign of success that Pakistan was now following Vajpayee's initiatives".

"Pakistan, which had said all sorts of things about us at the international stage, is today following Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's initiatives. It is a sign of success," Shourie said while addressing BJP workers in Goa.



Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pervez Musharraf shake hands on Monday. (AFP)

## Good start drives Pak hopes

IMTIAZ GUL

Islamabad, Jan. 5: Pakistan today described Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's meetings with President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali as a "good beginning" and hoped that the process would culminate in a composite dialogue.

"We predict more intensive engagement between the two countries with the beginning of the process," foreign office spokesman Masood Khan told a press briefing.

Khan also read out a statement similar to what Indian foreign minister Yashwant Sinha had said earlier in the day.

"I have not told you anything about the contents of the meeting (between Musharraf and Vajpayee) but it is our hope that the composite dialogue will lead to

talks on all issues on India-Pakistan agenda," Khan said.

Sinha had also said both leaders hoped that the process would continue. "We are interested in the success of a certain process and if we are interested, then we

specifics of the parleys between Musharraf and Vajpayee and parried a question on Pakistan information minister Sheikh Rashid's comments that the Indian side raised the issue of terrorism and the host Kashmir.

Responding to a question about possible exchange of nuclear confidence-building measures, Khan said: "Yes, this is a long-term goal. Both are nuclear powers and it is their responsibility to formulate the CBMs and they must come up with a restraint regime."

Pakistan and India had on January 1 exchanged the regular list of nuclear installations and facilities under an agreement to prevent attacks on each other's nuclear installations and facilities, signed by them in 1988.

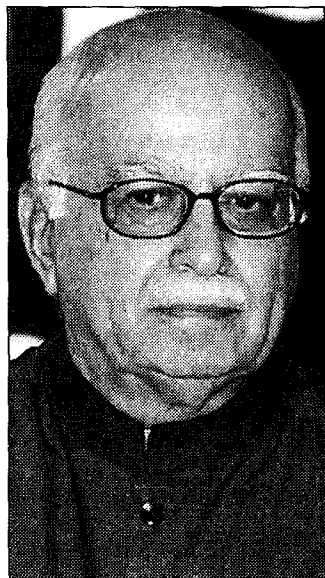
Talks please US

In Washington, the US state department said it was pleased that the leaders of India and Pakistan had met and expressed hopes for more engagement between the South Asian neighbours. China also welcomed the talks.

have to act with certain responsibility," he said, while attempting to play down the hype created after the Musharraf-Vajpayee meeting.

Khan also declined to go into

Speculation over what happened at the meeting overshadowed the second day of the Saarc summit, which had become possible only after Vajpayee agreed to attend.



Advani

ICE-BREAKING MEETING FOR AN HOUR

# Vajpayee, Musharraf hope peace process will continue

By Amit Baruah and  
B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 5. In an ice-breaking meeting, the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, today met the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, for about an hour at the Aiwan-e-Sadar, or the presidential palace, here.

Briefing the media after the much-anticipated meeting, the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, said: "Both leaders welcomed the recent steps towards normalisation of relations between the two countries and expressed the hope that the process will continue."

After some confusion caused by the remarks of the Pakistan Information Minister, Sheikh Rasheed, the Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman, Masood Khan, distanced himself from the statements and echoed the sentiments expressed by Mr. Sinha. "The two leaders discussed the positive impact of the recent confidence-building measures and hoped that their

momentum would be maintained," Mr. Khan said. He, like Mr. Sinha, did not give any details.

Apart from Mr. Sinha, the National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra, and the Foreign Secretary, Shashank, were present while the Pakistan Foreign and Finance Ministers, Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri and Shaukat Aziz, the Foreign Secretary, Riaz Khokhar, and Pakistan's High Commissioner to India, Aziz Ahmed Khan, attended the meeting.

While Pakistan is said to have raised the issue of resuming the composite bilateral dialogue, the Indian side reportedly spoke of cross-border terrorism. India specifically referred to the latest terrorist attack in Jammu and pointed out that one of the extremists killed was allegedly a Pakistani national.

Before going in for the meeting, Mr. Vajpayee said he hoped that the talks between India and Pakistan would take place continuously and progress could be made with the two countries

understanding each other's difficulties.

Speaking at a brief ceremony to lay the foundation of a High Commission residential complex, Mr. Vajpayee hoped that the new building would be able to face the "storms and rain" in inclement weather. He hoped that the Indian diplomats would work in a responsible manner to ensure that bilateral relations improved.

Earlier, Mr. Shashank and Mr. Khokhar met separately.

When it was pointed out to Mr. Sinha that the people of India and Pakistan expected a little more than his brief statement, he said that anyone who said anything more at this stage was not doing any service to the [peace] cause. Asked whether Mr. Mishra, had met the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate chief, Lt. Gen. Ehsan-ul-Haq, he said: "I don't think that is necessary."

(Asked at a separate briefing about the same "meeting," the Pakistani spokesman said: "I have no information on that.")

Mr. Sinha emphasised that the very fact that Mr. Vajpayee had come to Pakistan and met his counterpart, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, and Gen. Musharraf, meant that "progress" had been made. "Please look at it like that."

Asked whether cross-border terrorism figured in the Vajpayee-Musharraf talks, Mr. Sinha said, "Please don't ask for details." Would India and Pakistan put in place more confidence-building measures? "I don't think the possibility of more CBMs has been exhausted at this point."

Speaking separately, Mr. Masood Khan said the meetings were not just an event but a process. "And, we have to invest in a process. This is just the beginning."

By not giving details and talking in terms of a process, both countries have brought down the heightened expectations of a major breakthrough in the relationship in the immediate context. Delays in press briefings from both sides led to considerable speculation throughout the day.

Pakistan, however, continues to hope that these meetings, significant in themselves, would lead to the resumption of a composite dialogue between the two countries, including on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

"That [the resumption of dialogue] remains Pakistan's hope," Mr. Khan said. The Musharraf-Vajpayee and the Jamali-Vajpayee meetings were the first since the failed summit in Agra in July 2001 and, hence, significant.

Mr. Khan said the resumption of dialogue — whether at the level of Foreign Secretaries or Foreign Ministers — had not yet been decided.

Asked why India and Pakistan were not revealing what had transpired, Mr. Khan said the meetings were crucial and could not be termed a non-event. To a question whether there was scope for arriving at nuclear CBMs, he said: "Not in the immediate context. This is a long-term goal." Reiterating a previous Pakistani proposal, he said India and Pakistan must come up with a strategic restraint regime.

Talks welcomed;  
SAARC nations sign  
social charter: Page 11



The Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, at a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the 12th summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation in Islamabad on Monday. — AFP



# The twain meet, and that is enough

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6/1/04  
Qued. PM

**BHARAT BHUSHAN**

Islamabad, Jan. 5: Signalling a positive change in the India-Pakistan relationship, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee today called on General Pervez Musharraf at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the presidential palace. The two leaders, who met with their respective delegations for about an hour, decided to continue the ongoing process of normalisation of ties.

External affairs minister Yashwant Sinha said: "Both leaders welcomed the recent steps taken for the normalisation of relations between the two countries and expressed the hope that the process would continue."

Sinha did not rule out the two countries announcing some more confidence-building measures (CBMs). "I don't think the possibility of further CBMs has been exhausted," he said.

There was no one-to-one meeting between Vajpayee and Musharraf. Sinha, national security adviser Brajesh Mishra, foreign secretary Shashank and the Indian high commissioner in Islamabad, Shivshankar Menon, accompanied Vajpayee.

Stonewalling questions, Sinha said: "Anyone who says anything more than what I have said about the meeting at this stage is not doing any service to the cause. I am not in a position to go into details. It is not in the interest of the cause."

Pakistan information minister Sheikh Rashid came in for an Indian reprimand for telling PTV that the two sides were "working on a joint statement". Sinha dismissed it as "nothing more than speculation" and suggested that it was irresponsible



**The fact that the Prime Minister of India... met the President of Pakistan... that is progress**

INDIA

**The talks were comprehensive and intense. But our issues are more than 50 years old**



PAKISTAN

to indulge in speculation.

Rashid later clarified his remarks to say he had simply meant India and Pakistan would issue statements.

Sinha claimed that there had been a definite forward movement. "The fact that the Prime Minister of India came to Islamabad to attend the Saarc summit; that he met the Prime Minister of Pakistan; that he met the President of Pakistan; that I met my counterpart and the Indian foreign secretary met his counterpart — that is progress."

Rashid said: "The talks were comprehensive and intense (*Jum kar baat hui. Dat kar baat hui*). But our issues are more than 50 years old. So it would be wrong to say that all knotty is-

sues have been resolved."

A tremendous amount of backroom effort went on over the last four days for the meeting. Mishra, who reached Islamabad two days ahead of Vajpayee, is believed to have held several quiet but high-powered meetings with the Pakistani establishment.

Sinha was asked whether he had any comments on the alleged meeting between Mishra and Lt General Ehsan-ul-Haq, the director-general of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). "I don't think that is necessary," he said.

Former Pakistan foreign secretary Niaz A. Naik had revealed on a TV channel that Mishra had discussed India's "security concerns" with the ISI chief.

Before meeting Musharraf, Vajpayee had emphasised the need for India and Pakistan to understand each other's difficulties. "The dialogue must continue. We must understand each other's difficulties so that the path of working together is always kept open," he said while laying the foundation stone of the second phase of the Indian high commission building.

Vajpayee said times were changing and new questions were cropping up and new answers were being sought. "I am confident that the building whose foundation I am laying will be strong and will be able to withstand the vagaries of weather. Come storm or rain, this building must be able to withstand them," he said.

Vajpayee is given to using weather metaphors to describe India-Pakistan relations. Many here thought he was speaking about laying a new foundation for India-Pakistan relations.

■ See Page 6

# অভিযোগ পেশ করল

প্রথম পাতার পর

ভারতের পক্ষ থেকে আই এস আইয়ের ভূমিকা সম্পর্কিত সুনির্দিষ্ট তথ্যাবলী ব্রজেশ তুলে দিয়েছেন গোয়েন্দা প্রধানের কাছে। দিল্লি ছাড়ার আগে উপ-প্রধানমন্ত্রী লালকৃষ্ণ আডবানীর সঙ্গে বৈঠক করেও ব্রজেশ এ ব্যাপারে স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রকের বক্তব্য জেনে এসেছেন।

ব্রজেশ পাকিস্তানকে যা যা জানিয়েছেন তা হল • কাশ্মীর ও উত্তর পূর্বাঞ্চল-সহ সমগ্র ভারতে নানা ধরনের নাশকতামূলক কাজকর্মে আই এস আই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা নিচ্ছে। • আমেরিকা ও পারভেজের বিরুদ্ধে জঙ্গি হামলার বিরুদ্ধে ব্যবস্থা নিলেও কাশ্মীরে ভারত বিরোধী জঙ্গি কার্যকলাপে আই এস আই এখনও মদত দিচ্ছে। • ভারত বিরোধী কার্যকলাপের জন্য ছুরিয়ত নেতাদের একাংশকেও আই এস আই অর্থসাহায্য করে চলেছে।

ব্রজেশ মিশ্রর সঙ্গে এই গোপন বৈঠকে সবথেকে বেশি গুরুত্ব পেয়েছে কাশ্মীর প্রসঙ্গই। দাউদ-সহ ২০ জন জঙ্গিকে ফেরৎ দেওয়ার বিষয়টি আপাতত দূরে সরিয়ে রাখতে অনুরোধ করছে পাকিস্তান। পাক কর্তৃপক্ষের বক্তব্য, এই বিষয়টিকে এখন সামনে নিয়ে এলে কাশ্মীর নিয়ে শান্তি প্রক্রিয়া শুরু করা সম্ভব হবে না। তবে ভারত বিষয়টি নিয়ে প্রচারে না গেলেও দাবিটি থেকে সরেও আসেনি।

কাশ্মীর নিয়ে আলোচনায় ব্রজেশ মিশ্র হিজবুল মুজাহিদিন, লস্কর ই তৈবা এবং জৈশ ই মহম্মদের মত সংগঠনের বিরুদ্ধে ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের আর্জি জানিয়েছেন। যে যে ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের জন্য পাকিস্তানের কাছে আর্জি জানানো হচ্ছে। তার মধ্যে রয়েছে • হাওয়াল্লা চক্রের সাহায্যে কাশ্মীরের জঙ্গিদের কাছে টাকা পাঠানোর প্রক্রিয়া এখনও চলছে। জঙ্গিদের এই আর্থিক উৎসগুলিকে বন্ধ করা। • অস্ত্র সরবরাহ বন্ধ করা। • কাশ্মীর ও ভারতের অন্য প্রান্ত থেকে জঙ্গি কার্যকলাপে যুবকদের নিয়োগ বন্ধ করা। • এই যুবক জঙ্গিদের প্রশিক্ষণ দেওয়া বন্ধ করা। • পাকিস্তানের বিরুদ্ধে আইনি ও প্রশাসনিক ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া। প্রকাশ্যে বিষয়টিকে নিয়ে প্রচার করা না করে এ বার ভারত সমস্ত তথ্যপ্রমাণ পাক কর্তৃপক্ষের হাতে তুলে দিয়েছে। সব তথ্য জানানো হয়েছে তার মধ্যে আছে, ২০০৩ সালের ২৮ মার্চ হুজি-২ নামের আর্থিক চ্যানেল ভারতীয় গোয়েন্দারা ধরেছেন। শ্রীনগরে ছ'জন জঙ্গিকে ধরা হয়। এদের কাছে ৮ লক্ষ ৫০ হাজার টাকা ও একটি মারুতি গাড়ি পাওয়া যায়। হিজবুল মুজাহিদিন নেতা সহইফুল ইসলামের এজেন্ট আলতাফ হুসেইনকে শ্রীনগর থেকে গ্রেফতার করা হয়েছে। তার কাছ থেকে একটি ডায়েরি পাওয়া গিয়েছে। এই ডায়েরিতে আছে কী ভাবে এই সংগঠনটি পাক গোয়েন্দা সংস্থা আই এস আইয়ের নির্দেশে কাজ করত। শ্রীনগরে আল বদরের একটি আর্থিক চ্যানেল ধরা হয়েছে আক্বল রশিদ ভট্ট নামের জনৈক জঙ্গিকে ধরার মাধ্যমে। পাকিস্তান কর্তৃপক্ষের বিভিন্ন প্রতিনিধির সঙ্গে ব্রজেশের এই বৈঠকগুলি হয়েছে গত তিন দিনে। পাকিস্তান এই সমস্ত অভিযোগ স্বীকার না করলেও কাশ্মীরে জঙ্গি কার্যকলাপ দমনে ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণে আশ্বাস দিয়েছে। তবে আলোচনার সবটাই হয়েছে অত্যন্ত গোপনে, শান্তি আলোচনার নেপথ্যে, সমান্তরাল ভাবে।

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

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# India, Pakistan to start dialogue in February

● We will not allow territory under our control to be used by terrorists: Musharraf

By Amit Baruah and B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 6. In a giant step forward, India and Pakistan today announced that they had agreed to "commence" the process of "composite dialogue" in February. The level of the dialogue is still to be decided, according to both sides.

A joint press statement issued just before the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, returned to New Delhi late this afternoon, saw the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, reassure India that he "will not permit any territory under Pakistan's control to be used to support terrorism in any manner."

The accord raised expectations of a rapid improvement in bilateral relations, with both sides stressing that there were no "winners and losers". A "win-win" situation had been created for both.

However, Gen. Musharraf went as far as to say that "history had been made," suggesting that the two countries may have agreed on a long-term trajectory to resolve contentious issues.

At one point, he even used the term "deal."

Asked whether there had been some back-channel diplomacy, he said: "I don't think so. We [have] never reached in the past where we have reached now. With [the] passage of time and developments around the world, there is a realisation [of geo-economic realities]."

The statement continued: "The two leaders are confident that the resumption of the com-

posite dialogue will lead to a peaceful settlement of all bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, to the satisfaction of all sides."

At the end of several days of hard negotiations on the text of the statement, the two countries seemed to have ended a long period of acrimony and non-contact that had marked their relationship since the December 13, 2001 attack on India's Parliament.

## 'Ready to come tomorrow'

"You invite me today, I will come tomorrow," the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, said in Islamabad today when asked when he proposed to travel again to India.

Gen. Musharraf has no intention of competing with Mr. Vajpayee in poetry. Mr. Vajpayee is "far ahead and much more knowledgeable than me. *Sher-o-shayari mein woh (Vajpayee) bahut aage hain,*" [in poetry and Urdu couplets he is far ahead of

me], he said when asked whether the Indian leader had responded with any poem or couplet to the one he recited at the banquet hosted in honour of the SAARC leaders.

"As the confidence-building measures grow, more facilities can be given," Gen. Musharraf said promising to consider suggestions on facilitating Sikh pilgrims to visit gurdwaras, such as the Nankana Sahib and Punja Sahib, in Pakistan. — PTI, UNI

The six-paragraph statement said: "Prime Minister Vajpayee said that in order to take forward and sustain the dialogue process, violence, hostility and terrorism must be prevented... President Musharraf emphasised that a sustained and productive dialogue addressing all issues would lead to positive results."

"Both leaders welcomed the recent steps towards normalisation of relations between the two countries and expressed the hope that the positive trends set by the CBMs (confidence-building measures) would be consolidated."

The National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra, categorically denied that he had had any meeting with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief, Lt. Gen. Ehsan-ul-Haq, during his six-day stay in Islamabad. He, however, confirmed that he held meetings with other Pakistani interlocutors, but said it was up to Islamabad to identify these interlocutors.

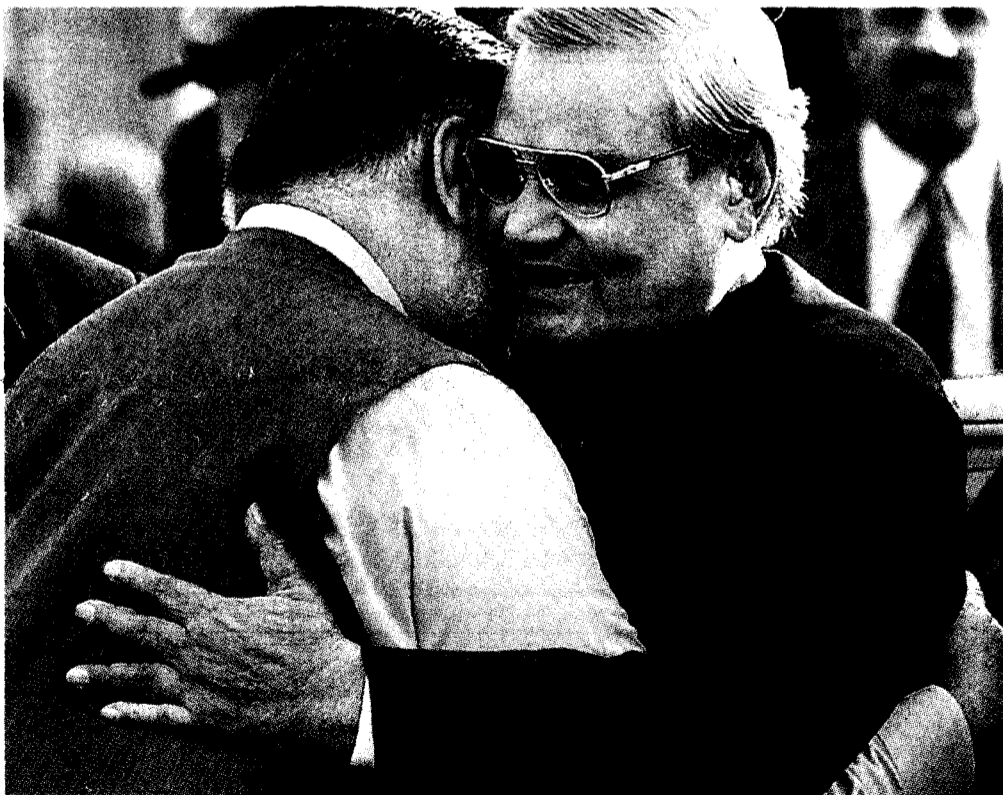
These meetings were to "tie up" loose ends in the joint press statement. Asked whether the assurance on non-use of Pakistani soil for terrorist purposes meant that Islamabad would now cooperate with New Delhi on the issue, Mr. Mishra said that as the two countries continued the dialogue process, this possibility could arise.

On the question of India's wanted "list of 20", Gen. Musharraf said that this should be looked at in an environment of trust and harmony "later." He counselled presspersons that Pakistan and India should leave aside contentious issues and concentrate on steps that could be taken easily.

Sounding like a man India could do business with, he said that a "thaw" had taken place in bilateral relations owing to the positive actions taken by both countries — Gen. Musharraf was open in praising Mr. Vajpayee's "vision and statesmanship."

Gen. Musharraf said the two countries had arrived at an "agreement to take the [peace] process to its logical end" and added in a matter-of-fact fashion that Kashmir was an issue that had to be resolved.

Editorial: Page 10  
SAARC declaration



The Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, gets a warm hug from his Pakistan counterpart, Pervez Musharraf, at the Islamabad airport on Tuesday. — AFP

'MUSHARRAF IS THE BIGGEST LEADER'

# India and Pakistan must keep talking: Vajpayee

By Amit Baruah and  
B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 3. The Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, confirmed today that he would interact with his Pakistani hosts during his three-day stay in Islamabad for the 12th SAARC summit that begins on Sunday.

Mr. Vajpayee, who arrived here in a special Indian Air Force aircraft, said in an interview to Pakistan Television this evening that he believed that India could talk to the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, and expressed the hope that this would lead to concrete achievements.

He described Gen. Musharraf as the "biggest leader" of Pakistan, with whom he had been interacting since his February 1999 visit to Lahore. The Prime Minister wanted him to play a role in promoting peace with India.

Mr. Vajpayee, who was received at the airport by his Pakistani counterpart, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, said that India and Pakistan must keep talking. "We have never shied away from a dialogue on Kashmir" even though India believed that Kashmir was an integral part of its territory.

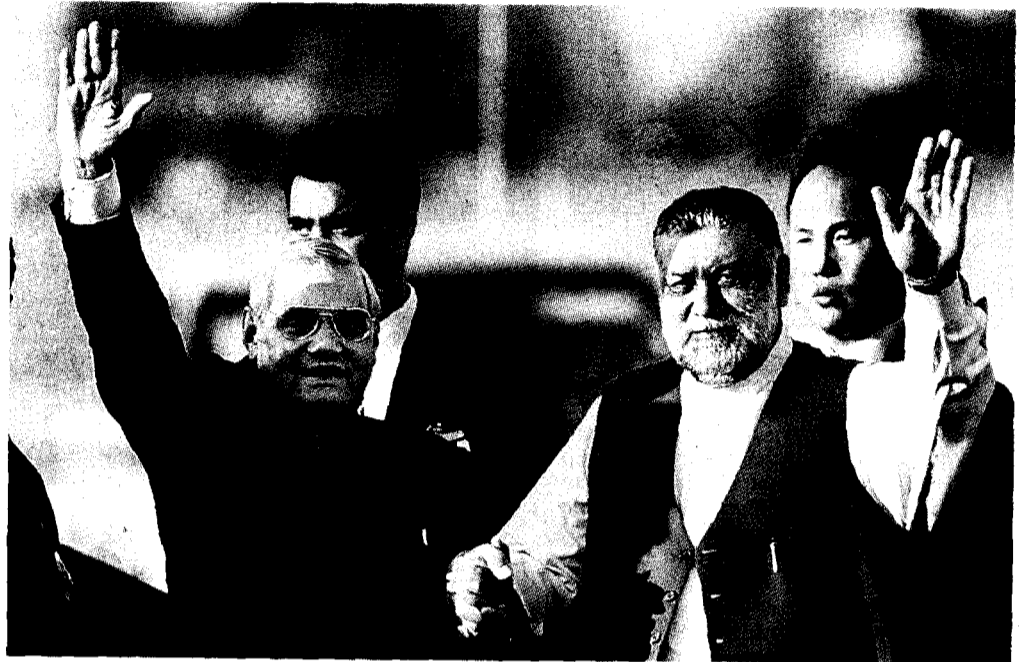
The two countries had never really got down to serious discussions on the Kashmir issue, but had been reiterating their positions. Any serious dialogue aimed at resolving this issue would take time.

Pakistan, he pointed out, was a neighbour and India needed to live with it. The choice was between living in peace and a continued state of tension. There was, however, a realisation that "we should live in peace."

Mr. Vajpayee said that it had been his endeavour to make peace with Pakistan ever since his first visit to Islamabad 25 years ago as the External Affairs Minister in the Janata Party Government.

Expressing regret at the massacre of Muslims in Gujarat in 2002, he denied that the Bharatiya Janata Party had used it for electoral gains. Also, Pakistan-bashing was not an issue in the recent Assembly elections.

The Prime Minister dismissed a suggestion that India was acting as a "junior partner" of the United States and pointed out that the allegation was also levelled against Pakistan. India had relations of equality with the U.S. and had no hesitation dif-



The Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and his Pakistan counterpart, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali, shortly after Mr. Vajpayee's arrival in Islamabad on Saturday. — Reuters

fering with it on issues.

The Prime Minister, who arrived a few hours earlier than scheduled (at 4 p.m. IST), was accorded a ceremonial welcome and guard of honour at the Chaklala air base, near here. He then left the air base in a bullet-proof BMW car, specially flown in from India.

Mr. Vajpayee exchanged pleasantries with Mr. Jamali at the airport, holding hands and waving to photographers. He drove to the highly-protected Serena Hotel, opposite the Jinnah Convention Centre, venue of the SAARC summit.

The Prime Minister's willingness to do business with Gen. Musharraf hardly comes as a surprise and is in line with his remarks on December 4, before he left for Abuja, Nigeria. Asked whom he would like to meet in Islamabad — Gen. Musharraf or Mr. Jamali — he said it was okay whoever he met.

In a statement before his SAARC visit, Mr. Vajpayee said, "While in Islamabad, I will take the opportunity of bilateral meetings with other SAARC leaders, besides interacting with our hosts. I hope all discussions, bilateral and regional, would proceed in the spirit of friendship, cooperation and good neighbourliness."

Just before Mr. Vajpayee's arrival here, Pakistan, as chair of the SAARC summit, formally announced that there had been

agreement on the text of the South Asian Free Trade Area draft, the SAARC social charter and the additional protocol to the existing convention on terrorism.

Announcing this at a press conference, Mr. Kasuri said that Kashmir was a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan and had nothing to do with the additional protocol on terrorism. He was responding to a question whether the additional protocol would impact the "freedom struggle" in Kashmir.

Mr. Kasuri said one could only be optimistic on India-Pakistan relations and his Prime Minister had tried hard to bring about a dialogue between the two countries. "The general assumption is that this opportunity provided by SAARC should not be missed [for a bilateral meeting between India and Pakistan]," he added.

## Next summit in Dhaka

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 3. The 13th South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation summit will be held in Dhaka, Bangladesh on January 1, 2005, the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Kurshid Mehmud Kasuri, said here today.

# Atal ready for talks with Pervez

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1/3/01 7/1/01

## VAJPAYEE CHANGES TACK, OFFERS FREE EXCHANGE ON KASHMIR TOO

Mubashir Zaidi & Agencies  
Islamabad, January 3

AS SOON as his plane landed at Islamabad, Atal Bihari Vajpayee eagerly climbed down. Not only from the Indian Air Force Boeing 737 but also from a position stated emphatically just a few hours ago.

In words that must have been music to his hosts' ears, the Indian Prime Minister told state-owned Pakistan Television that he is ready for talks with the country's President and "biggest leader", General Pervez Musharraf.

"Hum samajhte hain ki Musharraf sahib ke saath hamari baatcheet ho sakti hai (I think there could be talks with President Musharraf)," Vajpayee said in an exclusive interview, telecast minutes after he had arrived to a red carpet welcome. "We feel we could have talks with him and these would yield results."

Still, he left one thing vague: whether the talks would be a one-on-one — a subject of intense speculation in the run-up to the Saarc summit.

New Delhi was willing to hold "substantial" talks to iron out existing differences, Vajpayee said. "I believe the talks should continue. We never shied away from talking about the Jammu and Kashmir problem. Our stand, which is the right one, is that Jammu and Kashmir is part of India. But we are ready to have open talks on it."

Vajpayee's stance seemed to have undergone an about-turn between two TV interviews, just hours apart, on Saturday. To the Indian broadcaster, Doordarshan, he had said there would be "no bilateral talks" in Islamabad.

But shortly before take-off, his position had changed from the emphatic to the enigmatic. During his stay in Islamabad — the Prime Minister told reporters — he would hold bilateral meetings with leaders of Saarc countries other than Pakistan. With the hosts, he would merely "interact".

All that had changed by the time Vajpayee spoke to PTV, declaring that it was in the interest of both countries — and the world — to live as friends.

He answered questions on the Gujarat violence two years ago, saying whatever had happened was not right.



**PRIME MOVERS:** Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali listen to their countries' national anthems at Islamabad airport on Saturday.

"Muslims were killed. Hindus were burnt alive. It was unfortunate. It did not become an election issue."

Would the BJP do some Pakistan-bashing in the run-up to next year's Lok Sabha elections, the interviewer asked, contending this was done ahead of the Gujarat Assembly polls. The Prime Minister reminded the questioner that in the Assembly elections held recently in five states, there had been no "provocative" speeches against Pakistan.

Earlier, Vajpayee was received at the airport by Pakistani Premier Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali. He was accorded a tri-services guard of honour as the

national anthems of the two countries were played. Jamali then escorted Vajpayee to his armoured black BMW, specially brought from India for his security in Islamabad, which now resembles a fortress.

### Mystery mission

The principal secretary to the Prime Minister and National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra, apparently met the ISI chief on Friday night and discussed cross-border infiltration and the fencing of the LoC by India. Karachi-based Urdu daily *Ummat*, quoting highly-placed sources, said Mishra met the

### SIGNAL SWITCH

#### To Doordarshan

There will be no bilateral talks. We want to use all our time, all our energy, to make Saarc a success. That will help resolve other problems

#### Before take-off

While in Islamabad, I shall take the opportunity of holding bilateral meetings with other Saarc leaders, besides interacting with our hosts

#### To Pakistan TV

We think there can be talks with President Musharraf and that these would yield results. We never shied away from talking about the Kashmir problem. We are ready to hold open talks on the subject

head of a national security agency responsible for Pakistan's security. It was a clear reference to the Inter-Services Intelligence.

The arrival of Mishra — who has no official engagement connected to Saarc — ahead of Vajpayee has triggered a buzz in the Pakistani media. English daily *The News* speculated that Mishra, who arrived on Friday with Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha, is on a special mission. And that mission has been kept secret even from key officials in the Indian delegation to the summit, *The News* reported.

Related reports on Page 5



# ROAD TO ISLAMABAD

A progress report on the peace manoeuvres

Pravara Bank 2/11/03 T-6



Indian and Pakistani troops exchange sweets at Wagah

measures to Pakistan. Foreign office in Islamabad dubs them a "rehash and recycle" of the offer made earlier by Jamali

●**Oct. 29:** Pakistan responds to India's proposals. Appreciates resumption of talks on restoring air and sporting links, but springs trap on proposal for Srinagar-Muzaffarabad (capital of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir) bus service

●**Nov. 2:** Advani calls move "disappointing and surprising". Reiterates demand for handing over 20 criminals, including Dawood Ibrahim

●**Nov. 4:** Pakistan releases 74 Indian fishermen

●**Nov. 23:** Jamali announces a ceasefire on the Line of Control from Id.

●**Nov. 24:** Delhi agrees and suggests extending the truce to

●**April 18, 2003:** Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee extends "a hand of friendship" to Pakistan at a rally in Srinagar. But he slips in a rider — "I am ready to talk both at home and abroad but bloodshed must first stop"

●**April 20:** Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri says: "We are serious about stopping cross-border activity as much as we can..."

●**April 23:** President Pervez Musharraf welcomes Vajpayee's offer

●**May 2:** Vajpayee tells Parliament he wants to restore diplomatic, civil aviation and sporting links

●**May 6:** Pakistan Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali announces plans to resume air, rail and bus links and restore full strength at respective missions. India terms them "inadequate"

●**June 28:** 12 soldiers killed in first militant attack on an army camp in Jammu since peace overtures. Delhi refuses to be deterred from path of peace

●**July 10:** Pakistan high commissioner to Delhi Aziz Ahmed Khan presents credentials. Five days later, Indian high commissioner to Pakistan Shiv Shankar Menon leaves for Islamabad

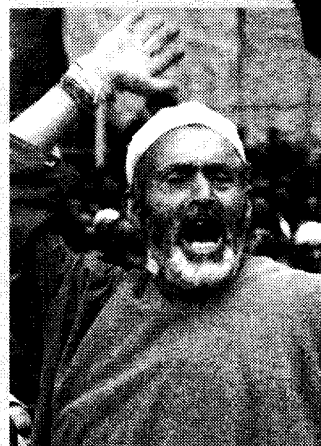
●**July 11:** Delhi-Lahore bus back on road

●**July 29:** In the first signs of hiccups in the peace process, Delhi protests against Islamabad's critical remarks about Indian officials and consulates in Afghanistan

●**Aug. 15:** Vajpayee reiterates peace gesture in Independence Day address

●**Sept. 17:** Warming ties catch sudden chill with Kasuri calling off a trip to India to invite Vajpayee for the Saarc summit in Islamabad after a snub from counterpart Yashwant Sinha

●**Oct. 22:** India offers a dozen reconciliatory



A spectator hails Vajpayee's peace offer at the Srinagar rally (left); the Delhi-Lahore bus resumes service (top); and Jamali announces the ceasefire (right).



awaits him in Pakistan

●**Dec. 14:** Bridge blown up in Rawalpindi before Musharraf's cavalcade is to pass over it

●**Dec. 18:** Musharraf offers to drop a 50-year-old demand for a UN-mandated plebiscite over Kashmir

●**Dec. 22:** Pakistan permits Vajpayee to bring down convoy of vehicles, security gadgets and commandos for visit

●**Dec. 23:** Vajpayee says infiltration has dropped after the ceasefire but rules out talks till Islamabad takes effective and visible steps to stop cross-border terrorism

●**Dec. 25:** Second attempt on Musharraf's life, Delhi reviews security for Vajpayee visit

●**Dec. 30:** The Pakistan President says he will not allow "misuse" of his territory for activities against any other country

●**Dec. 31:** India announces new year gift package of four proposals, including technical-level talk on Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service

●**Jan. 1:** South Asian foreign ministers agree at Saarc meet to put in place a free trade arrangement in the region by 2006, a step that India has been pushing for but Pakistan has been stonewalling. First flight from Pakistan in two years lands in India



Noor Fatima, who came for a heart operation from Pakistan, quickly became the face of Indo-Pak friendship

the Siachen glacier

●**Nov. 26:** Ceasefire takes effect

●**Nov. 28:** India says it will not hesitate to shoot at infiltrators and hopes Pakistan will not return fire

●**Nov. 30:** Pakistan offers India overflight rights

●**Dec. 2:** India suggests talks to resume the Samjhauta Express — the only rail link between the neighbours

●**Dec. 4:** Vajpayee writes to Jamali, confirming participation in Saarc summit

●**Dec. 8:** Jamali calls the Prime Minister, says a "warm welcome"

Graphic: Nupur Roy

## My last attempt at peace, says Vajpayee

By Our Islamabad Bureau

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 2. The Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, has again said that this will be his last attempt at making peace with Pakistan — a point that he made in the middle of 2003 in an interview to a German magazine.

In an interview to the *Dawn*, the Prime Minister said the entire spectrum of political opinion in India was for peace, cooperation and friendship with Pakistan.

On whether his Cabinet colleagues shared his views, Mr. Vajpayee responded: "The main question that is raised by critics of my peace initiative is whether it is getting — and will get in the future — a matching and sustained response from Pakistan."

If such a response was coming, the Prime Minister said that he saw no problem in putting behind violence, terrorism and hostility.

"I can see no obstacle to [the] establishment of a climate of

friendship and cordiality in which we can discuss and resolve all our outstanding bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir."

In Mr. Vajpayee's view, the Agra summit failed because Pakistan was insisting on the centrality of the Kashmir issue and India could not accept that.

The Prime Minister was quoted as saying that he did not want to repeat his frequently-stated views on terrorism.

Referring to the period since his April 18, 2003, hand of friendship speech in Srinagar, Mr. Vajpayee stressed: "These eight months have witnessed the ground swell of popular enthusiasm in the people of both our countries — parliamentarians and political workers, businessmen and professionals, artists and social activists — for a normal, peaceful and cooperative bilateral relationship. We should build on the momentum and on the recent positive developments in a constructive manner."

THE HINDU 03 JAN 2004

## TRUCE TALK ABROAD, TERROR HIT AT HOME

# LoC ceasefire will be indefinite: Pak

Agencies  
Islamabad/Washington, Jan 2

A DAY after India proposed to make the LoC ceasefire permanent, Pakistan said the truce would last indefinitely. But it turned down Delhi's proposal for a single currency and a Saarc Economic Union, made on Friday, saying the immediate focus should be on conflict resolution.

Asked about Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha's proposal for permanent ceasefire, Pakistan foreign office spokesman Masood Khan said Islamabad expected the ceasefire will be indefinite. "It is a comprehensive ceasefire. The ceasefire is holding and this is very good," he said. "The next step should be a composite dialogue to resolve all issues."

Pakistan saw Sinha's other proposal — "one currency, one tariff regime and free movement of goods, services and people" — as a good long-term goal, but argued the right atmosphere has to be created by removing conflicts in the region.

Islamabad kept its promise of not raising Kashmir at the foreign ministers' meeting, where Sinha embraced Pakistan's Khursheed Mehmood Kasuri. They posed for the cameras, smiling and with arms around each other.

The seven foreign ministers cleared a framework agreement for a South Asian Free Trade Area (Safta), which will come into force on January 1, 2006, and worked out the Additional Protocol on Terrorism. Under this, countries will freeze funding of terrorists, deny them refugee status, ex-



Two passengers run for cover as a third lies down during the attack on Jammu railway station on Friday.

## Jammu attack kills 6

TWO DAYS before the Saarc summit, terrorists struck at Jammu railway station, killing four people, including two BSF jawans, and wounding 15. Two of the three attackers, suspected to be Lashkar-e-Taib members, were killed by the security forces. Officials said the casualty figure could have been higher had a train been waiting at any of the platforms. The station was packed with pilgrims, who use it as a transit point for Vaishno Devi. The terrorists, dressed in army fatigues, first threw grenades

on platforms 1 and 2 around 7 pm. As panic-stricken passengers started running for safety, the militants began firing on them from the overbridge. Police commandos at the station couldn't return the fire immediately for fear catching the passengers in the crossfire. A passenger bound for Delhi said the terrorists took positions on the overbridge after throwing the grenades. One of the BSF jawans collapsed under the impact of a grenade explosion and the other taking a bullet.

HTC, Jammu

tradite them and move against terror at home. The ministers agreed to set up a South Asian Development Bank (for which the heads of states will sign a

Saarc social charter on January 6), try and avoid double taxation and celebrate 2005 as South Asia Tourism Year.

See also Page 5



# India offers fresh peace proposals

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Dec. 31. — India capped a year of small steps ahead towards a thaw in relations with Pakistan with proposals to keep both sides engaged in the New Year. The most significant proposal conveyed today to the Pakistan government was the offer of technical level talks on the proposed Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus link, connecting

J&K with PoK, from the week beginning 19 January.

Another proposal is to hold technical talks on beginning a bus link between Munabao and Khokrapar, connecting Rajasthan and Sind, from 12 January.

India has called for the removal of restrictions, on a reciprocal basis, on the movement of respective high commission personnel. The curbs were imposed following the terrorist attack on Parliament in

December 2001, and kept diplomats confined to the respective capital cities.

The government also proposed raising the staff strength at the respective missions to 75, up from the present 55, a foreign ministry spokesman said.

These proposals have been made "in continuation of the step-by-step process of normalisation of links and promotion of people-to-people contacts" initiated by India.

The two road links had been proposed as part of the Diwali dozen package in October. Diplomats said the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus, if it begins, would be the "most significant breakthrough in bilateral relations".

Delhi has also agreed to Islamabad's proposal, to talk about the Baghliar project and meetings between the Indus Waters Commissions of both countries to sort out differences

are scheduled for the middle of January, officials indicated.

Bilateral meetings at the level of heads of government during the Saarc summit have been sought by Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, officials said, and

Mr Vajpayee will meet leaders of all three countries, and also Bhutan and the Maldives. But no bilateral talks have been scheduled with the Pakistani leadership.

# Let's make it a permanent ceasefire, says Sinha

By Alok Mukherjee

NEW DELHI, JAN. 1. The External Affairs Minister, Yaswant Sinha, today left for Islamabad, hoping that the coming summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation would be successful.

Talking to the media before his departure, Mr. Sinha said, "We are going with a message of brotherhood," and noted that since the hand of friendship was extended to Pakistan by the Prime Minister in April last, several steps had been taken to improve relations.

India was now interested in making the existing ceasefire 'permanent' as the ceasefire now in place was open-ended and not bound by any timeframe, Mr. Sinha said and added that it was incumbent on both countries to ensure

that the ceasefire held. "It is a comprehensive ceasefire because it includes the international boundary, the Line of Control and the Actual Ground Position Line in Siachen. It will be our hope that both India and Pakistan will continue to ensure that this ceasefire remains in place."

Referring to yesterday's Indian proposals, including the holding of technical-level talks for bus links between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, he said, "We hope a positive response on them will come from Pakistan. In this manner we will continue to move forward to make our relations normal and cordial."

On the action of Bhutan to flush out Indian insurgent groups, he said, "Clearly, it is an example worth emulating by other SAARC countries. What Bhutan has done is an example before the other SAARC countries where terrorism takes shelter or terrorists take refuge. Those countries are under obligation under international conventions and under the agreement in SAARC to take action."

About the possibility of any bilateral meeting between the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari

Vajpayee, and Pakistani leaders on the sidelines of the summit, Mr. Sinha said, "There will be meetings. There will be a number of occasions for official meetings and social interaction. Apart from that there is no other meeting planned." On whether India would take the initiative for such a meeting, he said, "I am speaking as of 2 p.m. now. No such meeting has been planned."

"Our hope is that on these SAARC issues, concrete progress is made. India has a lot of hope and wish that all the seven countries of the grouping agree on SAFTA. If some difficulties are there, these could be addressed during the two meetings of the SAARC Foreign Ministers starting tomorrow. All efforts would be made to resolve them before the three-day summit begins on January 4," the Minister said.

Mr. Sinha left for Islamabad in a special Indian Air Force Boeing-737 and was accompanied by the National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra, the Joint Secretary in the External Affairs Ministry, Arun Singh, and senior officials. The Pakistan Deputy High Commissioner, Munawar Bhatti, and Indian officials saw him off at the airport.

# Indo-Pakistan talks: ten issues

By C. Raja Mohan

*India and Pakistan have been trapped for too long in arguing about procedural issues and defending past political postures.*

THE INDIAN Government insists that there is some way to go before it sits down at the negotiating table with Pakistan. But it is unlikely that the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, will return from Islamabad next week without an agreement to re-start the stalled dialogue in the near future. There is a question, however, that is more important than the timing of the dialogue — what will India and Pakistan do with these talks?

Over the last decade and a half, a dialogue — on-again and off-again — has indeed taken place between the two nations. But the results have been pitiful. They can be summarised easily — an agreement to start a bus service between Lahore and New Delhi, three nuclear and military confidence-building measures, an intent to negotiate more, and a general declaration on bilateral relations. To understand why the dialogue has delivered so little and assess the prospects for a different future, we must look at the structure of the Indo-Pakistan negotiations. Ten issues need to be addressed for a more purposeful engagement between the two sides.

The first set of issues is simple. What do they talk about? After considerable deliberation in the mid-1990s, India and Pakistan agreed on a framework for what is called the “composite dialogue” which put down all subjects of mutual interest. They were: a) peace and security including confidence-building measures; b) Jammu and Kashmir; c) Siachen; d) Tulbul navigation project; e) Sir Creek; f) terrorism and drug trafficking; g) economic and commercial cooperation; and h) promotion of friendly exchanges.

An agreed agenda did not end the difficulties. A new range of problems cropped up as the two sides squabbled about special emphasis in the talks on specific subjects like Kashmir. Eventually it was agreed that the first two — peace and security, and Jammu and Kashmir — will be taken up by the Foreign Secretaries. At the Agra summit in July 2001 the two sides had come to an agreement in their unfinished draft declaration that three subjects will be discussed at the political level — peace and security, Kashmir, and terrorism. It is a formula the two sides can now comfortably adopt.

What are the “core” issues? This question has generally been a dialogue-buster. India and Pakistan have each often argued, with some

vehemence, that precedence must be given to what it calls the “core issue”. They, of course, do not agree on what that core issue is. For Pakistan, the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir is the core. For India, it is cross-border terrorism that is at the heart of its concerns.

The international community, however, has a different core issue. Worried about the recurrent military crises between India and Pakistan, and concerned about a nuclear flash-point in the Subcontinent, the United States, Europe and Japan underline the importance of focussing on confidence-building measures. In the end, India and Pakistan have no option but to address each other’s primary concerns, without allowing them to derail the rest of the process. They also will have to demonstrate to the world that they are responsible nuclear powers and have the capacity to manage the dangerous nuclear factor in their relationship.

India and Pakistan at different times have set up political linkages among different parts of the bilateral agenda. These linkages have undermined Indo-Pakistan engagement in recent years. Pakistan’s President, Pervez Musharraf, has often said that trade ties between India and Pakistan can only improve after there is progress in resolving the Kashmir question. India says normalisation of bilateral relations must precede a serious discussion of the contentious issues like Jammu and Kashmir. Put another way, India and Pakistan have differed strongly on how they should sequence their peace process.

The marathon talks at the Agra summit in 2001 collapsed amidst disagreement between the two sides on what should be the relationship between Kashmir and the rest of the agenda. The problem can be circumvented now by agreeing to address all issues simultaneously, with the full understanding that not all tracks might move at the same speed.

India and Pakistan have also often set pre-conditions for a dialogue. In the mid-1990s when Islamabad thought it had New Delhi on the mat in Kashmir, Pakistan refused to talk unless India first withdrew troops from the valley and reduced its human-rights violations. India, after the

Kargil war in 1999 and the attack on Parliament on December 13, 2001, was adamant that there could be no talks unless Islamabad put an end to cross-border terrorism. For a variety of reasons, neither side could sustain their preconditions for too long.

Who should one negotiate with? This fifth question always casts a shadow over the Indo-Pakistan dialogue. In the complex power structure in Pakistan the Army Chief has a lot of power, which is exercised directly when the civilians are thrown out, and indirectly when there is a façade of democracy. At the moment, should Mr. Vajpayee deal with Gen. Musharraf who is the real source of power or with Pakistan’s Prime Minister, Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali?

Pakistan too faces a problem. Is it enough to deal with Mr. Vajpayee? Or

should they also engage the so-called hardliners in Mr. Vajpayee’s Cabinet, who many in Pakistan believe were responsible for the failure of the Agra summit. While the formal process of engagement would necessarily take place between heads of governments, there is reason why the dialogue cannot take the informal power centres on board.

Sixth, the shape of the table, too, has often been a problem in Indo-Pakistan engagement. Pakistan has insisted that the negotiations on Kashmir must involve the people of Kashmir. This demand is reinforced by the Hurriyat, which calls for involvement of Pakistan in its dialogue with New Delhi. India of course rejects the proposal. For now it is clear that there will be two separate tracks. One between New Delhi and Islamabad; and the other between New Delhi and a range of political forces in Srinagar, including the Hurriyat and other militant groups. In the end, it is mere common sense to say that Kashmiri opinion will have to be satisfied to some extent in any final settlement between India and Pakistan.

Seventh, the role of third parties has always been a contentious question. Islamabad has campaigned for years for a third party mediation of Indo-Pakistan disputes. India rejects this approach. India believes “bilateralism” is the key to progress on interstate relations in the Subcontinent. This contradiction need not detain

India and Pakistan. The formal dialogue between the two nations is likely to remain at the bilateral level.

But the world will increasingly intrude into this process, given the growing global concern about Indo-Pakistan tensions. More important, the improving relationship between New Delhi and Washington has given the confidence to India that American involvement in the region need not necessarily be inimical to India’s interests. The Kargil experience has allowed India to be more amenable to external “facilitation” of the Indo-Pakistan process.

Eighth, India and Pakistan differ on the role of confidence-building measures. Pakistan wants a short phase of negotiating CBMs and an early start to formal negotiations on Kashmir. India wants an extended process of CBMs to create the conditions under which Kashmir can be discussed. But there is no reason why India and Pakistan cannot move forward at the same time on both fronts.

Ninth, at what level do we negotiate? After Lahore and Agra, India prefers a bottom up approach. But Gen. Musharraf wants a high stakes top down negotiation led by himself and Mr. Vajpayee. Here again, the two leaders can signal a political commitment to address the sensitive issues at the highest level, let the talks be held at a lower level, and periodically review progress. Frequent meetings and visits to each other’s capitals by the top leaders, agreed at Agra, holds the key.

Finally, given the difficulties of moving forward through normal channels of communication should India and Pakistan use back channel diplomacy? India and Pakistan have used back channels in the recent past. Some times the best channel might be the most obvious. When the formal envoys, the High Commissioners, in both capitals are smart and enjoy the trust of the top leaders, they could create considerable movement, which can be supplemented by other approaches.

India and Pakistan have been trapped for too long in arguing about procedural issues and defending past political postures. Mr. Vajpayee and his Pakistani interlocutors must break the mould. The new mantra for Indo-Pakistan negotiations should be fairly simple: engage across a broad front, address each other’s core concerns, focus on problem-solving, expand bilateral cooperation wherever possible and open up the two societies for more intensive interaction.

# Peace be with us

*Quiz book 9-8 2/1*

**I** WATCHED a quiz show for secondary school children on one of the TV channels. One of the questions was: What was the reaction of the young participants to the recent ceasefire between India and Pakistan? The team which gave the winning answer said: "We do not understand what is happening. We read reports that both countries are making suggestions for peace. Then there are wars like Kargil. Vajpayee and Musharraf keep fighting. We feel the ceasefire should hold. More importantly, our leaders should realise that young people of both countries do not want war. We must have good relations based on mutual accommodation." It is my gut feeling that young people in Pakistan are equally in favour of peace and normalcy.

Are the mutually offered ceasefire proposals going to translate into discussions on substantive issues and a cooperative relationship between India and Pakistan? Prime Minister Jamali offered ceasefire proposals on November 24. By November 26, India had accepted, extending the ceasefire to the Siachen sector beyond the point up to which the LoC was demarcated in detail. The ceasefire has come into force since the night of November 26.

A curious aspect of the ceasefire is the emotionalism which characterises relations between peoples of all categories in India and Pakistan. Members of the Indian and Pakistani security forces who have fought many wars since Independence, and who continue to fire on each other whenever the necessity arises, met each other on Id to exchange sweets. All this within a matter of hours of the confrontationalist posture being ended by government orders on both sides. People of both sides who are involved in Track II contacts returned to their countries touched by the warmth shown by the other side.

Pakistan's prime minister made the ceasefire offer just before



## Conditions are conducive for a ceasefire that holds

**J. N. DIXIT**

Id to match Prime Minister Vajpayee's offer to normalise Indo-Pakistan relations just before Diwali. It could be considered a message to the people of India in general and to the people of J&K in particular, of Pakistan's desire to generate an atmosphere of peace. It was interesting that he did not link this to the pre-condition of discussions on Kashmir.

India responded positively to Jamali's offer. An additional reason for this could be the increasing pressure on India by world powers to resume dialogue with Pakistan and similar pressure on Pakistan to dissociate itself from terrorist activities. There are also indica-

desire to show that the Pakistani government is desirous of creating a positive atmosphere for the SAARC summit.

India's response is also rooted in similar considerations. Vajpayee would like to project the image of being a statesman committed to resolving Indo-Pakistan ties before the general elections of 2004. This is a distinctly positive development.

Civil aviation talks between India and Pakistan held in December have now resulted in the restoration of civil aviation contacts and overflight facilities. External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha has confirmed that India is serious

### In more recent times there is genuine desire for normalcy in both India and Pakistan, and for not letting it become hostage to concerns like Kashmir

tions of increasing opposition to Musharraf engineered by extremist Islamic groups within Pakistan moving the government to take sterner action against them. Thus, the punitive government decisions against the Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed.

Another reason is the groundswell of public opinion in Pakistan to have peace with India to which Jamali is more sensitive than Musharraf. Musharraf, for his own survival, might have endorsed the ceasefire initiative. There is also the reported gesture from him that he will relinquish the post of chief of army staff by the end of 2004. Last, but not least, the Pakistani initiative must have been animated by the

about moving towards a dialogue based on the Jamali-Vajpayee proposals. All major powers have welcomed the initiatives. The media, in India more than in Pakistan, is gushing with optimism.

These developments are positive and could become the basis for meaningful discussions for peace in the sub-continent. This reasoning, however, has to be tempered with realism. The ceasefire has not resulted in any great reduction in cross-border terrorism in J&K. In any case there is always a downscaling of such cross-border violence during winter. The question is whether there are indications of any change in Pakistan's views on dealing with Kashmir, and about their support

to violent militancy in J&K.

President Musharraf's press interview of December 17 shows a positive shift. He has said that Pakistan will set aside the view that the UN Security Council resolutions should form the basis for a solution of the Kashmir issue. He added that he is willing to come half way if India shows some effort to come to a compromise on the Kashmir issue.

Prime Minister Vajpayee, on his part, has moved away from his old stand of not meeting Jamali or Musharraf during the SAARC summit. J&K Chief Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed contributed to this optimism when he announced that the LoC may not be the basis of a solution, but it could be part of it.

Clearly, any Indo-Pak dialogue would take off from the ground already covered at Lahore and Agra, and on the tentative agreements reached earlier between the two countries on issues related to Siachen, Wullar Barrage, demarcation of the boundary at the Sir Creek and so on. Kashmir and the management of the results of the nuclear weaponisation of both the countries should be prioritised in this agenda.

Despite the long history of adversarial relationship between India and Pakistan, one phenomenon underlines public feeling in both countries. First, the pre-Partition linkages still have some emotional resonance in relations between the two peoples. Second, in more recent times there is genuine desire for normalcy and peace, and in not letting them become hostage to concerns like Kashmir. One accepts that the issues affecting Indo-Pak relations are complex and need patience. Discussions on these should be undertaken realistically without illusions, taking into account developments on the ground as separate from policy pronouncements. The ceasefire provides an opportunity for governments of the two countries to reason together. Hopefully, they will do so.

# India wants ceasefire forever

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Jan 1.— India is keen to make the ceasefire in place at present with Pakistan a “permanent” one, external affairs minister Mr Yashwant Sinha said today before boarding a special IAF Boeing-737 for Islamabad. “It is incumbent on both countries to ensure that the ceasefire holds,” he said.

The open-ended ceasefire along the LoC and the International Border was proposed by Pakistani Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali and promptly agreed to by India which extended it to Siachen as well.

Mr Sinha will take part in the two-day Saarc foreign ministers’ conference beginning Friday. The meeting will try to ease differences among the seven member nations of the Saarc on various issues, including terrorism and intra-regional free trade. The draft declaration the foreign ministers agree upon would be put up for the heads of government to finalise and sign at the summit beginning on Sunday.

Speaking to the media, Mr Sinha said: “Our (India and Pakistan’s) effort will be to see that the bitterness that has been there in our relations is removed.” He iterated that no bilateral meeting was scheduled between senior Indian and Pakistani officials or leaders.

With only three days to go for the summit, India and Pakistan today exchanged upgraded lists of their nuclear facilities and installations under a bilateral agreement for the

## Pakistan replaces minister-in-waiting

ISLAMABAD, Jan. 1. — In a last-minute decision, Pakistan has replaced the minister-in-waiting for Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee during his visit to Islamabad. Finance minister Mr Shaukat Aziz, a close aide of President Musharraf, will be the “minister-in-waiting” in place of information minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, who had made certain uncharitable remarks about the Prime Minister during his recent visit to New Delhi. Foreign secretary Mr Shashank said India had no role in the change. —SNS

13th year in succession. Pakistan foreign office invited Mr A Gitesh Sharma, political counsellor of the Indian high commission, and handed him over its list which broadly remained the same as that of last year. Pakistani officials said the Indian foreign ministry too handed over its corresponding list.

Under the agreement, the two countries are to inform each other on 1 January every year about the nuclear installations and facilities to be covered by the agreement. The first such exchange of lists took place on 1 January 1992. The pact stipulated that both the countries should list out the nuclear installations and facilities in order to exempt them from attacks in the event of a war.

Photographs, another report on page 5