

Singh, Bush discuss N-deal, cross-border terrorism

P rime Minister Manmohan Singh met U.S. President George W. Bush in St. Petersburg on July 17 to review their nuclear deal, conceived exactly a year ago, and also to seek greater support against cross-border terrorism. In a 30-minute meeting on the margins of the G-8 Summit, Manmohan Singh briefed Bush on the July 11 terror attack in Mumbai and Srinagar and spoke of how pained he was to see the suffering of innocent people during his visit to the Maharashtra capital.

Manmohan Singh told Bush that the U.S. and other G8 leaders must stand united with India in the war against terror and thanked leaders for their condemnation of the bombings that killed nearly 200 people and injured over 800. Stating that India was a recurrent victim of terror attacks, he said the blasts of the kind that took place in Mumbai were not possible without some "external support".

The Prime Minister said the world community, particularly the U.S., must take a stand against cross-border terror that found sustenance and support in militant camps in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The Prime Minister was accompanied by Foreign Secretary Shyam Saran and National Security Advisor M.K. Narayanan at the talks, while Bush was assisted by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

During the meeting the two leaders touched upon several aspects of U.S.-India ties, including the nuclear deal.

"We have a Parliament that is very zealous of what we do," the Prime Minister said. He added that the deal was a "permanent reconciliation in India-America relations".



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh with U.S. President George Bush during their meeting on the sidelines of the G8 Summit in St. Petersburg on July 17.

Bush, too, referred to the proposed nuclear cooperation agreement. "I look forward to this wonderful deal you and I negotiated moving ahead," Bush said, referring to the Joint Statement that set in motion the process towards an agreement that was signed when Bush visited India in March.

Singh also referred to relations between the two countries in the area of agriculture and said it was important for India since 65 per cent of its population was dependent on the farm sector. ■

■ On the Sidelines: A Slew of Bilateral Meetings

P rime Minister Manmohan Singh, who was a special invitee to G-8's outreach session in St. Petersburg, met leaders of various countries in bilateral and trilateral meetings on the sidelines of the summit.

■ In a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Lula Da Silva of Brazil, it was agreed that the transformation in the bilateral relations that commenced during Da Silva's visit to India in January 2004 must be continued. Both countries shared perspectives on energy issues including alternative fuel sources including ethanol and bio-diesel. The Prime Minister said that he was looking forward to visiting Brazil for a bilateral visit, followed by the IBSA Summit, in September this year.

■ At a meeting between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Chancellor of Germany Angela Merkel, several current international problems, including the situation in the Middle East and the impasse in the Doha Round, were discussed.

■ Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President of Republic of Kazakhstan Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev, in a meeting, discussed issues pertaining to



Prime Minister Manmohan Singh with President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev at a meeting held on the sidelines of the G-8 summit in St. Petersburg, Russia on July 17.

India's energy sector. Potential for business-to-business cooperation between the two countries, in particular in the IT sector, were also discussed.

■ Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh reviewed recent developments in the bilateral relations between the two countries. A copy of the Joint Study Group report on enhancing economic cooperation was handed over to both the Prime Ministers. Both of them expressed satisfaction that the Joint Study Group had completed its work in a

timely manner. They agreed to examine the recommendations expeditiously. Prime Minister Singh conveyed appreciation to the Japanese Prime Minister for his contribution to the recent positive momentum in bilateral relations; the railway sector in particular has benefited from this.

■ Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Chinese President Hu Jintao and Russian President Vladimir Putin met for a trilateral summit meeting and discussed a gamut of issues, including strategic cooperation and economic development. At the Summit, the Chinese President said China, Russia and India, who have set up bilateral strategic partnerships among themselves, exerted vital influence on international and regional affairs. Prime Minister Singh said that the three nations should make concerted efforts to enhance trilateral cooperation, making it beneficial to the peoples of the three countries as well as contributing to peace and development in the region and the world at large. The Russian President added that Russia, China and India share similar views on major international and regional issues. He said the three nations support a multi-lateral framework and have good bilateral relations. ■