

Bush: What this agreement says is that things change, times change, that leadership can make a difference | **Manmohan:** We have made history today

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It's A Deal. A Very Big Deal

India, US Overcome Pangs Of Separation

By Indrani Bagchi/TNN

New Delhi: It was the high noon of India-US relations. Exactly at 12 on Thursday, President George Bush and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh strode out to the Hyderabad House lawns to announce the nuke deal's done. India gave a list of civilian nuclear installations that could be made open to inspection and it passed muster with the US, leading to an agreement for guaranteed American supply of nuclear fuel to Indian reactors.

Adjectives flew thick and fast — historic, momentous, landmark — words that have been used and abused so much in international relations that they tend to lose their meaning. In this case, though, the deal was pregnant with positive significance. It meant India and US have jointly crossed the rubicon to leave behind the history of a prickly relationship and ushered in ties of mutual trust.

Said a visibly pleased Bush: "What this agree-

ment says is things change, times change, that leadership can make a difference...It's not an easy job for the prime minister (Manmohan Singh) to achieve this agreement, I understand. It's not easy for the American president to achieve this agreement, but it's a necessary agreement." Manmohan Singh simply said: "We have made history today."

The suspense was killing in the run-up to the summit. Philosophically and psychologically, both sides were ready to accept each other as partners. But there were some practical sticking points. Exactly how many reactors was New Delhi prepared to open up for international inspec-

tion? Would that be good enough for the Americans? Talks went through most of the night and early morning, and after endless cups of coffee, an acceptable figure was reached.

India would open up 14 of its 22 nuclear reactors to IAEA safeguards, while keeping its strategic

nuclear programme — a euphemism for its weapons programme — out of public eye. The scientific community, having built the country's nuclear capability indigenously and under huge constraints, was opposed to outsiders monkeying around with it. On Thursday, the assurance of guaranteed fuel supply — what will keep the reactors going — seemed to have softened the opposition in some quarters.

The Left was still implacable. It held a huge protest rally, but the din of slogans was drowned under the reality of the path-breaking civil nuclear agreement. After all, the deal changes India's position in the world — it was no

longer a nuclear outlaw; it was a recognised nuclear power, a part of the non-proliferation order.

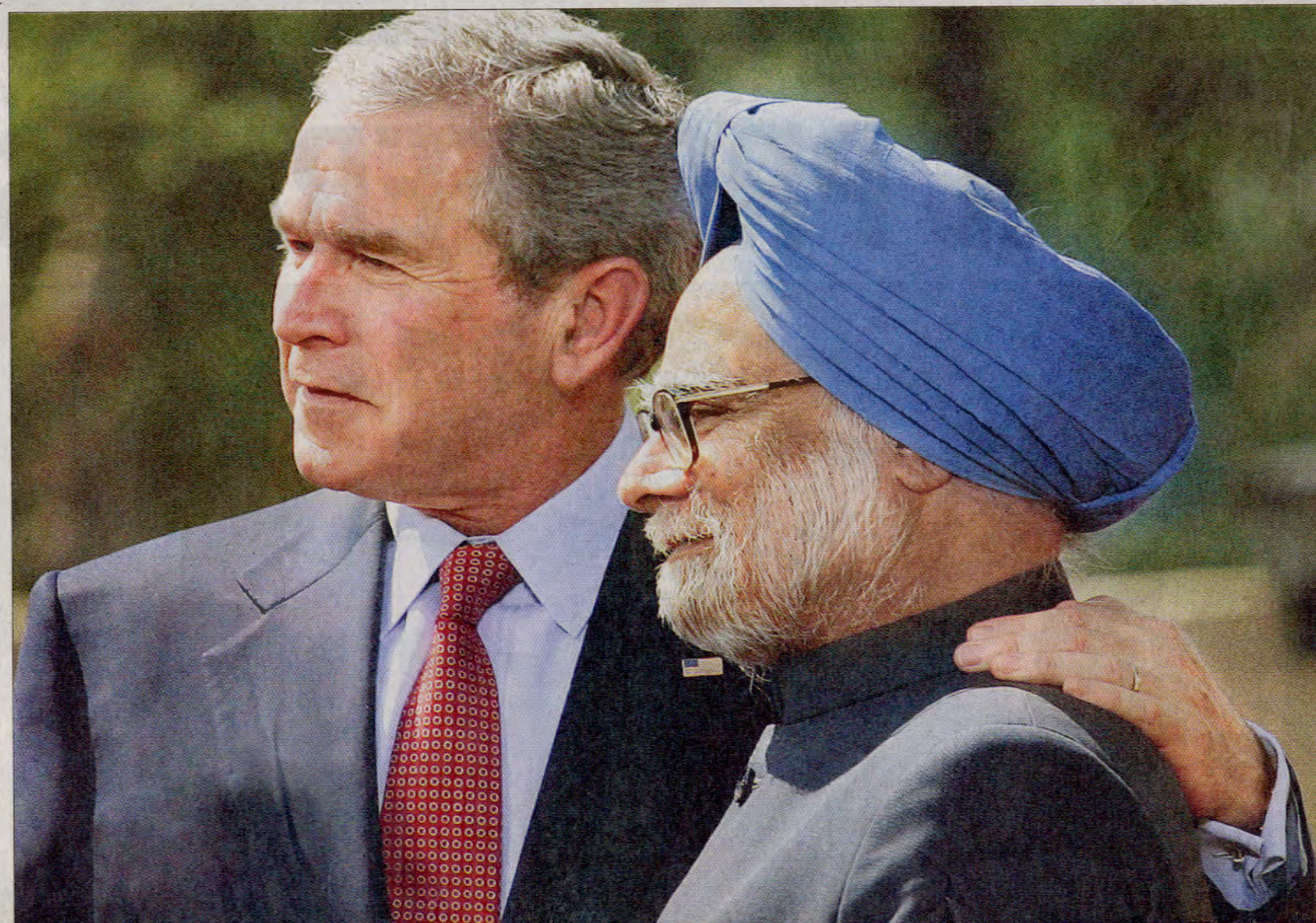
The challenge for Bush is to pilot this agreement through the US Congress in an election year, and a deal already under fire from non-proliferation ayatollahs in Washington. But the Prez was clear how he looked at it: "Proliferation is certainly a concern and we've got a good faith gesture by the Indian government that I'll be able to take to the Congress." His argument would be that it was in American interest to help India have a civilian nuclear power industry to reduce the pressure on the global demand for energy.

► Series of steps ahead: P5



Who were the men and women who worked behind the scenes to make the deal happen? What's at stake? Kaun jeeta, kaun hara? How's the rest of the world going to take it? What does it mean for business? TOI brings you the inside story, and analyses the impact in detail

DEAL WITH DUBYA
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TIMES IMPACT | Bush to Manmohan: "Mr Prime Minister, the world is watching our body language." Remember our headline yesterday?

WHAT IT SAYS...

14 out of 22 reactors, that's about 65%, under safeguards

India to decide status of all future reactors — whether civilian or military

All civilian reactors under permanent safeguards, but in return guaranteed lifetime fuel supply

Separation plan to be completed by 2014

Conclude International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreement as a nuclear weapons state

New civilian breeder reactors to be under IAEA safeguards

NUCLEAR ≠ NEW+ CLEAR

It's going to be a difficult deal for the prime minister to sell to his Parliament, but he has shown great courage and leadership... And it's a difficult deal for the American president to sell to our Congress... But it's a necessary agreement: **Bush**

Mission Accomplished? Not Yet...

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The hurly-burly is done, and now for the battles that have to be won. When Bush returns to Washington, he will have to sell the deal to:

- a hostile non-proliferation lobby;
- a skeptical Congress;
- a divided Nuclear Suppliers Group; and
- a confused American public.

Manmohan Singh too faces a tough task ahead. The Left despises Bush for very many reasons, and the Prime Minister might as well be supping with the devil in doing this deal. There's every chance that that Prakash Karat & Co will now intensify its opposition to UPA policies, from foreign to economic.

Within the UPA, and even the Congress, a close watch will be kept on how

the Muslim protests against the Iran vote and Bush pan out. Leaders like Lalu Yadav are not going to display public enthusiasm for the pact, keeping in mind their minority support base.

Bush, however, has a much steeper road ahead. For starters, why should the US offer nuclear technology and fuel and persuade other countries to do likewise to a country which

defied the world and went overtly nuclear? The first argument the Bush administration has begun making is that India did not break any rules in going nuclear. Unlike Iran or NSG members Brazil and South Africa, India was not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and as such did not violate any pact in going nuclear.

► Non-proliferation lobby: P4