

## **Indian PM Singh Told DIPLOMACY Chairman Dr. Limb : "New Delhi and Seoul Should Work Together Promote Trade and Investment"**

Question: Your Excellency Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India, what is your vision for India, your great nation?

Answer: I would like India to be a developed economy in which every citizen lives a life of dignity and self-respect and in peace. India is a developing country. Our priority is to banish poverty, ignorance and disease, to provide employment for all and to sustain a higher rate of economic growth so that we can unleash the full potential of our people's creativity and enterprise. My vision for India is that we will demonstrate to the world how we can achieve these economic and social objectives within the framework of a plural, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-lingual polity. I believe all nations of the world will one day emulate this example.

Q: Would you explain about the economic relations between India and South Korea, including FTA?

A: Economic cooperation is an important component of the relationship between India and South Korea. We share the view that broadening and deepening of economic and trade cooperation between the two countries, based on the complementarities and growth potential of the two economies, will contribute to further promoting their common prosperity.

During President Roh's visit to India in October 2004, we agreed to continue a policy dialogue in the economic and trade area with a view to developing more comprehensive and future-oriented relations. Accordingly, a joint study group has been established to explore ways to maximize bilateral economic and trade cooperation. While there has been a steady increase in the volume of bilateral trade and investment in recent years, these are yet to realize their full potential.

We feel that both sides should work together to grasp the opportunities to promote trade and investment that present themselves to create new synergies of cooperation. Several ROK companies and brand names are household names in India; there is room for many more.

Q: Please explain the new role of India for Asia and the world in the future.

A: India's growing stature in Asia and the world can be gauged from what India represents.

We are the largest practicing democracy in the world. India is a multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual society with a long tradition of peaceful co-existence and symbiotic relations between various communities. In the present time when terrorism and intolerance are plaguing the world, India can show the way for how pluralistic societies may be organized.

India's foreign policy is based on principles which promote friendship and trust between nations. We are committed to the establishment of peaceful, friendly, cooperative and mutually beneficial relations with our close neighbors. We believe dialogue and trust can solve all outstanding issues and are pursuing this approach.

The Indian economy is growing consistently at 5-6% per annum and is one of the fastest growing economies of the world. It is already one of the preferred destinations for investment for a variety of reasons including our large market, natural resources, and well-trained human resources. An important thrust of India's foreign policy has been to strengthen regional cooperation. Towards this end, India has been working for closer economic integration with other countries of South Asia and Southeast Asia. India is an active member of SAARC, BIMBSTEAC, IOR-ARC, a dialogue partner of ASEAN and a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum.

As a founding member, India has been firmly committed to the principles of the United Nations and has made significant contributions to its various activities, including peacekeeping operations. India has always been a strong advocate of general and complete disarmament, with nuclear disarmament being accorded the highest priority. Towards this end, India has taken several initiatives within the United Nations.

Our experience with relief and reconstruction following the Tsunami in December last year illustrates the way our role in the region is evolving. We want to be a friendly and a good neighbor. Commensurate with this approach, India was an active participant in disaster management, relief and rescue operations, assisting our neighbors and placing our wherewithal at their disposal.

India has been playing a key role in the human resource development of many countries of Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Latin America through its ITEC and Special Commonwealth Assistance Program for Africa Plan (SCAAP) programs, which together cover 156 countries. In sum, India's foreign policy is oriented towards developing holistic, durable and mutually beneficial relations with all countries; within this, we attach the highest importance to our neighbors.

Q: What is the fastest way to solve the North Korean nuclear issue?

A: India supports efforts for a peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue in the Korean peninsula through dialogue and cooperation of all concerned states. We are disappointed that DPRK has suspended its participation in the Six-Party Talks. In our view, dialogue and consultation among all parties concerned remain the best way to resolve the issue. We also believe that the Six-Party process provides the best forum for progress in this direction. We

hope that all parties would make sincere efforts for an early resumption of the talks.

Q: Would you explain about the relations between India and Pakistan?

A: India sincerely seeks a cooperative and constructive relationship with Pakistan. Significant developments have taken place since India extended the hand of friendship to Pakistan in April 2003. We recently received President Musharraf in India. I had a very good meeting with President Musharraf during his visit. We agreed to resolve all outstanding problems bilaterally in a spirit of friendship and cooperation. We discussed further confidence-building measures which would enhance mutual trust and understanding between the countries.

Last year has been quite a remarkable year in our relations. We have successfully concluded one round of the Composite Dialogue and started the next round. People to people exchanges are taking place across the spectrum in overwhelming numbers. We have unilaterally liberalized the visa regime for Pakistani nationals to travel to India. The ceasefire being observed, with the exception of a few incidents, has held since November 2003.

The operationalization of the Srinagar Muzaffarabad bus service as well as India's decision to discuss the proposal for an India-Pakistan-Iran pipeline with Pakistan is an indication of the change of direction of India-Pakistan relations. We are ready to discuss all bilateral issues with Pakistan, including J&K. The positive momentum in our bilateral relationship, however, needs to be fostered in an environment of peace and security free from violence and terrorism, in keeping with the commitment embodied in the Joint Press Statement of January 6, 2004.

Q: Please explain about your relations with China and the United States.

A: Premier Wen Jiabao's visit to India was a successful visit. We decided to upgrade our bilateral ties to a strategic and cooperative partnership for peace and prosperity. The two countries also signed an Agreement on the Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for Settlement of the Boundary Question. We discussed ways of broadening and deepening our cooperation with special emphasis on economic cooperation.

Our relations with China have seen rapid improvement across diverse areas in recent years and have entered a new phase of comprehensive development. Bilateral trade and economic co-operation has grown rapidly. The trade volume crossed US\$13 billion last year. China is already our second largest trade partner. Due to concerted efforts by both sides, mutual trust and understanding between the two countries has been continuously deepened, sustained by regular high-level exchanges.

On international and regional issues, the two countries have maintained good communication and cooperation. The relations have now reached a level of maturity where we are engaged in continuously expanding our commonalities and exploring newer areas of cooperation, while pro-actively addressing the outstanding differences in a purposive manner.

Our relations with the United States are growing very rapidly and assuming the form of a strategic partnership. As democratic and pluralistic societies, our two countries share basic values. At the political level, there is a strong convergence of interests, for example, in combating terrorism and preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Defence cooperation between India and the U.S. is maturing and our forces worked closely together in providing relief after the recent Tsunami.

Economically, the United States is an important investor, our largest trade partner and a leading source of technology. At a time when Indian economy and society are undergoing change, the U.S. is admired in India for its competitive spirit and strong individualism. The two million strong Indian community in the U.S., which has achieved enormous prosperity within a single generation, represents a special bond between us. Overall, our ties with the U.S. are certainly very important and I take particular pride that substantial progress is being made in this relationship.

Q: What is the new role of the United Nations in the 21st Century?

A: India is a founder member of the United Nations and is firmly committed to the Purposes and Principles enshrined in the U.N. Charter. In today's globalized and interdependent world where problems and challenges are no longer confined to national borders, the U.N., as the only truly universal forum for the community of nations, has a vital role to play in countering the challenges collectively facing humanity in various spheres like political, economic, social, environmental or demographic.

In recent years, we have observed a trend wherein the developmental activities of the United Nations have diminished. This has resulted in a growing sense of alienation among the majority of the U.N. member states. There is a need to bring a greater balance in the UN's priorities in order to reflect the concerns of the majority of its membership.

We, therefore, understand and share the current mood to revisit the very fundamentals of the present international order the nature of contemporary challenges, the effectiveness of the existing institutions to deal with them and the necessity of reforms in the UN system.

Since the founding of the United Nations, while the scope of UN activities has expanded greatly, its political and security architecture has remained largely static. The reform and expansion of the Security Council is therefore, an imperative to reflect the contemporary realities. We believe that a revitalized and strengthened United Nations and a more representative Security Council will enable it to face the challenges of the 21st Century more effectively.