

New Delhi submits list of 35 wanted fugitives to Islamabad

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“Home Secretary-level talks represented a sincere commitment to resolve all issues”

Nirupama Subramanian

ISLAMABAD: Even as India and Pakistan agreed, at the Home Secretary-level talks, on the need to take steps to completely eliminate terrorism, Officials have confirmed reports in local newspapers that India submitted a list of 35 of its fugitives who it wants Pakistan to trace and hand over.

Among them are Mumbai underworld don Dawood Ibrahim, Syed Salahuddin, who heads the Union Council of Jihadis as well as the Hizbul Mujahideen outfit, Jaish-e-Mohammed leader Masood Azhar and the five persons who hijacked an Indian Airlines flight to Kandahar in 1999.

“Pakistan has agreed to go through this list with all its seriousness,” the official said. In turn, the Pakistan delegation handed over a list of 58 of its

fugitives who it wants traced by India.

Illegal immigration

The agreement to take measures to check illegal immigration as part of establishing co-operation between the Central Bureau of Investigation and Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency could have positive spin-offs for the long-standing issue of fugitives, according to officials. The other areas of co-operation between the two agencies discussed at the meeting were measures to check counterfeit currency and human trafficking.

Repatriating prisoners

A joint statement at the end of the two-day talks between Union Home Secretary V.K. Duggal and Pakistan Interior Secretary Syed Kamal Shah on Wednesday said both sides

• Islamabad has agreed to go through the wanted list with all its seriousness

• Pakistan handed over a list of 58 fugitives it wants traced by India

• Both sides agree to immediately notify each of prisoners it had of the other's nationality

agreed to immediately notify each of prisoners it had of the other's nationality, grant consular access within three months and repatriate them as soon as the process of nationality verification was complete.

Many to be freed

Of the existing prisoners, those who have met diplomats of their country and whose nationality has been confirmed are to be released by June 30.

That means as many as 240

Indian fishermen could be on their way back home soon.

They also agreed to facilitate consular access to all remaining prisoners for verification of their nationality by July 31, for the “early release” of “inadvertent crossers, minors, senior citizens and disabled persons” against whom there are no criminal cases. In his remarks, Mr. Shah said agreements on the issue of prisoners represented a “very major and big headway.” It was not on the original agenda of the

talks but India had agreed at Pakistan's request to include it.

“As we meet every year, we are adding to the agenda,” he said.

“Friendship”

Commenting on the talks, Mr. Duggal said “the friendship and understanding” between the two countries and the efforts towards peace represented a “sincere commitment” on the part of the leaderships on both sides to resolve all issues through “the path of dialogue and discussion.”

The statement said both sides agreed to the early signing of a memorandum of understanding on narcotics control. Pakistan has finalised the MoU.

Officials said that if India raised no objections to it, the signing could take place when the secretary of the anti-narcotics department visited India later this year.

Visa issued, cancelled: Javed Akhtar

Not an issue of delay but one of denial

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Poet-scriptwriter Javed Akhtar on Saturday said he was issued a visa for Pakistan on June 20 but it was cancelled two days later. This was not an issue of delay by the Pakistan High Commission but one of visa denial, he pointed out.

Mr. Akhtar told this corre-



Javed Akhtar

spondent by telephone from Mumbai the High Commission was now backtracking after the

Indian media took up the visa cancellation in a big way.

He said a group visa was issued to him and 20 others, including Saif Ali Khan, Shabana Azmi, Sridevi and Urmila Matondkar, to travel to Karachi for a Bollywood fund-raiser for the October 2005 earthquake victims.

On June 22, another visa was issued but his name was missing. All others were given permission to travel to Karachi. The writer said he raised the issue with top

High Commission officials and they asked for "a day" to sort out the problem.

After waiting for visa, Akbar Asif, son of film director K.A. Asif and an organiser of the show, announced in Karachi on Friday that the June 25 event was being postponed as Mr. Akhtar had been denied a visa.

Mr. Akhtar said he was not going to make money in Karachi but going there for a good cause. "And, is this what I get in response?"

MUSHARRAF ALL PRAISE FOR MANMOHAN

Demilitarisation is Pak panacea

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD, June 24. — Having over the past two years come up with a plethora of proposals on Kashmir, the Pakistan President, General Pervez Musharraf, now visualises “demilitarisation” as the “final resolution.”

He said in a CNBC television programme last night: “I have proposed demilitarisation as (the) ... final resolution. Demilitarise Kashmir, give self-governance to (the) people of Kashmir with a joint management arrangement on top. This is an idea I am proposing. We could debate and modify the idea but we have to come up with an idea (for) a final settlement of the dispute to the acceptance of India, Pakistan and (the) people of Kashmir. It is for (the) people of Kashmir now to generate ideas and to put pressure on the Indian government for a resolution.”

He lauded the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh’s recent interactions with Kashmiri groups. “I am very glad to say that (he) has been interacting with all groups of Kashmiris. Obviously, he (has been) talking of a resolution,” he said, adding that he would discuss Kashmir and other issues with Dr Singh during the Indian Prime Minister’s visit to Pakistan.

Gen Musharraf stressed



a bilateral track to solve the Kashmir problem. “We are going on a bilateral track and Pakistan is going along with India. We do realise that we have to resolve this dispute bilaterally. I am not at all multilateralising it.”

In an unrelated development, India and Pakistan have agreed to release by 30 June all the fishermen languishing in each other’s prisons. Pakistan would free 432 Indian fishermen lodged in prisons in Karachi, while New Delhi has agreed to let out 30 of their Pakistani brethren, foreign office spokesperson Tasnim Aslam told reporters today.

“They (India-Pakistan) have agreed to release by 30 June all the fishermen they have been holding,” she said, adding that there were 30 Pakistani fishermen jailed in India. “India, on the other hand, has 432 fishermen in Pakistan. It does indicate

Dual role

ISLAMABAD, June 24. — Asserting that his continuation as President and Army chief is “very much needed” to tackle domestic, regional and global pressures Pakistan faces, General Pervez Musharraf has said he will decide on discarding his soldier’s uniform at the end of his presidential term next year. He said he was “extremely comfortable” with his double role. “I am my own model and do not believe in copying anyone. I copy myself, follow my gut reactions and perceptions.” He said the Pakistani government’s everyday affairs were looked after by the Prime Minister, Mr Shaukat Aziz. “I just have a role to ensure the system functions well, (and) in that (context), my presence is very much required,” he said.

PTI

something,” she said.

The decision follows bilateral home secretary-level talks. Before the negotiations, Pakistan released 71 Indian fishermen and India freed 59 Pakistani fishermen.

She said Pakistan would continue to arrest Indian fishermen “poaching in Pakistani waters.” The two countries have also agreed to provide consular access “by 31 July” to hundreds of civilian prisoners in each other’s prisons.

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Pak denies visa
for Javed Akhtar

Mughal-e-Azam premiere postponed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, JUNE 23

PAKISTAN's denial of visa to lyricist and writer Javed Akhtar to visit Karachi for the premiere of K Asif's magnum opus Mughal-e-Azam, has led to its postponement.

"I learnt yesterday that out of the 25-member delegation that was to visit Karachi tomorrow for the premiere, I was the only one to have been denied visa. I am quite surprised," Akhtar said here today.

"I don't understand what kind of a threat I pose to that country. In fact, we were going for a very noble cause. A day after the premiere, we were scheduled to participate in a telecon to raise funds for earthquake victims," Akhtar added.

Bollywood actors such as Saif Ali Khan, Urmila Ma-

tondkar, Shabana Azmi (Akhtar's wife), Zeenat Aman and Sridevi were supposed to attend the event, Akhtar said, adding that the organisers had decided to postpone the premiere.

"After learning that I have been denied visa, organiser Akbar Asif, who is K Asif's son, called a press conference in Karachi and announced that he was postponing the event till I am granted visa. I suppose it is now as good as cancelled," Akhtar said.

Asked if he was hurt at not getting visa, he said, "I am, in fact, quite amused. I feel they have given me too much importance. The only thing that comes to mind is that I have been too frank for their comfort on sensitive issues and in a society where there is no tradition of having Opposition, this is bound to happen."

India, Pakistan plan hotline on maritime security

Special Correspondent
PANAJI: The Indian Coast Guard and the Maritime Security Agency of Pakistan will set up a hotline soon as part of increasing cooperation for surveillance at sea between the two neighbours. Stating this at the commissioning of ICGS Subhadra Kumari Chauhan, a fast patrol vessel, at Vasco in South Goa on Fri-

day, Director-General of Coast Guard Prabhakaran Paleri, said: "We have signed an MoU with the Maritime Security Agency of Pakistan so that we can cooperate with each other in ensuring safety of mariners and fishermen and also fight together against law breakers and drug traffickers at sea."

He said in its bid to counter the increase in maritime crimes, the In-

dian Coast Guard was cooperating with Japan, Korea, Maldives, the United Kingdom, Bangladesh, UAE, Philippines and Vietnam in addition to having close relations with the Sri Lankan Navy.

GSL's offer

Chairman and Managing Director of Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) Rear Admiral A.K. Handa reiterat-

ed GSL's offer to the Coast Guard to be a partner in its modernisation plans.

In another ceremony at GSL yard on Friday, an AOPV ICGS Sankalpa was launched by Susheela Paleri, wife of Prabhakaran Paleri. The XFPV ICGS Savitri Bai Phule was launched by Uma Vadgaokar, wife of Flag Officer Goa Area Rear Admiral S.M. Vadgaokar, Goa Naval Area.

Nuclear Cloud Over S Asia

US deal may hit Indo-Pak diplomatic engagement

Maleeha Lodhi

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The political environment in South Asia is marked by an ambience of hope and anticipation. We are witnessing the most intensive diplomatic engagement between Pakistan and India since the military stand-off of 2001-02. From the depths of confrontation and crises, Pakistan and India have been able to take a series of confidence-building measures (CBMs) to establish a modicum of stability to their relations.

This new environment is marked by five features. First, there is a strong popular sentiment for peace in both countries and new stakeholders for peace have emerged. Second, there is a manifest sense in both countries that there is no military solution to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute or other problems. Third, there is recognition at both popular and official levels that neither country can achieve its full economic potential, or achieve prosperity for its people, while engaged in confrontation. Fourth, the two countries realise that they need to carefully manage their relations in a nuclearised environment. Fifth, globalisation is unleashing new dynamics and creating imperatives for cooperation, reshaping Pakistani and Indian political perceptions.

Five positives have emerged so far from the diplomatic engagement of the last two years. First, the ceasefire on the LoC has continued to hold. Second, there has been unprecedented people-to-people contact. Third, two rounds of the composite dialogue have been completed uninterrupted; the third round started in January 2006. Four, a number of CBMs have been agreed to and implemented. The fifth positive is the willingness to discuss economic cooperation signalled by continuing talks on the multinational Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline project. Can this be consolidated and further enlarged?

While there has been considerable movement on CBMs, there is as yet little to report

on conflict or dispute resolution. As President Pervez Musharraf has stressed, the CBMs can lose their effectiveness in the absence of conflict resolution.

The future of the dialogue and stability in South Asia depends on whether the two countries can address and overcome their divergences, especially on Kashmir and the nuclear-military balance, and build on the areas of convergence — trade, regional economic cooperation and North-South issues.

On Kashmir, the composite dialogue has entered its most delicate, perhaps defining, phase because unless the talks can begin to address the Kashmir dispute, relations will remain sus-



ceptible to future relapse into tensions. President Musharraf has offered, for public debate, ideas on possible approaches to a Kashmir settlement including an interim solution. He has mentioned the demilitarisation of the region; establishment of some form of self-rule by the Kashmiris on either side, and of joint supervision or oversight over common elements of Kashmir affairs by Pakistan and India. These ideas need to be seriously explored.

The strategic relationship between Pakistan and India remains undefined and unstable. Pakistan has proposed a strategic restraint regime to define and stabilise this strategic relationship, both in the nuclear and conventional fields, based on the concept of minimum deterrence.

The Indo-US nuclear deal has raised serious questions for regional stability. Under the agree-

ment, a large number of facilities and reactors including breeder reactors will be maintained outside safeguards, which will encourage India to continue and even accelerate its weapons programme without any constraint or inhibition. This threatens to erode minimum nuclear deterrence and strategic stability as proposed by Pakistan. It could also trigger a new arms race in our region.

A package approach for India and Pakistan, rather than the discriminatory one being pursued, would help to avert a nuclear arms race in the region, promote restraint and preserve strategic stability while also ensuring that the legitimate needs of both countries for civilian nuclear power generation are met.

A stable nuclear strategic relationship is essential for normal relations between India and Pakistan. A balance in conventional weapons is also an essential component of sustainable stability. The Indian military build-up that continues apace raises serious questions about India's ultimate strategic objectives and ambitions within and beyond South Asia.

Pakistan has tabled a number of proposals to achieve an understanding on the maintenance of a ratio of forces to provide each country the confidence that the other would not be able to launch a surprise attack on the other. These need to be explored.

Ultimately, an agreement for conventional military restraint could be accompanied by, or lead to, an agreement on the non-use of force or a non-aggression pact between Pakistan and India.

Looking ahead, the sustainability of the dialogue will be a key challenge in a dynamic but uncertain global milieu. Six elements will be critical to sustain this process: One, preservation of agreements and CBMs instituted so far. Two, promoting resolution of disputes so that the peace process moves into a conflict resolution mode. Three, a problem-solving approach applied by both sides. Four, principle of reciprocity guiding the process. Five, political contact at a sufficiently high level to manage issues and keep the process moving. Six, evolving a convergent vision for a future of peace and cooperation for the entire region.

The writer is Pakistan's high commissioner to UK.

Bhutto was ready to strike Indian N-sites in 1990



Bhutto believed that the US, India and Israel had hatched a plan to attack Pakistan.

PRESS Trust of India
Islamabad, April 30

FORMER PAKISTAN Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto had ordered in 1990 that F-16 fighter jets be kept ready to launch attacks on Indian nuclear facilities amid reports of a similar strike being planned by US, India and Israel on it, a former Army Chief has claimed.

She had also dispatched her Foreign Minister Yaqoob Khan to New Delhi with a message that Islamabad would launch a counter-attack on Indian nuclear facilities if New Delhi targeted Pakistani nuclear establishments. Former Pak-

istan Army Chief retired Gen. Mirza Aslam Baig, was quoted as saying by the *Dawn* newspaper.

Pakistan government received intelligence reports that the three countries had hatched a conspiracy to attack Pakistan nuclear facilities in 1990, the paper quoted him as saying at a meeting in Pakistan's Hyderabad on Saturday.

Baig, who recently floated a new political party Awami Qayadat Party said when the intelligence reports were passed on to the government, Bhutto, convened an emergency meeting which was at-

tended by the then President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Yaqoob, himself besides the now disgraced nuclear scientist A Q Khan.

He claimed Bhutto took a "very bold step" of sending Yaqoob to India with a message that if India launched strikes on Pakistan's nuclear facilities, its own nuclear facilities would be attacked.

After sending the message, Bhutto also asked the army to prepare for all eventualities and a squadron of F-16s was kept ready at the PAF base, Maripur in Pokhara, Baig claimed.

FEAR FACTOR

Baig, who is opposed to President Pervez Musharraf and backed Islamic parties said Islamabad's preparations to attack Indian nuclear facilities were closely watched by the US spy satellite and American officials immediately rushed to Islamabad to defuse the situation.

Baig said Pakistan had completed its nuclear programme in 1986-87 and in 1989 Bhutto had pronounced her "doctrine of nuclear restraint."

He also alleged that US and India tried to form greater Baluchistan to surround Iran and to isolate Pakistan and Afghanistan.

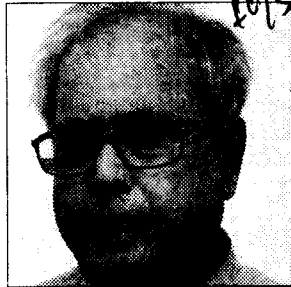
01 MAY 2008
THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

59 terror camps running in Pakistan: Pranab

Statesman News Service

JAMMU, May 9: The Union defence minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, today ruled out troop withdrawal from Jammu and Kashmir.

"With incidents like Doda and Basantgarh happening, we cannot pull out more troops," he said after visiting Doda and Basantgarh where 35 Hindus were massacred recently. Addressing a Press conference here, Mr Mukherjee said troops had been pulled out (30,000 troops were withdrawn between November 2004 and January 2005) not because of someone's demand, but because of



Mr Pranab Mukherjee

ground realities.

Regarding demilitarisation of Siachen glacier, he said it too depended on the outcome of the composite dialogue with Pakistan.

"We are committed to carrying forward the dialogue," he asserted adding that the government was

determined to carry the peace process forward and the militants by their senseless killings could not derail that. Saying that Pakistan should realise that terrorism is a common enemy for all of us, Mr Mukherjee said there were still 59 terrorist camps in Pakistan. He said incidence of massacre would not be allowed to become a roadblock in the Kashmir peace process. He also informed that the peace talks with the All Parties Hurriyat Conference and other separatists, as well as the second round table conference on Kashmir in Srinagar would go as scheduled.

19 0 MAY 2005

THE STATESMAN

নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখা থেকে সেনা সরছে না জঙ্গি ঘাঁটি ভাঙতে ফের মুশারফকে চাপ দিল্লির

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা, নয়াদিল্লি, ৯ মে: শান্তি আলোচনার মধ্যেই নয়াদিল্লি ইসলামাবাদকে মনে করিয়ে দিল, জঙ্গি পরিকাঠামো ধ্বংসের যে প্রতিশ্রুতি তারা দিয়েছিল, তা পালন করতে তারা ব্যর্থ। এই মুহূর্তে ভারত, পাকিস্তানের নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখা বরাবর ৫৯টি পাকিস্তানি জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠী সক্রিয়। দেশ জুড়ে হিংসা এবং জঙ্গি কার্যকলাপের প্রেক্ষিতে ইসলামাবাদকে আশঙ্কিত কথা মনে করিয়ে দিল নয়াদিল্লি।

জম্মুর মাটিতে দাঁড়িয়ে প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় আজ রীতি মতো চড়া সুরে পাকিস্তানকে জঙ্গি পরিকাঠামো ধ্বংস করার কথা বলেছেন। আল কায়দার প্রসঙ্গ তুলে প্রণববাবু বলেছেন, “সন্ত্রাসবাদীরা সব সময়ই ভারতের পক্ষে বিপজ্জনক।”

বাজপেয়ী জমানায় মুশারফ প্রতিশ্রুতি দিয়েছিলেন, ইসলামাবাদের ভারত বিরোধী জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠীকে নির্মূল করা হবে। সেই প্রতিশ্রুতি যে পাকিস্তান রক্ষা করেনি, তা বারবার মনে করিয়ে দিয়েছে নয়াদিল্লি। আজ প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রীও বিষয়টিকে আর একবার সামনে এনে বলেছেন, “পাকিস্তানকে মনে করিয়ে দেওয়া দরকার যে, সন্ত্রাসবাদীরা কারও বন্ধু হতে পারে না। আন্তঃসীমান্ত সন্ত্রাসের কোনও দেশ কাল নেই। এরা বিশ্বের কাছে বিপজ্জনক।” এই পরিস্থিতিতে নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখা থেকে যে সেনা সরছে না, বরঞ্চ নিরাপত্তা বাড়ানো হচ্ছে, সে কথাও সাফ জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন প্রণববাবু।

ওই এলাকার প্রত্যন্ত গ্রামগুলির ভিলেজ ডিফেন্স কমিটির হাতে আরও উন্নত অস্ত্র তুলে দেওয়া হবে বলেও জানানো হয়েছে।

গত কালই খোদ রাজধানীর উচ্চ নিরাপত্তা এলাকায় লঙ্কর ই-তইবার এক জঙ্গি পুলিশের গুলিতে মারা যায়। ধরা পড়ে আরও দুই জঙ্গি। দিল্লির বিশেষ পুলিশ বাহিনী সূত্রে জানা গিয়েছে, কয়েক মাস আগে নয়াদিল্লির বাজারগুলিতে যেমন ধারাবাহিক বিস্ফোরণ ঘটানো হয়েছিল, সেই ধরনের একটি বড় মাপের নাশকতা ঘটানোর পরিকল্পনা ছিল এই লঙ্কর জঙ্গিদের। আপাতত নিজামুদ্দিন রেলওয়ে স্টেশন থেকে গ্রেফতার হওয়া দুই জঙ্গিকে (ফিরোজ আব্দুল লতিফ ঘাসওয়াল ওরফে আবদুল্লা এবং মহম্মদ আলি চিল্লা ওরফে আলি) ২০মে পর্যন্ত পুলিশ হেফাজতে রেখে জেরা চালানো হচ্ছে। জেরার মুখে জানা গিয়েছে, শুধু নয়াদিল্লিই নয়, মহারাষ্ট্র এবং গুজরাতেও নাশকতা ঘটানোর উদ্দেশ্য ছিল জঙ্গিদের। বিশেষ করে, গুজরাত উপকূলের কান্দলা বন্দর, আমদাবাদ মোটর মার্কেট এবং রেলব্রিজ ওড়ানোর পরিকল্পনা ছিল জঙ্গিদের। আদতে মুম্বইয়ের বাসিন্দা



আবদুল্লা এক জন প্রশিক্ষিত ডিজেল মেকানিক ও কম্পিউটারে দক্ষ ব্যক্তি। বাংলাদেশের হরকত উল জিহাদি ইসলামি ওরফে ছজির নেতাদের সঙ্গে সে নিয়মিত সম্পর্ক রেখে চলত। বেশ কয়েক বার কাশ্মীর এবং বাংলাদেশেও সে গিয়েছে। গত জুলাই মাসে পাকিস্তানে জঙ্গি প্রশিক্ষণ শিবিরেও সে অংশ নেয়। লঙ্কর নেতা আদম চিমার সঙ্গেও যোগাযোগ রেখে চলত আবদুল্লা। লঙ্কর নেতা আদম চিমার হাত ধরেই গত কালের নিহত জঙ্গি হামজার সঙ্গে আলি এবং আবদুল্লার যোগাযোগ তৈরি হয়।

এরই মধ্যে পুলিশ এবং সেনার যৌথ অভিযানে উত্তর কাশ্মীরের কুপওয়ারা জেলায় গত রাতে মারা গিয়েছে বারাগসী বিস্ফোরণের প্রধান অভিযুক্ত মহম্মদ জুবাইর। বাংলাদেশের হরকত উল জিহাদি ইসলামির সদস্য জুবাইর বারাগসীতে নাশকতা ঘটিয়ে কাশ্মীরে গ্যা ঢাকা দিয়েছিল। গোয়েন্দা সূত্রের খবর, কাশ্মীর থেকে পাকিস্তানে পালিয়ে যাওয়ার চেষ্টা চালাচ্ছিল সে। মার্চ মাসের ৭ তারিখে বারাগসীতে সফটমোচন মন্দিরে বিস্ফোরণে এই ব্যক্তিই সবচেয়ে সক্রিয় ছিল বলে ধারণা গোয়েন্দাদের।

রবিবার নিরাপত্তা বাহিনীর সঙ্গে সংঘর্ষে নিহত এক হিজবুল জঙ্গি মুস্তাক আমেদ ওরফে গওহরের ডায়েরির সূত্র ধরে তদন্ত চালিয়ে আজ বড় সাফল্য মিলল। বিজবেহারায় রীতি মতো গবেষণাগার তৈরি করে কার্যকলাপ চালাত তারা। সেই গবেষণাগারটির খোঁজ মিলেছে। ২০০৪ সাল থেকে কাশ্মীরে যত গাড়িবোমা বিস্ফোরণ হয়েছে, তার বেশির ভাগেরই নাটের গুরু ছিল মুস্তাক। তার ডায়েরিতে পাওয়া তথ্য সূত্র ধরেই বিজবেহারায় আব্দুল রশিদ ডর নামে এক ব্যক্তির বাড়িতে তল্লাশি চালায় নিরাপত্তা রক্ষীরা। সেখানে গাড়িবোমা তৈরির সাজ-সরঞ্জাম ও বিস্ফোরকের সন্ধান মিলেছে। জম্মু-কাশ্মীরে শান্তি ফেরাতে, এ মাসের ২৫ তারিখ শ্রীনগরে গোল টেবিল বৈঠক ডেকেছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। প্রতিরক্ষা সূত্রের দাবি, ওই বৈঠক ভেঙে দিতেই উপত্যকা জুড়ে পরের পর গাড়িবোমা বিস্ফোরণের চক্রান্ত করেছিল লঙ্কর-ই-তইবা ও হিজবুল মুজাহিদিন।

চ্যানেল বন্ধ: শ্রীনগরের কেবল অপারেটররা মঙ্গলবার দুপুর থেকে সব ক’টি খবরের ও বিশেষ কিছু বিনোদনমূলক চ্যানেলের সম্প্রচার বন্ধ করেছে অখ্যাত জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠী আল-মদিনার হুমকিতে। যৌন কেলেঙ্কারির বিরুদ্ধে গত কয়েক দিন ধরেই তীব্র বিক্ষোভ চলছে শ্রীনগরে। এই পরিস্থিতিতে আল-মদিনা গত শনিবার ঘোষণা করে, টিভি চ্যানেলগুলিই যত নষ্টের গোড়া। বন্ধ করতে হবে এগুলির সম্প্রচার।

10 MAY 2006

ANADABAZAR PAPER

'Touch Pak, and India will feel the pain'

Former Army Chief Beg Brags About Islamabad's N-Deterrence Tactic And Advice To Teheran

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

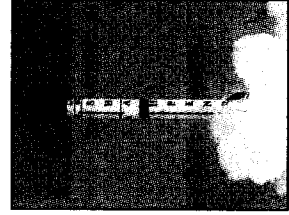
Washington: It does not matter who attempts to take out Pakistan's nuclear assets—the US, Israel or any other country—Pakistan will attack India in retaliation. This bizarre, hair-trigger nuclear stance is central to Pakistan's deterrence theory and was conveyed to New Delhi by Islamabad when it suspected India and Israel of collaborating to take out its nuclear assets, a top retired Pakistani general has revealed.

General Mirza Afzal Beg, Pakistan's former army chief, recalled Islamabad's India-centric nuclear policy to Associated Press' Kathy Gannon while relating how he had given similar advice to Iran in dealing with American pressure on its nuclear programme: no mat-

ter who attacks, aim for Israel. "We told India frankly (through an emissary) that this is the threat we perceive and this is the action we are taking and the action we will take. It was a real deterrent," Gannon quoted Beg as telling the Iranians about the time when Pakistan was paranoid about an India-Israel nexus.

Beg said he suggested the Iranian government "make it clear that if anything happens to Iran, if any one attacks it—it doesn't matter who it is or how it is attacked—Iran's answer will be to hit Israel; the only target will be Israel."

While Pakistan's hair-trigger nuclear posture has long been known to Indian planners, the latest revelations about targeting India for any misfortunes to its nuclear assets will doubtless force a reassessment



I suggested to the Iran government make it clear that if anything happens to Iran, if anyone attacks it—it doesn't matter who it is or how it is attacked—Iran's answer will be to hit Israel; the only target will be Israel

Gen Mirza Afzal Beg | FORMER PAK ARMY CHIEF

in India's own no-first-use nuclear stance. For instance, what happens if the US decides to take out Pakistan's nukes, as has been frequently speculated in the US media?

Can India stand by and be a failure for an American adventure? Beg also said he had advised Iran to "attempt to degrade the defence systems of Israel", harass it through the Hamas government

of the Palestinian Authority and the Hezbollah movement in Lebanon. It is broadly the same policy Pakistan has adopted towards India in Kashmir through terrorist groups and extremist factions of the Hurriyat.

Gannon, a Canadian journalist who had been AP correspondent in Pakistan and Afghanistan for 18 years before she was moved

to Teheran earlier this year, said the interview took place "several weeks" before the recent threatening exchanges between Iran and Israel. Gannon recently released her first book 'I is for Inferior', an account of her years in the region, and the Beg interview appears to be a result of the many close contacts she developed over the years.

Beg, however, denied to her that Pakistan had helped Iran with its nuclear programme, although he said former prime minister Benazir Bhutto once told him the Iranians offered more than \$4 billion for the technology. "They didn't want the technology. They asked, 'Can we have a bomb?' My answer was, 'By all means you can have it but you must make it yourself. No-

body gave it to us'," Gannon quotes Beg as saying about a visit he made to Teheran when he was the army chief in 1990.

While Pakistan may not have given Iran the nuclear bomb, it now transpires that it gave Teheran centrifuge equipments and blue print, a supply chain that its current military ruler Pervez Musharraf has blamed on a lone rogue operator: A Q Khan. But it now turns out that Pakistan peddled nuclear know-how to even Syria, the latest to join the list of countries A Q Khan proliferated to. According to an annual congressional report disclosed in Washington, Pakistani investigators have confirmed reports from the International Atomic Energy Agency that the Khan network "offered nuclear technology and hardware to Syria".

Detailed survey of Sir Creek from November

India, Pakistan agree to complete

job in five months

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Carrying forward a joint sample survey of Sir Creek, India and Pakistan will discuss the modalities for completing a full-fledged exercise by March next.

Technical experts will meet in Pakistan in August to work out the modalities of the survey, which will start in November. It has been decided to complete the job in five months. Hydrog-

raphers will propose options for delimitation of the maritime boundary, says a joint statement released at the end of the two-day talks on resolving the Sir Creek boundary delimitation dispute here on Friday.

At the previous meeting, both sides agreed to conduct a full-fledged joint survey without prejudice to their positions.

The present meeting saw "both sides narrowing their differences," said Surveyor-Gener-

• **Technical experts to work out modalities**

• **Hydrographers will propose delimitation options**

Indo-Pakistan boundary in the Sir Creek area and delimitation of the maritime boundary.

While Pakistan claims control of the entire Sir Creek, India says both sides should have the boundary mid-channel. The task has been made more difficult by the waterbody, in the Rann of Kutch, shifting course in the direction of India.

A contrast

The progress of these talks was in contrast to the tenth round on demilitarising the Siachen glacier held earlier this week. No progress could be

made on the intentions expressed at the ninth round to withdraw soldiers from the glacier. But there has been a desire, especially on the part of the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard, to delineate the maritime boundary at the earliest, since fishermen and other common men are affected by the dispute.

Both sides dispute the maritime territory beyond the mouth of Sir Creek, and the creek itself. India has strengthened its position in the area, setting up a Coast Guard station and refurbishing the assets at an

27 MAY 2006

THE HINDU

28 APR 2006

THE HINDU

India, Pakistan agree to work to finalise "Border Ground Rules"

Part of conventional CBMs between the two countries

B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD: India and Pakistan on Thursday agreed to work on the finalisation of "Border Ground Rules for implementation along the international border" as part of the conventional Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) between the two countries aimed at avoiding conflict.

The decision was arrived here at the third round of the Pakistan-India Expert Level Dialogue on Conventional CBMs in continuation of the composite dialogue. The Pakistan delegation was led by Tariq Usman Haider, Additional Secretary (United Nations), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Indian side by Dilip Sinha, Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs.

The two sides also agreed on the modalities for holding quarterly flag meetings on needs based sector level commanders in agreed sectors. The modalities for communication in this con-

text would be further discussed. Besides, it was agreed that consistent with the intent of the pact reached on development of no new posts and defence works along the Line of Control, the existing posts and defence works would not be fortified. An agreement on the speedy return of persons inadvertently crossing LoC was also reached.

Outdated

Both sides deemed it necessary to work on new border ground rules along the international border as the existing agreement, inked in 1960 between West Pakistan and India, was not only outdated due to new developments, but unimplemented.

A joint statement issued at the end of the meeting said as indicated in the Joint Statement of January 18, 2006, the Pakistan side presented a draft agreement to the Indian side on the Prevention of Incidents at Sea in order

to ensure safety of navigation by naval vessels, and aircraft belonging to the two sides.

It said both sides agreed to periodically discuss further CBMs and to review and monitor the implementation of existing Conventional CBMs as called for in the Lahore Memorandum of Understanding of 1999 and as mandated by the Foreign Secretaries in the Composite Dialogue process.

At a joint news conference the two delegations leaders expressed satisfaction over the meeting's outcome. In response to a question on whether the issue of reduction of troops in the Kashmir valley figured at the meeting, Mr. Haider said Pakistan gave its "ideas" to India on the subject. Mr. Sinha said New Delhi made its position clear that deployment of troops in its territory was its sovereign right and was exercised according to the prevailing security situation.

At a separate briefing, Mr. Haider dwelt at length on the "demilitarisation" proposals put forth by Pakistan but not accepted by India.

He said that with the objective of reducing threat along the LoC and the International Border, Pakistan had proposed a redeployment of artillery, guns, missiles and mortars above 120 mm outside the "boundary of Jammu and Kashmir."

No heavy artillery

He said the idea behind the proposal was that if there were no heavy artillery in the vicinity of the border, it would be difficult to launch operations.

The second proposal mooted by Pakistan was for non-deployment of "strike formations" close to the border.

Mr. Haider said Pakistan defence doctrine was non-aggressive and defensive' and argued that Indian intent of peace pursuit with Pakistan should be matched on the ground.

Mr. Haider said India rejected both proposals on the ground that deployment of troops and weaponry was the sovereign decision of the Government based on ground realities.

"We hope India re-looks at the proposals made by us on demilitarisation," he added.



CORDIAL WELCOME: Pakistani official Tariq Usman Haider (right) receives Dilip Sinha, chief of the Indian delegation at the Foreign Ministry on Thursday. - PHOTO: AP

India, Pak to reduce nuke accident risks

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD, April 22. — India and Pakistan will discuss the initiation of more confidence-building measures in the nuclear and conventional fields and attempt to finalise a draft agreement on reducing the risk of nuclear accidents during official-level talks here next week. The fourth round of official and expert-level talks on nuclear and conventional CBMs will be held here on 25 April between an Indian delegation headed by the additional secretary of the external affairs ministry, Mr KC Singh and his Pakistani counterpart, Mr Tariq Usman Haider.

The talks on Tuesday will cover a general framework on strategic stability, crisis management and the building of confidence.

Ahead of the talks, India has submitted a draft agreement on "Reducing Risk of Nuclear Accidents" and the Pakistani side is expected to give its opinion on it during the discussions.

Officials of both sides expressed cautious optimism about the finalisation of an agreement. The two sides are also expected to discuss Pakistan's proposal of an agreement on the prevention of incidents at sea to ensure the safety of naval vessels and aircraft.

THE STATESMAN

23 APR 1998

"Closer" to "final point" on Siachen: Narayanan

21/9
20-1 *gud pan*
NEW DELHI: India and Pakistan are "closer" to a "final point" on the Siachen problem. Talks are on to finalise the modalities for the authentication of the present troop positions, which can pave the way for the demilitarisation of the world's highest battlefield, National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan has said.

Just a month ahead of the official-level talks on Siachen, New Delhi asserted that it was keen on having "iron-clad guarantees" from Pakistan to avoid a scenario in which India would have to "reclaim" the positions it now occupied.

"[Agreements on] Siachen and Sir Creek have been on the anvil for a long time. As far as Siachen is concerned, the issue has been how do you authenticate the line where they [troops] are," Mr. Narayanan said.

Asked about the minimum conditions that India would expect Pakistan to meet, he said: "I don't think we are laying any conditions.

The only point is that we are occupying positions on the Salto Bridge. If we move back and if for some reason it becomes necessary to go back, it becomes so much more difficult." — PTI

Another report on Page 12

21 Apr 2006

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19/4

'India to go ahead with Iran-Pak pipeline project'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
APRIL 18

MINISTER of State for External Affairs E Ahamed today said India would go ahead with the pipeline project with Pakistan.

Preliminary discussions with regard to implementation of Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline project have been held, Ahamed said while participating in the 'Janavidhi-2006' programme organised by Kesari Memorial Journalists' Trust here. "India and Iran enjoy traditionally friendly relations... We intend to further strengthen and expand our multi-faceted ties," he said.



Minister of State for External Affairs E Ahamed with HH Shelkh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jabr Al-Sabah, the Amir of Kuwait, in Kuwait on Monday. PTI

On Iran's nuclear issue, Ahamed said it has been India's consistent stance that the issue should be resolved in a transparent manner through dialogue process.

India has consistently stated that all sides must work to find

a diplomatic solution and that confrontation should be avoided at all costs, he said.

Ahamed, who was here to campaign for UDF candidates, said his party IUML always stood against all kinds of extremism.

To a question on the support extended by Jamait-e-

Islami and Abul Nazer Madhani's PDP to Opposition LDF, Ahamed said the move was not going to affect the prospects of the UDF. Ahamed also rejected allegation that IUML had now become a "party of rich people".

'Conversion can't save him from the gallows'

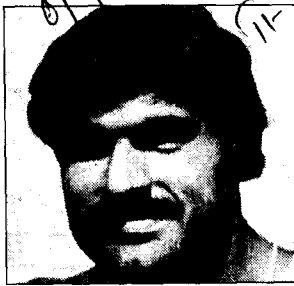
TNN AND AGENCIES

New Delhi: Embracing Islam will not help Sarabjit Singh escape the capital punishment for his alleged involvement in a series of blasts in Lahore, Pakistan's law minister Muhammad Wasi Zafar said here on Thursday.

Reacting to reports that Sarabjit has converted to Islam, changed his name to Sarfaraz Ahmad and was offering namaz five times a day, he said Pakistani laws do not discriminate between religions and if he has been found guilty by the courts he has to face execution.

"That is the law of the land. It does not vary from man to man and faith to faith," said Zafar, who is here to attend the 45th annual session of Asian African Legal Consultative Organisation.

In Amritsar, Sarabjit's sister Dalbir Kaur scoffed at the reports of his conversion.



SARABJIT: Hanging On

That is the law of the land. It does not vary from man to man and faith to faith

— Pak minister Wasi Zafar, reacting to reports Sarabjit has embraced Islam

"This is next to impossible, since my brother is a strong believer of Sikh religion and conversion is next to impossible for him," she said, reiterating her plea to Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf

to pardon him.

But minister Zafar said that even Musharraf did not have the power to pardon Sarabjit as the matter fell within the jurisdiction of the interior minister.

"No one is empowered to pardon him. Neither the executive nor the legislature... Not even the President or the courts. Section 402 of Pakistani penal code is very clear. It says no one except the legal heirs of the victim can pardon the convict," said Zafar, a lawyer by profession.

The Pakistani minister said: "Not only in death cases, even in cases of simple hurt or any bodily injury, the person found guilty has to be punished unless the victim or his/her family pardons the convict. The government does not have anything to do with it. They (victim's family) have to inform the court about the pardon."

07 APR 2006

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Endangered CBM

Red tape proves a roadblock

9/2/06 PMK
5-8
8/4

When launched a year ago it was more than front page news. The Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service was hailed as the key to re-linking the divided people of Kashmir, an instrument for making borders irrelevant, capable of transporting dreams into reality. At least so political leaders and their spin doctors asserted. In lower key was the re-opening this February of the Aman Setu that had been battered by the October temblor. But now that the bus attracts no publicity, queries are being asked if it was essentially a PR-stunt - it is attracting even less patronage. On the last two trips from Srinagar it had two, and four passengers. The sad picture gets enlarged by statistics revealing that applications for travel have also dwindled. It not as though the desire of people living on both sides of the Line of Control to re-connect has been either satiated or diminished, it is just that they cannot untangle all the red tape.

Although regulations do not specify that only family re-unions qualify for a ticket, the application form requires listing of the address of the relatives to be visited in POK. Then antecedents of both branches of the family are "verified", given the common traditions of our police forces that need not be a pleasant process, and fewer and fewer people wish to undergo the ordeal. Thus far only 816 have used the bus, and let it be noted that as many as 505 of them travelled out of Muzaffarabad. In commercial terms the service is as good as dead, hopefully its political and diplomatic demise can be averted. For it was always more than a transport service. The bus was projected as a major confidence building measure, but since its "failure" points to persisting suspicions among officials, and their refusal to scrap the babu approach, doubts are being created about sincerity towards the larger goodwill exercise. People-to-people contact was identified as the best way to undo the mistrust and complications of half-a-century but such contact is being frustrated where it matters most - the Kashmir region. A pattern is being seen: empty buses, no movement on opening other crossing points, hence a term gaining credence in Kashmir is "political silence". Clearly Dr Manmohan Singh and his team have a job at hand. Announcements alone are ever inadequate, in Kashmir failure to follow up promises fuels a dangerous cynicism.

07 APR 2006

THE STATESMAN

India, Pakistan for better trade ties

Branches of scheduled banks to be opened in each country; shipping pact soon

B. Muralidhar Reddy ^{MS} to grow in a new direction. With the operationalisation of SAFTA from July 1, over 4, 000 commodities will be ~~open~~ ^{open} for trade compared to less than 1,000 under the India 'positive list' maintained by Pakistan.

According to the statement, a new shipping agreement would be signed in the near future. Talks on air services agreement would be concluded expeditiously. The existing deal was signed before the era of private airlines and both sides are in agreement to give an important role to private airlines.

In line with Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz's announcement during his visit to India in November 2004, to open branches of scheduled banks in each country, the central banks would process applications expeditiously.

ISLAMABAD: India and Pakistan agreed on a number of proposals at the end of the third round of talks on economic and commercial cooperation within the framework of the Composite Dialogue here on Wednesday.

A joint statement welcomed the ratification of the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) by all SAARC member-countries.

The clarification by Pakistan Commerce Secretary Syed Asif Shah that the country would extend SAFTA to India means trade and economic relations between the countries are poised

completed in the near future. Soon, India and Pakistan are expected to have a fibre link through Wagah.

The initiative on liberalisation of the visa regime would be discussed. Pakistan has taken note of Indian proposal to convene a meeting of the relevant technical level experts at the Attari-Wagah border to draw up proposals for upgrading infrastructure to facilitate trade including export of transit cargo of Afghanistan. An MoU on assistance of mutual cooperation in capital markets has been conveyed by the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan to its counterpart in India.

Pakistan and India would constitute a working group to discuss the issues of joint registration of Basmati rice SGI. India would provide detailed proposals for trade in IT-enabled medical services. It was noted that the laying of optical fibre on the Indian side would be

Pakistan and India would constitute a working group to discuss the issues of joint registration of Basmati rice SGI. India would provide detailed proposals for trade in IT-enabled medical services. It was noted that the laying of optical fibre on the Indian side would be

Straw gives UK, USA credit for stopping Indo-Pak war

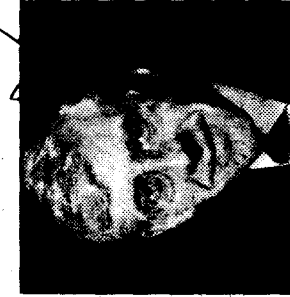
Agence France Presse

LONDON, March 28. — Intense diplomatic efforts by Britain and the United States prevented India and Pakistan from going to war four years ago, British foreign secretary Mr Jack Straw said today.

The Foreign Office, headed by Mr Straw, and the US State Department, under then secretary of state Mr Colin Powell, worked tirelessly to defuse the stand-off between the two countries over Kashmir, he said. He was respond-

ing to a question about hopes for a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir problem following a speech in London to British diplomats. "In early 2002, the anxiety internationally ... was whether Pakistan and India would move towards a conventional war — after all they have had three of those — which in turn could turn into a nuclear war," Mr Straw recalled. "If that had happened, the consequences for the world would have been catastrophic," he said.

"It took very active



Mr Jack Straw

diplomacy by the USA and the United Kingdom — and it was these two countries and bluntly no others." Mr Straw said he and Mr Powell were heavily involved in negotiations with the rowing neighbours, travelling

repeatedly to the region during the three months of discussions.

"In the end, Pakistan and India looked over the abyss, saw starkly that they simply couldn't start another conventional war, where it might lead and pulled back," said Mr Straw. Rather than a frozen conflict develop-

ing, this move led to a thawing of relations between the two countries. Mr Straw admitted Britain's historical failings in its two former colonies. But he also underscored the importance of diplomacy, at a time when the

international community was struggling to engage with Iran over its disputed nuclear programme. The benefits for the whole world from having British and US diplomats on the ground in India and Pakistan four years ago was huge, Mr Straw said.

If "people ever say to you: 'What is a diplomat for?', say a diplomat is partly for stopping wars and if you want to know about a war that diplomats stopped, British and American diplomats, yes backed by their secretaries of state, stopped a war," he said.

Friendship offer old hat: Pakistan

Stresses need for meaningful dialogue

B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday maintained that progress towards resolution of Kashmir, coupled with improved environment through dialogue with Kashmiris, would "greatly help" the peace process.

Islamabad's statement follows Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's speech at the inaugural ceremony of the Amritsar-Nankana Sahib bus service. He spelt out his vision on resolution of Kashmir and India-Pakistan relations on the occasion.

Pakistan had reacted immediately, saying it welcomed Dr. Singh's observations.

Foreign Office spokesperson Tasneem Aslam's statement on Monday was a clear acknowledgement that the initial reaction missed out some important points raised by Dr. Singh.

The statement considered it necessary to flag the point that the offer of treaty of peace, security and friendship was old hat.

"The ideas of a non-aggression pact or a friendship treaty have been suggested by both sides in the past. The fact remains that distrust caused by persistence of problems and disputes have prevented these ideas from becoming a reality. This further underscores the need for meaningful dialogue to address problems especially the Jammu and Kashmir dispute," Ms. Aslam said.

There was no doubt that pro-

• Says number of positive and important elements in Manmohan's speech

• Emphasises that Musharraf has said that status quo cannot be a solution to Kashmir

gress towards the settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute along with improved environment through interaction among Kashmiris, on both sides of the Line of Control, would greatly help the process of normalisation of relations, she said.

Cordial sentiments

Stating that in addition to the general cordial sentiments, there were a number of positive and important elements in Dr. Singh's speech, Ms. Aslam said the Prime Minister had spoken about finding pragmatic practical solutions to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and suggested that the two countries could work towards making the LoC irrelevant.

Endorsing the suggestion, Ms. Aslam maintained that President Musharraf had stated on a number of occasions that the status quo could not be a solution to the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and suggested that the LoC should be made irrelevant for the Kashmiris.

It noted that Dr. Singh had also stated that Kashmiris on the

two sides of the LoC should work out cooperative, consultative mechanism so as to maximise the gains of cooperation in solving problems of social and economic development of the region and also called for free movement and trade across the Line of Control.

"The President and Prime Minister of Pakistan emphasise that the time has come for India and Pakistan to focus and meaningful discussions for a settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. The President has offered the ideas of self-governance, demilitarisation and joint management which have found resonance among Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control."

'Non-papers'

Asked about media reports that both sides have exchanged 'non-papers' on the Siachen Glacier, Ms. Aslam dismissed them as "product of fertile imagination." She said both were engaged in dialogue in resolution of Siachen as well as Sir Creek and the subjects would be taken up in the last week of May as part of composite dialogue.

In response to another question about grant of most favoured nation (MFN) status to India by Pakistan, Ms. Aslam said though India had granted such a status to Pakistan, its trade balance with India was negative due to 'non-tariff barriers.'

No MFN status for India yet: Pak

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD, March 26. — Ahead of their crucial trade talks here tomorrow, Pakistan has stuck to its stance of linking the issue of "most favoured nation (MFN)" status for India and transit facilities for its goods with progress in resolution of political issues including Kashmir.

"Pakistan's stand on MFN status to India and opening of Attari-Wagah border on permanent basis for trade of all commodities is very clear and is linked with progress on political issues including Kashmir," commerce secretary Mr Syed Asif Shah, who would be lead the Pakistan delegation at the talks, said.

Asked whether

Pakistan "gave MFN status to India" following the Saarc countries ratifying the regional free trade area, Mr Shah said bilateral trade with India would still continue through a "positive approach", but did not elaborate.

The ratification of South Asian Free Trade Area by Pakistan and other Saarc countries does not mean that Pakistan has automatically granted MFN status to India.

"We will respond in case if there is any query from any quarter about the issue," Mr Shah was quoted as saying by media here today.

Commerce secretary Mr SM Menon, who is leading a 15-member Indian delegation, arrived here last night to

would make it much easier for it to step up trade with India even as the two countries made efforts to resolve Kashmir and other contentious issues through bilateral mechanism.

Indian officials say that it is to be seen what comes out of the latest round of talks.

Mr Shah said that Pakistan wants level playing field for trade for which removal of non-tariff barriers by India is essential. "We still need to study the Indian tariff regime and Indian government also needs to study our tariff regime."

The two sides would also discuss opening of bank branches on reciprocal basis to facilitate their commercial work.

India will have to liberalization of visa pro-

cedure as the current procedure for extending tier visa is creating a lot of problems for the people of both the countries.

New Delhi will also seek facilitation of tea export from India to Pakistan.

India will also offer to export its services in medical, construction and tourism sectors.

Tomorrow's talks would be held under the aegis of the Joint Working Group (JWG) set up two years ago to study Pakistan's complaints on Indian tariff regime and lack of level playing field for Pakistani goods.

The two commerce secretaries would meet on 28-29 March for the third round of talks on economic issues.

India will have to liberalization of visa pro-



take part in the three-day talks.

It also permitted duty free import of six essential items including sugar through Wagah to tide over shortages in domestic markets.

Pakistan has been asked to consider opening up its trade mechanism under Satta

PM ushers Indo-Pak unity

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, March 26.
— Prime Minister, Dr
Manmohan Singh, has
commended efforts to
encourage children from
India and Pakistan to
write letters of friendship
to each other.

Assisted by
Friends Without Borders.org,
the first set of such letters
was carried to
Pakistan on Friday, an
official release said today.

Describing this as a
“beautiful event being led
by children of both countries”,
Dr Manmohan Singh said it
had positive ramifications
for the future of the two
nations, once this generation
of children grows up and
takes on the reins of leadership.

While thanking the
organisers for their effort,
the Prime Minister also
saluted the children of
India, who had written
“heart-felt letters of
friendship”. He encouraged
more children to join the
movement.

27 MAR 2006

THE STATESMAN

মনমোহনের আহ্বানে উচ্ছ্বসিত নয় পাকিস্তান

ইসলামাবাদ, ২৫ মার্চ: প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহের আহ্বানে 'সাবধানে পা ফেলার' নীতি নিল পাকিস্তান।

কাল অমৃতসর থেকে নানকানা সাহিব পর্যন্ত বাসযাত্রার উদ্বোধন করে মনমোহন বলেছিলেন, পুরনো শত্রুতা ভুলে এটাই সময় অভাবিত কিছু ভাবার। আত্মবর্ধক ব্যবস্থায় দু'দেশের শান্তি প্রক্রিয়া আটকে না থেকে বন্ধুত্বের চুক্তির আহ্বানও জানিয়েছিলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। মনমোহনের এই আহ্বানকে ইতিবাচক হিসাবে বর্ণনা করলেও পাকিস্তান জানিয়েছে, প্রধানমন্ত্রী যে চুক্তির কথা জানিয়েছেন, তা অদূর ভবিষ্যতে হওয়া সম্ভব নয়।

এ কথা জানিয়ে পাকিস্তানের বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের মুখপাত্র তসনিম আসলাম আজ বলেছেন, "আমরা প্রধানমন্ত্রীর বক্তব্য পড়েছি। তাঁর বক্তৃতায় অনেক কিছুই ইতিবাচক। ভারত যে জম্মু ও কাশ্মীর-সহ বিভিন্ন দ্বিপাক্ষিক বিষয়ে সামনে এগোতে আগ্রহী, তা তাঁর বক্তব্যে ধরা পড়েছে।" পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট যে ভাবে কাশ্মীর সমস্যা সমাধানের মধ্য দিয়ে দু'দেশের দ্বিপাক্ষিক সমস্যার সমাধান চেয়েছেন, তা নাকচ করে দিয়ে মনমোহন বলেন, শুধু কাশ্মীর সমস্যার জন্য ভারত-পাক সম্পর্ক স্বাভাবিক হওয়া নির্ভর করছে না। মনমোহনের

বক্তব্যকে ইতিবাচক হিসাবে বর্ণনা করা হলেও কাশ্মীর সমস্যা নিয়ে নিজেদের মনোভাব থেকে একচুলও সরতে নারাজ পাকিস্তান। তসনিম আসলাম এ প্রসঙ্গে বলেন, কাশ্মীর সমস্যা বাদ দিয়ে দু'দেশের মধ্যে শান্তি প্রক্রিয়া এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়ার ভাবনা পাকিস্তানের কাছে একেবারেই অবাস্তব। তিনি বলেন, "আমরা বারবারই বলছি, কাশ্মীর সমস্যা সমাধান হলেই দু'দেশের মানুষ একযোগে দারিদ্র, অসুস্থতা এবং অজ্ঞতার বিরুদ্ধে লড়াই চালিয়ে যেতে পারবে।"

দু'দেশের সম্পর্ককে মসৃণ করতে কিছু দিন ধরেই নয়াদিল্লি ও ইসলামাবাদ সক্রিয়। আনুষ্ঠানিক আলোচনার পাশাপাশি 'ট্র্যাক টু' কুটনীতির মাধ্যমেই সমস্যার জট খোলার চেষ্টা চলছে। এই অবস্থায় ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রী যে চুক্তির ডাক দিয়েছেন, তা অবশ্যই তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ। যদিও মনমোহন সিংহ এই আহ্বান জানানোর সময়ে নয়াদিল্লির অবস্থান থেকে এক চুলও সরে আসেননি বলেই মনে করা হচ্ছে। পাশাপাশি, পাকিস্তানও নিজেদের অবস্থান থেকে সরে না এসেই মনমোহনের বক্তব্যকে স্বাগত জানিয়েছে। আর দু'দেশের মধ্যে সমস্যা সেই একটি বিষয় নিয়েই, কাশ্মীর।

—পি টি আই

26 MAR 2006

ANANDIAZAR P. S. RA

শান্তি চুক্তি: মুশারফকে ডাক মনমোহনের

অমৃতসর, ২৪ মার্চ (পি টি আই)— ভারত-পাক সম্পর্ক স্বাভাবিক করার লক্ষ্যে আজ একটি উদ্যোগ নিলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিং। দুদেশের মধ্যে 'শান্তি, নিরাপত্তা ও বন্ধুত্ব-চুক্তি' স্বাপনের প্রস্তাব দিলেন ইসলামাবাদকে। এদিন প্রধানমন্ত্রীর নিশান-সঙ্কেতে অমৃতসর এবং ওপারের শিখতীর্থ, গুরু নানকের জন্মস্থান নানকানা সাহিবের মধ্যে বহু প্রতীক্ষিত বাস চলাচল শুরু হল। এই ঐতিহাসিক মুহূর্তেই অমৃতসরে দাঁড়িয়ে পাকিস্তানের উদ্দেশ্যে শান্তি-চুক্তির উদ্যোগ আহ্বান জানালেন মনমোহন। দু-পার পাঞ্জাবের মানুষের কাছেই স্বার্থা পৌঁছে দিতে গুরুমুখীতে ভাষণ দিলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। বললেন, আমার স্থির বিশ্বাস, দীর্ঘদিন ধরে ভারত ও পাকিস্তান যেরূপে পৌঁছতে চাইছে, শান্তি-চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরের মধ্য দিয়েই একমাত্র সেখানে পৌঁছনো সম্ভব। বাস চলাচল শুরুর এই ঐতিহাসিক মুহূর্তে পাক জনসাধারণের কাছে আমি সেই আহ্বানই জানালাম। আমার দৃঢ় প্রত্যয় পাক নেতৃত্বও এই ডাকে সাজা দেবেন। চুক্তির ফলে শুধু শান্তি-উদ্যোগই সফল হবে না, সিয়াচেন, সার খাঁড়ি ও বাগলিহার প্রকল্পের মতো সমস্যারও সফল সমাধান ঘটবে। অতীতের সব ভুল বোঝাবুঝি, শত্রুতা, বিদ্বেষ ভুলে এগিয়ে আসুক দু-দেশ। এতদিন যা ভাবা যায়নি, আসুন, তা এবার ভেবে দেখি আমরা। ভাষণের ফাঁকে ফাঁকে পাক প্রেসিডেন্টের প্রশংসা ও সমালোচনা দুই করেছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। সন্ত্রাস দমনে সাহসী পদক্ষেপের জন্য মুশারফের যেমন প্রশংসাও করেছেন, তেমনি জম্মু-কাশ্মীর নিয়ে তাঁর মন্তব্যের সমালোচনাও করেছেন। ভারত-পাক সম্পর্ক স্বাভাবিক করার প্রস্তুতির সঙ্গে মুশারফের কাশ্মীর সমস্যা এক করে দেখার দৃষ্টিভঙ্গিকে 'ভুল' আখ্যা দিয়েছেন তিনি। বললেন, জম্মু-কাশ্মীর সমস্যার বাস্তবোচিত সমাধান নিয়ে আলোচনা করতে পিছপা নয় ভারত। সুতরাং, কাশ্মীর ইস্যুর সঙ্গে ভারত-পাক সুসম্পর্কের প্রশ্ন এক করে দেখা আবশ্যিক। গতকাল ২৩ মার্চ ছিল পাকিস্তানের জাতীয় দিবস। সেই উৎসব উদযাপনের পরের দিনটিকে মনমোহন শান্তি-চুক্তি ডাক দেওয়ার জন্য বেছে নিয়েছেন। বস্তুত এই শান্তি-চুক্তির কাজ অনেকটাই এগিয়ে গেছে। দুবাইয়ে বসে দু-দেশের দুই জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা এম কে নারায়ণন ও তারিক আজিজ চুক্তির খসড়া প্রায় পাকা করে ফেলেছেন। ভারত-মার্কিন পরমাণু চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরিত হওয়ার পর মুশারফ এমনিতেই একটু পিছিয়ে পড়েছেন। সামনের বছরই নির্বাচন। তাকে ক্ষমতায় ফিরতে হবে। এই সময় সন্ত্রাসবাদের



ওয়াশা সীমান্তে মনমোহনের হাতে 'শান্তির' পতাকা। শুক্রবার। ছবি: এ এফ পি

বিরুদ্ধে লড়াই অব্যাহত রেখে আমেরিকার মন জিতে নেওয়াটা তাঁর পক্ষে একান্ত জরুরি। ভারতের এই বন্ধুত্ব-চুক্তির ডাক ফিরিয়ে দেওয়া মুশারফের পক্ষে কঠিন। পাক বিদেশমন্ত্রক স্বাগত জানিয়েছে মনমোহনের প্রস্তাবকে। এর মধ্যে 'সদর্থক মনোভাব' দেখতে পাচ্ছে পাকিস্তান। দিল্লি-লাহোর, শ্রীনগর-মুজফফরাবাদ ও অমৃতসর-লাহোর বাস চলাচল ইতিমধ্যে চালু হলেও লাহোর-নানাকানা সাহিব বাস চালু হতে বিলম্ব ঘটছিল।

মুশারফের হুমকি: সন্ত্রাসবাদের বিরুদ্ধে যে জোরদার লড়াইয়ে তা জানাতে বিদেশি জঙ্গিদের পাক ভূখণ্ড ছাড়ার চরম হুমকি দিলেন পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট। শাসিয়ে রাখলেন, তাঁর দেশ না ছাড়লে মরতে হবে তাদের। জাতীয় দিবস উপলক্ষে গতকাল লাহোরের এক বিশাল জনসমাবেশে এই হুমিয়ারি দেন মুশারফ। আফগানিস্তানের দিকে আঙুল তুলে তিনি বলেন, সে-দেশের অকর্মণ্যতার দায় বইতে হচ্ছে পাকিস্তানকে। আর এ-সব সহ্য করব না আমরা।

বন্ধুত্বের চুক্তি করতে ডাক পাকিস্তানকে

অমৃতসর, ২৪ মার্চ: আত্মসম্মতি ব্যবস্থা রয়েছেই। এ বার সেই প্রক্রিয়াকে আরও প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক চেহারা দেওয়ার আহ্বান জানালেন মনমোহন সিংহ। দু'দেশের শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়াকে পূর্ণতা দেওয়ার জন্য পাকিস্তানকে শান্তি, নিরাপত্তা ও বন্ধুত্বের চুক্তি করার ডাক দিলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী।

সিয়াচেন, স্যার ক্রিক, বাগলিহারের মতো বিতর্কিত প্রসঙ্গে 'অর্থপূর্ণ সমঝোতা' হতে পারে বলে প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনে করছেন। সেই সঙ্গেই পাকিস্তানকে স্বরণ করিয়ে দিয়েছেন, একমাত্র জম্মু ও কাশ্মীর সমস্যার সমাধানের উপরে ভারত-পাক সম্পর্ক স্বাভাবিক হওয়া নির্ভর করছে না। তবে এই প্রশ্নেও বাস্তবোচিত সমাধান খুঁজতে ভারতের কোনও আপত্তি নেই। বন্ধুত্বের চুক্তির বিষয়বস্তু কী হতে পারে, তার কোনও ইঙ্গিত মনমোহন দেননি। কিন্তু বার্তা পৌঁছতে চেয়েছেন যে, আত্মসম্মতি ব্যবস্থাতেই দু'দেশের শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়া আটকে থাকা উচিত নয়।

সীমান্তের দুই পারের পঞ্জাবের মধ্যে বাস পরিষেবা চালু হয়েছে আজ। অমৃতসর থেকে নানকানা সাহিব পর্যন্ত বাসযাত্রার উদ্বোধনের ঐতিহাসিক দিনটিকেই পাকিস্তানের দিকে নতুন করে বন্ধুত্বের হাত বাড়িয়ে দেওয়ার জন্য বেছে নিয়েছেন মনমোহন। বিশুদ্ধ পঞ্জাবিতে আজ তাঁর বক্তব্য, "এই

ঐতিহাসিক মুহূর্তে আমি পাকিস্তানের মানুষকে এই আহ্বান (চুক্তি) জানাচ্ছি। আমি নিশ্চিত, পাক নেতৃত্ব তাতে সাড়া দেবেন।" বাসযাত্রাকে সবুজ সঞ্চেত দিতে গিয়ে প্রধানমন্ত্রী বলেছেন, "পুরনো শত্রুতা এবং ভুল বোঝাবুঝি পিছনে ফেলে আসার এটাই সময়। এটাই সময় অভাবিত কিছু ভাবার।"

অধুনালুপ্ত সোভিয়েত ইউনিয়নের সঙ্গে 'বন্ধুত্বের চুক্তি' ছিল ভারতের। পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে সম্পর্কের মাত্রা এর

'ট্র্যাক-টু' কূটনীতি চালিয়ে গিয়েছেন। আত্মসম্মতি ব্যবস্থাই যে সব নয়, সেই কথাটা বারবার বলেছেন পারভেজ মুশারফ। সম্প্রতি কাশ্মীরকে শুধু দ্বিপাক্ষিক প্রসঙ্গ বলে সুর বদলানোর সময়েও পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট সে কথা বলেছিলেন। এ বারে মনমোহনও শান্তি ও বন্ধুত্বের জন্য চুক্তি করার ডাক দিয়ে বোঝালেন, আত্মসম্মতি ব্যবস্থাকে আরও দৃঢ় ভিত্তির উপরে দাঁড় করানোর সময় এসে গিয়েছে।

দিয়েছেন কাশ্মীরের গ্রহণযোগ্য সমাধানের জন্য যে যার নিয়ন্ত্রিত এলাকায় মানুষের সঙ্গে কথা বলা উচিত। পাকিস্তান যে বারবারে ভারতকে কাশ্মীরীদের সঙ্গে আলোচনার কথা বলে, সেই কথাটাই পাকিস্তানের দিকে ফিরিয়ে দিয়েছেন মনমোহন।

চিরাচরিত ভাবে ভারত-পাকিস্তানের শান্তি স্থাপনের প্রয়াস আটকে থেকেছে সন্ত্রাসবাদের প্রশ্নে। কিন্তু পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট সদ্য গত কালই বলেছেন, পাকিস্তানের মাটিকে ব্যবহার করে অন্য দেশের যে সব জঙ্গি বা সন্ত্রাসবাদী কার্যকলাপ চালাতে চাইছে, তাদের অবিলম্বে দেশ ছেড়ে যেতে হবে। নইলে জঙ্গিদের 'গুঁড়িয়ে' দেওয়া হবে। আর আজ প্রধানমন্ত্রী সন্ত্রাস মোকাবিলার জন্য পাক প্রেসিডেন্টের প্রশংসা করেছেন। তবে এটাও বলেছেন, দু'দেশের স্বার্থেই এই ব্যাপারে আরও কড়া ব্যবস্থা নিতে হবে পাকিস্তানকে। সীমান্ত পুনর্নির্ধারণের প্রশ্ন ওঠে না বলে জানিয়েই তিনি বলেছেন, সীমান্তের জটিলতাকে অপ্রাসঙ্গিক করে দেওয়ার জন্য তৎপর হতে হবে। শিল্প-বানিজ্যে সহযোগিতা বাড়াতে হবে। অমৃতসর, লাহোরের মতো শহরকে দক্ষিণ এশিয়ার গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বাণিজ্য কেন্দ্রে পরিণত করতে হবে। — পি টি আই

হাত বাড়ালেন মনমোহন

পরে কোথায় দাঁড়াবে, তা এখনই বলা সম্ভব না-হলেও কূটনৈতিক মহল কিন্তু ভারতীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রীর আজকের আহ্বানকে অতৃপ্ত হিসাবেই দেখছে। পাক বিদেশ মন্ত্রকও জানিয়েছে, মনমোহনের কথায় 'ইতিবাচক ভাবাবেগ' ধরা পড়েছে। কাশ্মীর-সহ দ্বিপাক্ষিক নানা প্রসঙ্গে ভারত যে সামনে এগোতে সত্যিই আগ্রহী, সেটা বোঝা গিয়েছে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর আহ্বানে।

ভারত-পাক সম্পর্ককে আরও মসৃণ করার ব্যাপারে দু'তরফের নেতৃত্বই বেশ কিছু দিন ধরে সক্রিয়। আনুষ্ঠানিক আলোচনার পাশাপাশি দু'দেশের জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা এম কে নারায়ণন এবং তারিক আজিজ

বস্তুত, সতেরো বছর বাদে প্রথম সি বি আই-এফ আই এ বৈঠক, সিয়াচেন-প্রসঙ্গে মতৈক্যের সম্ভাবনা তৈরি হওয়া— বিভিন্ন ইঙ্গিত এখন সম্পর্ক সহজ হওয়ার দিকেই।

কাশ্মীর-প্রশ্নে মে মাসেই প্রধানমন্ত্রীর দ্বিতীয় গোল টেবিল বৈঠকে বসার কথা। কাশ্মীর-রাজনীতিকে ইতিবাচক পথে নিয়ে যেতে চাওয়ার সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই প্রথামাফিক শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়াতে গতিসঞ্চার করছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। সেই নিরিখেও অমৃতসর-নানকানা সাহিব বাসের উদ্বোধনে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর শান্তি-আহ্বান আলাদা তাৎপর্য পেয়েছে।

তবে প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনে করিয়ে

'Borders cannot be redrawn but we can work towards making them irrelevant'

Excerpts from Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's speech while inaugurating the Amritsar-Nankana Sahib bus on Friday

I AM extremely happy to be here in Amritsar on this very important occasion of the launch of a regular bus service between Amritsar and Nankana Sahib. This is indeed a memorable day for Punjab. This is a historic day for the entire Sikh community, both in Punjab and elsewhere. This is a historic day for the Panth. In many ways, it is a historic day for both India and Pakistan.



For the RECORD

Ever since the independence of our country in 1947, every morning, every devout Sikh prays to let us have free access to the Gurudwaras left behind in Pakistan. And among the Gurudwaras, Nankana Sahib is the holiest and most important. Our government has made sincere efforts in this direction and this bus service between Amritsar and Nankana Sahib is a result of this.

This is an emotional day for every Sikh. And for me too. Memories of the Partition of 1947 and my own travel from Pakistan to India come vividly to my mind. My heart swells with pride to launch this bus service connecting two of the holiest sites for the Sikh Panth. On this historic occasion I send my greetings to the people of Pakistan and to President Pervez Musharraf.

We need more such links between the two countries in the months and years to come. For this, we require friendly relations between India and Pakistan. I hope this bus service opens yet another chapter in improving the relations between our two countries. When President Musharraf had come to visit us in New Delhi last year I had said that "the journey of peace must be based on a step-by-step approach, but the road must be traveled." As an ancient saying goes, a road is made by walking.

I am happy that we are moving forward and creating a road, one step after another, even though many hurdles have come up along the way. The bus service from Srinagar to Muzaffarabad was one step. The rail link from Munnabao to Khokrapar

was another step. The steps we have taken to promote trade and to make travel and transport easier are all small but important steps forward. Today, we take another step. A historic step. This bus service from Amritsar to Nankana Sahib renews an emotional bond between the two sides of the border.

I have said repeatedly to President Musharraf and the people of Pakistan that we are sincerely committed to peace and development in this region. Our government is committed to resolving all outstanding issues with Pakistan, including the issue of Jammu & Kashmir. For this, I and General Musharraf have agreed that it is necessary to keep firm control over terrorism. There is a growing realisation in both our countries that terrorism is an enemy of civilised societies. General Musharraf has taken bold steps to curb extremism and I compliment him for that. But more needs to be done in the interest of both India and Pakistan.

As I see it, the normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan will open up enormous opportunities for an accelerated rate of economic growth. And for creating new job opportunities. Our trade potential is far in excess of what we are able to realise on the ground. There are many things that the two Punjab can learn from each other's development experience.

I have a vision that the peace-making process must ultimately culminate in our two countries entering into a Treaty of Peace, Security and Friendship to give meaning and substance to our quest for shared goals. I make this offer to the people of Pakistan on this historic occasion

We must encourage people-to-people contacts between actors in civil society, between academics, businessmen, artists, and most importantly, the common people. It is through such contacts that we can explore a vision for a cooperative common future for our two nations — a future where peace pre-



And the bus is on its way to a brand new destination

ails, where relations are friendly, where our citizens rejoice in the well-being of the other country.

I am aware that General Musharraf has often stated that the normalisation of relations between our two countries cannot move forward unless what he calls the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir is dealt with. In my view, it is a mistake to link normalisation of other relations with finding a solution to Jammu and Kashmir. But we are not afraid of discussing Jammu and Kashmir or of finding pragmatic, practical solutions to resolve this issue as well.

A step-by-step approach has to be adopted given the inherent difficulties involved in finding practical solutions. I suggest that both sides should begin a dialogue with the people in their areas of control to improve the quality of governance so as to give the people on both sides a greater chance of leading a life of dignity and self-respect.

I have often said that borders cannot be redrawn but we can work towards making them irrelevant — towards making them just lines on a map. People on both sides of the LOC should be able to move more freely and trade with one another. I also envisage a situation where the two parts of Jammu and Kashmir can, with the active encouragement of the governments of India and Pakistan, work out cooperative, consultative mechanisms so as to maximise the gains of cooperation in solving problems of social and economic development of the region.

The vision that guides us is that the destinies of our peoples are interlinked. That our two countries must therefore devise effective cooperative strategies to give concrete shape

India sincerely believes that a strong, stable, prosperous and moderate Pakistan is in the interest of India and the entire South Asia. We are sincerely committed to the prosperity, unity, development and well-being of Pakistan. When our neighbours live in peace, we live in peace

and meaning to this shared vision. India sincerely believes that a strong, stable, prosperous and moderate Pakistan is in the interest of India and the entire South Asia. We are sincerely committed to the prosperity, unity, development and well-being of Pakistan. We want good neighbourly relations. We want all the people of South Asia to live a life of dignity and self-respect. When our neighbours live in peace, we live in peace.

We must move forward. We want to move forward. We need to do much more to create the environment in which we can move forward. It is possible for us to come to a meaningful agreement on issues like Siachen, Sir Creek, Baglihar. I am convinced we can move forward, if all concerned are willing to accept the ground realities; if all concerned take a long view of history and of our destiny. The time has come to leave behind the animosities and the misgivings of the past and to think the unthinkable of moving together in pursuit of our common objective of

getting rid of chronic poverty, ignorance and disease that still afflict millions of our citizens. India and Pakistan must work together to open up new opportunities of economic cooperation, not only with South Asia, but also with West Asia and Central Asia. Cities like Lahore and Amritsar should once again become thriving international commercial centres serving the entire region.

Instead of looking at each other as adversaries, we must have the courage to see each other as supporting the other for the realisation of a better tomorrow for all the people of India and Pakistan. I have a vision that the peace making process must ultimately culminate in our two countries entering into a Treaty of Peace, Security and Friendship to give meaning and substance to our quest for shared goals. I make this offer to the people of Pakistan on this historic occasion. I am sure the leadership of Pakistan will reciprocate.

Today is a day of hope for Punjab. Punjab has seen many years of great pain and sorrow. Punjab has seen many years of waste and violence. But the past is behind us. This Golden Land of ours is once again bounteous and filled with joy. Our government in Delhi and in Punjab have been working tirelessly for the development of the state...

Punjab is the granary of India. Every farmer in Punjab is a proud soldier in our war against poverty and hunger. Your hard work has made India proud and prosperous. Your courage and enterprise makes each one of us proud. As a son of Punjab I salute every son and daughter of this great land. May your path be blessed.

Straight road from the Golden Temple

VIPIN PUBBY recalls an earlier journey to Nankana Sahib

In the daily prayer (ardas) of all devout Sikhs which is recited at the beginning and end of all tasks and all important functions there is reference to only one place. It is to Nankana Sahib, the birthplace of the first Sikh guru, Guru Nanak Dev, was supplemented in the ardhas by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) in 1947 following Partition which resulted in the holy township becoming a part of Pakistan.

No wonder then that all devout Sikhs, and for that matter all Punjabis, dream a visit to Nankana Sahib and pray at half a dozen historical gurdwaras, particularly Gurdwara Janamasthan, located about 75 km from Lahore. The gurdwara is among the most important places of Sikh pilgrimage besides the Golden Temple and the birthplace of the Khalsa. Takht Sri Keshgarh Sahib at Anandpur Sahib.

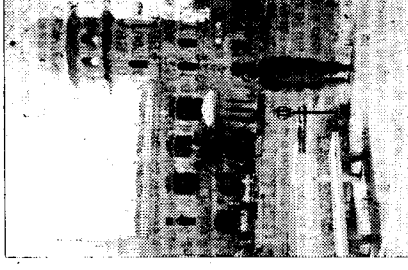
This it was a godsend for me when an offer came to visit Nankana Sahib. The Pakistan government had been allowing a limited number of pilgrims in religious jathas (groups) to visit the gurdwara on festive occasions. My visit was to be as part of a delegation led by former Haryana CM Om Parkash Chautala.

The Sikhs in our group were immersed in prayers when we saw the yellow and white complex. One could see their eyes get moist as we neared the gurdwara after about two hours' journey from Lahore. We were awestruck as we entered the sacred and historic precinct and proceeded towards the entrance. Evidently not matching the opulence of the Golden Temple, the building was freshly whitewashed and the sweet rhythms of Gurbani floated from the sanctum sanctorum.

Special moments at Guru Nanak's birthplace

Guru Nanak was born here in 1469. The place was then called Rai Bhoi di Talwandi. He stayed here for several years before embarking on a long journey to spread his word. The place remained neglected for several decades after he left but regained prominence when two other Sikh Gurus, Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Hargobind, visited the place. The shrines remained under the control of local mahants during British rule and there were stories of excesses committed by them. Then in 1921 a large number of Sikhs protested and stormed the Gurdwara against the mahant who was being backed by the British. He ordered his men to open fire, killing about 150 of them. Bullet marks left by the incident are still visible in the premises.

This led to an uproar and the SGPC took over the management. It looked after the gurdwaras till 1947; thereafter the shrines fell into neglect once again. With the thaw in bilateral ties, Pakistan has been allowing greater and greater numbers access to visit the shrine. In March last year, Punjab chief Minister Amarinder Singh and his Pakistani Punjab counterpart, Pervez Elahi, jointly laid the foundation stone for a road linking the town with Manawala.



Special moments at Guru Nanak's birthplace

Devirupa Mitra
in New Delhi

March 24. — The Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh's offer for a "treaty of peace, security and friendship", in the absence of any details of its possible contents, could be described with a well-known cliché, tweaked a little — old wine in a relatively new bottle.

In fact, India and Pakistan had been playing a football game in the same field since Independence. Every few years, Pakistan "offers" a no-war pact, while India reciprocates by periodically removing the dust from a friendship treaty.

So far, the difference seems to be a matter of semantics. India had been earlier championing a "Peace, friendship and cooperation" treaty with Pakistan. In the new formulation, the word "cooperation" has been replaced by "security" in the title.

The first overture towards a no-war pact was in 1949 when India proposed a joint declaration, which included language that both countries "desirous of friendship" would not resort to war and settle disputes through peaceful methods. The Pakistani PM, Liaquat

Ali Khan, accepted but added a clause that they will resort to "arbitration" on all points of difference. There were also reports that he wanted a timetable for settling all irritants. Needless to say, it was a stillborn birth.

In Tashkent in 1966, India had also handed over a draft of a friendship treaty, but neither side belaboured on it.

The most serious effort to reach a pact was made in the early 1980s, when a treaty, which included no-war elements, was near completion, but talks were

called off by Indira Gandhi accusing Pakistan of complicity in Punjab terrorism.

The intense negotiations began in September, 1981, when Pakistan offered to enter into "immediate consultations with India for the purpose of exchanging mutual guarantees of non-aggression and non-use of force in the spirit of the Simla agreement".

India accepted the offer, but insisted that it was only Pakistan responding to its original 1949 no-war pact proposal.

In 1982, Pakistan and India exchanged drafts,

for which talks went on into 1984.

According to retired diplomats who were in service during that period, about nine out of 14 articles in the draft treaty were approved, with the sticking point being India's insistence of exclusive bilateral mechanism and disallowance of foreign bases.

But in July, 1984, Mrs Gandhi called off negotiations to protest against Pakistani involvement in terrorism in Punjab. After her assassination, both sides did start to again pick up the threads in 1985, but

Indo-Pak overtures: many re-runs, few results

that initiative petered out.

The last public talks had been in 2002, when Pakistani president, General Pervez Musharraf, had proposed a no-war pact and regional de-nuclearisation, immediately rejected by India as "nothing new".

According to Dr Savita Pande of JNU, a friendship treaty does certainly "improve" the atmospherics, but she also expressed caution that Pakistan may not be ready to upgrade all areas of ties. She cited the recent Pakistani decision not to give MFN status to India, despite ratifying Safta.

The timing of the Prime Minister's proposal, suggested Professor PR Chari of Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, was related to domestic political situation. "There is always a new foreign policy initiative timed with a first class political crisis at home," he said. But besides that, he pointed out that the Pakistan's foreign office statement in response to the speech was not any proper reply. The spokesperson did not make any reference to the treaty proposal, only noted that the speech had "positive elements".

Looking at Lahore

If the two Punjabs get closer, India and Pakistan cannot but follow. Godspeed, Dr Singh

PRIME MINISTER Manmohan Singh could not have chosen a better venue than Amritsar and a more appropriate occasion than the launch of a bus service to Nankana Sahib to extend a hand of friendship to Pakistan. Speaking at the very faultline of the subcontinent's partition, Singh was putting across the proposition that bridging the divide between the two Punjabs and the two Kashmirs might hold the key to an enduring peace in the region. That Singh himself was a victim of Partition lends a personal touch to his bold attempt to transform not merely state-to-state relations between India and Pakistan, but also those between the two regions that have been among the worst affected by the great 1947 separation. That an Indian prime minister is ready to pronounce on the interconnection between regional and national reconciliation reflects the new levels of political confidence in New Delhi amidst India's improving relations with the major powers, especially the US and its increasing comfort levels with economic globalisation.

Greater cooperation between the two Punjabs that the PM hopes for would not only restore the status of Lahore and Amritsar as great global centres of commerce, but would also remove some of the major sources of ani-

mus across the border towards the normalisation of Indo-Pak relations. New Delhi has taken its time in recognising that a resolution of the Kashmir question is important from India's own interest; not merely because Pakistan wants it. The PM's three-fold package on Kashmir should allay recent Pakistani concerns that India is not serious about talks. The PM's emphasis on good governance, open borders and consultative mechanisms between the two Kashmirs provides a realistic basis for further talks between all the key players: New Delhi, Srinagar, Islamabad and Muzaffarabad.

The PM's call for a treaty of peace, security and friendship revives an idea that has been around for a long time. Such a treaty, however, makes sense only amidst a rapid normalisation of bilateral relations. Singh suggested political will to settle such problems as Siachen and Sir Creek are at hand. Once purposeful negotiations start on Kashmir, troop reductions begin to take effect on both sides of the border, and trade gathers momentum, a peace treaty would be a perfect keystone. A positive response from Pakistan to the new ideas articulated at Amritsar should see the PM travelling to Pakistan at an early date and converting some of the nice thoughts into credible action.

From road to

road map

P rime Minister Manmohan Singh's latest remarks on the peace process with Pakistan and his suggestions on the practical steps needed to move towards a resolution of the Kashmir dispute represent a major new political and diplomatic initiative by New Delhi. The venue was Amritsar and the occasion the launch of a new bus service to the Sikh holy shrine of Nankana Sahib in Pakistan. Dr. Singh said he did not agree that progress on other issues had to be linked to a settlement on Kashmir, but this did not mean India was afraid of discussing or finding "pragmatic, practical solutions" to that issue as well. He then made two suggestions. The first was that both sides should begin a dialogue with the people in their areas of control "to improve the quality of governance" and give people on both sides "a greater chance of leading a life of dignity and self-respect." The second was that the governments of India and Pakistan should encourage the "two parts of Jammu and Kashmir" to "work out cooperative, consultative mechanisms so as to maximise the gains of cooperation in solving problems of social and economic development of the region." This is the first time the Government of India has spoken officially of the need for cross-border institutional and administrative mechanisms that can link Kashmiris across the Line of Control. A fact of life in once-disputed regions such as South Tyrol, cross-LoC arrangements would allow borders — which everyone agrees cannot be redrawn — gradually to become irrelevant. Territorial, juridical sovereignties would remain intact, of course, but these would not be allowed to come in the way of people in the region moving and trading freely.

If these proposals show a willingness to engage with Pakistan directly in finding the kind of "out of the box" solutions President Musharraf has been speaking about, Dr. Singh took yet another step forward to establish the seriousness of the new opening he was making. He indicated that his government would like to reach a "meaningful agreement" with Pakistan on the issues of Siachen, Sir Creek, and Baglihar. Two of these three issues figure in the ongoing composite dialogue process but progress has been slow. This is not the first time Dr. Singh has spoken of the need to find a quick solution to the Siachen dispute; he must now exercise firm political leadership to clinch the matter. His remarks were also significant for their tone and tenor. In language reminiscent of the joint statement of April 2005, terrorism figured not as a stick to beat Pakistan with but as a shared concern. He complimented General Musharraf on the "bold steps" he had taken to curb extremism but added that more needed to be done in the interest of both India and Pakistan. If the composite dialogue process is to show more significant results than new bus and train services, the Prime Minister's remarks open up exciting possibilities for concrete movement in a number of areas, including Kashmir. The road to peace, he noted, is made by walking. He must lead boldly from the front to ensure the journey is completed.

Manmohan offers friendship treaty to Pak

But Says Talks Must Not Be
Linked To J&K Imbroglia

By Yudhvir Rana/TNN

Amritsar: Even as rains lashed Amritsar, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Friday said enough in his 20-minute speech to warm the hearts of an eager people excited about India's growing friendship with Pakistan.

Here to flag-off the much-awaited Amritsar-Nankana Sahib bus, Manmohan's words would have gladdened Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf too. Hailing the Pakistani leader for taking "bold steps to curb terrorism", Manmohan asked Pakistan to enter into a "treaty of peace, security and friendship" with India. This, he said, would be the culmination of ongoing peace process between the two nations.

Saying the step would give "meaning and substance" to the quest for shared goals of both nations, the PM added, "We hope that the Pakistani leadership will reciprocate." He was also careful to point out that Pakistan should not link normalisation of relations to the festering Jammu and Kashmir issue. Of course, the resolve to find solutions to all outstanding debates with Pakistan, including Jammu and Kashmir, remains. Despite Kashmir, he said there could be meaningful agreements on issues like Baglihar, Sir Creek and Siachin.

Going beyond, and once again donning the mantle of statesman, the PM said, "A strong, stable, prosperous and moderate Pakistan is in the interest of India and the entire South Asia. Continuing with his Pak theme, he said though Musharraf had taken bold

Islamabad welcomes statement

Islamabad: Pakistan on Friday said Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's offer of a "treaty of peace, security and friendship" reflected "some positive sentiments" and contained an "acknowledgement" about the need to move forward on the resolution of Kashmir and other contentious issues. "He has also acknowledged the need to move forward on the resolution of Kashmir and other issues between the two countries," foreign office spokesperson Tasnim Aslam said.

steps to curb extremism, a lot more was required to be done in the interest of both nations.

"India is not afraid of discussing Jammu and Kashmir or finding a pragmatic, practical solution to resolve the issue," the PM said, as people braved the rains to hear him. "A step by step approach has to be adopted given the inherent difficulties involved in finding practical solutions. But the time has come to leave behind animosities and misgivings of the past and to think the unthinkable of moving together in pursuit of common objectives like chronic poverty, ignorance and disease."

Expressing concern about the people on either side of the LOC, he said, "Borders cannot be redrawn, but we can work towards making them irrelevant or just a line on a map. People on both sides of the LoC should be able to move more freely and trade with one another."

India, Pak together on fighting crime



Tariq Parvez (right), Director General of Pakistan's FIA talks to the media as CBI Director Vijay Shankar looks on in New Delhi on Wednesday.

India and Pakistan agreed on Wednesday to work together to turn up the heat on criminal trafficking, humans, drugs and narcotics between the two countries.

Officials of the arch-rivals' crime-fighting agencies, meeting in New Delhi after a gap of 17 years, also discussed setting up a South Asian police agency on the lines of Europe's Europol.

They agreed to appoint special liaison officers between India's Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Pakistan's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

"We look forward to increasing cooperation in larger areas of mutual interest and ensuring criminals of the two countries do not have any kind of respite from the two agencies," CBI Director Vijay Shankar said at a joint news conference with the FIA chief.

Human trafficking and smuggling routinely take place along the Indo-Pakistan border.

The issue of Dawood Ibrahim, who is believed to be in Pakistan, was also discussed.

A joint statement issued after the talks said the two sides had decided that "all efforts will be made ... for expeditious disposal of pending Interpol references".

Ibrahim is wanted in connection with many criminal cases in India including the 1993 serial bomb blasts in Mumbai, formerly known as Bombay, which killed more than 260 people.

He also heads the shadowy underworld of Mumbai, the nation's bustling West coast commercial and film hub.

The CBI chief said the idea of a regional police agency along the lines of Europol had been discussed but remained at a "conceptualisation stage". —Reuters

23 MAR 2006

INDIAN EXPRESS

Indo-Pak investigating agencies hold dialogue

Stateman News Service

NEW DELHI, March 21. — After a gap of 17 years, the elite investigating agencies of India and Pakistan have started a dialogue on matters pertaining to crime, human trafficking, drug abuse and transnational crimes.

During the two-day technical level talks between the CBI and FIA both countries would discuss areas of cooperation and possibility of 'limited' extradition treaty between the two countries. Besides dis-

cussing the formation of the SAARC POL (police cooperation between SAARC countries on the lines of Europe police cooperation EURO POL), the two elite agencies would also take up the extradition of listed terrorists. While India has sought extradition of 25 terrorists allegedly hiding in Pakistan, the Pakistan government has given a long list of 53 most wanted Pakistani terrorists who have allegedly taken refuge in India.

Indian will, of course, press for the extradition of

Dawood Ibrahim wanted in many criminal cases, including the Mumbai blasts, and the five hijackers of the Indian Airlines plane in 1999. However, CBI officials did not reveal whether the issue was taken up today or would be taken up tomorrow. "We will answer all your queries at 1 p.m. tomorrow after the talks are over," a senior CBI official said.

The two-day technical level talks, between CBI director, Mr Vijay Shankar and the FIA (Federal Investigating Agency) chief, Mr Tariq Pervez,

began today. Sleuths from both sides will mainly focus on "institutional cooperation between two countries in tackling human-trafficking, counterfeiting of currency, besides appointment of nodal officers in both the countries for quick and timely exchange of information on criminal matters.

Mr Shankar was assisted by an additional director, joint director (policy) and deputy director (coordination) of the CBI, representatives of home and external affairs ministries, officials from Directorate of Revenue Intelligence and

Narcotics Control Bureau. The Pakistani delegation includes an additional director general and inspector general of FIA, and a senior official from the Pakistan foreign office. The last time the two elite agencies had held a meeting was in 1989. The renewed process of dialogue was initiated in August last year, when the Indian home secretary floated the idea of mutual cooperation on transnational crimes and suggested that the CBI and FIA should act as nodal agencies to locate fugitives.

পরমাণু চুক্তি নিয়ে শাসাল পাকিস্তান

নয়াদিল্লি ও ইসলামাবাদ, ১৭ মার্চ:
আমেরিকার সঙ্গে পরমাণু সহযোগিতা
চুক্তি নিয়ে প্রতিবেশীদের ক্ষোভ
সামলানোর কাজ চালিয়ে যাচ্ছে
ভারত। একই রকম সহযোগিতা চেয়ে
বিফল হওয়ার পরে পাকিস্তান এ বার
তীব্র ভাবে চুক্তির বিরোধিতা শুরু
করেছে। সে দেশের বিদেশমন্ত্রী
খুরশিদ মহম্মদ কাসুরি যা বলেছেন,
তার মোদা কথা, এমন চুক্তির ফলে
পরমাণু অস্ত্র প্রসার রোধের উদ্দেশ্যই
দফারফা হবে। পরমাণু অস্ত্র তৈরি
করে ভারত সুবিধা পাবে আর ইরান,
উত্তর কোরিয়া, পাকিস্তানের মতো
দেশকে আন্তর্জাতিক নিয়ম মেনে
চলতে হবে, তা হয় না। তাঁর দাবি,
আমেরিকা পাকিস্তান এবং ভারতকে
একই চোখে দেখুক। চিন আগেই এই
চুক্তির বিরোধিতা করেছে।

ভারতের জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা
উপদেষ্টা এম কে নারায়ণন অবশ্য
দাবি করেছেন, এই চুক্তির ফলে
পাকিস্তান বা চিনের চিন্তার কোনও
কারণ নেই। কারণ, সামরিক পরমাণু
শক্তির ক্ষেত্রে ভারতের কৌশলগত
কোনও পরিবর্তন হয়নি। অসামরিক
পরমাণু শক্তি সহযোগিতার ক্ষেত্রে
পাকিস্তানকে প্রস্তাব দিয়েই রেখেছে
চিন। এ বিষয়ে 'কিছু করার' ইঙ্গিত
দিয়ে কাসুরির মন্তব্য, "চিনের সঙ্গে
আমাদের সম্পর্ক সমুদ্রের চেয়েও
গভীর। আমেরিকার সঙ্গে তেমন
সম্পর্ক নয় বলেই এখন আমার দেশের
লোক মনে করছে।" নারায়ণনের
কটাক্ষ, "নিকট প্রতিবেশী দেশ চিনের
সঙ্গে ঘনিষ্ঠতা দেখিয়ে ফয়দা তুলতে
চাইতে পারে, কিন্তু চিন এবং আমরা
বিরোধে যেতে চাই না।" আবার
চিনের প্রতি তাঁর বক্তব্য, "চিন
দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব এবং পূর্ব এশিয়ায়
যোগাযোগ বাড়চ্ছে। তবে ওই সব
দেশগুলো ভারতের সঙ্গেই বেশি
স্বচ্ছন্দ।" — পিটিআই

ANADABAZAR PATRKA

Sarabjit's kin threaten suicide

"The Centre should bring him back safely within a week"



PLEA FOR HELP: Sukhpreet Kaur (centre), wife of Sarabjit Singh, looks on as her sister-in-law Dalbir Kaur (left) addresses mediapersons in Amritsar on Saturday. — PHOTO: AFP

AMRITSAR: The family of Indian prisoner Sarabjit Singh, whose review petition against his death sentence was rejected by the Pakistan Supreme Court on Friday, has threatened to commit suicide if the Government failed to have him repatriated within a week.

Sarabjit's sister Dalbir Kaur told presspersons here on Saturday that the entire family would commit suicide at the Wagah border in the next 30 days if the Indian Government failed to bring him back safely within a week. Before taking the extreme step, the family would sit on a hunger strike at the border and stage a protest before the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi.

"We will urge the High Commission to grant us visa to visit the Kotlakhpat Rai Jail at Lahore, where Sarabjit is languishing for the past one-and-half

decades," she said. "I will personally appear before President Pervez Musharraf and ask for clemency for my brother who has been falsely implicated."

Garnering support

She said she would meet a cross-section of people there to garner support in her efforts to save her brother. "Good relations between India and Pakistan and driving buses across borders are all meaningless exercises if Sarabjit, who is innocent, cannot be saved."

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, being a Sikh, should come forward to hold a dialogue with Pakistan to ensure her brother's early release, Ms. Kaur said adding that she had sought an appointment with President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam and the Prime Minister.

She had also sought legal advice

from BJP general secretary Arun Jaitley.

Peace marches

She would build public opinion through peace marches in Punjab and outside for saving her brother.

She also planned to hold a march to the Wagah border along with Sarabjit's wife and two daughters and submit a memorandum to the Pakistani authorities with an appeal to President Musharraf to remit the death sentence of her brother. Sarabjit's wife Sukhbir and daughter Poonam were present at the press conference.

Sarabjit's family along with their well-wishers and supporters held a demonstration in the border town of Bhikhiwind on Friday in protest against the Pakistan Supreme Court rejection of one of the four review petitions. — PTI, UNI

Sarabjit loses plea for life

OUR BUREAU

Islamabad/Chandigarh, March 9: Hopes for the release of Sarabjit Singh, an Indian sentenced to death in Pakistan on spying and terror charges, were dented today with the Supreme Court here dismissing one of his four review petitions and the government sounding unsure of a presidential pardon.

The death sentence had sparked a clamour for his release in India last year and prompted diplomatic efforts at the highest level, with Delhi just stopping short of a formal request for clemency.

The apex court rejected the review petition, saying it had been filed too late, Sarabjit's lawyer Rana Abdul Hameed said. Like the convict's family, Rana claims the farmer from Amritsar is innocent and had unwittingly strayed across the border into Pakistan.

In the early 1990s, two lower courts had sentenced Sara-

bjit to be hanged in four cases relating to five explosions in Lahore, Kasur and Faisalabad, which left 14 people dead. The Supreme Court upheld each death sentence in August and September last year.

Rana said a second review petition was still pending. "...But we have no hope. Now the only way out appears to be to file a mercy petition before General Pervez Musharraf seeking his pardon."

He added the plea would be submitted after the court's verdict on the second petition.

After today's verdict, Sarabjit's family has also pinned all their hopes on Musharraf. "We can now only pray at the feet of President Musharraf who can pardon him," said Dalbir Kaur, Sarabjit's sister.

But Pakistan information minister Sheikh Rashid said he didn't know if Musharraf could pardon him as, according to Islamic law, only family members of those killed can grant clemency to the accused.

10 MAR 2005

THE TELEGRAPH

India, Pakistan fail to reach accord on air services

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: India and Pakistan have failed to reach agreement on additional flights and destinations for designated airlines.

Government sources told this correspondent that Pakistan wanted a "quantum jump" in flights and destinations, which demand India was not prepared to accept.

Additional destinations

The Indian side expected that Chennai and Islamabad would be made additional destinations. At present, Indian and Pakistani airlines only fly to New Delhi, Mumbai, Karachi and Lahore.

A Pakistani official confirmed that Islamabad wanted the existing number of 48 flights a week increased by either 24 or 48. But the Indian side was not agreeable.

The Pakistanis wanted Chennai, Hyderabad and Cochin as additional destinations.

Talks will continue

A "joint statement" issued after talks between civil aviation authorities on Monday and Tuesday said the discussions were held "friendly and cordial." "Both sides expressed [a] desire to expand the scope of the existing Air Services Agreement and agreed to continue discussions for enhancement of capacities, frequencies, and gateways for the benefit of the travelling public of the two countries."

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THE HINDU

The general is not one to sit back and enjoy his defeat

Musharraf's China card

ASHOK V. DESAI

A pivotal event for India and Pakistan was 9/11. The US decided precipitately and, as it turned out, wrongly that al Qaida was behind the attacks and that the Taliban had given it sanctuary in Afghanistan. It decided to invade Afghanistan, remove the Taliban and hunt for Osama bin Laden. Pakistan was Taliban's progenitor and protector. Colin Powell asked General Musharraf whether he was with the US or against; after only a moment's hesitation, Musharraf said he was with the US. In one short step, Pakistan overtook India.

The impact was not political alone. The Pakistan economy was in poor shape, and its government was in default to foreign lenders. After Pakistan became an ally, the US asked World Bank, International Monetary Fund and USAID to pour money into it, and revived it. Today, Pakistan is growing at about the same rate as India.

But then came Manmohan Singh. He saw that America's decision not to sign the Kyoto treaty was a decision not to scale back energy use. Hence the US was bound to be interested in developing energy supplies to meet future demand. The supplies could not come from coal: it was a dirty fuel. Its known reserves would be exhausted in the second half of this century, and even if new reserves were discovered, they would be deeper and more expensive to exploit. Supplies could not come from oil, which would be depleted even faster than coal. The ultimate hydro potential was not enough even to take care of today's total energy consumption. If a nation wanted to consume increasing quantities of energy in the future, it would sooner or later have to turn to nuclear power. If this was true of the US, it was even truer of India, whose energy consumption would increase faster. The interests of the two countries converged. US companies had developed relatively cheap nuclear power plants before all industrial countries decided to stop building them in the 1980s. The US would have to resume production of nuclear plants; and India could buy them.

That was the temptation India could wave before the US; what could India ask in return? Since India had been in the Soviet camp, the US and its allies had imposed an embargo on export of equipment and technology that might add to India's military capability; the embargo covered a broad range of advanced technology. It

had been reinforced with other punitive measures after India's nuclear ceremony of 1998. India could ask for its withdrawal.

Apart from widening India's energy options, this bargain had two further advantages. The US made it difficult for India to buy military equipment abroad. Since India was an ally, the Soviet Union supplied it with arms at throwaway prices. But after it collapsed, Russia's military capability has fallen behind; and it has developed a bigger market in China. Sweden sold us guns; but once Rajiv Gandhi was suspected to have taken a bribe on purchase of Bofors guns, Sweden became un-

But even now, India's imports are six times those of Pakistan. Though largely closed today, India's market for services is enormous. Once the US got interested in the Indian market, Pakistan would lose weight in America's foreign policy. Vajpayee had laboriously tried to improve relations with Pakistan; he had persevered even after its treacherous infiltration of Kargil and after Musharraf's flamboyant misbehaviour in Agra. Such thankless, plodding efforts to befriend a recalcitrant neighbour would be unnecessary if the US sided with India.

So ever since he became Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh has



Musharraf's search for a lever to force open India's grip on Kashmir is leading him nowhere

been working on a deal with the US; the nuclear agreement signed in Delhi last week is the first, but not the only fruit of his efforts. More must follow.

And meanwhile, Pakistan has been marginalized. In particular, Musharraf hoped that the US would pressure India to settle the Kashmir dispute in Pakistan's favour. This hope is now buried. Manmohan Singh made that clear to him when he told him that there would be no

transfer of territory or migration of people based on religion — in other words, that India would not cede Kashmir or any part of it. And Bush told Musharraf in public last week in Pakistan that Kashmir was for India and Pakistan to settle — that by implication, the US would not intercede in either's favour.

In the India-US-Pak game, Musharraf has lost out to Manmohan Singh. But he is not one to sit back and enjoy his defeat. He has been advertising Pakistan's economic health, and inviting trade and investment. He did so in Davos in January when the World Economic Forum made him chief guest. Wherever he goes, his speeches are replete with figures: in the last five years, exports increased 120 per cent, government revenue 130 per cent, development expenditure 300 per cent, foreign investment 600 per cent; last year, Pakistan produced half a million motorcycles, 150,000 cars, and so on. He advertises Pakistan as the gateway to the Persian Gulf and to central Asia; even China, according to him, would have to go through Pakistan if it wants to trade with India. He says Pakistan has the cheapest workers and the best mangoes in the world.

And then, in February, Musharraf went on a state visit to China to celebrate the 55th anniversary of Sino-Pak friendship. On Kashmir, China repeated the Bush line: that it was a problem for India and Pakistan to settle. A large number of agreements were signed. That is common on state visits: nothing much comes out of most. But amongst the important agreements, China promised to build further nuclear power plants, and to begin negotiations on a Sino-Pak Free Trade Agreement.

Musharraf started as a single-minded India-hater. His campaign got hobbled after he enlisted in America's campaign against terrorism. He scaled down his India-phobia to an obsession with Kashmir. He is not out of that phase. But enmity with India makes Pakistan a risky location: it does Pakistan considerable economic damage. So does it India; but India has been doing fairly well despite living close to Pakistan. So Musharraf's search for a lever to force open India's grip on Kashmir is leading him nowhere. Will he now come to the realization that peace with India, devoid of a concession on Kashmir, would be highly advantageous to Pakistan? He will get there sooner or later, though he may not admit it in public.

Thar Express brings India, Pakistan closer

Mohammed Iqbal

MUNABAO (RAJASTHAN): Forty-one years after the disruption of the rail link between India and Pakistan on the western border, the much-awaited Thar Express from Pakistan steamed across the desert sands to arrive here on Saturday to a tumultuous welcome by people of India. Hundreds of excited men, women and children cheered as the decked up train rolled into the platform marking resumption of train service snapped since 1965.

The train, which crossed Hyderabad, Mirpur Khas and Khokhrapar towns in Sindh province after starting from Karachi on Friday night, reached here one hour behind schedule on Saturday afternoon.

The revival of the rail link is set to reunite a great many divided families across the borders, besides giving a fillip to the friendly relations emerging between the two countries as part of confidence building measures.

Railway Minister Lalu Prasad, accompanied by a host of dignitaries, was at the station to witness the historic moment and

welcome the travellers from Pakistan.

An estimated 200 passengers, including 62 members of a delegation of the Pakistan-India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy and a few journalists, came on the goodwill train's inaugural run.

Folk songs

Local folk musicians sang songs and a Border Security Force band played the tune of the famous Rajasthani folk song "Padhaaro Mharey Des" (welcome to my land) as the 10-bogie green and yellow train No. 6205 from Pakistan came to a halt at the spruced up platform. The Pakistani travellers standing on footboards waved and extended their hands to the people at the station.

"It is a historic occasion. This train has restored a lost link which was of immense significance for divided families," a visibly cheerful guard of the train, Khalid Pervez, told The Hindu. The driver, Jaan Shehzad, and assistant driver, Mohammed Shareef, were equally pleased while pointing out that the train had received a great reception at

each station on the way.

Iqbal Haider, Secretary-General of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and former Federal Minister - who was a member of the Pakistani delegation - said the friendly ties would help in people's welfare on both sides of border. The delegation will visit Jaipur and other towns in Rajasthan to spread the message of peace and harmony.

Balloons and pigeons were released into the sky and a large number of villagers stood on sand dunes outside the fences put up at the station as Mr. Lalu Prasad flagged off the train on its return journey to Pakistan carrying the 241 Indian passengers who had arrived here after an overnight journey aboard the Thar Express of Indian Railways that started from Jodhpur.

Mr. Lalu Prasad, talking to reporters at the station, said the train would bridge the gap between the people in the two countries even as the two governments were "persistently making progress" on all other issues. He said the Railways had plans to start goods trains on the route to promote trade.

Both incoming and outgoing passengers echoed the sentiments of reviving the long-lost relations between the families and building up bridges of understanding between the two nations.

Mohammed Basheer from Jodhpur, one of the first passengers to buy the journey ticket, said he would attend several marriages of relatives during his visit to Karachi, while Luqman Khan and Bairam Khan of Ram-sar village in Barmer district would be meeting their 75-year-old sister, living at Chhachhro in Sindh, for the first time.

Family reunion

Bhagwan Das of Dikri village in Mirpur Khas district of Pakistan said he would be visiting his brothers settled in Gujarat after several years. Qamarunnisa from Karachi, accompanied by her husband and three children, said she would be meeting her aunts at Makrana in Nagaur district of Rajasthan after a gap of 35 years.

Each of the passengers, getting clearance through Customs and Immigration, had a story emanating from the history of

Partition of the subcontinent - to share. The bulk of the divided families of Mohajirs (refugees), who had migrated from the Indian heartland, are living in the urban areas of Sindh and the restored link provides them a shorter route to India in comparison with the existing route via the Wagah border.

The Indian Railways restored the rail link at a cost of Rs. 10.73 crores in a period of seven months, while Munabao station has been refurbished with the construction of two new platforms, Immigration and Customs counters and facilities of bank and money exchange besides other amenities.

The arrangement can handle nearly 650 passengers from either side.

The rail link was snapped when Pakistani fighter jets bombed the tracks connecting the two countries during the 1965 war. Prior to that, trains used to travel between Mumbai and Karachi through Munabao. The track between Barmer, forming part of the then Jodhpur princely State, and Sadiipalli in Sindh was laid way back in

December 1900.

Baluch smells India hand in violence

Karachi, Feb. 6 (Reuters): The governor of Pakistan's western Baluchistan province today accused Afghan warlords and drug barons of arming tribal militants and India of financing them, a day after 21 people were killed in the latest round of violence.

Baluch separatists and tribal militants have waged a low-level insurgency for decades, but the violence has escalated over the past year, posing another challenge to President Pervez Musharraf's authority over his turbulent nation.

Baluchistan governor Ovais Ahmad Ghani said the deteriorating security situation was partly a spillover from Afghanistan due to the weakness of President Hamid Karzai's government.

"Unfortunately Karzai's central government is weak in the provinces," he said. "We have successfully stopped 10 to 12 per cent of arms movement from Afghanistan but the border between Afghanistan and Baluchistan is 1,200-plus km long and it is very difficult to completely seal it."

Yesterday, 13 people were killed by a bomb on a bus some 60 km south of the provincial capital of Quetta. About a dozen suspects have been detained, but the authorities have not blamed any group.

Also today, eight people were killed when tribesmen fired over 100 rockets at Sui, a town sitting atop Pakistan's largest gas field.

On Friday and Saturday,



The bus after Sunday's blast in Quetta. (AFP)

rockets had rained down on Dera Bugti, 50 km from Sui, and near the Loti Gas Field.

Baluchistan is thinly populated but mineral rich, and its people want to benefit more from the exploitation of those resources, and the government faces trouble both from tribal militant and the secessionist Baluch Liberation Army.

Ghani's comments come a little over a week before Karzai is due to visit Pakistan.

He said more than one country is involved in fuelling the insurgency in Baluchistan, with a clear nod towards India. "These groups are spending over 500 million rupees annually in weapons purchase," he said. "We know where the money is coming from, I don't want to name any particular country, but everybody knows that we have an old rivalry with India."

Last month, the Pakistan government levelled similar accusations after an Indian official said the Pakistan army should exercise restraint in Baluchistan.

THE TELEGRAPH

17 FEB 2006

Pervez prods Delhi on Kashmir

IMTIAZ GUL

Muzaffarabad, Feb. 5: Cutting out the usual Kashmir Solidarity Day rhetoric, President Pervez Musharraf today exhorted India to show more courage and sincerity if it wished to see the stalemate over the disputed state broken.

"Pakistan will not be found wanting if India shows sincerity and reciprocity towards finding a just solution to the longstanding dispute," Musharraf told a large crowd that had gathered in the capital of Pakistan Kashmir to mark the occasion, observed under official patronage every year.

The general's comments contrasted sharply with what he had told Kashmiris the same day six years ago.

Then, he had defended the

militancy as an "indigenous struggle for the right of self-determination" and vowed to continue supporting it.

Today, he reiterated part of what he had then said, declaring: "Kashmir runs in my blood and I promise you I will make efforts to find a durable solution to it." But his tone was clearly more conciliatory as he spoke of the "improved ties with India".

The October 8 earthquake had provided both countries with an opportunity to move forward on Kashmir, Musharraf said. "Now is the time and the leadership should make use of the opportunity and move towards a solution of the Kashmir dispute. If they (India) take a step, we will also move forward."

Musharraf repeated his



A jawan stands guard as a boy watches a Muharram procession in Srinagar on Sunday. (Reuters)

proposals of self-governance and demilitarisation as a way towards the resolution of the standoff.

"I hope that (the) Indian leadership will give a serious

The general welcomed Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's recent comment that the neighbours should look for a pragmatic and peaceful solution to Kashmir.

He expressed solidarity with the tens of thousands of people left homeless by the October quake in this city. Most buildings have crumbled to rubble here, as well as in Bagn district and at Balakot, a small city in northern Pakistan that happened to be on the fault-line and close to the epicentre.

Kashmir Solidarity Day was also observed by religion-based political parties like the Jamaat-e-Islami as well as the United Jihad Council — an association of 16 Kashmiri militant outfits — with the usual reiteration of their resolve to "liberate Kashmir".

thought to these proposals as it is not only in the interests of Pakistan and the Kashmiri people but also in the interest of India, its people and the South Asian region as a whole."

6 FEB 2006

THE TELEGRAPH

THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 2006

Steady and slow peace process

Like a comforting ritual, the composite dialogue between India and Pakistan entered the third round with the two Foreign Secretaries paying obeisance to the long list of joint statements issued by their leaders since the two sides began talking to each other in January 2004. If those statements were intended to provide the scaffolding for the new edifice, the actual process of construction has been slow but not agonisingly so. There have been real gains — the opening of new travel routes and crossing points is a major achievement — but many obstacles remain. The new Amritsar-Lahore bus service has begun, and the Amritsar-Nankana Sahib bus and Munabao-Khokhrapar train should be operational soon. The Kashmir earthquake may have delayed plans for the proposed truck service between Muzaffarabad and Srinagar but there is no good reason for the Skardu-Kargil link failing to get off the drawing board. There is little point in adding to the number of trains, buses, and crossing points if the two countries are unable or unwilling to adopt a more liberal visa policy. Staff strength at the two embassies is not yet back to normal and the formal commitment Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Pervez Musharraf made for the opening of the Karachi and Mumbai consulates by January 1 has not been honoured. It is regrettable that the rental property identified by Pakistan in Mumbai proved unavailable owing to objections from local tenants but surely it is not beyond the capacity of the Indian Government to provide suitable facilities for the speedy opening of the consulate.

On the political front, the exchange of words over the situation in Balochistan did serve as a downer. This has not prevented the two sides from continuing the dialogue, but on Kashmir the talks appear to be going nowhere. Islamabad's concern remains that New Delhi is using confidence-building measures (CBMs) to sidestep consideration of Kashmir, the 'core' issue. New Delhi, on the other hand, believes Islamabad is continuing to use cross-border terrorism as a lever to exert pressure. General Musharraf has made a number of proposals aimed at squaring the circle of conflicting Indian and Pakistani views on Kashmir but India is resisting getting drawn into any discussion on these until confidence levels are higher. While the Prime Minister's cautious instincts are understandable, India can afford to be less inhibited on the lesser disputes, notably Siachen. Dr. Singh has proclaimed his desire to turn the glacier into a mountain of peace but this broadness of vision has not found a reflection in official-level discussions on the issue. Later this year, the Prime Minister will travel to Pakistan for a summit with General Musharraf. A specific target the two sides must set themselves for the summit is the conclusion of a broad agreement on the withdrawal of Indian and Pakistani troops from Siachen.

THE HINDU

26 JAN 2006

Pakistan and the gas pipeline

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Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz's recent comments on the India-Iran gas pipeline via Pakistan reflect the uncertainty over the project.

B. Muralidhar Reddy

ON JANUARY 21, hours before he was to fly into Washington from New York on his first official visit to the United States and his big date with George W. Bush, Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz declared that Islamabad would not 'rush' into a deal for a natural gas pipeline from Iran to India via Pakistan while the United Nations has Iran's nuclear programme under "scrutiny."

Mr. Aziz's declaration is reminiscent of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's statement in Washington in July 2005 about the risks involved with the project given the "uncertainties" of the situation in Iran and the preparedness of any consortium of bankers to finance it. Dr. Singh came under flak from political parties in India and subsequently the Government had to clarify matters.

Now it was Mr. Aziz's turn. In his comments to the press, the Pakistan Prime Minister did concede that the proposed \$7 billion project with Iran would help Pakistan's economy keep growing at a fast clip while fostering better relations with India. Then he said: "I think it would be fair to wait to see how these things unfold." He was replying to a question whether Pakistan was determined to see a pipeline deal go through, regardless of what might happen to Iran at the U.N. "We will take any decision which we have to in our national interest," Mr. Aziz said. "Once the environment changes, naturally we will see what these regulations or resolutions are, and create or follow a strategy accordingly."

During her visit to Islamabad in March last year, U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice articulated the Bush regime's position on the pipeline. "Well, we've voiced our concerns to the Indian Government about the gas pipeline with Iran. It's not only with India. We've sim-

ilarly talked to Japan about a gas project that they would have because the United States has sanctions on Iran for good reasons. We have many differences with Iran about terrorism, about interference in their neighbour's affairs, about the fate of the Iranian people themselves. And so we've voiced our concerns.

"But we also understand that this and other such projects are emblematic of the tremendous energy demands that are there in growing economies, like in India or Pakistan economy, or for that matter, the growing economy of the United States and that the message that we are therefore carrying to everyone is that we all need to pool our thinking, our technologies, our ability to come up with reliable energy supplies, energy supplies that are hopefully environmentally," Dr. Rice told a Pakistani television channel.

Since the July 2005 Indo-U.S. nuclear deal, Pakistan has been pressing Washington for a similar gesture to Islamabad. Though Washington has not given any reason to Islamabad to think it can be bracketed with New Delhi on the nuclear front, it has dangled the carrot of stepped up cooperation to meet future energy needs. The calculation of Mr. Aziz could be that he would be in a better bargaining position on energy cooperation by giving into the wishes of the U.S. on the Iran pipeline.

The shadow of uncertainty on the pipeline project cast by Mr. Aziz is particularly unfortunate given the numerous rounds of talks at the political and technical level Iran, Pakistan, and India have had on the project in the last few months.

The bilateral talks among the three countries have progressed to such an extent that now the stage is being prepared for the first trilateral dialogue in the next few weeks in Teheran. Will the pipeline project fall victim to strong-arm tactics by the U.S.?

THE HINDU

26 JAN 2006

MAKING HISTORY

Lahore-Amritsar bus service begins with song and dance

Pre-Partition "twin cities" rejoined after five decades....

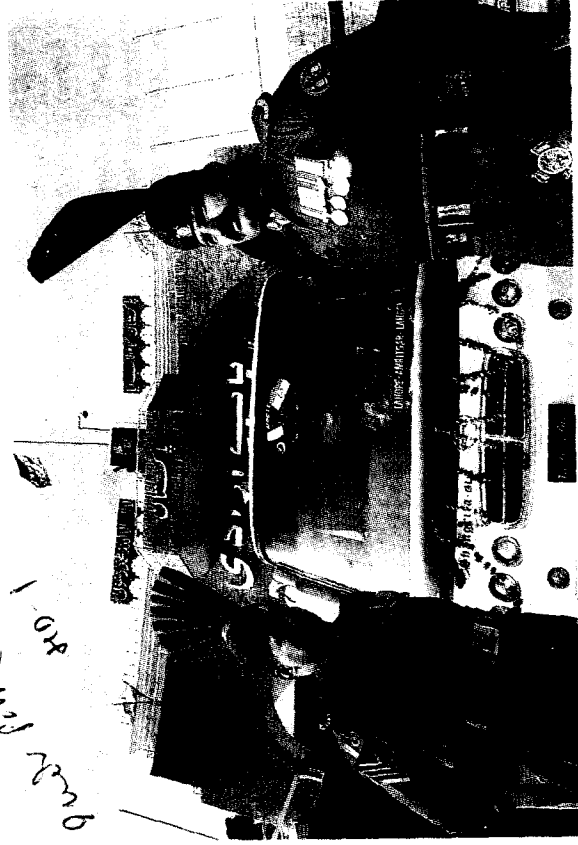
Sarabjit Pandher

CHANDIGARH: Transcending various apprehensions, the first Lahore-Amritsar bus service began on Friday when a Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation bus carrying 26 passengers from Lahore crossed the zero line at the Wagah-Attari Joint Check Post along the international border.

The moment was of historic significance. Considered twin cities before Partition, Amritsar and Lahore are now connected through a surface transport system for the first time since 1947. Bus service, which was a common activity along the Grand Trunk Road in the pre-Partition days, became a rare treat along the re-christened Sher Shah Suri Marg.

Since Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh had left for Hyderabad to attend the All-India Congress Committee session, Excise and Taxation Minister Sardool Singh, Transport Commissioner Iqbal Sidhu and Director Narinderjit Singh received the bus at the border, while Amritsar Deputy Commissioner Kirandeep Singh Bhullar and Police Chief R.P.S. Brar greeted the passengers amid elaborate security measures.

The light green bus sporting national flags with "Dosti" inscribed, ferried



BRIDGING THE GAP: The first Lahore-Amritsar bus prepares to cross the Wagah border on Friday. The 'Dosti' bus had 26 passengers.

- PHOTO: AFP

mostly Pakistani officials led by their Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Communication, Firdous Aalam. Among the passengers were the celebrated folk singer Reshma and five members of her family. The welcome included performances by Bhangra troupes and persistent shower of rose petals.

The moment the bus entered India, smartly attired BSF jawans saluted it while a police band played "Ghar Aya

Islamabad.

With Friday's ceremony, the fourth road and rail link between India and Pakistan has become operational. Two road links -- Delhi-Lahore and Srinagar-Muzaffarabad -- and the only rail link between Lahore and Attari have been functional for some time now. Sources indicated that two more surface transport links between the two countries are expected to become operational next month when the Munnabao-Khokrapar train and Amritsar-Nankana Sahib bus services would start.

For the driver of the bus, Yaseen, it was an experience of a lifetime and he was overwhelmed by the response from the people, who prayed for the initiation of the service. He remarked that traffic was the same on both sides but roads were slightly better on the other side.

Other passengers, including four Indian cricket fans, said that they could not convince themselves that they had participated in such a historic event, which according to them would "unite the hearts of the two nations".

In future the Pakistani bus named "Dosti" (Friendship) will arrive every Friday and return the following day, while the Indian bus "Punj Aab" (named after the five rivers in the state) would depart from Amritsar every Tuesday and return on Wednesday.

The one-way fare for the journey aboard the 45-seater air-conditioned bus would be Rs. 750 in India and Rs. 900 in Pakistan.

Mera Pardesi..."

It was interesting to note that it took four hours for the bus from Gulberga in Lahore to culminate its 65 km journey at the International Bus Terminus in the Youth Hostel at Amritsar.

In future, interested passengers would have to undertake a 12-hour journey to Delhi to get a visa from the Pakistan High Commission to avail of the facility. Similarly passengers in Lahore would have to travel to

INDO-PAK TALKS ■ Foreign Secys discuss progress made in peace process

No new defence posts on LoC: India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 17

INDIA today proposed to Pakistan that no defence posts be developed and no defence work take place near the Line of Control (LoC) as the foreign secretaries of the two countries met here to review the ongoing peace process and discuss fresh confidence building measures.

The Indian side also proposed holding of the brigadier-level flag meetings at the frontier, External Affairs Ministry spokesman Navtej Sarna told reporters after the first day of the two-day talks.

New Delhi feels that un-



Minister of State (External Affairs) E Ahamed and Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran with Pakistan Foreign Secretary Riaz Mohamad in New Delhi on Tuesday. Anil Sharma

abated cross-border terrorism and peace and security, including confidence building measures.

The Foreign Secretaries will

finalise the schedule of the meetings on the other six subjects of the dialogue — Siachen, Sir Creek, Tulbul Navigation Project, terrorism and drug trafficking, economic and commercial cooperation and promotion of friendly exchanges.

During their talks on J-K, the Foreign Secretaries will assess the progress of CBMs across the LoC and finalise dates for a technical-level meeting to discuss modalities for outstanding decisions such as Poonch-Rawalakot bus service, movement of trucks along Srinagar-Muzaffarabad route, meeting points for relatives and allowing pilgrims across the LoC.

The meeting will review and assess the decisions taken by

the expert-level groups on nuclear and conventional CBMs.

Saran and Khan will also finalise dates for the meeting of the technical-level working groups of the joint Commission, the foreign secretaries' review meeting of the current round of the composite dialogue to be followed by the plenary session of the joint commission and the review meeting by the foreign ministers of the two countries.

Discussions are also expected on issues on which decisions have been taken and action is pending, like opening of consulates in Mumbai and Karachi, and operationalisation of Munnabao-Khokrapar rail link.

India raises terrorism issue

Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI: India on Tuesday said it made a statement on Balochistan last month as New Delhi was "concerned" over the situation in the Pakistani province. Earlier, Pakistan protested saying the remarks amounted to interference in its internal affairs.

India also raised the issue of Pakistani support to terrorism on the first day of the third round of composite dialogue between Foreign Secretaries Shyam Saran and Riaz Muhammad Khan here.

Though they said their piece on contentious issues, both sides felt that considerable progress was made in the second round. A joint statement is expected on the concluding day of discussions on Wednesday.

Officials privy to the 150-minute talks said India raised the issue of terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan. Mr. Saran told Mr. Khan that Islamabad must agree on extradition and mutual legal assistance treaties as proof of its commitment to tackle terrorism.

To a question, the External Affairs Ministry spokesman said: "Pakistan took up the issue of the statement we made [on human rights in Balochistan]. ... In his response, the Foreign Secretary said that an official statement had been made, which spoke for itself. It was made because [a] certain situation was developing in our neighbourhood, which was of concern to us. And, he regretted the unfounded allegations about Indian interference in Balochistan."

India presented two "non-papers," or written ideas which do not amount to a commitment, suggesting that no new defence post/work be taken up along the Line of Control and that Brigade Commanders be permitted to hold flag meetings.

Another report on Page 12

BJP demonstration in Delhi

Charges the Congress with colluding with Italian businessman Quattrocchi

Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar

NEW DELHI: Bharatiya Janata Party activists on Tuesday held a demonstration at Parliament Street here, charging the ruling Congress with colluding with Italian businessman Ottavio Quattrocchi, an accused in the Bofors case, in getting his London bank accounts defrosted.

Led by senior leaders, the protesters — who raised slogans against the Congress and its leaders — symbolically pulled down police barricades before courting arrest.

Addressing the gathering, party spokesperson Arun Jaitley charged the Congress with letting Mr. Quattrocchi off the hook through its action, which led to the defreezing of the accounts in which the kickback money had allegedly been stashed away. Mr. Jaitley charged the Congress with misusing constitutional institutions while in power. "First it attacked the Supreme Court and the Election Commission. Now, it is misusing the Central Bureau of Investigation. If the dignity of the Constitution continues to be eroded, then the people will lose their trust in democracy."

Vijay Kumar Malhotra, MP from South Delhi, accused the Congress of colluding with the Italian national and weakening the case against him. When the Congress came to power last time, its president Sonia Gandhi tried to get the commission paid in the Bofors deal through the then Union Minister, Madhav Singh Solanki. This time, she utilised the services of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Law Minister H.R. Bhardwaj, Suresh Pachori and the CBI and almost succeeded in withdrawing the commission amount deposited in the accounts of Mr. Quattrocchi in London, he said.

BJP vice-president Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said the issue had a direct bearing on the national security. The CBI lost its credibility by the way it changed its strategy under the pressure of the Centre and owned up responsibility for all the goof-ups in the case.



BJP PROTEST: BJP leaders Madan Lal Khurana and Arun Jaitley address a party rally at Parliament Street in New Delhi on Tuesday against the defreezing of Ottavio Quattrocchi's London bank accounts. — PHOTO: V. SUDERSHAN

India proposes new CBMs to Pak

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Jan. 17. — Pakistan raised the issue of the Indian statement on Balochistan, even as India proposed new military CBMs including no new defence works and posts on the Line of Control on the first day of foreign secretary-level talks in New Delhi today. India also told Pakistan that it will extend the Munabao-Khokrapar rail link to the pilgrim town of Ajmer.

The foreign secretaries had their first round of talks today for two-and-a-half hours, followed by a working lunch. Later, the Pakistani foreign secretary, Mr Riaz Mohammad Khan, met the minister of

No security vetting for bus to Pak

WAGAH, Jan. 17.—Ahead of the launch of the much-awaited bus service between Amritsar and Lahore, the Centre today gave a relief to the passengers by doing away with the formal cumbersome security vetting system. It also decided to set up a task force for developing the Wagah border check post on the Indo-Pak border to give it a truly international transit point look. The decisions were taken at a high-level meeting between Union home secretary Mr VK Duggal, who was visiting the border area to review the security arrangements, and senior officials of the Punjab government here. He reviewed security and immigration arrangements ahead of the inaugural bus from Lahore to Amritsar on 20 January. The Indian side will ply its first bus on 24 January.— PTI

objected to India's Balochistan statement. But the foreign secretary, Mr Shyam Saran, responded that it was made "because a certain situation was developing in our neighbourhood which was of concern to us." He also rejected the allegations about India's interference in Balochistan as "unfounded". During today's discussions, Pakistan gave "preliminary observations" on a draft MoU that New Delhi handed over to Islamabad on measures to reduce the risks of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons.

The two top diplomats reviewed the second round of the composite dialogue and worked on the schedule for the next round.

The two sides noted as "positive achievements" the decision to launch bus services between Amritsar and Lahore and Amritsar and Nankana Sahib, successful implementation of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service and meeting points along the Line of Control. Mr Saran said that India's response in the wake of the October 8 earthquake was appreciated by the Pakistan foreign secretary.

Burns arriving today

US Under Secretary of State Mr Nicholas Burns will begin his three-day visit to India tomorrow in course of which he will hold talks with foreign secretary Mr Shyam Saran on the nuclear deal.

THE STATESMAN

India, Pak to discuss 'new ideas'

Cross-Border Terrorism To Figure In Composite Talks

New Delhi: India and Pakistan will discuss "new ideas" on promoting bilateral ties when foreign secretaries of the two countries meet here on Tuesday to kick off the third round of composite dialogue amid New Delhi's serious concerns over continued cross-border terrorism.

During the two-day talks between foreign secretary Shyam Saran and his Pakistani counterpart Riaz Mohammad Khan, the two sides will review the progress of ongoing peace initiatives and confidence-building measures (CBMs) with an aim to ensure their early implementation.

"There are new ideas which will be discussed at the meeting," official sources said here on Sunday without divulging specifics as it may pre-empt the talks. The Indian side is expected to make some fresh proposals with regard to enhancement of people-to-people contacts, like launch of transportation links and tourism exchanges.

The two countries will also review the progress on proposals already made like the launch of bus service between Kargil in Jammu and Kashmir and Skar-

du in northern areas of the state under Pakistani occupation. Work with regard to the launch of the truck service on Srinagar-Muzaffarabad Road and start of the Munnabao-Khokrapar train service will also be reviewed.

Taking place in the backdrop of terror attacks in Delhi and Bangalore in which Pak-based Lashker-e-Taiba (LeT) have been found involved, the meeting will discuss terrorism which is of much importance to India, the sources said.

New Delhi is expected to convey its concerns over unabated cross-border terrorism and emphasise that continuance of terror attacks here could put a cloud of uncertainty on the ongoing peace process.

The Indian side is likely to stress that Pakistan was not doing enough to end terrorism emanating from its soil and needed to do much more if the peace process was to continue.

India feels that Pakistan had not fulfilled its commitment given at the highest level on ending cross-border terrorism and dismantling of terror infrastructure existing in that country. Agencies

16 JAN 2015

Indo-Pak trade may cross \$1 b

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Jan. 14. — Given the upsurge in the past few months, bilateral trade between India and Pakistan holds the potential to cross the \$1 billion mark by the end of the current fiscal, the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has said in a study.

Official trade between India and Pakistan grew at an impressive rate of 76 per cent in the fiscal 2005-2006 (April to November) and is expected to double by the end of the current fiscal.

However, unofficial trade between the two nations is already more than \$2 billion, the CII and India Development Foundation (IDF) said in the study conducted in collaboration with the Pakistan-India CEOs Business Forum (Pakistan).

The study "India-Pakistan: Partnering for a Prosperous South Asia", presented to the Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh recently, highlights the key areas where bilateral trade between India and Pakistan

could be developed and trade links established.

Promotion of bilateral trade between India and Pakistan holds immense significance for economic growth and stability in South Asia, said CII president, Mr YC Deveshwar, commenting on the study. "Now, with the expansion of Saarc and the inclusion of Afghanistan, trade in South Asia will become even more important in the days to come," he said.

The study highlights complementarities in trade between India and Pakistan in sectors such as, engineering, sugar, pharmaceuticals, information technology and tourism, and concludes that economic benefits of liberalising trade clearly outweigh the costs.

It also points out that transaction costs were lower and bilateral trade between India and Pakistan facilitated the flow of ideas and knowledge that strengthen international competitiveness.

India and Pakistan could together develop strong manufacturing bases, since both

the countries had large pools of well-trained engineers and managerial workforce.

The study also points out that one of the major impediments to enhanced bilateral trade between the two countries was lack of data or research on the trade and economic policies in the respective countries.

The study underlines the initiatives taken by the two governments to facilitate bilateral trade.

Conditions had now been created in India whereby Pakistan's enterprises could sell their products here on a competitive basis. Similarly, Pakistan has also lifted the ban on imports from India on a number of commodities.

According to CII, in a world economy that was fast recovering, and where new trade relations were coming about frequently, India and Pakistan needed to seize every opportunity to boost trade and carve out a much larger percentage of world trade, given their capabilities and potential.

Trading charges in the midst of drift

Amit Baruah

DRIFT HAS taken hold of India-Pakistan relations. After missing an opportunity for real cooperation in the wake of the October 2005 earthquake, a lack of direction in bilateral ties between the two countries seems evident from the developments in the past few weeks.

There has also been a partial return to what was considered "normal" for decades between India and Pakistan — trading charges and blaming the other for anything that goes wrong domestically. In the bargain, some of the sheen has been rubbed off the peace process.

Yes, the process of dialogue and contacts has been going on; yes, some tiny steps for cooperation were taken after one of the worst natural disasters that struck Pakistan and India. But the fact remains that the Indian and Pakistani establishments remain deeply suspicious of each other.

A day before the December 28 terrorist strike in Bangalore, India decided to go on a verbal offensive against Islamabad, saying it had been watching with concern the spiralling violence in Balochistan and the heavy military action, including the use of helicopter gunships and jet fighters, by Pakistan.

Given New Delhi's defensive posture on human rights issues and its disinclination to confront the Western consensus on a vital issue like Abdul Qadeer Khan and his nuclear industry, the External Affairs Ministry took a surprisingly proactive stand on human rights violations in Balochistan.

With the Ministry under the direct charge of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, there is little doubt where the approval for the December 27 statement from.

India's "concern" at the situation in Balochistan goes against the grain of mature and statesman-like remarks made by Dr. Singh himself in Dhaka on November 13, 2005. Asked by an Indian correspondent whether the Pakistani state or "rogue elements" were responsible for recent terrorist incidents, Dr. Singh emphasised he had

The India-Pakistan peace process has taken some knocks recently. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Pervez Musharraf need to engage directly.

said many a time that India did not have the liberty of choosing its neighbours.

"We have to do business with governments that are in power [in Pakistan] ... therefore, using harsh language in public is not the best way, I think, to promote dialogue and understanding. If we have any concerns, we do discuss with the governments concerned. I do not believe anything great is achieved by conducting this dialogue in full [public] glare," the Prime Minister said.

So where does the Balochistan statement fit in? Certainly not in the paradigm proposed by the Prime Minister. Yet a provocative statement was made by New Delhi. Its consequences for the peace process were obvious given that "follow-up" from the Pakistani Foreign Ministry spokeswoman and President Pervez Musharraf was only to be expected.

In a recent interview to CNN-IBN, the General blamed India for providing "lots of financial support" and support in kind to anti-government elements in Balochistan. To my mind, the General only accused India of fishing in Balochistan's troubled waters since New Delhi had expressed concern about the record of the Pakistani state in that province.

He also conveyed an invitation of sorts to Dr. Manmohan Singh to visit Pakistan for a cricket game. "Now if he comes here and we do nothing about the peace process, I am afraid we are just wasting our time," the General said bluntly.

In a return to punch-bag diplomacy, ably aided by the kind of questions that were put to him in the television interview, the General expressed a sense of frustration at the lack of response from India to his proposals on self-

governance in Jammu & Kashmir, something between autonomy and independence. At the same time, President Musharraf said India-Pakistan relations had never been better.

From the interview, it would appear that the General is frustrated with India's attitude and approach — unhappy, perhaps, that New Delhi hadn't given him the importance he wanted. He added another "bombshell" on television when he called for the withdrawal of Indian troops from Srinagar, Baramulla, and Kupwara towns.

India's response to the interview was quick and sharp. At 10 p.m. on January 7, India flatly rejected any Pakistan role in the withdrawal of troops from Jammu & Kashmir. "I would like to say ... that any demilitarisation or redeployment of security forces within the territory of India is a sovereign decision of the Government of India and cannot be dictated by any foreign government," the External Affairs Ministry spokesman stated.

India, through the Ministry spokesman, cut at the root of hopes that some creative thinking on approaching the Kashmir issue was possible. Using a description for Jammu & Kashmir that traditionally irritates Pakistan, he added, "... It ought to be clear that concepts such as joint control or joint management over Jammu and Kashmir, which is an integral part of India, cannot be the basis of a settlement of the issue of Jammu and Kashmir."

Let us rewind to April 2005 when the General and the Prime Minister concluded that the peace process between India and Pakistan was "now irreversible." In this spirit, the two leaders addressed the Kashmir issue and agreed to continue their discussions towards a final settlement of

the problem.

Obviously, the peace process has taken a hit with all these potshots being taken by India and Pakistan. Mercifully, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh refused to comment on the General's demilitarisation proposals. A UNI report quoted him as saying on January 10: "I simply do not want to make any comment on this issue."

Since it is still at the level of the spokesman on the Indian side, the Prime Minister has given himself the space to engage with Gen. Musharraf on another occasion to inject positive atmospherics into a vitiated environment.

One thing definite about India-Pakistan relations is they never remain the same — they are forever changing, always throwing up a new surprise. If the leaders remain serious about the peace process being irreversible, they need to take charge of what is happening under its umbrella.

Solemn commitments contained in the very bilateral joint statement issued on April 18, 2005, have not been implemented yet. A specific case in point is that of the Indian and Pakistani consulates in Karachi and Mumbai, which, according to the joint statement, were to be opened "before the end of the current year".

Role of babudom

Let us now look at babudom in India and Pakistan. There was a long window between April 18 and December 31, 2005. However, the babus showed little urgency in meeting the deadline in the bilateral agreement, which has now passed. Essentially, the two sides remain suspicious of each other and neither is willing to accommodate the other.

New Delhi rightly remains suspicious of Pakistani terrorist groups and their actions in India. At the same time, Jaish-e-Muhammad, responsible for several major terrorist strikes in India, has also been found culpable in the assassination attempts on Gen. Musharraf himself in December 2003.

The Lashkar-e-Taiba, on the other hand, is a different cup of tea and information suggests it is still being used by Pakistani intelligence agencies. There cannot be any tolerance for residual support from the Pakistani establishment to terrorist outfits. At the same time, India needs to recognise that some anti-India groups are also a problem for the Pakistani state.

Of course, the partial action taken against the terrorist groups became necessary for Islamabad after the September 11, 2001 terrorist strikes. The United States remains important for Pakistan and Islamabad continues to bask in the glory of Washington's complimentary reference to its role in the "war" against terrorism.

It also needs to be acknowledged that the U.S. has become an important player in South Asia. Washington's goal has been to ensure that India-Pakistani histrionics do not detract from its larger goal of taking on Al-Qaeda and Taliban terrorists in Pakistan.

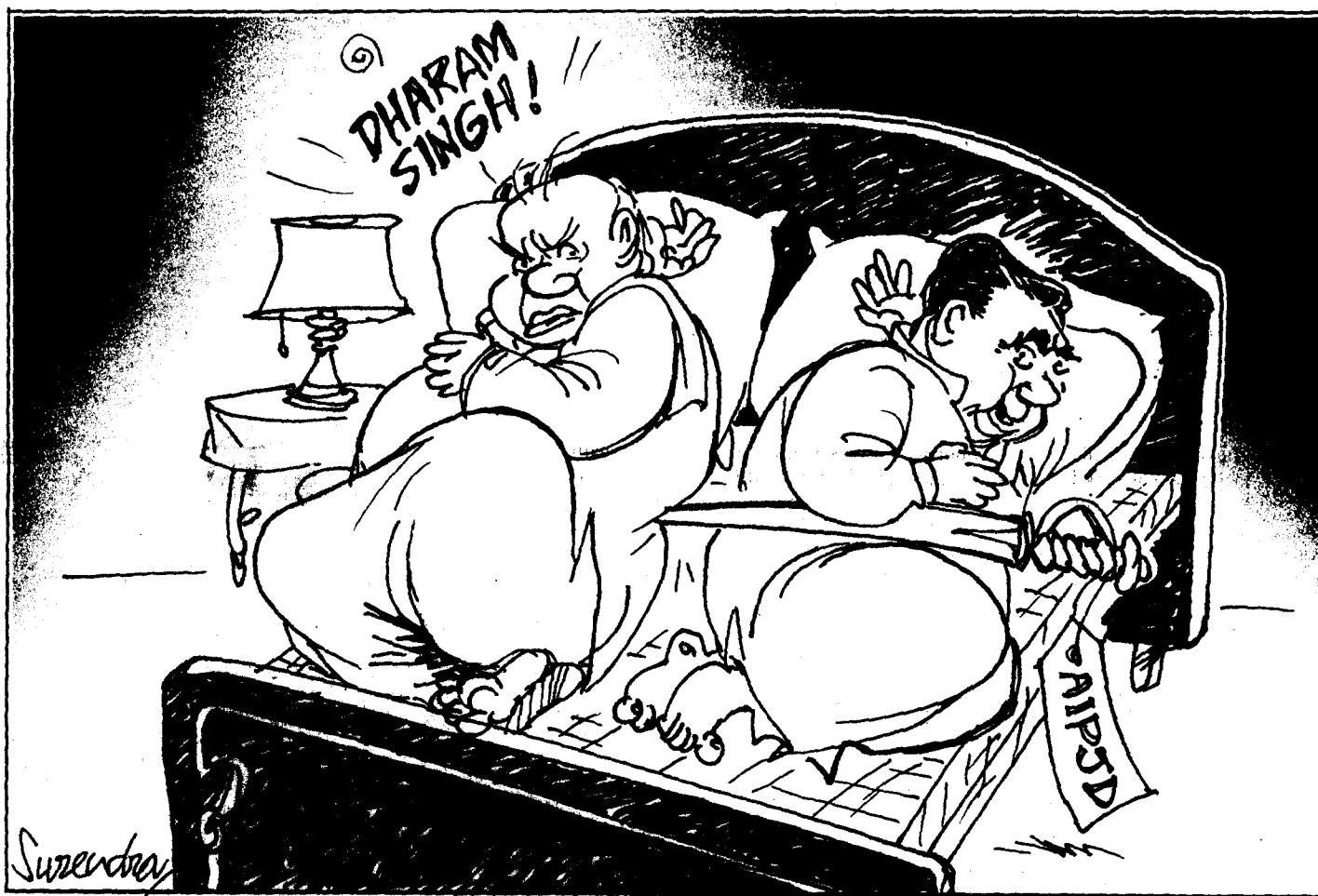
Given the importance of the U.S. to both Pakistan and India, it would not come as a surprise if Islamabad and New Delhi have upped the ante ahead of President George W. Bush's visit to both countries some time in February-March.

If Pakistan wants to express a sense of frustration about the lack of progress on Kashmir (and the need for Mr. Bush to push India), India wants to stress that Islamabad continues to support terrorist actions in its territory (and the need for Mr. Bush to push Pakistan) prior to the U.S. President's arrival in the region.

Though the peace process has taken some knocks in the past few weeks, it will weather these verbal assaults. The need to eschew the public route in India-Pakistan relations is obvious from what has happened after India's Balochistan comment and the General's response.

The Prime Minister and the General need to engage directly and confidentially if the health of the peace process is to be restored. Trading charges will not promote peace.

CARTOONSCAPE



Puerile Pervez

5/16
10/1 Merits the cold-shoulder *guz part*

Applause, of the derisory slow-handclap variety, is due to the President of Pakistan for an unfailing ability to come up with childish, or mischievous, suggestions to resolve the Kashmir issue every time a television camera has him in focus. Something similar is also due to certain Indian channels which consistently (remember The Breakfast Show at Agra) provide him with otherwise valuable air time to float his gas-filled balloons. Genuine applause, this time around anyway, has been earned by the External Affairs Ministry for losing not a minute to summarily and thoroughly reject General Musharraf's latest unguided missile. Mercifully, the Indian government did not wait to "study the text" of Musharraf's latest idea; nonsense needs only cursory perusal to invite condemnation.

General Musharraf's call to pull the Indian army out of Srinagar, Kupwara and Baramulla is no loose cannon going off from the Pakistani President; it is as sinister as it is calculated (and, incidentally, has been made previously by a member of the Pakistani military establishment). While Kupwara and Baramulla are known to be the hotbeds of militancy, Srinagar is where most of their forays are targeted. Moving the army to the fringes of those urban centres would be to dismantle the counter-insurgency grid that provides a degree of control — already much of Srinagar has been handed over to the para-military and J&K police.

What is so sinister about the redeployment call is the motivation: the line that it is the presence of the army that attracts/provokes militant violence. A parallel is sought to be drawn with the theory that if American and British troops were withdrawn from Iraq the insurgency there would dissipate. That theory is finding several takers in the US and UK, clearly Musharraf hopes to tap similar sentiments to glean support on Kashmir — after having generally failed to convince the global community that the violence in the Valley is akin to the Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation. The call re-confirms Islamabad's sponsorship of militancy, how else could a quid pro quo be offered?

The invitation to Manmohan Singh to watch some cricket in Pakistan and do a little diplomacy on the sidelines is also "loaded". Musharraf will use India's spurning that offer to suggest a lack of goodwill since he had tried his luck at that — ignoring the fact that he virtually extracted that invitation from New Delhi. It also reveals an inability to think complex issues through, as if solving Kashmir is possible in an ODI format. Why, such short-term strategies did not work for Musharraf is his military avatar — a la his misadventure in Kargil. India must go beyond its double rejection in as many days, and send out firm signals that while it will go the extra mile to foster better human relations and progress the bilateral dialogue process, it has had enough of Musharraf's small-screen machinations. We must insist that our focus is on the bigger picture.

Hurriyat leaders in Muzaffarabad

'Any solution should encompass entire Kashmir'

B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD: The visiting Hurriyat delegation on Tuesday travelled to Muzaffarabad, capital city of Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) flattened in the aftermath of the October 8 earthquake, and exchanged views on relief and rehabilitation of the quake victims.

The three member delegation led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq was received by Prime Minister of PoK Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan at the Prime Minister House. President of PoK Sardar Anwar Khan and several other leaders of PoK were present.

Abdul Ghani Bhat and Bilal

Lone are the other members of the delegation. The APHC leaders would return home on Saturday after a visit to Islamabad.

The Hurriyat leaders are in Muzaffarabad to essentially share the grief of the quake victims in PoK and discuss ideas on how they could help in the relief and rehabilitation process. Their fortnight long visit in June last year was termed historic as it kicked off the informal interaction between the leaders of Kashmir on either side of the Line of Control (LoC).

As in June, the Hurriyat leaders intend to travel to Islamabad for a meeting with

President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz. In their interaction with the Pakistani leadership they intend to exchange views on a resolution of the Kashmir problem.

For some time now, Mr. Farooq has been talking about the idea of 'United States of Kashmir.' However there are no takers for the proposal either in India or Pakistan. It is certainly not an easy task for the Hurriyat leaders to generate the same kind of enthusiasm as they did in their June travel.

'Tedious procedure'

On their arrival at Lahore on Monday night the Hurriyat

leaders complained that the objective of opening five checkpoints along the LoC to facilitate travel of Kashmiris across had been 'defeated by the tedious procedure' adopted by the Indian government for issuance of travel documents.

"I don't think more than 40-50 people have used these five points for travel because of the intransigence of New Delhi. It takes the Indian government months to issue travel documents to those who wish to go to Azad Kashmir from any one of these points; it is easier to travel on Indian passport to Pakistan and Azad Kashmir," Mr. Farooq told reporters.

Handwritten notes: A/1, 9/2/06, and other scribbles.

Pakistan calls India a bully

Asks New Delhi To Mind Its Business On Balochistan Issue

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India and Pakistan are at it again as the war of words between the two countries heated up over the Balochistan issue. The foreign office here is furious at a comment by the Pakistani spokesperson calling India a "bully".

Pakistan took exception to a reported Indian statement that its interest in Balochistan was par for the course. "Anyone who says that there is nothing extraordinary about a statement that is tantamount to interference in the internal affairs of other countries betrays the psyche of a bully, a bully who sees a red rag everywhere. Our advice to the Indian officials would be to mind their own business," foreign office spokesperson Tasnim Aslam said in Islamabad on Monday.

These are strong words, fumed officials here, though India may not take this matter forward by adding to the bitter verbiage.

Aslam, like Pakistan president Pervez

Qureshi
 'Anyone who says that there is nothing extraordinary about a statement that is tantamount to interference in the internal affairs of other countries betrays the psyche of a bully, a bully who sees a red rag everywhere'

campaign in Balochistan, there has been routine speculation of Iranian interference. But this time, Pakistan has turned its radar on India, possibly as a response to India pointing to Pakistan-trained terrorists carrying out attacks in India.

Official sources in India had been quoted saying that Pakistan routinely commented on India's actions in Kashmir. Refuting this, the Pakistani official said, "Pakistan strictly adheres to non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. As a matter of policy we do not make statements on situations in other countries even though they may be serious." In a related statement, which is a clear indication of the downward spiral the peace process is under, Pakistan linked India's statement on Balochistan with the peace process, saying it would "vitalize" the atmosphere of the carefully constructed process to "find peaceful and just solution to the Kashmir dispute and other disputes between our two countries."

Musharraf before her, alleged through clever insinuation that Pakistan believed that India was arming and financing the Baloch insurgents. Referring to a statement by Balochistan chief minister Jan Mohammed, she said, "I would not like to elaborate on it at the moment. But yes, there are indications and evidence of foreign involvement."

Balochis have been battling the rule of Islamabad and what they call "Punjabis" for over three decades now, and since the 1970s

India, Pakistan exchange lists of nuclear facilities

The 1988 agreement refrains attack on each other's facilities in the event of war

B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD: India and Pakistan on Sunday exchanged lists of their respective nuclear facilities on the first day of the New Year as per an accord in place since 1988.

An official statement issued by Pakistan Foreign Office said here that the swap took place under an agreement signed in 1988 on the prohibition of attacks on each other's nuclear in-

• **The agreement came into force in 1991**

• **Third round of composite dialogue in New Delhi**

stallations in the event of war. Pakistan Foreign Office Director (India Desk), Zaheer Janjua handed over the list to Sibi George, First Secretary (Political) in the Indian High Commission here at 11:00 a.m., Pakistan standard time. Similarly, in New Delhi an official of the Indian External Affairs Ministry handed over the Indian nuclear facilities list to the First Secretary of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi Khalid Jamali at 11:30 a.m., Indian Standard Time.

The agreement came into force in 1991 and the first such exchange of information was on January 1, 1992.

Both the countries have since then continued with the practice, even at the height of tensions in 2002 and 2003.

Under the agreement both Pakistan and India are to refrain from attacking each other's nuclear facilities in the event of a war. India went nuclear in May

1998 and within few days Pakistan followed suit.

Today's exchange of list on nuclear facilities came two weeks before the scheduled third round of composite dialogue slated in New Delhi.

To be inaugurated by the foreign secretaries of the two countries, the talks would focus on Kashmir and security related confidence building measures (CBMs).