

India and Pakistan as good neighbours

Dr R K Pachauri, July 05, 2012

I was in Pakistan last week, and this was one of several trips that I have made to that country. This time, of course, it was different, because I went over land through the Wagah Border which is a very interesting experience. On my return I came through the same route, and there were of course a large number of journalists and TV cameras on both sides of the border. As it happens, I walked across just a little interval apart from the return of Surjeet Singh, the prisoner who I believe spent about thirty years in Pakistani jails. Fortunately, I was not mistaken for him and managed to come across without any attention from the media on either side.

I found my trip to Pakistan, to say the least, heartwarming. Despite the fact that there is obviously a faction of Pakistani society, which is ill disposed towards India and would perhaps like to wage surreptitious as well as open war with this country, the large bulk of the population there is craving for friendly relations. Most heartwarming was my visit to Gah where our Prime Minister was born, and where we at TERI have been active in installing a number of renewable energy devices. The entire village turned out to welcome me with firecrackers, a band in attendance and tonnes of rose petals on my car. Some of you may have already tested the rewaris that I had brought back. This combined with a huge basket of mangoes provided by the Chief Minister of Punjab (Pakistan) Mr Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif made it necessary for me to get another piece of luggage to bring back all these bulky and heavy items. The hospitality of the Pakistani people is unmatched, and I asked for this additional piece of baggage around 11 p.m. at the end of dinner hosted by Mr Asim Buksh one of the well known businessmen there, and he had his supermarket opened early to have the piece of baggage delivered to me at my hotel in the morning.

I am mentioning all this because I believe we must strive for much better people to people contact, professional relationships and certainly trade and commerce between our two countries. I believe TERI can play a role in this regard. Please watch this space, and you will find out about further developments that we would undertake in the very near future.