

12.01 hrs.

STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER

Summit Level Talks Between India and Pakistan

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Now, the hon. Prime Minister will make the statement which will be telecast live.

[Translation]

THE PRIME MINISTER (SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Members would recall my invitation to President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan to visit India.

Prior to his visit, I had occasion to exchange views—both individually and collectively—with leaders of political parties, eminent persons, media representatives and intellectuals, on the future prospects for Indo-Pak relations. They almost unanimously endorsed my view that the visit should be utilized to seek avenues for durable peace and cooperative friendship with Pakistan. Building on the Shimla agreement and Lahore declaration, I sought, through the invitation and subsequent visit to strengthen the broad-based framework of dialogue, so that progress could be made on all outstanding bilateral issues, including Jammu and Kashmir. I also identified the continuing cross border terrorism as an important subject to be addressed.

To promote a congenial environment and confidence building before the visit, the Government took some significant decisions relating to peace and security, nuclear and non-nuclear confidence building measures, people to people contacts, humanitarian issues, education, youth exchanges and trade. I believe these decisions have been well received by the people of India and Pakistan. The Government remains committed to implementing them.

President Musharraf, accompanied by Begum Musharraf came to New Delhi on July 14. He was accorded full ceremonial welcome. He called on the President, who hosted a state banquet in his honour. The Vice-President, the Home Minister, the External Affairs and Defence Minister and the leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha called on him. I hosted lunch in his honour. At the retreat in Agra on July 15 and 16, President Musharraf and I had extensive one to one talks for over five hours. We also had talks at the delegation level.

During these discussions, I emphasized the importance of creating an atmosphere of trust for progress on all outstanding issues including Jammu and Kashmir. I took up other specific issues which would help the process of peace. These included the issues of 54 prisoners of war believed to be in Pakistani jails; the extradition of terrorists and criminals taking refuge in Pakistan, the upkeep of Sikh Gurudwaras and Hindi temples in Pakistan, extending good treatment to Indian pilgrims visiting holy places in Pakistan and promotion of bilateral trade beneficial to both the countries.

I focussed on terrorism being promoted in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. I conveyed in clear terms that India has the resolve, strength and the capacity to meet terrorism and violence until it is decisively crushed. I want to reiterate this resolve today on the floor of this House.

In his presentations, President Musharraf focussed exclusively on Jammu and Kashmir only. Hon. Members would be familiar with all his views, since they were widely disseminated in both our electronic and print media.

Despite obvious differences in our views, we made progress towards bridging the two approaches in a draft joint document. We wanted to incorporate in the document the structure of a future dialogue process on all issues, including meetings at official, ministerial and summit levels. I made proposals for addressing the issues of peace and security—including nuclear and conventional confidence building measures, Jammu and Kashmir, and terrorism and all other issues from the composite dialogue. But finally, I had to abandon the quest for joint document mainly because of Pakistan's insistence on the 'settlement' of the Jammu and Kashmir issue, as a pre-condition for the normalization of relations. Pakistan was also reluctant to acknowledge and address cross-border terrorism. My Cabinet colleagues and I agreed that our basic principles cannot be sacrificed for the sake of a joint document.

Hon. Members, though there are serious differences regarding the solution of Jammu and Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan, I believe that an all-round development in the relationship between the two countries will have a positive impact on our dialogue on Jammu and Kashmir.

No objective will be achieved by going into the controversy that whether Jammu and Kashmir is a Prime issue or not. We cannot ignore the cross-border terrorism and insurgent activities prevailing in the State. The activities being carried out in Jammu and Kashmir with the help of foreign mercenaries and foreign funding are nothing but the terrorism. Killing of innocent men, women

and children cannot be termed as 'Jehad', a holy war or a political movement. It is a considerable issue that just after the Agra Summit, pilgrims were murdered on their way to Amarnath. Just two days ago, a massacre took place in which people belonging to a single community were killed by the terrorists. Therefore, Pakistan's refusal to stop cross border terrorism is the biggest hinderance in creating a positive atmosphere for a mutually agreeable solution to the problem.

Pakistan want to evolve the solution of Jammu and Kashmir problem as per the wishes of Kashmiri people. I am sure that every Kashmiri whether belonging to Kashmir valley, Jammu, Laddakh, Pakistan occupied Kashmir or to Northern areas of Shaksgram valley, has the foremost desire to lead a peaceful and secured life and to enjoy the freedom so that he could progress economically.

It should be our continuous endeavour to provide them their constitutional rights. Most of the Kashmiris have their elected representatives who present their legitimate demands before the Government. We are ready to consider demands and ideologies which may even come from representatives of a small section of the Kashmir people, provided they are ready to give up the path of violence. With these feelings we have offered talks with the representatives of All Party Hurriyat conference.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, President Musharraf has invited me to Pakistan which I have accepted. Similarly, Foreign Minister of Pakistan has also invited our Foreign Minister. This has also been accepted. In this way, our bilateral relations with Pakistan would continue. We will continue the path of dialogue and also the friendly exchanges. We would continue to make Pakistan understand that our bilateral cooperation should not stop for the solution of a single issue. Though we have failed to evolve consensus to sign the joint declaration at Agra but to an extent we succeeded in developing mutual understanding. Likewise, we will continue our cooperation in other fields also. And definitely India's concern to stop the cross-border terrorism would be included in the documents of future talks.

I would also like to mention that we are not in search of any issue of publicity and discussion. We shall continue our diplomatic moves patiently and our endeavour for peaceful, friendly and cooperative relation will be continued vigorously.

SHRI MOHAN RAWALE (Mumbai South Central): Mr. Speaker, Sir, the only solution to the problem is to attract Pakistan...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: This subject is going to be discussed in the evening, what are you doing.

...(Interruptions)

[English]

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing should go on record.

...(Interruptions)*

MR. SPEAKER: We are discussing this matter today evening.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: We are discussing this matter at 4.00 p.m.

...(Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing should go on record.

...(Interruptions)*

12.10 hrs.

PAPERS LAID ON THE TABLE

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI L.K. ADVANI): Sir, I beg to lay on the Table:-

- (1) (i) A copy of the Proclamation (Hindi and English versions) dated the 2nd June, 2001 issued by the President under clause (1) of article 356 of the Constitution in relation to the State of Manipur published in Notification No. G.S.R. 410 (E) in Gazette of India dated the 2nd June, 2001, under article 356 (3) of the Constitution.
- (ii) A copy of the Order (Hindi and English versions) dated the 2nd June, 2001 made by the President in pursuance of sub-clause (i) clause (c) of the above Proclamation published in Notification No. G.S.R. 411 (E) in Gazette of India dated the 2nd June, 2001.

(Placed in Library, See No. LT No. 3716/2001)

- (2) A copy of the Report (Hindi and English versions) of the Governor of Manipur dated the 31st May, 2001 to the President.

(Placed in Library, See No. LT No. 3717/2001)

* Not recorded.