

JOINT STATEMENT FOLLOWING MEETING BETWEEN THE S.M. KRISHNA MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS OF INDIA AND HINA RABBANI KHAR MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF PAKISTAN

The Minister of External Affairs of India, H.E. S.M. Krishna and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, H.E. Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar met in New Delhi on July 27, 2011.

2. The Ministerial level talks were preceded by a meeting between the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan on July 26, 2011.
3. The talks were held in a candid, cordial and constructive atmosphere.
4. The Ministers reviewed the status of bilateral relations and expressed satisfaction on the holding of meetings on the issues of Counter-Terrorism (including progress on Mumbai trial) and Narcotics Control; Humanitarian issues; Commercial & Economic cooperation; Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation Project; Sir Creek; Siachen; Peace & Security including CBMs; Jammu & Kashmir; and promotion of friendly exchanges.
5. The Ministers affirmed the importance of carrying forward the dialogue process with a view to resolving peacefully all outstanding issues through constructive and result oriented engagement, and to establish friendly, cooperative and good neighbourly relations between Pakistan and India.
6. The Ministers underlined the need for sustained effort by both countries to build a relationship of trust and mutually beneficial cooperation in conformity with the determination of the people of both countries to see an end to terrorism and violence and to realise their aspirations for peace and development.
7. The Ministers agreed that terrorism poses a continuing threat to peace and security and reiterated the firm and undiluted commitment of the two countries to fight and eliminate this scourge in all its forms and manifestations. Both sides agreed on the need to strengthen cooperation on counter-terrorism including among relevant departments as well as agencies to bring those responsible for terror crimes to justice.
8. The Ministers noted with satisfaction the fact that since the resumption of dialogue earlier this year, the process of release of prisoners and fishermen from both sides has continued. In this regard, the Ministers agreed with the recommendations of the Judicial Committee on Prisoners regarding (a) early repatriation of the prisoners who have completed their sentences and whose travel documents are available; (b) adoption of a humane approach in dealing with cases of fishermen, women, elderly, juvenile prisoners, prisoners terminally ill or suffering from serious illness or physical / mental disability and (c) need to monitor the welfare of prisoners in order to ensure their humane treatment.
9. The Ministers attached importance to promoting peace and security, including Confidence Building Measures, between India and Pakistan and agreed to convene separate meetings of the Expert Groups on Nuclear and Conventional CBMs, in Islamabad in September 2011.
10. The Ministers held discussions on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir and agreed to the need for continued discussions, in a purposeful and forward looking manner, with a view to finding a peaceful solution by narrowing divergences and building convergences.
11. On Cross-LoC trade and travel facilitation for Jammu & Kashmir the Ministers decided the following:-

CROSS-LoC TRADE:

- i) List of 21 products of permissible items for Cross-LoC trade will be respected by both sides. The Working Group will review the trading list with a view to further specifying permissible items to facilitate intra-Jammu & Kashmir Cross-LoC trade.
- ii) Both sides will provide adequate facilities at the trade facilitation centres on each side.
- iii) The number of trading days stand enhanced from 2 to 4 days per week. Truck movements shall take place on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, both on Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalakot routes.
- iv) The Designated Authorities will resolve operational issues concerning cross-LoC trade through regular interaction.
- v) Regular meetings between the Chambers of Commerce and traders of both sides will be facilitated.
- vi) Existing telephone communication facilities should be strengthened.
- vii) The meetings of the Designated Authorities will be held alternately at the Terminal of the Crossing Points on both sides of the LoC every quarter or as and when deemed necessary.

CROSS-LoC TRAVEL

- i) Cross-LoC travel would be expanded on both sides of the LoC to include visits for tourism and religious pilgrimage. In this regard, the modalities will be worked out by both sides.
- ii) Facilities including waiting area, terminal and clearing procedures at the operational crossing points will be streamlined by both sides for smooth Cross-LoC travel.
- iii) The Cross-LoC bus service between Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and Poonch-Rawalakot routes will henceforth run on every Monday.
- iv) Application forms and requisite documentation in respect of travel across LoC will be exchanged by email between Designated Authorities of both sides. Such email transfer of application forms will be backed up by hard copies.
- v) Both sides will expedite the processing time for applications, which shall not be more than 45 days.
- vi) Six month multiple entry cross-LoC travel permits will be allowed by the Designated Authorities after completion of the required formalities at an early date.
- vii) Coordination meetings between the Designated Authorities will be held at the Terminals alternately on both sides of the LoC every quarter or as and when deemed necessary.

It was agreed that the Joint Working Group will henceforth meet on a bi-annual basis to review existing arrangements and suggest additional measures for Cross-LoC travel and trade.

12. The Ministers agreed that increase in trade and economic engagement between the two countries would be mutually beneficial. In this context, they emphasized the importance of early establishment of a non-discriminatory trade regime between the two countries, including reduction/removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers. They also emphasised the need for facilitating trade and redressing trade imbalance. The Ministers noted with satisfaction that during their meeting held in Islamabad in April 2011, the Commerce Secretaries of the two countries had decided on a number of important steps to realize the full potential of bilateral trade.

13. The Ministers agreed that discussions will continue on Siachen, Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation Project and Sir Creek to find a mutually acceptable solution to these issues. They reiterated their commitment to seeking early and amicable solutions to all these issues. They reaffirmed their commitment to the Indus Waters Treaty.

14. The Ministers also agreed that people of the two countries are at the heart of the relationship and that issues of people-to-people contacts and humanitarian issues should be accorded priority and treated with sensitivity. They noted with satisfaction the progress made towards finalization of a revised Visa Agreement which would help liberalise the visa regime and facilitate people-to-people, business-to-business and sports contacts.

15. The Ministers also emphasized promotion of cooperation in various fields including, facilitating visits to religious shrines, media exchanges, holding of sports tournaments and cessation of hostile propaganda against each other.

16. The Ministers decided to resume the work of the India-Pakistan Joint Commission and agreed that the Technical Level Working Groups should hold their meetings to identify avenues of further cooperation in these fields.

17. They reaffirmed their commitment to the goals and objectives of SAARC and agreed to make joint efforts to promote cooperation for regional development in the SAARC framework.

18. It was also decided that the Foreign Ministers will meet again in Islamabad in the first half of 2012 to review progress in the dialogue process.

19. The Ministers agreed to the continuation of the dialogue process and to the convening series of Secretaries level meetings on Counter-terrorism (including progress on Mumbai trial) and Narcotics Control; Humanitarian issues; Commercial and Economic cooperation; Wullar Barrage/Tulbul Navigation Project; Sir Creek (at the level of Additional Secretaries/Surveyors General); Siachen; Peace & Security, including CBMs; Jammu & Kashmir; and Promotion of Friendly Exchanges. Dates of all these meetings will be decided through diplomatic channels and will be held prior to the next Ministerial meeting.

20. The Ministers noted that Shri Anand Sharma, Hon'ble Minister for Commerce and Industry of India, has extended an invitation to his counterpart, H. E. Makhdoom Amin Fahim, Minister of Commerce of Pakistan to visit India at a mutually convenient date.

21. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan will be calling on Dr. Manmohan Singh, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India. She will also be calling on Smt. Sushma Swaraj, Hon'ble Leader of the Opposition (Lok Sabha).

Islamabad
27 July 2011