

# **Fire Bombing of Samjhauta Express: Reactions from Citizen Groups & Media**

Thursday 22 February 2007, by [Collective / Multiple signers](#) (Date first published: 22 February 2007).

**Some five years after the train fire at Godhra that sparked anti - muslim pogrom by Hindutva extremists, the fire bombing of the samjhauta express (the only train to ply between India and Pakistan) raises many questions as who was involved. Could it be Hindutva fundamentalists or their counterparts who want to stall the official peace process between India and Pakistan.**

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## **A. REACTIONS BY CITIZENS GROUPS**

(i)

**20 Feb 2007**

**PAKISTAN-INDIAN PEOPLES' FORUM FOR PEACE AND  
DEMOCRACY CONDEMNS THE FIRE BOMBING OF SAMJHAUTA  
EXPRESS**

Pakistan-India Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy (PIPFPD) strongly condemns the vicious terrorist bombing of the Delhi-Lahore Samjhauta Express in which 67 people were killed and more than 50 injured. Indians and Pakistanis are united in their deep grief at this heinous crime that cannot be justified by any cause and we express our deep condolences to the families of the innocent victims of this act of terror.

The train symbolizes the deep desire of the peoples of India and Pakistan to have good neighbourly relations and it has served as a crucial lifeline to maintain people to people contacts across the border. The terror attack on

the train and its timings indicates that its purpose was to derail the peace process and to undermine people to people contacts, which has been a significant component of the process of building peace between the two countries. PIPFPD urges that this tragic incident should not be allowed to disrupt the process of normalizing relations as had happened last July. In this context, PIPFPD is deeply appreciative of the efforts of the governments of India and Pakistan to continue with the peace process, and welcomes the move to continue without interruption the train service and other cross border links. Let this become an opportunity to affirm the urgency of normalising relations in recognition of the people of India and Pakistan's commitment to peace and friendship.

Tapan Kumar Bose

General Secretary

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## **Press Release**

February 19, 2007

### **TERROR ATTACK ON SAMJHAUTA EXPRESS**

As citizens of India committed strongly committed to peaceful and fruitful relations between India and Pakistan as also unequivocally to lasting justice and peace between all communities within India, our heart goes out to all the victims of the recent terror attack on board the Samjhauta Express. The attack reveals above all, that terror and terrorism has no religion and victims of all communities, Muslim and Hindu, rich and poor can easily become the victims of such an attack. We offer our deepest condolences to all the affected families in this moment of grief.

We unequivocally condemn this attack that is an attempt not only to de-rail peace talks but also to create schisms and rifts between communities. We thank the political leadership of both countries for using sombre and sensitive language at such a time and urge them — specifically the intelligence and investigative authorities of

India — to go further and rigorously investigate and get to the bottom of such an attack.

Outfits of terror have no religion and should never be equated as such. The language and acts of terror can be perpetrated by fanatic outfits within any and all social, political and religious sections. Similarly victims of terror as today's brutal incident shows, can hail and do hail from all sections. Terror and terrorism can be home grown as well as imported; both equally are not just anti-national, they strike at the fabric of our nation because they create schisms between communities.

Vijay Tendulkar, President CJP

Dr Prabhat Patnaik, noted economist

Teesta Setalvad, Secretary, CJP and co-editor Communalism Combat

Arvind Krishnaswamy, Treasurer, CJP,

Javed Akhtar, CJP and Muslims for Secular Democracy (MSD),

CP Chandrashekar, economist, JNU,

Javed Anand, CJP and MSD,

Nandan Maluste, CJP,

Anil Dharker, CJP,

Rajendra Prasad, SAHMAT

Ram Rehman, SAHMAT,

MK Raina, SAHMAT,

Hasan Kamal, MSD,

Rahul Bose, CJP

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## **B. SELECTED COMMENTARY AND EDITORIALS IN THE INDIAN AND**

## PAKISTANI PRESS:

(i)

### **The Hindu**

**Feb 20, 2007**

#### KEEP THE PEACE PROCESS ON TRACK

by Siddharth Varadarajan

For the third time in less than a year, terrorists have attempted to derail the peace process between India and Pakistan. Handing them a victory is the last thing we should do.

IN TERMS of the choice of both target and timing, it is not difficult to surmise that Sunday night's bomb blast on board the link train of the Samjhauta Express was aimed primarily at stopping the peace process between India and Pakistan.

As the indigent, divided families who travel on it every week know so well, the time the train takes to run from Delhi to Lahore can hardly be justified by the laws of locomotion or the dictates of cartography. And yet, that journey is a symbol of the civilised neighbourliness ordinary Indians and Pakistanis so desperately yearn for, a hint of what the future might bring if only the understanding and compromise its name connotes were allowed to run to its final destination.

The terrorists who bombed the train are clearly not interested in that final destination. By murdering at least 67 passengers on the eve of a visit to India by Khurshid Ahmed Kasuri, the Foreign Minister of Pakistan, their intention is to provoke another bout of tension and finger-pointing between Islamabad and New Delhi. At the very least, their aim is to make the process of travel between the two countries so fraught with danger that few will want to take on the risk and inconvenience of the journey by train, bus or even plane.

In the wake of the coordinated bombing of several commuter trains in Mumbai on July 7, 2006, the terrorists were temporarily able to seize the initiative but that mistake must not be repeated

again. Then, India postponed a scheduled meeting of Foreign Secretaries and within days the atmospherics began to degenerate. Policemen in Mumbai and Delhi spoke loosely about the "pretty good evidence" they had of the Pakistani establishment's involvement and it seemed as if the peace process was going into free-fall. In the end, however, the evidence turned out to be less than clinching. The realisation also dawned that dialogue and people-to-people contact help rather than hurt the country's interests.

After some deft pre-negotiation involving the creation of a joint anti-terror mechanism, India finally felt comfortable talking to Pakistan again.

Though India was right to criticise Pakistan for the latter's failure to act against terrorist organisations and training facilities on its territory, it erred in linking the future of the peace process to an incident for which Islamabad's complicity could only be inferred but not established. Indeed, nearly seven months after the blasts, evidence of Pakistan's official complicity continues to elude Indian investigators. Unfortunately, this failure to follow through with the specific allegation will no doubt be used by Pakistan to question the validity of India's general case that terrorist groups continue to operate from its territory.

### *Fundamental question*

At the heart of the Indian policy dilemma lies a fundamental question: is the government of Pervez Musharraf involved in the instigation, planning or execution of terrorist acts such as the blasts in Mumbai and Malegaon and on the Samjhauta Express? There is no doubt the Pakistani establishment has the capability to mount these kinds of covert operations but it is not clear what its motive would be, or what it would stand to gain from a termination of the peace process because there can no longer be any doubt over what the underlying logic of these blasts is.

But if the answer to the question of General Musharraf's involvement is 'No', then does this mean there are terrorist groups on the soil of Pakistan that are able to operate independently of, and in opposition to, the Pakistani state? It is obvious that this is so. The numerous bombings that have taken place inside Pakistan such as in Karachi

last year on the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, the suicide attacks on Pakistani soldiers, and the attempts that have been made on General Musharraf's own life all suggest such "independent" terrorist groups not only exist but are flourishing. What is not clear, however, is the extent of connectivity between Pakistan's "independent" and "dependent" terrorist outfits such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Muhammad. Islamabad and Washington may like to pretend a Chinese Wall separates the two; in reality, there is mixing and osmosis of men and materiel. That is why the Pakistani establishment is at once both a sponsor and a victim of terrorism. Three years after promising to act, the Pakistani government remains indifferent to the existence of terrorist groups on its territory. Prominent individuals such as Masood Azhar go in and out of house arrest but the activities of their organisations continue more or less unchecked. At the same time, the overall scale of cross-border violence and infiltration in Jammu and Kashmir has fallen, though the scale and audacity of terrorist strikes elsewhere in India has gone up. In assessing its general policy to Pakistan, India knows there is no viable military option or compellance strategy to deal with this problem. The massive military mobilisation during Operation Parakram proved conclusively that India has no option other than diplomacy in dealing with Pakistan. This does not mean ending terrorism should not be the top-most priority for India. The Government should continue to insist that Pakistan fulfil its January 2004 commitment of not allowing its territory to be used for terrorism directed against India. Shutting down existing and new groups as and when they come up and arresting their leaderships is a verifiable demand that India should make. And for evidence of compliance, it need rely merely on the ample reports that the Pakistani press itself publishes from time to time, rather than on "narco-analysis" and "brain mapping" of terrorist suspects on this side. Before using the continuation of the peace process as a lever to try and stop terror again, however, India needs to ask whether the peace process has in any way compromised its national security. Today, many more visas are being issued to Pakistanis than in 2004. Trade is up, both direct and indirect. New transportation routes have opened up in Kashmir, Punjab and Rajasthan. Business delegations visit each other far more frequently. If any of this has led to national security being compromised on the margins - for example, some 30-odd Pakistanis who applied for visas to watch cricket two years ago have yet to return home - surely our agencies can devise a better system of address verification, information-sharing, and so on so as to minimise the risks involved in encouraging closer people-to-people contact and travel. In the long run, greater travel, tourism, and trade will enlarge the constituency of people inside Pakistan who support the normalisation of relations with India. This, in turn, could eventually alter the political dynamics within Pakistan. It is also largely thanks to the ongoing peace process that India and Pakistan have established a common vocabulary on Kashmir, something that would have been unthinkable a few years ago. Today, both sides agree that the solution lies in transcending the Line of Control dividing Jammu and Kashmir. This shift in thinking can hardly have endeared General Musharraf to the extremists who regard Kashmir's territory as their own sacred battleground. It is precisely the prospect of a peaceful solution that has got the authors of the Samjhauta Express and Mumbai train blasts so worked up. Rather than allowing terrorists to dictate the pace and content of the peace process, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President

Musharraf must insist on keeping the initiative in their own hands. There can be no turning back now. The Samjhauta Express martyrs must not have died in vain. ---- {{Date: Wed, 21 Feb 2007 10:14:27 +0500 MY LETTER PUBLISHED IN "THE HINDU"}} <http://www.hindu.com/2007/02/21/stories/2007022102901001.htm> I was appalled on reading the article by Praveen Swami and Siddharth Varadarajan's "Keep the peace process on track." For a Pakistani-American and a strong supporter of better India-Pakistan relations like me, the deep-seated prejudice of the writers was disheartening. Without a shred of evidence, they have laid the blame at the door of Pakistanis for the death of Pakistani citizens. Not once do they even suggest that this could be the work of Hindu extremists. F. Zakaria, Palo Alto, California {This was my original that they edited:} {I was appalled and disgusted by both Praveen Swami and Siddharth Varadarajan's op-ed pieces in The Hindu. As a Pakistani-American and a strong supporter of better India-Pakistan relations, the deep seated prejudice of the writers was deeply disheartening. Without a shred of evidence they lay all blame on Pakistanis for the death of Pakistani citizens on the Samjhota Express. Not once do they even raise the possibility that this could also be the work of Hindu extremists, so close to the 5th year anniversary of the terrible Godhra tragedy. If one cannot get fair-minded and balanced opinions in India's premier newspaper what hope do we have of healing the deep wounds of conflict between the two countries.} -----

----- (ii) {{The Telegraph <BR>February 20, 2007 EDITORIAL}} For a relationship that so routinely uses buses and trains as vehicles of expression, the message sent out by bombed train compartments is expected to be poignant. The gutted Samjhauta Express is supposed to derail the India-Pakistan peace process. The threat the attack conveys is no different from that which was borne out by the carnage that immediately preceded the first journey of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus two years ago. Any step to normalize relations between the two countries is seen by hardliners as an attempt by the establishment to soft-pedal the Kashmir issue. Bus or train diplomacy thus takes the first beating each time the nations are close to ending the hiatus in bilateral ties. Like the much-hyped bus service, the Samjhauta Express in 2004 signalled a rapprochement between the feuding neighbours. That the train managed to escape the wrath of militants so far, and even to expand its network, was perhaps owing to its utility to thousands of passengers who found it a convenient way to mend broken ties and carry out business. Unfortunately, such mundane affairs have never been the concern of troublemakers. An ominous message had to be sent out before the visit of the Pakistan foreign minister, Mr Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri, could take the dialogue to its next logical step. A success like the Samjhauta Express was an obvious target. There is no reason to suspect that the bomb attack will permanently impair Indo-Pakistan relations, nor suspend train operations between the countries forever. Despite the initial hitches, the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus has taken off. The bomb attack on the train, too, is unlikely to keep determined travellers away for long. However, it is the commitment of the two governments to carrying on the peace process that will decide the severity of the immediate repercussions of the bombing. This is the first incident in which the majority of victims are of Pakistani origin. The fact that the bombs could have been planted in an unguarded railway station in India itself has also caused much consternation in the Pakistani establishment. It has accused the Indian administration of a security lapse

with the same vehemence with which India often blames its neighbour in similar situations. Yet both the countries should be ashamed at this evident failure of their joint mechanism to combat terrorism. ----- (iii) {{The Hindu <BR>Feb 20, 2007 Editorial PEACE AND THE BURNING TRAIN}} The heart-rending scenes of charred bodies and twisted metal in two coaches of the Pakistan-bound Samjhauta Express are gory testimony to yet another major terrorist strike in India. The horrifying twin bomb explosions when the train was near Panipat in Haryana, killing at least 67 people, unite Pakistan and India in deep grief. They are a chilling reminder that terrorism in this day and age has international linkages in more ways than one. The identity of those responsible for the carnage is not yet known but the object and timing of the attack provide strong clues to the motives. Started in 1976 following the Shimla accord, the Samjhauta (Understanding) Express has symbolised good neighbourliness between India and Pakistan. The train, which has run almost uninterruptedly for more than three decades - suspended only for short periods in the wake of Operation Bluestar, the Babri Masjid demolition, and the terrorist attack on Parliament - has been a lifeline for people-to-people contact between the two countries. Millions of people on either side of the border, most of them poor folk, have used the train to visit relatives and places of pilgrimage.

The attack on the train (technically a special train from which the passengers are transferred at Attari to the India-Pakistan service) has taken place a day before Pakistan's Foreign Minister Khursheed Kasuri arrives in New Delhi for talks on the ongoing peace process. In a bid to signal their strength, terrorists sometimes choose to time their attacks to coincide with the visit of dignitaries. In 2002, Hurriyat leader Abdul Ghani Lone was shot dead in Srinagar a day ahead of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to Kashmir. Two years earlier, 35 Sikhs were massacred in Chattisinghpura in Kashmir on the eve of President Bill Clinton's visit to India. It is more than likely that those who perceive the India-Pakistan peace process as a threat to their survival have perpetrated the Samjhauta Express carnage. The attack may revive memories of the Mumbai train blasts last year, but there is an important difference. The Samjhauta Express is a highly protected train and the attack on it raises serious questions about gaps in railway security. How did the incendiary material used to set the coaches ablaze get past the security checks at Old Delhi railway station? The decision to allow the unaffected coaches to



resume their journey to Attari on the Indian side of the border must be commended. Terrorists aim at disrupting normal life. The best way to honour the victims of terrorism is to ensure that life goes on in the midst of heart-rending grief. And the best way to defeat terrorist designs is to ensure that the peace process remains on track.

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## **The News International**

**February 20, 2007**

Editorial

### **SAMJHOTA EXPLOSION**

The loss of as many as 65 precious lives on the Samjhota Express linking Pakistan and India is tragic and must be the work of the elements opposed to the ongoing peace process between the two countries. It is worth noting that the deadly explosion took place a day before Pakistani Foreign Minister Khursheed Kasuri's three-day trip to India, where according to various reports, there may well be a breakthrough agreement signed on liberalising the stringent visa regime currently existing between the two countries. The Samjhota Express was on its way to Attari and eventually Lahore from Delhi when, according to eyewitnesses, it was rocked by two explosions as it was traveling through Panipat district in the Indian state of Haryana. At least 65 people are reported to have been killed and the Indian authorities believe that some of these may well be Pakistani nationals returning to Pakistan after visiting relatives in India. In fact, a spokesperson of the Pakistan Foreign Office said on Monday morning that "preliminary investigations" showed that most of the victims were Pakistani.

According to India's railways minister, Laloo Prasad Yadav, the blasts were caused by crude explosives and struck two coaches of the train. Pakistan has rightly condemned the blasts and has asked India to conduct a thorough investigation

into the act of terrorism. One would have to unequivocally agree with Mr Yadav's remarks to the press that the blasts were "aimed at derailing peace talks" between the two countries. One hopes that both sides will swiftly and publicly express their determination to carry on with the peace process. Also, both countries- and India particularly- should understand that dilly-dallying or perceived lack of progress only serves to strengthen the hawks and opponents of peace on both sides. As far as motive is concerned, the attackers could be from an array of opponents to the peace process; from the militants in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir who have opposed the ongoing dialogue and taken a hard line on the four-point plan put forward by President Pervez Musharraf to the Shiv Sena/VHP/Bajrang Dal combine which has time and again expressed opposition to the peace talks. (Incidentally, the bombing comes almost a week before the fifth anniversary of the infamous Godhra train incident that ignited the Gujarat communal riots of 2002.)

The latter in fact has an explicit agenda of ridding India of its Muslims so that their ideal of a true (read pure) Hindu nation can be realised — and they make no effort really to even hide it. In that context, attacking a train carrying Pakistani passengers, and which is a symbolic link between the two countries, serves many purposes and drives home a message to the Indian government that there are some people who oppose the peace talks. Of course, these aren't the only opponents to peace between the two countries. Several statements made in recent months by the top Indian military brass — particularly with regard to the settling of the Siachen dispute — have shown that institution to be bitterly opposed to peace — at least for now. One hopes that in this case there will at least be no finger-pointing by the Indian authorities without a thorough investigation into the causes of the blasts.

**February 20, 2007**

Editorial

## PUT THE JOINT MECHANISM TO WORK

### Blast on Samjhauta

The bombing of the Samjhauta Express, which has claimed 66 lives and grievously injured scores of others, is, without doubt, a cold-blooded attempt by purveyors of terror to blow the fragile Indo-Pakistan peace process apart.

Given the train is a symbol of dialogue, it's particularly vulnerable. Special measures to secure the train from the nefarious designs of groups, whose political and ideological existence is inversely linked to the increasing proximity between India and Pakistan, were certainly needed.

It's time the Indian security-intelligence establishment insisted passengers taking the train go through rigorous security and immigration clearances at the Delhi station itself. Trans-national trains the world over follow such procedures. Most importantly, however, it would do well not to give in to its anti-Pakistan reflex and point accusatory fingers at Islamabad.

The Indian state should ensure that a rigorous probe is conducted. All possibilities, even those that appear implausible, must be explored. Dubious arrests, and forced confessions, which usually follow terror attacks, do little to enhance the credibility of the Indian state.

Seen as part of a continuum of recent terror strikes in Pakistan, the Samjhauta explosion indicates that Manmohan Singh was, after all, right in asserting that Pakistan, too, is a victim of terror.

The train explosion now provides New Delhi the opportunity to put its instinctive distrust for Islamabad aside and try and make the joint anti-terror mechanism truly functional. New Delhi should realise that Pervez Musharraf does not have complete control over Pakistan-based terrorist groups.

Large sections of Pakistani society, which view

secular modernity with suspicion, are in the thrall of political Islam. Communal carnages in India, like the 2002 post-Godhra pogrom, together with the Indian state's failure to deliver substantive justice to victims of communal riots, have only legitimised the specious two-nation theory that has been its ideological ballast.

New Delhi, even as it continues to engage Islamabad vigorously, must deliver on its constitutionally-ordained promise of secularism. That is important if it is to be seen as a trustworthy partner in peace by all of Pakistan.

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#### HELPLINE NUMBERS FOR SAMJHAUTA EXPRESS

Northern Railway has started the following help line numbers:-

New Delhi Railway Station 1072, 011-23342954, 23341074

Head Quarter 011-23389319, 23389853, 23385106

Hazrat Nizamuddin Station 011-24355954

Ambala Station 1072, 0171-2610329, 2611072

Amritsar Station 0183-2564485, 2223171

Ludhiana 0161-2760006

Jalandhar 0181-2223504

At site 0180-3297823, 6450342

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#### **Indian Express**

**February 22, 2007**

'A NEW TRACK IS OPENED UP EACH TIME A PERSON FROM ONE COUNTRY CROSSES THE BORDER TO THE OTHER'

by Furrukh Khan

For many passengers on the Samjhauta Express on

its way to Lahore from Delhi, two explosions in the middle of the night ended everything. 'Samjhauta' offers a variety of meanings: understanding, agreement, coming together, compromise and other such affable connotations. This might have been the idea behind naming this train service which provides multiple avenues of negotiation and contact for people between two traditionally hostile and often suspicious governments.

Today, that aim of integration, much like the train which symbolised it, lies in a wreckage. One can only imagine how the victims' families are dealing with this mortal blow. Right now the attention should be solely focused on the victims and survivors of this terrible tragedy.

Historically, Panipat has been the site where many innocents have lost their lives to the forces of bigotry. It befalls the rest of us to fight back on multiple fronts and talk about coexistence, about tolerance and about life. Such should be a path undertaken by a wider, more diverse group of people from Pakistan and India as a practical and viable alternative to the 'official' track of diplomacy. History has revealed that official talks continue to be held hostage to the actions of a few. But parallel tracks exist. Unfortunately, only one, euphemistically named 'track two' is talked about. But a new track is opened up each time a person from one country crosses the border to the other. It is only by this physical act that one is able to challenge the ideologies of fear and loathing instilled in sections of the population.

The victims of the Samjhauta Express carnage, which included children, women and men, all of them innocent, paid a terrible price. It could have been any one of us who might have been unfortunate enough to have been on that train that day. Under 'normal' circumstances, people could have travelled easily across the border to the site of this terrible tragedy. However, considering the track record of India and Pakistan with their citizens, there is no doubt that those affected would have to deal with more insults that add to their injuries.

Now is the time to grieve for those whose lives have been forever changed. Yet, when the time

comes to take up the task of pushing for a more encompassing dialogue between the people and the governments of Pakistan and India, there has to be a more steely resolve to open more tracks of communication. While one might not be able to do much for the victims, one can at least promise to use their memory to fuel the drive for better relations between the two countries. The moral majority has to make its presence felt through its participation in a variety of ventures which would make it much more difficult for the minority to believe that it can destroy the feelings of goodwill which beat in so many hearts on both sides of the border. Next time someone sets out from Delhi for Lahore, it should be the warmth of a Lahori that greets the traveller, not the murderous smoke and fire of a terrible attack.

*The writer teaches postcolonial studies at Lahore University of Management Sciences, Lahore*

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## **Dawn**

**21 February 2007**

Editorial

### **SAMJHOTA EXPRESS TRAGEDY**

MONDAY'S tragedy at Panipat is too staggering for words. The identification of the charred bodies will take some time. But so far a minimum of 68 people have fallen victim to flames lit by men utterly indifferent to human suffering. The fire-bombing of the Samjhota Express, carrying 757 passengers, 553 of whom were Pakistanis, did more than cause death and destruction in Samjhota Express; it rocked the subcontinent itself.

Newspaper reports and TV images cannot catch even a fraction of the humanitarian dimensions of the tragedy, the grief and misery inflicted on the hundreds of families, and the agonies of the severely burnt now fighting for their lives. What precisely the perpetrators of this crime wanted to achieve by killing innocent civilians and destroying entire families is a mystery. If the aim was to sow discord and derail the peace process, both governments have made it clear that

such dastardly deeds will not be allowed to stand in the way of the normalisation process and the pursuit of the composite dialogue to which they are committed. In fact, as Pakistan has made it clear, even the train service will continue to run on schedule. Condemning "such wanton acts of terrorism", President Pervez Musharraf said that he would not allow "elements who want to sabotage the on-going peace process to succeed in their nefarious designs". Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's focus was on the humanitarian side of the tragedy, and he reaffirmed his government's "commitment to ensure that its perpetrators are punished". Monday's crime at Panipat came a week ahead of the fifth anniversary of the burning of the train at Godhra and a day before the arrival of Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri in New Delhi for talks with his Indian counterpart. It took years of investigations and court judgments to finally establish that the Muslims initially held responsible for the Godhra train fire were not to blame. In the present case, too, one hopes that time will sooner or later establish the truth and unmask the fiends behind this despicable crime whose victims were innocent people. It must also be noted that the casualties would have been far fewer if the Indian authorities had not sealed off all train windows.

There are several ways in which the impact and immediate outcome of the Panipat tragedy are different from similar acts of terrorism committed earlier. Unlike what happened immediately after the Bombay train blasts in July last year, no responsible person in the Indian government has pointed fingers at "Pakistan-based terrorist groups" for the crime. Since a majority of the dead are Pakistanis, no one in his right mind would see Islamabad's hand in the crime. Secondly, we now have in place an Indo-Pakistan "anti-terrorism mechanism" to which President Musharraf and Prime Minister Singh agreed at Havana last year. This part of the Havana statement was criticised in India by some right-wing elements who objected to the establishment of a forum designed "to identify and implement counter-terrorism initiatives and investigations." The existence of such an instrument obviously irks those in India who blame Pakistan for every act of terrorism even

before investigations begin.

There is no doubt that the two sides will jointly investigate a crime that has shocked the world. There are extremists and hate groups on both sides of the border, and they would love to derail the peace process. However, the two governments must know that the scourge of terrorism now seems to be operating on a scale that, if left unchecked, could make a mockery of not only the peace process but everything else meant to promote harmony and understanding between Pakistan and India.

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**P.S.**

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