

Post Summit, Pakistan media brings up Kashmir issue

While welcoming the declaration at the SAARC Summit in [New Delhi](#) condemning terrorism and proposing an economic union, sections of the Pakistani media Thursday sang the Kashmir tune and held India guilty of preventing a rapprochement between South Asian neighbours.

The Nation said in an editorial Thursday: 'With Kashmiris suffering under India's oppressive occupation and with Pakistanis in full support and sympathy with them, it is hard to visualise an equation of friendship taking shape in the subcontinent. It forecloses the possibility of lasting peace.'

'The Indians ought to see the *raison d'etre* of tension between the two countries, which inhibits the growth of normal relations and sincerely work for a just and equitable solution of the problem, if they really want the SAARC to flourish,' the newspaper said.

The News said much of the work had historically been blocked by the perceived rivalry between India and Pakistan, but said the 'blame for this cannot be put entirely on Pakistan's shoulders'.

'This is more about India's ambitions and its somewhat hegemonic role in South Asia, and the perception among the other SAARC states of it sometimes acting -even if unwittingly - a bully,' the newspaper said in its editorial, adding that such apprehensions were nursed by Colombo and Dhaka as well.

Referring to India-Pakistan relations, it argued: 'Pakistan's stand in its relationship with India is ultimately defensive in nature and, though probably more complex than that of the others, is no different in its essence in that it refuses to be pushed around.'

The newspaper sought to belittle India's unilateral gesture of removing barriers to exchange of goods and travel within the region, pointing out that India 'refused' to discuss 'important issues such as Kashmir' on the same platform that it meant to use for the common good of the region.

Striking a different note, Dawn expressed the hope that India and Pakistan would 'begin to see the larger picture now' and warned: 'If they continue to quibble over minor issues - more out of a tradition of historical mistrust - they will lose out on the broader political and strategic advantages they can draw from a partnership based on mutual respect for each other's interests that do not necessarily clash.'

The Dawn editorial sought to place India-Pakistan relations and the South Asian situation against the backdrop of the war on terror and the United States and its Western allies' 'endeavour' to gain control over West Asia's oil resources. '... any closing of ranks between India and Pakistan will be welcome,' it said.

'After all, they are squeezed between the devil and the deep sea as the challenge they face comes as much from the US as from the extremists who do not hesitate to unleash terror on them,' the newspaper added.

The 14th summit of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) ended in New Delhi Wednesday with the eight member nations calling for a South Asian Economic Union and a convention on international terrorism among other things.

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