

us show respect to the hon. Prime Minister. It is a very important matter.

12.03 hrs.

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER*

Recent visits of the Chinese premier and the President of Pakistan to India

THE PRIME MINISTER (DR. MANMOHAN SINGH) :

Mr. Speaker Sir, I rise to inform the hon. Members of two important visits of our country in the last few weeks.

Premier Wen Jiabao of China paid a State visit to India from 9th April to 12th April, 2005. The visit was substantive in its outcome. Premier Wen has himself described it as 'historic'.

Sir, my meeting with the Chinese Premier on 11th April was most warm and productive. We signed a Joint Statement which contains a vision of where India-China relations are headed and an Action Plan for co-operation in bilateral, regional and global domains. A copy of the Joint Statement is placed on the Table of the House. Eleven other Agreements were signed and the Report of the India-China Joint Study Group on comprehensive trade and economic co-operation released. The range of agreements concluded reflects the rapid strides made in our relations with China in recent years. Premier Wen and I agreed that India-China relations have entered a new phase of comprehensive development.

In the Joint Statement, we have agreed to establish a "Strategic and Co-operative Partnership for Peace and Prosperity". It codifies the consensus between us that India-China relations transcend bilateral issues and have now acquired a global and strategic character. The partnership also reflects our desire to proactively resolve outstanding differences, while not letting them come in the way of continued development of relations. This is not in the nature of a military pact or alliance but reflects a

congruence of purpose apart from a common perception of world events.

A major outcome of the visit was the Agreement on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of the India-China Boundary Question. A copy of the Agreement is placed on the Table of this august House. This understanding has been possible as a result of deliberations between the Special Representatives of India and China on the boundary question. The institution of Special Representatives was created during my distinguished predecessor's visit to China in June 2003. The Agreement is truly a major milestone on the way to the settlement of the boundary question. It provides for a "political settlement" of the boundary question in the context of the "overall and long term interests" of the two countries. Both sides have agreed that an early boundary settlement should be pursued as a "strategic objective".

The Agreement sets out for the first time ever, principles for an overall settlement of the India-China boundary question. While this understanding is of great significance, we do acknowledge that we are still quite some distance away from a final boundary settlement.

We have agreed that in the meanwhile, the two sides will strictly respect and observe the Line of Actual Control, maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas and expedite the work of clarification and confirmation of the Line of Actual Control. The Protocol on the Modalities for the implementation of Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field in the Border Areas, signed during the Chinese Premier's visit, will help in maintaining peace along the Line of Actual Control.

During my meeting with Premier Wen, he stated that China regarded Sikkim as an "inalienable part of India", and that Sikkim was no longer an issue in India-China relations. The Joint Statement signed by us explicitly

*Also Placed in Library. See No. L.T. 1918/2005.

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refers to "Sikkim State of the Republic of India". The Chinese side has officially handed over to us a revised map showing Sikkim as within the international boundaries of India.

The understandings reached during the visit will also give a major fillip to the economic dimension of the relationship, to which both sides are attaching a great deal of importance. Bilateral trade has been growing rapidly and crossed the US \$13 billion mark last year. A target of US \$20 billion by 2008 is envisaged. Mr. Speaker, Sir, during my meeting with Premier Wen, an India-China Joint Economic Group, chaired by the two Commerce Ministers, will oversee facilitation and expansion of trade in goods and services, investment flows and other areas of economic co-operation. Premier Wen and I agreed to set up a Joint Task Force as well to examine the feasibility and benefits of Trading Arrangements.

Sir, the Chinese Premier and I also had a useful exchange of views on regional and multilateral issues. Among other things, we agreed on the importance of comprehensive reforms in the UN system. China conveyed that it attached great importance to the status of India in international affairs and understood and supported India's desire to play an active role in the UN and international affairs.

Sir, I believe the Chinese Premier's visit to India will give a significant boost to the all-round development of India-China relations. Our policy towards China is characterised by continuity and consensus.

Sir, I now come to the visit of the President of Pakistan...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please do not interrupt him.

(Interruptions)

SHRI TAPIR GAO (Arunachal East) : The Prime Minister has not highlighted anything about Chinese claim of Arunachal Pradesh during his speech. ...(Interruptions) Today, Arunachal wants clarification on the stand of the Government of India.

MR. SPEAKER : But this is not the first time that you have raised it. Hon. Member, I have allowed you during the Question Hour also. I am sure, hon. Prime Minister, at an appropriate occasion, will deal with it.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Do not record anything more.

(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I have allowed you too.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Do not record it.

(Interruptions)*

[Translation]

PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA (South Delhi) : Mr. Speaker. Sir, the issue of Arunachal Pradesh is very serious. So the hon. Member wants to draw the attention of the Prime Minister towards it...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : I am earnestly requesting you. I know such an important matter has been raised by the hon. Member. The Prime Minister is here. He has listened to him. I have also allowed him during the Question Hour. I am not minimising the importance, but do not disturb the hon. Prime Minister while making the statement.

(Interruptions)

*Not recorded.

MR. SPEAKER : Very well. You have had a discussion on it. You can always have a discussion on it. Please co-operate. If you go on interrupting, it does not look nice.

(Interruptions)

SHRI TAPIR GAO : This is the voice of the people of Arunachal Pradesh...*(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER : I am requesting you. This is the last time, I am requesting you to sit down.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : I am requesting you for the last time to sit down. Do not compel me to do anything. You have made your point.

(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : You have made your point. You cannot go on interrupting him. You have made your point, and I am not minimising it. Then, why are you interrupting? I have said that more than once. I appreciate your feelings.

DR. MANMOHAN SINGH : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the President of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf visited India from April 16 to 18, 2005. I had invited him to the cricket match in New Delhi and we used the opportunity of his presence here to hold substantive discussions on a wide range of bilateral issues. We also issued a Joint Statement which takes stock of our relations and outlines the ideas and activities agreed upon between us to move our bilateral relationship forward. A copy of the Joint Statement is placed on the Table of the House.

Sir, during our talks, President Musharraf and I reviewed the progress made in our bilateral relations. We assessed positively the progress that had been made through Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs), people-to-

people contacts and enhancing areas of interaction and expressed our Joint determination to build on the momentum already achieved. I also conveyed to President Musharraf the great importance we attach to enhanced bilateral economic and commercial co-operation. I underlined the need to multiply beneficial linkages of trade and transit, including the gas pipeline. We agreed that greater co-operation between the two largest economies of South Asia would not only contribute to the well-being of the peoples of the two countries but also bring a higher level of prosperity for the entire region.

We agreed on several forward-looking measures to increase interaction between the countries, among them being the restoration of the rail link between Khokhrapar and Munnabao. Each of these are reflected in the Joint Statement.

Earlier this month, we started the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service despite terrorist threats and a dastardly suicide attack on the Srinagar Tourist Reception Centre. The courage and determination of our peoples and the condemnation by our two Governments as contained in the Joint Statement, of attempts to disrupt this important initiative, give us confidence for its continued and successful operation with even greater frequency in the future...*(Interruptions)* I am convinced the bus service has tapped a latent reservoir of public support for greater people to people contact, especially among people living on either side of the Line of Control...*(Interruptions)*

The issue of Jammu and Kashmir was also discussed in a positive atmosphere. I emphasized that while the redrawing of boundaries was not possible, all measures that could bring the peoples on both sides together, including increased transportation linkages to facilitate greater traffic of people and trade across the border and the Line of Control, would help the process and create an atmosphere of mutual trust and confidence. President Musharraf and I agreed to continue our discussions in a

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sincere, purposeful and forward-looking manner. We have agreed to work together to carry forward the process and to bring the benefit of peace to the people of our two countries, and in particular, the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

President Musharraf stressed the importance of addressing the Jammu and Kashmir issue. However, he also agreed that the confidence building process between the two countries had made significant progress. We both felt that this process would contribute to promoting a general sense of trust and understanding in our two countries, which in turn would be conducive to creating the environment for a just, fair and mutually acceptable solution to all outstanding issues. Consequently, we have agreed to pursue further measures to enhance interaction and co-operation across the Line of Control including agreed meeting points for divided families, trade, pilgrimages and cultural interaction.

The Joint Statement specifically re-affirmed the commitments made in the Joint Press Statement of January 6, 2004, and the Joint Statement issued after the meeting of the Indian Prime Minister and the Pakistani President in New York on September 24, 2004. This re-affirmation addresses our concerns relating to terrorism from across the border. The Joint Statement also contained a pledge that terrorism would not be allowed to impede the peace process. It also underlines the importance of the peace process and the degree of improvement in relations between the two countries.

While I am satisfied with the progress achieved in our talks during the visit, we should remain conscious of the difficulties ahead. The difficult issues that divide us have bedeviled relations between India and Pakistan for far too long to hope for an immediate resolution. The threat to the peace process from extremist forces and terrorist organisations has not been eliminated. Therefore, I

mentioned to President Musharraf that the whole process of serious and sustained dialogue hinges on building an atmosphere of trust and confidence, free from violence and terror. We look forward to Pakistan implementing their assurances in letter and spirit.

Sir, as hon. Members are aware, the past year has been quite a remarkable one for our relation with Pakistan. The two countries successfully concluded one round of the Composite Dialogue and have already commenced the next round. Diplomatic and other links have been normalised and restored to the pre-December 13, 2001 level. People-to-people exchanges are taking place across the spectrum in overwhelming numbers. The ceasefire being observed along international Border, the Line of Control and the Actual Ground Position Line in Siachen has, with the exception of a few stray incidents, held since November, 2003.

Sir, India is committed to peace and friendship with Pakistan. We sincerely seek a co-operative and constructive relationship with Pakistan. I am heartened to see that this desire is reciprocated by the Pakistan side, and that there is considerable popular support for an improved relationship in both countries. To create such a durable co-operative and constructive relationship, we need to invest in the ongoing process of engagement and confidence building and ensure that recent positive trends are sustained. We have chalked out a detailed schedule and agenda for round of the composite dialogue that has commenced. Sir, we believe that persistent and purposeful engagement will show us the way to peace and enable us to fulfil the promise of friendship and co-operation that we have made to our people.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Can I get the papers laid?

(Interruptions)