

Sarabjit review plea in Pak SC

IMTIAZ GUL

Islamabad, Sept. 28: Sarabjit Singh's lawyer has filed a review petition before the Pakistan Supreme Court, challenging the "questionable" trials against the convict in two courts.

Lahore High Court and an anti-terrorist court had awarded death sentence to the Indian from Bhikhiwind in Amritsar for allegedly carrying out five blasts in Lahore, Kasur and Faisalabad in Pakistan in 1990.

The explosions had killed at least 14 people and injured dozens.

The Pakistan Supreme Court upheld the death sentence against him in several cases.

Speaking to reporters in Lahore today, Sarabjit's lawyer Rana Abdul Hamid said the review petition was filed at the Lahore registry of the Supreme Court.

He said there are contradictions in the statements of witnesses that were recorded during trial in the lower courts.

Also, a statement by a defence eyewitness was ignored during the trials. The apex court's attention has been drawn to this, Hamid added.

The lawyer said he has also challenged a confession by Sarabjit but did not give further details on this.

Sarabjit can appeal to President Pervez Musharraf for clemency or to have his death sentence commuted into life imprisonment, Hamid said.

Musharraf had said during his recent visit to New York that he would look into Sarabjit's case once the legal aspects of the matter were brought before him.

"I am a compassionate person, who does not believe in taking others' lives," he had told mediapersons.

Sarabjit's family members say he is trapped in a case of "mistaken identity". They claim he unintentionally crossed the border in a drunken state.

Sarabjit's sister Dalbir Kaur has even threatened to commit suicide along with the convict's wife and children if her brother is hanged.

Pakistani authorities claim Sarabjit is Manjeet Singh, a RAW agent involved in the bomb blasts.

However, last month, the Pakistan government allowed Indian diplomats to meet Sarabjit at Kot Lakhpat jail in Lahore to verify his nationality.

When Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met Musharraf in New York, Sarabjit's case reportedly figured in their discussion.

THE TELEGRAPH

Sarabjeet lawyer disappointed

ISLAMABAD, Sept. 25. — The lawyer of Sarabjeet Singh today expressed extreme disappointment over the government's reluctance to permit him to meet his client, whose death sentence was upheld by Pakistan Supreme Court for allegedly carrying out bomb blasts in the country in 1990.

Mr Rana Abdul Hamid, who has been hired by a human rights group from Canada to save Sarabjeet's life, said over phone from Lahore that he was "extremely disappointed and puzzled" over the government's reluctance to permit him to meet Sarabjeet in Lakpath prison. "They are not allowing me to see my client. It is very embarrassing to note that I can not meet my client facing gallows," he said.

Mr Hamid, who was planning to file a writ petition in Lahore High Court seeking a legal directive to meet Sarabjeet, said he met additional home secretary, prisons of Punjab, this week as a last resort, seeking his intervention. "Nothing has come off it so far. I keep hearing from the officials that they have not received orders from concerned agencies," he added. "The government is depriving the right of my client to meet his lawyer," he said. Mr Hamid plans to file a review petition in Supreme Court tomorrow. He had sought the transcripts of the interview of a key witness, conducted by some Indian TV channels early this month, in which the witness said that he was forced to give false evidence against Sarabjeet. Mr Hamid said he made a request to the Indian High Commission in this regard yesterday. High Commission official Mr Deepak Kaul said efforts were underway to obtain the transcripts. — PTI

Pak rules out MFN status to India

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD, Sept. 24. — Ruling out granting of Most favoured Nation (MFN) status to India until the Kashmir issue is resolved, Pakistan has said infrastructure facilities and simplified customs procedures have to be in place to facilitate trade with that country.

Pakistan would not extend the MFN status to India without the resolution of "disputes", including the Kashmir issue, commerce minister Mr Humayun Akhtar Khan told reporters at a seminar on "Regional Economic Cooperation in South Asia" in Karachi. He said

Madrasa abuse sparks murder

MULTAN, Sept. 24. — A 12-year-old Pakistani boy today said that he had killed a fellow student at an Islamic school because he was angry that a teacher had been sexually abusing him and other children and he wanted the school closed. Police arrested the boy yesterday at his home.

Multan police chief Mr Munir Ahmed Chisti told reporters. The boy answered questions, saying he slit the throat of a 10-year-old student in

Islamabad has to improve port efficiency and reduce cost of doing business at ports to facilitate bilateral trade. In addition, infrastructure facilities, including border infrastructure and simplified cus-

the school's bathroom a week ago to somehow force the seminary to close. "I had no bad feelings against this boy. I was obsessed with the idea of getting this school closed," he said. "I wanted to give a bad name to the institute so that abuse of children could stop." Asked whether he himself had been assaulted, the boy said: "The step I took, doesn't it suggest what could have happened to me? I wanted to close the school so

blocks would be in place to facilitate trade with India. Mr Khan said he is of the opinion that WTO would not clash with Safta in the Saarc region, but added that after 20 to 25 years, trade

that the abuse of children could stop." The boy said that he was aware that about "eight to 10" other boys had been abused by the teacher. The boy claimed he had plans to kill the teacher. Mr Chisti said police are looking for the man. There have been growing demands by human rights groups for investigations into incidents of sexual abuse of children at Islamic schools in Pakistan. **AP**

vanish under free trade regime. Pakistan were the main reason for slow progress on bilateral issues in the region, he claimed. Rise of prosperity will lead to disappearance of differences, he noted.

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The audacity of the general ✓ 19/19

The prime minister's visit to New York should prove to be an important moment in the learning curve for him and the establishment. He will be more careful perhaps about claiming to have made history with General Pervez Musharraf, as he did last year in New York, or in announcing to the world that he trusts Musharraf and can do business with him.

New York has shown Musharraf to be someone who is dogged about what he wants. For that he is willing to lie, bring to bear external pressure or act petulant. Although he had claimed that he had set aside his country's insistence on implementation of UN resolutions to resolve the Kashmir issue in January 2004, he had no hesitation in saying in the present UN general assembly, "Resolutions of the United Nations, especially the security council's decisions, must be implemented" and that "it is in that spirit that Pakistan is pursuing the composite dialogue with India". When confronted with his change in stance by India, he is believed to have blamed the whole thing on some enthusiastic speechwriter!

From stridency to cajoling to bluntness in asking the Indian prime minister what he wanted in Kashmir, Musharraf has shown that he is willing to adopt any tactic to get what he wants. What he managed to do in the US was to put India on the defensive — as an obdurate party that did not want an early resolution of the Kashmir issue.

What also became evident in New York is that the US stakes in Pakistan's military ruler are very high. This was evident not only from the enhanced level of hospitality he received — Bush invited him for dinner — but also from the manner in which the US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, intervened on his behalf with India. The impact of Rice's request for concessions on Kashmir is the same as Musharraf's during his dinner meeting with the prime minister — that whatever India has done up to now is not a concession.

Even if it is not enough, consider what India has done on Kashmir: India has opened the Srinagar to Muzaffarabad bus route by allowing passport-less travel; it has allowed the leaders of the All Party Hurriyat Conference to travel to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on the bus; it did not make too much of a fuss when Hurriyat leaders visited Pakistan without visas; on their return, the prime minister met them, enhancing their legitimacy; India has pulled out the Border Security Force from policing duties in Kashmir and replaced them with the Central Reserve Police Force; it has allowed the former prime minister of PoK, Sardar Qayoom, to visit India; it has allowed Hur-

TWENTY-TWENTY

BHARAT BHUSHAN



Here's the gameplan

riyat's Mirwaiz Umer Farooq to visit New York to meet Musharraf; in the joint statement issued in New York, it has relegated terrorism to a secondary position in the bilateral dialogue; and most importantly, it has successfully completed two rounds of the composite dialogue with Pakistan.

India, in effect, has been constantly responding to the wishes and sentiments of the people of Kashmir. Yet, General Musharraf acts like a petulant child who does not want to leave New York for home till he gets a toy in hand and the US urges India to give him one. Surely this is an unacceptable situation.

The general made much of demanding a troop reduction in Jammu and Kashmir. Why is troop reduction an issue at a time when there is a cease-fire along the line of control and the international border? It should not be an issue at a time when there are no hostilities, the commanders on the two sides are talking on hot-

lines and bus routes and people travelling to and fro have perforated the LoC. The only reason why Indian troops are in Kashmir is because of the existence of a terrorist network which needs to be broken and not allowed to rebuild itself. Why should India reduce its alert level at a time when there is evidence that Pakistan is still promoting terrorism in Kashmir? The demand for troop reduction is clearly then being made to humiliate India diplomatically. It implies that when it comes to Kashmir, India cannot take a sovereign decision. Musharraf had the gall to suggest to the Indian prime minister that the troops which had been withdrawn from Jammu and Kashmir had not been situated in bases far enough from the state.

The only context within which a foreign country can tell another where to situate its troops is when confidence-building measures are being put in place on the border be-

tween the two — as, say, between India and China. Otherwise, it is uncalled for. Its only implication is that India is in occupation in Kashmir and that the occupation forces must get out. Entertaining such demands is certainly not very clever foreign policy.

This situation has come about because of two factors. Firstly, successive governments in India have hyped up the relationship with Pakistan to such an extent that every meeting between the political leaders of the two countries is overloaded with expectations. And secondly, because India has no policy on Kashmir. New Delhi seems to be moving too fast and purely tactically in relation to Pakistan without making an assessment of the motivation and conduct of the adversary.

Pakistan on the other hand seems to be working to a plan. Its policy-makers are focussed. They are demanding troop reduction in Kupwara and Baramulla because they are the main infiltration routes to Kashmir. If the army is removed from there, Pakistan will be at the doorstep of Srinagar.

Islamabad wants troop reduction also as it makes it easier to push its political agenda in Kashmir. It wants to create a powerful lobby, even among the democratically elected politicians, which would be pro-Pakistan.

If there is troop reduction, the APHC can tell people that it is their achievement. This way they expand their base among the people, and as and when elections are held, they contest as Pak proxies.

Musharraf would want APHC to contest elections and tell the world that these are democratically elected people and not militants or jihadis unhappy with India. To get them elected, he would give them all help, including backing their efforts using the gun. If they win the elections, he can dictate politics in Kashmir. APHC is Pakistan's proxy for now but Musharraf has also invited the Kashmiri chief minister, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, to visit Islamabad.

It is a long-term plan. By contrast, India seems to have no gameplan. It is not sufficient to say that borders will not change or that the "possible options" for a peaceful settlement of Kashmir will be "pursued in a sincere spirit and purposeful manner". Whose options are these? India has not put forward any options, only Pakistan has. So what have we agreed to discuss with sincerity? Only when New Delhi knows for sure what it wants in Kashmir can it address the question of what the other side may want while safeguarding its own interests. Since that clarity is nowhere to be seen, Indian leaders have to suffer the audacity of General Musharraf and his guardian angels in Washington DC.

‘The general made much of demanding troop reduction in Kashmir. Why is troop reduction an issue at a time when there is a ceasefire along the LoC and the international border? The only reason why Indian troops are in Kashmir is to break the existing terrorist network and not allow it to rebuild itself’

Hurriyat leader fully supports India-Pakistan dialogue process

Mirwaiz Umer Farooq meets Musharraf for third time in five months

NEW YORK: In their third interaction in five months, Hurriyat Chairman Mirwaiz Umer Farooq met Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf here and extended full support to the India-Pakistan dialogue but expressed regret over the "slow" pace of the peace process.

During the meeting with Gen. Musharraf at the Roosevelt Hotel lasting over an hour, the Mirwaiz briefed him on the first-ever talks the Hurriyat leaders had with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi on September 5 while discussing the ongoing India-Pakistan dialogue process.

"This is our attempt to find a lasting solution to the Kashmir issue so that we could see a peaceful South Asia," he told PTI after the meeting.

time, we, the Kashmiris feel we are being involved. But, the pace of the talks process is slow."

He said the Hurriyat wanted the Kashmiri leaders to be associated with the talks which has not happened as yet but the fact that both Dr. Singh and Gen. Musharraf are talking to them shows that Kashmiris are being indirectly associated with the dialogue.

He said he kept the amalgam's viewpoint before the Pakistan President while terming the meeting as a Hurriyat effort of having a triangular dialogue on Kashmir simultaneously with India and Pakistan.

Tripartite talks needed

"The matter looks fast becoming triangular," he said, adding the Hurriyat's stand had been

that the bilateral dialogue process should not only become triangular but lead to becoming tripartite — "and, it is very much in sight, so, we as the concerned party, support it."

Specific proposals

He also mentioned Hurriyat's specific proposals which the Kashmiris intend to present to both India and Pakistan.

He said the Hurriyat would put forward its proposals to Dr. Singh in the second round of talks which they intend to hold soon.

Thereafter, Kashmiri leaders look forward to visiting Pakistan again. He, however, did not elaborate the specific Hurriyat proposals.

Describing his meeting with Gen. Musharraf as fruitful, the

Mirwaiz said the General "supported our stand."

As the Mirwaiz met Gen. Musharraf, Pakistani officials announced that the President had invited Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed to visit Pakistan. Mehbooba Mufti, Sayeed's daughter and an MP, and Omar Abdullah, President of the National Conference in J&K, will visit Pakistan ahead of Mufti, the Pakistan media reported.

Asked if he supported visit to Pakistan by Sayeed and his daughter, he said, "why not, since they have already expressed their intention, they may like to do so."

Hardliner Syed Ali Shah Geelani held a different view. He said it was not the time to pursue personal politics. —PTI



Mirwaiz Umer Farooq

Pace of dialogue 'slow'

The Mirwaiz, who had met Musharraf in Delhi in April and later in Islamabad in June, said he extended full support to the dialogue process. "For the first

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Tariq Aziz rushes to US

Seeks Washington's help in making India more flexible

PRESS Trust of India
Islamabad, September 16

WITH PRIME Minister Manmohan Singh ruling out reduction of troops in the Valley till violence and terror continued, Pakistan's National Security Adviser, Tariq Aziz, has rushed to Washington to ask the US to press India to demonstrate more flexibility.

Aziz, who held a series of behind-the-scenes talks with India's special envoy, S.K. Lamba, in the run-up to Singh's meeting with President Pervez Musharraf in New York on Wednesday, will brief his US counterpart on the progress of the talks as well as seek Washington's help in pressing India to be more flexible, local daily *The News* reported.

Quoting officials, the paper said the Pakistani side went into the talks on September 14 expecting progress, but came out "slightly disappointed."

They, however, managed to salvage

PEACE TALKS FALLOUT

something from the meeting as the Indian Prime Minister accepted an invitation by Musharraf to visit Pakistan, "although no dates have been agreed upon", it said.

The Pakistan media, which got upbeat projections ahead of the talks by the country's ambassador to the US, Gen (ret'd) Jahangir Karamat, uniformly reported lack of progress in the Singh-Musharraf meeting, saying the Indian Prime Minister's nod to visit Pakistan was the only "saving grace."

Well before the talks, Karamat, a former Army Chief, told a large contingent of Pakistan media which covered the event that the two leaders were likely to agree on the troop pullout from Siachan. He also said that India might agree to pull out troops from some ar-

reas in Jammu and Kashmir.

Also, hours ahead of the meeting, Karamat said Musharraf, in his talks with US President George Bush in New York, had asked him to pressure India to pull out troops from some areas in Jammu and Kashmir.

The lack of progress on any of the issues made Pakistani media to project the talks as a failure with headlines like "Musharraf-Singh talks make no headway". The damage was partly limited as the newspapers also carried Musharraf's assertions that talks were not "deadlocked."

The News quoted Pakistan officials as saying that before the talks they were hoping that progress could be made in trying to work out broad contours of a settlement of the Kashmir issue through back-channel diplomacy, but no major headway was made during Wednesday's meeting.

In this sense, they said, "the outcome was a disappointment".

17 SE 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

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Pressing on with

détente

It is obviously unrealistic to expect Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Pervez Musharraf to give a major boost to India-Pakistan relations each time they meet. Beginning with the agenda-setting Vajpayee-Musharraf meeting during the Islamabad SAARC summit in January 2004, détente has made spirited progress and the overall character of bilateral relations has been transformed beyond recognition. People-to-people contacts have multiplied and productive steps taken to establish trade and economic linkages. The recent exchange of civilian prisoners might not be as dramatic a development as the launch of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service. But this humanitarian gesture signified that the two countries were making a serious effort to develop their relationship. While none of the major issues in contention is settled after two rounds of the composite dialogue, there has been sufficient momentum in the exchanges to justify the claim that détente between India and Pakistan has become irreversible. There could be a loss of momentum if these issues are not addressed by the time the third round of the dialogue takes place in January 2006. What is clear is that Dr. Singh and General Musharraf had more than a formal meeting in New York to explore the way forward. What is uncalled for at this stage is hyped-up frustration over the absence of a breakthrough.

Not much information has been provided on the specifics of the four-hour meeting between the leaders of India and Pakistan. However, there are indications that the Prime Minister has refocussed on the issues of infiltration across the Line of Control and violence in the Kashmir Valley. Dr. Singh delivered a message indirectly to Islamabad when, during his interaction with President George W. Bush, he gave voice to the complaint that "Pakistan still controls the flow of terror and they must stop it for any realistic progress." Indian security experts are of the view that while infiltration and violence have both declined this year (although there has been a spurt in violence in the summer months), the terrorist groups appear to be adopting new tactics. They are now apparently being trained to cross the fence along the LoC, and to manufacture explosives from locally sourced material. There is also allegedly a steady flow of messages between operatives in the Valley and their controllers in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Under these circumstances, it was unrealistic to expect that Dr. Singh would respond positively to General Musharraf's request (conveyed through Mr. Bush) that troops should be withdrawn from the districts of Baramulla and Kupwara. A modest change has been effected with the Central Reserve Police Force taking over security duties in Srinagar district from the Border Security Force. While this process might be replicated in the rest of Jammu and Kashmir, it is clear the Army's back-up role in India's most troubled State will not be ended any time soon.

17 SEP 2005 THE HINDU

কথা চলুক

ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের রাজনৈতিক নেতৃত্বের এবারকার শীর্ষ বৈঠক দ্বিপাক্ষিক বিরোধগুলি মীমাংসা করিয়া দিবে, এমন প্রত্যাশা কোনও মহলেই ছিল না। বস্তুত সে ধরনের বৈঠক কেবল এই দুই দেশের মাটিতেই অনুষ্ঠিত হইতে পারে। সে জন্য সুদূর মার্কিন মুলুকের নিউ ইয়র্কে উড়িয়া যাওয়ার কোনও প্রয়োজন ছিল না। আসলে দুই নেতাই ওই তৃতীয় রাষ্ট্রে হাজির হন রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের ষাটতম বার্ষিকী উদ্‌যাপন উপলক্ষে আয়োজিত সাধারণ পরিষদের অধিবেশনে যোগ দিতে। ওই অধিবেশনের ফাঁকে সমবেত রাষ্ট্রনায়কেরা অনেকেই দ্বিপাক্ষিক শীর্ষ বৈঠকের বাড়তি সুযোগটুকু কাজে লাগাইতে সচেষ্ট হন। প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ কিংবা প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফের বৈঠকটিও সেই প্রক্রিয়াতেই আয়োজিত হয়, ঠিক যেমন তাহার আগে মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট জর্জ ডব্লিউ বুশের সঙ্গেও পৃথকভাবে দুই নেতাই আলাপ বিনিময় করেন। ভারত-পাক শীর্ষ বৈঠকটি বাড়তি মাত্রা পাইয়া যায় তাহার দীর্ঘস্থায়িত্বে। চার ঘণ্টা ধরিয়া এ বৈঠক চলার ফলে আশা জাগিতেছিল, তাহা হইলে বোধহয় নির্ণায়ক একটা কিছু ঘটতে চলিয়াছে। শেষ পর্যন্ত যে তেমন কোনও ঘোষণা বা যৌথ বিবৃতি মিলিল না, তাহার জন্য বৈঠকটিকে নিষ্ফল বলা যায় না।

মনে রাখা দরকার, কাশ্মীর প্রঙ্গে পাকিস্তানের জেদ বা অনমনীয়তাই দুই দেশের সম্পর্ক জটিল করিয়া রাখিয়াছে। বলা হইতেছে, সম্পর্কের শৈত্য অনেকটা হ্রাস পাইয়াছে। রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের অধিবেশনে ভাষণ দিতে গিয়া তৎসঙ্গেও মুশারফ কিন্তু কাশ্মীর প্রসঙ্গ উত্থাপন করিয়াছেন এবং কাশ্মীর হইতে ভারতীয় সেনা প্রত্যাহারের দাবি জানাইয়াছেন। প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ ভারতীয় পররাষ্ট্রনীতিকে তাহার সাবেক পাকিস্তান-কেন্দ্রিকতা হইতে অনেকটাই বাহির করিয়া আনিয়াছেন। আন্তর্জাতিক সমস্যাগুলির মীমাংসা লইয়াই তিনি ভাবিত থাকিয়াছেন। তবু মুশারফের একটা জবাব তাঁহাকে দিতেই হইত। তিনি তাই সীমান্ত-পারের সন্ত্রাসী অনুপ্রবেশ বন্ধ হওয়ার শর্ত উল্লেখ করেন। মুশারফের সঙ্গে দ্বিপাক্ষিক বৈঠকের সময়ও প্রধানমন্ত্রী অব্যাহত সন্ত্রাসবাদী অনুপ্রবেশ ও উপত্যকায় তাহাদের জেহাদি হিংসা বন্ধ হওয়ার উপর জোর দেন। মুশারফের পাকিস্তান সুযোগ পাইলেই পাক ভূখণ্ডে জেহাদিদের প্রশিক্ষণ শিবির বন্ধ হইয়া যাওয়ার কথা বলেন। অথচ শিবির যেমন অক্ষত আছে, তেমনই অব্যাহত রহিয়াছে অনুপ্রবেশও। অনুপ্রবেশকারীরা যে অঞ্চল দিয়া ঢুকিতেছে, সেই কুপওয়ারা ও বারামুল্লা হইতেই ভারতীয় সেনা সরাইয়া লওয়ার জন্য পাকিস্তান চাপ সৃষ্টি করিতেছে। নয়াদিল্লির পক্ষে যে সে চাপের কাছে নত হওয়া অসম্ভব, মুশারফকে প্রধানমন্ত্রী তাহা বিশদে জানাইয়াছেন। মুশারফ নিজেই সন্ত্রাসবাদের বিরুদ্ধে আন্তর্জাতিক সংগ্রামের অগ্রসেনানী রূপে তুলিয়া ধরেন। এ ব্যাপারে মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্টের অনুমোদন তাহার দাবিকে বৈধতা দেয়। অথচ মার্কিন রণনৈতিক স্বার্থ সিদ্ধ করা অর্থাৎ আল কায়দার বিরুদ্ধে দমনপীড়ন চালানোর জন্যই তিনি জর্জ বুশের এই শংসাপত্র আদায় করিয়া থাকেন।

নয়াদিল্লি যে পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট সম্পর্কে এই মার্কিন শংসাপত্রে প্রভাবিত নয়, নিজের অভিজ্ঞতা হইতেই পাকিস্তান ও তাহার শাসকদের স্বতন্ত্র মূল্যানে বিশ্বাসী, ইহা স্বাভাবিক। ভারত লক্ষ করিয়াছে, উত্তর-পশ্চিম সীমান্তের জনজাতীয় এলাকা হইতে আল কায়দাকে উৎখাত করিতে মুশারফ যত উৎসুক, অধিকৃত কাশ্মীরে স্থিত জেহাদি প্রশিক্ষণ শিবির বন্ধে ততটাই উদাসীন। এ জন্যই সীমান্ত দিয়া অনুপ্রবেশ অব্যাহত, অব্যাহত কাশ্মীর উপত্যকায় জঙ্গি তৎপরতা। পারস্পরিক আস্থাবৃদ্ধির জন্য গৃহীত বিভিন্ন ব্যবস্থা সত্ত্বেও (বাস-সার্ভিস চালু করা, বন্দি-মুক্তি ও বিনিময়বাণিজ্য ও সংস্কৃতির প্রতিনিধিদের সফর বিনিময় ইত্যাদি) তাই কাশ্মীর এখনও অশান্ত, রক্তাক্ত রহিয়া গিয়াছে। এমনকী ছরিয়ত নেতৃত্বের সঙ্গে শান্তিপূর্ণতার সূচনাও জঙ্গি তৎপরতায় কোনও ইতিবাচক প্রভাব ফেলিতে পারে নাই। মনমোহন নিশ্চয় মুশারফের সহিত তাহার দীর্ঘ বৈঠকে এই বিষয়গুলির উপরেই জোর দিয়াছেন। এ ধরনের বৈঠক ভবিষ্যতেও হইবে। হার্দ্য পরিবেশে বৈঠক হইতেছে, ঝগড়ায় সভা ভুল হইতেছে না বা সভার আলোচ্য বা পরিণাম লইয়া পরস্পরবিরোধী বিবৃতি জারি হইতেছে না, ইহাই প্রমাণ, প্রতিটি বৈঠকই কিছু অগ্রগতি সম্ভাবিত করিতেছে।

অনড় মনমোহন, মার্কিন চাপে পড়ে টেকি গিলছেন মুশারফ

সীমা সিরোহি • নিউ ইয়র্ক

১৬ সেপ্টেম্বর: সৌজন্য বজায় রেখে নীতিতে অনড়।
পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে শান্তি আলোচনায় ভারতের এই
মনোভাবই আর এক বার বুঝিয়ে দিয়ে নিউ ইয়র্ক ছাড়ছেন
মনমোহন সিংহ।

তাই আজ সাংবাদিকদের কাছে পারভেজ মুশারফের
‘সাহস এবং দৃঢ়তার’ প্রশংসা করলেও ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রী
বুঝিয়ে দিয়েছেন, সন্ত্রাস এবং সীমান্ত প্রশ্নে জমি ছাড়ার প্রশ্নই
ওঠে না। তবে শান্তি আলোচনা এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়ার স্বার্থে
প্রয়োজনীয় নমনীয়তা যে তাঁর
সরকার দেখাতে তৈরি, তার
ইঙ্গিতও তিনি দিয়েছেন।

সন্ত্রাস বন্ধ না সেনা সরানো—
কোন প্রক্রিয়া আগে শুরু হবে, তা
নিয়ে পারভেজ মুশারফের সঙ্গে
তাঁর বৈঠক উত্তপ্ত হয়ে উঠেছিল।
ভারত নিজের অবস্থানে অনড়
থাকায় উত্তাপ আরও বাড়ে। সেই
অবস্থানই জানিয়ে আজ ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রী বলেন, “মুশারফ
আমাকে বলেছেন, সীমান্ত-সন্ত্রাস বন্ধে তিনি দৃঢ়প্রতিজ্ঞ।
বাস্তবে পরিস্থিতি যদি সত্যিই বদলায়, আমরাও এগোতে
তৈরি।” তেমনই, সীমান্ত নতুন করে চিহ্নিত করার প্রশ্ন যে
নেই, তা-ও জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন তিনি। অবশ্য পাশাপাশি তাঁর
ঘোষণা, “সীমান্তকেই অপ্রয়োজনীয় করে দিতে আমরা এক
সঙ্গে কাজ করব।”

দুই নেতার শীর্ষ বৈঠকে কাজের কাজ কিছুই হয়নি এবং
সন্ত্রাস বনাম কাশ্মীর —এই পুরনো বিতর্কে শান্তি আলোচনা
থমকে গিয়েছে, এই ধারণা বদলানোর জন্য তৎপর ছিলেন
মুশারফ ও মনমোহন দু’জনেই। কাল রাতে এই বৈঠক নিয়ে
মুশারফের আশাবাদ প্রকাশ অবশ্য অনেকটাই বাধ্য হয়ে,
চাপের মুখে। সম্প্রতি মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট তাঁকে পরিকারই
বলে দিয়েছেন, কাশ্মীরে জঙ্গি সন্ত্রাস বন্ধে তাঁকে দ্রুত কিছু
করতে হবে এবং শান্তি আলোচনা থেকে সরে আসা চলবে
না। লন্ডন বিস্ফোরণের পাণ্ডারা যে পাকিস্তানের মাদ্রাসায়
একাধিকবার গিয়েছে তা জানাজানি হওয়ার পরে সন্ত্রাস

দমনের ক্ষেত্রে মুশারফের উপর চাপ দিন দিন বেড়েছে। এর
পরে মুশারফ হাড়ে হাড়ে বুঝেছেন, বুশ-ব্লেকার যেমন
চটেছেন তাতে শান্তি আলোচনা ভেঙে গেলে বা থমকে
গেলে পুরো দায় এসে পড়বে তাঁর উপরেই। ফলে ভারতের
কাছ থেকে দাবি অনুযায়ী কিছু না পেলেও প্রেসিডেন্টকে
দেখাতেই হচ্ছে, শান্তি আলোচনা এগোচ্ছে। তাই
পাকিস্তানের সংবাদপত্র বা কূটনৈতিক মহল একান্তে যতই
হতাশা, ক্ষোভ প্রকাশ করুক না কেন, মুশারফ বার বার
বলেছেন, বৈঠক ব্যর্থ হয়নি।

ভারত অবশ্য প্রথম থেকেই বলেছে, তড়িঘড়ি কিছু

আস্থাবর্ধক ব্যবস্থা ঘোষণা করা
তো তুলনামূলক ভাবে অনেক
সহজ। তবে সত্যিকারের
অগ্রগতির জন্য ধীরে সূত্রেই
এগোতে হবে। তাই মুশারফের
সঙ্গে বোঝাপড়াই মনমোহনের
প্রধান উদ্দেশ্য ছিল। তাই
আলোচনায় ভারত হতাশ নয়।

আজ সাংবাদিকদের সে কথাই
বলেন ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রী। “প্রত্যেক বৈঠকেই নাটকীয় কিছু
হতে পারে না। আপনাদের সামগ্রিক ভাবে বিষয়টি দেখতে
হবে। আমিও প্রেসিডেন্টকে আমাদের বাধ্যবাধকতার কথা
জানিয়েছি। তিনিও জানিয়েছেন।” এই বৈঠক থেকে যে
নাটকীয় প্রত্যাশার কিছু ছিল না, তা বোঝাতে গিয়ে মনমোহন
এমনকী এ-ও বলেন, “মূলত রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের সাধারণ সভার
অধিবেশনেই যোগ দিতে এসেছিলাম। মুশারফের সঙ্গে
বৈঠক তো এর ফাঁকে করলাম।”

তবে প্রেসিডেন্ট বুশের কাছে পরস্পরের বিরুদ্ধে নালিশ,
রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জে নাম করে এবং না করে অভিযোগ নিয়ে যে তিক্ততা
তৈরি হয়েছিল, তার কাঁটাছেড়া হচ্ছে দুই শিবিরেই। আর কে
নালিশ করার পুরনো কৌশল ফের শুরু করল, তা নিয়ে তলে
তলে দোষারোপও চলছে। এ বিষয়ে নিজের অসন্তোষ
কিছুটা প্রকাশ করে মনমোহন বলেন, মুশারফ রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জে
কাশ্মীর প্রসঙ্গ তোলায় তিনি বেশ অবাধ হয়েছিলেন।
“প্রেসিডেন্ট গত অধিবেশনে যে বক্তৃতা দিয়েছিলেন, তার
এর পর ছয়ের পাতায়

টেকি গিলছেন মুশারফ

প্রথম পাতার পর

থেকে এ বারের ভঙ্গি ছিল বেশ
স্বাভাবিক।” তাই প্রসঙ্গটি বৈঠকে
ভেঙেনও মনমোহন। তিনি জানান,
মুশারফ জানান, পাকিস্তান অবস্থান
বদলাচ্ছে, এমন ধারণা তৈরি করতে
চাননি তিনি। সেই ব্যাখ্যা আপাতত
মেনে নিয়ে ভারতীয় শিবির এখন
দেখতে চান, পরশু মনমোহনের কাছে
দেওয়া সন্ত্রাস বন্ধের প্রতিশ্রুতি কতটা
রক্ষা করেন পারভেজ মুশারফ।
সাংবাদিকদের কাছে তিনি তা
জানিয়েও দিয়েছেন।

সব মিলিয়ে মুশারফ বেশ ফাঁপরে।
এর একটা বড় কারণ লন্ডন
বিস্ফোরণের পরে তৈরি হওয়া চাপ।
লন্ডন বিস্ফোরণের পাণ্ডারা পাকিস্তানে
গিয়েছিল জানার পরে হোয়াইট হাউস
এবং ১০ নম্বর ডাউনিং স্ট্রিটে
বিপদসঙ্কেত পৌঁছয়। বুশ-ব্লেকার
আলোচনায় ঠিক হয়, জঙ্গি ঘাঁটি ধ্বংসে
মুশারফকে আরও চাপ দিতে হবে।
মার্কিন সূত্রে খবর, গত কয়েক সপ্তাহে
সম্প্রতি তিন বার মুশারফকে ফোন
করেন বুশ। মুশারফকে বলেন, তিনি এ

বার হাতেনাতে ফল চান। ভারতের
তরফেও চাপ আগাগোড়াই বজায় রাখা
হয়েছে। গত ওয়াশিংটন সফরে জঙ্গি
ঘাঁটি নিয়ে তথ্যপ্রমাণ দেন মনমোহন
সিংহ। এ বারও পাকিস্তানকে নিয়ে
একই অভিযোগ জানান তিনি। তার
উপরে মার্কিন গোয়েন্দারাও হোয়াইট
হাউসে জানান, সন্ত্রাসবাদের বিরুদ্ধে
লড়াইয়ে যে পাকিস্তান যথেষ্ট
সহযোগিতা করছে না। তাই এ বার
বুশের সঙ্গে বৈঠকে আশাবাদ কিছু
শোনেননি মুশারফ। আর সেই গুঁতো
এমনই যে বৈঠক থেকে অপ্রাপ্তির কথা
মুখ ফুটে বলা যাচ্ছে না, শুধু বার বার
দেখাতে হচ্ছে মনমোহন সিংহ
পাকিস্তানে যাওয়ার আমন্ত্রণ গ্রহণ
করেছেন। শান্তি আলোচনায় গতি
আনতে ভারতকে চাপ দেওয়াতে
ওয়াশিংটনে দৌড়ছেন নিরাপত্তা
উপদেষ্টা তারিক আজিজ। অথচ মুখে
পাকিস্তানের প্রেসিডেন্টকে ভারতের
কূটনৈতিকদের সুরে সুরে মিলিয়ে
বলতে হচ্ছে, কাশ্মীরের মতো বিষয়
যেখানে জড়িত, সেখানে চটজলদি
সমাধান আশা করছেন কী করে?

শান্তির পথে ধীরে চলব, বার্তা মনমোহনের

সীমা সিরোহি • নিউ ইয়র্ক

১৫ সেপ্টেম্বর: লাহোর বাসযাত্রার মতো কোনও নাটকীয় ঘোষণা হল না। হওয়ার কথাও ছিল না। কারণ, শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়ায় সুনির্দিষ্ট অগ্রগতি চাইলেও ভারত এই ব্যাপারে ধীরেসুস্থে এগোতে চায়। কিন্তু তাই বলে নেশভোজের আসরে চার ঘণ্টার প্রলম্বিত বৈঠক সেরে মনমোহন সিংহ ও পারভেজ মুশারফ খালি হাতে বেরোননি। নিজেদের জন্য বেশ কিছু দায়বদ্ধতার অঙ্গীকার করেছেন তাঁরা।

ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রী এবং পাক প্রেসিডেন্টের বৈঠকের পরে কূটনৈতিক দপ্তর মেনে যৌথ বিবৃতি জারি করা হয়েছে। সেখানেও নাটকীয় কিছু নেই। চার অনুচ্ছেদে বহু আলোচিত সেই কথাগুলিই বলা হয়েছে— দু'পক্ষই সন্ত্রাসবাদকে শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়ায় বাধা হয়ে উঠতে দেবে না, কাশ্মীর-সহ সমস্ত বকেয়া বিষয়ে শান্তিপূর্ণ আলোচনার মাধ্যমে সমাধান খোঁজা হবে ইত্যাদি। তবে এই আনুষ্ঠানিক ঘোষণার আড়ালে দ্বিপাক্ষিক বহু বিষয়েই সন্তোষজনক বোঝাপড়ায় পৌঁছানোর চেষ্টা করেছে দুই শিবির। সেই চেষ্টারই অন্যতম ফল, সর্বজিৎ সিংহের মৃত্যুদণ্ড রদ করার বিষয়টি দেখার জন্য মুশারফের ব্যক্তিগত আশ্বাস।

তবে বোঝাপড়া চললেও সন্ত্রাসের মতো বিষয়ে ভারত যে সুর নরম করবে না, সেটা জানাতে ভোলেননি ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রী। বিদেশসচিব শ্যাম

সুর নরম মুশারফের

নিজস্ব প্রতিনিধি, নিউ ইয়র্ক, ১৫ সেপ্টেম্বর: ভারত সাদা দিলে রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের নিরাপত্তা পরিষদে গৃহীত প্রস্তাবের ভিত্তিতে কাশ্মীর সমস্যা সমাধানের দাবি থেকে সরে আসার আশ্বাস দিলেন পারভেজ মুশারফ। আজ এক সাংবাদিক বৈঠকে তিনি বলেন, “আমরা এতটাই নমনীয়। কিন্তু সেটা এক তরফা হতে পারে না। ভারতকেও সমান ভাবে সাদা দিতে হবে।” যদিও কালই রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের সাধারণ সভার অধিবেশনে পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট বলেছিলেন, রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের প্রস্তাবের ভিত্তিতেই কাশ্মীর সমস্যা মেটাতে হবে। সেটাই পাকিস্তানের ঘোষিত নীতি। কিন্তু এ দিন তিনি বলেন, সেই অবস্থান থেকে পাকিস্তান সরে আসতে রাজি আছে, যদি ভারতও তার অবস্থান থেকে সরে আসে। পাকিস্তানের মাটিতে জঙ্গি শিবির আছে, এই অভিযোগও জোর গলায় খারিজ করেছেন মুশারফ।

সারন বৈঠকের পরে জানিয়েছেন, জম্মু ও কাশ্মীরে হিংসা এবং সন্ত্রাস চললে শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়ায় যে তার প্রভাব পড়তে বাধ্য, সেই স্পষ্ট কথাটা মুশারফকে বলে দিয়েছেন মনমোহন।

নেশভোজের বৈঠক সেরে বেরিয়ে মনমোহন সিংহ বলেন, “আলোচনায় আমি সন্তুষ্ট।” দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্কের সমস্ত দিক নিয়েই আলোচনা হয়েছে বলে তিনি জানান। আর পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট যৌথ বিবৃতি পড়ে শোনান। কিন্তু গত এপ্রিলে দুই শীর্ষ নেতার বৈঠকের পরে যে উদ্দীপনা ছিল, সেটা এ বারে দেখা যায়নি। সাংবাদিকদের প্রশ্নের উত্তরও দেননি দুই নেতা।

তার মানে আলোচনায় আশাপ্রদ কিছু হয়নি— বৈঠক শেষের দৃশ্য দেখে এমন আপাত ধারণাই তৈরি হয়েছিল। কিন্তু ঘটনা হল, ফলাও করে ঘোষণা করার মতো এ বারের আলোচনায় কিছু হওয়ার ছিল না। তাই ভারতীয় কূটনৈতিক মহলও হতাশ হওয়ার কারণ দেখছে না। পাকিস্তানে ভারতের প্রাক্তন রাষ্ট্রদূত সতীন্দ্র লাহা এবং পাকিস্তানের জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা তারিক আজিজ নিজেরা দফায় দফায় বৈঠক করে আগেই দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্কের রূপরেখা কী হতে

এর পর সাতের পাতায় ● দর কষাকষিতে অত্রই ছিলেন অটল... পৃঃ ৫

শান্তির পথে ধীরে চলব

প্রথম পাতার পর

পারে, তা ঠিক করে রেখেছেন। তারও পরে ভারতের জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা এম কে নারায়ণন বিষয়টিতে হস্তক্ষেপ করেছেন। তাঁরই তৎপরতায় নিউ ইয়র্কের যৌথ বিবৃতিতে সন্ত্রাস প্রসঙ্গ স্থান পেয়েছে।

পর্দার অন্তরালে বিবিধ কূটনৈতিক তৎপরতার জন্যই মনমোহন-মুশারফ পরস্পরকে একগুচ্ছ আশ্বাস দিতে পেরেছেন। মুশারফের যেমন দাবি ছিল, কাশ্মীর উপত্যকার বারামুলা ও কুপওয়ারা সেক্টর থেকে সেনা সরাতে হবে। এ বারের বৈঠকে অবশ্য নির্দিষ্ট কোনও এলাকার কথা বলেননি তিনি। মনমোহন তাঁকে আশ্বাস দিয়েছেন, দেশে ফিরে রাজনৈতিক-সহ সব মহলে আলোচনা করে তিনি সেনা কমানোর বিষয়ে সিদ্ধান্ত নেবেন। দু'দেশের স্বার্থ এবং নীতি অক্ষুণ্ণ রেখে দু'দিকের রাজনৈতিক বন্দিদের মুক্তির প্রসঙ্গটি বিবেচনা করার কথা বলেছে দু'পক্ষই। এই প্রসঙ্গে মনমোহনকে মুশারফ আশ্বাস দিয়েছেন, সর্বজিৎ সিংহের মৃত্যুদণ্ড যাতে রদ করা যায়, সেটা তিনিই দেখবেন।

অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ীর আমলে নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখা বরাবর ভারত-পাক সংঘর্ষ-বিরতি ঘোষিত হয়েছিল। কাশ্মীর উপত্যকায় যথার্থ শান্তি-প্রতিষ্ঠার স্বার্থে জঙ্গিরাও যাতে অস্ত্র সংবরণ করে, সেই মর্মে দীর্ঘ দিন ধরেই বিচার-বিবেচনা চালাচ্ছে দিল্লি। কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের সঙ্গে হরিয়ত নেতৃত্বের বৈঠকে এবং তার আগে হরিয়তের পাকিস্তান সফরে এই প্রসঙ্গে আলোচনা হয়ে গিয়েছিল। এ বারে সেই প্রসঙ্গে কথা বলতে গিয়ে মনমোহন মুশারফকে মনে করিয়ে দিয়েছেন, শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়ার স্বার্থে এই ধরনের আস্থাবর্ধক ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া যেতেই পারে। কিন্তু শর্ত একটাই: সীমান্তের ও-পারে সন্ত্রাসে মদত দেওয়া বন্ধ করতে হবে। এবং মুশারফ ফের আশ্বাস দিয়েছেন, সন্ত্রাস রোধের জন্য তাঁর আন্তরিক প্রচেষ্টা জারি থাকবে।

সার্বিক ক্রিক বা সিয়াজেন নিয়ে সমঝোতাসূত্রের কথাও বৈঠকে উঠেছে। কিন্তু কোনওটাই হাঁকডাক করে বলার মতো নয় বলে মনে করছে ভারতীয় কূটনৈতিক মহল। রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের সাধারণ অধিবেশনে কালই পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট কাশ্মীর-প্রসঙ্গ তুলে বলেছিলেন, নিরাপত্তা পরিষদে গৃহীত প্রস্তাব মেনেই কাশ্মীর-সমস্যার সমাধান হওয়া উচিত। তার পরে মনমোহনের সঙ্গে আলোচনায় ঘোষণা করার মতো কিছু নেই দেখে পাক প্রতিনিধি দলের এক সদস্যের হতাশ মন্তব্য ছিল, “ভারত প্রেমের ভান করে যেতে চায়। কিন্তু আমরা নিকা চাই।”

আর এইখানেই ভারতীয় কূটনীতিকেরা মনে করছেন, বিষয়টা ‘ভান’ বা ‘নিকা’র নয়। বাস, ট্রেন বা বিমান চালানোর মতো আস্থাবর্ধক ব্যবস্থার ঘোষণা করে দেওয়াটা বড় কথা নয়। সত্যিকারের অগ্রগতি চাইলে ধীরেসুস্থেই এগোতে হবে। তাই পর্দার আড়ালের কূটনীতির উপরে ভরসা করে পরিণত বিচারবোধের পরিচয় দিতে চান তাঁরা। আর সে জন্যই বড় ঘোষণার দিকে না-গিয়ে মুশারফের সঙ্গে বোঝাপড়া সারতেই নজর দিয়েছেন মনমোহন। বোঝাপড়ার দিকে লক্ষ্য ছিল বলেই মুশারফ মনমোহনকে বলেছেন, রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জে কাশ্মীর-প্রসঙ্গ তুলে এই বৈঠকের আগে তিক্ততা তৈরির কোনও উদ্দেশ্য তাঁ ছিল না। আন্তর্জাতিক মঞ্চে পাকিস্তানের কাছে যে যে বিষয় গুরুত্বপূর্ণ, সেগুলির কথা বলতে হত বলেই কাশ্মীরকে টেনেছেন।

যৌথ বিবৃতিতে বাণিজ্যিক ও অর্থনৈতিক সম্পর্কের উন্নতির কথা বলা হয়েছে। আমেরিকার অস্তিত্বের কথা মাথায় রেখে ইরান থেকে গ্যাস পাইপলাইনের কথা এড়িয়ে গিয়েছে দু'পক্ষই। বৃহত্তর লক্ষ্যের দিকে নজর রেখে বাগাড়ম্বর বর্জন করা আর বোঝাপড়ায় মন দেওয়া। মুশারফের সঙ্গে বৈঠকে আগাগোড়া এই নীতিই বজায় রাখেন মনমোহন।

Manmohan, Pervez burn midnight oil

S. Rajagopalan

New York, September 15

MANMOHAN SINGH gave Pervez Musharraf a clear message in New York: Terror must stop before troops can be withdrawn from specific areas of Jammu and Kashmir.

The two leaders met for over four hours on Wednesday night (Thursday in India). By the time it was over, it was past midnight.

In the run-up to the meeting, Pakistan had made public its case for withdrawal of Indian troops from Baramulla and Kupwara, arguing that such a step would contribute to a more positive environment in the region. Addressing the UN General Assembly, Musharraf had sought to equate the Kashmir issue with Palestine, saying the ongoing composite dialogue should be "result oriented".

"Resolutions of the United Nations, especially the Security Council's decisions, must be implemented. Our nations must not remain trapped, by hate and history, in a cycle of confrontation and conflict," Musharraf had said.

When the two leaders met, Singh pointed out that such remarks would do little good for maintaining a conducive atmosphere. Musharraf maintained that it was not his intention to create any negative setting. His only motivation, he said, had been to emphasise the need that Pakistan felt for progress on the issue.

Singh also voiced concerns over continuing acts of terrorism; Musharraf assured him that he would do everything possible to stop it. He said Pakistan was in the forefront of the war on terror.

Both leaders vowed to press ahead with the peace process — their joint statement stressed that terrorism would not be allowed to impede it — and reaffirmed their commitment to resolve "all pending issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, to the satisfaction of both sides".

SUMMIT HIGHLIGHTS

TERROR CONCERNS Singh says no troop withdrawal from J&K till terror stops. Pervez pledges to do his best

KASHMIR ISSUE In UN address, Pervez equates Kashmir with Palestine. Singh feels this was not good for conducive atmosphere

SARABJIT SINGH PM takes up issue; Pervez says it is being handled on a humanitarian basis

JOINT STATEMENT Terrorism will not be allowed to impede peace process. Both leaders commit themselves to resolving all pending issues, including Kashmir

The marathon meeting was held at Singh's initiative at the New York Palace Hotel. It had given rise to media expectations of a more spectacular outcome than the statement, seen as bland, that finally emerged. The two leaders did not take questions at their joint media appearance.

Foreign secretary Shyam Saran stoutly defended the outcome of the "free-ranging discussion" that was marked by candour. "We are not engaged in event-making, but a process that requires hard work," Saran said, cautioning against expectations of instant success.

Musharraf, who read out the statement at the brief media appearance, also said he had invited Singh to visit Pakistan, and the latter has agreed.

External affairs minister K. Natwar Singh and national security adviser M.K. Narayanan assisted the Prime Minister during the talks, while Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Kasuri and deputy security adviser Tariq Aziz assisted Musharraf.

Complete coverage on Page 2



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf after their summit in New York on Thursday.

AP

Sarabjeet deserves to die: Pak SC

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD, Sept. 14. — The death sentence for Sarabjeet Singh is "well-deserved" and "warrants no leniency", the Pakistan Supreme Court ruled while upholding the capital punishment on the Indian convicted for carrying out five bomb blasts in that country in 1990.

"The death sentence is well-deserved and he (Sarabjit alias Manjeet) did not warrant any leniency," said the detailed 27-page verdict authored by Justice Mohammad Mr Nawaz Abbasi. The judgment also

1579
took exception to the trial court conviction of on only one count of terrorism "when he should have been convicted and sentenced separately for each murder in each case," the *Dawn* reported today.

On 18 August, the Pakistan Supreme Court upheld the death sentence imposed upon Sarabjeet Singh, dismissing his appeals on similar judgments of Lahore High Court and an Anti-Terrorism Court. Sarabjeet was convicted of carrying out five bomb blasts that had left 14 killed and 89 others injured.

His lawyer, Mr Abdul Hamid Rana, said by tele-

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phone from Lahore that he had not yet received a copy of the detailed judgement and that he would file a review petition as soon as he got it.

Mr Rana further said that he would make a mercy petition to the Pakistan President if the Supreme Court confirmed the death penalty in its review, adding that he had not been allowed to meet Sarabjeet, lodged in Kot Lakhpat jail in Lahore. The review petition should be filed within 30 days of receiving detailed judgement and the court grants a minimum of 15 additional days to prepare the legal

201
defence, the lawyer said. He said that recent television interviews given by one of the witnesses asserting that the prosecution had forced him to identify Sarabjeet as the one who triggered the blasts, was of little legal significance until the witness contradicted his statement in the court.

Sarabjeet's family continues to be optimistic. "I am hopeful that Dr Manmohan Singh and President Pervez Musharraf would discuss granting unconditional clemency to him during their meeting today," Sarabjeet's sister, Ms Dalbir Kaur, said in Amritsar today.

THE HESMAN

MANMOHAN: STOP TERROR FLOW INTO J&K; PERVEZ: PULL OUT TROOPS FROM VALLEY AREAS

It's battle of onus before talks

Press Trust of India

NEW YORK, Sept. 14. — Ahead of their meeting here, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and President Pervez Musharraf have made comments seeking to put the onus of the progress in the India-Pakistan peace process on each other with the Indian leader making it plain that the flow of terror into Jammu and Kashmir must stop for that.

On his part, Gen Musharraf, who will be the Prime Minister's guest at a dinner tonight (5.30 a.m. IST on Thursday), introduced a new element into the dialogue process by seeking President George W Bush's help to persuade India to pull out troops from areas such as Baramulla and Kupwara in the Kashmir Valley to achieve forward movement in the discussions.

"The proposal is a message for India and the USA as well," a Pakistani official said.

Both Dr Singh and Gen Musharraf had separate meetings with the US President and the Indo-Pak peace process figured prominently.

They gave their assessment to Mr Bush and in the process sent out messages to each other on what needs to be done.

The Prime Minister did some plain-speaking, telling the US President that Pakistan still controlled the flow of terror into Jammu and Kashmir and this must



Dr Manmohan Singh with foreign minister Mr K Natwar Singh and Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (left) at a dinner reception for the members of the Non-Aligned Movement in New York on Tuesday. — PTI

stop, "for any real progress to be made in the peace process".

During a 30-minute one-on-one meeting with Mr Bush, the Pakistani President pushed hard for a pullout of Indian troops from specific areas in the Kashmir Valley saying it would be a "definitive step" towards a meaningful progress on the Kashmir problem.

Unless there is Indian reci-

procity on the key issue of Kashmir all other confidence-building measures would lose their impact, the General told Mr Bush.

Dr Singh and President Musharraf will review the progress of their dialogue on Kashmir and other issues during the dinner meeting. There is speculation that they may make progress on issues like Siachen and Sir Creek.

PM peeve at Atal out in meet with Bush

NEW YORK, Sept. 14. — The PMO today sought to downplay the controversy back home over the reference made by Dr Singh to Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee's criticism of the Indo-US nuclear deal during his talks with President Bush here last evening. Mr Bush was hopeful that he would get the US Congressional approval for the deal and Dr Singh told him that Parliament had discussed it and he had its backing. Dr Singh mentioned Mr Vajpayee's criticism which had come as a surprise to him. His media adviser Mr Sanjaya Baru said the reference to Mr Vajpayee was in the context of the President referring to the debate in the US Congress and Dr Singh responding by mentioning the reaction in India. "You are a good man. We can do business with you." These were the US President's words of compliments for Dr Singh. — PTI

Remark sparks row, page 4

Let all share peace & prosperity: PM

UNHQ, Sept. 14. — Dr Manmohan Singh today said globalisation should not leave in its wake large pools of dispossessed and rejected the notion that poverty, illiteracy and backwardness hindered exercise of democracy. "Globalisation is bringing new opportunities each day in the quest to overcome the age-old challenges of poverty, ignorance and disease", the Prime Minister said and called for ensuring that "its relentless advance does not leave in its wake large pools of dispossessed and that the voiceless are empowered".

"Only democracy can ensure that they, too, become stakeholders in a millennium of peace and prosperity that we, in the United Nations, seek to accomplish," he said while speaking at the launch of UN Democracy Fund, along with President George W Bush, on the 60th anniversary of the world body. The Prime Minister said poverty, illiteracy and backwardness did not hinder the exercise of democracy. "Quite on the contrary, our experience of more than 50 years of democratic rule demonstrates how democracy is a most powerful tool to successfully overcome the challenge of development," he said.

Democracy alone gives the assurance that the development aspirations of the poorest citizens of the society would be taken into consideration, Dr Singh said, adding "this is the unique strength of a democratic set-up".

He announced that India would soon establish a virtual centre on the Internet for providing information on democracy and a forum for exchange of experience.

Bush praises India

President George W Bush praised India's initiative in establishing the UN Democracy Fund, for which New Delhi has pledged \$10 million. He said the fund would help all those who want to join the democratic world and India, the largest democracy, had played a major role in establishing it. — PTI

More reports on pages 3 and 5

SEP 15 2001

THE STATESMAN

Wagah witnesses history of freedom

Statesman News Service

CHANDIGARH, Sept. 12. — It was a historic moment at Wagah border as India and Pakistan released 585 prisoners today, marking one of the biggest prisoner exchanges between the two countries in recent times.

Joyous and emotional scenes were witnessed on both sides of the border as the freed walked into the arms of relatives, many of whom had yearned for this moment for more than a decade. There was excitement in the air since morning with hundreds of families gathering at this border check post as the process for the exchange got underway.

This border check post in Punjab was buzzing with activity with hundreds anxious to see their loved ones return to India after languishing in Pakistani prisons for years. This was the biggest such exercise after 1974 when war prisoners were last exchanged between the two countries.

Pakistan was to release 435 Indian prisoners, including 371 fishermen (mostly from Gujarat) and 64 other civilians. India was to release 150 Pakistani prisoners, including one Mohammad Babar who was in Indian jails for over 15 years.

Officials said 64 civilians coming back home from

Pak no to swapping Sarabjeet

ISLAMABAD, Sept. 12. — Pakistan today ruled out swapping Sarabjeet Singh, sentenced to death for "spying", with some of the Pakistani prisoners housed in Indian jails, saying they were not "spies".

"We do not have any spies in India and all the 587 prisoners released today by both the countries at Wagah were civilians and not security prisoners," foreign office spokesman Mr Naeem Khan said here while replying to a questions on whether Pakistan would swap Sarabjeet with any its "spies" imprisoned in India. Pakistan today released 435 prisoners while India set free 152 Pakistani prisoners at Wagah border. — PTI

Pakistan were mostly youths from Punjab and other north Indian states. They had been duped by unscrupulous travel agents who had promised to take them to the West. Many families from Punjab, Haryana and Kashmir had arrived at Wagah despite having no confirmation on whether their loved ones would be released or not.

RECEIVED
THE STATESMAN

সর্বজিভের ছায়াতেই ওয়াগায় সীমান্ত পার বন্দিদের

ওয়াগা, ১২ সেপ্টেম্বর: ভারত-পাকিস্তান সীমান্তে আজ অনেক সর্বজিৎ সিংহ।

এক জন মহম্মদ বাবর। ১৫ বছর ভারতের জেলে বন্দি থাকার পরে তিনি ফিরছেন নিজের দেশে, পাকিস্তানে।

এক জন গুজরাতের বল্লভ। মাছ ধরতে গিয়ে ধরা পড়েন পাকিস্তানি নিরাপত্তারক্ষীদের হাতে। সেখানকার জেলে হুমাস কাটিয়ে দেশে ফিরছেন।

আরও এক জন সর্বজিৎ রয়েছেন। তিনি মদনলাল। ৩৮ বছর আগে সীমান্ত পেরিয়ে বিপদে পড়েছিলেন। তবে শেষ পর্যন্ত তাঁর খোঁজ পেয়েছিলেন আত্মীয়েরা। বছর কুড়ি আগেও বাড়ির মানুষ জানতেন, কোন জেলে আছেন মদনলাল। এর পরে এক দিন হঠাৎই আর খোঁজ নেই তাঁর। দিল্লিতে সরকারি মহলে অনেক ঘুরেছেন। আজ প্রচারপত্র ছাপিয়ে ওয়াগায় এসেছেন মদনলালের ভাই, ভাইপো। প্রচারপত্রে একটিই আবেদন: “এই আমার ভাইয়ের ছবি। ওকে কেউ কোনও জেলে দেখে থাকলে দয়া করে জানাবেন।” সীমান্তের ও পার থেকে যে ক’জন ভারতীয় আজ দেশে ফিরলেন, প্রত্যেকের হাতে তাঁরা ধরিয়ে দিলেন প্রচারপত্র।

আর এক জন সত্যিই সর্বজিৎ। সেনাবাহিনীতে কাজ করতেন। এক দিন প্রশিক্ষণের সময় নদীতে ভেসে চলে যান পাকিস্তানে। আত্মীয়দের হাতে তুলে দেওয়া হয় একটি মৃতদেহ। জানানো হয়, ১৯৯৮ সালে তাঁর অন্ত্যেষ্টিক্রম হয়ে যায়। তার পরেই বাড়ির লোক জানতে পারেন, আসলে পাকিস্তানের জেলে বন্দি সর্বজিৎ। সাত বছর আশা আর অপেক্ষায় বসে আছে পরিবার। আজ তাঁর বোনও সেই কথাই জানালেন। ভাইয়ের ছবি নিয়ে তাঁরাও এ দিন হাজির সীমান্তে।

এই ভাবে আজ সীমান্তে মিলনের মধ্যে সর্বত্র সর্বজিৎ। লাহোরের কোটলাখপত জেলে বসে মৃত্যু না মুক্তি, এই চিন্তায় যিনি দিন কাটাচ্ছেন, ওয়াগা জুড়ে আজ শুধুই তাঁর ছায়া।

মহম্মদ বাবরও সেই ছায়াতেই দাঁড়ালেন।

“সর্বজিভের বোনের কাছে, সংবাদ মাধ্যমের কাছে আমি কৃতজ্ঞ। তিনি তাঁর ভাইয়ের জন্য আবেদন করেন। সেই পথেই আমার বোন আমার মুক্তি কাম্য আওয়াজ তোলেন। মানবাধিকার কমিশনের কাছে



বিদায় পাকিস্তান। ওয়াগা সীমান্ত পেরিয়ে স্বদেশের মাটিতে পা রাখার ঠিক আগে ভূমিচূষন পাক জেল থেকে ছাড়া পাওয়া ভারতীয় নাগরিকের। সোমবার। — পি টি আই

যান। তাই সর্বজিৎও যদি আজ মুক্তি পেতেন, আমার খুশি দ্বিগুণ হত। আর মামলার প্রধান সাক্ষীই তো ওঁর পক্ষে দাঁড়িয়েছে এখন। তা হলে মুক্তি দিতে বাধা কোথায়?” বললেন তিনি।

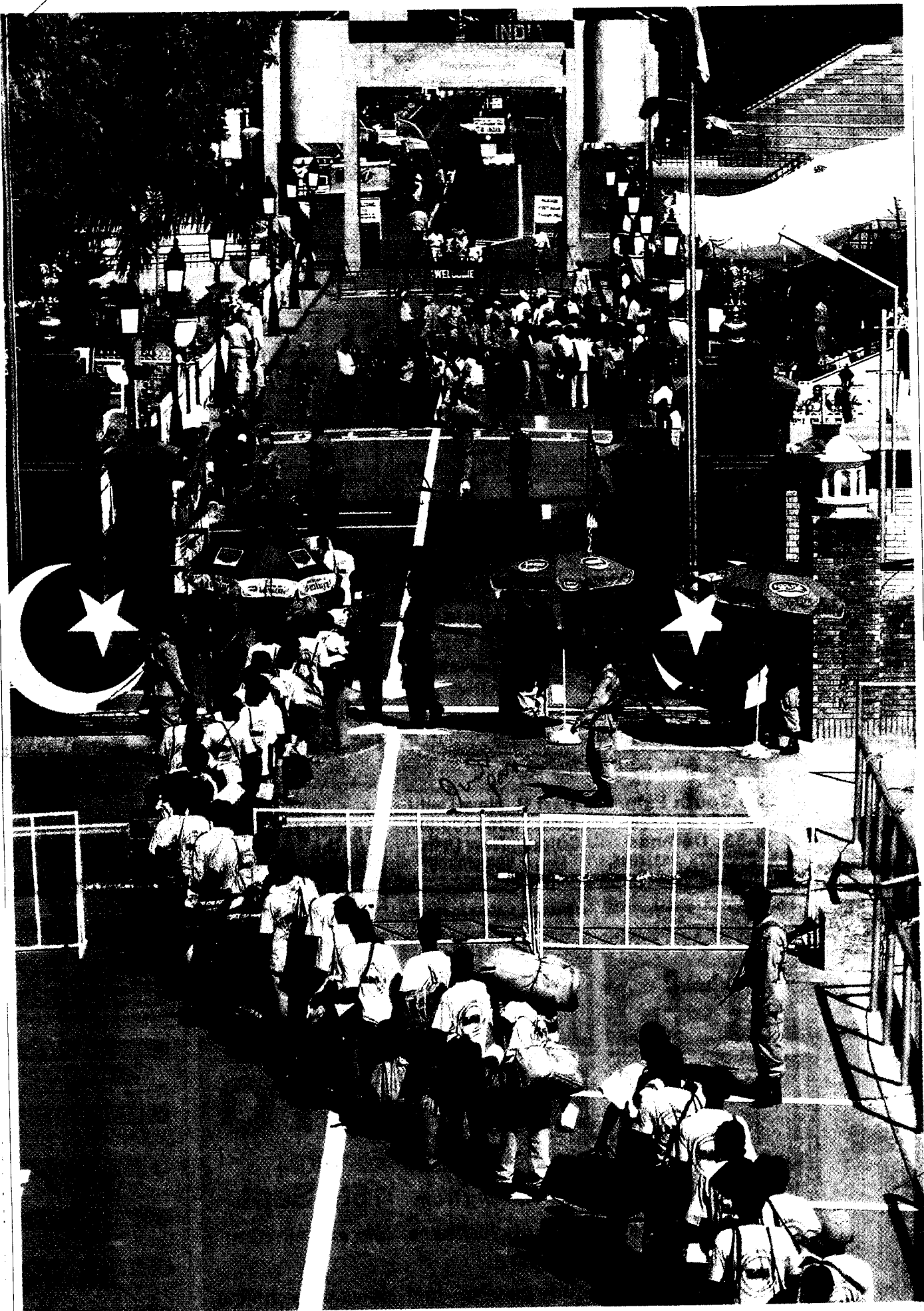
পাকিস্তান আজও ২৪ জন ভারতীয় সংস্কারীকে বেআইনি ভাবে জলসীমায় ঢুকে পড়ার জন্য আটক করেছে। কিন্তু সেই ঘটনার ছাপ বিন্দুমাত্র ছিল না ওয়াগায়। এখানে ভারত মুক্তি দিয়েছে ১৫২ জন পাকিস্তানিকে। আর পাকিস্তান ৪৩৫ ভারতীয়কে। সব মিলিয়ে ৫৮৭ জন আজ সীমান্ত পার হলেন। তাঁদের নিতে দু’পারের মানুষের ভিড়। আত্মীয়দের কারও চোখেমুখে খুশি। তাঁদের পরিজনদের আজ ঘরে ফিরছেন। কারও হাতে ছবি, চোখে জল।

এই মিলন অনুষ্ঠানে হাজির ছিলেন স্থানীয় সাংসদ নভজোৎ সিংহ সিধু। ছিলেন পাক পঞ্জাবের স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রী ওয়াসিম ফিজাদ। ভারত-পাকিস্তানের সম্পর্ককে আরও এক কদম এগিয়ে দেবে এই বন্দি-মুক্তি, বললেন দু’জনই। দু’দিন পরে নিউ ইয়র্কে রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের শীর্ষ বৈঠকের পাশে মুখোমুখি বসবেন মনমোহন সিংহ ও পারভেজ মুশারফ। প্রায় ছ’শো বন্দি-বিনিময়ের পরেও ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রীর দেওয়া সেই নৈশভোজে এক বার হলো উঠবে কোটলাখপতের বন্দিটির কথা।

কারণ, এই ৫৮৭ বন্দি-বিনিময় নয়, একমাত্র সর্বজিৎ সিংহকে ভারতের হাতে তুলে দেওয়ার ঘটনাই দু’দেশের সম্পর্কে মাইলফলক হয়ে থাকবে। পাক ‘গুপ্তচরের’ বদলে সর্বজিৎ নয়: ভারতে বন্দি কোনও পাক ‘গুপ্তচরের’ মুক্তির বদলে সর্বজিৎকে ছেড়ে দিতে নারাজ পাকিস্তান। কারণ পাকিস্তানের দাবি, ভারতীয় জেলে পাকিস্তানের যে সব নাগরিক বন্দি রয়েছেন, তাঁরা কেউই গুপ্তচর নন।

আজ পাক বিদেশমন্ত্রকের মুখপাত্র নঈম খান সাংবাদিকদের সাফ বলেন, “আমাদের কোনও গুপ্তচর ভারতে বন্দি নেই। আজ ওয়াগা সীমান্তে দু’দেশ যে ৫৮৭ জন বন্দি মুক্ত করল, তারা সকলেই সাধারণ নাগরিক।” এই ৫৮৭ জনের মধ্যে ১৫৪ জন পাকিস্তানি-ও ৪৩৫ জন ভারতীয়। নঈম আরও জানান, সর্বজিভের পরিবারকে পাকিস্তান ভিসা প্রেরণ, সংবাদপত্রে প্রকাশিত এই খবরের কোনও ভিত্তি নেই। তিনি দিল্লিতে পাক হাইকমিশনে খোঁজ নিয়ে জেনেছেন, সর্বজিভের পরিবারের কেউই এখনও ভিসার জন্য আবেদন করেনি। —

—রয়টার্স, পি টি আই



HISTORIC SWAP: Indian prisoners (in the foreground) and Pakistani prisoners (at the far end) cross the Wagah border. The two countries began exchanging over 500 prisoners. — PHOTO: AFP

583 prisoners walk to freedom at Attari-Wagah border

History made in largest repatriation between Pakistan and India in peacetime

Sarabjit Pandher

CHANDIGARH: Amid emotional scenes, India and Pakistan on Monday scripted history by repatriating 583 prisoners, the largest such mutual exchange during peacetime.

Against 152 Pakistani nationals who were listed to walk free, only 148 were repatriated as the documents of the remaining four were found to be incomplete. On the other hand, Pakistan returned 435 Indian nationals, including 371 fishermen.

The rest included 51 youths from Punjab who had been duped by unscrupulous travel agents.

The process of repatriation, identification and handing over of the released to their relatives at the Attari-Wagah joint check post along the Indo-Pakistan border was expected to be completed late in the night.

According to witnesses in Amritsar, a shortage of staff led to mismanagement as the local police had a tough time controlling anxious relatives who were held back at the outer gate of the check post, almost a kilometre away from the zero line.

● **Pakistan returns 435 Indian nationals**

● **Of 152 Pakistani nationals, 148 repatriated; documents for 4 incomplete**

● **Staff shortage causes mismanagement of process; police struggle to control waiting relatives**

No arrangements had been made for the relatives who braved the humid weather since morning for a glimpse of their loved ones. Border Security Force (BSF) jawans carried out the daily retreat ceremony at the Wagah post without the usual fanfare of spectators cheering them as they lowered the tricolour at sunset.

Following the simultaneous repatriation, authorities detained the released prisoner for questioning for a couple of hours. Relatives were then summoned to identify the released person before allowing him to walk free.

Once outside the outer gate of the check post, the other waiting relatives welcomed him with garlands and sweets.

While it was a time for celebrations for some, it was a day of major disappointment for many others, especially the families of

54 Prisoners of War who were believed to be held in various Pakistan jails since the 1971 War. On realising that their relatives were not among the repatriates, their distraught families were joined by others in an impromptu demonstration. Tears streamed down the faces of many as words betrayed the emotions.

Earlier, Wasim Sajid, Minister of Interior Affairs from the Pakistani province of Punjab, who crossed over into Indian Territory to discuss arrangements for the repatriation with the Indian authorities, told reporters that the exercise was a major indicator about the improvement in Indo-Pakistan relations.

Hopeful that more prisoners would be exchanged soon, Mr. Sajid said the Secretary-level talks in August was successful in laying down norms for expediting the identification process.

dures, which was the main reason for nationals languishing in the neighbouring country's prisons.

Led by his sister Dalbir Kaur, relatives of Sarabjit Singh who faces a death sentence in Pakistan, received the repatriated prisoners and tied *rakhis* on them.

Ms. Kaur said the family expected Sarabjit to walk free in the next exchange of prisoners.

Som Dutt, who was the first to be released after he spent eight years in Pakistan's prisons, said a number of Indians in the jails there had tuberculosis.

He was caught in Italy on forged travel documents and pushed into Lebanon, Turkey and Iran, finally landing in Pakistan's jails.

Gurdev Singh, a youth from Bikhwind in Amritsar, has returned after nine months in a Pakistani prison. He was duped by travel agents, which saw him land in Lebanon. From there he was deported to Turkey and pushed into Iran and Pakistan. He said after the international community raised Sarabjit's issue, the Pakistan authorities changed their treatment of prisoners.

Sarabjeet 'confesses', over to Pervez

AP & IANS

ISLAMABAD/CHANDIGARH, Sept. 10. — Sarabjeet Singh, facing a death sentence in Pakistan, was today shown on television admitting that he was responsible for a series of bomb attacks that killed several people across eastern Pakistan in 1990. Only weeks ago Pakistan's Supreme Court had upheld the death sentence handed to him in 1991 on charges of spying for the Research and Analysis Wing and carrying out the attacks. "Yes, I carried out bomb

attacks," Sarabjeet was seen telling state-run Pakistan Television. It was not clear when and where his statement was recorded, but it came a day after President Pervez Musharraf told the Associated Press that the man had "carried out terrorist attacks and killed people here." Gen. Musharraf also said: "One has to take the decision in a deliberate manner... It needs to come to me with all its legal implications, then only will I take a decision. But I am basically a person who shows common passion and mercy." The



Sarabjeet Singh's sister Ms Dalbir Kaur watches the telecast of President Musharraf's statement in Amritsar on Saturday. PTI

remarks come about a week before the President is scheduled to meet Dr Manmohan Singh on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in New York.

Foreign minister Mr K Natwar Singh said in New Delhi today: "I hope the (Sarabjeet) issue will be discussed when the Prime Minister meets President Musharraf on 14 September. We have told them (Pakistan) that he is an Indian national... We hope he won't be hanged."

Fear gripped Sarabjeet's family after TV channels repeatedly telecast President Musharraf's remarks. His sister Ms Dalbir Kaur said from her village near Amritsar that the General's statement had scared the family members

who were hoping Sarabjeet would be released. The family has maintained that the man on death row was not a spy and that he strayed accidentally into Pakistani territory in August 1990 while farming his land near the border.

"I can see the shadow of death on my brother once again. His daughters have never seen him. Please release him. He is innocent. We have suffered so much," a weeping Ms Kaur said. Sarabjeet's wife and two daughters have threatened to commit suicide if his life is not spared.

সন্ত্রাস বন্ধ করতে মুশারফকে চাপ দেবেন মনমোহন

অগ্নি রায় • নয়াদিল্লি

৯ সেপ্টেম্বর: গুরেজ সেক্টর দিয়ে অনুপ্রবেশ বা অযোধ্যায় হামলার মতো ঘটনার পুনরাবৃত্তি যাতে না হয় তা নিশ্চিত করতে প্রতিশ্রুতি রক্ষা করুক ইসলামাবাদ। হিংসা বন্ধ করা হোক উপত্যকায়।

১৪ সেপ্টেম্বর নিউ ইয়র্কে পাকিস্তানের প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফের সঙ্গে বৈঠকে এই মর্মে চাপ বাড়াতে চাইছেন মনমোহন সিংহ। প্রেসিডেন্টের সম্মানে সেখানে নৈশভোজের আয়োজন করবেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। তবে সৌজন্যের মধ্যে বজায় রাখা হবে চাপও।

বিভিন্ন মঞ্চে এবং ছরিয়ত নেতৃত্বের মাধ্যমেও (সম্প্রতি মিরওয়াইজ ফারুকের নেতৃত্বাধীন ছরিয়তের মধ্যমপন্থী অংশ

ইসলামাবাদে পারভেজের সঙ্গে বৈঠক করে এসেছেন) পারভেজ ভারতের শীর্ষ নেতৃত্বের কাছে বার্তা পাঠিয়েছেন, শ্রীনিগর তথা উপত্যকার বিভিন্ন এলাকা থেকে 'অতিরিক্ত' সেনা যেন কমানো হয়। ইসলামাবাদের বঙ্গব্যা, শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়ায় যখন বেশ কিছুটা এগনো গিয়েছে, বাগিচা থেকে বন্দি প্রত্যর্পণ— বেশ কিছু বিষয়েই আত্মবর্ধক পদক্ষেপ করা গিয়েছে, তখন এই সেনার বাহুল্য অপ্রয়োজনীয়, কাশ্মীরের বাসিন্দাদের শান্তি বিঘ্নকারী। এ প্রসঙ্গে প্রধানমন্ত্রী সম্প্রতি ছরিয়ত নেতাদের যা বলেছেন, তা তিনি পাকিস্তানের প্রেসিডেন্টকেও বলতে চলেছেন। তা হল, সীমান্ত বরাবর অনুপ্রবেশ এবং হিংসা বন্ধ হলেই সেনা সরানোর মতো পরিস্থিতি তৈরি হবে।

বিদেশমন্ত্রক সূত্রের খবর, বৈঠকের পরে যৌথ বিবৃতি ঘোষণা হতে পারে। দিল্লি চাইছে, সেই বিবৃতিতে যথেষ্ট গুরুত্বের সঙ্গে সন্ত্রাস প্রসঙ্গের উল্লেখ থাকুক। গত এপ্রিলে দিল্লিতে পারভেজের 'ক্রিকেট সফরের' সময় ভারত-পাক শীর্ষ পর্যায়ের যে যৌথ বিবৃতি হয়, সেখানে মূলত ভারতের চাপেই শেষ মুহুর্তে সন্ত্রাস প্রসঙ্গ অন্তর্ভুক্ত করা হয়েছিল। বলা হয়েছিল, মনমোহন সিংহ এবং পারভেজ মুশারফ- 'এই দুই নেতাই জানিয়েছেন যে তাঁরা শান্তিপ্রক্রিয়ায় বিঘ্নকারী সন্ত্রাসবাদকে বাড়তে দেবেন না।' কিন্তু এই ঘোষণার পরবর্তী

চার মাসে বাধা হয়ে বার বার ভারতকে বলতে হয়েছে, ভারতবিরোধী জঙ্গি কার্যকলাপে মদত দেওয়া বন্ধ করিনি ইসলামাবাদ। পাকিস্তানের মাটিতে এখনও একই রকম সক্রিয় জঙ্গি ঘাঁটি।

অযোধ্যায় জঙ্গি হানার ঘটনায় পাকিস্তানের দিকে আঙুল উঠেছে। গুরেজ সেক্টরে টানা তিন দিন চলেছে 'প্রক্সি ওয়ার'। প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় আগেই জানান, কাশ্মীরে সেনা কমানোর সিদ্ধান্ত পুনর্বিবেচনা করা হবে। বাস্তবে দেখা গিয়েছে উপত্যকায় সেনা বাড়ানো হয়েছে। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর নিউ ইয়র্ক সফরের প্রাক্কালে কেন্দ্রীয় মন্ত্রিসভার নিরাপত্তা বিষয়ক কমিটি সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে, অন্য উপক্রমত অঞ্চলের পাশাপাশি উপত্যকায় বাড়ানো হবে 'টেরিটোরিয়াল আর্মি'।

বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের খবর, সন্ত্রাস দমনের ব্যাপারে পাকিস্তানের

উপর চাপ দেওয়ার পাশাপাশি বেশ কিছু ক্ষেত্রে পারস্পরিক সহযোগিতার সূত্র খোঁজা হবে। বিদেশমন্ত্রকের মুখপাত্র নভতেজ সারনা বলেন, "ভারতের ৩৭১ জন মৎস্যজীবী ও ৭৪ সাধারণ নাগরিক পাক জেলে বন্দি রয়েছেন। আশা করা হচ্ছে তাদের শীঘ্রই ছাড়া হবে।" জানা গিয়েছে, দু'দেশের

জেলে বন্দি পরস্পরের নাগরিকদের দুর্দশা ঘোচানোর ব্যবস্থা নিয়ে সিদ্ধান্ত হবে। পাক জেলে বন্দি সর্বজিৎ সিংহের বিষয়েও আলোচনা হবে। আলোচনা হবে এ সব বিষয়েও:

- যুগ্ম আর্থিক কমিশনকে সক্রিয় করা এবং শীঘ্রই জয়েন্ট বিজনেস কাউন্সিলের বৈঠক ডাকা।
- বছর শেষ হওয়ার আগেই মুম্বই ও করাচিতে কনসুলেট খোলা।
- ইরান-পাকিস্তান-ভারত পাইপলাইন, তুর্কমেনিস্তান-আফগানিস্তান-পাকিস্তান পাইপলাইন এবং গালফ- সাউথ এশিয়া পাইপলাইন প্রকল্প।
- সিয়াচেন এবং সার ক্রিক সমস্যার সমাধানের লক্ষ্যে দু'দেশের মধ্যে বর্তমান প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক ব্যবস্থাকে সক্রিয় করা।
- খোকরাপার-মুনার্বাও রেলসংযোগ শুরু হওয়ার কথা ছিল আগামী বছরের ১ জানুয়ারি থেকে। কিন্তু সেই প্রকল্প এখনও বিশ বাঁও জলে। আলোচনা হবে এর ভবিষ্যত নিয়ে।
- অমৃতসর-লাহোর বাস যোগাযোগ।



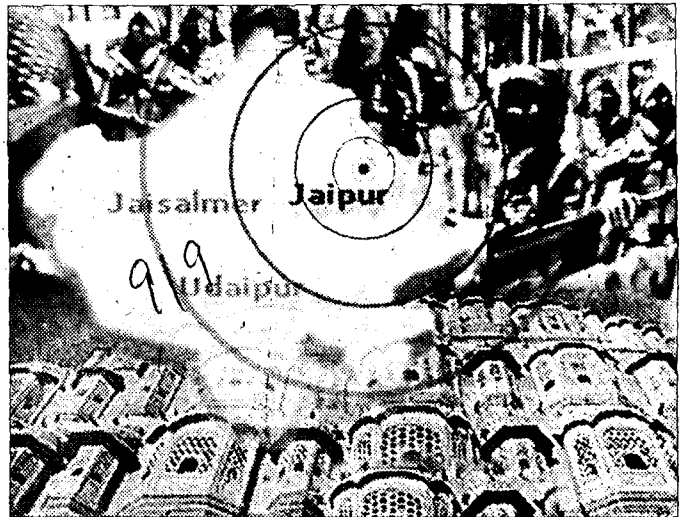
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Threat cloud over Pink City

Ranjit Singh Jamwal in Jaipur

Sept. 8. — Even as Rajasthan played host to the talks between Dr Manmohan Singh and Mr Tony Blair today, a suspected terrorist outfit — Al-Mansur — threatened strikes in Jaipur if Pakistani prisoners were not released from Rajasthan's jails. In a letter written to a local Hindi daily here, Al-Mansur threatened to blow up five-star hotels in the city and the railway station between 7 and 14 September. The outfit demanded the release of 35 Pakistani prisoners allegedly languishing in various jails of the state.

State home minister Mr Gulab Chand Kataria said: "We are checking the authenticity of the letter and Intelligence agencies are trying to collect more information. The Central government has also been asked for help in this regard." The origin of the e-mail address from where the message was posted was also being looked into. The letter was also a topic of discussion at the security agencies' meetings today. Written in English and Urdu, it was warned the BJP state government against making light of the threats issued. In the letter, Al-Mansur also threatened to prove its point if all Pakistani prisoners held in various jails of the state were not released. In the wake of the threat, the Rajasthan government strengthened



security at all five-star hotels as well as at places of attraction across the city. Intelligence agencies and police were keeping a close watch too. Rajasthan, with a border with Pakistan on its west, has quite a good number of Pakistani prisoners in its jails.

THE HINDU

Sarabjeet an Indian: New Delhi

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Sept. 5. — India today said it conveyed to Pakistan that Sarabjeet Singh, sentenced to death for his alleged involvement in the Lahore bomb blasts in 1990, is an Indian national.

“The Punjab government has now confirmed that the individual is indeed Sarabjeet... So we have informed the Pakistani authorities that he is Sarabjeet and he is an Indian national,” foreign ministry spokesman Mr Navtej Sarna said.

The Indian High Commission in Islamabad had sent its report to the foreign ministry here which, in turn, contacted the Punjab government seeking the details of Sarabjeet.

Asked whether the process of Sarabjeet’s repatriation to India now been cleared, the spokesman said: “Now, we have to wait and see how the Pakistani legal and juridical processes work.” Queried about when the Pakistani authorities had been contacted, he said: “Either today or yesterday.”

Asked about media reports which had quoted one of the key witnesses in the case as saying that he was not sure whether Sarabjeet was involved in the blasts, the spokesman said: “What the Indian government has been doing is focused on a certain series of steps which we have to take as a foreign government — to get consular access, a confirmation of national identity and so on.”

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After bus, it is trucks

Technical-level meetings to be held soon on operationalisation

B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD: India and Pakistan on Friday agreed to start a truck service on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad route as a first step towards promotion of trade across the Line of Control (LoC).

The decision is part of a series of confidence-building measures (CBMs) envisaged at the Foreign Secretary-level talks, which concluded here on Friday.

"Improved atmospherics"

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf told Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran that the "improved atmospherics had created [a] conducive environment to make real progress on all issues, particularly Jammu and Kashmir." Mr. Saran made a courtesy call on Gen. Musharraf and apprised him of the outcome of the second round of the composite dialogue.

An official statement quoted Gen. Musharraf as saying that he hoped that an end to human rights violations and withdrawal of troops from urban centres in Kashmir would help in raising the comfort level of Kashmiris. He emphasised the need to address the Kashmir dispute in a focussed manner to seek a final settlement acceptable to Pakistan, India and the people of Kashmir.

Gen. Musharraf told Mr. Saran that he was looking forward to meeting Prime Minister Manmohan Singh later this month in New York on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr. Saran said Dr. Singh was committed to the peace process and was keen on seeing progress

in the composite dialogue.

Asked at a news conference about Dr. Singh's recent remarks that attempts by Pakistan to combat violence and cross-border terrorism were "half-hearted," Mr. Saran said India welcomed the assurances by Gen. Musharraf that various measures were being taken to fight terrorism. It was conveyed that terrorism and extremism posed a danger to Pakistan too.

Mr. Saran said India hoped that "these commitments are, in fact, implemented. I, of course, drew attention to the fact that on the ground, infiltration and violence still continue, and it is our hope that this would subside." He recalled that both Gen. Musharraf and Dr. Singh agreed that terrorism must be confronted and not allowed to impede the peace process.

A joint statement said the Foreign Secretaries would meet in New Delhi in January next to launch the next round of composite dialogue. They would carry forward the discussions on Jammu and Kashmir and peace and security.

Dialogue 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 would be held between January and July 2006.

Poonch bus service

It was decided that technical-level meetings would be held as soon as possible on early operationalisation of the Poonch-Rawalpindi bus service and the truck service.

INDIA, PAK FOCUS ON PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE CONTACT

It's trade truck now

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD, Sept. 2. — India and Pakistan today announced a slew of measures to promote people-to-people contacts, including starting a truck service for trade on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad route.

The two countries also outlined a roadmap for the third round of the Composite Dialogue process to be launched next January in New Delhi with a meeting of their foreign secretaries.

Addressing reporters at the end of his two-day talks with his Pakistani counterpart, Mr Riaz Md Khan, here, foreign secretary Mr Shyam Saran said: "It's important to adopt a people-centric approach" and encourage cross-border trade and people-to-people contacts.

It was decided that technical-level meetings would be held on early starting of the Poonch-Rawalkot bus service and a truck service for trade on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad route. The foreign secretaries agreed to hold talks on establishing meeting points across the LoC for divided families. It was also decided that technical experts would finalise the modalities for the Lahore-Amritsar and Nankana Sahib-Amritsar bus services later this month.

PM promise

THIRUVANTHAPURAM, Sept. 2. — The Prime Minister today said he and the Pakistan President would "do all that is in our power to make the peace process irreversible". Dr Manmohan Singh said he was happy that the Hurriyat leaders had accepted his invitation for talks. He was addressing Congress functionaries at the KPCC headquarters here. In Srinagar, the Hurriyat said its talks with Dr Singh on Monday would be "Kashmir-centric" and focus on Armed Forces Special Powers Act, release of prisoners and human rights situation in J&K. — PTI

Mr Saran said during his "courtesy call" on Gen. Pervez Musharraf, he had conveyed to him that Dr Manmohan Singh "greatly looks forward" to the meeting between the two leaders in New York on 14 September.

Reciprocating the sentiments, Gen. Musharraf told Mr Saran that he too was looking forward to exchanging views with Dr Singh on various bilateral issues, including J&K.

Asked if he had raised the issue of Sarabjit Singh with Gen. Musharraf, Mr Saran said it was not talked about "specifically".

A joint statement issued after the

foreign secretaries' talks said there was agreement on the need to improve, on humanitarian grounds, the existing mechanism for quick disposal of consular issues related to prisoners, fishermen and inadvertent border-crossers.

The statement added that it was agreed that the foreign secretaries would meet in January 2006 to launch the next round of Composite Dialogue, when they will carry forward the discussions on J&K and peace and security.

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 would be held between January and July next year.

The two sides welcomed the continuation of the ceasefire and commended the finalisation of the agreement on pre-notification of ballistic missile tests which has been recommended for signing during the meeting between the foreign ministers here on 3-4 October. During that meeting, an MoU will also be signed for establishing communication links between the Pakistan Maritime Security Agency and the Indian Coast Guards, the joint statement said.

ক্ষেপণাস্ত্র চুক্তি হবে বিদেশসচিব বৈঠকে

ইসলামাবাদ, ১ সেপ্টেম্বর: ভারত-পাক বিদেশসচিব পর্যায়ের বৈঠকের পরেও কয়েকটি বিষয়ে সিদ্ধান্ত ঝুলেই থাকল। দুই দেশের মধ্যে যৌথ কমিশন ফের চালু হবে কি না বা সর্বজিতের মুক্তির মতো অনেকগুলি বিষয়েরই আজকের বৈঠকে মীমাংসা হয়নি। তবে নতুন বাস চালুর ব্যাপারে সম্মত দু'পক্ষই। দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্কের উন্নতির জন্য দুই দেশ সার্বিক আলোচনা এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতেও রাজি হয়েছে।

ভারতের তরফে লাহোর ও স্যার হিন্দ (লুথিয়ানা) এবং কার্গিল ও স্কার্দুর মধ্যে নতুন বাসের প্রস্তাব রাখা হয়েছে। পাশাপাশি, শ্রীনগর-মুজফ্ফরাবাদ বাসের সংখ্যা বাড়ানো এবং পৃষ্ণ ও রাওয়ালকোটের মধ্যে বাস চালু করার ব্যাপারে টেকনিকাল-স্তরে কথাবার্তা শুরু করার সিদ্ধান্ত হয়েছে।

ইসলামাবাদে ভারতের বিদেশসচিব শ্যাম সারন ও পাক বিদেশসচিব রিয়াজ মহম্মদ খানের বৈঠকে আজ এ মাসে নিউ ইয়র্কে ভারতীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গে পাক প্রেসিডেন্টের বৈঠকের আলোচ্যসূচি স্থির করা হয়। রিয়াজ জানান, ১৪ সেপ্টেম্বর মুশারফ-মনমোহন বৈঠকেও কাশ্মীরই মূল আলোচ্য বিষয় হবে। মনমোহন সিংহের ছরিয়ত নেতাদের সঙ্গে দেখা করার সিদ্ধান্তকে ইতিবাচক আখ্যা দিয়ে রিয়াজ বলেন, “আমরা বরাবর বলেছি, কাশ্মীরি নেতৃত্বকেও আলোচনায় সামিল করা উচিত।” অন্য

দিকে, শ্যাম জানান, কাশ্মীর প্রসঙ্গে আলোচনায় ভারত তার পূর্বঘোষিত পরিধি ছেড়ে বেরোবে না। ফলে, সীমান্তরেখা বদলানোর প্রশ্নও উঠছে না। কাল ভারতীয় প্রতিনিধিরা মুশারফ ও পাক প্রধানমন্ত্রী শওকত আজিজের সঙ্গে দেখা করবেন।

রিয়াজ জানান, কাল বৈঠকের শেষে যৌথ বিবৃতি জারি করা হবে। যৌথ কমিশনের প্রসঙ্গে রিয়াজ ও সারন জানান, এই বিষয়ে অক্টোবরে বিদেশমন্ত্রীদের বৈঠকে চূড়ান্ত সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া হবে। কমিশনের প্রধান হিসেবে দুই দেশের বিদেশমন্ত্রীরা থাকবেন। শ্রীনগর-মুজফ্ফরাবাদ বাস পরিষেবা বাড়ানোর ব্যাপারেও কথা হয়েছে।

আজ বিদেশসচিবেরা ক্ষেপণাস্ত্র সংক্রান্ত এক চুক্তির সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছেন। এ বার থেকে ক্ষেপণাস্ত্র পরীক্ষার আগে দুই দেশই একে অপরকে আগাম তথ্য দেবে। আগামী অক্টোবরে দুই দেশের বিদেশমন্ত্রীদের বৈঠকে এই চুক্তি সই হওয়ার কথা। সম্প্রতি পাকিস্তান তার ক্রুজ ক্ষেপণাস্ত্র বাবরের উৎক্ষেপণের আগে ভারতকে জানিয়েছিল।

দু'বছর আগে সার্বিক আলোচনা-প্রক্রিয়া শুরু হয়। আজকের বৈঠকের মাধ্যমে তার শেষ। রিয়াজ জানান, এই বিষয়ে তৃতীয় পর্যায়ের বৈঠকও শুরু করতে আগ্রহী দিল্লি ও ইসলামাবাদ। বন্দি সর্বজিতের প্রসঙ্গও বৈঠকে একবার ওঠে। তবে সে ব্যাপারে মুখ খোলেনি কোনও পক্ষই। - পি টি আই

ANADAL... KKA

Pre-notification for missile tests

India proposes two additional bus routes, but rules out redrawing boundaries

Agencies
Islamabad, September 1

TAKING FORWARD the peace process, both India and Pakistan on Thursday agreed to sign an agreement on pre-notification of ballistic missile tests when foreign ministers of both the countries meet here early in October. The agreement on pre-notification of missile testing does not, however, include cruise missiles.

India also proposed two additional bus routes between the two countries, but firmly ruled out redrawing of boundaries or fixing "artificial deadlines" for a resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir issue.

The two countries decided to continue the composite dialogue process and begin the third round by year-end.

The Indian side had proposed bus routes between Lahore and Sir Hind (Ludhiana), and Kargil and Skardu, foreign secretary Shyam Saran told a Press conference here after wide-ranging talks with Pak counterpart Riaz Mohammad Khan to set the stage for the meeting between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Pervez Musharraf in New York on September 14.

He said both sides had agreed "in principle" to increase the frequency of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service and that a hotline between the two foreign secretaries would soon be set up. Both countries had also agreed to hold technical-level talks for operationalising the Poonch-Rawalkot bus link, Saran said.

India was also prepared to explore "all possible means" with Pakistan to come to a "mutually acceptable solution" to the Kashmir issue, Saran added. He said

that, during his meeting with Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz on Thursday evening, he had conveyed Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's message that India was determined to address all outstanding issues, including the Kashmir issue, with Pakistan.

It was also conveyed that, "As far as India is concerned, the parameters within which we can address the issue of J&K are well known. The Prime Minister has himself articulated these parameters. It's not possible to look at the redrawing of boundaries or concessions in territorial terms", Saran said. India, he said, believed both countries had an obligation to minimise the "negative consequences" of the lines drawn on the map on the people on both sides of the border to make their lives easier.

Asked about Musharraf's statements insisting on a timeframe for a resolution of the Kashmir issue, he said the Pakistan President had not put any deadline on any issue between India and Pakistan and added, "Putting artificial deadlines is not the way to go about it".

Saran said the two sides had also finalised the text of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Indian Coast Guards and Pakistan Maritime Agency for communication links between them. This could be signed during the visit of external affairs minister K. Natwar Singh here from October 3 to 5.

Observing that he was "very satisfied" with the discussions, Saran said it had set the stage for a "very constructive" and "very productive" meeting between Musharraf and Singh in New York on the sidelines of UN General Assembly session.



India's foreign secretary Shyam Saran (left) with Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz in Islamabad on Thursday. AP

Asked if the issue of Sarabjit Singh — sentenced to death for his alleged involvement in the bomb blasts in Lahore and Multan was raised — Saran said it was not just the issue of one prisoner but a humanitarian issue of so many prisoners on both sides.

"We're checking the details. He (Sarabjit) has said he's so and so. That's being checked", external affairs ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna said.

Sarabjit identity

India said on Thursday that it was confirming the identity of

Sarabjit, sentenced to death in Pakistan, on the basis of information given by him during consular access in a Lahore jail earlier this week.

"We're checking the details. He (Sarabjit) has said he's so and so. That's being checked", external affairs ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna said.

US bounty for Pakistan Navy

PRESS Trust Of India
Islamabad, September 1

THE USA has offered to sell two Perry class naval frigates to Pakistan Navy besides providing eight long-range maritime patrol aircraft fitted with Harpoon missiles. The offer for sale "has been made by the US Navy" and the price of the frigates will be negotiated once the US Congress gives its approval, Chief of Pakistan Navy Admiral Shahid Karimullah told reporters here on Wednesday.

Named after an American naval hero, Oliver Hazard Perry, the frigates were designed by the US in the 1970s as general-purpose escort vessels.

Although some Perry-class vessels are slated to remain in the US service for years, many others are being decommissioned and transferred to other countries after necessary modifications. Besides the two US frigates, Pakistan Navy is also acquiring four P-22F frigates from China, Admiral Karimullah said. The frigates, three of which will be built in China and one in Pakistan, will form part of the Navy's fleet by 2013, he added.

Since the delivery of the first Chinese Frigate will take about three years to materialise, the US frigates could be a good stop-gap arrangement, he said.

Pakistan Navy is also holding talks with the UK to acquire British frigates, he said, adding the talks have not yet borne fruit as the prices are not acceptable to Pakistan. The Navy chief said no government in the past had thought about strengthening the Pakistan Navy and credited President Pervez Musharraf for his support.

India, Pakistan to continue dialogue

Joint Commission headed by Foreign Ministers to be revived to give a new impetus to bilateral ties

B. Muralidhar Reddy ¹⁰⁻¹
ISLAMABAD: India and Pakistan on Thursday agreed to continue the composite dialogue in the same format and revive the 'Joint Commission' to be headed by the Foreign Ministers of the two countries to give a new impetus to bilateral ties.

On the opening day of their meeting Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran and his Pakistani counterpart Riaz Mohammad Khan were unanimous on the 'integrity' of the composite dialogue and decided to commence the third round under the format in December this year.

Sharing details of the deliberations at a news conference, Mr. Saran said they have also agreed on the text of the pre-notification of missile tests agreement,

reached in New Delhi last month. The Foreign Ministers of the two countries would initiate it when they meet here from October 3 to 5.

Though it was decided to re-activate the Joint Commission, originally conceived in 1988, there was some ambiguity on its jurisdiction. While the Indian side referred to as Joint Commission on the lines of the 1988 body, Riaz Mohammad Khan chose to describe it as Joint Economic Commission.

In response to a question on the characterisation of the Commission by the Pakistani side, Mr. Saran told journalists not to read too much into it. "The Joint Commission is being revived in the form it existed before. As to the mandate we have suggested that the first

revived Commission meeting be held when the Foreign Ministers are here in October," the Foreign Secretary said.

The last meeting of the Joint Commission was held in 1989. At that time, it had four sub-commissions. "We will have to see what kind of format it should have," his Pakistani counterpart said, adding dates for its first meeting to be held at the Foreign Ministers' level were being worked out. He said the meeting would discuss what should be the mandate of the Commission, its structure and objectives.

Describing his meeting with Mr. Khan as 'productive' the Foreign Secretary said that they have set the stage for a 'very productive' interaction between Prime Minister Manmohan

Singh and President Pervez Musharraf in New York on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly on September 14.

Mr. Saran said the meeting also deliberated on the possibility of increasing the fortnightly Muzaffarabad-Srinagar bus service besides two additional bus routes connecting people on both sides of Kashmir. These routes are Punj-Rawalpote and Kargil and Skardu.

The Foreign Secretary said soon technical level talks would be held with Pakistan for operationalisation of the Amritsar-Lahore bus service. Two additional buses connecting Amritsar-Nankana Sahib and Lahore and Sarhind (Punjab) were considered.

On the subject of prisoners in

each other's country, Mr. Saran said both sides have agreed to put in place a mechanism for intimation about arrest of each other's citizens to enable the countries seek consular access and facilitate their early release.

Mr. Saran, who also called on Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, said that India was determined to resolve all outstanding issues including Jammu and Kashmir within the parameters laid down by Dr. Singh.

He said the solution would have to be without re-drawing of boundaries or any territorial concessions. At the same he reiterated concern of India over continued attempts at cross-border infiltration and said dialogue could succeed only in an atmosphere free of violence and terrorism.

দ্বিপাক্ষিক বন্দিমুক্তি

ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের সম্পর্ক যে সরকারি পর্যায়েও ক্রমশ স্বাভাবিক হইয়া উঠিতেছে, তাহার আরও একটি প্রমাণ, দুই দেশের যৌথ সিদ্ধান্ত যে, জেলখানায় বন্দি প্রতিবেশী দেশের নাগরিকদের অনন্ত কাল জেলে ফেলিয়া পচানো হইবে না, শাস্তির মেয়াদ শেষ হইলেই মুক্তি দেওয়া হইবে। শুধু তাহাই নহে, প্রতিবেশী দেশের নাগরিককে গ্রেফতার করার পর ধৃতের বিষয়ে তাহার দেশের সরকারকে সম্যক অবগত করা হইবে এবং দূতবাসের কূটনীতিকদেরও স্বদেশীয় বন্দিদের সহিত দেখা করিতে দেওয়া হইবে। চুক্তিটি অতিশয় গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। ইহা এমন সময় সম্পাদিত হইল, যখন চরবৃষ্টির দায়ে পাকিস্তানের কারাগারে মৃত্যুদণ্ডপ্রাপ্ত ভারতীয় বন্দি সর্বজিৎ সিংহের সহিত লাহোর জেলে দুই ভারতীয় কূটনীতিককে দেখা করিতে দেওয়া হইয়াছে। একই সঙ্গে পাকিস্তানের সফররত স্বরাষ্ট্র সচিবকেও তিহার জেলে আটক দুই পাকিস্তানি বন্দির সহিত সাক্ষাৎ করিতে দেওয়া হইয়াছে। পারস্পরিক বন্দিমুক্তি বা বন্দি বিনিময় চুক্তি অতএব কেবল মৌখিক শুভেচ্ছার ব্যাপার নয়, বাস্তব পরিস্থিতির শক্ত জমিতে তাহার ভিত।

ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের স্থলপথের দীর্ঘ সীমান্ত দিয়া যেমন এক দেশের নাগরিক অনেক সময় ভুলক্রমেও অন্য দেশের সীমানায় ঢুকিয়া পড়েন, তেমনই আরব সাগরে ঘুরিয়া বেড়ানো মৎস্যজীবীরাও অন্য দেশের জলসীমায় অজান্তে অনুপ্রবেশ করিয়া ফেলেন। যঁাহারা ইচ্ছাকৃতভাবে সীমান্ত ডিঙান, তাঁহাদের নানা অভিসন্ধি থাকে। কেহ মাদক চোরাচালানে জড়িত, কেহ বা চরবৃষ্টিতেও। সন্ত্রাসবাদীদের অনুপ্রবেশের বিষয়টি তো আছেই। তবে কোনও ক্ষেত্রেই অনুপ্রবেশকারীকে বিনা বিচারে অনন্ত কাল কারাগারে প্রবাসজীবন যাপনে বাধ্য করা মানবিক নয়। একই ভাবে শাস্তির মেয়াদ-অন্তে জেলে আটক রাখাও অন্যায়। বহু ভারতীয় ও পাকিস্তানি মৎস্যজীবী ও সাধারণ নাগরিক এই অমানবিকতার শিকার হইয়াছেন। এত দিন রাষ্ট্রপ্রধানের শুভেচ্ছার প্রকাশ হিসাবে রাজতন্ত্রের সাবেক কায়দায় এক সঙ্গে কিছু বন্দিকে মুক্তি দিয়া স্বদেশে ফেরত পাঠানোর চল ছিল। কিন্তু রাষ্ট্রনায়কের অভিপ্রায়নির্ভর এই ঘটনার মধ্যে অনুকম্পা বা দেখনদারি যতটা, ন্যায়বিচার ও মানবিক অধিকার ততটা নাই। অন্য দেশের জেলে পচিয়া মরার অন্যায্যটির প্রতিবিধান একটি দ্বিপাক্ষিক বন্দোবস্ত দাবি করিতেছিল। এই দাবি করাটির জেলে দণ্ডিত ভারতীয় বন্দি সর্বজিৎ সিংহের মুক্তির দাবিকে ঘিরিয়া নূতন করিয়া আন্দোলিত হয়। কেবল সর্বজিৎ-এর নিকটাত্মীয় ও শুভাকাঙ্ক্ষীরাই নন, ভারতের অনেক মহলেই তাঁহার দণ্ড মকুবের দাবি উঠিতে থাকে। এ জন্য ভারত সরকারকে কূটনৈতিক পর্যায়ে সক্রিয় হইতেও বলা হয়। পাকিস্তানের প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফের কাছে দণ্ড-মকুবের আর্জিও জমা পড়িতে থাকে। এই সূত্রেই দুই দেশের জেলে বন্দিদের ন্যায়বিচার প্রাপ্তি ও মুক্তির বিষয়টি সামনে আসিয়াছে।

একটি প্রাসঙ্গিক প্রশ্ন, সন্ত্রাসবাদ, অন্তর্ঘাত, চোরাচালান কিংবা অন্যান্য অপরাধে লিপ্তদের লইয়া। বলা হইতেছে, নূতন বন্দোবস্তের সুযোগে দুই দেশই নিজেদের গুপ্তচরদের বিনিময় করিয়া লইবে। কিন্তু দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্ক স্বাভাবিক হইতে থাকিলে পরস্পরের উপর চরবৃষ্টির প্রয়োজনও তো ফুরাইয়া যাইবে। যদি একটি দেশের ভূখণ্ড প্রতিবেশীর সার্বভৌমত্ব ও আঞ্চলিক অখণ্ডতা নাশের কাজে ব্যবহৃত হইতে না দেওয়া হয়, যদি নিরস্ত্রীকরণ এক দিন হইয়া ওঠে উপমহাদেশের জপমস্ত্র, তবে পরস্পরের প্রতিরক্ষা প্রস্তুতির উপর নজরদারি বা চরবৃষ্টির দরকারও তো থাকিবে না। সেই আদর্শ যুগের অভিষেক হয়তো এখনও দূরপর্যায়, তবে দ্বিপাক্ষিক মৈত্রী ও সৌহার্দ্যের লক্ষ্য তো তাহাই। এই মুহূর্তে অবশ্য পরিস্থিতি তেমন নয়। দাউদ ইব্রাহিম সহ সন্ত্রাসবাদী ও অন্তর্ঘাতকদের যে তালিকা পাকিস্তানকে ভারত দিয়াছিল, তাহাদের এক জনকেও ইসলামাবাদ নয়াদিল্লির হাতে তুলিয়া দেয় নাই। এ ধরনের অসহযোগিতা প্রতিবেশীর অভিপ্রায় সম্পর্কে সংশয় জাগাইয়াই রাখে। মৌখিক প্রতিশ্রুতি এবং বাস্তব অনুশীলনের মধ্যে ফারাক প্রায়শ দৃশ্য হইয়া পড়ে। তথাপি অসামরিক সাধারণ নাগরিকদের হয়রানি ও বন্দি প্রবাসের অবসানের রাষ্ট্রিক চেষ্টা স্বাগত। একজন গুপ্তচরের যাহা নিয়তি, একজন নিরীহ মৎস্যজীবীর তো সেই একই পরিণাম হইতে পারে না।

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FROM DAILY TIMES

Dragging feet over transit trade and Kashmir

PRIME MINISTER Shaukat Aziz said Saturday that Pakistan would only open the door to transit trade for India if India made progress on resolving the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan. He said that the Wagah border crossing in Lahore had always been open for Afghan goods to India, but "reverse traffic" could not be allowed as that was part of the issue of transit trade between India and Pakistan. He, however, sought to delink the Iranian gas pipeline project from Kashmir by saying, "Pakistan has informed India that it would allow a pipeline to pass through its territory if India was interested in buying gas from a third country". He had already told India earlier this year that "Pakistan would go it alone if India was not interested in building the gas pipeline as Pakistan needed to cater to its growing energy needs".

The "linking" of issues within the normalisation process between India and Pakistan suggests a crimp in the bilateral dialogue that began in 2004 with a lot of promise. It is moot whether the BJP government would have moved faster on the various "baskets" of issues meant to be decided in parallel, but the change of government in New Delhi has introduced hiccups that are disconcerting.

The "baskets" were always threatened by the overwhelming pull of the old way of running the bilateral equation. Pakistan wanted to move on Kashmir on a fast track while India bought time by bringing up the other issues. But the fact is that even the important water issue has not been handled bilaterally despite a number of meetings at the experts' level, and Pakistan has had to move for arbitration by the World Bank — a sure sign that normalisation is not moving forward significantly enough to lower the traditional mutual distrust between the two countries.

Therefore the conventional thesis that Indo-Pak normalisation will lead to the building up of enough mutual trust to enable a more meaningful discussion of the old tortured disputes, especially the Kashmir dispute, must be reconsidered. India has moved at its traditional leisurely pace — commented upon by other negotiators, especially on the issue where it enjoys the status quo, while Pakistan's President Musharraf seems to have gone out on a limb while "recasting" the Kashmir case in terms that hawks in Pakistan have started to attack, especially his hint that Pakistan would be willing to climb down from the position it had taken traditionally on the basis of the UN Security Council Resolutions.

The India-in-Afghanistan thesis will in the end prove more costly and less realistic to India than going through Pakistan after patching up with it

But the fact equally is that Pakistan's old strategy based on a conflictual relationship with India hasn't really gone away although alternative and lateral thinking is clearly visible on the periphery of the mainstream point of view. Pakistan is territorially thin vis-a-vis India and can best be used as a transit area for regional trade. But if the need for a degree of conflict with India remains the baseline of thinking in Pakistan, then this thin sliver of territory will continue to obstruct India's economic march towards Afghanistan and thence to Central Asia.

Islamabad finds it very difficult to rationalise to Pakistanis the giving of transit rights to India without a visible quid pro quo from India on the "core" issue. Despite what PM Shaukat Aziz says, the Iranian gas pipeline was offered to India without any linkage because the general feeling was that it might actually oil the wheels of India's decision-making on the Kashmir issue.

Unfortunately, if Kashmir is difficult to reopen for the Congress government, its unwillingness to move on the water issue is inexplicable. So we have Pakistan digging its heels on transit trade. India has been dithering on the issue of trade. The Iranian gas pipeline — a project sure to transform Pakistan in ways that the anti-India hawks in Pakistan can hardly imagine — has been allowed to become uncertain. India's own hawks in New Delhi may prefer doing business with Afghanistan and Central Asia by "encircling Pakistan". But the India-in-Afghanistan thesis will in the end prove more costly and less realistic to India than going through Pakistan after patching up with it.

(Editorial)

FROM DAWN

India, Afghanistan pledge to defeat terrorism

KABUL: India and Afghanistan pledged on Sunday to work together to defeat the menace of terrorism in the region. Indian PM Manmohan



This week, PM Manmohan Singh visits Afghanistan, Indian Sarabjit faces a death sentence in Pakistan, India and Pakistan release prisoners across their border. What is the reaction to all these events in leading Pakistani newspapers? A sampler:

positive development. Such steps, they said, would help secure the release of prisoners from both sides of the border on humanitarian grounds.

FROM THE NEWS

Indian diplomat meets convicted spy

LAHORE: Indian Visa Consular Deepak Kaul on Tuesday met spy Sarabjit Singh alias Manjit Singh, who has been sentenced to death, for the



Singh during his two-day trip to Afghanistan, first by any Indian prime minister in 29 years, said that the dialogue that has begun sets out a path for the progress. While issuing a joint statement, Singh said, "There is convergence of view that terrorism anywhere and everywhere poses threat. So, we are reiterating the belief that we are merchants of peace and hope to bring progress and stability."

Indian HC team meets convict

LAHORE: A two-member delegation of the Indian High Commission on Tuesday visited a fellow countryman who is on death row in the Kot Lakhpat Jail. Indian HC visa counsellor Deepak Kaul and another official, Mr Sharma, met Sarabjit Singh who was sentenced to death for terrorist activities in Pakistan. The two remained with the prisoner for about an hour and a half.

The officials said the purpose of their visit was to confirm whether the prisoner was an Indian national Sarabjit.

The diplomats said the prisoner was in a good health, adding he had given them a message for his family. The officials expressed ignorance when asked whether the prisoner's family would be coming to the Wagah border in a day or two.

They thanked the Pakistan government for giving them access to the prisoner, and termed it a

first time here at the Kot Lakhpat Jail.

Pakistan decided to grant the Indian diplomat consular access two days ago and informed the Indian High Commission on Monday about the schedule for their meeting. The Indian diplomat would inform his High Commission about the credentials of the prisoner as the meeting was aimed to confirm his identity.

The Indian High Commission is optimistic about resolving this issue, hoping to further strengthen the ongoing peace process between the two countries. Pakistan's Supreme Court upheld the death sentence for Manjit Singh earlier this month. Since then, his family has been demanding his release.

Singh's sister says her brother has been confused with a Manjit Singh, whom Pakistan wants for a series of bombings in Lahore in 1990. Pakistani officials said he had confessed to his crimes and was using Manjit Singh as an alias.

FROM THE NATION

Pak, India to release prisoners on September 12

NEW DELHI: In an agreement which is understood to have rescued the home secretary level

talks from a deadlock, India and Pakistan have decided to release on September 12 all fishermen and civilian prisoners who have completed their sentence. According to the joint statement issued at the end of the two days of intensive home secretary level talks in New Delhi Tuesday, India and Pakistan have said that they were giving necessary instructions to begin the exercise to set free these fishermen and civilian prisoners whose national status was confirmed.

The two countries, in the joint statement, have committed themselves to combating terrorism by taking effective steps for its "complete elimination." Addressing a joint press conference, Pakistan's interior secretary Syed Kamal Shah and his India counterpart V.K. Duggal, said that the two countries would provide immediate notification of the arrests made by either side and give consular access to all persons within three months of their being taken into custody as agreed by the Foreign Secretaries in December 2004.

India's home secretary Duggal read out from the seven-point joint statement that the two countries have also agreed that prisoners would be released by New Delhi and Islamabad immediately on completion of their sentence and nationality verification. According to Indian official position, some 600 civilian prisoners and fishermen were lodged in each other's jails. "We have also agreed to release on September 12, 2005, all fishermen and civilian prisoners who have completed their sen-

and could turn the dialogue table a stage of allegations and counter allegations.

At the end of the talks when the belated joint statement was issued, neither India nor Pakistan mentioned about their wanted persons. Indian home secretary V.K. Duggal refused to take questions from the media after reading out the statement.

The joint statement, which was delayed by over four hours, said India's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) would cooperate in the fight against terrorism. It has been decided that experts from the two agencies would meet at mutually convenient dates to work out modalities on areas they could work on jointly.

The home secretary level talks in New Delhi have concluded ahead of a meeting between the foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan in Islamabad September 1. The foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan are expected to confirm a meeting between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Pervez Musharraf on the sidelines of the UN summit next month.

FAIZUL HAQUE

Indian stubbornness may derail talks

ISLAMABAD: As top Pakistani and Indian diplomats review progress on the nearly two-year long peace process in their talks on September 1 and 2, officials here fear that Indian refusal to hold meaningful talks on Kashmir could lead to collapse of formal negotiations between the two foreign ministries.

The South Asian nuclear rivals have been striving for the last couple of months to devise a mutually acceptable strategy for the resolution of Kashmir issue through informal channels along with the ongoing formal talks. Officials working on the front of secret diplomacy have made several meetings during this period but no progress was achieved, said diplomatic sources here, adding that deadlock continues to persist on Kashmir with Pakistan constantly demanding Indian troops' reduction whereas India asking for complete halt to the so-called LoC infiltration.

After the failure of secret diplomacy, the two foreign secretaries, Riaz Muhammad Khan and Shyam Saran, would endeavor to break the stalemate in their talks on September 1 and 2, but the sources said no breakthrough was expected even at the higher diplomatic level as far as Kashmir was concerned. In case the top

diplomats failed the core issue would be referred to top political leadership so that some sort of mechanism could be evolved for talks leading to the mutually acceptable solution.

President Musharraf would discuss Kashmir and its relevant CBMs with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh at the sidelines of UN General Assembly meeting in New York in September. Apart from that the two foreign ministers will also meet in Islamabad on October 4 and hence the talks on core issue would be shifted from diplomatic to higher political level.

The sources said Pakistani officials involved in formal and informal talks had told the top leadership in Islamabad that India was dragging its feet on the Kashmir question and it was unwilling to disturb a status quo. They said the upcoming foreign secretaries' talks had assumed great significance keeping in view the current stalemate over Kashmir and it would be the result of the negotiations between the top diplomats that would decide the fate of formal talks.

SHAIQ HUSSAIN

At the end of the talks when the belated joint statement was issued, neither India nor Pakistan mentioned about their wanted persons. Indian home secy V.K. Duggal refused to take questions after reading out the statement

Peace talks to resume today

ISLAMABAD, Aug. 31. — India and Pakistan will review the progress of the second round of the composite dialogue process and chalk out the future course of the peace manoeuvres during the two-day foreign secretary-level talks beginning here tomorrow.

Ahead of a meeting between Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and President Pervez Musharraf in New York, foreign secretary Mr Shyam Saran and his Pakistani counterpart Mr Riaz Mohammad Khan will review the progress made on the eight issues, including Kashmir, mentioned in the composite dialogue framework. The two sides may also consider a changed format to carry forward the process to address all outstanding issues.

Asserting that there has been "noticeable progress" in some of the issues discussed under the composite dialogue framework, Mr Saran had yesterday said in Delhi that "perhaps the composite dialogue will still need to be carried on in future as well, but perhaps, in a somewhat changed format". Besides reviewing the progress made on key issues like Kashmir, peace and security, CBMs, Siachen and Sir Creek, they will also take stock of the relationship and outline the course to move forward the dialogue process. They were also expected to prepare the agenda and groundwork for the Manmohan-Musharraf meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly annual session in New York next month.

Officials from both the countries admit that the second round of the dialogue process, unlike the first, made significant strides, especially on Kashmir. The meeting comes close on the heels of a decision made by the home secretaries of both countries to release all fishermen and civilian prisoners who have completed their sentence.

The second round of dialogue would formally end after talks between foreign minister Mr Natwar Singh and his Pakistani counterpart Mr Khurshid M Kasuri, scheduled for 3 October here. Under the terms of the process, the talks would be reviewed both by the foreign secretaries and the foreign ministers. The secretaries would decide whether to take the dialogue process to the third round or reactivate the joint ministerial commission. — PTI

বন্দিমুক্তি নিয়ে একমত ভারত ও পাকিস্তান

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ৩০ অগস্ট: মানবিকতার কারণ দেখিয়ে দু'পারের বন্দিদের ছাড়ার প্রসঙ্গে সহমত হল ভারত ও পাকিস্তান। দু'দেশের স্বরাষ্ট্রসচিব পর্যায়ের বৈঠকে গোয়েন্দা সমন্বয়ের ক্ষেত্রেও এক ধাপ এগিয়েছে দুই দেশ। যৌথ ঘোষণাপত্রে সন্ত্রাস নির্মূল করার প্রসঙ্গটি রাখা হয়েছে। সব মিলিয়ে একাধিক আস্থাবর্ধক ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের কথা বলা হলেও কাঁটা রয়েছে এক জায়গাতেই। দাউদ ইব্রাহিম।

ভারতের চাপের জবাবে পাকিস্তান কাল জানিয়েছিল, দাউদ ও দেশে নেই। আজ তা নিয়ে ভারত প্রকাশ্যে মুখ না খুললেও পাকিস্তানকে বেশি অস্বস্তিতে ফেলেছে আমেরিকা। ভারতে নিযুক্ত মার্কিন রাষ্ট্রদূত ডেভিড মালফোর্ড আজ তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ ভাবেই বলেন, “দাউদ নজরের মধ্যেই রয়েছে। আমরা চাই, ওর মতো লোকদের ধরা হোক।” শুধু এতেই থামেননি মালফোর্ড। মুশারফের অস্বস্তি বাড়িয়ে পাকিস্তানে জঙ্গি ঘাঁটি ভেঙে ফেলার দাবিও জানিয়েছেন।

ঘোষণাপত্রে আজ বলা হয়েছে, “দু'পক্ষই সন্ত্রাসবাদকে সম্পূর্ণ নির্মূল করতে প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ। এ জন্য কার্যকর ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া হবে।” এর পরেই বলা হয়, “ভবিষ্যতে, কোনও সুবিধাজনক সময়ে, সি বি আই এবং পাক গোয়েন্দা সংস্থা ফেডারেল ইনভেস্টিগেশন

দাউদকে নিয়ে চাপে ইসলামাবাদ

এজেন্সি-র বিশেষজ্ঞেরা পরস্পরের মধ্যে আলোচনায় বসবেন।”

দু'দেশের মধ্যে আস্থাবর্ধনের পদক্ষেপ হিসাবে বন্দিমুক্তির সিদ্ধান্তও

বলা নেই। ঘোষণাপত্রে বলা হয়েছে, বন্দিমুক্তি নিয়ে ২০০৪-এর ডিসেম্বরে বিদেশসচিব পর্যায়ের বৈঠকে যে সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া হয়েছিল, তা বাস্তবায়িত



ভারত-পাক যৌথ বিবৃতি

- সন্ত্রাস দমনে হাত মেলাবে দু'দেশের গোয়েন্দা সংস্থা।
- অন্য দেশের নাগরিককে বন্দি করলে বিজ্ঞপ্তি জারি।
- গ্রেফতারের তিন মাসের মধ্যে বন্দি-দূতাবাস যোগাযোগ।
- শান্তি শেষে অন্য দেশের বন্দি প্রত্যর্পণ।
- ইতিমধ্যে সাজা শেষ হওয়া বন্দিদের মুক্তি ১২ সেপ্টেম্বর।
- মাদক চোরাচালান রোধে সহযোগিতা বৃদ্ধি।

নেওয়া হয়। পাকিস্তানে অন্তত ৯২৩ জন ভারতীয় ও ভারতের জেলগুলিতে ৬০০-রও বেশি পাক নাগরিক বন্দি রয়েছেন বলে বৈঠকে জানানো হয়েছে। যদিও এই হিসাবের মধ্যে দু'দেশের কারাগারে বন্দি মৎস্যজীবীদের কথা

করা হবে। অর্থাৎ, গ্রেফতার করা হলে সঙ্গে সঙ্গে বিজ্ঞপ্তি জারি করা হবে। তিন মাসের মধ্যে বন্দিদের সঙ্গে সংশ্লিষ্ট দেশের কূটনৈতিক কর্তাদের দেখা করার অনুমতি মিলবে। শান্তির মেয়াদ শেষ হওয়ার পরে নাগরিকদের

প্রমাণ মিললেই তাকে মুক্তি দেওয়া হবে। যে সাধারণ বন্দি ও মৎস্যজীবীদের শাস্তির মেয়াদ ফুরিয়েছে এবং নাগরিকদের প্রমাণ মিলেছে, ১২ সেপ্টেম্বর তাদের দু'দেশই মুক্তি দেবে।

এপ্রিল মাসে নয়াদিল্লিতে পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট মুশারফের 'ক্রিকেট সফরে' দু'দেশের মধ্যে আস্থাবর্ধক আবহাওয়া চাঙ্গা হয়েছিল ঠিকই। কিন্তু সেই যৌথ ঘোষণাপত্রেও দিল্লি রীতিমতো চাপ দিয়ে সন্ত্রাসের প্রসঙ্গটি তুলেছিল। পরেও বিভিন্ন মঞ্চে যখনই সুযোগ এসেছে, ইসলামাবাদের মাটি যে ভারত-বিরোধী সন্ত্রাসে ব্যবহৃত হচ্ছে, সে কথা তুলতে ছাড়েনি দিল্লি। এই বৈঠকেও কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্রসচিব ডি কে দুগ্গল পাক স্বরাষ্ট্রসচিবকে জানিয়েছেন, অনুপ্রবেশ ও সন্ত্রাস দমনে ২০০৪-এর যৌথ ঘোষণাপত্র মেনে চলতে হবে। সেই ঘোষণাপত্রে বলা হয়েছিল, ভারত-বিরোধী সন্ত্রাস দমন এবং জঙ্গি ঘাঁটি ধ্বংসে সক্রিয় হবে পাকিস্তান।

সম্প্রতি কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্রপ্রতিমন্ত্রী রঘুপতি একটি বিবৃতিতে জানিয়েছেন, নয়াদিল্লি এবং উত্তরপ্রদেশের পশ্চিমাংশে ঘাঁটি গেড়েছে জৈশ ই মহম্মদ, লস্করের মত ইসলামিক জঙ্গি সংগঠনগুলি। এ ব্যাপারে একটি রিপোর্ট পাকিস্তানের স্বরাষ্ট্রসচিবের হাতে তুলেও দেওয়া হয়েছে।

Diplomats meet Sarabjit in Pak jail

Islamabad: Sarabjit Singh, facing death sentence in Pakistan, on Tuesday gave his personal details, circumstances under which he was arrested, tried and convicted to two Indian high commission officials who met him at the high-security Kot Lakhpath jail near Lahore.

Forty-one-year-old Sarabjit, who Pakistan claims is an alleged Indian spy Manjit Singh and blames him for the 1990 blasts in Lahore and Multan, is in good health and gave details of his parents, children and other members of his family during an hour-long meeting with Deepak Kaul, consular visa, and attache visa S C Sharma. His death sentence was upheld by Pakistan supreme court recently.

"We had an hour-long meeting with Sarabjit during which he gave us a number of his personal details as well as his side of the story", Kaul said after the meeting. He also gave a message to be sent to his family, which Kaul declined to reveal.

Sarabjit, whose family members in Punjab have threatened to kill themselves if Pakistan carried out the death sentence, gave details of the circumstances under which he was caught, tried and convicted, Kaul said.

The tall, lanky rural man appeared very intelligent and fairly knowledgeable and spoke both English and Hindi well, he said. About the confusion over his name and identity, Kaul said he



Deepak Kaul briefs media after meeting Sarabjit Singh

identified himself as Sarabjit Singh and not Manjit Singh as claimed by Pakistan.

During the meeting, Sarabjit was photographed to enable his family to identify him back home. The details would be sent to India for verification after which his national status will be established before further action is taken, Kaul said. India has also sought consular access for 65 other Indian prisoners languishing in Pakistani jails.

India was granted consular access to Sarabjit after it made a second request following Pakistan SC verdict on August 18 upholding the death sentence given to him by lower courts. Pakistan claims he was given a fair trial as Sarabjit was defended by a lawyer engaged by a Canadian human rights group. Agencies

India, Pakistan move forward

Some civilian prisoners are to be released; CBI, FIA to cooperate

Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI: In the first public sign of cooperation between the investigative agencies, experts from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Pakistani Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) will meet "in the near future" to discuss issues of mutual interest. This was announced by senior Indian and Pakistani officials on Tuesday.

A joint press statement issued after two days of talks between Union Home Secretary V.K. Duggal and Pakistan's Interior Secretary Syed Kamal Shah said all civilian prisoners in Indian and Pakistani jails — who had completed their sentences and whose nationality had been confirmed — would be released on September 12.

"The talks were held in a friendly and cordial atmosphere and the deliberations were frank and forthright. Both sides reit-

• Talks between Home, Secretaries were "frank and forthright"

• Investigative agencies to collaborate in criminal cases

• MoU between narcotics control agencies soon

erated their commitment to combat terrorism and re-emphasised the need for effective steps for the complete elimination of this menace," the statement said.

positive even as they discussed difficult questions that had divided them in the past.

On collaboration between the investigative agencies, the joint statement read: "Both sides underlined the need for cooperation between the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Federal

Investigation Agency and agreed that experts from both sides would meet at mutually convenient dates in the near future, to work out modalities for the implementation of arrangement for cooperation between the two agencies agreed earlier."

Asked what the "earlier arrangement" was, senior officials said the CBI and FIA could now seek each other's help in criminal cases on the basis of a prior arrangement.

Such arrangements, they said, were internationally accepted. The CBI and FIA would now assist each other in case of a request made by either side.

The Home Secretaries agreed to "implement the decisions" taken by the Foreign Secretaries in December 2004. They reiterated their commitment to provide immediate notification of arrests made by either side, provide consular access to all persons within three months of

arrest and release prisoners immediately after the completion of the sentence and verification of the nationality.

A memorandum of understanding between the narcotics control agencies of the two countries would be finalised and signed shortly.

Mr. Duggal told reporters that "utmost understanding" had been shown by the two sides to each other's concerns. The agreement was a "fairly substantial move forward," an achievement in itself.

"All other related issues pertaining to terrorism were also discussed," he said, and added that Mr. Shah had promised to look into India's concerns once he returned to Islamabad.

Mr. Shah said: "We are hopeful that, as agreed between us, this process of composite dialogue would continue further and each time we meet, we make a sincere effort to move further."

THE HINDU

HOME SECY TALKS ■ India seeks extradition of 5 hijackers of IC-814 and some Khalistan leaders

India, Pak exchange lists of most wanted

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 29

INDIA and Pakistan today exchanged lists of terrorists and criminals wanted in each other's country as both sides began their two-day home secretary level talks, to discuss issues of terrorism, drug trafficking and prisoners languishing in jails.

"We exchanged documents relating to terrorists, criminals and those involved in anti-national activities. While India gave a list of nearly 30 people, including underworld dons Dawood Ibrahim, Chhota Shakeel and Jaish-e-Mohammed chief Maulana Masood Azhar and ULFA chief Presh Barua, the Pak-



Home Minister Shivraj Patil with Interior Secretary of Pakistan Syed Kamal Shah (third from right), Pakistan High Commissioner Aziz Ahmed Khan and Union Home Secretary V.K. Duggal in Delhi. Ravi Batra

Sarabjit: India wants dates

New Delhi: Observing that Pakistan's decision to allow consular access to Sarabjit Singh, on a death row, was the first step to get into the facts of the case, India today hoped Islamabad would soon give dates when its diplomats could meet him. "First step for any action, including clemency, is consular access so that one can get into the facts of the case. I hope that the dates will also be now announced soon," Union Home Secretary V.K. Duggal said at the beginning of two day Indo-Pak Home Secretary-level talks.

Among other names in the Indian list are those of Tiger Memon and PoK-based Hizbul Mujahideen

supremo Syed Salauddin. The Indian side also sought extradition of five hijackers of IC-814 in 1999 and some of the Khalistan leaders, including Ranjit Singh Neeta, who have been holed up in Pakistan since late 1980s.

The list of names given by Pakistan was not immediately available.

Shah described his talks as very useful and positive. "We are sincerely committed to taking care of the issues and problems that exist. If India is peaceful and India is secure, we feel Pakistan will be peaceful. If Pakistan is peaceful, India should feel that it would be peaceful. So, we have to work for this objective and we feel we are in the right direction," he said.

istani side handed over names of what it called were persons wanted in that country and living in India," an official who attended the meeting said on conditions of anonymity.

Delhi to seek Dawood's deportation

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI, Aug. 28. — Ahead of the Indo-Pak home secretary-level talks beginning here tomorrow, India today said it would seek deportation of nearly 30 terrorists and criminals, including underworld don Dawood Ibrahim, from Pakistan and push for an accord to combat drug trafficking.

"We will seek the deportation of all those who are involved in terrorist activities against India and are wanted in this country for serious crimes and terrorism-related activities and are based in Pakistan," Union home secretary, Mr VK Duggal, said.

Asked specifically if Dawood, declared a global terrorist by the

USA, would figure in the list of those whose deportation is being sought by India, Mr Duggal said: "We will ask for all those who are wanted in India so that they can face the due process of law here (clearly indicating that the underworld don was part of the list)."

On whether new names of terrorists and criminals have been added to the list of 20 wanted men given to Pakistan, the secretary said the list to be given during the home secretary-level talks comprises nearly 30 names. He, however, declined to spell out the names.

Mr Duggal said the issue of prisoners languishing in each other's country would also figure.

Asked if Sarabjit Singh's release will be discussed, he said the issue was being taken up through diplo-

Trade-off on Sarabjit'

ISLAMABAD, Aug. 28. — A PoK-based conglomerate of militant outfits has asked Islamabad to seek clemency for Md Afzal, sentenced to death in India in the Parliament attack case, before granting pardon to Sarabjit Singh awarded the death penalty here.

"Pakistan should first seek clemency for Kashmiri youth Md Afzal before India seeks release of Sarabjit Singh," Hizbul Mujahideen leader and chief of the United Jihad Council Syed Salahuddin said in a statement. — PT

dite finalisation and signing of a memorandum of understanding for an institutional mechanism to tackle narcotics trade.

Mr Duggal, who will be leading the Indian team for the parleys with the 11-member Pakistan delegation headed by its interior secretary, Syed Kamal Shah, said the need for an MoU to deal with drug trafficking was agreed upon by both sides in the last round of home secretary-level talks in Islamabad last year.

"The MoU's draft was given to Islamabad after making certain changes and it will be taken up during the talks," he said. He added that he expected the MoU to be inked during the talks between chiefs of narcotics control agencies of the two countries next month.

matic channels. Yesterday, the Pakistan secretary had parried questions on whether Sarabjit's release would figure in the talks.

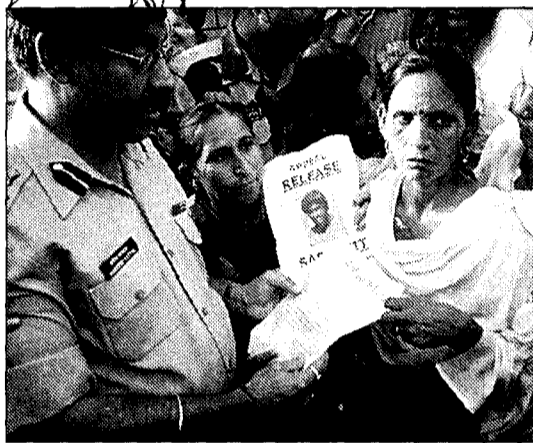
On drug trafficking, Mr Duggal said efforts will be made to expe-

Indo-Pak talks to focus on prisoners

New Delhi
27 AUGUST

AS the movement seeking the release of Sarabjit Singh gained momentum, Pakistan told India on Saturday that it was ready to discuss the issue of prisoners languishing in the jails of the two countries. This announcement comes before the two-day home secretary-level talks which begin on Monday.

Arriving in the capital for talks with his Indian counterpart VK Duggal on issues of terrorism and drug trafficking, Pakistan's interior secretary Syed Kamal Shah said he had come with a "very positive mind". However he remained evasive on



whether Singh's issue would be discussed.

"Usually the agenda (of Indo-Pak home secretary-level talks) is terrorism and drug trafficking, but this time we have requested that we

would like to discuss the issue of prisoners held in both the countries," Mr Shah told reporters.

Asked whether the case of Sarabjit Singh — sentenced to death for his alleged in-

volvement in the 1990 bomb blasts in Lahore and Multan — would figure in the discussions, he said: "Let us see".

Mr Shah, who is heading an 11-member delegation, said: "We hope and we are confident that it will be a positive meeting. It will be useful to both the countries and their people."

Two rounds of talks have already been held during which India has been pressing Pakistan to dismantle the terror infrastructure on its territory and fulfil the promise made by its President Pervez Musharraf on January 6, 2004 in a joint statement. A joint statement is likely to be issued at the end of the talks on Tuesday.

— PTI

29 AUG 2004 The Economic Times

2718 Delhi notices talks 'progress' 9/22/88 PAK 5

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI, Aug. 26. — Ahead of the Indo-Pak foreign secretary-level talks, India today said that there has been "noticeable progress" in the composite dialogue process and it will need to be carried forward to address specific important issues.

Foreign secretary, Mr Shyam Saran, who will be undertaking a three-day visit to Pakistan from 31 August for talks with his counterpart, Mr Riaz Muhammad Khan on the composite dialogue process, said it has been "quite useful" and that "there has been noticeable progress" in some areas. Asked about reports in Pakistani media that further talks could be held under the aegis of a Indo-Pak joint commission, Mr Saran said the mandate of any such body would have to be discussed. He noted that the joint commission in the 1980s related to economic and trade issues, as also on promoting people-to-people contacts.

... and Pak hand in Afghanistan

Ahead of Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh's visit to Kabul on Sunday, India

today offered full support to Afghanistan, including strengthening its security capabilities, to effectively deal with the "newly-emerging threat" from Taliban operating from Pakistan.

It would also undertake developmental projects worth 50 million US dollars in the war-ravaged country.

Foreign secretary, Mr Shyam Saran told reporters here that New Delhi was also keen to develop trade and expand reconstruction works in the country but these efforts were being hampered by the denial of transit facility by Pakistan.

"We want Afghanistan to emerge as a democratic, independent, sovereign country, in full mastery of its own destiny.... It is in our interest to ensure that Afghanistan does not become a kind of a centre of extremism or terrorism once again. Anything that threatens Afghanistan's stability is a matter of concern for us," he said.

Stability of Afghanistan continues to be threatened by the activities of "remnant Taliban" operating from Pakistan and added that India was ready to expand support in the area of security if Kabul sought it. Citing some recent incidents, Mr Saran said, "insurgents are coming in from Pakistan and indulging in violent acts."

THE STATESMAN

Pakistan agrees to give consular access to Sarabjit Singh

HO-12 ✓ 2718
9/27/80

Foreign Secretary to discuss issue of prisoners during Islamabad visit

Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Islamabad has agreed to provide consular access to Sarabjit Singh, an Indian "national" sentenced to death by Pakistani courts, Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran announced on Friday.

Mr. Saran stated that the issue of prisoners was always on the agenda of the dialogue between India and Pakistan. It would also figure in the August 29-30 discussions between the Indian and Pakistani Home Secretaries in New Delhi.

The Foreign Secretary, who will be in Islamabad at the end of the month for bilateral talks as part of the composite dialogue framework, remarked that the need to resolve the issue of Indian and Pakistani prisoners from

a humanitarian angle would also be discussed with his counterpart.

Asked about the exchange of prisoners, Mr. Saran said: "We have not talked about prisoner exchange in relation to the Sarabjit Singh case. We have been talking about release of civilian and other prisoners including fishermen who are currently in the custody of Pakistan and also said that as a humanitarian gesture we would also be willing to release those Pakistani prisoners who are in Indian jails."

"In fact, we have agreed to release a very large number of Pakistani prisoners in India jails. But, the verification process is still being carried out. That is, the Pakistani side, which has been given consular access to these people, has to verify that

India willing to release Pakistani prisoners

Format of composite dialogue may be altered

Mandate of joint commission to be discussed

these are Pakistani nationals and would then be willing to take them back. So, that sometimes takes a little time."

In response to another question, Mr. Saran indicated that the format of the ongoing composite dialogue between India and Pakistan could be altered. Though he did not go into specifics, there has been some talk of tackling certain issues in the

"two plus six" composite dialogue at the level of Foreign Ministers.

Mr. Saran also said that the mandate of the now-revived joint commission would also be discussed during his talks in Islamabad. "The joint commission as it operated in the [19]80s had both economic as well as trade and also cultural and people-to-people exchanges in its ambit. But the composite dialogue is looking at certain very specific issues. For example, we have the Siachen issue, we have the Sir Creek, we are also discussing issues like terrorism, narcotics trafficking. So, it is not very clear at this point of time whether all this can be subsumed under what was originally the mandate of the joint commission between the two countries."

But these are things on which no definitive decisions have been taken. I think we really need to have a fuller exchange of views in Islamabad when I am there."

"But, I think when I visit Islamabad we will certainly have an exchange of views as to how both sides look at the role that the joint commission can perform, whether its focus will be mostly on the economic relationship between the two countries, or whether we will be looking at a broader format," he stated.

Pointing out that there had been notable progress in some of the issues discussed under the composite dialogue framework, the Foreign Secretary said: "So, perhaps, the composite dialogue will still need to be carried on in future as well but, perhaps, in somewhat of a changed format. But these are things on which no definitive decisions have been taken. I think we really need to have a fuller exchange of views in Islamabad when I am there."

27 AUG 2005

The

26 AUG 2005

সর্বজিৎকে নিয়ে কূটনৈতিক চাপ বাড়াচ্ছে দিল্লি

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২৫ আগস্ট: পাকিস্তানে ভারতীয় 'গুপ্তচর' তথা ফার্সির আসামি সর্বজিৎ সিংহের প্রাণরক্ষার জন্য কূটনৈতিক স্তরে সব রকম চেষ্টা চালাচ্ছে ভারত। আজ দিল্লিতে পাক হাইকমিশনার আজিজ আহমেদ খান ভারতীয় বিদেশমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গে দেখা করলে নটবর সিংহ তাঁর মাধ্যমে পাক সরকারের কাছে এই অনুরোধ রাখেন। এ মাসের শেষে পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে বিদেশসচিব পর্যায়ের বৈঠকেও সরকারের তরফে এ নিয়ে দরবার করবেন বিদেশসচিব শ্যাম সারন। ভারত-পাক শান্তি প্রক্রিয়ার মাঝপথে সর্বজিৎ-প্রসঙ্গটি ক্রমেই একটি কূটনৈতিক দর কষাকষিতে পরিণত হচ্ছে। তবে দু'দেশই যথেষ্ট সাবধানে পা ফেলছে। পাকিস্তানের পক্ষে বিষয়টি সহানুভূতির সঙ্গে বিবেচনা করা হবে বলে ইঙ্গিত দেওয়া হয়েছে। কাল পাকিস্তানের বিদেশবিষয়ক সংসদীয় স্ট্যান্ডিং কমিটির বৈঠকে সর্বজিৎের বিষয়টি নিয়ে আলোচনা হবে বলে জানা গিয়েছে। ভারতও পাক

সর্বজিৎকে নিয়ে জোরালো আবেগ কাজ করছে। শাহরুখ খানের মতো তারকারাও আবেদন জানিয়ে বলেছেন, সর্বজিৎকে মানবিকতার স্বাতিয়ে মুক্তি দেওয়া হোক। এ সবে মধোই আজ এক অবসরপ্রাপ্ত বিএসএফ জওয়ান দাবি করেছেন, ১৫ বছর আগে সর্বজিৎের মতো দেখতে এক জনকে তিনি অমৃতসরের রাজপাল চৌকির কাছে সীমান্ত পারিয়ে পাকিস্তানে যেতে দেখেন। তিনি চৈঁচিয়ে থামতে বললেও ওই ব্যক্তি তা শুনতে পাননি। ও পার্বে যাওয়ার সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই পাক সীমান্তরক্ষবাহিনী লোকটিকে ধেফতার করে। এখন চিঁড়িতে সর্বজিৎের ছবি দেখে ওই জওয়ানের চেনা মনে হয়েছে। তাঁর দাবি সত্যি হলে প্রমাণিত হয়, সর্বজিৎ ও সনজিৎ আলদাদ লোক।

সর্বজিৎকে নিয়ে জোরালো আবেগ কাজ করছে। শাহরুখ খানের মতো তারকারাও আবেদন জানিয়ে বলেছেন, সর্বজিৎকে মানবিকতার স্বাতিয়ে মুক্তি দেওয়া হোক। এ সবে মধোই আজ এক অবসরপ্রাপ্ত বিএসএফ জওয়ান দাবি করেছেন, ১৫ বছর আগে সর্বজিৎের মতো দেখতে এক জনকে তিনি অমৃতসরের রাজপাল চৌকির কাছে সীমান্ত পারিয়ে পাকিস্তানে যেতে দেখেন। তিনি চৈঁচিয়ে থামতে বললেও ওই ব্যক্তি তা শুনতে পাননি। ও পার্বে যাওয়ার সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই পাক সীমান্তরক্ষবাহিনী লোকটিকে ধেফতার করে। এখন চিঁড়িতে সর্বজিৎের ছবি দেখে ওই জওয়ানের চেনা মনে হয়েছে। তাঁর দাবি সত্যি হলে প্রমাণিত হয়, সর্বজিৎ ও সনজিৎ আলদাদ লোক।

পাকিস্তানেও সর্বজিৎকে নিয়ে জনমতের পরস্পরবিরোধী চাপ রয়েছে। জামাত-ই-ইসলামির নরমপন্থীরা মনে করেন, সর্বজিৎকে ছেড়ে দেওয়াই উচিত। পাশপাশি, ভারতে বন্দি পাক গুপ্তচরদের

নিষেধ আলোচনা হওয়া উচিত। আবার, কূটনৈতিক স্তরে সর্বজিৎকে ক্ষমা করা মানে ভারতের চাপের কাছে নতিস্বীকার করা। জামাত মুশারফকে পাঁচটা চাপ দিয়ে বলেছে, "উনি তো ওঁর নিজের উপরে হামলাকারীদের ব্যাপারে অত্যন্ত কড়া। দেশের উপরে হামলাকারীর জন্য এত দরদ কেন?" প্রসঙ্গত, ২০০৩ সালে মুশারফকে হত্যার চেষ্টা করার অপরাধে এক সেনাকে গত সপ্তাহেই ফাঁসিতে ঝুলিয়েছে পাকিস্তান। আর, সর্বজিৎের নামে ভারতীয় গোয়েন্দা সংস্থা 'র'-এর হয়ে একাধিক বিস্ফোরণ ঘটানোর অভিযোগ রয়েছে।

সর্বজিৎের গ্রাম ভিকিউইন্দের বাসিন্দাদের আপত্তি ঠিক এখানেই। সর্বজিৎই মনজিৎ নামে 'র'-এ কাজ করতেন, এটা তাঁরা মনে ন। ওঁদের দাবি, পুলিশি জেরার মুখে বাধ্য হয়ে সর্বজিৎ নিজেই মনজিৎ বলে মেনেছেন। ১৫ বছর আগেও তাঁরা এ কথা ভারতের তৎকালীন প্রধানমন্ত্রীর জানিয়েছিলেন। লাভ কিছু হয়নি।

Pak to consider India's Sarabjit appeal today

Agencies

Islamabad/New Delhi, August 25

PAKISTAN WILL officially begin considering a response to growing appeals from India to release Sarabjit Singh — sentenced to death — when the standing committee on foreign affairs of the Senate meets here on Friday.

The committee will review the situation following the pronouncement of the death sentence on Singh and the concerns expressed by India, Pakistan's Online news agency said on Thursday.

Foreign minister Khurshid M. Kasuri and foreign secretary Riaz Ahmad Khan will attend the meeting. The committee will also review steps taken by the government for the release of over 400 Pak prisoners held in Indian jails.

Natwar-Aziz meeting

Taking up the issue with Pakistan for the second consecutive day, In-

dia said it was a "humanitarian" matter and conveyed the strong public sentiment in the country favouring sparing of his life.

External affairs minister K. Natwar Singh raised Sarabjit's issue during a meeting with Pakistan high commissioner Aziz Ahmed Khan and his deputy, Munawar Saeed Bhatti, at the foreign office. The minister "reiterated the fact that this is a humanitarian matter and also that there's a strong public sentiment in India for sparing the life of the individual", external affairs ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna told reporters.

The issue of Pakistan providing consular access was again taken up, he said, adding, "We hope things will move in a positive direction". The spokesman said India's high commissioner in Islamabad Shiv Shanker Menon had taken up the matter with Pakistani foreign secretary Riaz Muhammad Khan on Wednesday.



Sarabjit's daughters, Sapandeep and Poonam, perform 'hawan' with the students of Gurukul College, Bhikhiwand near Amritsar on Wednesday. PTI

Sarabjit's family contends that it is a case of mistaken identity. Sarabjit has been sentenced for his alleged involvement in the bomb blasts in Pakistan in 1990. "As far as we're concerned, he (Sarabjit) has had a fair trial. He's been through the due proc-

ess of law. It was tried by the lower courts and then it was tried by the high court. After the high court judgment, an appeal was made by his lawyers to the Supreme Court, which upheld the high court decision. So, he's been through the legal process", Aziz Khan said. "But, considering that this request has been made, I'll convey it", he said.

Yagna for Sarabjit

Several college girls on Thursday performed a yagna (religious offering) in Bhikhiwind village in Amritsar, next to the Pakistan border, to pray for the life of Sarabjit. Singh's daughters, Poonam and Swapandeep Kaur, and wife Sukhpreet Kaur were also present in the Gurukul college premises during the yagna. The three later praised the media for bringing back a ray of hope to their lives which they had completely lost over the past decade.



Shah Rukh chips in

SHAH RUKH Khan, whose *Veer Zaara* dealt with a similar theme, has called for Sarabjit's release.

Meanwhile, the South Asian Free Media Association (Safma) said on Thursday that the plight of prisoners languishing in jails on either side even after serving their terms should be highlighted. "Hundreds of prisoners continue to languish in various jails of Pakistan and India even after completing their terms", Safma's Pakistan Chapter secretary-general Imtiaz Alam said in Chandigarh. PTI

Pak examines access to Sarabjit

Statesman News Service & PTI

ISLAMABAD/NEW DELHI, Aug. 24. — Islamabad today informed New Delhi that its request for consular access to Sarabjit Singh, sentenced to death for his alleged involvement in bomb blasts in Pakistan, was being considered. The news came even as senior Pakistan ministers debated if President General Pervez Musharraf was authorised to pardon the suspect.

Pakistan foreign secretary Mr Riaz Md Khan told Indian High Commissioner Mr Shivshankar Menon that India's request was being studied, the foreign ministry spokesman said in New Delhi.

Pakistan foreign minister Mr Khurshid M. Kasuri said the Indian request has been referred to the

No infiltration: Pervez

ISLAMABAD, Aug. 24. — Asserting that there was no infiltration into J&K from the Pakistani side, President Pervez Musharraf has said he would take up the Indian charge in this regard with Dr Manmohan Singh during their meeting in New York next month when Kashmir would be the "central point" of talks. — PTI

interior ministry and a decision on it would be taken soon. He added that Pakistan and India should accord a more humane treatment to prisoners from each other's side.

The Indian High Commission sought consular access to establish Sarabjit's identity before trying to get him out. The request for access, the second in the past 15 years since Sarabjit's arrest, has not been acceded to so far. "Despite repeated

attempts we have not been able to meet him or any of the 107 other prisoners convicted in Pakistan," an Indian official in Islamabad said.

Pakistan information minister Sheikh Rashid said, under Islamic law, Sarabjit could be pardoned only by the blast victims' relatives and even "the President cannot pardon the accused".

Sarabjit's Lahore-based lawyer said he would file a review petition in the Supreme Court.

The family of Sarabjit and some locals today took out a peace march along the Indo-Pak border at Khalra near Amritsar to appeal for his release. "We appeal to President Musharraf to free Sarabjit and to reverse the death sentence." Sarabjit's wife, Mrs Sukhpreet Kaur, who accompanied the marchers, told reporters.

24 AUG 2004

India seeks access to Sarabjit

9/29/8
PKA

5/1
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Statesman News Service

No mistaken identity: Kasuri

NEW DELHI, Aug. 23. — India today sought from Pakistan consular access to Sarabjit Singh, sentenced to death for his alleged involvement in bomb blasts, as the Prime Minister said he would take up the case with President Pervez Musharraf.

Dr Manmohan Singh gave the assurance to a delegation of Congress MPs and MLAs from Punjab.

Sarabjit, who the Pakistan government claims is Manjit Singh, a RAW agent, was given death sentence for allegedly being involved in four bomb blasts in that country.

Following the Pakistan Supreme Court's verdict upholding this judgment by an anti-terrorist court, Sarabjit's family members have intensified their campaign to secure his release, even threatening to commit suicide if they failed.

Terming it as a humanitarian issue, the external affairs minister, Mr K Natwar Singh, said: "We will take up the issue with the government of Pakistan".

"Our High Commission in Islamabad has taken up

NEW DELHI, Aug. 23. — Virtually ruling out that Sarabjit's was a case of mistaken identity, Pakistan's foreign minister, Mr Khurshid M Kasuri, told a TV news channel tonight that the matter was in court for 15 years but this issue had not been raised by his lawyer.

Asked whether Sarabjit would get clemency and live, Mr Kasuri said: "Frankly, when an appeal of clemency is made to the President, only then we would know".

Pakistan tonight said it had received the Indian request seeking consular access to Sarabjit and was processing it. The Indian High Commission here had sought consular access. — PTI

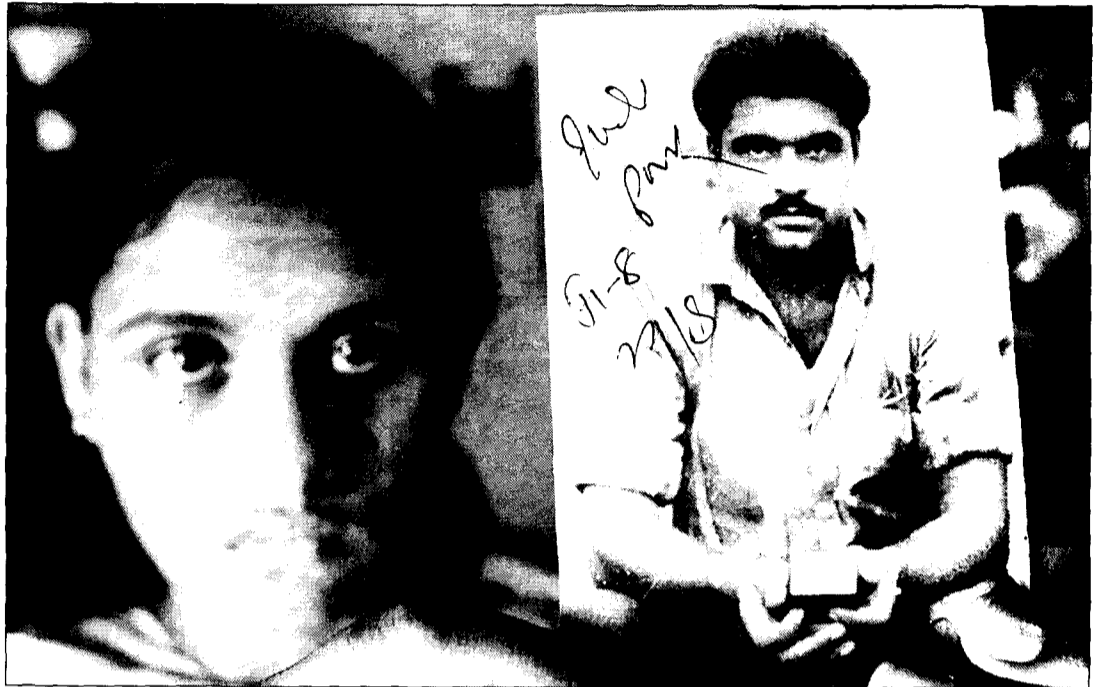
the matter and sought consular access," the foreign office spokesman, Mr Navtej Sarna, said.

Sarabjit's sister Ms Dalbir Kaur met the external affairs minister, Mr Natwar Singh, urging him to take up the matter with the Pakistan government. Denying that Sarabjit was a RAW agent, Ms Kaur said it was a case of mistaken identity.

21 AUG 2005

THE STATESMAN

Sarabjit's family looks heavenwards for help



Sarabjit Singh's daughter Swapandeeep shows his at their Bhikhiwind residence on Monday

By Yudhvir Rana
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bhikhiwind (Amritsar): When all hopes are dashed, god is the only hope left. This is what the family of Sarabjit Singh, who has been awarded death sentence in Pakistan on charges of spying, feels.

Early on Monday, the family and friends of Sarabjit walked to Gurudwara Shaheed Baba Deep Singh to pray for his release. "Only Gurughar (house of the Guru) can save him now," said Sarabjit's sister Dalbir Kaur, who claimed that her brother had wrongly been identified as Manjit.

On Monday, they sought the help of all the authorities they hoped could help Sarabjit escape execution: The Presidents of India and Pakistan A P J Abdul Kalam and Pervez Musharraf respectively, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and MPs Navjot Sidhu and Avinash Rai Khanna. Threatening to commit mass suicide if the execution was not stopped, Dalbir warned: "Both Delhi and Islamabad should know that Sarabjit will not be the only one who will be hanged. We have prepared five nooses at home, and we will commit mass suicide."

The fact that the issue was raised in parliament has given them some hope. Cutting across party lines, Parliament on Monday expressed concern at the death sentence awarded to Sarabjit. Articulating these concerns, Rajya Sabha chairman Bhairon Singh Shekhawat and Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee directed the government to furnish details of Indians detained in Pakistani jails. Minister of state for personnel Suresh Pachauri said in the Upper House that he would convey the members' sentiments to external affairs minister Natwar Singh.

The government is yet to make

a formal statement in the case. Dalbir said she has written to President A P J Kalam as well as to his Pakistan counterpart Pervez Musharraf to intervene in the matter. "He is not Manjit Singh, he is not a RAW agent. The entire village knows he is Sarabjit Singh. The two presidents must stop the injustice being done in the name of law," she said.

She now plans to visit Delhi to meet Kalam.

Dalbir, a local BJP office-bearer, had been knocking on the doors of the authorities since August 1990, when Sarabjit went missing. But no administration

official has approached them so far, she laments.

She said Sheetal Das Kaler, co-ordinator of the South Asia Human Rights Group, Canada, had watched a news item on TV after which Canadian activists sent a representative and collected from the family several documents like driving licence, voter's list, ration card, school certificate and certified identification papers from the village sarpanch.

Kaler had also assured the family that he and some Canadian MPs would visit Pakistan to pursue the case.

They have held meetings in Canada and are also in touch with the Sarabjit's counsel in Pakistan, Rana Abdul Hameed and other officials, Dalbir said.

Satnam Singh, a friend of the accused, said Sarabjit was fond of body building and was an expert driver. But he had a drinking problem. At the time of his disappearance, Sarabjit was working on the fields of sarpanch Suchcha Singh, situated close to the border. Satnam Singh said Sarabjit probably strayed into Pakistani territory in an inebriated condition on August 28, 1990.

"He is Sarabjit Singh, son of Sulakhan Singh. Not Manjit Singh, son of Mehanga Singh (as claimed by Pakistan). The family has all the proof," he added.

The long struggle for Sarabjit's release has taken its toll on the family. Dalbir's husband Baldev Singh has sold about 45 bighas of land in Uttaranchal and UP over the last 15 years and is now left with just 30 bighas.

Now a property dealer in Bhikhiwind, Baldev said Dalbir, Sarabjit's wife Sukhpreet and daughters Sapandeeep and Poonam all do embroidery work on shawls to make a living.

Sarabjit's father Sulakhan Singh retired as a driver in UP Roadways in 1986 and didn't own any land.

Pak SC cool to Indian request

Islamabad: Pakistan supreme court, which has upheld the death sentence awarded to Manjeet Singh alias Surjeet Singh for allegedly spying for India, has so far not responded to an Indian request for consular access to him. Indian officials here said a request for providing consular access to meet Singh and other convicted Indians in Pakistani jails had been made by the Indian high commission well before the apex court gave the judgement last week.

Meanwhile, Pakistan foreign spokesman Naem Khan told reporters here that he was not aware of Islamabad receiving any mercy appeal directed to President Pervez Musharraf from Singh's family in India. Affirming it to be a case of mistaken identity, Singh's family has decided to submit a mercy petition to Musharraf. TNN & Agencies

PM to talk to Musharraf to save Sarabjit



Dalbir Kaur

New Delhi: As the family of Sarabjit Singh, who faces the death row in Pakistan, stepped up the campaign to secure his release, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday gave an assurance that he will take up the case with President Pervez Musharraf. Singh gave the assurance to a delegation of Congress MPs and MLAs from Punjab who urged him to take up the issue with Musharraf.

"The PM assured us that he will speak to Pakistan President Musharraf on the issue and that the government will do all it can to save the life of Indian national Sarabjit Singh", Punjab PCC chief Shamsheer Singh Dullo told reporters here after the meeting. "We urged the Prime Minister to do everything possible to save an innocent man. Why should he be punished for mistaken identity", Dullo said.

Stepping up the campaign for his release, Sarabjit's sister Dalbir Kaur met external affairs minister Natwar Singh and asked him to take up the matter with the Pakistan government urgently.

Denying that Sarabjit was a RAW agent as claimed by Pakistan, she said it was a case of mistaken identity and the government should send evidence to Musharraf to prove his innocence. Sarabjit, whom the Pakistan government claims is Manjit Singh, a RAW agent, was given death sentence for allegedly being involved in four bomb blasts in that country.

"It is a case of mistaken identity. The case is against some Manjit Singh. My brother is innocent and I want the government to talk to Musharraf to save him", Dalbir, who has come to Delhi along with her husband Baldev Singh from Amritsar, said. Agencies

'Spy' kin pin hopes on Pervez

GAJINDER SINGH

Chandigarh, Aug. 22: The ropes are ready. If President Pervez Musharraf does not grant death-row Sarabjit Singh his life, his family of five will hang themselves.

"I will first take care of the others and then kill myself. It is better for all of us to die once and for all than to live death each day. *Sadda rab hun sirf Musharraf hain* (Our God is only Musharraf now)," cried Sarabjit's sister Dalbir over phone from Bhikiwind, not very far from Amritsar.

Sarabjit was suspected to be a RAW agent and sentenced to death in October 1990 by a Pakistani anti-terror court for involvement in a series of blasts. Last week, Pakistan's



Musharraf: Last resort

Supreme Court upheld the sentence.

"We have no hope other than to seek clemency from Musharraf. It is only he who can save him. We wrote to him on Saturday. We wrote asking him to think about his daughters. We wrote to him to stop an innocent man from going to the gallows," Dalbir said.

"We wrote to him for justice to halt the hanging of a person who had crossed the border on the Khem Karan Khalra side on August 25, 1990, in an inebriated state and was implicated in a false case."

According to Dalbir, her entire family — her brother's wife Sukhpreet, daughters Swapandweep and Poonam as well as her husband and herself — had decided to hang themselves the moment they heard last week that Sarabjit's sentence had been upheld.

She said her family did not have much faith in either the Punjab or the Indian government as neither had lent them

an ear for the past 15 years. Sarabjit was never a RAW agent, she said.

"The government did nothing all these years. Nobody came to our rescue. We were pushed aside whenever we went to the Wagah border post seeking information about him," she said.

"It is only Musharraf who can be God for us. He should realise how the gesture will help ties between India and Pakistan."

Sukhpreet said the family had furnished proof that Sarabjit was being hanged due to a mistaken identity. His birth certificate, voter ID and ration card had been handed to Pakistan rights activist Asma Jehangir, she said.

"He was Sarabjit Singh and never Manjeet Singh. They (the documents) were submitted to the Pakistani authorities. But he was still tried and punished as Manjeet Singh," she said.

The South Asia Human Rights Group in Canada will be delivering the letter Sarabjit's family has written to Musharraf.

"If President Musharraf cannot overrule the death sentence, he can surely grant clemency. He will be saving five more lives," Dalbir said.

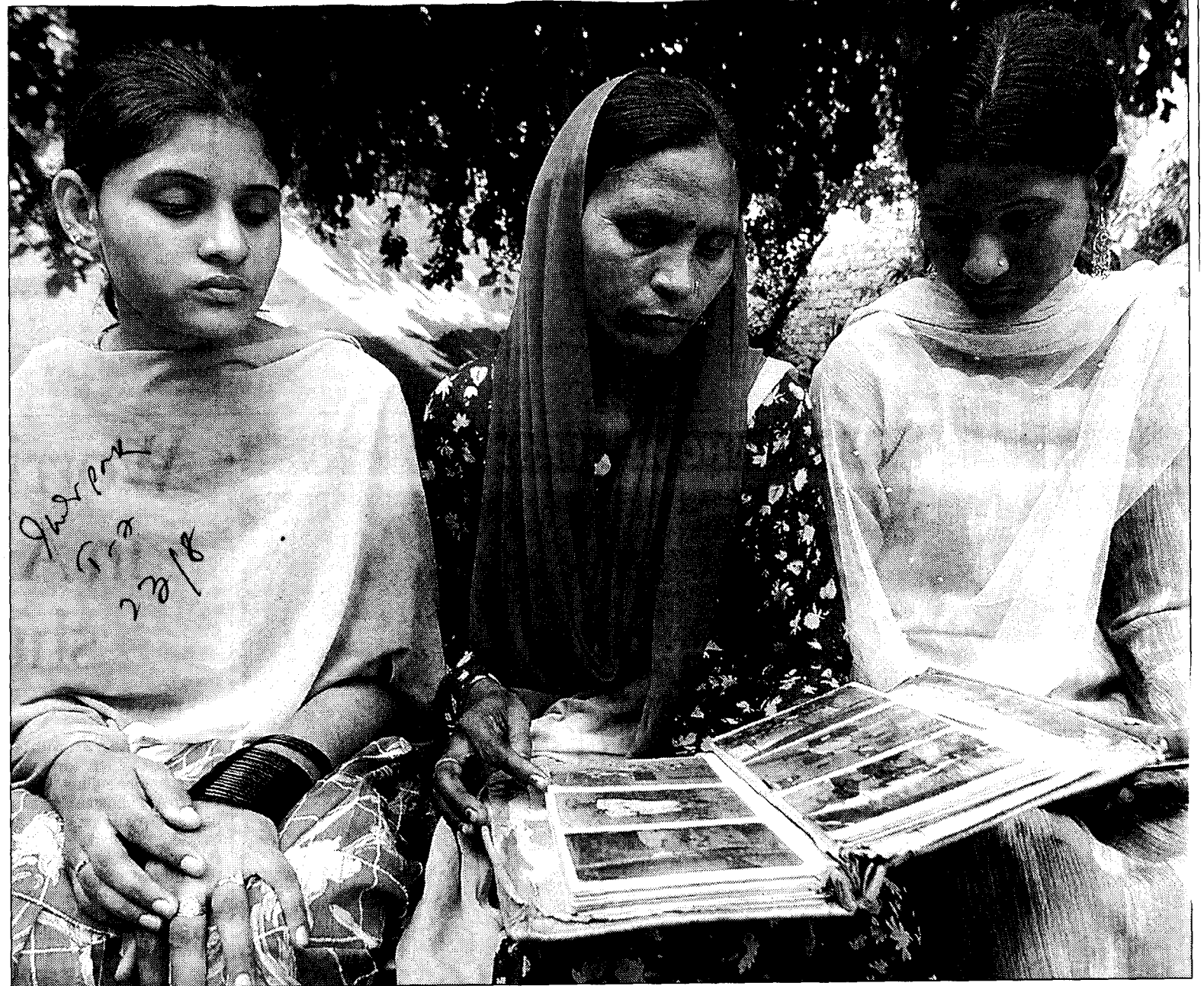
Lodged in Kot Lakhpat Rai jail since 1990, Sarabjit's only communication with his family has been through letters he writes to his sister.

"In one of his letters, he mentioned his death and doubted if he would ever be able to enjoy freedom. We will be with him if he dies," Sukhpreet said, her voice choking.

The Punjab government today issued a communiqué saying it had taken "serious note" of Sarabjit's sentence and appealed to the Centre to intervene through diplomatic channels for his release.

A Punjab government official said there was little India could do to save Sarabjit.

"It is a tricky situation. If we seek his pardon, Pakistan would seek a similar response on terrorists operating in Kashmir. Will the Centre adhere to the Pakistani request then?" he asked.



File picture of Sukhpreet Kaur, wife of Manjeet Singh, with daughters Swapandweep (right) and Poonam (left) in Bhikiwind. (AFP)

India awaits nod to consular access

IMTIAZ GUL

Islamabad, Aug. 22: The Indian government is awaiting the response of Islamabad to a request for consular access to Manjeet Singh and other prisoners completing their terms in Pakistan's jails.

"We await the response on our request that was made much long ago," said an Indian diplomat in Islamabad.

However, Pakistan foreign ministry spokesperson Naeem Khan has said he is unaware of any formal exchange between New Delhi and Islamabad on Manjeet.

Manjeet, suspected by the Pakistan government to be a Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) agent, was convicted by an anti-terror court.

The death sentence was upheld by the Supreme Court

here. He was also convicted for being involved in five bombings in Pakistan's Punjab province.

Spokesperson Khan today said: "I have seen reports on the issue but am not aware if the Indian government has formally approached Pakistan or not."

Appealing to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistan's President General Pervez Musharraf for clemency, Manjeet's family, including sister Dalbir Kaur, claimed the man's actual name is Sarabjit Singh and he is innocent.

In her appeal to Musharraf, Kaur said her brother was a "victim" of animosity between the two countries.

RAW sources also denied that the man was an agent and said he is actually Sarabjit Singh of Bhikiwind village, like

his family claims.

Naeem Khan, however, confirmed that Pakistan is only looking into a request by Delhi seeking the release of 450 other Indians in different Pakistani jails.

"We received the request just recently," he said, adding that Pakistan also hopes India will provide consular access to its 222 nationals who are completing their terms in different Indian jails.

A report, issued by the foreign office early this month said there are about 611 Pakistani prisoners in India of which 389 have already been provided consular access. It said the country's interior ministry has been able to confirm the identity of only 173 of 389 prisoners.

Last December, the two nations had reached an agree-

ment for the early release of prisoners held by either side.

Centre to raise issue

The Centre today said it would sound Pakistan on Sarabjit Singh's death sentence and try to secure his release, reports our special correspondent from New Delhi.

Junior parliamentary affairs minister Suresh Pachauri said he would convey MPs' strong emotional reactions to foreign minister Natwar Singh and request him to take up the matter with Pakistan.

The assurance came after S.S. Ahluwalia of the BJP raised the matter in the Rajya Sabha. Speaking emotionally of Sarabjit's family, he exhorted members to lend full support to secure his release.

Sarabjit's family has been saying that he strayed across

the Line of Control under the influence of liquor in August 1990.

"This is a pure case of mistaken identity which has been proved beyond point by the distressed family of Sarabjit Singh. Recently, a film *Veer-Zaara* was made on this issue but it is now happening in real life.

"We, through Parliament, should demand not only Sarabjit Singh's release but also the release of 550 Indians who are languishing in Pakistani jails," Ahluwalia said.

The motion found support from members cutting across party lines. Rajya Sabha chairman Bhairon Singh Shekhawat demanded that information on the number of people languishing in Pakistani jails be tabled in the House.

পাক জেলে বন্দি ভারতীয়ের ফাঁসি নিয়ে সংসদ উত্তাল

নয়াদিল্লি, ২২ অগস্ট: পাকিস্তানি জেলে বন্দি সর্বজিৎ সিংহের ফাঁসি ঠেকাতে সরকারের সক্রিয় হওয়ার দাবিতে সরব হল লোকসভা। '৯১ সালে ভারতীয় গোয়েন্দা সংস্থা 'র'-এর গুপ্তচর ও পাকিস্তানে বোমা হামলার মূল চক্রী সন্দেহে পাকিস্তানে ধরা পড়েন অমৃতসরের বাসিন্দা সর্বজিৎ। ২৮ অগস্ট তাঁর ফাঁসির আদেশ বহাল রেখেছে পাক সুপ্রিম কোর্ট।

আজ লোকসভা ও রাজ্যসভায় বিজেপি ও শিরোমণি অকালি দলের সাংসদের বিষয়টি তোলেন। তাঁদের দাবিতে স্পিকার সোমনাথ চট্টোপাধ্যায় বলেন, সংসদের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গিকে সম্মান দিয়ে সরকারের ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া উচিত। বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ বলেন, সরকার তদন্ত করে পাক কর্তৃপক্ষের সঙ্গে কথা বলবে। রাজ্যসভার চেয়ারম্যান ভৈরৌ সিংহ শেখাওয়াত বলেন, পাক জেলে বন্দি প্রায় ৫৫০ ভারতীয়ের ভবিষ্যতের ব্যাপারে সরকার কী ব্যবস্থা নিচ্ছে তা সংসদকে জানাতে হবে। সংসদ বিষয়ক প্রতিমন্ত্রী সুরেশ পাটেলিও জানান সরকার এ বিষয়টি খতিয়ে দেখবে।

এ দিকে, অমৃতসরে সর্বজিৎের পরিবারের সদস্যরা হুমকি দিয়েছেন, ফাঁসি না ঠেকালে তাঁরা আত্মহত্যা করবেন। সর্বজিৎের প্রাণ ভিক্ষা চেয়ে তাঁরা রাষ্ট্রপতি কালাম, প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ, প্রাক্তন প্রধানমন্ত্রী অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী এবং পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফকে চিঠি দিয়েছেন। — পি টি আই

ANAD BAZAR

ANAD BAZAR PATHRA

Pervez puts J&K before extremism

Press Trust of India

LONDON, Aug. 13. — Acknowledging India's sincerity in resolving the Kashmir problem, Pakistan President Mr Pervez Musharraf has said the process should be expedited to enable him to deal with extremism firmly.

"I see the sincerity of the Indian leadership. But if we can move faster towards a resolution of Kashmir my hands will be stronger to deal with extremism," Musharraf said in an interview to the 'Daily Telegraph' published today. "I have told the Indians we can only control extremists to a degree. But there will be nowhere for the extremists to go once there is a settlement on Kashmir," he said.

Answering a question on the success he has achieved in dealing with extremists, Musharraf admitted that previously his hands were tied, either because of the 10-month-long confrontation with India in 2002 or the last general elections or political insecurities at home and abroad. "The situation is now far different from what I faced before," he said. "Now I am much stronger." After last month's London bombings, he said as many as 800 militants were arrested and 1,400 foreign students attending madrassas - Islamic schools - in Pakistan were asked to leave the country.

Musharraf said he has made it



Gen. Musharraf

clear to the police and the concerned ministries that the government is serious about following a crackdown on those banned extremist groups who have re-emerged under a new name, the closure of all publications propagating "hate", creating a new syllabus for the madrassas and their registration by December.

Sustainable democracy

Asking Pakistanis to join hands in defeating forces of negativism and establish a progres-

sive state, Pakistan President Mr Pervez Musharraf today claimed the country was heading towards "sustainable" democracy under his rule.

"I appeal to every Pakistani to come forward and join hands to defeat the forces of obscurantism and negativism, which exist on the fringes of society. Have pride in yourselves as Pakistanis. The country needs you to stand up and be counted," he said in a message to the nation on the eve of its 58th Independence Day.

Musharraf said Pakistan has been put on the path of sustainable democracy under his six-year rule. "We have carried out empowerment of the people at the grassroots level, representation of women at all tiers of governance has been ensured, rights of the minorities have not only been protected but through electoral reforms, they have been brought to the mainstream of national life," he said.

The main focus of the government now is to accelerate the transfer of economic benefits to the people, he said. "Pakistan's economy has emerged from a near stage of insolvency in 1999 as one of the most vibrant economies of Asia. Reforms initiated in every major field of endeavour have yielded dividends, and as a result of prudent policies, Pakistan's stature in both the Ummah (Islamic) and the comity of nations has risen significantly," he said.

14 AUG 2005

India, Pakistan agree to boost trade

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Aug. 10. — India and Pakistan have decided to take further steps to boost trade, including revising the air and shipping services agreements, discussing lowering of Customs and non-tariff barriers, expediting opening of bank branches and establishing a fibre optic network between Amritsar and Lahore.

A joint statement released today at the end of the two-day talks on economic and commercial cooperation that took place under the framework of the Composite Dialogue, said that the two sides recognised the scope for further increase in bilateral trade and discussed further measures to enhance mutually beneficial economic and commercial cooperation.

Economic co-operation could only be effective through good trade link-



Indian and Pakistani officials discuss the nitty-gritties of the confidence-building measures in New Delhi. — AFP

ages, therefore the air and shipping services agreement will be revised.

The 1975 Shipping protocol will be reviewed in a bilateral meeting next month in Pakistan. Similarly, the existing Air Services Agreement will also be examined in Aeronautical talks in September.

The participants also decided the sub-groups on non-tariff barriers and trade facilitation would be held before the second meeting of the Joint Study Group, which will be con-

vened soon in Islamabad. The sub-groups will formulate recommendations for the JSG.

Besides, the two neighbours "agreed that requests for opening of bank branches in both the countries would be processed expeditiously to facilitate bilateral trade relations". This is a follow-up to the decision taken to open branches of schedule banks in each other's country during the visit of the Pakistani Prime Minister to India in November 2004.

11/8
11 AUG 2005 THE STATESMAN

India, Pak discuss Wagah trade

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Aug 9.— India today suggested opening of the Wagah-Attari land route bordering Pakistan on a permanent basis to allow a larger number of commodities for trade.

“The Wagah-Attari LCS was notified by India in 1994 on the permanent basis for movement of goods by road and rail. We hope that Pakistan would consider opening of the same on permanent basis for a larger number of commodities,” Commerce secretary Mr SN Menon told a delegation from Pakistan led by his Pakistan counterpart, Syed Asif Shah. “This has the potential for the creation of jobs by increasing ancillary activities along these routes.”

The two day parleys on economic and commercial cooperation, which was part of the ongoing Composite Dialogue between the two countries, saw both sides deliberating on issues of mutual importance, including civil aviation, shipping, banking and petroleum and natural gas and a roadmap for the Joint Study Group (JSG).

The decision to constitute the JSG at Commerce Secretary level was taken at a bilateral meeting between commerce and industry minister, Mr Kamal Nath, and his counterpart, Mr Humayun Akhtar Khan, at Islamabad in November 2004.

The exchange of technology and skills between the two countries would help enhance the quality of goods at relatively cheaper prices, Mr Menon said.

Pakistan's commerce secretary noted that the two countries had initiated a process of de-escalating tension with a view to normalising bilateral relations and stressed that the Composite Dialogue of which the talks on economic and commercial Cooperation were an integral part, was an important step in this direction.

Mr Shah said Pakistan had been exploring ways to increase its trade with India, as this would be beneficial for both countries. In recent weeks, he said, Pakistan took the important decision to allow the import of onions, potatoes, tomatoes, garlic, live animals and halal meat from India via the land route of Wagah, which was followed by the inclusion of vaccines and medicines.

10 AUG 2005

THE STATESMAN

Headway in trade talks

India, Pakistan decide to rework air and shipping agreements

PRESS Trust of India
New Delhi, August 9

IN A move that would lead to improved air and sea links, India and Pakistan decided on Tuesday to rework bilateral civil aviation and shipping agreements.

"There's some forward movement on improving air and sea links for which fresh civil aviation and shipping agreements would be entered into", said sources after the end of commerce secretary-level trade talks.

Technical groups from both sides will be meeting next month to thrash out the fresh agreements, they said.

With a view to enhance cooperation in various financial sector and capital markets, both sides agreed for a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) and the Pakistan stock market watchdog.

The Indian side led by commerce secretary S.N. Menon and the Pakistani team led by their acting commerce secretary Syed Asif Shah decided to enhance cooperation in banking sector as also insurance support for ex-

porters to boost trade.

However, on opening up of the Wagah-Attari land route on permanent basis, both sides felt that it could not be opened until infra-structural bottlenecks were addressed.

But sources said both sides are working out the road map for the joint study group on trade.

The sub-group on customs and trade facilitation and non-tariff barriers would meet once again in September to chalk out future course.

New Delhi also gave a fresh list of items it wants Pakistan to add on to the positive list, which Islamabad said would be looked into when the list is reviewed. Pakistan last week lifted ban on sugar import from India following a steep hike in domestic prices.

The talks, which were held in a cordial atmosphere, were earlier scheduled to continue till Wednesday, but were concluded in a single day.

Both sides also decided to improve their transit facilities as a measure to push trade, they said.

Earlier, Menon had outlined opening up of Wagah-Attari land route for trade in more number of



REUTERS
Syed Asif Shah (L), acting secretary of the ministry of commerce, Pakistan, and S.N. Menon, Indian commerce secretary, in New Delhi on Tuesday.

commodities on a permanent basis, liberalising visa restrictions among measures needed for pushing up bilateral trade. "This has the potential

for creation of jobs by increasing ancillary activities along these routes. We can bring prosperity to villages, and breathe life into the rural economies on both sides of our border", said Menon.

Delivering his opening remarks, Shah noted that both India and Pakistan and "more importantly the people of both countries will gain from this enhanced cooperation in bilateral trade and economic cooperation".

"We've to remain mindful of the fact that the growth in trade can be sustainable in the long run only if it's mutually beneficial for both the trading parties which in turn is dependent on availability of a level-playing field. Our efforts, should aim at developing a model of win-win commercial relationship".

He further emphasised that the Pakistani side had come to the talks with an 'open mind', and want to move forward on all components of the composite dialogue in a constructive manner, but said, "for trade and economic interaction to flourish, it's essential to have a peaceful and enabling political environment".

India, Pak not to build new border posts

Also agree to upgrade hotline between DGMOs by next month-end

Sandeep Dikshit ⁹¹⁸ HD-12

NEW DELHI: India and Pakistan on Monday agreed not to build any new military posts along the border, and hold flag meetings between formation commanders at four points on the line of control (LoC) as part of conventional confidence-building measures (CBMs).

The two sides also agreed to upgrade the existing hotline between the two Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMOs) by the end of next month, implement the 1991 agreement on airspace violations in letter and spirit, speedy return of inadvertent line-crossers, uphold the ongoing ceasefire and periodically review the existing CBMs.

This was the second round of the expert-level talks as part of the composite dialogue process. On Saturday, the two sides agreed on some nuclear CBMs, including agreeing to notify each

other about ballistic missile tests in a pre-determined format and operationalising a hotline between Foreign Secretaries from next month.

The only existing formal nuclear CBM between India and Pakistan — agreed 20 years back — was the annual exchange of a list of nuclear facilities. There were two conventional CBMs — prior notification of Army exercises of a certain size near the border and a commitment by the two air forces not to violate each other's airspace.

Now, not only will both countries refrain from building new posts, they would not undertake defence works such as strengthening of bunkers. The Pakistan side mooted this proposal. The four sectors on the LoC where local commanders will hold meetings are Kargil (Olding in Pakistan), Uri (Chakothi), Naushera (Sadabad) and Jammu (Sialkot). Pakistan had also sug-

gested the idea of upgrading the DGMO hotline and implementation of Article 2 of the '91 pact on not violating airspace.

On the return of inadvertent line-crossers, it was agreed to work out a comprehensive framework to that end. It is not that the soldiers on both sides are hostile due to the absence of such a pact. India recently repatriated a 45-year-old man who had crossed over and was found loitering near an Army post in Mendhar recently. Indian soldiers had also helped locate the body of a Pakistani soldier who had slipped and fallen to his death near the heights of the Siachen glacier.

However, Pakistan did not agree to Indian proposals to step up contacts between the two armies and strategic institutions in order to "reduce tensions and avoid misconceptions." These include exchanges between the defence training establish-

ments, more sporting and cultural contacts between military representatives and joint seminars by strategic institutes. "It is a matter of deep regret that Pakistan did not agree to these proposals but the idea was to hone down the CBMs offered by both sides to what could be agreed to at the moment," said the Foreign Office spokesperson.

Pakistan wanted the implementation of these measures to be tied to paring down of the Indian military, which currently enjoys numerical superiority. Responding to this demand, the spokesperson said "as far as India is concerned the quantity [number of troops] is governed by its security objectives." However, the spokesperson was unable to throw light on whether the bar on development works along the border also meant that repairs to the border fence would also cease.

Pakistan rejects allegations of cross-border infiltration

"India is creating a bogey of infiltration to deploy more troops in J&K"

B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD: The Commerce Secretaries of India and Pakistan will begin a two-day meeting on Tuesday to discuss proposals for expanding economic and trade cooperation.

Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman Naeem Khan told mediapersons that the discussions would focus on transportation services. Pakistan would go into the talks with an open, constructive and positive mind, and he hoped India would bring

about some "improvements" in its trade regime to facilitate Pakistani products into its market.

Pakistan was looking forward to Indian proposals to rectify the trade imbalance and would propose a meeting of the Joint Working Group.

Positive talks

Mr. Khan described the just-concluded talks on nuclear confidence-building measures (CBMs) as positive and said both sides showed flexibility. The measures agreed to would bring

about strategic stability.

Asked if the recent allegations and counter-allegations would have any impact on the peace process, Mr. Khan replied in the negative. He referred to the cordial atmosphere during the talks on nuclear and conventional CBMs and recalled a recent telephonic conversation between Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf and the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, in which they agreed on the need to avoid negative statements.

Rejecting India's allegations

of "cross border infiltration," Mr. Khan described it as an attempt by New Delhi to deploy additional troops in Kashmir. "India is basically creating a bogey of infiltration to deploy more troops in occupied Kashmir." While some reports from India suggested that "infiltration" in Kashmir had gone down, others talked of an "upsurge in terrorist incidents." He asserted that Pakistan's commitment to counter-terrorism was complete and unquestionable.

Mr. Khan claimed that human

rights violations in Kashmir have gone up during the past few days and called for an "improvement" in the situation there.

To another question, he said Pakistan and Britain would soon sign a treaty providing for the extradition of criminals. "The extradition treaty will be ready for signing as soon as the two countries finalise procedural formalities." Pakistan had also signed a memorandum of understanding with the U.K to regulate visas for Pakistanis wishing to travel to that country.

India, Pak firm on ceasefire pact

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Aug. 8. — India and Pakistan today agreed to continue the ceasefire and not build any new posts and defence works along the Line of Control, as well as implement a 14-year-old agreement on air space violations “in letter and spirit”.

This was among the seven confidence building measures (CBMs) decided on in the second round of expert level talks between India and Pakistan held here today. The Indian side to the second round was led by the joint secretary, ministry of external affairs, Mr Dilip Sinha, and the Pakistani delegation was headed by additional secretary, ministry of foreign affairs, Mr Tariq Osman Hyder. A joint statement released at the end of the talks read that the two sides “reaf-

firmed their commitment to uphold the ongoing ceasefire”. They have also agreed on Pakistan’s proposal to not build any new posts and defence works along the LoC. The issue of people accidentally crossing the LoC featured in the talks. The two sides agreed on the “speedy return of inadvertent Line crossers, and to work out a comprehensive framework to that end”.

There will also be monthly flag meetings between local commanders at four sectors, Kargil-Olding, Uri-Chakothi, Naushera-Sadabad and Jammu-Sialkot. It was decided to implement the 1991 agreement between Pakistan and India on air violations.

The existing hotline between the two Directors General of military operations will be upgraded by September 2005. The joint statement said the talks “were held in a cordial and constructive

atmosphere”, during which, both sides exchanged views on their respective “security concepts”.

The report on the progress of the current round of talks will be made to the foreign secretaries of both countries, who will decide on the date and venue of the next round. This round follows closely the third round of talks on nuclear CBMs which led to India and Pakistan agreeing on pre-notification of missile tests and setting up a hotline between the foreign secretaries.

However, there were some CBMs suggested by India in the field of military-to-military contacts, including holding of seminars and exchanges between think tanks and defence training establishments and friendly sporting events between the two armed forces and exchange of military bands, which did not find support from the Pakistanis.

9 AUG 2005

THE STATESMAN

INDO-PAK TRADE CROSSES \$600-M MARK

All set for Indo-Pak trade talks

ENR 2.71

ISLAMABAD, Aug. 7. — Liberalisation of Indo-Pak trade and reduction of tariff and non-tariff barriers are expected to figure in the official-level talks in New Delhi from Tuesday, during which India is expected to raise its longstanding demand to Pakistan for reciprocating the most favoured nation (MFN) status.

Amid encouraging signs of a thaw in economic ties, a high-level trade delegation is also accompanying Pakistani officials for the two-day commerce secretary-level talks.

This is the second round of parley's, part of the eight sub-jects listed under the Composite Dialogue process.

Additional secretary of commerce, Mr Syed Asif Shah is heading the Pakistani delegation, instead of commerce secretary Mr Tasnim Durani, who

took part in the earlier round.

The talks come in the wake of Pakistan opening up the hitherto closed Wagah border for duty-free import of essential commodities like meat, onions, potatoes, garlic and tomatoes and sugar to bring down the soaring prices back home.

This week Pakistan lifted a four-year ban to import one lakh tone sugar from India. The supplies of all the items have begun trickling down by road, rail and through ships.

The government and the traders said the Indian goods helped to bring down the prices.

A joint working group has been set up by the two countries to study Pakistan's complaints of high Indian tariffs, which Islamabad argues was the main impediment in pushing its exports to India.

It also cites this as the main reason for Islamabad's reluctance to grant the MFN status to

India despite New Delhi according the same status the Saarc framework.

India-Pakistan Trade

Meanwhile, due to major bilateral trade initiatives by India and Pakistan during 2004-05, two-way trade between the two neighbours has touched \$600.77 million, a record increase of over 76 per cent.

Indicating this, commerce and industry minister, Mr Kamal Nath, said India's exports to Pakistan at \$505.44 million in 2004-05 almost doubled in one year from \$286 million in 2003-04. Imports from Pakistan also increased to \$95.33 million from 57.74 million dollars a year ago, the minister said.

In rupee terms, bilateral trade during 2004-05 is estimated at Rs 2,699.36 crore as against Rs 1,583.42 crore in 2003-04, an increase of 70 per cent, an official release said.

Among the bilateral trade ini-

tiatives taken was the decision to set up a joint study group on Economic Co-operation between the two countries. This move followed meetings that Mr Kamal Nath held in November 2004 with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf in Rawalpindi and with his counterpart, Mr Humayun Akhtar Khan in Islamabad on the sidelines of the fourth Saarc commerce ministers' meeting.

The first meeting of JSG was held in February this year at New Delhi. Two working groups have been set up under the JSG on customs and trade facilitation measures and non-tariff barriers to enhance cooperation in these areas.

Indian exports to Pakistan include iron ore, dyes and chemicals, drugs and pharmaceuticals plastic and linoleum products. Fruits and nut, cotton yarn and fabrics, pulses, spices, man-made filament and leather are imports.

Indo-Pak cooperation: Scaling new heights

If a mountaineering institute has its way, India & Pak will embark on a joint expedition to K2

AMITAVA Banerjee
Darjeeling, August 5

IF RED tape doesn't tie the plan down in India and Pakistan, mountaineers from the two countries might find themselves giving each other a helping hand in jointly scaling one of the world's toughest mountains, K2.

If the expedition comes through, it would create scenes vastly different from those of the Indian and Pakistani armies training their guns on each other in the dizzy heights of the Karakoram and Siachen.

The proposal, designed by the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), Darjeeling, has already been okayed by the Indian defence ministry. And its clearance by the Pakistani home ministry is being awaited. "We are quite hopeful of the clearance coming through, as bonds between the two countries will be further strengthened since mountaineering is all about camaraderie," said J.S. Dhillon, principal, HMI. If everything goes well, the expedition will be flagged off in July 2006. The time for climbing K2, the world's second highest mountain (8611m), is from April to July.

Earlier, mountaineers Harish

SUMMIT

CHALLENGES

Kapadia and Mandip Singh Soin from India and Nazir Sabir and Colonel Sher Khan from Pakistan had gone to Switzerland in 2002, along with Jamie Andrew of Scotland, on a joint initiative of the World Conservation Union.

K2, also called Mount Godwin Austin and locally known as Dapsang and Chogori (Great Mountain), forms part of the Karakoram Range and lies in the Gilgit district on the western side of the Indian-Pakistani Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir. It is, thus, presently in Pakistani-administered territory.

The glacier- and snow-covered mountain rises from its base at about 15,000 ft on the Godwin Austin Glacier, a tributary of the Baltoro Glacier. In 1856, T. G. Montgomerie of the Survey of India had measured the mountain and named it "K2" to denote it as one of 35 summits in the Karakoram Range. He named the peaks in the order he saw them - K1, K2, K3 and so on.

K2, at present, is the only major mountain still retaining the name

given to it by its surveyor and is regarded as one of the toughest to climb. The HMI proposal visualises a 10-member team, five each from the two countries. "The mountaineers will be given pre-expedition training at the Darjeeling HMI for at least six months," Dhillon said.

The first attempt to conquer K2 was made in 1902 by a team of European climbers. The expedition had, however, failed. Several unsuccessful attempts followed in 1909, 1938; 1939 and 1953 till an Italian team, led by Professor Ardito Dessoir, made it to the top in 1954.

It was a 10-member team with a few extra hands joining later as the expedition had failed to recruit any Sherpas. On July 28, four men reached Camp VIII in the evening and spent the night there. Of these four, Lino Lacedelli and Achille Compagnoni climbed on towards the summit the next morning. Up on the ridge, just 200 metres below the top, oxygen had abruptly run out. The climbers, however, continued without oxygen and finally reached the summit in the afternoon after a gruelling climb, registering man's conquest of K2. The summiteers managed to return safely.



জঙ্গি মদত নিয়ে পাকিস্তানকে তোপ আডবানীর

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ৩১ জুলাই: পাকিস্তানে গিয়ে প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফকে সন্ত্রাস নিয়ে যা বলে এসেছিলেন তা হারিয়ে গিয়েছিল জিন্না-বিতর্কে।

আজ এক মোক্ষম সময়ে সেই একই কথা প্রকাশ্যে বলে যবে-বাইরে একটি সঙ্কেত পাঠালেন বিরোধী দলনেতা লালকৃষ্ণ আডবানী। দেওয়ানে আডবানী মনে করিয়েছেন কাশ্মীরে রক্তপাতের কথা। বলেছেন, জঙ্গি পরিকাঠামো তৈরিতে পাক মদত রয়েছে। অযোধ্যা কাণ্ড-সহ এ দেশে বিভিন্ন নাশকতামূলক কাজের পিছনে থাকা লঙ্কর-ই-তুইবাকে পাকিস্তানই মদত দিচ্ছে। সুতরাং জঙ্গি শিবির ধ্বংসের জন্য দিল্লির উচিত ইসলামাবাদকে চাপ দেওয়া। এই মন্তব্য করে এক দিকে আডবানী বিরোধী নেতা হিসাবে প্রকাশ্যেই সরকারের

পাশে দাঁড়ালেন। অন্য দিকে তুটু করতে চাইলেন সঙ্ঘ পরিবারকেও।

নিয়ন্ত্রণবোধ বরাবর পাক জঙ্গি হামলার ঘটনা, অযোধ্যা হামলায় পরিস্থিতি জটিল হয়েছে। যাবতিক ভাবেই এই সময়টাকে বেছে নিয়েছেন আডবানী। ভারত সরকার শান্তি প্রক্রিয়াকে ব্যাহত হতে না দেওয়ার কথা বললেও 'ছায়া যুদ্ধের' প্রস্তুতি চলছেই। প্রতিরক্ষা ও বিদেশমন্ত্রকের তরফ থেকেও স্বর চড়ছে। পাক্ষাপাশি কূটনৈতিক স্তরেও জঙ্গি মদত এবং অনুপ্রবেশের প্রক্ষেপে পাকিস্তানকে চাপে রাখার চেষ্টা চলছে। প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ ওয়াশিংটন সফরের সময় তার ভিত্তি করে এসেছেন।

এমন একটা পরিস্থিতিতে বিরোধী দলনেতা হিসাবে আডবানীও আজ বিদেশনীতির প্রক্ষেপে একামত তৈরি করতে চেয়েছেন। বাজপেয়ী মন্ত্রিসভায়

উপ-প্রধানমন্ত্রী ও স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী থাকার সময় যে কথা তিনি বারবার বলতেন, আজ নতুন প্রেক্ষিতে তারই প্রতিধ্বনি করেছেন তিনি। বলেছেন, শ্রীনিগর ও



অযোধ্যা হামলার পরে জঙ্গি প্রশিক্ষণ শিবির গুড়িয়ে দেওয়ার জন্য চাপ তৈরি করুক ভারত। তাঁর কথায়, "বাজপেয়ীজী প্রধানমন্ত্রী থাকাকালীন সার্ক সম্মেলনে এই প্রতিশ্রুতি দেওয়া হয়। পাকিস্তানের উচিত তা পালন করা।" তিনি বলেন, সন্ত্রাসের পরিকাঠামো, জঙ্গিদের সহায়তা দান অবিলম্বে বন্ধ করা উচিত পাকিস্তানের।

লন্ডন বিক্ষোভের পরে দেওয়া উচিত নয়। শুজাত হুসেনকে সমর্থন করে এমএমএ-র পক্ষ থেকেও হুমকি দেওয়া হয়েছে, প্রয়োজনে তারা আদালতে যেতেও পিছুপা হবে না।

পাকিস্তানে গিয়েও মুশারফকে জঙ্গি মদনে ব্যবস্থা নিতে অনুবোধ করেছিলেন আডবানীও। তবে আজকে করা তাঁর এই মন্তব্য যথেষ্ট তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ বলে মনে করছে রাজনৈতিক মহলা। তাঁর ওই সফরের পর প্রায় দু'মাস পেরিয়ে গিয়েছে। অনেক জলও গড়িয়ে গিয়েছে বমনায়। জিন্না-বিতর্ক সামলে শেষ পর্যন্ত দলের সভাপতি পদে টিকে গিয়েছেন। অবশ্য সজ্জের কুদৃষ্টিকে সঙ্গে নিয়েই। রাজনৈতিক মহলের মতে, আজ দীর্ঘদিন পরে প্রকাশ্যে পাকিস্তানের বিরুদ্ধে বক্তব্য রাখায় কটর হিন্দুত্ববাদীরা খুশিই হবেন। রাজনৈতিক ভাবে কোণঠাসা আডবানীর পক্ষে যা মন্দের ভাল।

Advani wants Pak to wipe out terror bases

Our Political Bureau
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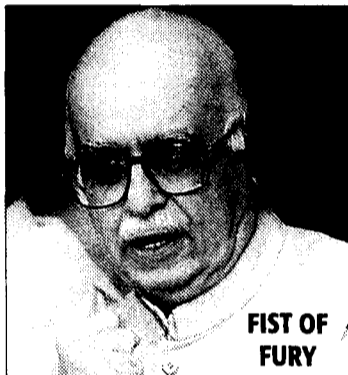
BJP president LK Advani on Sunday asked the Manmohan Singh government to exert pressure on Islamabad to destroy militant training camps there in the wake of the Srinagar and Ayodhya attacks. "This commitment was made when AB Vajpayee travelled to Islamabad to attend the Saarc Summit. Pakistan should respect the commitment now," he said.

In a joint statement in January 2004, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf had said Pakistani soil or occupied land would not be allowed to be used for terrorist activities. This was reaffirmed at the last meeting between Dr Manmohan Singh and President Musharraf.

The Opposition leader, who indicated that the NDA would focus its attack on the government's "inept" handling of internal security issues said the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) was reactivating its centre in Muridke area of Pakistan with training camps and meetings being organised there. "LeT is involved in the Ayodhya incident, it is also responsible for the Srinagar attack," he said. He asked the Centre to apply pressure on the Pakistan government to destroy the "terrorist infrastructure, stop aid to militants, arrest

them and take punitive action against them."

Muridke — which houses the sprawling campus of Markaz-Dawa-wal-Irshad or Centre for Learning, the LeT's ideological parent — is back in



focus as a breeding ground of terror, after investigations into the London blasts revealed that one of the bombers, Shezad Tanweer, got his training in jihadi antics at a camp there.

Interestingly, ever since the Pervez Musharraf government came under heightened pressure from the US to crackdown upon the LeT, especially after the US forces picked up senior Al Qaeda lieutenant Abu Zubaydah from an LeT safehouse in Faisalabad, the outfit had reportedly shifted its operations and office from Muridke in Pakistan to Muzaffarabad. In fact, even the LeT's control is believed to have passed on from Emir Hafiz Mohammad Sayeed to a general council headed by Maulana Abdul Wahid Kashmiri.

The trade route to peace

The resumption of trade by road between India and Pakistan after a hiatus of 40 years will go some way towards rectifying the anomalous nature of economic interaction between the two neighbours. True, the window that has opened up is a limited one. Trucks from India bearing garlic, tomato, onions, potatoes, and meat pull up to the Wagah border post but do not actually cross over into Pakistan. If the cargo is in sacks, it is unloaded a few metres away from the zero line separating the two countries and carried in relay by (grateful and under-utilised) Indian and Pakistani porters up to waiting trucks on the other side. When the cargo is unbundled, the authorities allow the unloading and loading trucks to be parked back to back astride the zero line. There is no tax or duty, so the paperwork is relatively simple. Since the insurance, licensing, and tax protocols involved in allowing trucks to cross from one side to the other are complicated and as yet un-negotiated, this is the way trade by road will be for the foreseeable future. And yet it is a huge improvement over a situation where an Indian exporter of vegetables could only hope to send a consignment by train on the specified days the rail service was available. Aside from allowing faster access to the vegetable mandi of Lahore, the road route allows export on a daily basis.

For (officially recorded) direct bilateral trade to grow to its full potential, India and Pakistan must work on import policies as well. Pakistan's refusal to grant most-favoured nation status to India has always been a sore point but Islamabad is right in pointing out that MFN status has not made it any easier for Pakistani companies to sell items such as textiles and fruits to India. As the bigger economy, with a lot to gain from regional economic integration, India must be prepared to go the extra mile in boosting the level of bilateral trade. If it means granting unilateral concessions for certain products Pakistan is keen to export, so be it. Good politics and diplomacy are all about creating shared economic stakes and mutual dependencies. As economic interaction increases, there will be a handsome payoff for Indian firms. Tata Consultancy Services has announced plans to set up, in collaboration with a Pakistan partner, a training centre for software engineers in Lahore. The company is also talking of investing in a software development facility in that country. The proposed Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline is another example of how economics and politics can interact fruitfully. India has been slow to realise the trade potential of its land border with neighbours, including China, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. For years, the Indian establishment has tended to see borders as sites of tension and danger rather than as windows of opportunity and promise. There are signs this mindset is changing but the pace of change needs to be stepped up.

Terrorist arrivals

A bit more than 'seasonal'

It would be oversimplistic to attribute the upsurge in infiltration bids across the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir to seasonal factors, which so heavily influence tourism. While it is true that all the passes in the mountains are now free of snow blockage, experience would suggest that militant activity corresponds with the climate that pervades the bilateral dialogue. It is no mere coincidence that the LoC has been hot over the last fortnight after no progress was made on Siachen, Sir Creek etc and India re-emphasised that the infrastructure that supports terrorism had not been dismantled by Pakistan. The neutralising of some 40 infiltrators over a three-day period is a success story for the army, but no guarantee that some did not elude detection. It is impossible to "seal" the frontier, in some stretches the terrain does lend itself to razor-wire fencing and sensors, and again it is no mere coincidence that the most serious infiltration bid was made in the Gurez sector where no fencing has been undertaken. So also in the Mushkoh area, which hit the headlines during Kargil-1999. Not only are the training camps in Pakistan continuing to churn out militants — a senior army official estimates some 2,000 are awaiting induction — their operations are being professionally planned and directed. The Pakistani military no longer provides "covering fire" but, as an Indian commander has asserted, it is not possible for large groups of militants to pass undetected through the defence lines on the other side of the LoC. The string of charges levelled by top Pakistan army officials when the Indian forces undertook some pro-active patrolling in the Poonch sector is indicative of their mindset, or game-plan to put it bluntly. The proxy war persists.

The need for the US forces to repeatedly launch raids (not always successfully) along the Afghanistan-Pakistan frontier, and now evidence that the London bombers were "educated" in religious schools in that country confirm that for all its rhetoric the present dispensation in Islamabad — despite being military-dominated — is unwilling or unable to contain the jihadi elements. Will the international community remain an impotent spectator? India must not cease to bring diplomatic pressure to bear, as well as instruct its security forces to pull no punches when dealing with cross-border terrorism. A practical dimension has to be given to the "zero-tolerance" Manmohan Singh has emphasised.

22 JUL 2004

পরমাণু অস্ত্র পেতে পারে জঙ্গিরা, চিত্তিত

মনমোহন

ওয়াশিংটন, ২১ জুলাই: পরমাণু শক্তিধর দেশ হিসেবে আমেরিকার স্বীকৃতি পাওয়ার পরেই ওয়াশিংটনে বসেই প্রতিবেশী পাকিস্তানের পরমাণু কর্মসূচি নিয়ে প্রশ্ন তুললেন ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ। আজ এক সাক্ষাৎকারে তিনি আশঙ্কা প্রকাশ করেছেন, ইসলামি জঙ্গিদের হাতে পাকিস্তানের পরমাণু বোমার অপব্যবহার হতে পারে। তিনি জানান, গত কয়েক বছরে পাকিস্তানে পরমাণু অস্ত্রের ব্যাপক প্রসার হয়েছে।

প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফের প্রতি তাঁর পূর্ণ আস্থার কথা জানিয়েও মনমোহন বলেন, পাকিস্তানে জেহাদিরা যে কোনও সময় ক্ষমতা দখল করে নিতে পারে। একটি মার্কিন টিভি চ্যানেল ও একটি দৈনিক পত্রিকাকে দেওয়া দু'টি সাক্ষাৎকারে তিনি স্পষ্ট বলেন, গত কয়েক বছরে আল কায়দা ও ওসামা বিন লাদেনের জঙ্গি চক্র শিকড় গেড়েছে পাকিস্তানের মাটিতে। “আমরা বা আপনারা গণতন্ত্রের যে সংজ্ঞা জানি, পাকিস্তান তার মধ্যে পড়ে না”, বলেছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। তিনি বলেন ভারত চায়, একটি নরমপন্থী ইসলামি রাষ্ট্র হিসেবে গড়ে উঠুক পাকিস্তান।

মনমোহন বলেছেন, পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্কের উন্নতির জন্য প্রেসিডেন্ট মুশারফের সঙ্গে যৌথ ভাবে চেষ্টা চালাচ্ছেন তিনি। কিন্তু তার জন্য গত কয়েক দশকে পাকিস্তানের জঙ্গি ইতিহাস যে ভুলে যাওয়া সম্ভব নয়, তা-ও মনে করিয়ে দেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। “তালিবান পাকিস্তানেরই সৃষ্টি। সে দেশ জুড়ে ছড়িয়ে থাকা অসংখ্য ধর্মীয় বিদ্যালয় ও মাদ্রাসায় ছড়াচ্ছে ওয়াহাবি মতাদর্শ, আর শেখানো হচ্ছে ইসলাম ছাড়া অন্য ধর্মকে ঘৃণা করতে” — সোজাসাপটা মন্তব্য করেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। পাকিস্তানের নাম না করে তিনি বলেন, “ভারতের পরমাণু প্রযুক্তি অন্য দেশ থেকে চুরি করে আনা নয়।’ নিজেদের পরমাণু প্রযুক্তির প্রতি ভারত যে যথেষ্ট দায়িত্বশীল সে কথাও মনে করিয়ে দিয়েছেন তিনি। তবে মনমোহনের মন্তব্যের তীব্র প্রতিক্রিয়া জানিয়েছে ইসলামাবাদ। পাকিস্তানের তরফে বলা হয়েছে, “ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহের যা বলেছেন তা ঠিক নয়। ওঁর এরকম মন্তব্য বিভ্রান্তি বাড়াবে।” পাক বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের দাবি, পাকিস্তানের পরমাণু ভাণ্ডার যথেষ্ট সুরক্ষিত রয়েছে এবং তা জঙ্গিদের হাতে যাওয়ার কোনও কারণ নেই।”

পাকিস্তানের মধ্যে দিয়ে ইরান থেকে পাইপলাইনে গ্যাস আনার ব্যাপারেও অনিশ্চয়তা তৈরি হয়েছে বলে জানান প্রধানমন্ত্রী। তিনি বলেন, ইরানের বর্তমান রাজনৈতিক পরিস্থিতিতে এই প্রচেষ্টা কতটা সফল হবে বোঝা যাচ্ছে না।

তবে আমেরিকার সঙ্গে ইরানের সম্পর্ক উন্নয়নে ভারত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা নিতে পারে বলে মন্তব্য করেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। ইরানের সঙ্গে দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্ক গড়ে তুলতেও আগ্রহী ভারত। প্রধানমন্ত্রী বলেছেন, ইরান ও ভারত, দুই দেশই এক প্রাচীন সভ্যতার অঙ্গ। ইরান বিশ্বের বৃহত্তম শিয়া মুসলিম দেশ। কিন্তু শিয়া মুসলিমদের সংখ্যার বিচারে ভারতের স্থান দ্বিতীয়। এই বিরাট জনগোষ্ঠীর প্রতি ভারত দায়িত্বশীল এবং সেই কারণেই তেহরানের সঙ্গে দিল্লির সহযোগিতাও গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। — পি টি আউ

নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখায় জঙ্গি তৎপরতা লঘু করে দেখছি না, ইসলামাবাদকে বলল দিল্লি

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ১৯ জুলাই: শান্তি-আলোচনার মধ্যেই নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখায় জঙ্গি তৎপরতায় তারা যে উদ্দিগ্ন, সেটা পাকিস্তানকে জানিয়ে দিতে আর দেরি করল না ভারত। সামরিক স্তরে আজ দিল্লির তরফ থেকে ইসলামাবাদের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করে বলা হয়েছে, নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখায় অনুপ্রবেশ এবং সন্ত্রাসের ক্রমবর্ধমান ঘটনাকে লঘু করে দেখার প্রস্তুতি উঠছে না। একই দিনে সেনাপ্রধান জে জে সিংহ একটি অনুষ্ঠানে বলেছেন, নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখা বরাবর ৫৩টি শিবিরে ২৫০০ জঙ্গি প্রশিক্ষণ নিচ্ছে। নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখা পেরোনোর অপেক্ষায় রয়েছে তারা।

ইসলামাবাদের তোলা অভিযোগ (ভারত নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখা বরাবর গুলি চালিয়েছে) উড়িয়ে দিয়ে আজ দিল্লির তরফে পাল্টা জানিয়ে দেওয়া হয়েছে, গত কাল রাজোরির বালোনি সাব-সেক্টরে দুপুর বেলা পাকিস্তান গুলি ছুঁড়েছিল। প্রকাশ্যে না-বলেও সরকারি সূত্রে ইসলামাবাদের কাছে এই সঙ্কেতই পৌঁছে দেওয়ার চেষ্টা হয়েছে যে, নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখায় বাজপেয়ী জমানায় হওয়া সংঘর্ষ-বিরতির চুক্তি ভঙ্গ করেছে পাক সেনা। পাকিস্তানের দিকে আঙুল তুলে সেনাপ্রধান সিংহও বলেছেন, নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখা বরাবর জঙ্গি তৎপরতার

ব্যাপারে সে দেশের গোয়েন্দাদের কাছ থেকে কোনও তথ্য-সহযোগিতা পাচ্ছেন না ভারতীয় গোয়েন্দারা।

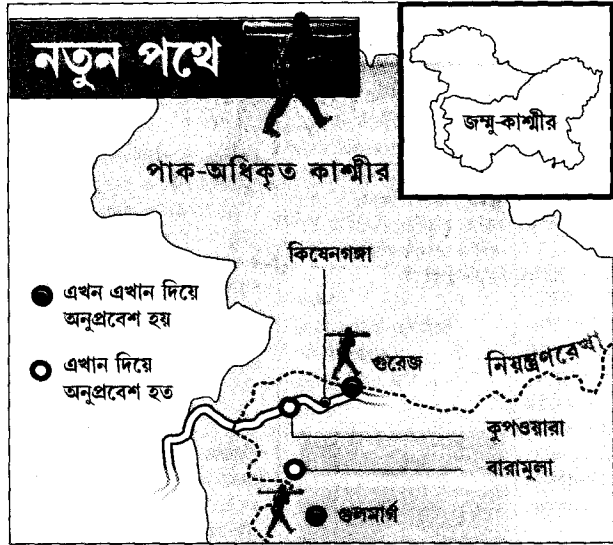
অন্য দিকে, কাল গলা তোলার পরে আজও হাত গুটিয়ে বসে নেই ইসলামাবাদ। ভারতের অবস্থান জানা

মানছে না। এই বিষয়ে একটি প্রতিবাদপত্রও তারা রাখবনের হাতে তুলে দিয়েছে।

শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়া শুরুর পরে দু'দেশের মধ্যে এই ধরনের চাপানউতোর এই প্রথম। প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রক সূত্রের খবর,

তৎপরতাকে ছায়াযুদ্ধ হিসাবে চিহ্নিত করে সাউথ ব্লক রীতিমতো কোমর বেঁধে নেমেছে। প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় সম্প্রতি বলেছিলেন, শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়া চলার সময় সন্ত্রাসবাদীদের ঝোঁক থাকে এমন জায়গায় হামলা করা, যাতে গোটা দেশ তাদের উপস্থিতি টের পায়। এই আশঙ্কা মাথায় রেখেই চলতি অমরনাথ যাত্রার নিরাপত্তা আরও টানটান করা হয়েছে। সীমান্তের যে সব জায়গায় প্রতিরক্ষা পরিকাঠামোয় কিছুটা ঘাটতি রয়েছে, তাকে যুদ্ধকালীন ভিত্তিতে টেলে সাজা হচ্ছে। সেনাপ্রধান জানিয়েছেন, হিংসার ঘটনা বেড়ে যাওয়ায় এখন কাশ্মীরে সেনা সরানোর কোনও প্রস্তুতি নেই। বরফ গলার সময়ের দিকে তাকিয়েই সেনা ফেরানোর সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া হবে।

শুধু সীমান্তই নয়, অযোধ্যার ঘটনার পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে দেশের বিভিন্ন ধর্মীয় স্থানের নিরাপত্তা আটোসাঁটো করার সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রক। স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী শিবরাজ পাটিল আজ বলেছেন, "সন্ত্রাসবাদীদের ছক ভেঙে দেওয়ার জন্য সবাইকে একজোট হয়ে নামতে হবে। ধর্মীয় স্থানে নিরাপত্তা ব্যবস্থা কী ভাবে বাড়ানো যায়, সেই বিষয়ে রিপোর্ট তৈরির জন্যও



সঙ্গেও আজ পাক বিদেশ মন্ত্রক ইসলামাবাদে ভারতীয় ডেপুটি হাইকমিশনার রাখবনকে ডেকে পাঠিয়ে জানিয়ে দিয়েছে, ভারতের যুক্তি তারা

চলতি বছরে অনুপ্রবেশ রোধের সময়ে নিরাপত্তা বাহিনীর হাতে মারা গিয়েছে ১০৫ জন জঙ্গি। এখনই 'কার্গিল' না-বলেও নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখায় জঙ্গি

এর পর পাঁচের পাতায়

নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখায় জঙ্গি

প্রথম পাতার পর তিনি মন্ত্রকের কর্তাদের নির্দেশ দিয়েছেন। এই পরিস্থিতিতেই ২৯-৩০ অগস্ট সন্ত্রাসবাদ নিয়ে বৈঠকে বসছেন ভারত-পাকিস্তানের স্বরাষ্ট্রসচিবেরা।

গুরেজ সেক্টরের অভিযান প্রায় শেষের মুখে। কিন্তু এই ঘটনা তাদের চোখ খুলে দিয়েছে বলেই প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রক জানাচ্ছে। ঘরোয়া ভাবে সরকারি কর্তারা স্বীকার করে নিচ্ছেন, গুরেজ-কাণ্ডের জন্য তাঁরা যথেষ্ট প্রস্তুত ছিলেন না। তার দু'টো কারণ। বরফ পড়লে উপত্যকা দুর্গম হয়ে পড়ে। প্রায় অলঙ্ঘনীয় বাধা ডিঙিয়ে কেউ ঢুকবে না ধরে নিয়েই এখানকার সেনার সংখ্যা কম রাখা হয়েছিল।

এর আগে বারামুলা বা কুপওয়ারার মতো জঙ্গি সংঘর্ষের ঘটনা গুরেজে কখনও ঘটেনি। তবে অভিযান এগানোর সঙ্গে সঙ্গে 'যাবতীয় উপযুক্ত ব্যবস্থা' নেওয়া হয়েছে।

সামরিক গোয়েন্দাদের রিপোর্টে জানা গিয়েছে, গুরেজ বা গুলমার্গের মতো নতুন এলাকাগুলি কাজে লাগাচ্ছে পাক-জঙ্গিরা। তাদের

অভিযানের ধরনও পাল্টেছে। এক কর্তার বক্তব্য, "এখন ওরা জনা দশ-পনেরো করে নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখা পেরিয়ে ঢুকছে। তার পরে বিক্ষোভ ঘটিয়ে বা অন্য কোনও ভাবে সেনার মনোযোগ কেড়ে নিচ্ছে। তারও পরে তিন-চার জনের ছোট ছোট দলে স্থানীয় গ্রামের মানুষের মধ্যে মিশে যাচ্ছে। অনেক ক্ষেত্রেই সেই সব নাম-কা-ওয়ান্তে গ্রামে শুধু পশুপালকেরাই থাকেন।

বছরের গোড়ায় প্রবল বরফপাতের ফলে কাঁটাতারের বেড়া ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হয়েছে। অনুপ্রবেশ রোধে যে সব যন্ত্র লাগানো হয়েছিল, সেগুলোরও ক্ষতি হয়েছিল। তাই ১০ জুলাই নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখা পার হয়ে জঙ্গিরা প্রায় ২৫ কিলোমিটার পর্যন্ত ঢুকে এলেও সেনা টের পায়নি। শেষ পর্যন্ত পশুপালকের কাছ থেকে খবর পেয়ে অভিযান শুরু করা হয়। এখনও পর্যন্ত উদ্ধার হয়েছে ২টি একে-৪৭, ৩টি অটোমেটিক পিস্তল, ২টি রেডিও সেট, ৮০০ রাউন্ড কার্তুজ। তবে আরও অনেক অস্ত্র এখনও উদ্ধার করতে পারা যায়নি বলে স্বীকার করছে প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রক।

Delhi & Islamabad declare talks agenda

But LoC casts shadow over dialogue

NILOVA Roy Chaudhury
New Delhi, July 19

AS INDIA and Pakistan announced a schedule for the next round of bilateral talks under the composite dialogue process, Islamabad issued a 'demarche' (protest) to New Delhi on Tuesday, for alleged violation of the Line-of-control. India categorically denied the charge.

India's deputy high commissioner in Islamabad, TCA Raghavan, was called in to the Pakistan foreign office on Tuesday and given the formal protest note. Raghavan denied the charges to Pakistan's director-general for South Asia, Jalil Abbas Jilani.

"There's no question of any Indian troops having crossed the LoC", a senior official said. "This has been conveyed to Pakistan".

Incidents of civilians "straying" across the LoC "occur routinely", official sources said. They are usually returned after the directors-general of military operations (DGMO) of both countries talk.

Meanwhile, a schedule for the next part of the discussions under the bilateral composite dialogue will begin next week when the secretary, culture, heads for Islamabad for talks on Promotion of Friendly Exchanges on

July 26 and 27.
Talks on nuclear and conventional confidence-building measures (CBMs) will be held in New Delhi on August 5, 6 and 8. Additional secretary, UN, in the ministry of external affairs will head the talks on nuclear CBMs, while the joint secretary dealing with Pakistan will head discussions on the conventional CBMs. The Pakistani foreign ministry's additional secretary, Tariq Osman Hyder, will head the Pakistan delegation.

Crucial trade issues will come up in talks on Economic and Commercial Cooperation and the meeting of the Joint Study Group on economic cooperation and trade, being held back-to-back on August 9 and 10.

A key proposal likely to emerge from these talks at the level of commerce secretaries, (intended to "demystify" each other's trading regimes, among other things) is the revival of the India-Pakistan Joint Commission, outlined in the joint statement issued after Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's visit in April. The Joint Commission is headed by the foreign ministers of both countries and was supposed to meet annually when it was set up in 1983. It has met thrice, the last time in 1989.

20 JUL 2006

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

India, Pak spar on LoC violation

Spurt in infiltration won't affect ceasefire agreement, says army

VISHAL THAPAR
New Delhi, July 19

LT-GEN. S. S. Dhillon, the commander of army's Srinagar-based 15-corps, on Tuesday said that the recent spurt in the infiltration of militants to this side of the LoC would not affect the ceasefire as agreed upon by the Indian and Pakistani troops in Jammu and Kashmir.

"The cessation of hostilities, which was mutually agreed upon 20 months ago still stands. We (Indian and Pak troops) face each other without any violation. This is despite continuing instances of infiltration," Dhillon said.

On Monday, however, the Indo-Pak ceasefire that has held since November 26, 2003 was clearly under pressure as Indian troops waged a major counter-infiltration operation close to the LoC and Islamabad accused them of violating the Line.

This is the first charge from either side of violation of the LoC since the cease-

General Shaukat Sultan alleged that Indian Army crossed the LoC at Tara Sher Khan in the Poonch sector. He accused Indian troops of entering a house on the Pakistani side of the LoC and abducting one person.

The hotline between the chiefs of military operations on the two sides crackled on Monday in the context of the Pakistani charge. Pakistan's Director-General of Military Operations Major General Yusuf registered a protest with India's officiating Director-General, Major General J.S. Liddar.

Gen. Yusuf also demanded an explanation for what he termed as violation of the LoC and asked for the return of the person he said had been abducted.

While rejecting the Pakistani charge of crossing over into their territory, the Indian side drew attention to a major counter-infiltration operation in the Poonch area of J&K. The Indians maintained that the Pakistani allegation was actually meant to dis-

credit a legitimate operation conducted on the Indian side.

The operation has to be seen in the context of the recently stepped up infiltration bids all along the LoC. Since July 9, at least 36 infiltrating militants have been shot dead in encounters with the Indian Army.

Major-general Liddar assured his Pakistani counterpart that he would verify whether any Pakistani national had been arrested by the Indian troops in the course of the counter-infiltration operation. The two are expected to talk again on this issue on Tuesday morning.

In Jammu, General Officer Commanding in Chief Northern Command, Lt General Hari Prasad claimed on Monday that the Pakistani troops were helping terrorists to cross into India. "It is impossible for the terrorists to infiltrating from areas close to Pakistani post. The fact is that they are coming from their (Pakistan's) territory and they are aware of this," Prasad told *Hindustan Times*.



Porters carry supplies for army posts in Gurez sector.

fire, and comes in the wake of perhaps the heaviest infiltration activity from the Pakistani side since November 2003.

Pakistan's military spokesman Major

20 JUL 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Infiltration on, Pak denials false: India

Pakistan-trained terrorists trying to cross LoC, says army officer

HT Correspondent
Jammu/Islamabad, July 18

THE SPATE in the infiltration attempts by Pakistan-trained terrorists from across the line-of-control (LoC) in the entire northern theatre may hit the pace of ongoing confidence-building measures between India and Pakistan.

General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command, Lt-General Hari Prasad claimed that the Pakistani troops were helping terrorists to cross over to the Indian side. "Any amount of denial is fine, but the ground realities are different".

Prasad said the Pak-trained terrorists were now attempting to cross over from the Akhnoor sector to the Kabul Gali sector on the LoC. But Indian troops were neutralizing the attempts with the help of surveillance equipment and intelligence inputs in clean-up operations.

Gen. Prasad stressed that terrorist camps in Pakistan were intact and Pakistan was pushing more terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir than in the past year.

Speaking on the infiltration attempts in the Gurez sector, he claimed 15 terrorists were spotted in the area where deployment of troops was not dense. So, with the help of helicopters additional troops were airlifted there and terrorists were trapped.

"During gun battle and

searches, 11 bodies have been recovered and search for the missing is on", Gen. Prasad said. One more body had been recovered from the area during searches on Monday, added an army spokesman. He also said an alert had been sounded along the entire stretch of the LoC, so that any infiltration attempt could be foiled.

Avoid blame game: Pak

Under the international scanner following revelation of Pakistani links to the London bombers and the Ayodhya attack, Pakistan said on Monday that, there was need to avoid "blame game" and "remain sober" in the "difficult" task of fighting terrorism.

Pakistan high commissioner to New Delhi Aziz Ahmed Khan said his country was "fully committed" to the international fight against terrorism and had taken "all measures possible" not to allow its soil to be used for such activities.

"Let's not forget that fighting terrorism is a difficult task. It's a task in which the international community will have to work together", he said in a television show.

Asked about the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba's apparent hand in the attack on the makeshift Ram temple in Ayodhya, Khan said, "We haven't received any investigation report of that sort". He quickly added, "When the Parliament attack

took place, we had immediately offered India a joint investigation. As far as Pakistan is concerned, we don't support acts of terrorism, particularly on religious places".

Asked about the increased infiltration activity in the Gurez sector, Khan said, "Pakistan has taken all measures possible not to allow Pakistani soil for such activity".

About reports that the London bombers had taken training in Pakistan, Aziz said, "(They are only) believed to have (done so). Pakistan and the UK are cooperating closely in the investigations". Khan added that the report in the Herald magazine that 13 militant training camps in Pakistan had been revived was "more speculation than anything else".

"Hardly any activity has been reported (in the article). Sometimes, such organisations, in order to gain propaganda points and publicity, can mislead (the reporter). The fellow may have been misled".

Aziz cancels visit

The sudden postponement of Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz's visit to the US - scheduled to take place later this month - may have been to avoid undue comparison with the high-profile welcome being accorded by the Bush Administration to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

19 JUL 2005

The ...

2,000 militants waiting on LoC: Army

Poonch/Jammu, July 18

POSTED AT handshaking distance with Pakistani troops on the Line of Control, the Army is on a hawk-eye vigil with information of 2,000 armed intruders waiting to cross over to Jammu and Kashmir.

"Despite the peace initiatives between India and Pakistan, the terrorist infrastructure is intact across the LoC where nearly 2,000 armed militants are poised to cross into this side to keep the pot of militancy boiling," a defence spokesman said here. Most of these militants were currently waiting at "launching pads" on the Pak occupied Kashmir (PoK) side of the LoC such as Kopramain, Badayan Gopalpur, New Thruti, Daramsal,

Sona, Pattan and Kanjur, he said. The terrorist camps churning out militants were Paddar, Hazira, Rawalakote, Nikial, Mangu, Barnallah, Khorian, Jandrote, Kotli and Fogosh. "The troops are keeping a hawk-eye on the zero line round the clock to stop cross-border infiltration, which has picked up after the snowline started melting in the Pir Panchal ranges," 16 Corps GoC Lt Gen Sudhir Sharma said on Sunday.

Infiltration "has picked up though we had achieved near zero infiltration syndrome till May," he said. The soldiers were making use of thermal imagers and night-vision devices to keep tabs on infiltration activity along the 740-km LoC some of which had three-tier fencing.

The terrorists who infiltrated in

an Army officer.

Amidst tight security arrangements, 3,302 pilgrims left for the cave shrine. The pilgrims left around 5 am from Jammu in a fleet of 136 vehicles, Jammu's Senior Superintendent of Police Alok Puri said. About 1.60 lakh devotees have so far offered prayers at the cave shrine.

Meanwhile, a gunbattle broke out between a group of infiltrating militants and security forces in Uri sector on Sunday. The infiltrators were confronted by troops at Kamalkote-Uri, 100 kms from Srinagar.

At least six civilians were injured when militants hurled a grenade on a security vehicle in Anantnag district. The grenade was lobbed on a passing BSF vehicle at the main market in Koymoh-Kulgam. IANS & HTC

GUREZ GUNBATTLE

the Gurez sector were planning to target Amarnath Yatra pilgrims, claim security agencies. In view of the encounter in Gurez sector, security forces deployed for the Amarnath Yatra have been alerted and fresh instructions have been flashed to the Army to sanitize the area in the higher reaches so that the terrorists do not succeed in their sinister designs.

"The areas were already dominated by the Army but with the fresh inputs, more troops have been launched for making the pilgrimage incident-free this year also," said



AP
ICON: An armyman displays a slain militant's wallet with an Osama photo at Rampur camp near Srinagar.

ভারতের বিরুদ্ধে পাক সম্মতিভিযোগ

ইসলামাবাদ, ১৮ জুলাই:
শান্তিপ্রক্রিয়ার মধ্যে ভারতের বিরুদ্ধে
সুর চড়া করল পাকিস্তান। সোমবার
ভারতের সেনাবাহিনীর বিরুদ্ধে
নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখা পেরনোর অভিযোগ
এনেছে পাকিস্তানের প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রক।
পাশাপাশি, ভারতের গোয়েন্দা সংস্থা
র-এর বিরুদ্ধে নাশকতামূলক
কার্যকলাপ চালানোরও অভিযোগ
আনা হয়েছে।

পাকিস্তানের প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রকের
অভিযোগ, ভারতের কয়েক জন সেনা
নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখা পেরিয়ে পাক অধিকৃত
কাশ্মীর থেকে এক জনকে ধরে নিয়ে
গিয়েছে। লিখিত প্রতিবাদও জানানো
হলেও ভারতের তরফে কোনও মন্তব্য
করা হয়নি। একই সঙ্গে পাক বিদেশ
মন্ত্রকের মুখপাত্র ভারতের সেনাসূত্রের
একটি খবর নিয়ে তীব্র আপত্তি
জানিয়েছেন। দু'হাজার জঙ্গি ভারতে
ঢোকার জন্য নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখায় অপেক্ষা
করছে বলে যে খবর বেরিয়েছে, সে
সম্পর্কে তাঁর মন্তব্য, “শান্তিপ্রক্রিয়ার
সময়ে এ সব কথা না বলাই উচিত।”
আবার এ দিনই ইসলামাবাদের পুলিশ
কর্তা তারিক জামিল দাবি করেন, তারা
পাঁচ জন সন্দেহভাজন জঙ্গিকে
ধরেছেন। তারা গ্যাস পাইপলাইন ও
বিদ্যুতের খুঁটি উড়িয়ে দেওয়ার ফন্দি
এঁটেছিল। ভারতের গোয়েন্দা সংস্থার
সঙ্গে যোগাযোগের কথা এই জঙ্গিরা
সন্দেহ করে বলে দাবি জামিলের।

ANADABAZAR PAPER

India, Pak to engage financial consultants for pipeline

9/20/05
Pak

14 JUL 2005

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI, July 13. — India and Pakistan today decided to appoint separate financial consultants by 15 September and set December-end as the deadline for a definite agreement on implementation of the Iran gas pipeline which is targeted for completion by 2010.

At the end of a two-day technical talks they decided that the financial consultants would advise on project structure before the two gas importers sign an inter-government agreement facilitating beginning of work on the project by early 2006.

The consultants would also advise on legal, commercial and contractual framework that would guarantee safe delivery of gas at an affordable price.

"This project is essential for sustainable and affordable energy to

meet the requirements of high economic growth rates of the two countries," the Pakistani oil secretary, Mr Ahmad Waqar, told reporters releasing a joint statement at the end of the first meeting of the Indo-Pak Joint Working Group here.

While there was convergence on issues like quantity of gas, quality of gas, technical standards for the pipeline and techno-economic considerations, the two sides will meet again by the end of next month to detail risk mitigation and inter-government 'Framework Agreement' for the project.

The consultants have to submit their reports by November end when petroleum minister Mr Mani Shankar Aiyar travels to Islamabad to meet his counterpart Mr Amanullah Jadoon for initialing a project agreement.

Petroleum secretary Mr SC

Tripathi, who led the Indian side at the JWG, said the bilateral talks would ultimately converge into a tripartite agreement with Iran also joining in once the importers agree on a Framework Agreement.

Mr Waqar said Pakistan would become a gas deficit country by 2010 and the pipeline was being targeted for completion by then.

Once operational, Islamabad would begin with importing 10 million standard cubic metres per day and ramping it up to 60 million standard cubic metres per day in the next five years.

India is looking at importing 60 mmscmd and increasing the quantity to 90 mmscmd in three years' time.

"The Framework Agreement will address all concerns of safety of pipeline and safe delivery of gas (to India)," he said.

Rise in project cost

NEW DELHI, July 13. — The ambitious Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline is likely to cost upwards of \$7 billion, 75 per cent more than previous estimate of \$4.16-billion mainly due to rise in steel price.

According to the latest estimate presented to the Indo-Pak Joint Working Group, which met here on 12-13 July, the cost of laying 2100-km of pipeline from Assaluyah port in Iran (on Persian Gulf) to Indian border (Barn district in Rajasthan), may be 7 billion dollar to be spent over construction period of five years.

The cost has also gone up account of higher cost of acquisition of land for laying through thickly populated areas.—PTI

India, Pakistan to discuss pipeline project

All issues, including transit fees and security, to be discussed in today's meeting

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: India and Pakistan will discuss all issues involved in laying the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline in its entirety, including transit fees and security issues, on Tuesday. The talks will be held during a meeting of the India-Pakistan Joint Working Group on pipeline projects between the two countries.

The Adviser to the Pakistan Prime Minister on Energy, Mukhtar Ahmad, and Pakistan Petroleum Secretary Ahmed Waqar are expected to meet Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar at the beginning of the two-day talks.

Petroleum Ministry officials say the discussions will cover critical issues like gas prices,

Meeting to discuss gas prices, terms of supply, commercial arrangements and each country's role

Prospects of extending Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan gas pipeline to India to be examined

Technical issues like the pipeline route and the landfall points to be taken up

terms of supply and commercial arrangements as well as the role of each country in the pipeline project. Security issues are expected to be one of the key elements in the talks.

Pakistan and Iran have already entered into a memorandum for the project, but India's role is crucial as it will be the largest consumer. The prospects of extending the Turkmenistan-

Afghanistan-Pakistan gas pipeline to India are also likely to be examined during the meeting. In addition, technical issues like the route of the pipeline and the landfall points will be taken up, officials said.

The Joint Working Group is expected to push forward the progress on the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project, which has been hanging fire for many

years. The project has been given some impetus after the recent visit of Mr. Aiyar to Iran and Pakistan, where discussions were held on the possibilities of consolidating India's participation.

India's role in the project was originally envisaged as being a partner in construction of the pipeline, but has now altered to that of being a consumer at the landfall point on the India-Pakistan border.

This change in concept has made the project far more attractive from the Indian point of view. The security risk aspect, however, is still being carefully studied and officials feel that many of the apprehensions could be ironed out in the meeting.

HINDU

07 JUL 2005

“More terrorist incidents could disrupt peace process”

Prime Minister asks BJP not to go after “cheap political points”

N. Ram

LONDON: Offering a measured perspective on Tuesday's foiled terrorist attack at Ayodhya in relation to the India-Pakistan peace process, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh made it clear he regarded it as “a major incident.” He expressed concern that “certainly these incidents, if they get repeated, have the potential to disrupt” the India-Pakistan peace process.

Asked who might have been behind the Ayodhya incident, he

asked about the BJP's demand for the resignation of the Home Ministers of the Central and Uttar Pradesh Governments, the Prime Minister remarked: “By that logic, Mr. Advani should have resigned many a time...[when] he was the president of the Home Ministry.” He cited the terrorist attacks at Akshardham, at Chhattisgarhpura, on the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly, and above all on Parliament as major cases in point, adding “we never used those occasions to score cheap political points.”

These observations came during an interaction with journalists on board Air India 001

flying the Prime Minister and his delegation to the United Kingdom to participate in meetings connected with the G-8 summit and other engagements.

Asked whether the Ayodhya incident would affect the India-Pakistan peace process, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh offered this nuanced assessment: “I have always maintained that we need to carry public opinion to make a success of the peace process. Anything that comes in the way of public opinion, and certainly these incidents, if they get repeated, have the potential to disrupt the peace process. So all concerned have

obligations [to keep]. In our Joint Statement, I and President Musharraf have committed ourselves to making the peace process irreversible. I sincerely hope that we can stick to that solemn commitment, both of us.”

Studiously avoiding pointing the finger at Pakistan or anyone else, Dr. Singh offered the sombre reading that “there is no doubt that the infrastructure of terror is, by and large, intact.” To a question about who benefited from such terrorist provocations, his answer was: “those who do not want the peace process to go on.” In response to another question on the current

state of India-Pakistan relations, he noted that progress had been made in people-to-people contacts and in other areas. There was an agreement to move ahead, although he would not say “everything is rosy in the garden of eden.”

Asked about the former External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh's criticism of the Government, in the light of his role in the Kandahar incident, and his demand that the Prime Minister should say the Ayodhya attack was an insult to Hindus, the Prime Minister responded: “Of all people, Mr. Jaswant Singh who escorted Maulana Masood Azhar to the safety of Kandahar!

It [the Ayodhya terrorist incident] is an insult to all human beings. When places of worship are attacked, something of us dies. As human beings, we should all feel concern.”

Was there any security failure? “There is no security lapse,” Dr. Singh responded. “We had known that the terrorist elements would provoke incidents like this and there was enough evidence that Ayodhya [could be targeted]. Our intelligence agencies had warned us about the possibility of this type of incident, and the way our security forces tackled this problem, they deserve our compliments.”

Smv - PMK

Talks on Tulbul project inconclusive

India and Pakistan are likely to come out with a joint declaration

Gargi Parsai

19 27/6

NEW DELHI: India and Pakistan on Tuesday resumed talks here on the Tulbul navigation project (Pakistan calls it Wullar barrage) at the Wullar Lake on the Jhelum in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Secretary-level talks were inconclusive with each side reiterating its position. It is after nearly a year that both sides have picked up the thread on Tulbul, now part of the composite dialogue process.

Pakistan's Water and Power Secretary Ashfaq Mahmood led an eight-member delegation. The Indian side is headed by Water Resources Secretary J. Hari Narayan.

At the last round of talks held in Islamabad in July 2004, it was agreed that discussions would continue to find a solution to the issue consistent with the provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty

Describing the marathon talks as "cordial and satisfactory", Mr. Narayan said the exercise would continue on Wednesday. Sources said both sides might come up with a joint declaration.

India for revival of work

India is insisting on revival of work on the project, suspended in 1987. The project was conceived in the 1980s and work began in 1984. It was stopped midway in 1987 after Islamabad raised objections.

The Jhelum, which flows through the Kashmir valley, provides an important means of transportation of goods and movement of people. To sustain navigation throughout the year it is considered necessary to maintain a minimum depth of water, which will permit movement of boats.

◆ Talks are "cordial and satisfactory"

◆ Pakistan side is led by Water Secretary Ashfaq Mahmood

◆ The last round of talks was held in Islamabad in July 2004

missible under the treaty, while Pakistan maintains that the project is a violation of the treaty. India says suspension of work is harming the interests of people of Jammu and Kashmir and also depriving people of Pakistan of irrigation and power benefits that may accrue from regulated water releases.

The Treaty divided the six rivers of Punjab between India and Pakistan. India got unrestricted use of the Beas, the Ravi and the Sutlej, and Pakistan got the three western rivers of Chenab, Indus and Jhelum.

The Treaty also allows either country to have restricted access for domestic and agriculture use, generation of hydroelectric power through a "run-of-the-river" project and non-consumptive use including navigation provided the same quantum of water is returned to the river.

gndv p m

Advani blames Pervez for Agra summit failure

9.2.05 in Pakistan 51-5
29/6

Statesman News Service & PTI

LAKHIMPUR/NEW DELHI, June 23. — Sending out conciliatory signals to the Sangh Parivar, the BJP president, Mr LK Advani, today said at Lakhimpur in Jammu that peace and normal relations between India and Pakistan could not be achieved until terror infrastructure is alive in Pakistan.

Mr Advani blamed the Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf for the collapse of the Agra summit in 2001 because of the latter's "refusal" to accept existence of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. "Musharraf was not ready to accept the fact that there was problem of terrorism in J & K. He, instead, said it was freedom struggle in which innocent people get killed. Then the Government of India said there can be no agreement," the former Deputy Prime Minister, who was blamed by Gen. Musharraf for the Agra failure, said.

Mr Advani was addressing his first public meeting after his controversial Pakistan tour and his subsequent resignation-retraction affair earlier this month. Apart from his comments on Jinnah and the Babri Masjid demolition during his Pakistan visit, which sparked off a furore within the Sangh Parivar, Mr Advani had then also talked about the "irreversibility" of the Indo-Pak peace process. "We are not against peace and normal relations with Pakistan and it is good to have peace but it can not be brought until terrorist infrastructure is alive," Mr Advani told the Lakhimpur rally organised to commemorate the Jana Sangh founder Shyamaprasad Mookerjee's death anniversary. "There would be no compromise on militancy as far as the BJP is concerned and no peace can be achieved until militancy is alive in Jammu and Kashmir." In line with the RSS *sarsanghchala*, M. K. S. Sudarshan's recent attack on Jawaharlal Nehru, Mr Advani also blamed Nehru for the prevailing situation in Kashmir.

Accusing India's first Prime Minister of committing "two major blunders", the BJP chief said that the bid to extend a special status with separate Constitution to J&K was Nehru's "first mistake". Nehru's "second mistake", charged Mr Advani, was to stop our Army from its forward march to take back Kashmir and throw out Pakistani elements from the state during the 1947 Pakistani aggression to annex Kashmir acceded to India by the then Maharaja with active support of Sheikh Abdullah.

24 JUN 2005

THE STATESMAN

India rejects Rashid's application

India
Pakistan
10-1

25/6

Pakistan Minister had applied for permission to travel by bus

Diplomatic Correspondent

NEW DELHI: India has rejected the application of Pakistan Information Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, to travel by the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus.

The External Affairs Ministry spokesman told mediapersons on Friday: "The Information Minister of Pakistan, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, had applied to travel on the bus from Muzaffarabad to Srinagar. The Government of India has processed the application and has declined to accord permission taking into account all relevant aspects involved."

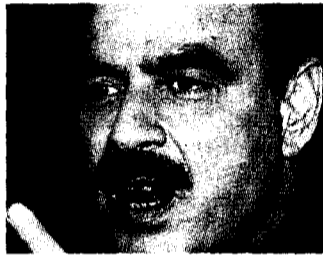
On Thursday, India confirmed that it had received the Sheikh's application and announced that this would be processed "in due course."

The Sheikh found himself in the middle of a controversy after Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front leader Yasin Malik "thanked" him in Pakistan for running training camps for Kashmiri militants at his farmhouse.

On June 14, India reacted sharply to Mr. Malik's statement, expressing concern that persons directly involved in "such activities" continued to hold high positions in Pakistan.

"No effective action"

"Our stand remains that no effective action has been taken by Pakistan to dismantle the infrastructure of support to terrorism on a permanent basis. This is contrary to the assurance given by the Pakistani leadership that Pakistan will not allow



any territory within its control to be used to support terrorism in any manner. It is our sincere hope that Pakistan will abide by its commitment," it had said.

Officials here had been indicating informally that given the "role" played by Mr. Ahmed in "running" these camps, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for him to travel to Jammu and Kashmir at this point.

Mr. Ahmed was here during the April visit of Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf.

However, at that time the allegations made by Mr. Malik had not come to light.

Earlier, Pakistan had refused permission to "mainstream" Kashmiri politicians such as Mehbooba Mufti and Omar Abdullah, who had wanted to travel to Muzaffarabad by the first April 7 bus that left Srinagar.

Following the sharp reaction from the External Affairs Ministry, political parties, including the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party, had demanded that Mr. Ahmed not be allowed to travel by the bus.

Rashid shocked: Page 12

24 JUN 2005

TRIP

বিশ্বাস ভেঙেছে ইসলামাবাদ, অটলকে লিখলেন মনমোহন

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২১
জুন: প্রাক্তন প্রধানমন্ত্রীর চিঠির উত্তরে
বর্তমান প্রধানমন্ত্রী বললেন, বিশ্বাস
ভেঙেছে ইসলামাবাদ। মনমোহন
সিংহের অভিযোগ, শ্রীনগর-
মুজফ্ফরাবাদ বাসযাত্রা নিয়ে দু'দেশের
মধ্যে যে সমঝোতা ছিল, তা লঙ্ঘন
করেছে পাকিস্তান। হরিয়ত নেতারা শুধু
অধিকৃত কাশ্মীরে যাবেন, এটাই হির
ছিল। কিন্তু পাকিস্তানের অন্যত্র তাঁদের
আমন্ত্রণ করে সমঝোতার বাইরে যাওয়া
হয়েছে বলেই মনে করছে দিল্লি।

দু'দেশের মধ্যে শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়া
চলাকালীন মনমোহন সিংহের এই
মন্তব্য যথেষ্ট তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ বলে মনে
করছে কূটনৈতিক শিবির এবং প্রধান
বিরোধী দল বিজেপি। হরিয়ত নেতা
ইয়াসিন মালিকের মন্তব্যের (পাক
তথ্যমন্ত্রী শেখ রশিদ আহমেদের সঙ্গে
জেহাদিদের প্রত্যক্ষ সংযোগ রয়েছে)
পরে কিছুটা নড়েচড়ে বসে বিদেশ
মন্ত্রক গত সপ্তাহে পাকিস্তান প্রসঙ্গে
একটি কড়া বিবৃতি দিয়েছিল। তার ঠিক

পরেই আজ প্রধানমন্ত্রীর চিঠি।

আজ বিজেপি প্রশ্ন তুলেছে,
আস্থাবর্ধক ব্যবস্থা চলতে চলতেই
দু'দেশের মধ্যে এই 'বিশ্বাসঘাতকতা'র
ঘটনা ঘটছে কেন? রাজ্যসভার
দলনেতা এবং প্রাক্তন বিদেশমন্ত্রী
যশোবন্ত সিংহ আজ প্রধানমন্ত্রীর চিঠি
সঙ্গে নিয়ে সাংবাদিক সম্মেলন
করেছেন। তাঁর বক্তব্য, "প্রধানমন্ত্রী
চিঠিতে স্পষ্ট করেছেন যে, এটা অন্য
দেশের প্রতি বিশ্বাসঘাতকতা।
প্রধানমন্ত্রীর এ বার দেশকে জানানো
উচিত, পাকিস্তানের কাছে কূটনৈতিক
জবাবদিহি তিনি চাইবেন কি না।"

হরিয়তের সফর নিয়ে দু'দেশের
মধ্যে কূটনৈতিক চাপানউতোর চলছে
এক মাস ধরে। সেটা চূড়ান্ত পর্যায়ে
চলে যায় ইসলামাবাদে পাক
প্রেসিডেন্টের মন্তব্যে। পারভেজ
মুশারফ বলেন, পাসপোর্ট ছাড়াই
হরিয়ত নেতারা পাকিস্তানে এসেছেন,
এটা খুবই ভাল লক্ষণ। মুশারফের এই
মন্তব্য নিয়ে তৎক্ষণাৎ মুখ খোলেনি

বিদেশ মন্ত্রক। বাজপেয়ী বিষয়টির
ব্যাখ্যা চেয়ে চিঠি লিখেছিলেন
মনমোহনকে। আজ উত্তরে মনমোহন
বলেছেন, "হরিয়ত নেতাদের পাসপোর্ট
দেওয়া হয়েছিল। তাই এটা কখনওই
বলা ঠিক হবে না যে, আমাদের তরফ
থেকে হরিয়তের সফর নিয়ে কোনও
গোলমাল করা হয়েছে।"

বাজপেয়ী অভিযোগ তুলেছিলেন
হরিয়ত নেতাদের পাকিস্তানে যেতে
দেওয়া নিয়ে। মনমোহনের বক্তব্য, গত
চার-পাঁচ বছর ধরেই (অর্থাৎ বাজপেয়ী
জমানাতেও) হরিয়ত নেতারা ভারত
সফররত পাক নেতাদের সঙ্গে দেখা
করে এসেছেন। পাক রাষ্ট্রদূতদের
সঙ্গেও এরা বৈঠক করেছেন। এই
প্রেক্ষিতে ইউপিএ সরকার মনে
করেছে, তাঁদের পাকিস্তান সফর
কোনও ক্ষতি ডেকে আনবে না।
বিজেপি অবশ্য এখানেই ইতি না-টেনে
মন্তব্য করেছে, সফরে গিয়ে তাঁরা কী
করলেন, হরিয়ত নেতাদের কাছে তার
কৈফিয়ত চাওয়া সরকারের কর্তব্য।

22 JUN 2005

ANADABAZAR PAPER

"No role for third party in J&K issue"

Violation by Pakistan on Hurriyat visit: Manmohan

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has rejected the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee's assertion that the UPA Government had "mis-handled" the visit of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Dr. Singh was responding to Mr. Vajpayee's charge (in a letter dated June 15) that "the peace process with Pakistan has taken [a disturbing turn]." In his reply, the Prime Minister asserted that "it is our endeavour to take the composite dialogue between India and Pakistan forward while ensuring that India's vital interests are fully satisfied."

Dr. Singh's letter dated June 20 was released by the BJP here.

Addressing himself to Mr. Vajpayee's concern over the Hurriyat leaders' visit, Dr. Singh put the visit in a context: "You are aware of the fact that in the last four or five years, these leaders have regularly met Pakistani dignitaries visiting India, as well as Pakistani diplomats. In this background, our Government felt that their visit to Pakistan could not do any harm."

Dr. Singh stated that by inviting the Hurriyat leaders to visit Islamabad "Pakistan violated an understanding on these procedures that had been reached between India and Pakistan." He informed Mr. Vajpayee that "passports were issued to

those Hurriyat leaders who did not possess Indian passports and [who] made a request for the issue of such documents."

Dr. Singh put on record the Government position on the Hurriyat claim [which was apparently endorsed by Pakistan] to be the "sole representative."

He wrote: "We have been consistently of the view that Jammu and Kashmir has a duly-elected Government which came into office after an election that was internationally held to be free and fair. We recognise that there are some groups that are outside the electoral process, and the All Party Hurriyat Conference is one among such groups in Jammu and Kashmir."

Reacting to the BJP charge that the Government had allowed the situation to "slip out of hand" and that some kind of a third-party intervention was round the corner, he wrote: "I would like to emphasise that there is no room in our discussion — or in our actions — for ambiguity regarding our position on Jammu and Kashmir. I have reiterated on every possible occasion that there can be no redrawing of boundaries. We have also ruled out any role for a third party — either through interventions or as guarantor of as mediations — in any form."

Text of letter: Page 14

22 JUN 2005

THE HINDU

Rashid helped ultras: Amanullah

HE NEVER GAVE ARMS TRAINING, SAYS JKLF RAWALPINDI UNIT CHIEF
Include Kashmiris in dialogue: Mirwaiz

JAMMU, June 17. — Chief of JKLF's Rawalpindi-based unit Amanullah Khan today confirmed that Pakistan's information minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed helped the JKLF till April 1990 by offering lodging and boarding to "freedom fighters from Indian-occupied Kashmir" but never imparted military training to them. In a statement emailed to The Statesman today, Mir Amanullah Khan said that after his efforts to meet then Prime Minister Mrs Benazir Bhutto failed in 1989, he approached Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, a Muslim League leader from Rawalpindi, for helping hun-

dreds of "freedom fighters" who had reached Muzaffarabad from across the ceasefire-line. "He agreed and the boys who were living in tents in a graveyard in Muzaffarabad shifted to his Fatehgang Road farm near Rawalpindi," he said.

The JKLF chief said Sheikh Rashid, however, had nothing to do with military training which was imparted under the supervision of a senior JKLF member Commander Farooq, who happened to be a retired Army officer. "But under pressure from the government, Sheikh Rashid told the JKLF

SRINAGAR, June 17. — The moderate faction of Hurriyat Conference today insisted on inclusion of people of Kashmir in the Indo-Pak peace process on Kashmir and flayed the idea of converting the LoC into international border to resolve the problem. After the visit of Hurriyat and other separatists to Pakistan the "people of Kashmir have been accepted as a party to the Kashmir issue for the first time in 57 years," Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, chairman of the amalgam said while addressing the Friday congregation at the Jamia mosque here. — PTI

that he could not continue keeping the freedom fighters at his farm. They had to vacate it in April 1990," said Amanullah Khan.

Das Munshi visits Baglihar
Union water resources minister Mr Priya Ranjan Das Munshi

today visited the controversial Baglihar hydro-power project for an on-the-spot study. He said he would be submitting a report to PM on the status of the project being constructed on the Chenab river. — SNS

Manmohan seeks report on Baglihar

Priyaranjan Dasmunsi visits dam site

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has sought a report on the status of the 450-MW Baglihar hydropower project being constructed on the Chenab river in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir under the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 between India and Pakistan.

Indicating this, Union Minister for Water Resources Priyaranjan Dasmunsi who visited the dam site on Friday with a high-level team of officials and experts, said he would submit his report to Dr. Singh on his return here on Saturday.

Jammu and Kashmir Minister for Power Niaz Mohammad Sharief accompanied the Central team.

In January this year, Pakistan approached the World Bank for the appointment of a Neutral Expert to resolve its differences with India on the design of the Baglihar project. On May 10, the bank appointed Prof. Raymond Lafitte of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology as the Neutral Expert.

Earlier this month, the Neutral Expert held his first meeting with India and Pakistan to set a

● **Pakistan objects to dam construction**

● **Dasmunsi hopes inspection by Neutral Expert will be completed by January next year**

● **Final hearing in dispute after inspection**

procedure to enable him to arrive at a determination of the differences in a fair and equitable manner. The procedure settled by the Neutral Expert gives both parties three occasions each to explain their stances. The Neutral Expert will also conduct an on-site inspection of the dam.

While Pakistan has raised objections on the design of the dam saying it would affect downstream flows, India has maintained that it has not deviated from the provisions of the Treaty. India is reported to have offered to make changes in the design to accommodate Pakistan's objections without compromising the safety of the dam or the benefits that are to accrue

from the project.

During his visit to the project site, Mr. Dasmunsi expressed the hope that the inspection would be completed by January end next year following which the final hearing in the dispute would begin.

The World Bank brokered the Indus Waters Treaty, which was signed by India and Pakistan in 1960 and divides water of six rivers flowing from Kashmir. Under the Treaty, the waters of the rivers Ravi, Beas and Sutlej are allocated to India and waters of the other three rivers Jhelum, Chenab and Indus allocated to Pakistan.

Pakistan objects to India's construction of the Baglihar project, which started in 1999. It claims the project violates the Indus Waters Treaty and would affect the flow of river waters to its territory. India denies such a charge, saying it does not take water from the river.

The project is to be completed by 2007. The expected height of the Baglihar dam will be 470 feet. The extent of water storage has not yet been made public and this forms the cause of dispute between Pakistan and India.

8 JUN 2

THE HINDU

Atal attacks Kashmir policy

Hurriyat ready

NEW DELHI, June 16. — The consensus over the Indo-Pak peace process today showed the first signs of fissures with Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee sending a strongly-worded letter to Dr Manmohan Singh, charging that the process has become "Kashmir-centric, an objective cherished by Pakistani establishment".

Mr Vajpayee asked the Centre to refrain from giving prominence to the Hurriyat and from letting Pakistan talk of third-party intervention. Pakistan should not be allowed to deviate from its 2004 commitment of "curbing terror activities" on its land and

"autonomy". He referred to Yasin Malik's "revelation" about Sheikh Rashid's PoK terror camp.

The Congress rejected the charges as "baseless, irresponsible and unfortunate." "The BJP is not concerned about national security and merely wants to deflect public attention," said Mr Anand Sharma. Under the bilateral agreement over the peace bus, citizens could only travel up to PoK. "If Hurriyat leaders went beyond, Pakistan is responsible for the breach," he said. On Rashid, he said: "If this is true, he must not be allowed to visit India."

— SNS & PTI

Bowlers' pick: Gilchrist,

LONDON, June 16. — Australia's Adam Gilchrist is the world's scariest one-day cricket batsman, followed closely by Indian opener Virender Sehwag, a poll of 26 international bowlers has shown.

The bowlers were asked to name one-day cricket's hardest hitter, the batsman most likely to wreck their figures, the biggest hit they had seen and the world's most frightening batsman.

Players got one point for a mention and five for being placed at the top of each category.

The results published in the July issue of the *Bowler's Cricket* have Gilchrist heading the Scary List with 43 points, followed by West Indian Brian Lara (34 points), Pakistan's Shalid Afridi (29), India's Virender Sehwag (25), England's Andrew Flintoff (15), India's Sachin Tendulkar (12) and New Zealand's Chris Cairns (11).

Sehwag scariest



Selection troubles for Sourav

NEW DELHI, June 16. — The BCCI chief has told a TV channel that Sourav Ganguly's form is a matter of concern and the "selection committee will look into it." — PTI (See page 12)

On the hardest hitters, South African bowler Makhaya Ntini voted for West Indian Chris Gayle, saying: "Man, he hits it hard!". Australian paceman Jason Gillespie agreed about Ntini, but Sri Lanka's Upul Chandana named Afridi, who gave Indians a taste of his prowess by scoring the second quickest century of all time in the India-Pakistan series in March-April.

Prominent on the list of the biggest hits was New Zealander Nathan Astle's six off England bowler Andrew Caddick, which cleared the Christchurch ground in 2001-02, in the course of a much-admired double ton. The hit was mentioned by two England bowlers, Matthew Hoggard and Paul Collingwood, a local newspaper reported today.

Gilchrist responded to the honour by saying: "I guess it's an honour in a strange kind of way, but it's not something I place a lot of emphasis on." — IANS

ইয়াসিনের মন্তব্যের জেরে পাক মন্ত্রীর সফরে না

আগ্নি রায় • নয়াদিল্লি

১৫ জুন: কাশ্মীরে স্বাগত নন পাকিস্তানের তথ্য ও সম্প্রচারমন্ত্রী শেখ রশিদ আহমেদ। কূটনৈতিক স্তরে দিল্লি আজ ইসলামাবাদকে জানিয়ে দিয়েছে, রশিদকে ৩০ তারিখের মুজফফরবাদ-শ্রীনগর বাসে চড়ার অনুমতি দেওয়া সম্ভব নয়। রশিদ পাক-অধিকৃত কাশ্মীরে জিহাদীদের জন্য প্রশিক্ষণ শিবির চালান, জেকেএলএফ নেতা ইয়াসিন মালিক এই খবর ফাঁস করে দেওয়ার পরেই তাঁর সম্পর্কে কড়া মনোভাব নিল ভারত।

দিল্লির এই সিদ্ধান্ত চলতি ভারত-পাক শান্তি প্রক্রিয়ায় বিরূপ প্রতিক্রিয়া তৈরি করবে, সন্দেহ নেই। কিন্তু সেই ঝুঁকি নিয়েও যে দিল্লি রশিদের সফরের উপরে নিষেধাজ্ঞা জারি করল, তার কারণ জঙ্গি কার্যকলাপ নিয়ে পাকিস্তানকে কড়া বাতী পাঠাতে চায় ইউপিএ সরকার। যদিও প্রকাশ্যে 'জঙ্গি সংযোগ'কে আবেদন খারিজের কারণ বলে

দেখাচ্ছে না দিল্লি। সরকারি ভাবে বলা হয়েছে, শ্রীনগর-মুজফফরবাদ বাস সাধারণ মানুষের যাতায়াতের জন্য। যাঁরা ঘরবাড়ি ছেড়ে চলে গিয়েছিলেন, তাঁদের জন্য। নেতা-মন্ত্রীদের জন্য নয়। যে জন্য ওমর আবদুল্লাহ, মেহবুবা মুফতিরা বাসে চড়ে মুজফফরবাদ যেতে পারেননি।

মুখে এ কথা বললেও ঘটনা হল, ইয়াসিন মালিকের বিবৃতিই দিল্লিকে ক্ষুব্ধ করেছে। কাল এ নিয়ে বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের মুখপাত্র যা বলেছেন, তেমন কড়া ভাষায় পাকিস্তান সম্পর্কে ইলানীং কালে কিছু বলেনি ভারত। নভোজ সারনা বলেন, "স্থায়ী ভাবে সন্ত্রাসবাদ বন্ধ করা এবং জঙ্গি পরিকাঠামো ধ্বংসে কোনও ব্যবস্থা পাকিস্তান এখনও নেয়নি। নিজেদের নিয়ন্ত্রণাধীন কোনও এলাকা সন্ত্রাসের কাজে ব্যবহার হবে না, এই মর্মে পাকিস্তান নেতৃত্ব যে আশ্বাস দেন, তা রক্ষা করা হচ্ছে না।"

শেখ রশিদ অবশ্য আত্মপক্ষ সমর্থন করে বলেছেন, "আমার ফর্ম হাউস বা বাড়িতে কখনও কোনও জঙ্গি শিবির ছিল না। ইয়াসিন মালিকের

যে বিবৃতি নিয়ে জল যোলা করা হচ্ছে, সেই বিবৃতি দেওয়ার সময় আমি তাঁর সামনেই ছিলাম। তিনি এমন কোনও কথা আদপেই বলেননি।" সেই সঙ্গেই রশিদ জানিয়েছেন, বাসযাত্রার পরিকল্পনা থেকে সরবেন না। ভারত তাঁকে বাসে চড়ার অনুমতি না-দিলে শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়ার পক্ষে তা ক্ষতিকর হবে বলে মন্তব্য করছেন রশিদ।

মালিকও আজ রশিদের সমর্থনে বলেন, "রশিদ জঙ্গি প্রশিক্ষণ শিবির চালান এমন কথা আমি বলিনি। শুধু বলেছিলাম, কাশ্মীরের স্বাধীনতা আন্দোলনে তাঁর অবদান স্বর্ণক্ষেত্রে লেখা থাকবে।"

কিন্তু এই দাবিকে অনেকটাই নড়বড়ে করে দিয়েছে পাকিস্তানের প্রাক্তন স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী নাসিরুদ্দীন বকর ও জেকেএলএফ নেতা হাশিম কুরেশির বক্তব্য। কুরেশি বলেন, "মালিক সত্যি কথাই বলেছেন। আমি '৯৪ পর্যন্ত জেকেএলএফের শীর্ষস্থানীয় পদাধিকারী ছিলাম। রশিদের শিবিরে প্রশিক্ষণপ্রাপ্তদের সঙ্গে আমি নিজে কথা বলেছি।" আর বকরের দাবি, "রশিদ সত্যি বলছেন না।"

সারনার কালকের বক্তব্যের পরেই দিল্লির মনোভাব স্পষ্ট হয়ে গিয়েছিল। বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের পক্ষ থেকে স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রকের সংশ্লিষ্ট কর্তাদের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ করা হয়। রশিদের সঙ্গে অন্তত ৩৫০০ জেহাদির এখনও প্রত্যক্ষ যোগাযোগ রয়েছে বলে জানায় কেন্দ্রীয় গোয়েন্দা বিভাগ। একই অভিযোগ পাক রেলমন্ত্রী জাভেদ আশরাফ কাজি, পাক-অধিকৃত কাশ্মীরের গভর্নর মেজর জেনারেল আনওয়ার খানের বিরুদ্ধেও। স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রক বলে, যোহেতু পুরনো অভিযোগ নতুন করে উঠেছে এবং অভ্যন্তরীণ রিপোর্টও অনুকূল নয়, তাই এই মুহুর্তে রশিদকে আসার অনুমতি দেওয়া সম্ভব নয়।

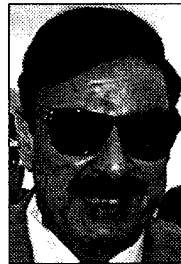
প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় অবশ্য মনে করেন, এই ঘটনায় শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়া ব্যাহত হবে না। তবে একই সঙ্গে তিনি বলেন, "শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়াকে বিঘ্নিত করার চেষ্টা চলছে।" কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্রপ্রতিমন্ত্রী শ্রীঅকাশ জওসওয়াল বলেন, "ইয়াসিন মালিকের সঙ্গে বিভিন্ন গোষ্ঠী নিয়মিত যোগাযোগ রাখে। তাঁর বক্তব্য অধিশাস করা শক্ত।"

India attacks Pak over jihadi training issue

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 14 JUNE

POUNCING on Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik's startling revelation that Pakistani information minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed had operated jihadi training camps, New Delhi on Tuesday received fresh impetus to renew its attack on Islamabad of not taking proper action to dismantle the infrastructure of support to terrorism.

At a function in Islamabad on Monday, JKLF chief Yasin Malik, who is part of the Hurriyat delegation visiting Pakistan, asserted on 3,500 militants being trained at a camp set up by Mr Rashid Ahmed when militancy was at its peak in Jammu and Kashmir.



Yasin Malik

Sheikh Rashid has played a dominant role to the cause of liberation of Kashmiris. He used to support the frontline jihadis, but very few people know about his contribution, he was quoted by Pakistani newspaper *Daily Times*.

New Delhi on Tuesday was quick to take up the issue to buttress its contention that the Pakistani establishment was clearly involved in supporting militancy in Jammu and Kashmir. It is particularly serious that people directly involved in such activities continue to occupy high positions in Pakistan. Our stand remains that no effective action has been taken by Pakistan to dismantle the infrastructure of support to terrorism on a permanent basis, foreign office spokesperson Navtej Sarna said.

This is in contrary to the assurance given by the Pakistani leadership that Pakistan will not allow any territory within its control to be used to support terrorism in any manner. It is our sincere hope that Pakistan will abide by its commitment, Mr Sarna added. The revelation is now expected to cast a shadow on Mr Rashid's impending visit to Jammu & Kashmir.

The information minister is understood to have submitted an application to visit the state on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service. He is

Yasin says Pak trained terrorists

MUBASHIR Zaidi
Islamabad, June 14

YASIN MALIK, chief of the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front, said on Monday that Sheikh Rashid, Pakistan's information minister, ran a training camp for Kashmiri militants. However, Rashid told reporters the moderate Kashmiri leader was referring to another person of the same name. "He (Malik) was talking about another Sheikh, not myself," he said in an attempt to distance himself from Yasin's assertion.

Speaking at a function, Yasin said, "I would say in the initial days of the Kashmir movement, the guy who had a frontline role was he (the minister). Nobody knows that when we were brought on this soil, about 3,500 boys were accommodated at his farm-house."

Malik said the boys went to Pakistan for military training in 1988 and Sheikh Rashid Ahmed used to take them to the Northwestern Frontier Province bordering Afghanistan for various assignments.

Pakistan has always denied Indian accusations that it had supported militancy in the Indian-administered Kashmir since the late 1980s.

"I did my rightful duty of bringing to notice his great contribution for the Kashmir cause which nobody knows," Malik said.

India expressed "great concern" on Tuesday over the issue. Calling it "contrary to the assurance given by the Pakistani leadership", official MEA spokesman Navtej Sarna said, "It is particularly serious that people directly involved in such activities continue to occupy high positions in Pakistan."

Responding to a query, Sarna reiterated India's position that "no effective action has been taken by Pakistan to dismantle the infrastructure of support to terrorism on a permanent basis." "It is our sincere hope that Pakistan will abide by its commitment" to "not allow any territory within its control to be used to support terrorism in any manner."



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— Yasin Malik

BJP attacks Pak over Hurriyat

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, June 12. — Barely two days after the tenuous resolution of its unprecedented leadership crisis over Mr LK Advani's controversial praise for Jinnah, the BJP today went on the offensive targeting Islamabad for rolling out "a red carpet welcome" for separatist Hurriyat leaders.

The BJP made clear its intentions to rock Parliament over the issue. "The Hurriyat delegation was allowed to go to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir by permit and it was the duty of Pakistan government not to allow them to enter Pakistan without Indian passports. Our apprehension that the bus to Muzaffarabad would facilitate separatist elements to enter Pakistan without Indian

passports has been proved true," BJP parliamentary party spokesman Mr VK Malhotra said here.

Condemning General Pervez Musharraf's statement that Hurriyat represented the people of Jammu and Kashmir as "fallacious and unacceptable", Mr Malhotra said: "They have no representation in Jammu and Ladakh regions. In Kashmir Valley too, Hurriyat never contested elections and have no representative character at all."

Describing Pakistan's action in "supporting and actively helping separatists" as "highly objectionable", he said it was in "blatant violation" of the joint statement issued by the Pakistan President and the then Prime Minister, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, on 6 January, 2004. Mr Malhotra asked the UPA government to explain what action it contem-



THEY ALSO PLAY POLITICS! VHP leaders Mr Ashok Singhal and Mr Praveen Togadia in the company of sadhus, at a meeting in Hardwar on Sunday. — PTI

plated against Hurriyat leaders mouthpiece, *Organiser*, has also "who deliberately travelled without Indian passports". The RSS the Hurriyat's Pakistan visit.

RSS, VHP keep heat on Advani

NEW DELHI, June 12. — The storm set off by Mr LK Advani's comment Jinnah remarks continued to rage through the Sangh two days after "the resolution of the issue". The VHP, at the forefront of anti-Advani campaign, has indicated that it might review its "ties" with the BJP at its apex body's two-day meet at Hardwar starting 14 June. Over 150 religious leaders would attend the meeting. Mr Praveen Togadia said the meet will draw the "ideological roadmap" for the VHP.

Mr MG Vaidya, a senior RSS ideologue and former RSS spokesman, also joined issue today, saying Mr Advani should not have gone back on his decision to resign as the BJP chief. — SNS

THE BIGGER PICTURE: Do preconceived notions about Jinnah stand up to scrutiny?

The man we love to hate

BY MANOJ JOSHI

THE STORM over L.K. Advani's remarks on Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Partition is a reflection of the somewhat extraordinary circumstances that led to the creation of Pakistan and its relationship to India. What we are beginning to learn is that the responsibility for Partition didn't rest exclusively with the founders of Pakistan, and Jinnah is not the caricature he has been made to be by nationalist historians of Pakistan or the demon he's been portrayed as by some of our historians.

Partition was a major event in the history of the subcontinent and the world. Yet almost all those who lived through the era, and all historians since, are agreed that it was not a foreordained thing. Given the number of variables at play, it's impossible to come up with one contrafactual account of the event. But there is no dearth of decisions and happenings, which, had they worked another way, could have provided several alternate lines of historical evolution: What if the Congress had not resigned from the government in 1939? What if the Cabinet Mission plan of 1946 had succeeded? What if the communal massacres of 1946-47 hadn't taken place? What if Sikandar Hyat Khan hadn't passed away when he did? What if Jinnah's illness had been known about earlier?

Historians have long debated the role of an individual in history. Jinnah exemplifies the rare example of those who have, through their own brilliance, stubbornness, courage and determination, changed the course of history, in this case, by creating a State called Pakistan, which was not based on the common attributes of nationhood — common history, ethnicity, culture, language — but the genuine fear of the identity of a religious minority being swamped by a majority it had ruled over for centuries. Notwithstanding the fantastic reasoning of a number of Pakistani historians who claim antiquity of their State going back to Mohenjodaro, the ideological origins of 'Pakistan' aren't more than a hundred years old and its birth took place in the phantasmagoric summer of 1947.

Despite the bitterness of the years preceding, as of 1940, Jinnah still saw India as comprising "two nations who must both share the governance of their common motherland". The Muslim League's acceptance, albeit conditional, of the Cabinet Mission plan, indicated that till mid-1946, Jinnah was willing to work along the idea of a confederal, if not federal, India. What the historical record shows is the great impatience



THEY DON'T QUITE UNDERSTAND US, DO THEY?: Jinnah and Gandhi

of all the principal actors — the British, the Congress and the Muslim League — to force a solution in the subcontinent.

Prodded by the Viceroy's alarming reports, in early 1946, British Prime Minister Clement Attlee sent a Cabinet Mission to India to settle the terms under which India would get self-rule. Having failed to get the Indian endorsement, the Cabinet Mission announced their plan on May 16, 1946. The essence of its proposal was that there should be a single Union of India comprising British-Indian provinces and Princely States dealing with foreign affairs, defence and communications. The rest of the powers would remain with the provinces, which could form groups with their own executive and legislatures. Each group was free to cede additional powers to the Centre and a province was free to secede from a group, but not the union. The Cabinet Mission envisaged a single constitution-making body for this new union and this constituent assembly could seek full independence or remain a dominion within the Commonwealth.

Both the Congress and the League were uneasy about the Cabinet Mission proposals, but went along with the idea. The former welcomed the idea of a single constituent assembly as a prelude to a united independent India; the League saw it as part of a set of proposals that would lead to a sovereign Pakistan. But the Cabinet plan was torpedoed by Jawaharlal Nehru, who declared that the new constituent assembly would not be

fettered by previous agreements. In other words, the Congress would not promise to uphold any of the commitments made to the League.

The die was now cast and Jinnah decided to take recourse to Direct Action which, translated on a ground already fertile with communal propaganda, led to the Great Calcutta Killings on Direct Action Day of August 16, 1946. This was the trigger that started the communal carnage — of Hindus in Noakhali and of Muslims in Bihar. And, beginning in early 1947 of Sikhs and Hindus in Rawalpindi, Muslims in Amritsar and East Punjab culminating finally in the holocaust following Partition.

Whatever may have been the failings of Jinnah and Nehru, the primary responsibility for this outcome rested with the British. In February 1946, Attlee declared that the British would leave the subcontinent not later than June 1948 after transferring power to Indian hands. Ideally, he said, this would be to a government created by a new constitution. But if that were not possible, the British would consider whom to hand it to — "whether as a whole to some form of Central government for British India, or in some areas to the existing provincial governments..."

With the League refusing to join the constituent assembly, the Cabinet Mission proposals were now dead. So the new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, now began to work on his own plan based on Attlee's February 20 statement. Plan Balkan, as the name suggested, would ask all the provinces of British India —

Madras, Bombay, UP, Bihar, Central Provinces, Orissa, Delhi, Ajmer-Merwara and Coorg — to confirm whether or not they wished to remain in the existing constituent assembly. The Bengal and Punjab provincial assemblies would be split on communal lines and if these separate meetings voted for Partition, the provinces would be divided — Indians would have to be responsible for their own partition. As for the 600-odd princely states, they could join any of these provincial groupings they were contiguous towards.

Just how idiosyncratic the summer of 1947 was is brought out by the following episode. On May 10, Mountbatten received the go-ahead from London for this plan to balkanise India, and he called a meeting a week later with Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan, Baldev Singh and Congress leaders to formally announce it. Nehru was at the time Mountbatten's house guest in Simla. That night he decided to reveal the plan to Nehru who was, simply put, appalled. Next morning, Nehru penned a confidential note emphatically rejecting the plan pointing out that where the Attlee statement and the Cabinet Mission plans recognised the existence of a Union of India to start with, Mountbatten's plan would lead to not just one partition, but a large number of successor States. Mountbatten now sought out V.P. Menon and an alternative plan was worked out that involved the transfer of power to two successor governments on the basis of Dominion Status. This was the plan that was announced on June 3 and led to the division of the country.

Had India and Pakistan been divided and gone their respective ways, that would have been the end of the matter. But they didn't. They have, to paraphrase T.S. Eliot, been united for 60 years "in the strife that divided them". After this period characterised by war and hostility, they are seeking closer union through soft borders and a free trade union, with the possibility of a common currency, and, who knows, some kind of a South Asian political union.

It's a measure of the intensity of the current India-Pakistan peace process that it has touched off a huge upheaval where preconceived ideas, partisan history, old feuds and fading memories are being churned. Like the fabled *samudra manthan*, the process is yielding a lot of poison. Advani has decided to swallow some of it, but he's no Lord Shiva. Before the nectar emerges, all of us in the subcontinent will have to swallow our share.

09 JUN 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Iran, Pakistan & India To Gain From Move, IOC Will Supply Diesel To Pak Cities

Musharraf gives nod to \$4-bn pipeline project

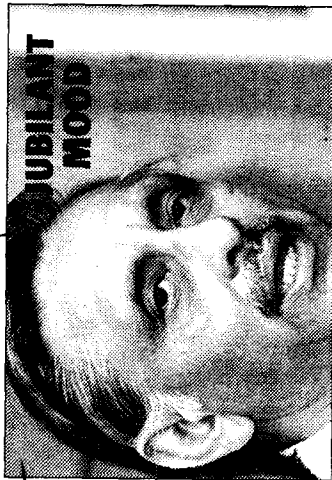
Soma Banerjee
ISLAMABAD 7 JUNE

YOU could call it India's biggest coup in recent times on Pakistani soil. President Pervez Musharraf on Tuesday gave his final seal of approval to the \$4.16-billion Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline project, underscoring his country's commitment to join hands with India in their quest for energy security. Speaking on the move, an upbeat Union petroleum minister Mani Shankar Aiyar said: "The political will to move forward was so far a constraint. That political will was more than demonstrated in the talks during the past two days."

With this approval, the countdown to the pipeline project has begun in right earnest. This puts the three major energy players of the region on board — Iran, which has the world's second largest gas reserves after Russia, and the two energy hungry economies of India and Pakistan. The political commitment of the three nations will form the basis of an overarching agreement that will seal the legalities of the deal.

A senior Indian government official said: "There was no way we could have moved forward with the technical or financial aspects of the project without the required political commitment. This endorsement by Pakistan took the project strides ahead."

The two governments issued a joint statement on Tuesday endorsing the need to give top priority to transnational pipelines to serve their interests in energy security. The strong "demonstration of political commitment" by the Pakistan government comes even as Uncle Sam continues to mount pressure on Iran. The decision by both India and Pakistan to move ahead with the pipeline project has major geopolitical ramifications, officials said. Both India and Pakistan are moving towards a huge energy crisis and both nations must harness the required energy supplies to meet growing industrial demand.



JUBILANT MOOD

Allying fears and apprehensions about US pressure and security issues, Mr Aiyar said: "We are sensitive to our concerns and we trust that they are sensitive to our energy requirements."

We have now moved from asking questions about security concerns to addressing security concerns in a serious and sincere manner." Mr Aiyar is on a trilateral tour of Pakistan, Azerbaijan and Iran. On Tuesday, he conceded that talks over the past three days gave a momentum to the project beyond the expectations of New Delhi.

With President Musharraf blessing the project and pledging to "personally work towards removing all roadblocks," Mr Aiyar said, "the success of the talks surpasses even my own unbounded optimism."

President Musharraf met Mr Aiyar at Islamabad and discussed all aspects of the project. He was convinced of the roadmap being charted out by India and Pakistan in their joint bid at energy security. He also approved the setting up of a joint working group and intensifying of talks. "The President agreed that we need to tap all sources (Turkmenistan, Iran and Qatar), although the phasing might differ from project to project. He also agreed that India and Pakistan need to access energy in all its form."

Diesel exports plans on track

Soma Banerjee
ISLAMABAD 7 JUNE

INDIA'S plans for exporting diesel to Pakistan may finally take off. The Pakistan government is expected to review the ban on diesel imports from India in its next export-import policy.

An assurance to this effect has been given by Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz to India's petroleum minister Mani Shankar Aiyar during a bilateral meeting. Addressing reporters, Mr Aiyar said: "My meeting with Pakistan's commerce minister could not take place as he had to leave the city. Petroleum secretary S.C. Tripathi will, however, meet his Pakistani counterpart and put in a formal request for taking diesel and LNG out of the negative list of importable products from India."

The proposed diesel export would be spearheaded by India's market leader IOC which plans to supply diesel at Karachi, Lahore and Jhelum. IOC has proposed to sell 3.25-million tonnes of diesel between October 5 and March 6. This has been decided after taking into account India's refinery expansion plans and the country's projected demand growth.

The idea of importing diesel from India was first broached almost two years ago. Last December, Pakistan State Oil Company, the state-run refining and marketing company, had asked IOC for a price offer. IOC offered a non-binding indicative offer to sell an annual quantity of 2.5 million tonnes of diesel.

The indicative offer price was based on the Platts index prices IOC's offer price ranges between \$3.75 and \$6.5 a barrel above the mean price at Platts.

Diesel could be exported to the Chiktirana depot, near Jhelum city, Machkui depot near Lahore and Port Qasim, Karachi. While bulk of the product, about 300,000 tonnes is proposed to be sent through tank wagons to Jhelum, 1.2 million tonnes are proposed to come in through tank trucks. The balance 1 million tonnes is proposed to be exported through tankers to Karachi.

IOC officials pointed out that although there is no information on the current price at which Pakistan imports diesel from Kuwait, India could offer very competitive rates, given the low freight costs. The total petro-product demand of Pakistan is about 14 million tonnes. Of this, the country imports an estimated 4 million tonnes.



JUN 2005

The Economic Times

Adieu, says Advani

Jinnah praise turns fatal

RADHIKA RAMASESHAN

New Delhi, June 7: A villain in a part of his political parivar and a tragic hero across the border, Lal Krishna Advani today resigned as BJP president.

Fifty-eight years after Partition, Mohammed Ali Jinnah has caused a division in a political entity at the other end of the spectrum with Advani's laudatory comments on the father of Pakistan plunging the BJP in a crisis deeper than the one after last year's poll defeat.

As the RSS formally sought retraction of his remarks written in the book at Jinnah's mausoleum in Karachi and more hardcore elements like the VHP's Praveen Togadia labelled him a "traitor", an anguished Advani quit.

His resignation letter made no mention of his position as the leader of the Opposition in Parliament, though there were already suggestions from even within the BJP that he should surrender that post, too.

The party was asking him to reconsider his decision but other than Atal Bihari Vajpayee, no frontranking leader defended his comments on Jinnah.

Advani stuck to what he wrote about Jinnah. "I have not said or done anything in Pakistan which I need to retract or review," he said in his resignation letter addressed to Sanjay Joshi, the party general secretary who is also the Sangh point man in the BJP.

The letter is dated 6th/7th June and says it was being written "before departing from Karachi".

The BJP parliamentary board and its office-bearers will meet at 5 pm tomorrow with the agenda of asking Advani to "reconsider". But the party did not address what is apparently Advani's cause of anguish in that it did not defend him against attacks from Sangh hardliners.

Last night, all BJP general secretaries met Mohan Bhagwat, tipped to be the next RSS

chief, but no one came to the BJP president's defence.

For the record, RSS spokesman Ram Madhav, who had suggested Advani should review his remarks, said: "Leadership is an internal issue of the BJP. We have not sought anyone's resignation."

Vajpayee, who is known to speak with a forked tongue often, was more forthright than his party colleagues.

"Whatever has been said is being misinterpreted. His (Advani's) remarks on Jinnah are being misinterpreted," Vajpayee said before Advani drove to his residence for a half-hour meeting.

Behind the move to formally ask Advani to review his decision, stray voices had begun to express criticism.

Yashwant Sinha, once close to Advani, said: "His remarks in Pakistan were unnecessary and avoidable."

Asked if Advani's resignation would create a vacuum, Sinha said that, on the contrary, the party would emerge stronger. "Advani has resigned as BJP president, he should also consider whether he can be an effective leader of the Opposition."

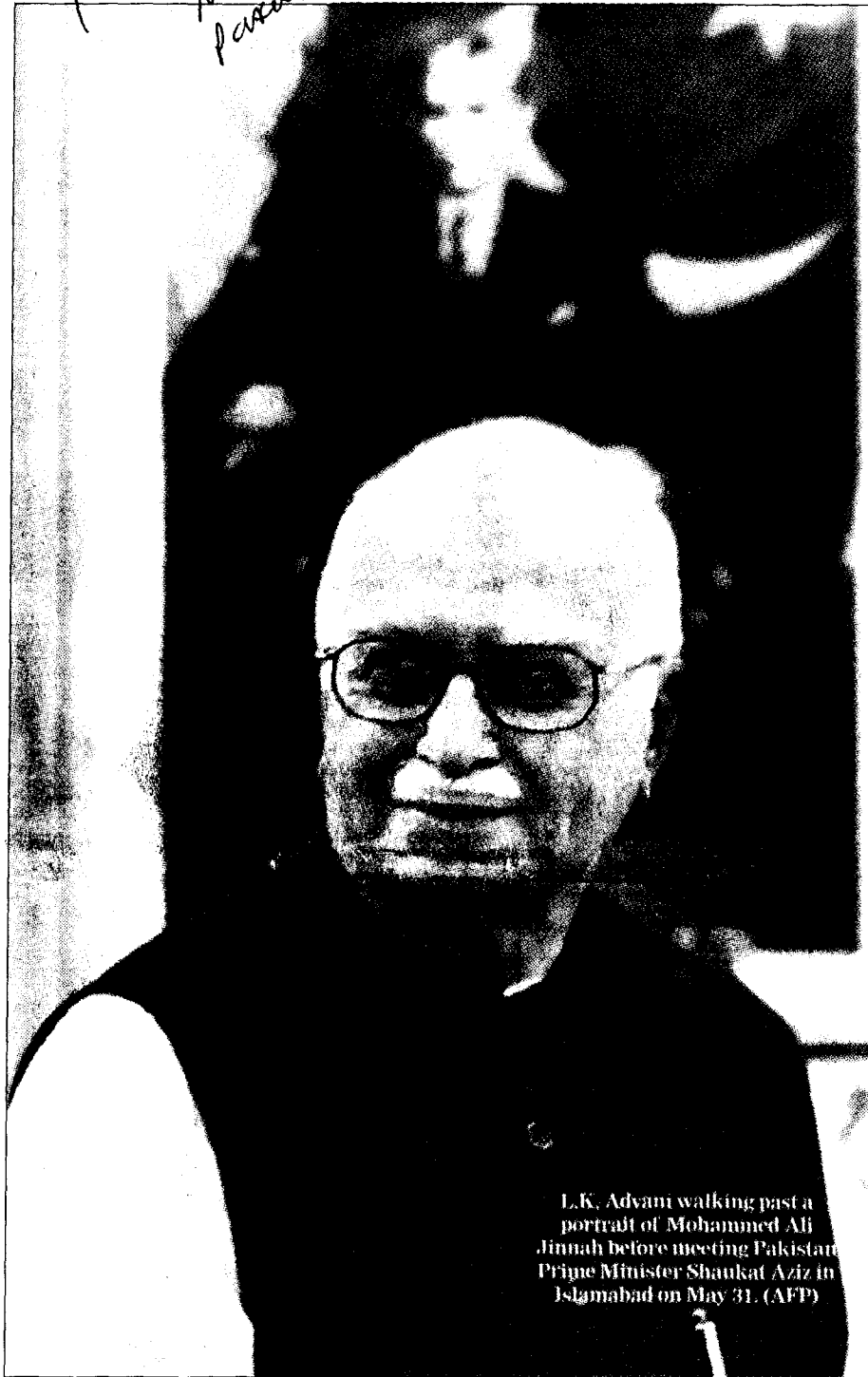
It was a clear hint Advani should give up that post.

After a meeting of the general secretaries and the available vice-presidents this evening, senior vice-president M. Venkaiah Naidu, a shadow of Advani, gave what seemed a valedictory address.

In a news conference, Naidu said: "Advani has made yeoman contribution to the cause of nation-building, to the cause of Hindutva, to the cause of the BJP.... We are proud of Atalji and Advani's leadership and guidance and we are confident he will reconsider his decision."

As Advani's future hung in the balance, Pakistan expressed "surprise". "This time in Pakistan he impressed by a new gesture and his remarks about Quaid-e-Azam and other things have given him a new look," information minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad said.

■ See Pages 6 and 8



L.K. Advani walking past a portrait of Mohammed Ali Jinnah before meeting Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz in Islamabad on May 31. (AFP)

My dear Sanjayji,

I am writing this letter just before departing from Karachi. I have decided to request the party to relieve me of Presidentship. I am sure acceding to my request would be in the best interests of the great cause I have served all my life, as also of the party which has given me so much.

I have taken the decision after pondering the matter very carefully. And I believe that my visit to Pakistan last week has immensely reinforced the initiatives taken by the NDA Government to bring about peace and normalcy with Pakistan. I have not said or done anything in Pakistan which I need to retract or review.

Sincerely,

L. K. Advani
L K Advani

IF THE BATON PASSES

The succession line-up in the BJP

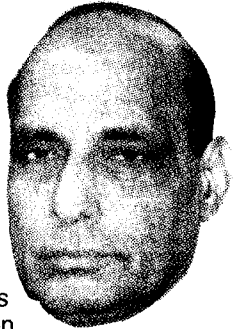
Rajnath Singh

For: Good equations with the Sangh. UP Rajput. Never speaks out of turn. Low-key

Against: Lacks national perspective. Little experience in dealing with issues other than agriculture. Unpopular among other UP leaders

Achievement: Proved his mettle in the Chhattisgarh polls and in Jharkhand, post-election

On Jinnah: Silent



Murli Manohar Joshi

For: "Hindutva" credentials make him the Sangh's favourite. UP Brahmin. Articulate

Against: Swadeshi economics. Not known as a team leader. Wears his caste on his sleeves

Achievement: Implemented saffron agenda in education

On Jinnah: Silent

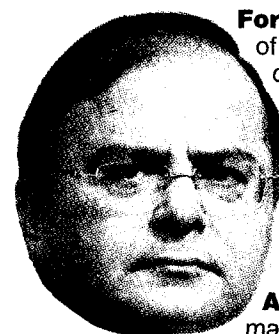
Sushma Swaraj

For: Crowd-puller and good speaker. Nurtured image of the perfect middle-class bahu and beti. Another Sangh favourite

Against: Not an organisational person. Over-aggressive at times and disliked by second-rung rivals

Achievement: Won party applause for not making it a cakewalk for Sonia Gandhi in Bellary

On Jinnah: No comments



Arun Jaitley

For: Ace debater and no whiff of corruption. Moderate face despite being Narendra Modi's friend. Good organisational skills

Against: No mass appeal. Connects mostly with the urban middle class. Involved deeply in legal practice and cricket politics

Achievement: Earned good marks as law minister

On Jinnah: In London, spared by sound-bite hunters

Dark horses
Pranod Mahajan, Narendra Modi and Venkaiah Naidu

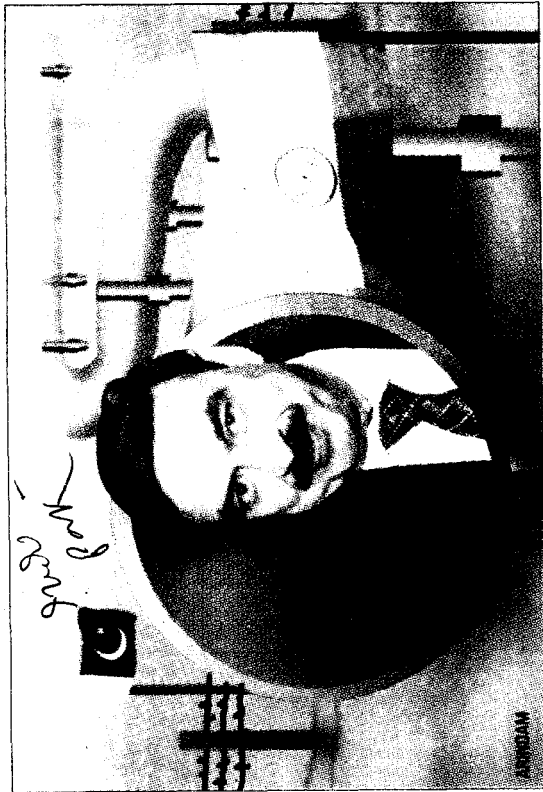
Minister on bus, gas in pipeline

SNS & PTI

JAMMU/ISLAMABAD, June 6. — Pakistan is now promising to send both ministers and gas gushing through to India!

Pakistan's information minister, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, will board the next Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus for a "private" visit to Jammu and Kashmir at the invitation of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front leader, Mr Yasin Malik, while the Pakistani Prime Minister has voiced his "top priority" backing for the proposed gas pipeline from Iran and Turkmenistan to India via Pakistan.

The announcement today of the proposed ministerial visit had the Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, promptly semaphoring a "Welcome, Sir!" message. "There is nothing unusual about people travelling on the bus. People go from here. People from Pakistan can come here. Sheikh Rashid is also most welcome to come to Kashmir. He is a Kashmiri. He has relationships with many people here," he held forth in Srinagar



today. Hurriyat leaders had met the Pakistani minister in Rawalpindi yesterday. "This bus was started for Kashmiris like me. It is my right that I visit my brothers and sisters. I have not seen a whole generation of my cousins. It has been my wish for a long time that I visit Kashmir before I die. Perhaps the time and opportunity have arrived," said Sheikh Rashid. Also today, Pakistan's Prime

Indo-Pak joint panel

ISLAMABAD, June 6. — Delhi and Islamabad today agreed to set up a joint committee to thrash out the modalities for getting the project, which would help bridge the huge energy deficit in the two countries, off the ground by January 2006. If the terms and the roadmap decided on by the Joint Working Group headed by the petroleum secretaries are acceptable to India and Pakistan, gas from the 2,600-km long pipeline, 760 km of which would pass through Pakistan, would flow from early in 2010. Iran, which is not part of the JWG, will join the discussions later to convert the project into a trilateral venture. "The pipeline looks like a certainty now," Mr Aiyar said. — PTI

Islamabad for talks on the proposed billion-dollar pipeline that would feed natural gas from Iran and Turkmenistan to India, via Pakistan. In fact, Mr Aiyar's Pakistani counterpart in a statement issued on Sunday, said his country would ensure that all India's security concerns are met to enable the gas to coming gushing through.

Cup coup on anvil, page 12

Advani wants to debate Jinnah now

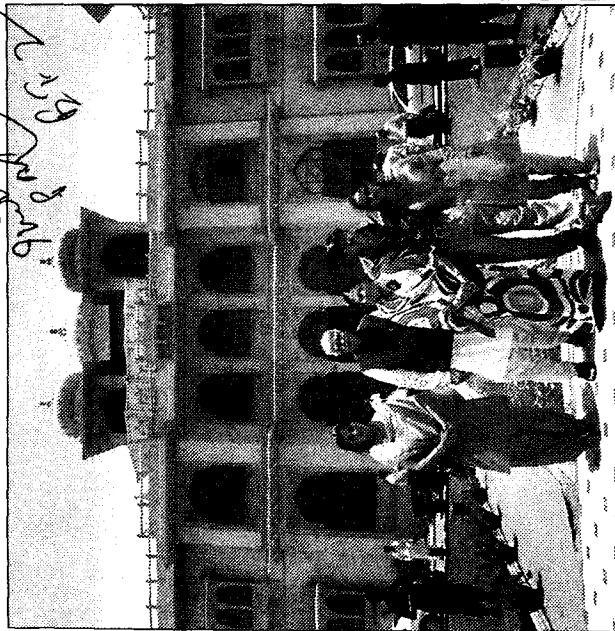
Jinnah Was Secular? Cong Not Convinced

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 6 JUNE

MR L K Advani, who has been accused of igniting the latest round of fire within the Sangh fraternity by anointing on Muhammad Ali Jinnah the "secular" tag, on Monday defended his remarks on the founder of Pakistan, and said he was ready for a debate on the issue. Returning to the capital after a weakening visit to Pakistan, Mr Advani got a taste of the conflicting emotions he had stoked with his re-assessment about Jinnah's role in the sub-continent's history. While his party colleagues lined up inside the IGI Airport's VIP lounge to greet him, protesters belonging to the Hindu Jagaran Manch gathered outside with placards containing slogans such as "Pakistan samarthak, wapas jao, wapas jao," and "Pakistan premi, wapas jao."

The BJP president, who had already been alerted about the tremors his remarks had triggered, appeared to be unfazed about it all. "I have come to know that my remarks have triggered a debate. I have no objection to it. The matter should be debated," Mr Advani told reporters as he emerged from the airport.

The BJP chief then proceeded to reiterate the context and the background in which he had made his observations. Jinnah, in his speech to the Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947, Mr Advani pointed out, had favoured a secular and non-theocratic state, and was of the view that there should not be any difference between Hindus and Muslims in the soon-to-be-created nation as all of them were its citizens. After laying a wreath at Jinnah's mausoleum in Karachi,



the BJP president said, he made a reference to the Quaid-e-Azam's address in the course of his comments. "I did not issue any text. It was just a mention about which I have come to know that there has been some debate here and there. I have no objection to it. It is good. There should be a debate," Mr Advani maintained.

Mr Advani then went on to sum up his journey — only his second to Pakistan in the last 28 years — describing it as a political-cum-cultural-cum-religious voyage. There was also an element of nostalgia involved, as he was born and brought up in the Sindh province. Besides taking a trip down memory lane with members of his family, the objective of the weakening journey, he said, was to promote the peace initiatives undertaken by the NDA government towards Indo-Pak peace. As the leader of BJP, the

principal constituent of the NDA, it was his duty, Mr Advani maintained, to see that the peace process was carried forward. "The aim of the journey to Islamabad, which formed the first leg, was almost essentially political. "We discussed things very freely," he observed about his talks with Pakistan's political leadership, including President Pervez Musharraf, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and foreign minister Khurshid M Kasuri.

Describing his trip as a memorable and unforgettable week of his life, Mr Advani told newsmen that during his journey to Karachi, he visited an ancient temple which had references in the Mahabharat. He said that he had urged external affairs minister K Natwar Singh to take the initiative in the restoration of the temple with the help of the ASI.

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 6 JUNE

EVEN as Laloo Yadav and Nitish Kumar, rivals in poll-bound Bihar, chose to back Mr Advani's reappraisal of Jinnah, Congress on Monday steered clear of the temptation to play votebank politics and said that it did not consider Pakistan's founder "secular."

The Congress, which has been facing the charge of putting Jinnah in the place of Ali brothers during the freedom struggle as part of a larger appeasement strategy, criticised Mr Advani for praising Jinnah.

"It is truly ironic and astounding that Mr Advani considers Jinnah secular. Perhaps Mr Advani would like to explain to the nation the new definition of secularism. For (Mr) Advani, as for Jinnah, as indeed for Veer Savarkar, secularism can mean a two-nation theory," party spokesman Abhishek Singhvi told reporters.

He said that Jinnah demanded separate electorate on the basis of religion and if this was secularism "it can mean a division of India on religious line which Congress always opposed. Jinnah always demanded it and Mr Advani now supports. Mr Advani desired Jinnah's brand of secularism in In-

dia," he said. Incidentally, last weekend, Ms Sonia Gandhi attended a meeting of Jamaat Ulama Hind in the Capital where the Maulanas raised the demand for a communal quota in the legislature. Ms Gandhi, who led a delegation of senior Congress leaders to the meeting, chose to keep quiet when the demand that led to the Partition was made.

But on Monday, Congress was a picture of "secular" reasonableness when it attacked Mr Advani. Referring to Jinnah's speech quoted by Mr Advani, Congress spokesman said "one speech in August 1947 does not make Jinnah secular, just like one swallow does not make a summer."

He said secularism of India's freedom movement and that of Gandhi-Nehru could not possibly be compared with that of Jinnah, who on the death of Mahatma Gandhi referred to him as a Hindu leader.

The Congress spokesman said Mr Advani's support to Jinnah's "secularism" was just like the "hypocrisy and flip-flop" on the Ayodhya issue. "His tears at the demolition of Babri Masjid are nothing but crocodile tears. Such expression of pain was nothing but the changing colour of a political chameleon inspired by lust of power," the Congress spokesman said.

India, Pak to team up for Iran gas import

Islamabad, Jun 5

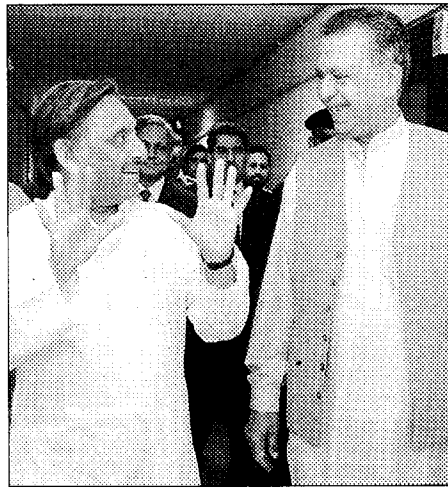
INDIA AIMS to team up with Pakistan to bargain for a cheaper price of natural gas it plans to import through the proposed 4.16-billion dollar Indo-Iran pipeline to bridge its huge energy deficit.

Petroleum Minister Mani Shankar Aiyar, who came here from Lahore on Sunday morning, will stress on the need for the two nations to unite to get economical price of gas from Iran during talks with his counterpart Amanullah Khan Jadoon, an official accompanying the minister said.

New Delhi till now had only been talking to Iran for import of natural gas through the 2600-km pipeline, 760-km of which is to pass through Pakistan, at its border and had left it to Tehran to deal with Islamabad on transit issues. This had led to Iran quoting a price equivalent of liquefied natural gas (LNG), which according to India, was at least 40 per cent costlier than its calculations of the delivered price of gas through a pipeline.

"Tehran has put very high transit cost and we now feel it is time for India and Pakistan to start talking to deal with some of these issues," the official said.

In the first ever engagement with Pakistan in the hydrocarbon sector, Aiyar would take up issues of security of the pipeline, its route, the transit fee and legal



Petroleum minister Mani Shankar Aiyar with Pak counterpart Amanullah Khan Jadoon.

framework for ensuring delivery of gas at Indian borders with Jadoon as well as Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf when he calls on him on Tuesday. "Upon assessing Pakistan's response, the Cabinet might be approached to enhance Petroleum Ministry's mandate for a trilateral treaty and possibly also participating in the pipeline construction," the official said.

PTI

06 JUN 2005 THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Pervez adds dispute twist to Hurriyat visit

POK

Islamabad: Giving a twist to India's gesture of allowing Kashmiri separatist leaders to travel to Pakistan, President Pervez Musharraf said on Saturday it was a recognition of the "disputed status" of Jammu and Kashmir by both countries.

Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and eight other separatist leaders from the Kashmir valley were flown from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to the Pakistani capital by helicopters around the time Musharraf was leaving on a three-day visit to the UAE and Qatar. He will meet them on his return.

The visit of the separatist leaders had "great political significance because they have not come on Indian passports and visas issued by Pakistan", the general was quoted as saying by the state-run APP news agency at Chaklala airbase before his departure.

So, he said, "it is the recogni-

Advani extols Jinnah

Karachi: L K Advani on Saturday paid homage at the masoleum of Pakistan's founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah, a taboo with the saffron brigade. But after placing a wreath at the *mazar* and hailing the "great man", he reminded Pakistanis that he had favoured a secular state vis-a-vis the Islamic state it was now. Back home, VHP activists in Gujarat demanded he quit as Gandhinagar MP and stay back in Pakistan in protest against his "anti-Hindu" comments. Advani seems to have raised their hackles with his statements on the Babri Masjid demolition and the Partition. PTI

tion of the disputed status of Indian-held Kashmir by both countries".

India had expressed reservations about travel by the separatist leaders beyond PoK on special permits but later issued

them passports to facilitate it. However, it made it clear that onus for travel by them beyond PoK would be on Pakistan.

Describing the visit as "a very important confidence building measure", Musharraf said "this is a great leap forward in understanding flexibility being shown by the both sides".

This, he said, should now lead to discussion for the resolution of the Kashmir issue. "The option is open—we hope that it leads to that."

'Geelani detained'

The hardline faction of the Hurriyat Conference on Saturday claimed that its chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani, who had turned down Musharraf's invitation to visit Pakistan, has been detained by security forces in Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir. Police could not confirm the claim. PTI

JUN 2005

JUN 2005

Jinnah espoused the cause of secular Pakistan, says Advani

“A rare individual who had actually created history”

KARACHI: Attempting to shed the Hindu hardliner image, BJP president L.K. Advani on Saturday paid homage at the mausoleum of Pakistan's founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah, describing him as “a great man” who had espoused the cause of a secular Pakistan in an address to his country's Constituent Assembly.

After placing a wreath at the ‘mazar’ of Jinnah here, Mr. Advani said the founder of Pakistan was a “rare individual” who had “actually created history.”

“There are many people who leave an inerasable stamp on history. But there are a few who actually create history. Qaed-e-Azam Jinnah was one such rare individual,” he wrote in the visitors' book at the mausoleum, which he visited with his family amidst unprecedented security.

Recalling that freedom fighter Sarojini Naidu had described Jinnah in his early years as an “Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity,” Mr. Advani reminded the people of Pakistan that their father of nation had favoured a secular state vis-a-vis the Islamic state it was now.

Jinnah's August 11, 1947 address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan was really “a classic, a forceful espousal of a secular state in which while every citizen would be free to pursue his own religion, the state should make no distinction between one citizen and another on grounds of faith. My respectful homage to this great man.”

Back to school

Mr. Advani took a trip down memory lane when he visited his alma mater here, with his schoolmates remembering him as being “good in mathematics.”



HOMAGE TO JINNAH: BJP president and leader of the Opposition L.K. Advani paying floral tributes at the mausoleum of Pakistan's founding father Mohammad Ali Jinnah, in Karachi, on Saturday. — PHOTO: AFP

The 78-year-old leader recalled that at times he used to cycle all the way to his St. Patrick's High School just to see on the board that the school was closed for the day due to rains. Quoting noted economist Amartya Sen, an “overwhelmed” BJP chief said a country's progress depended on the importance it

gave to education and health.

Schoolmates remembered him as “an outgoing student who was good in mathematics.”

Denis Laper, Advani's junior in the school, recalled that he was the “scorer” in the school cricket team and he erred only once when he missed a no-ball. “He was very disciplined, always

ready to help,” Mr. Laper said.

School Principal Father Joseph Paul described Advani as one of the “most illustrious” students of the institution along with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and the former Prime Minister, Mohd. Khan Junejo. “I am fully confident that

Advani's visit to Pakistan is a blessing for the peace loving people of Pakistan....his visit to Pakistan will prove to be a catalyst in bridging the vast gap of impediment between the old and new generations across the two borders,” said Mushtaq Noorwala, president of the Old Patri-cians. — PTI

JUN 2005

JUN 2005

THE HINDU

“Pakistan Army backing peace process”

922 PAK
11/12
7/16

Gen. Maqbool describes Mr. Advani's visit as a "courageous step"

LAHORE: Seeking to remove any apprehensions in the minds of Indians in regard to the Pakistan Army's role in the peace process, the Punjab Province Governor, Lt. Gen. Khalid Maqbool (retd.), told the visiting BJP president, L. K. Advani, that the Army fully backed the process.

The Governor, considered close to the military establishment and President Pervez Musharraf, was responding to a query from Mr. Advani at a meeting on Friday.

Gen. Maqbool described Mr. Advani's visit as a "courageous step" and said it reinforced the peace process. "What you have been saying after [coming to Pakistan] sounds like new hope."

The ruling PML (Q) president, Chaudhary Shujaat Hussain, hosted a dinner in honour of the BJP chief on Thursday. On Friday the Punjab Chief Minister, Pervez Illahi, hosted lunch for the visiting dignitary.

Mr. Advani will start for his hometown Karachi on Friday



TO THE FAITHFUL: A Sikh devotee presenting a shawl to BJP leader L.K. Advani at a gurdwara in Lahore on Friday. — PHOTO: AFP

night. He is scheduled to visit his Alma Mater, St. Patricks High School, while his wife Kamala, who has never visited the town

after the Partition, would be looking for her house near Regal building in the Sadar area of Pakistan's business capital. —PTI

'KASHMIRI' SHABIR REFUSED PERMIT

Warm welcome

for Hurriyat

Statesman News Service

CHAKOTI (PoK)/JAMMU, June 2. — Pakistan today rolled out the red carpet for the delegation of separatist Kashmiri leaders — led by Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Omar Farooq and also including JKLK chairman Yasin Malik and a representative of Shabir Ahmad Shah's J&K Democratic Freedom Party — when they crossed over to Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir from Srinagar on a "historic trip" that was expected to see the Kashmiri leaders interacting with the Pakistan President and Prime Minister in Islamabad, apart from meeting various leaders of PoK.

In all, nine separatist leaders stepped into PoK, while the hardliners, led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani, chose to turn down the Pakistan government's invitation. Mirwaiz Umar Farooq came with six others of his faction. The president of the J&K Democratic Freedom Party, Shabir Ahmad Shah, was not given the permit to travel to PoK as he had written "Kashmiri" where his nationality was to have been declared on the permit form as well as in his passport documents. Md Abdullah Tari represented Shah's party in the delegation.

The other leaders in the delegation are Hurriyat leaders Abdul Gani Bhat, Maulvi Abbass Hussain Ansari, Bilal Gani Lone, Fazal Haq Qureshi, Mohammad Yaqub Vakil and Ghulam Mohammad Bhat. The leaders are to address the PoK Assembly tomorrow, apart from meeting leaders of PoK. They will travel to Islamabad from PoK on 4 June for talks with General Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Mr Shaukat Aziz, among others.

Before leaving for the journey, former chairman of the Hurriyat, Abdul Ghani Bhat, said: "We are taking love across the border. We want the Hurriyat delegation to bridge the gap between India and Pakistan. We don't think in terms of weak-

Militants behead four

SRINAGAR, June 2. — Extremists beheaded four members of two families, including a policeman, and shot dead a ruling People's Democratic Party worker in Kulgam of Anantnag, in two separate incidents in Jammu and Kashmir overnight. Three terrorists were killed in an encounter with security forces today in Udhampur district. Ultras struck New Thead area of Harwan on the outskirts of Srinagar and abducted four members of two families, including constable Abdul Majid Khan, working with the Special Operations Group, and later beheaded all of them. Muttawakil Khan, father of Abdul Majid, who tried to resist the kidnapping, was shot at and injured by the terrorists. This is the second such incident in the area after last month's kidnapping of six persons at Dardkhour village, of whom four were beheaded while another escaped. The fate of an abducted woman still remains unknown. — PTI

ening the delegation by non-issuance of travel documents to some people. We don't talk of numbers, we talk ideas." He added that the Hurriyat would like to resume the dialogue process with the Centre upon their return from Pakistan.

Pakistan lived up to its promise of according a warm welcome to the Kashmiri leaders. PoK Prime Minister Sikandar Hayat welcomed the group and an army band played as the team crossed the Aman Setu to a rousing welcome, in contrast to the low-key affair on the Indian side. While Hurriyat members crossed the bridge together, Malik and Tari walked a little behind, reflecting their separate identity.

The trip was described by Mirwaiz as a "big step". He said it could form the basis for a "triangular dialogue" featuring India, Pakistan and Hurriyat. Lone termed the trip as "the first step" towards the resolution of the Kashmir problem.

More reports on page 5

03 JUN 2005

THE STATESMAN

Onus on Pakistan, says New Delhi

Judo Pak
HD-1

“Travel by Hurriyat leaders beyond PoK
outside bilateral understanding”

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: With the Regional Passport Office in Srinagar reportedly processing the passport applications of several Hurriyat leaders on a priority basis, India on Wednesday said the “onus” for any Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus passenger travelling onward to Islamabad lay “on the Pakistani authorities.”

More than a dozen Hurriyat leaders are due to board the bus to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on June 2. Asked about reports that they had been advised to carry their passports in addition to the bus-specific travel permit, the External Affairs Ministry spokesman said on Wednesday that “the bilateral understanding [on the bus] is limited for travel, on the basis of permits

issued by the two sides, to the entire territory of the erstwhile State of Jammu & Kashmir. If some of the Hurriyat leaders are invited to travel to Islamabad as has been reported, outside this provision of the above understanding, the onus for this lies on the Pakistani authorities.”

The Indian Government, he said, had always maintained that it would be “willing to consider requests for visits by any Indian national to Muzaffarabad and other places across the Line of Control on the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service, and these requests would be processed in accordance with the understanding reached between India and Pakistan.” It was on this basis, said the spokesman, “that individual applications from some of the APHC leaders have been

processed and those who have been accepted by the Pakistani side have been allowed to travel on the bus.”

Asked whether placing the “onus” on Pakistan represented a change in the Government’s earlier stand that Islamabad would be breaching a bilateral understanding by letting the Hurriyat leaders travel outside of the PoK, Mr. Sarna said there was no contradiction. “I have stated our position on more than one occasion. The understanding between India and Pakistan as far as the bus service is concerned is quite clear. If leaders are invited to visit Islamabad and they do so then the onus for that part of the journey lies on Pakistan authorities. I do not see any contradiction in these statements. It is quite clear.”

02 JUN 2005

THE HINDU

Advani meets Pakistan Opposition leaders

Agreement over taking peace process to logical conclusion

B. Muralidhar Reddy
 with reservations about how it was being carried out by President Pervez Musharraf. They have been vocal about the "deviation" from Pakistan's traditional stance on Kashmir.
 Mr. Rehman, leader of a faction of the Jamaat-e-Ulema Islamia (JUI), is considered the "father" of the Taliban. A number of well-known Taliban cadres are products of his seminary in the Frontier. However, he has been a vocal advocate of India-Pakistan rapprochement and was one of the prominent Opposition leaders who visited India last year.

Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), headed by Qazi Hussain Ahmed, the largest MMA component has been a bitter critic of Gen. Musharraf's India policy. He

has just recovered, after heart surgery, and addressed a large gathering in the national capital last Friday in protest against the alleged desecration of the Quran by U.S. soldiers.

It is not immediately clear whether there was any effort on the part of either Mr. Hussain or Mr. Advani for a meeting. The interaction with Mr. Rehman materialised in the last minute.

Later the BJP president said he deemed it necessary to call on his Pakistani counterpart to exchange views on a number of subjects. Such interaction was useful in carrying forward the rapprochement process initiated by the former Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Immediately after the meeting, Mr. Advani received a dele-

gation of senior leaders from the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) led by the former Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto.

The party has its own list of grievances against Gen. Musharraf and his "exclusivist" politics. The reference is to the repeated assertion by Gen. Musharraf that Ms. Bhutto has no role in the national politics.

Earlier in the day Mr. Advani was given a warm welcome at the National Assembly, where he had a meeting with Speaker Chaudhary Amir Hussain.

"You are one of the veteran leaders of Indian Parliament

and we welcome you to our National Assembly. The breakthrough in our bilateral relations came when Atal Bihari Vajpayee came to attend the SAARC Summit in Islamabad early last year. Thereafter came all the Confidence Building Measures [CBMs]. However, all of us here know your support to the peace process when you were in government, and also now. Therefore, the credit, both directly and indirectly, goes to you also," the Speaker told him.

Mr. Advani thanked the Speaker and said: "The credit for the peace process must really go

"The credit for the peace process must really go to the awaam [people] of the two countries"

to the awaam [people] of the two countries. The two countries have lived with tension for too long. If the tension disappears, the possibilities of bilateral cooperation are immense."

Mr. Hussain said he made a memorable visit to India recently at the invitation of Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee. He said he had invited Mr. Chatterjee to visit Pakistan and requested Mr. Advani to convey his invitation personally to the Speaker. The BJP president suggested to his host that the time has come for the formation of a Friendship Association of Parliamentarians of India and Pakistan, on the lines of similar associations between the parliamentarians of India and other countries.

Handwritten notes: "12" and "Gangadhar" with a signature.

অব্যাহত সম্প্রীতি

আগামী কাল মুজফ্ফরাবাদগামী বাসে শ্রীনগর হইতে ছরিয়ত সম্মেলনের নেতাদের আরোহণ ভারত-পাকিস্তান সম্পর্ক এবং কাশ্মীর সমস্যার মীমাংসা, উভয় দিক হইতেই একটি তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ ঘটনা। পাকিস্তানের তরফে ছরিয়ত নেতৃত্বকে অধিকৃত কাশ্মীরের রাজধানী সফরের আমন্ত্রণ আগেই জানানো হইয়াছিল। ছরিয়তের কট্টরপন্থী অংশটি এ আহ্বানে সাড়া দিতে চায় নাই। কিন্তু নরমপন্থী অংশটি পাক কাশ্মীর সফরে প্রবল ভাবে উৎসাহী। ভারত সরকার তাঁহাদের যাত্রা বিস্তৃত করার কোনও চেষ্টা করে নাই। ছরিয়ত নেতারা পাকিস্তানি প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফের সহিত সাক্ষাৎ করার জন্য নয়াদিল্লিতে আসার সময় পাইলেও প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহের সহিত সাক্ষাতের সময় বাহির করিতে পারেন নাই। তৎসঙ্গেও নয়াদিল্লি ছরিয়ত নেতাদের প্রতি কোনও প্রতিশোধমূলক মনোভাব গ্রহণ করে নাই। কেবল মুজফ্ফরাবাদ ছাড়িয়া ইসলামাবাদ, করাচি, লাহোর প্রভৃতি শহরে সফরের অনুমতি দেয় নাই। তাহাতে প্রথম দিকে দুই-একজন ছরিয়ত নেতা গোঁসা করিলেও পরে নয়াদিল্লির শর্ত মানিয়াই বাসে যাত্রী হইতেছেন। ভারত-পাক সম্পর্কে যে শুভেচ্ছা ও সৌহার্দ্যের সুপবন বহিতেছে, সেই প্রেক্ষিতেই ছরিয়তের বাসযাত্রাকে বিচার করিতে হইবে।

কট্টরপন্থী ছরিয়তের নেতা সৈয়দ আলি শাহ গিলানি পাকিস্তানের আমন্ত্রণ প্রত্যাখ্যান করিয়াছেন। তাঁহার ক্ষোভ, পাকিস্তান কাশ্মীর লইয়া তাহার ৫৮ বছরের পুরানো অবস্থান পাল্টাইয়া ফেলিয়াছে, কাশ্মীরিদের স্বার্থ জলাঞ্জলি দিয়া ভারতের চাপের কাছে নতিস্বীকার করিতেছে, ইত্যাদি। মুশারফকে ঘুরাইয়া তিনি 'কাশ্মীরিদের প্রতি বিশ্বাসঘাতক'ও বলিয়াছেন। সরকারি ভাবে পাকিস্তান কিন্তু এখনও ছরিয়তকেই কাশ্মীরি জনসাধারণের প্রকৃত প্রতিনিধি বলিয়া গণ্য করিয়া থাকে। সেই ছরিয়তেরই একাংশ পাকিস্তানকে বিশ্বাসঘাতক বলিতেছে, ইহা নিঃসন্দেহে কাশ্মীর প্রশ্নে একটি চমকপ্রদ মোড়। তবে গিলানির প্রত্যাখ্যান তাঁহার অনুগামী সব সংগঠন মানিয়া লয় নাই, ১৭টি সংগঠনের মধ্যে অন্তত ৬টি নরমপন্থী সংগঠন ছরিয়ত নেতাদের সহযাত্রী হইয়া মুজফ্ফরাবাদের দিকে পা বাড়াইয়াছে। ছরিয়ত নেতারা চোখ-কান খোলা রাখিলে পাক কাশ্মীরের সহিত ভারতীয় কাশ্মীরের জীবনযাত্রার তুলনামূলক বিচার করিতে পারিবেন। মুশারফ যাহাই বলুন, ছরিয়ত কাশ্মীরি জনগণের একমাত্র প্রতিনিধি নয়, এই প্রতিনিধিত্বের দাবিদার তাঁহারাও যাঁহারা কাশ্মীরিদের ভোটে জিতিয়া রাজ্যে সরকার গড়িয়াছেন এবং যাঁহারা বিরোধী পক্ষে রহিয়াছেন। ছরিয়তকে বাদ দিয়া যেমন কাশ্মীর সমস্যার মীমাংসা সম্ভব নয়, তেমনই কেবল ছরিয়তকে লইয়া এবং নির্বাচিত জনপ্রতিনিধিদের বাদ দিয়া এই মীমাংসার চেষ্টা বা প্রস্তাব হাস্যকর। তবু ইহার গুরুত্ব আলাদা। ইহা দেখাইয়া দেয়, বিচ্ছিন্নতাবাদীদের বৃহৎশং ও এখন সম্ভ্রাস ও হিংসার বদলে আপসের মাধ্যমে কাশ্মীর সমস্যার সমাধানের পক্ষপাতী। তাই এই মর্মে ভারত ও পাকিস্তানের সরকারের প্রয়াসে তাঁহারা শরিক হইতে আগ্রহী।

একই সময়ে ভারতের বিরোধী নেতা লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণীও পাকিস্তানে। তিনিও পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট কর্তৃক আমন্ত্রিত এবং তিনিও ভারত সরকারের প্রতিনিধি হিসাবে, সফর করিতেছেন না। পাকিস্তান আডবাণীর জন্মস্থান এবং দেশভাগের আগে তিনি সেখানেই বড় হইয়াছেন। তবু বিরোধী দল বিজেপির সভাপতি এবং লোকসভার বিরোধী নেতা আডবাণী তাঁহার সফরের আগে যখন প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহের সহিত সাক্ষাৎ করেন এবং চলতি শান্তি প্রক্রিয়া ও দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্ক আগাইয়া লওয়ার আশ্বাস দেন, তখন অসুয়াদীর্ঘ, সংঘাতময় ভারতীয় গণতন্ত্রের নিহিত সুম্মা ও শক্তিও স্পষ্ট হইয়া ওঠে। শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়া শুরু করার গোটা কৃতিত্ব আডবাণী বাজপেয়ীকেই দিতে চাইয়াছেন, যদিও বাজপেয়ীর আমলেই সীমান্তে যুদ্ধকালীন সৈন্যসমাবেশ এবং সামরিক প্রস্তুতি চূড়ান্ত পর্যায়ে পৌঁছাইয়াছিল। তবে আডবাণী স্বীকার করিয়াছেন, মনমোহন সিংহের সরকার এই প্রক্রিয়াকে অব্যাহত রাখিয়াছে, যদিও বিজেপির দলীয় অবস্থান সরকারের প্রতি অত উদার নয়। আডবাণী দায়িত্বসচেতন রাজনীতিক। আশা করা যায়, ঘরের বিবাদের জের তিনি বাহিরে টানিয়া লইবেন না এবং কংগ্রেস নেতৃত্বাধীন সরকারের সহিত তাঁহার দল ও জোটের তীব্র ও বিদ্বেষপূর্ণ প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতার ছায়া তিনি তাঁহার সফরে পড়িতে দিবেন না। মনে রাখা দরকার, ভারত-পাকিস্তান সম্পর্ক তাহার যাবতীয় প্রীতিময়তা ও সৌহার্দ্য সত্ত্বেও এখনও একটি অতিশয় স্পর্শকাতর বিষয় এবং পারভেজ মুশারফ একজন দুঁদে রাষ্ট্রনায়ক। চাতুর্যে তিনি যে-কোনও প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বীকে বোকা বানাইতে সক্ষম। তাই সতর্কতার সহিত ও সন্তর্পণে পা ফেলা দরকার।

'Peace process irreversible'



BONHOMIE: President Musharraf with Mr LK Advani in Rawalpindi on Tuesday. — PTI

ISLAMABAD, May 31. — Mr LK Advani today held talks with President Pervez Musharraf after which he said both of them were convinced that a solution to Kashmir and other issues would "definitely" be reached. He earlier held talks with Prime Minister Mr Shaukat Aziz.

During his hour-long meeting with Gen. Musharraf at his Rawalpindi residence, the two agreed that the peace process should be made irreversible and "must be taken to its fruition." "A solution *niklega, zaroor niklega*" (the solution will arrive, it certainly will arrive) and we said it almost in unison," Mr Advani said.

Mr Advani said he had asked the President what the next phase of the

peace process would be to which he said: "Dr Manmohan Singh and I developed an understanding. The objective is clear, but not the solution. A lot of preparatory work is needed." He said he looked forward to meeting Dr Singh on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session in September.

While Gen Musharraf told Mr Advani that the "peace process has now been taken over by the people of the two countries," Mr Advani responded by saying: "We can no longer say: 'Let us give peace an option'. It is the only option." He said he too wanted a solution on Kashmir acceptable to all, including the diverse communities within Kashmir. Gen. Musharraf told him that he had ordered the rail-

Gifts for the General

ISLAMABAD, May 31. — Mr Advani presented two boxes each of alphonso mangoes to President Musharraf and Prime Minister Mr Shaukat Aziz. He also presented a collection of old classical songs, of which the General is a great fan. Profiles of Dilip Kumar and Meena Kumari, culled from daughter Pratibha's documentary series on Bollywood titled *Yaadein*, was also gifted to the President apart from marble plates from Agra and a copy of Mr Advani's book *Prisoner's Scrapbook*. — PTI

way authorities to complete work on the Khokhrapar-Munnabao rail link by December. — PTI

Another report on page 4

01 JUN 2005

THE STATESMAN

Advani does an 'image makeover' in Pakistan

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD, May 31. — Seeking to shed his image of a "hawk" responsible for the demolition of the Babari Masjid and the scuttling of the Agra peace talks, BJP president and leader of the Opposition, Mr LK Advani, today described the Ayodhya incident as the "saddest day" of his life, and asserted that his "image and real persona" were not "very identical".

Recalling the recent interactions of seven BJP MPs during a conference of South Asian Parliamentarians organised by South Asian Free Media Association, he said here that it was conveyed to him that the people were excited

about his impending visit to Pakistan. "I told them that the eagerness and excitement was to see whether I really have horns," he said, evoking laughter, while taking questions from the Pakistani media.

Mr Advani termed as "scurrilous charge" the allegation that he conspired to assassinate the Father of Pakistan, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, before his migration to India, an FIR on which was purportedly registered against him. "I do not think I need to comment. It is in a way a scurrilous charge," he said.

In a gesture aimed at building bridges, Mr Advani also visited the largest mosque in the Islamic world, the picturesque Faisal Mosque in Islamabad, which was built by the

Saudi royal family. Accompanied by Indian High Commissioner Mr Shivshankar Menon, he went round the mosque for over 15 minutes, appreciating the unique architecture. Mr Advani also dismissed the charge that the BJP published propaganda literature to malign Pakistan.

During his remarks to reporters, Mr Advani disagreed with the charge that he had been "spewing venom" against Pakistan and has now shifted his stand. "It has been my conviction that it was in the best interest of India and Pakistan that peace and normalcy are established. As Vajpayee had said, we can change our history but we cannot change our geography," Mr Advani said.

01 JUN 2005

THE STATESMAN

"Peace process should be made irreversible"

Indo-Pak

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Advani, Musharraf agree on need to resolve outstanding issues, including Kashmir

B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf and BJP president L.K. Advani have asserted that the India-Pakistan peace process should be made "irreversible" and it must be taken to its logical conclusion.

Pakistan-born Mr. Advani, who is on a visit to the country on a political as well as nostalgic trip, had an hour-long meeting with Gen. Musharraf and the focus of their interaction was the ongoing peace process between the two countries. Among others he met Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri and had lunch with Senate Chairman Mohammed Mian Soomro.

Barring the subtle differences on emphasis, there was complete unanimity between Gen.

Musharraf and Mr. Advani on the need for the two countries to march towards the path of peace and resolution of all outstanding issues including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing a press conference where he shared details of his meeting with Gen. Musharraf, the BJP president was at pains to emphasise that it was the "bold and courageous" commitment of Pakistan President against terrorism that led to "real breakthrough" in Indo-Pak relations.

The reference was to the joint press statement issued after the meeting between Gen. Musharraf and the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, on the sidelines of the SAARC summit on January 6, 2004. It said Pakistan was opposed to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and Gen. Musharraf

pledged to ensure that soil of Pakistan would not be allowed to be used for activities directed against any country.

The focus of the prime bulletin of the Pakistan Television on the meeting was on Gen. Musharraf's assertion that Kashmir "dispute could be resolved with sincerity, flexibility and courage." It quoted Gen. Musharraf as telling Mr. Advani that parliamentarians of both countries have played an important role in creation of an "enabling environment" in improvement of Indo-Pak ties. It said Mr. Advani appreciated the role of Gen. Musharraf in normalisation of ties. Though the General made a reference to how Pakistan looked forward to the visit of Hurriyat leaders Mr. Advani did not rake up issue of invitation to cross into Pakistan from PoK.

An ambience for a dialogue

Javed Jabbar has been a Senator and a Minister in three Federal Cabinets in Pakistan. He has been a part of the Track-II process between India and Pakistan, known as the Neemrana Dialogue, since 1992. Mr. Jabbar, in Hyderabad recently to attend the South Asia Editors Forum, spoke to Jyotirmaya Sharma about the India-Pakistan peace process and its future.

There are indications of a seeming thaw in relations between India and Pakistan. Is there more to it than mere histrionics and well-meaning symbolism?

It is not 'seeming'. There is a thaw. Secondly, histrionics are important. They set the tone, they create a mechanism, or an ambience, within which a dialogue can be conducted. A dialogue cannot be conducted while one is menacingly looking at the other. To create the appropriate process of listening to each other, and speaking with each other with civility and respect, histrionics and the ambience are extremely important. And that, I think, has been very successfully created in the last 16 months, since January 2004 in particular, by a host of factors. This encourages one to think that as the two countries broach the gut issues, hopefully the civility will remain even if there are divergencies of viewpoint.

What is the subterranean content of this process, one that takes us beyond the need to create the right ambience?

Underlying this process is really the reconciliation of both nations to the inevitability and the reality of their respective evolving personas and identities. We tend to think of each other in fixed terms, almost in stereotypical terms. India has the great advantage of being an older historical entity with a pre-1947 identity, even though it may not have existed as a singular nation-state. Pakistan doesn't have this. It has a much shorter identity. The subterranean context, therefore, is that we are working out the capacity to recognise our respective identities, and hopefully through a period of time, and through a period of listening to each other, we will get to know what this evolving persona of the two nations is.

India is changing as a society and as a state. It is aspiring to a new role in world affairs and in regional affairs. Similarly, Pakistan is going through an extreme internal ferment of a positive kind. It is working out its relationship with religion, its relationship within the country between the four provinces. There is, therefore, dynamic change taking place within both societies.



Javed Jabbar ... committed to peace. - PHOTO: K. GAJENDRAN

Both these dynamic societies, then, are looking at each other and trying to relate to each other in an equitable manner.

Given this background, the inevitable 'K' question arises. What do you see as the way forward on Kashmir?

The Kashmir question will have to be dealt with on at least three recognisable levels. On Kashmir in specific terms, while the two sides engage in a closed-door process, which has to be closed-door for the time being, the Track-II and the Track-III (Track-II comprises the non-official discourse and Track-III is media and people-to-people contact) processes need to start looking at actual options and start preparing

people in both countries for what could be the various solutions that governments eventually can accept or present to people as possible alternatives.

What are these likely solutions?

There is no joint consensus on what these options are. But there is talk of a regionalisation of the devolution process, looking at Kashmir's diversity in terms of ethnicity, in terms of religion even, and in terms of territory. That is one approach.

Another is the simultaneity of processes on both sides of the line of control and creating mechanisms for interaction between them - whether through the bus service, whether through the respective legislatures,

whether through joint economic initiatives.

The third is to look at not similar but equally problematic places like Andorra, Spain and France, and also the way in which Italy and Austria worked out issues of territory.

These are difficult sets of options, but they need to be discussed much further and refined and debated. Any solution will require flexibility on both sides; rigidity is not the basis for a solution.

You have often spoken of 'instant terrorism', something that goes beyond the conventional definition of terrorism. Could you elaborate? Also, how much of a threat is instant terrorism to the peace process?

There will be two facets to this. The persistence of disparities and the increase in disparities.

Both countries are pursuing growth, both as an objective and as a mirage. Growth is the *mantra* of the free market. Both countries seem to have given in, thrown in their conceptual weapons to this great new philosophy of the free market. It is very sad to see this happening.

Even though, to their credit, both countries talk about poverty alleviation, in practical and real terms it seems to be growth first and foremost.

The thinking is: If only we achieve 7 per cent or 8 per cent growth will we be able to do all this. The relationship created between growth and creation of jobs is not a fully tested thesis. Time and again there has been growth without jobs.

The other crisis will be when pockets within society are not content with accepting disparity as a consequence of fate and destiny.

They will refuse to accept disparity of any kind or injustice of any kind. These disparities will create distortions. Then there are the naxalites here and religious fanatics in both the countries. There is no definitive answer to this.

Hopefully, this ferment will produce a philosophy, a political approach to economic growth, and state responsibility for the social sector which is not seen as a sop to poverty but seen as a central role of the state.

মৌলবাদী বিক্ষোভ এড়াতে হায়দরাবাদ যাত্রা বাতিল আডবাবীর

জয়ন্ত যোবাল • ইসলামাবাদ

৩০ মে: লাহোর ছুঁয়ে ইসলামাবাদ এসে পৌঁছতেই দিল্লির দূত লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাবীকে লাল কার্পেট বিছিয়ে স্বাগত জানান পাকিস্তান।

খোদ প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফ এই অভূতপূর্ব সংবর্ধনার আয়োজন করেছেন ঠিকই, কিন্তু তাই বলে এটা ভাবার কারণ নেই যে, আডবাবী সম্পর্কে পাকিস্তানের এত দিনের ধারণা আমূল বদলে গিয়েছে।

এ বার করাটি গেলে সেখান থেকে পাক হায়দরাবাদ যাওয়ারও ইচ্ছে ছিল আডবাবী পরিবারের। কিন্তু পাক সরকারের আপত্তিতে সোটা হচ্ছে না।

জামশেদ বুন্দের রোড এক্সটেনশনে ক্যাম্পেটের ৩১ মিল্ড কালোচ বেগ রোডের বাড়িতে বিজেপ সভাপতির জন্ম। ১৯৭৭ সনে তৎকালীন কেন্দ্রীয় তথ্যমন্ত্রী হিসাবে করাচিতে ভারত-পাক ক্রিকেট ম্যাচ

দেখতে এসেও তিনি জমাভিত্তেয় এসেছিলেন। সেই বাড়িতে তখন বাস করতেন জুনাগড়ের এক মুসলমান পরিবার। এ বারও সেই সোতলা বড় বাড়িটি দেখতে যাবেন আডবাবী। কিন্তু তিনি হায়দরাবাদ গেলে পাক সরকারের আপত্তি কীসের?

ভারতের স্বাধীনতা প্রাপ্তির দিনে পাক হায়দরাবাদে ছিলেন আডবাবী। ১৯৪৭-এর সপ্তেম্বরে তিনি দিল্লি চলে যান। সাম্প্রতিক দিল্লি সফরে হায়দরাবাদের আডবাবী গলিতে আডবাবীর ঠাকুরদার নামাঙ্কিত একটি বাড়ির ছবিও তাঁকে উপহার দেন মুশারফ। এখন জানা যাচ্ছে, সেই বাড়িটি আদৌ আডবাবীদের ছিল না। তবে এটা ঠিক, হায়দরাবাদে বেশ কিছু দিন তাঁরা ছিলেন।

কদিন আগেই স্থানীয় এক সংবাদপত্র খবর ছেপেছে যে, হায়দরাবাদে থাকার সময়ে মহম্মদ আলি জিন্নাকে হত্যার যত্নস্ব

করেছিলেন আডবাবী। এমনিতেই মুশারফের আডবাবী-ভজনার বিরুদ্ধে মৌলবাদীরা সরব। আডবাবীর বিরুদ্ধে মিছিলও বের করেছে তারা। তার উপর ওই সংবাদপত্র জিন্নার হত্যার যত্নস্বের গল্প ফাঁদায় এলাকায় উত্তেজনা সৃষ্টি হয়েছে। সংবাদপত্রটির উপরে জামাতদের প্রভাব যথেষ্ট, যাদের জঙ্গি সংগঠনগুলি মুশারফের বিরোধিতায় সরব। বেশ কিছু জঙ্গি সংগঠন তো তাঁকে হত্যারও চেষ্টা করছে। এই পরিস্থিতিতে আডবাবীর নিরাপত্তার প্রশ্ন তুলে পাকিস্তান সরকার তাঁকে হায়দরাবাদে যেতে বাধন করে। হায়দরাবাদে আডবাবীর স্ত্রী কমলা দেবীর বাসস্থান ছিল। সেখানে একটি দরওয়াজা থেকে চেয়েছিলেন বিগোষ্ঠী দলনেতা। তা-ও বাদ পড়েছে সফর সূচি থেকে।

২ জুন ইসলামাবাদ থেকে ফেরার পথে কাটা সরাজ মন্দিরে আসার কথা ছিল আডবাবীর। মুশারফের উদ্দেশ্যে

কিন্তু তাঁর মাধ্যমেই চিনের সঙ্গে পরিচয় হওয়া এই মন্দিরেরই উদ্বেগন করবেন তিনি। সেখান থেকে লাহোর। কিন্তু সড়ক পথে তাঁকে যেতে বাধন করেছিল। আডবাবী যে দিন হাইকমিশনার সঙ্গে দেখা করতে যান, সে দিন বৈঠকের ফাঁকে জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা এম কে নারায়ণনকেও ডেকে নেন মনমোহন সিংহ। নারায়ণন আডবাবীকে বলেন, এই বুঁকি নেওয়া

আজ ইসলামাবাদ পৌঁছে সেই ব্রিটিশ কূটনীতিকের কথাই মনে পড়ছে আডবাবীর। আগামী দু'দিন প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফ শুধু নন, প্রধানমন্ত্রী, বিদেশমন্ত্রী, সেনেট চেয়ারম্যান, জাতীয় পরিষদের স্পিকার, পাকিস্তান মুসলিম লিগ নেতা চৌধুরি সুজাত হুসেন, বিগোষ্ঠী দল নেতা মৌলানা ফজলুর রহমান প্রমুখ বহু নেতার সঙ্গেই তাঁর দেখা হবে। এমনকী কটরপন্থী জামাত নেতারা দেখা করতে চাইলেও আডবাবীর আপত্তি নেই। এ দেশে এসে তাঁর

পরিচিত 'হুক' বা কটরপন্থী ভাবমূর্তিটা ধুয়ে-মুছে সাফ করে দিতে চাইছেন তিনি। তাই শুধু ইসলামাবাদই নয়, লাহোর এবং করাচিতেও যাবেন।

কিন্তু আডবাবীকে পাকিস্তানে নিয়ে আসার জন্য এত উৎসাহ কেন দেখালেন মুশারফ? আডবাবীর মন্তব্য, "অনেকে বোধহয় আমার মাথায় দুটো শিং আছে কি না, শুধু এটুকু দেখার জন্যই আমাকে এক বার দেখতে চান।"

পারভেজ মুশারফ চাইলেও তাঁকে আমন্ত্রণ জানানো উচিত হবে কি না, এ নিয়ে আগরা শীর্ষ বৈঠকের আগে বাজপেয়ী মন্ত্রিসভায় প্রবল বিতর্ক হয়েছিল। তখন ভারতে পাক হাইকমিশনার আশরফ জাহাঙ্গির কাঞ্জি। তিনি আডবাবীর সঙ্গে পাঁচ বার বৈঠক করেছিলেন। তখনই পাকিস্তান জানত আডবাবী বিরোধিতা করলে, প্রেসিডেন্টের ভারত সফর অসম্ভব। আডবাবী কিন্তু রাজি হয়ে যান।

তবু আগরা শীর্ষ বৈঠক বার্থ হয়।

পাকিস্তানের ধারণা হয়, আডবাবীর জন্যই বৈঠক বার্থ। তিনি খলনায়কে পরিণত হন। যে সন্ত্রাস প্রসঙ্গ নিয়ে আগরা শীর্ষ সম্মেলনে ভেঙে গিয়েছিল, প্রায় দু'বছর পর যৌথ বিবৃতিতে তা মেনে নেন মুশারফ। ইসলামাবাদে সাক্ষের সময় যৌথ বিবৃতিতে পাকিস্তান জানায় যে, তাদের ডুখণ্ডকে সন্ত্রাসের কাজে ব্যবহৃত হতে দেবে না তারা। আডবাবী বলেন, "আগরায় মুশারফ এই সন্ত্রাস দমনের বিষয়টি বিবৃতিতে রাখতে রাজি হলে বৈঠক বার্থ হত না।"

ইসলামাবাদে সার্ক সম্মেলনের পরে পাক স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী ফায়সাল সালে হায়াত তৎকালীন স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী আডবাবীকে আমন্ত্রণ জানান। আডবাবী বলেছেন, পাক জেলে থাকা ভারতীয় বন্দিদের মুক্তি এবং বন্দি বিনিময় চুক্তি নিয়ে তিনি আলোচনা করতে চেয়েছিলেন। কিন্তু তখন আর জাসা হয়নি। এলেন এত দিন পর।

Advancing the peace process

Though there has been no further dialogue at a political level since the India-Pakistan summit in Delhi a few weeks ago, non-official bodies remain active and help to keep things moving. SAFMA (South Asian Free Media Association) has just concluded a conference in Islamabad where President Musharraf came to the final session and made many significant observations. He identified some of the basic themes of the dialogue, expressed his views on them, and made his listeners believe that dialogue prospects were hopeful. He spoke of finding a solution through making borders irrelevant — a pregnant formulation that can open up a variety of future possibilities.

He also elaborated his earlier comments on the internal lines of division within Kashmir: in his view, there are coterminous geographical, religious and ethnic divides that offer different bases for future territorial redistribution. This is an idea he has been pursuing for some time now, though its implications remain unclear. President Musharraf referred to the need to listen to the voice of the Kashmiris and spoke of the possibility of arriving at a conclusion soon, while he and Manmohan Singh are still in authority, for they have established an encouraging rapport.

There was more besides, a fairly extended look at some of the salient issues, on which he showed readiness to share his thinking with his audience. There have been other occasions when Pakistan's leader has responded to Indian journalists with similar candour, so one can see how his thought

has evolved and how he is grappling with the subject. Nor has he been shy on this or on previous occasions to say what he thinks.

There is much to reflect on in President Musharraf's remarks. His conviction that the peace process is developing satisfactorily seems to be rooted in the trust and confidence built between him and the Indian Prime Minister.

Dis-agreements between the two countries on matters like the Baglihar dam on the Chenab, or the role of the Hurriyat Conference, have not disturbed this mutual confidence, and that is the essential foundation for any peace process.

There are many sceptics who do not believe the process can reach anywhere, some of them with impressive credentials acquired through frontline service during many years of confrontation. The heads appear to have gone beyond the entrenched disbelief of the doubters in their earnest search for common ground. Making borders irrelevant is an idea that has, rightly, captured a great deal of attention. The phrase is sonorous and arresting: what could it mean? Obviously there can be no casual obliteration of the facts of political geography: borders, whether the India-Pakistan line or the LoC in Kashmir,

cannot simply disappear.

Gen Musharraf seems to refer primarily to the LoC and to express readiness to develop contact across this line, so that there is a better atmosphere and increased cooperation. The Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus is a start. It should lead to other measures within Kashmir, in the areas of trade, tourism and environment to begin with. All this

is in the general direction of enlarged autonomy for the state, which could be a key element in taking matters forward. Increased autonomy for the state could go a long way towards meeting the Kashmiri demand for a say in their own affairs. The New Delhi-Islamabad dialogue has stirred some unease among Kashmiris who feel left out and obliged to do little more than watch as decisions about their future are being taken.

It is not the separatists alone who believe that their long struggle and losses they have suffered are not to be ignored. Enlarged autonomy for Kashmir would also go down well in Pakistan, while India has never been averse to the idea: it was Narasimha Rao who said that the sky was the limit for Kashmiri autonomy within the Indian Union.

Successive governments have tried to advance in the same direction. True,

there have been regional differences within Jammu and Kashmir that have complicated the picture, but the trend remains towards acceptance of greater autonomy for the state. If borders are to become irrelevant, this process will of necessity be emphasised. The question of territory remains a major issue. Pakistan has said it cannot accept the LoC as a permanent division, while India cannot hand over bits of Jammu and Kashmir. President Musharraf has adopted an individual way of looking at this problem by speaking of overlapping regional, ethnic and religious divides within the state. Where this can lead is yet to be spelt out but it seems to be a way of looking at different options. The Pakistani leader gives the impression that he is groping for innovative solutions.

There are many other important points that came up at the SAFMA meet, especially what was said about finding a solution during the respective tenures in office of the present leaders. Quite a lot has been clarified, and the argument advanced. President Musharraf has proved to be an effective spokesman. India has been much more reticent in public discourse on the issues. This is unfortunate and should be rectified, and the Indian leadership would do well to communicate more openly with its public.

Issues of basic importance are under bilateral discussion and a wide debate is needed to build the consensus that would support the government's efforts.

(The author is a former Foreign Secretary, Government of India.)

wide angle

SALMAN HAIDER



SINGH OPPOSES BOUNDARY ALTERATION

Autonomy no solution: Pak

SNS & PTI

ISLAMABAD/NEW DELHI, May 30. — Ruling out autonomy as a solution to the Kashmir issue, Pakistan today said demilitarisation was a pre-requisite for extending right to self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and finally empowering them.

In New Delhi Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, while expressing his willingness to work with President Pervez Musharraf to find a "meaningful solution" to difficult issues, today virtually ruled out any timeframe for solving the Kashmir problem. "I will never accept anything that leads to a further division of India on religious lines," he also said.

"I have no mandate to negotiate on redrawing our boundaries. Within these limitations, the two of us must work together to create an environment to take the peace process forward," Dr Singh told foreign correspondents based in Delhi.

In Islamabad foreign office spokesman Mr Jalil Abbas Jilani said: "President Pervez Musharraf has never advocated granting autonomy or semi-autonomy to any part of Kashmir as solutions to resolve the Kashmir issue."

Elaborating, he said: "Gen. Musharraf in his quest to seek a lasting solution to the Kashmir issue made certain remarks in recent weeks. These included unacceptability of a solution based on the Line of Control, respect to the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, resolution of the dispute which is acceptable to all the stakeholders including Pakistan, India and Kashmir, and demilitarisation which is a prerequisite for extending right of self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and finally empowering them."

In Srinagar Hurriyat hardliner Syed Ali Shah Geelani today said no power on earth could shake his amalgam's ideological association with Islamabad.

Advani in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD/NEW DELHI, May 30. — Mr LK Advani, the first Opposition leader from India to visit Pakistan officially, arrived in Islamabad from Lahore at midnight where he was received, among others, by Indian High Commissioner Mr Shivshankar Menon and Pakistan protocol officials. He will also visit Karachi where he was born. The former deputy Prime Minister, accompanied by his family members on his second visit to this country in 27 years, will be in Pakistan for a week. Earlier before leaving for Lahore, the BJP chief said: "I consider my visit to be a part of the happy process of steadily increasing people-to-people contacts at various levels between India and Pakistan." The visit has given Mr Advani an opportunity to give a makeover to his image in Pakistan, where he is dubbed as the "most anti-Pakistan politician in India" and also as the "hawk who sabotaged the Indo-Pak Agra summit".

During his two-day stay in Islamabad, he is scheduled to meet President Pervez Musharraf, Prime Minister Mr Shaukat Aziz, foreign minister Mr Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri and Opposition leaders. His discussions are expected to focus on politics and terrorism.

At the "formal media interaction" in Lahore on 2 June Mr Advani is likely to face questions on the Ayodhya demolition, Gujarat riots and the failure of the Agra talks. But the BJP does not see it as an embarrassment for their chief.

"He would have a chance to change people's perception in Pakistan about him," a BJP leader said in New Delhi.

"We expect that despite his hawkish stand, Mr Advani will stick to the Prime Minister's line to strengthen Indo-Pak relations," AICC spokesperson Mrs Jayanti Natarajan said.

— SNS & PTI

Photograph on page 4

National Front, a constituent of the Hurriyat, however, said today it was under pressure from its cadres to board the peace bus.

মুখ খুলবেন না কাশ্মীর-সূত্র, দাউদ নিয়ে

দেশের লড়াই দেশে রেখে পাকিস্তান সফরে আডবাণী

জয়ন্ত ঘোষাল • নয়াদিল্লি

২৯ মে: বিহার থেকে তহলকা, যাবতীয় বিষয়ে কংগ্রেসের সঙ্গে বিরোধ সাত দিনের জন্য শিকেয় তুলে নয়াদিল্লির প্রতিনিধি হয়ে পাকিস্তান সফরে যাচ্ছেন লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী।

আজ এক একান্ত সাক্ষাৎকারে বিরোধী দলনেতা বলেছেন, “দেশের ভিতরে কংগ্রেসের সঙ্গে বিজেপি-র অনেক বিবাদ আছে। দেশে ফিরে বিহার নিয়ে ফের জোরদার রাজনৈতিক লড়াইয়ে নামব। কিন্তু পাকিস্তানে যখন প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফের কাছে যাচ্ছি, তখন আমি দেশেরই প্রতিনিধি।”

পাকিস্তানে যাওয়ার আগে আডবাণীর আশা, “...দু’দেশই ছ’দশকের শত্রুতা ভুলে এমন এক ভবিষ্যতের সূচনা করবে, যেখানে থাকবে শান্তি ও বন্ধুত্বপূর্ণ সম্পর্ক। শুধু সীমান্ত দিয়ে পৃথক করা দু’টো প্রতিবেশী দেশই তো নয়, ভারত-পাকিস্তান প্রকৃত অর্থেই দু’টি সার্বভৌম রাষ্ট্র।”

মনমোহন সিংহের দল ও সরকার যে ভাবে পাকিস্তান ও কাশ্মীর পরিস্থিতির মোকাবিলা করছে, তা নিয়ে অনেক ক্ষেত্রেই যে তাঁদের সঙ্গে মতপার্থক্য আছে, সেটা অস্বীকার করেননি আডবাণী। তবে তাঁর কথায়, “ইসলামাবাদে গিয়ে এই মতপার্থক্য তুলে ধরতে চাই না। সে সব দেশের মধ্যে আলোচনা হবে। পাক প্রশাসনকে জানাতে চাই যে, পাকিস্তান ও কাশ্মীর নিয়ে আমাদের নীতির কোনও ভেদ নেই।” আডবাণী বলেন, “পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়া শুরু করেছিলেন অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী। মনমোহন সিংহ সেই প্রক্রিয়াকে এগিয়ে নিয়ে চলেছেন। প্রেসিডেন্ট মুশারফ আমাকে আমন্ত্রণ জানিয়েছেন সে দেশে যেতে। সেই সুযোগে আমি এই শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়াকে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে সাধ্যমতো চেষ্টা করব।”

তবে কাশ্মীর-সমস্যা সমাধানের

কোনও সূত্র বার করতে পাকিস্তান যাচ্ছেন না আডবাণী। বরং, তাঁর এই সফরকে ভারত-পাক কূটনীতির ‘ট্র্যাক-২’ পর্যায়ের অঙ্গ বলা যায়। কারণ, কাশ্মীর-সহ বিভিন্ন বিষয়ে আলোচনার জন্য ভারতের পক্ষে সরকারি প্রতিনিধি সতীন্দ্র লাম্বা আছেনই। দু’দেশের মানুষের মধ্যে যোগাযোগ বাড়ানোই আডবাণীর পাক সফরের মূল লক্ষ্য।

সূত্র নিয়ে তিনি মুখ খুলবেন না, তেমনই কী বলবেন, তা-ও মনমোহনের সঙ্গে কথা বলেই তিনি ঠিক করে নিয়েছেন।

যেমন ঠিক হয়েছে, দাউদ ইব্রাহিম বা আই এস আই নিয়ে আডবাণী মুখ খুলবেন না। বিজেপি সভাপতির বক্তব্য, “যখন আমি স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী ছিলাম, তখন এ ব্যাপারে কিছু তথ্য ছিল। এখন এ নিয়ে কথা বলা উচিত হবে না।”

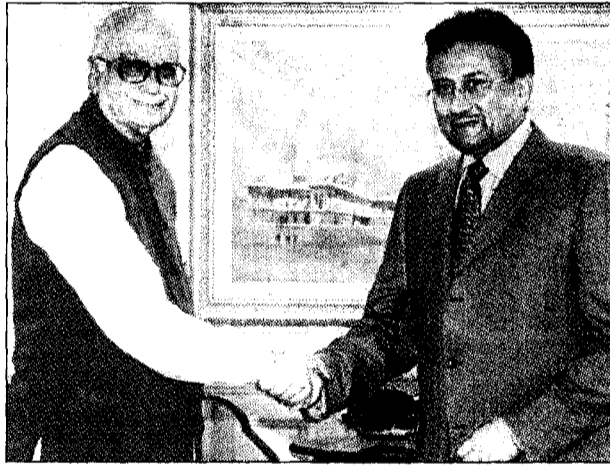
আমরা স্বাগত জানাই। কিন্তু পাকিস্তানকেও সীমান্তে সন্ত্রাস বন্ধ করতে হবে।”

মুশারফের সাম্প্রতিক ভারত সফরে দিল্লির সঙ্গে তাঁর কী আলোচনা হয়েছিল, তা আডবাণীকে সবিস্তার জানিয়েছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। হরিয়ত নেতাদের সফর নিয়েও কথা হয়েছে। আডবাণী প্রধানমন্ত্রীকে জানিয়েছেন, উপ-প্রধানমন্ত্রী থাকার সময়েই তিনি হরিয়ত নেতাদের পাক সফরের ছাড়পত্র দিয়েছিলেন। তবে এই ব্যাপারেও আডবাণীর বক্তব্য স্পষ্ট— “জম্মু, কাশ্মীর এবং লাদাখ, এই তিন এলাকার প্রতিনিধিদের নিয়েই কাশ্মীর-সমস্যা সমাধানের চেষ্টা করা উচিত। হরিয়ত থাকলে অসুবিধা নেই। কিন্তু তাঁরাই একমাত্র কাশ্মীরের প্রতিনিধি নন। সব অঞ্চল ও ধর্মের প্রতিনিধিদের নিয়ে এগানো উচিত।”

দেশভাগের পরে এটা আডবাণীর দ্বিতীয় পাক সফর। ’৭৭ সালে মোরারজি সরকারের তথ্যমন্ত্রী হিসেবে তিনি পাকিস্তানে গিয়েছিলেন। এ বারের সফরে ইসলামাবাদে প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফ, প্রধানমন্ত্রী শওকত আজিজ, বিদেশমন্ত্রী খুরশিদ মেহমুদ কাসুরি-সহ একাধিক নেতার সঙ্গে তাঁর বৈঠক হবে। আডবাণী জানিয়েছেন, যাঁরা দেখা করতে চান, পাকিস্তানে তাঁদের সকলের সঙ্গেই তিনি দেখা করবেন। বেনজির ভুট্টোর আইনজীবী ফোন করেছিলেন, পিপিপি-র প্রতিনিধিদল দেখা করবেন। জামাতের মতো কট্টরপন্থী দলের প্রতিনিধিরাও দেখা করতে চান।

আর ছেলেমেয়েকে করাচিতে নিজের জন্মভিটেও দেখিয়ে আনবেন আডবাণী। যাবেন নিজের পুরনো স্কুলেও। এ বার দিল্লি সফরে মুশারফ এনেছিলেন আডবাণীর জন্মভিটের ছবি। বাড়িতে এখনও আডবাণীর বাবার নাম লেখা। দিয়েছিলেন ক্লাস সিন্ধের ছাত্র লালকৃষ্ণের নাম লেখা একটি

এর পর সাতের পাতায়



দিল্লির বন্ধুত্ব এ বার ইসলামাবাদেও। — ফাইল চিত্র

ইসলামাবাদে গিয়ে পাক প্রেসিডেন্টের দেওয়া বিবিধ কাশ্মীর-সূত্র নিয়ে যে আডবাণী মুখ খুলবেন না, তা প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গে গত পরশুর বৈঠকে তিনি ঠিক করে নিয়েছেন। পাকিস্তানের জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা তারিক আজিজের সঙ্গে আগামী কয়েক মাসে বেশ কয়েকটি বৈঠক হবে লাম্বার, এই সব সূত্র নিয়ে আলোচনা করা তাঁর দায়িত্ব। আর এই সূত্র বার করতে তাড়াহুড়ো না-করার যে নীতি ইউপিএ সরকার নিচ্ছে, তার সঙ্গে একমত আডবাণী। তাঁর কথায়, “মনমোহন সরকারের হাতে কোনও আলাদিনের আশ্চর্য প্রদীপ নেই যে, এত বছরের সমস্যা সমাধান হয়ে যাবে।” তাই মুশারফের সঙ্গে বৈঠকে যেমন এই সব

শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়ার অগ্রগতির জন্য দু’দেশের যে একমত গড়ে তোলা দরকার, তা বুঝেই ভারতের বিরোধী দলনেতাকে আমন্ত্রণ জানিয়েছেন মুশারফ। আর আডবাণীও সেই একবাক্য চেহারাটাই তুলে ধরবেন। কিন্তু সেই সঙ্গে মনে করিয়ে দেবেন, কোন কোন ক্ষেত্রে পাকিস্তানকেও সতর্ক থাকতে হবে। আডবাণী বলেন, “কাশ্মীর নিয়ে অনেক রকমের তান্ত্রিক সূত্র দেওয়া যায়। কিন্তু বাস্তবে কতটুকু প্রয়োগ করা সম্ভব, সেটা বিবেচনা করেই এগানো প্রয়োজন। দু’দেশের মধ্যে সীমান্ত শিথিল হোক। ব্যবসা-বাণিজ্য বাড়ুক, পাক সেনা এবং জঙ্গিদের সঙ্গে সংঘর্ষ-বির্গতি হোক। কাশ্মীর-প্রসঙ্গে আত্মবর্ধক পদক্ষেপকে

সফরে আডবাণী

প্রথম পাতার পর 'অ্যাটেডাঙ্ক রেজিস্টার'। সেন্ট

প্যাট্রিয়াল স্কুলের এক প্রাক্তন ছাত্রের তরফে আর এক প্রাক্তনকে অভিনব উপহার। আডবাণীর কথায়, "তখনই ঠিক করেছিলাম ছেলেমেয়েকে এ বার জন্মভিটে দেখিয়ে আনব।"

এই সফরে আডবাণীকে দিয়ে বৃহত্তর পঞ্জাবে অবস্থিত, প্রাচীন হিন্দু কাটাসরাজ মন্দিরের উদ্বোধন করাবেন মুশারফ। ভেঙে যাওয়া মন্দিরটির সংস্কার করিয়েছেন পাক প্রেসিডেন্টই। মহাভারতের কাহিনি অনুযায়ী, বক্রপী ধর্ম যুধিষ্ঠিরকে ৫টি প্রশ্ন করেছিলেন কাটাসরাজেরই পাশে। পুরাণে উল্লিখিত সেই সরোবর এখনও আছে। কটুরপত্নীদের জুকুটি উপেক্ষা করে আডবাণীকে দিয়ে এই মন্দির উদ্বোধন করিয়ে বড় কূটনৈতিক চমক দিতে চান পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট।

আগ্রা শীর্ষ বৈঠকের জন্য মুশারফ যখন ভারতে এসেছিলেন, তখন এই হৃদয়তা তো হয়ইনি, বরং বৈঠকের ব্যর্থতার জন্য পাকিস্তান আডবাণীকেই খলনায়ক করে তোলে। এর পরে অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী ইসলামাবাদে যখন সার্ক সম্মেলনে গিয়েছিলেন, তখন তাঁর সফরসঙ্গী জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা ব্রজেশ মিশ্রের সঙ্গে তারিক আজিজের কয়েকটি গোপন বৈঠক হয়। মূলত নিরাপত্তা এবং জঙ্গি প্রসঙ্গ নিয়ে সেই আলোচনার আগে তৎকালীন উপ-প্রধানমন্ত্রী তথা স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী আডবাণীর সঙ্গে কথা বলে নিয়েছিলেন ব্রজেশ। সার্ক হয়ে যাওয়ার পরে তৎকালীন পাক স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী আডবাণীকে সে দেশে আমন্ত্রণ জানিয়েছিলেন। কিন্তু আডবাণীর যাওয়া হয়নি। শেষ পর্যন্ত বিরোধী নেতা হয়ে আডবাণী সেই পাকিস্তানেই যাচ্ছেন, তবে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর দূত হিসেবে। ভারত-পাক শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়াকে এগিয়ে নেওয়ার জন্য।

স্যার ক্রিক নিয়ে

ও জট খুলল না

ইসলামাবাদ, ২৯ মে: ভারত ও

পাকিস্তানের মধ্যে দুদিনের

আলোচনার পরেও স্যার ক্রিক নিয়ে

সমস্যার কোনও সমাধান হল না। তবে

বৈঠক শেষে দুদেশের যৌথ বিবৃতিতে

ভারতের অতিরিক্ত সার্ভেয়র

জেনারেল এম গোপাল রাও এবং

পাকিস্তানের প্রতিরক্ষা দফতরের

অতিরিক্ত সচিব এহসান-উল-হক

চৌধুরী দাবি করেছেন, "আলোচনা

হয়েছে খোলাখুলি ও হৃদয়তাপূর্ণ

পরিবেশেই। দুদেশের প্রতিনিধিরাই

সমাধানের বিভিন্ন পথ নিয়ে আলোচনা

করেছেন।" গুজরাতের এই খাঁড়ি

অঞ্চলে ১৯২৫ সালে স্যার ক্রিকের

মধ্যস্থতায় কচ্ছ এবং সিন্ধু প্রদেশের

রাজাদের মধ্যে একটি সীমানা নির্দিষ্ট

হয়েছিল। গোলমাল বাধে পাকিস্তান

এখানকার ১৭টি অঞ্চল দাবি করায়।

ভারতের পাঁচটা দাবি, খাঁড়ির অর্ধেকটা

তাদের সীমানার অন্তর্গত। বর্তমানে

ভারত চায়, স্যার ক্রিক রেখা অনুযায়ী

দুদেশের মধ্যে সীমানা নির্দিষ্ট করে

দেওয়া প্রয়োজন। যদিও পাকিস্তান

চাইছে, স্যার ক্রিক রেখার পূর্ব তীরও

তাদের সীমানার মধ্যে আসুক।

30 MAY 2005

ANADIPAKISTAN.COM

No progress on Sir Creek ^{HD-12}

**Both sides agree to meet later
to carry forward the talks** <sup>9 mds
pak</sup>

B. Muralidhar Reddy ^{MS}

ISLAMABAD: The Sir Creek talks between India and Pakistan to resolve differences over the coastal strip off the Gujarat coast ended on Sunday without any forward movement.

A brief joint press statement issued at the end of talks in Rawalpindi between the Indian delegation headed by the Additional Surveyor-General M. Gopal Rao, and the Additional Secretary of Pakistan's Ministry of Defence, Ahsan-ul-Haq Chaudhry, said that both sides had agreed to meet at a later date to carry forward the talks.

"The talks were held in a frank and cordial atmosphere. The two sides exchanged views on various issues involved. The two sides agreed to continue their discussions aimed at an early resolution of the issue for the mutual benefit of the two countries," it said.

According to official sources, India asked Pakistan to accept the land delineation on the basis of the joint survey carried out in January, but Pakistani officials said they had not yet analysed the technical aspects of the survey. Pakistan also maintained that demarcation of the land and maritime boundary at Sir Creek needed to be addressed as one package.

Eighth round

This is the eighth round of talks on the subject and the second under the current round of the composite dialogue process.

There were expectations of progress this time as the two sides conducted a joint survey of the disputed marshy creek in January to determine the pillars installed in 1925 to settle the dispute between then rulers of Rann of Kutch and Sindh.

The disputed Sir Creek, which runs along the Rann of Kutch in India and Sindh in Pakistan, is at the centre of a 22-year-old dispute between the two countries. The demarcation of boundary has been a bone of contention for several decades.

The history of the issue dates back to 1914, when an agreement was signed between the then Government of Sindh and Rao Maharaj of Kutch. According to the agreement, both sides agreed to a boundary line running through the middle of the creek as a border between the two States.

One side of the creek is under Pakistan's control whereas there are naval installations of India on the other side. Pakistan claims that all the 17 creeks of Sindh coast belong to it, while India maintains that almost half of the area of Sir Creek, the 17th one, belongs to it.

The Indian contention is that the "green line" was simply an indicative line, and that the boundary line should be defined by "mid-channel" of the creek as shown on the map of 1925. But Pakistan rejects the Indian view on the ground that the notion of "mid-channel" is applicable only to navigable channels while this channel is not a navigable one.

30 MAY 2005

THE HINDU

Sir Creek talks end without any headway

Islamabad, May 29

INDIA AND Pakistan ended on Sunday a two-day talk on Sir Creek without making any headway on differences over the coastal strip off Gujarat coast.

"The talks were held in a frank and cordial atmosphere. The two sides exchanged views on various issues", said a brief joint press statement issued at the end of talks in Rawalpindi.

This is the eighth round of talks on the subject and the second under current round of Composite Dialogue process.

Expectations of progress were high this time as the two sides, in a rare agreement, conducted a joint survey of the disputed marshy creek in January to determine the pillars installed in 1925 to settle the dispute between then rulers of Rane of Kutch and Sindh.

But the officials of both sides made no headway this time, too, on the 22-year-old dispute despite jointly reviewing the results of the survey.

Officials here said that India asked Pakistan to accept the land delineation on the basis of the joint survey but Pakistani officials said they have not yet analysed the technical aspects of the survey.

Pakistan also maintained that demarcation of land and maritime boundary at Sir Creek needed to be addressed as one package and not separately.

An agreement on Sir Creek would help both countries finalise their respective exclusive economic zones (EEZ) in that coast between

Pipeline parley on June 5

Islamabad, May 29

INDIA AND Pakistan will start a new round of talks on building a gas pipeline from Iran June 5 when petroleum minister Mani Shankar Aiyar arrives on a four-day official visit to Pakistan.

A senior Pakistan government official said Aiyar would arrive in Lahore June 4 and then visit Islamabad and Karachi June 5 and June 7, respectively.

"Aiyar is scheduled to meet President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and will hold talks with his Pakistani counterpart on the proposed gas pipeline project and discuss other aspects of energy cooperation," said the official.

Gujarat and Sindh to file their claims before the UN Convention of Laws of Seas, which had set the deadline to settle maritime disputes by 2009.

The joint survey was conducted to identify the pillar installed in 1925 to help demarcate Sir Creek coastal strip.

India argues that the centre of the navigable channel of Sir Creek should be the boundary line while Pakistan contends that the eastern Bank of Sir Creek should be the line of demarcation.

PTI

30 MAY 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Advani plans Pak visit for image makeover

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VINOD Sharma
New Delhi, May 29

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ON MONDAY, Lal Krishna Advani will embark on a journey that will at once be a challenge and an opportunity for him. A challenge because he is not known as a peacemaker in Pakistan; and an opportunity because the stay may help him bridge what he calls "a big gulf between my post-1990s image and my real self".

From the moment he lands in Lahore en route to Islamabad, Advani will be under close scrutiny on Gujarat and Ayodhya and his alleged role in the failed Agra Summit. Also, there are bound to be comparisons with Atal Bihari Vajpayee, widely recognised in Pakistan as a statesman.

In fact, General Pervez Musharraf's post-Agra campaign helped Vajpayee as much as it hurt Advani. By painting him as a leader surrounded by party hawks, the General's spin-doctors unwittingly (or, perhaps, by design) built the Vajpayee persona of a lonely peacemaker.

There it is. He is blamed for the failure of the summit, which, he, in fact, had mooted and made possible.

On the eve of his visit, the BJP chief told

HT: "When the then Pak envoy, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, approached me with the proposal, I mooted the idea of a summit between Atal-ji and Musharraf."

The significance of openings across Wagah to promote his "self-image" and his commitment to peace isn't lost on the Leader of the Opposition. "I'm for normality and enduring peace between India and Pakistan. My visit will reinforce the NDA's initiative, being taken forward by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh," he said. That's a politician never passing up an opportunity to claim credit.

In 1992-'93, when Benazir Bhutto hosted V.P. Singh and other Opposition leaders from the Saarc countries in Karachi, her critics had asked, "What purpose will it serve without Advani and Jamaat-e-Islami chief Qazi Hussain among the invitees?" So, while he will be meeting Musharraf, the Pak PM and the foreign minister, it shouldn't surprise anyone if he reaches out to Qazi Hussain, whose party has often fought elections on the promise of unfurling the Pakistani flag on Red Fort.



30 MAY 2005

THE HINDU

Geelani slams Pak betrayal, skips invite

HT Correspondent
Srinagar, May 29

SYED ALI Shah Geelani won't take the bus to Muzaffarabad on June 2.

The head of hardline faction of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference said on Sunday that he wouldn't undertake the trip because Islamabad had lately diluted its declared position on Kashmir. The decision had been adopted by a majority vote in the amalgam's Majlis-e-Shoora (Central Advisory Council), he added.

The announcement should come as a big jolt to Islamabad, which had invited all separatist leaders for talks on Kashmir with leaders of PoK and Pakistan.

Pakistan's foreign minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri had been hoping that the visit by leaders from the Indian side of the LoC, including Geelani, would represent a big step forward in resolving the Kashmir crisis.

Emerging from a six-hour-long meeting with leaders of his faction, Geelani said the "exercise at this juncture would be futile".

Geelani, who wants Islamabad to stick to its traditional approach of placing the Kashmir problem at the core of Indo-Pakistani relations, has been dismayed by what he perceives as a major shift in Pakistan's attitude. He is unhappy at the way Kashmir is losing its importance in the India-Pak-

istan talks agenda.

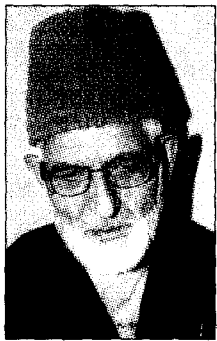
Geelani feels that since January 2004, when India and Pakistan started talking to each other, there has been no substantive change in the situation in Kashmir. "There is nothing new to talk about on Kashmir. We have already stated that Pakistan should unequivocally support the Kashmir cause. That is what we had conveyed to President Pervez Musharraf, and there is nothing more that can be added to it."

Geelani's contention is that only Pakistan is showing flexibility on Kashmir; India has not reciprocated.

"Pakistan is backtracking from its established policy on Kashmir. It is deviating from the policy it had been pursuing for the past 57 years. I want to register my protest by not visiting that country," Geelani said. He added that he was thankful to the people and political leadership of Pakistan, who, "through phone calls and email, have been asking me to accept the invitation." He, too, had an urge to visit Pakistan, but wouldn't go there "as a slave of India," Geelani said.

He said he would love to visit Pakistan "but as a free citizen, not with curbs imposed by India." Taking a dig at the leaders, who are taking the June 2 Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus, he said, "I would garland them on their return if they come with permit for our *azadi*".

Photograph on p2



Pakistan is backtracking from its earlier policy on Kashmir.

It is straying from the policy it had been pursuing for the past 57 years.

I want to register my protest by not visiting that country

Syed Ali Shah Geelani

30 MAY 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Dialogue on Sir Creek begins

India, Pakistan seek to resolve dispute over coastal strip off Gujarat coast

B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD: India and Pakistan on Saturday commenced talks on Sir Creek, the disputed coastal strip off the Gujarat coast, with a review of the joint survey conducted in January this year to identify the boundary pillars installed in 1924 to demarcate the area.

An Indian defence delegation, headed by Surveyor-General of India Gopal Rao held talks with the Pakistani Additional Secretary of the Ministry of Defence, Ahsan-ul-Haq Chaudhry, at the Pakistan Ministry of Defence in Rawalpindi.

This is the eighth round of talks on the subject so far in a bid to resolve mutual claims on Sir Creek. The talks will end on Sunday.

In January, both sides had deployed eight teams each for the survey of the horizontal segment of the creek. The decision to carry out the joint survey was made at the last meeting between the two sides in December 2004. Sir Creek is part of the eight-point

agenda of the Composite Dialogue process.

The disputed Sir Creek, which runs along the Rann of Kutch in India and Sindh in Pakistan, is at the centre of a 22-year-old dispute between the two countries.

Both sides believe the survey results will be very useful in resolving the dispute related to the demarcation of the boundary in Sir Creek, a 96 km-long strip of water between the Rann of Kutch (in India) and Sindh (in Pakistan).

Bone of contention

The demarcation of boundary has been a bone of contention between India and Pakistan for several decades. In 1914, an agreement was signed between

the then Government of Sindh and Rao Maharaj of Kutch. According to the agreement, both sides agreed to a boundary line running through the middle of the creek as a border between the two States.

The final demarcation was completed in 1925 in which the boundary was shown by a "green line", depicted on the eastern side of the creek.

One side of the creek is under Pakistan's control, whereas there are Indian naval installations on the other side. Pakistan lays claim to all the 17 creeks of the Sindh coast, while India maintains that almost half of the area of Sir Creek, the seventeenth one, belongs to it.

• This is the eighth round of talks on Sir Creek

• Review of the January 2005 survey of the area done

• Compromise proposal by India until issue is resolved

• Talks to end on Sunday

The Indian contention is that the "green line" was simply an indicative line, and the boundary line should be defined by "mid-channel" of the creek as shown on the map of 1925.

But Pakistan rejects the Indian view on the grounds that the notion of "mid-channel" is applicable only to navigable channels and says this channel is not a navigable one.

Mutually acceptable

India has proposed that pending formalisation of the boundary in Sir Creek, the two sides could consider the delimitation of the India-Pakistan maritime boundary from seawards, by commencing at the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) limit and proceeding landwards up to a mutually acceptable limit as per provisions under technical aspects of law of sea (TALOS).

The seaward approach is based on internationally accepted principles and will benefit both countries for the exploitation of resources.

Views exchanged on Sir Creek

HO-9 22/5 922 PNN

ISLAMABAD, May 28. — India and Pakistan today exchanged views on results of the joint survey of Sir Creek — the disputed coastal strip off Gujarat coast, a small marshy strip along the Rann of Kutch — which they conducted early this year to identify the bounday pillars installed in 1924 to demarcate the area.

“We have exchanged views on the survey. Talks were inconclusive,” an official, who attended the parleys

between the defence officials of the two sides on Sir Creek, said. The discussions between the Indian delegation headed by Maj.-Gen. Gopal Rao, the Surveyor General of India and additional secretary in the ministry of defence, and the Pakistani side, led by Rear Admiral Ahsan-ul-Haq Chaudhry, would continue over dinner tonight and tomorrow, after which the two sides are expected to issue a joint press release, he said.

Unlike the previous rounds of talks on Sir Creek, which was one of the major contentious issues after Siachen, the two sides this time reportedly discussed a possible solution based on the joint survey of Sir Creek. The resolution of the issue would help both the countries to notify their exclusive economic zones (EEZs). The first round of the two-day talks was held in a cordial and friendly atmosphere, officials said. **PTI**

29 MAY 2001 THE HINDU

বরফ গলেনি

সিয়াচেনে

শীতের কথা

হবে দু'পক্ষের

ইসলামাবাদ, ২৭ মে: সিয়াচেন থেকে সেনা সরানোর বিষয়ে কোনও বোঝাপড়ায় আসতে পারল না ভারত-পাকিস্তান। দু'দেশের প্রতিলক্ষা সচিব পর্যায়ের বৈঠক শেষে এক যৌথ বিবৃতিতে শুধু জানানো হয়েছে, "সিয়াচেন-সমস্যার শান্তিপূর্ণ সমাধানের জন্য আলোচনা চালিয়ে নিয়ে যেতে চায় দু'দেশ।"

প্রতিলক্ষা সচিব অজয় বিক্রম সিংহের নেতৃত্বে ভারত থেকে আট জনের প্রতিনিধি দল কাল পাট অফিসারদের সঙ্গে রাওয়ালপিণ্ডিতে দু'দিনের বৈঠকে বসেছিলেন। পাক দলের নেতৃত্বে ছিলেন সে দেশের প্রতিলক্ষা সচিব তারিক ওয়াসিম গাজি। সিয়াচেন সমস্যা নিয়ে এটি ভারত-পাকিস্তানের নবম বৈঠক। তবে এ বারেও সিয়াচেন বরফ গলল না। যৌথ বিবৃতিতে বলা হয়েছে, "প্রক্রিয়াটি ত্বরান্বিত করতে দু'পক্ষই খোলামেলা ও গঠনমূলক আলোচনা করেছে। ২০০৩-এর নভেম্বর থেকে অঙ্গসংবরণের যে সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া হয়েছিল, তা বহাল রাখার সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে দু'দেশ।"

কাল ভারতের সেনাপ্রধান যোগীন্দর যশোবন্ত সিংহ দাবি তোলেন, সিয়াচেনের ১১০ কিলোমিটার অবস্থান রেখাকে আপাতত পাকিস্তান মেনে নিক। তবে এ বিষয়ে দু'টি দেশ কোনও সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে কি না, তা আজ জানা যায়নি।

অজয় বিক্রম সিংহ জানিয়েছেন, দু'টি দেশই বিভিন্ন প্রস্তাব খতিয়ে দেখছে। তিনি বলেন, "বৈঠকে অবশ্যই ইতিবাচক পদক্ষেপ করা হয়েছে।"

পাক প্রতিলক্ষা সচিবও বলেন, "আমরা পরস্পরকে বুঝতে চেষ্টা করেছি। আলোচনা চালিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়া হবে।" কাল থেকে সার ক্রিক প্রসঙ্গে দু'দিনের বৈঠকে বসছেন ভারত-পাক প্রতিনিধিরা।

এ দিকে, পাকিস্তানের মধ্যে দিয়ে প্রস্তাবিত ভারত-ইরান গ্যাস পাইপলাইন বানানো হলে সেটি সুরক্ষিত রাখার দায়িত্ব নেবে পাকিস্তান। আজ লাহোরে এই আশ্বাস দেন পাক বিদেশমন্ত্রী খুরশিদ মাহমুদ কাসুরি। পাকিস্তানে সফররত ফেডারেশন অফ ইন্ডিয়ান চেম্বার অফ কমার্স অ্যান্ড ইন্ডাস্ট্রি (ফিকি)-র এক প্রতিনিধিদলের সামনে এই কথা বলেন কাসুরি। এই পাইপলাইনকে তিনি 'সব থেকে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অর্থনৈতিক আস্থাবর্ধক প্রকল্প' বলে আখ্যা দিয়েছেন। — রয়টার্স, পি টি আই

28 MAY 2005

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

28 MAY 2005

THE STATESMAN

No agreement on Siachen

SNS & PTI

ISLAMABAD, May 27. — India and Pakistan today failed to reach any agreement on demilitarisation of Siachen, the world's highest battlefield, but decided to continue the talks in the future to resolve the issue. The two countries, however, agreed to continue the ceasefire in place since November, 2003.

A joint press release issued after the two-day talks between the defence secretary, Mr Ajai Vikram Singh, and his Pakistani counterpart, General (Retd) Tariq Waseem Ghazi, at the Pakistan army headquarters in Rawalpindi, near here, said they had agreed "to continue with their discussions to resolve the Siachen issue in a peaceful manner". "The two sides held frank and constructive discus-

sions with a view to taking the process forward. They expressed satisfaction with the ceasefire currently in place since November, 2003, and agreed to its continuation," it said.

After the talks, Mr Singh told reporters that the parleys had been held in a "cordial and positive" atmosphere. Gen. Ghazi said there had been a "forward movement" and the talks had "helped us understand each other's position in a much better way". This was the ninth round of talks on Siachen and also the second round of parleys on the issue under the current process of the composite dialogue between the two countries.

On the first day of the talks yesterday, officials said the two sides had discussed some proposals relating to certain confidence-building measures on the key issue of demilitarisation of Siachen. Pakistan insists on the with-

drawal of troops from Siachen to the pre-1984 positions without any authentication of the positions held by both sides as demanded by India.

Talks on Siachen would be followed by two-day negotiations from tomorrow on another contentious issue, Sir Creek. Siachen and Sir Creek have been listed under the Composite Dialogue process by the two countries to discuss Kashmir and other combustible issues.

The atmosphere in which the talks were held, the attitudes and the cordiality displayed by the two sides, as also the kind of understanding reached between the two sides, hinted at a movement forward in terms of the ideas that had been discussed, Mr Singh said after the talks. He called on senior defence minister, Mr Rao Sikander Iqbal and foreign secretary, Mr Riaz Md Khan.

India, Pakistan begin talks on glacier standoff

Joint statement likely today

Rawalpindi, May 26

INDIA AND Pakistan opened talks on Thursday on two bitter border disputes, including the military standoff on the Siachen Glacier, the world's highest battlefield. A ceasefire has been in place across Kashmir, including Siachen, since November 2003.

The Siachen talks, in Rawalpindi, a garrison city adjoining Islamabad, lasted a few hours and a joint statement would be issued after another session on Friday, a Pakistani defence ministry statement said.

Thursday's session between senior defence ministry officials was described as "cordial and friendly".

Uninhabitable and far from insurgent areas, analysts say, Siachen could easily be disconnected from the broader Kashmir dispute.

Both sides expressed optimism on the eve of the talks, but a stumbling block to any phased troop withdrawals has been India's insistence on verifying the two armies' actual positions.

Pakistan has been reluctant to submit to this as it says India took the ground through aggression.

Indian army chief General Joginder Jaswant Singh

said any decision would safeguard Indian interests. "We want basically to be clear that the present positions on the ground, called the Actual Ground Position Line, that is authenticated in some way or the other so that we safeguard our interests for the future and we disengage from such deployments after that," said Singh. "That's fundamental," he added.

"We have been given directions by (our) respective political leadership to move ahead," defence secretary Ajai Vikram Singh, the head of the Indian delegation, said on arriving in Pakistan.

"The atmosphere is definitely positive." Pakistani defence secretary Tariq Waseem Ghazi said there were "positive signs".

He went on to add, "We would like to work towards this resolution and we will discuss all these issues with this positive frame".

Several thousand soldiers have died on the Siachen Glacier, a battle zone standing between 18,000 and 22,000 ft high in the mountains of northern Kashmir.

But more have died from the extreme cold, altitude and avalanches than from enemy fire.

Reuters

27 MAY 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Pervez positive on Siachen

Press Trust of India

Centre clears talks agenda

ISLAMABAD, May 24. — Ahead of Indo-Pak official-level talks on Siachen and Sir Creek issues, General Pervez Musharraf has said the "intentions" on both sides were "very good" to resolve these "unnecessary irritants".

The Pakistan President, however, alleged "malafide" intention on the part of India in the construction of the Baglihar hydro-power project over Chenab river in J&K.

"On Siachen and Sir Creek, the intentions are very good on both sides and that is strongly reflected in the joint statement in New Delhi. Both of these are actually troublesome on both sides and they are unnecessary irritants which can be resolved," he said in an interview to local newspaper *Daily Times*.

Asked whether it was possible to demilitarise Siachen without demilitarising Kashmir, he said:

NEW DELHI, May 24. — The Centre tonight cleared the agenda for the India-Pakistan defence secretary-level talks starting in Islamabad on 26 May on proposed demilitarisation of Siachen Glacier, Sir Creek issue and other military confidence-building measures.

The country's stand to be taken at the two-day talks, which will be the ninth in the series, was finalised at the two-hour meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security held in the Operations Room at the Army Headquarters here. Dr Manmohan Singh, who presided over the meeting, was briefed on all aspects of Siachen and other issues. Asked whether India expected any forward movement at the talks, defence minister Mr Pranab Mukherjee said "let us see". Defence secretary Mr Ajai Vikram Singh would be heading a high-level delegation comprising officials from the defence and foreign ministries for the talks with his Pakistani counterpart Mr Tariq Waseem Ghazi. Officials said India may be placing some new proposals at the talks but said the outcome would depend on Pakistan's approach. The meeting assumes significance as it comes in the wake of the new momentum in -Pak ties following a chain of confidence building measures. — PTI

"Yes, indeed, there was an agreement in 1989. And that agreement was based on relocation of Siachen. And in 1992 the relocation position was decided. And our Secretary Defence went from here to India for a signing ceremony. "Two hours before the signing

ceremony, they backtracked. I think it's a habit with them to backtrack at the last moment. And our defence secretary came back empty handed. Now I have told the Indian Prime Minister that this is a clear decision, there is no problem. Let's decide on that."

25 MAY 2005

THE STATESMAN

Musharraf wants a guarantor

PRESS Trust of India
Islamabad, May 24

PAKISTAN PRESIDENT Pervez Musharraf wants any pact with India on Kashmir to be guaranteed by the international community.

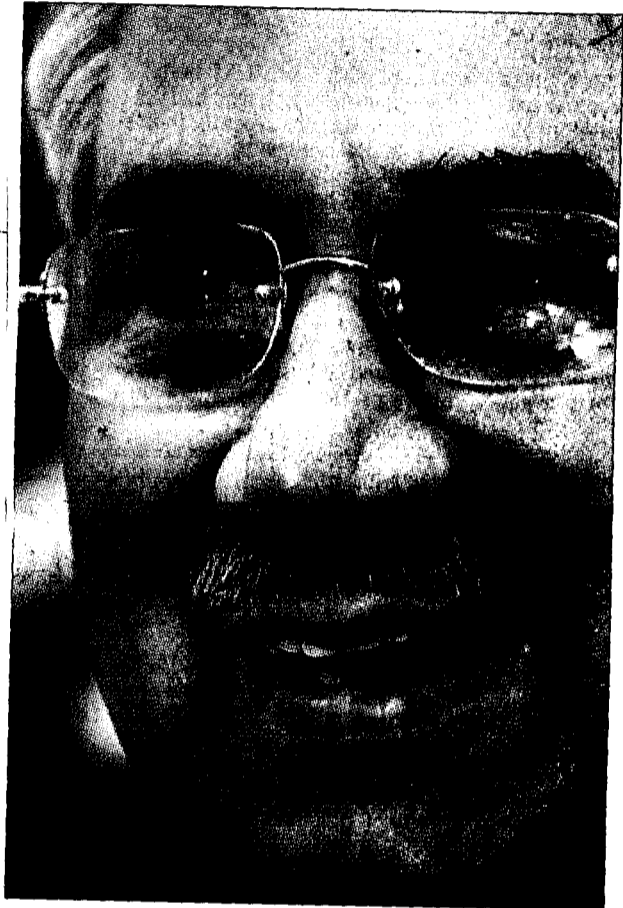
"I think if we reach an agreement, there should be something other than just bilateral guarantees. The international community should play a role in the guarantees. And this is a new thing that I am saying," he said in an interview to *Daily Times*, a Pakistani daily.

"We are talking of guarantees which go beyond us. If we reach an agreement and we are reasonably sure that it will be followed, there is no harm why we should be so stuck up. I think we will have better permanence if the international community is involved, finally, in the guarantee," he said.

On peace talks: Answering a question on where he saw the peace process in the next one year, Musharraf said, "If we move forward, this whole issue (Kashmir) can be put behind us in 12 months."

On Manmohan Singh: "My only hope is that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh stays and is allowed to move forward. I am very glad to say that my interaction with BJP leaders, Advani and Vajpayee, has been very good. The only thing that I told them was: please don't oppose it because you are in the Opposition." He also said the Left was on board.

Talks with Hurriyat: Musharraf said India had allowed Hurriyat leaders to travel to Pakistan. Asked who would represent Kashmiris at the talks, Musharraf said, "The true representative of the Kashmiris is the All Parties Hurriyat Conference." In the same breath, he said, "Let us see if there is any other group who also represents the Kashmiris and



can be included in the talks."

Militancy in J&K: On whether he was in a position to enforce a ceasefire by militants in Kashmir, Musharraf said militancy would die a natural death if there was an agreement acceptable to India, Pakistan and the Kashmiris. He said he could try to persuade militants to stop their activities if India was willing to demilitarise. "I can't give a guarantee that no bullet will be fired. I don't hold a whistle which I blow and end militancy."

Siachen, Sir Creek: Musharraf said intentions on both sides were good. "Both of these are...unnecessary irritants which can be resolved," he told *Daily Times*. However, he suspected "malafide" intentions on India's part in the construction of the Baglihar hydro-power project. Asked if it was possible to demilitarise Siachen without demilitarising Kashmir, he said: "Yes, there was an agreement in 1989."

25 MAY 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

কাশ্মীর-সমঝোতায় তৃতীয় পক্ষের 'গ্যারান্টি' চান মুশারফ

ইসলামাবাদ, ২৪ মে: খানিকটা ঘুরপথে কাশ্মীরকে আন্তর্জাতিক মঞ্চে টেনে আনার আর এক দফা চেষ্টা করলেন পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফ। এ বার আর শান্তি আলোচনায় সরাসরি তৃতীয় পক্ষের মধ্যস্থতা চাননি তিনি। তাতে ভারতের ঘোর আপত্তি আছে। মুশারফের নয়া প্রস্তাব, দু'দেশ কাশ্মীর সমস্যার সমাধানের ব্যাপারে ঐকমত্যে উপনীত হলে সেই সমঝোতা রূপায়ণের 'গ্যারান্টি' দিক আন্তর্জাতিক মহল।

একটি পাক সংবাদপত্রকে দেওয়া সাক্ষাৎকারে মুশারফ বলেছেন, "এই বিষয়টা আগে আমার মাথায় আসেনি। এখন আমার মনে হচ্ছে, যদি কোনও সমাধান সূত্র তৈরি হয় এবং আমরা মোটামুটি নিশ্চিত হই যে সেই সূত্র ধরে এগোনো যাবে, তা হলে সেটা আর শুধু দ্বিপাক্ষিক বিষয় থাকা উচিত নয়। কেননা আন্তর্জাতিক মহল নিশ্চয়তা দিলে সমাধানটা অনেক বেশি স্থায়ী হবে।" আগামী এক বছরের মধ্যে কাশ্মীর সমস্যার সমাধান হয়ে যাওয়া উচিত বলেও মন্তব্য করেছেন পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট।

কাশ্মীর সমস্যা সমাধানে একটা সময়সীমা বেঁধে দেওয়ার কথা দীর্ঘদিন ধরেই বলে আসছেন মুশারফ। এর আগে তিন বছরের মধ্যে সমস্যা মেটানোর দাবি করেছিলেন তিনি। ভারত অবশ্য সেই ডাকে সাড়া দেয়নি। বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ ইসলামাবাদে এসে মুশারফকে বলে গিয়েছিলেন, পঞ্চাশ বছরেরও বেশি পুরনো একটা সমস্যার সমাধান এত ভড়িভড়ি সম্ভব বলে তাঁরা মনে করেন না।

ভারতের এই অবস্থানে তখনকার মতো ক্ষুব্ধ হলেও সম্প্রতি ফের যত শীঘ্র সম্ভব কাশ্মীর সমস্যা সমাধানের কথা বলতে শুরু করেছেন মুশারফ। দিনকয়েক আগেই তিনি বলেছেন, "আমার সঙ্গে মনমোহন সিংহের বোঝাপড়া ভাল। দু'জনে ক্ষমতায় থাকতে থাকতেই সমস্যা মিটিয়ে ফেলার চেষ্টা করা উচিত।" সাক্ষাৎকারে সেই কথাই পুনরাবৃত্তি করে মুশারফ বলেছেন, "আমরা যদি সাহসের সঙ্গে এগিয়ে চলি, তা হলে এক বছরের মধ্যেই বিষয়টা মিটিয়ে ফেলা সম্ভব।" সেই লক্ষ্যে বাজপেয়ী ও আডবানীর কাছে তাঁর অনুরোধ, এখন বিরোধী পক্ষে আছেন বলেই দয়া করে ভারত-পাক শান্তিপ্রক্রিয়ার বিরোধিতা করবেন না।

হরিয়ত কনফারেন্স নেতাদের দিল্লি পাকিস্তানে আসার অনুমতি দিয়েছে বলেও দাবি করেছেন মুশারফ। কালই হরিয়তের বিবদমান সব গোষ্ঠীর নেতাকে আমন্ত্রণ জানিয়েছে তাঁর সরকার। মুশারফের মতে, এই সফরের মধ্যে দিয়েই শান্তি আলোচনায় কাশ্মীরিদের সামিল করার প্রক্রিয়া শুরু হবে। তিনি বলেন, "এখান থেকে ফিরে ওঁরা ভারত সরকারের সঙ্গে কথা বলবেন। অন্তত তেমনই চেষ্টা করব। ত্রিপাক্ষিক আলোচনার মধ্যে দিয়েই সমাধানের পথ খোঁজা উচিত।"

মুশারফের এই ইচ্ছাকে দিল্লি কতটা আমল দেবে, তা নিয়ে অবশ্য প্রশ্ন আছে। মুশারফ জানান, হরিয়তকেই কাশ্মীরিদের এক মাত্র প্রতিনিধি বলে মনে করেন তিনি। ভারত আবার পিডিপি ও ন্যাশনাল কনফারেন্সের মতো মূল স্রোতের রাজনৈতিক দলগুলিকে স্বীকৃতি দেয়। এই 'স্পর্শকাতর' বিতর্কে ঢুকতে নারাজ মুশারফ বলেছেন, আর কোনও গোষ্ঠীকে আলোচনার অন্তর্ভুক্ত করা যায় কি না, তা খতিয়ে দেখা যেতে পারে।

বাগলিহার প্রকল্প নিয়ে এ দিন ভারতের কড়া সমালোচনা করে মুশারফ বলেছেন, যে ভাবে বাঁধ তৈরি করা হচ্ছে তাতে উদ্দেশ্যটাই 'অসৎ' বলে মনে হয়। তিনি বলেন, "বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদনের জন্য বাঁধ তৈরির অধিকার ভারতের নিশ্চয়ই আছে। কিন্তু তার জেরে আমরা জল থেকে বঞ্চিত হব এটা মানা যায় না।" বিষয়টি নিয়ে আলোচনায় দিল্লির টালবাহানাও বিস্ময়কর বলে তাঁর মন্তব্য। - রয়টার্স

25 MAY 2005

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

Musharraf's India policy

There is concern in Pakistan that President Musharraf has not taken all concerned along in making course corrections to the India policy.

B. Muralidhar Reddy

PAKISTAN'S PRESIDENT Pervez Musharraf has once again jolted various sections within his country with his two categorical assertions on the Kashmir issue. Even liberal elements in Pakistan are finding it hard to deal with his declaration that Kashmir cannot be resolved on the basis of religion and that borders have to be made irrelevant for the ultimate solution.

The pro-peace elements have no quarrel with the General's quest for peace with India. Their main worry is over what are increasingly seen as 'unilateral', though much needed, corrections in Pakistan's India policy. They are concerned over the sustainability of such a policy without involvement of various stakeholders, nurtured by the establishment for decades.

These constituencies, within and outside the political domain, brought up on the staple of "Kashmir *banega* Pakistan" (Kashmir would become Pakistan), are feeling restless as the establishment unveils elements of its new approach to India. Leave alone taking them into confidence, there is no effort by the establishment to provide the necessary information on the logic and rationale of various actions and pronouncements.

As a result there is a growing feeling that the military establishment is in a great hurry to buy peace with India under external pressure. A meeting of the Kashmir representatives chaired by Gen. Musharraf before his visit to India from April 16 to 18 best illustrates the point.

Most of the Kashmir representatives at the conference wanted to know why an impression has been allowed to gain ground that Pakistan was in haste and why unilateral concessions were being made to New Delhi. A defensive Gen. Musharraf merely appealed to them to have trust in him and assured them that he would never undermine the interests of the Kashmiris.

Against this backdrop his statements in

New Delhi about 'soft borders' and how the Kashmir issue could be resolved only at the level of himself and Manmohan Singh did not go down well back home. Implied in it was an unambiguous statement that the All Parties Hurriyat Conference is welcome to give inputs on Kashmir but has no place at the dialogue table.

He acknowledged that pro-India Kashmir leaders couldn't be ignored in any future scheme of things. It is a realistic policy correction after years of building up the Hurriyat as the sole representative body of the Kashmiris. So when he returned from his 'successful' trip from New Delhi, there was not a single credible voice in the country that praised him.

A pro-peace party like the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) qualified its welcome with a question as to why its leader and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was dubbed an anti-national for her earlier formulation on soft borders and need for sustained dialogue with New Delhi.

Of course PPP has a personal axe to grind with Gen. Musharraf as it struggles to regain the political space in the country. But the sentiments among other political and non-political elements in the country are not different. It is primarily because Gen. Musharraf has ended up sending a loud and clear message that he is the sole architect and arbitrator of the India policy.

It is over two years now since the then Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee extended a hand of friendship to Pakistan and the peace process gained momentum. And yet the Pakistan Parliament has not had an opportunity even once for a full-fledged debate. It should be no surprise if there is a wide gap in the thinking at the top and at various other levels even within the Pakistani establishment. It can at some stage become a classic case of the left hand not knowing what the right hand is doing!

Access to Indian and South Asian journalists to freely travel within Pakistan is a case



Manmohan Singh and Pervez Musharraf ... pushing for peace.

in point. In response to a similar unilateral gesture by India, Gen. Musharraf announced a reciprocal measure at a conference in Lahore in November 2004. Till date there is no movement on the announcement.

At the latest SAFMA conference here when the organisers reminded Gen. Musharraf of his November promise, he looked at the Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri present on the same dais. "We are all for it. The Ministry of Interior needs to be instructed," he told the Pakistan President amidst peals of laughter from the audience.

Gen. Musharraf's formulation on the need for India and Pakistan to grasp the historic opportunity thrown up by "fleeting moments" and that too within the tenures of their current leadership also raises some questions. "I personally feel it (grasping the fleeting moment) should be done within the

tenures of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and myself. There is harmony and understanding between the Indian Prime Minister and myself — this is a big difference between now and the past — therefore, I believe that this is a fleeting moment, which we must seize for sake of future of the two countries and South Asia. The fleeting moments in history are not available every time — they come and go — the governments and leaders, who grasp them, create history," Gen. Musharraf said.

Very laudable thoughts. However the moot question is could an understanding between the two leaders, however powerful, be translated into permanent peace at the earliest because of the fear that such a moment might not last? Should not the understanding between the two leaders be cemented by involvement of people at various levels?

24 MAY 2005 THE HINDU

Mufti supports Pervez call for J&K autonomy

HTC & Agencies
Islamabad, May 21

JAMMU AND KASHMIR chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed on Saturday welcomed Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's detailed blue print to resolve the Kashmir dispute.

The chief minister said Musharraf's suggestion of autonomy was a step in the right direction and would benefit people on both sides of the LoC. But, he said peace was a prerequisite for the success of the peace process. "Violence has to come to an end," Mufti added.

Meanwhile, the Hurriyat moderates chose a guarded response, saying they would be flexible in their approach for a "durable solution" and give their reaction in a day or two. However, the leader of the hardline faction of Hurriyat, Sayeed Ali Shah Geelani rejected the offer outright, saying "maximum self governance is not a permanent solution to Kashmir issue".

"No solution that is not in accordance with wishes and aspirations of people of J&K would be acceptable," he said. Geelani said Kashmir was not a territorial dispute between India and Pakistan, which the two countries could decide without taking state's representatives into confidence.

Earlier, addressing a gathering of parliamentarians and journalists from SAARC countries in Islamabad, Musharraf had said "The solution to the Kashmir dispute lies in making borders irrelevant and creating an area that is

demilitarised with maximum self-governance".

Musharraf also set a time frame for a solution to the long-standing issue. He said history offered only "fleeting moments" to resolve complex issues like Kashmir. The prevailing international atmosphere as well as improved relations between the two countries offered "ideal opportunity" for him and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to resolve it, he added.

"A solution must be found within the tenure of Manmohan and myself. I am in complete harmony and understanding with the Prime Minister,"

he said. Musharraf also said that a solution had to be found, as there was no guarantee that future leaders of the two countries would continue the process with same spirit.



Mufti Mohammad Sayeed

UK arms boost for Pak

Britain and Pakistan have agreed to boost intelligence and defence collaboration under a memorandum of understanding signed in Islamabad this week.

India has been a far bigger market for British arms. But the agreement, signed by Sir Kevin Tebbit, top official at the ministry of defence, and his Pakistani counterpart, Lieutenant General Ali Muhammad Jan, signals the UK government's intention to increase arms exports to India's nuclear neighbour and the west's ally in the "war against terror".

Pervez puts religion aside for Kashmir

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD, May 20. — Acknowledging India's "sensitivities", President Pervez Musharraf said tonight that a solution to the Kashmir issue could not be achieved on a religious basis.

Stating that "we do understand India's sensitivities of their secular credentials", the Pakistani leader said a solution to the vexed issue could not be on "any religious basis".

Addressing parliamentarians and journalists from India, Pakistan and other South Asian countries here, Gen. Musharraf said: "It (a solution) should be on a people's basis, regional basis".

"To identify a region, allow maximum self-governance to people, demilitarise and take some action to make the border

irrelevant," he said.

The Pakistani leader had in November spoken about demilitarising regions but this is probably the first time he ruled out a solution of the Kashmir issue on the basis of religion.

In a nearly two-hour interaction, the President said his ideas, to start with, might sound "confusing" but he was very confident that a solution could be reached on Kashmir that satisfied India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir.

He said a solution had to be found keeping in mind India's stand on no re-drawing of the borders, Pakistan's stand on the unacceptability of the LoC as a permanent border and boundaries becoming irrelevant.

"These are conflicting standpoints. The solution lies somewhere in a compromise. In fact, it lies in the third statement, that is boundaries becoming

A solution had to be found keeping in mind India's stand on no re-drawing of borders, Pakistan's stand on the unacceptability of the LoC as a permanent border and boundaries becoming irrelevant.

irrelevant."

Gen. Musharraf said history offered only "fleeting moments" to resolve complex issues like Kashmir and the prevailing international atmosphere as well as improved relations between the two countries



Pervez Musharraf

'Too old to tango... let us clap'

ISLAMABAD, May 20. — It takes two to tango. But if the two are too old for that they can at least clap together, President Musharraf told Dr Manmohan Singh during his recent visit to Delhi.

"I told Dr Singh that in Urdu they say you can clap with two hands. In English they say it needs two to tango. I told him that we two may be too old for tango but we can clap together. The hand of Pakistan is available." "When elephants fight or make love, the grass gets trampled. It is the same with India and Pakistan," the General said. — PTI

frame, Gen. Musharraf said the question should be put to the Indian government.

"I would be inclined to any time frame. However, in view of sensitivities on your (Indian) side, may I say that practically and realistically one can't very strictly lay it down in terms of months and days. Maybe that is very difficult. But what I have said does indicate some kind of time frame indeed. One does not know about the future of these two (himself and Dr Singh) incidental leaders," Gen.

Musharraf said. He said it needed to be done because there was no guarantee that future leaders of the two countries would continue the process with the same spirit.

On initiating more confidence-building measures, Gen. Musharraf said there were apprehensions in Pakistan that in the name of implementing CBMs the Kashmir issue was being put on the back burner. He wanted the CBMs and conflict resolution to go in tandem.

Another report on page 5

Indus Treaty has never been violated: PM

New Delhi, May 12

ASSERTING THAT India had never violated the Indus Water Treaty, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Thursday said the government was preparing to provide all the information and technical details that might be required by the World Bank neutral experts to make a comprehensive assessment of the Baglihar hydro-power project in Jammu and Kashmir.

After Pakistan sought its arbitration, the World Bank earlier this week named Swiss national Prof. Raymond Lafitte as its neutral expert to resolve the dam issue. Singh noted that, under the terms of the 1960 Treaty, the World Bank was obliged to appoint a neutral expert even if one of the parties made a representation.

"We had felt that a reference to the World Bank (by Pakistan) was pre-mature because further technical discussions between our experts could have led to a narrowing of differences", he said in the Lok Sabha during a special discussion on foreign affairs.

Singh said he had conveyed to Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf if Islamabad could come up with "convincing and technically" verifiable objection to any aspect of the project, India would be willing to consider "appropriate design modifications". India, he said, had never violated the treaty, which has stood the test of time for the past 45 years. "We intend to adhere to the treaty in letter and in spirit", Singh added.

PTI

13 MAY 2005 THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

বাগলিহার নিয়ে জটিলতা আরও বাড়ছে

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ১১ মে: ভারত-পাকিস্তান শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়া যখন নতুন উদ্যম ফিরে পেয়েছে ঠিক সেই সময়েই কাশ্মীরের বাগলিহার জলবিদ্যুৎ প্রকল্প নিয়ে দু'দেশের বিরোধ আরও জটিল চেহারা নিতে চলেছে। শ্রীনগর থেকে মুজফ্ফরাবাদে বাসের চাকা শেষ পর্যন্ত গড়িয়েছে। কিন্তু কাশ্মীরে বাগলিহার জলবিদ্যুৎ প্রকল্প নিয়ে দু'দেশের বিরোধ মেটা দূরের কথা, বিশ্বব্যাঙ্কের হস্তক্ষেপের ফলে তা আরও সমস্যার কারণ হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে।

এই কূটনৈতিক সমস্যার সমাধানে উদগ্রীব বিশ্বব্যাঙ্ক আজ ঘোষণা করেছে 'বাগলিহার প্রকল্প নিয়ে দু'দেশের মধ্যে মতপার্থক্য খতিয়ে দেখতে' এক বিশেষজ্ঞ পর্যবেক্ষক তথা মধ্যস্থতাকারীকে পাঠানো হচ্ছে। সরকারি সিদ্ধান্ত, যদি ওই পর্যবেক্ষক অনুরোধ করেন পাকিস্তানের আর্জি মেনে বাগলিহার বাঁধ নির্মাণ বন্ধ রাখতে, তা হলে তা প্রত্যাখ্যান করা হবে। ভারত বিশ্বব্যাঙ্ককে জানিয়েছে, যে কোনও দেশের যে কোনও পর্যবেক্ষক প্রকল্প দেখতে আসতে পারেন। বিশেষত বিশ্বব্যাঙ্ক এই প্রকল্প-চুক্তির অন্যতম স্বাক্ষরকারী। তাই তাদের আসা ভারত চোঁকাতে পারে না। এই ব্যাপারে দু'দেশের সঙ্গে কথা বলেই বিশ্বব্যাঙ্ক পর্যবেক্ষক পাঠাচ্ছে। কিন্তু বিশ্বব্যাঙ্ককে ভারত স্পষ্ট জানিয়ে দিয়েছে, বাঁধের কাজ কিছুতেই বন্ধ হবে না।

এই ঘটনায় ক্ষুব্ধ পাকিস্তান। তারা চাপ দিচ্ছে কাজ বন্ধ করার জন্য। আর ভারত সরকার আগামী তিন মাসের মধ্যে কাজ শেষ করার নির্দেশ দিয়েছেন সংশ্লিষ্ট মহলকে। বাগলিহার প্রকল্প তৈরির সময় সনদ অনুযায়ী বলা ছিল, এই প্রকল্পে সমস্যা দেখা দিলে বা কোনও পক্ষের আপত্তি তৈরি হলে সেই দেশ বিশ্বব্যাঙ্কের দ্বারস্থ হতে পারে। তখন বিশ্বব্যাঙ্ক চাইলে তৃতীয় নিরপেক্ষ দেশ প্রকল্পের প্রযুক্তিগত দিকটি খতিয়ে দেখতে পারে।

জম্মু ও কাশ্মীরের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী মুফতি মহম্মদ সঈদ এবং তাঁর মেয়ে মেহবুবা মুফতিও চান বাঁধের কাজ যত দ্রুত সম্ভব শেষ করতে। কারণ এর ফলে রাজ্যের অর্থনীতি কিছুটা উন্নত হবে, বেকারদের কর্মসংস্থান হবে। কেন্দ্রীয় জলসম্পদ উন্নয়ন মন্ত্রী প্রিয়রঞ্জন দাশমুন্সি সম্প্রতি বিষয়টি নিয়ে প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ এবং জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা এম কে নারায়ণনের সঙ্গে বৈঠক করেছেন। আজ কেন্দ্রীয় মন্ত্রিসভার নিরাপত্তা বিষয়ক বৈঠকেও স্থির হয়েছে, কোনও পরিস্থিতিতেই এই কাজ বন্ধ করা হবে না। মুফতি পাশে থাকায় কাজের অগ্রগতি দ্রুত হবে বলেই মনে করছে কেন্দ্র।

এর আগেও বিশ্বব্যাঙ্কের পক্ষ থেকে এক বার অনুরোধ এসেছিল, নয়াদিল্লি প্রত্যাখ্যান করেছে। আবারও করতে চলেছে। সনদ অনুযায়ী তিনবার বিশ্বব্যাঙ্কের অনুরোধ প্রত্যাখ্যান করা যায়। ভারত চাইছে এই ভাবে বেশ কিছুটা সময় বের করে

এর পরে পাঁচের পাতায়

বাগলিহার

প্রথম পাতার পর
নিতে, যাতে এর মধ্যে বাঁধ তৈরির কাজ শেষ হয়ে যায়। সরকারি হিসাব অনুযায়ী বাঁধ তৈরির কাজ ৬৫ শতাংশ হয়ে গিয়েছে। খুব শীঘ্রই প্রিয়রঞ্জন দাশমুন্সি যাচ্ছেন বাগলিহারে কাজের অগ্রগতি দেখতে। তিনি বলেন, "আমরা এটি দ্রুত বাস্তবায়িত করতে চাইছি সাধারণ মানুষের স্বার্থে।"

বেশ কিছু দিন ধরে এই প্রকল্প নিয়ে বিবাদ চলছে দু'দেশের মধ্যে। আত্মবর্ধক ব্যবস্থাগুলি যখন নেওয়া হয়, তখনও কিন্তু এই বিষয়টি নিয়ে একমত হযনি। পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফ দিল্লি এসেও বিষয়টি তুলেছিলেন। মূলত বাঁধের ভৌগোলিক অবস্থান নিয়েই প্রশ্ন তুলেছে পাকিস্তান। ভারত এই কাজ বন্ধ করতে রাজি না হওয়ায় পাকিস্তান বিশ্বব্যাঙ্কের দ্বারস্থ হয়।

বিশ্বব্যাঙ্ক এর পর ভারতের সঙ্গেও কথা বলে। বিশ্বব্যাঙ্কের সঙ্গে কোনও বিরোধে যেতে চায় না ভারত। আবার সুকৌশলে এই বিষয়টিতে পুরনো অবস্থানেরও কোনও বদল ভারত চাইছে না।

আজ বিশ্বব্যাঙ্কের প্রেস বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে বলা হয়েছে, "সুইস অধ্যাপক ও সিভিল এঞ্জিনিয়ার রেমন্ড ল্যাফিতেকে বাগলিহার প্রকল্পের কাজ দেখতে পাঠানো হচ্ছে। ভারত ও পাকিস্তান এই দু'দেশই মনে করে রেমন্ড নিরপেক্ষ পর্যবেক্ষক। তিনি কী মতামত দিলেন তা সময়ের সঙ্গে সঙ্গে জানা যাবে।"

12 MAY 2005

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

সিয়াচেনে জট খোলার আশা, জটিলতা বাড়ছে বাগলিহারে

জয়ন্ত ঘোষাল

৮ মে: সিয়াচেন সমস্যা নিয়ে ভারত-পাকিস্তান দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্কের জট খুব শীঘ্রই খুলতে পারে বলে মনে করছে মনমোহন সিংহ সরকার। এই বিষয়টি নিয়ে দু'এক মাসের মধ্যেই দু'দেশের প্রতিরক্ষা সচিবেরা বৈঠকে বসবেন। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সচিবালয় সূত্রে আজ এই সিদ্ধান্তের কথা জানানো হয়েছে। তবে সিয়াচেন সমস্যা নিষ্পত্তির সম্ভাবনা উজ্জ্বল হলেও বাগলিহার জলবিদ্যুৎ প্রকল্প নিয়ে জটিলতা বেড়েছে।

দিল্লি সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে, কাশ্মীরে ওই বাঁধ নির্মাণ বন্ধ করা হবে না। কিন্তু বিশ্বব্যাঙ্কের কাছে দিল্লির অবস্থানের বিরুদ্ধে প্রতিবাদ করেছে পাকিস্তান। বাগলিহার প্রসঙ্গে পাকিস্তান আলোচনা করতে রাজি হলেও, যত দিন না এই আলোচনা শেষ হচ্ছে, তত দিন নির্মাণ বন্ধ রাখতে হবে বলে দাবি তাদের। ভারত তাতে রাজি নয়। বাগলিহার প্রকল্প শুরু করার সময় যে-সনদ তৈরি হয়, তাতে বলা ছিল, এই প্রকল্পে সমস্যা দেখা দিলে বা কোনও পক্ষের আপত্তি থাকলে সেই দেশ বিশ্বব্যাঙ্কের দ্বারস্থ হতে পারে। তখন বিশ্বব্যাঙ্ক চাইলে তৃতীয় নিরপেক্ষ দেশ প্রকল্পের প্রযুক্তিগত দিকটি খতিয়ে দেখতে পারে। পাকিস্তান এখন অন্য ৪-৫টি রাষ্ট্রকে এই বিষয়টি নিয়ে অনুরোধ

জানাতেও দিল্লি তার প্রতিবাদে অনড়। জম্মু-কাশ্মীরের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী মুফতি মহম্মদ সঈদ অবশ্য চান বাঁধের কাজ যত তাড়াতাড়ি সম্ভব শেষ করতে। কারণ এর ফলে রাজ্যের অর্থনীতি পাল্টে যাবে, বেকারদের কর্মসংস্থান হবে। পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফ দিল্লি থেকে ঘুরে যাওয়ার পরে ভারতের পক্ষ থেকে এ প্রসঙ্গে আলোচনা করার তোড়জোড় শুরু হয়েছে। পাকিস্তানে ভারতের প্রাক্তন রাষ্ট্রদূত ও বর্তমানে ভারত সরকারের মনোনীত দূত সতীশচন্দ্র লাম্বা পাকিস্তানের জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা তারিক আজিজের সঙ্গে এ নিয়ে আলাপ-আলোচনা করছেন।

প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সচিবালয় সূত্রের খবর, পাকিস্তানের মতো বাংলাদেশের ব্যাপারেও এই ধরনের নরম-গরম নীতি নিয়েছে ভারত। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর দফতর সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে, ঢাকার আপত্তি অগ্রাহ্য করেই ভারত-বাংলাদেশ সীমান্তে কাঁটাতারের বেড়া দেওয়া হবে। নভেম্বর মাসে ঢাকায় সার্ক সম্মেলন হওয়ার কথা। ভারত সেই সম্মেলনে যোগ দেবে বলে সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে। সার্ক মনমোহনের সঙ্গে বাংলাদেশের প্রধানমন্ত্রী খালেদা জিয়ার দ্বিপাক্ষিক বৈঠকেরও সম্ভাবনা রয়েছে। কিন্তু সীমান্তের ১৫০ গজের মধ্যে কাঁটাতারের বেড়া দেওয়া নিয়ে ঢাকার আপত্তি মানতে নারাজ দিল্লি। সম্প্রতি

ত্রিপুরা সীমান্তে বি এস এফ এবং বি ডি আরের সংঘর্ষে প্রাণ হারান এক বি এস এফ কমান্ডার। তার পরিপ্রেক্ষিতেই এই কড়া মনোভাব নিয়েছে দিল্লি।

প্রধানমন্ত্রী সচিবালয়ের এক সূত্র জানিয়েছেন, বাংলাদেশের সঙ্গে শান্তি প্রক্রিয়া শুরু করতে আগ্রহ থাকলেও বর্তমানে সীমান্তে যা চলছে, তাতে কূটনৈতিক কঠোর অবস্থান নিতে পিছপা হবে না ভারত। অনূপ চেটিয়ার মতো আলফা নেতাদের বাংলাদেশ ভারতের হাতে তুলে না-দেওয়ায় ক্ষুব্ধ প্রধানমন্ত্রী। তবে ওই সূত্র এ-ও জানিয়েছে যে, শান্তি আলোচনার ব্যাপারে ভারতের জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা এম কে নারায়ণন আলফা নেতৃত্বের কাছে শীঘ্রই চিঠি পাঠাবেন।

কিন্তু আলফা সম্পর্কে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সচিবালয়ের মনোভাব যতটা ইতিবাচক, নাগাল্যান্ডের এন এস সি এন (আইজাক-মুইভা গোষ্ঠী) সম্পর্কে ততটা নয়। আইজাক ও মুইভার যেমন কেন্দ্রের বিরুদ্ধে ক্ষোভ রয়েছে, তেমনিই কেন্দ্রেরও তাঁদের ব্যাপারে বেশ কিছু আপত্তি আছে।

নেপালের ক্ষেত্রেও পুরোপুরি সন্তুষ্ট নয় ভারত। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গে বৈঠকের পরে জ্ঞানেন্দ্র নেপালে জরুরি অবস্থা প্রত্যাহার ও কিছু রাজনৈতিক বন্দিকে মুক্তি দিলেও বহুদলীয় গণতন্ত্র ফেরাতে তিনি আরও কিছু ব্যবস্থা নেবেন বলে আশা করছে দিল্লি।

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