

VISIT OF JASWANT SINGH, INDIA'S  
MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AF-  
FAIRS AND DEFENSE

**HON. FRANK PALLONE, JR.**

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 2, 2001*

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to note that Jaswant Singh, who serves as both Minister of External Affairs and Minister of Defense of India, is visiting the United States. He arrived on Sunday, September 30th and will depart on Tuesday, October 2nd.

During Minister Singh's visit, he met with New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani to show support to the U.S. in the fight against terrorism on the global level. Minister Singh is also visiting Washington, DC to meet with top officials at the White House, the State Department and the Defense Department, as well as House and Senate leaders.

Minister Singh's visit to the U.S. is symbolic of India's unconditional support for the U.S. This support is based on shared democratic principles and common interests. Additionally, from the very day that the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington occurred, India has come forward in strong support of the United States, offering its unwavering support for the war against terrorism.

India's prompt and bold action in coming forth to stand united with the U.S. stems from the fact that this country has been on the front lines in the fight against international terrorism for the years. Over the past 10 to 15 years, more than 53,000 civilians in India have been killed as a result of cross-border terrorism. These victims have suffered at the hands of many of the same terrorist networks believed to be behind the attack on the U.S.

India continues to be subject to the ravages of cross-border terrorism to this very day. Just yesterday afternoon, Monday, October 1st, a massive explosion near the main entrance of the State Assembly in India's state of Jammu and Kashmir left at least 29 persons dead and 40 injured. In addition, two militants firing from automatics later stormed the heavily-guarded assembly complex. The state assembly was in session when the blast occurred.

Those killed included five policemen, two from the Central Reserve Police Force, a schoolgirl and six state assembly employees. Eyewitnesses said a suicide bomber drove a jeep laden with explosives up to the main entrance of the state assembly and shortly after, the jeep exploded into a massive ball of fire leaving behind a trail of death and destruction. Jaish-e-Mohammad, a Pakistan-based militant group, has claimed responsibility for the blast. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher has condemned the bombing, stating: "I would say, first of all, that we very strongly condemn the attack today in Kashmir, as we have previous attacks. We think that no cause can justify the deliberate targeting of civilians in this manner. We extend our sympathies to the victims of the attack, we extend our condolences to India, a country that's suffered many terrorist attacks over the years. India is a key partner in the global coalition against terrorism, and we do believe that terrorism must be ended everywhere."

In statements from top Government officials, India has expressed its condolences for the

terrible losses, its solidarity with the American people, and its pledge of cooperation with the Administration. We have learned in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, the number of missing Indian nationals and persons of Indian origin is estimated at about 250.

Cooperation between India and the United States, the world's two largest democracies, extends beyond the current international campaign against terrorism, and has been steadily developing for the past few years. During the U.S.-India Summits in New Delhi in March 2000 and Washington in September 2000, the two countries established frameworks for preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery, preserving stability and growth in the global economy, protecting the environment, combating infectious diseases and expanding trade, especially in emerging knowledge-based industries and high technology areas.

However, at this time of crisis and tragedy for the American people, India has shown itself to be a good friend and a reliable and valued partner. India, with its strategic location and its excellent intelligence data, represents a vital resource and a logical partner for cooperation with the U.S. At this time of crisis, India has been recognized and appreciated in public statements from President Bush, Secretary of State Colin Powell and other top officials in the Administration and the visit to Washington of Minister Singh allows U.S. leaders to demonstrate the importance that the U.S. attaches to our growing relations with India.

INDIAN GOVERNMENT BARS  
VIEWING OF BURNING PUNJAB

**HON. DAN BURTON**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, October 2, 2001*

Mr. BURTON of Indiana. Mr. Speaker, for quite a while, people interested in South Asian issues have had a valuable resource in the website Burning Punjab, located at <http://www.burningpunjab.com>. This website has reported many stories about the Indian government's tyranny against Sikhs and other minorities. Now the Indian government has banned the viewing of Burning Punjab in the northwest part of India, where Punjab, the Sikh homeland, is. Punjab, of course, declared its independence on October 7, 1987, calling itself Khalistan. The website has been blocked in Punjab and in the state of Haryana, which has a substantial Sikh population, and Delhi.

Suppressing information is not the way that democratic countries do things. This ban shows that India is a deficient democracy. It has about as much freedom of the press as Communist China. Burning Punjab was founded on September 15, 1997. On March 29, 2000, the site's founder, Sukhbir Singh Osan, was reportedly threatened with murder, apparently by the Indian government. Are these the acts of a democracy?

The massive human-rights violations of the Indian government have been well documented. Over 250,000 Sikhs, more than 200,000 Christians, over 75,000 Kashmiri Muslims, and tens of thousands of Dalits and other minorities have been killed by the gov-

ernment. It holds over 52,000 Sikhs and tens of thousands of others as political prisoners with no charges and no trial. Some have been in custody for 17 years. There have been rapes of nuns, murders of priests, the burning death of a Christian missionary, attacks on Christian prayer halls, schools, and churches, on mosques, on the Golden Temple. A group of Indian soldiers were caught trying to burn down a Gurdwara (a Sikh temple) but were stopped by villagers.

Why does a country like that receive U.S. aid? Do we support them so they can suppress the information their citizens need? Do we support them so they can maintain bloody repression against the minorities within their borders? We should stop all aid to India until basic human rights like the free flow of information are allowed for all citizens. Furthermore, we should put this Congress on record in support of self-determination for the people of Khalistan, Kashmir, Nagaland, and the 14 other countries seeking their freedom from India. This should take the form of an internationally-monitored, free and fair plebiscite on the question of independence. That is the democratic way and the way of major world powers. We owe it to the principles that gave birth to America to take these measures to promote the principles of freedom in South Asia and around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to place the article on the banning of Burning Punjab into the RECORD at this time.

[From Burning Punjab News, Sept. 23, 2001]

VIEWING WEB SITE "BURNING PUNJAB"  
BANNED IN NORTH INDIA

NEW DELHI.—The Indian Intelligence Agencies have banned the viewing of World Wide Web site 'Burning Punjab' ([www.burningpunjab.com](http://www.burningpunjab.com)). The site was not accessible in Punjab, Haryana and Delhi for the past four days. It is reliably learnt that the Research Analysis Wing (RAW) of the Indian Hindu Regime ordered ban. The 'Burning Punjab' has now decided to change its IP identity and servers.

Here it is pertinent to mention that web site 'Burning Punjab' was launched on September 15, 1997 by a Chandigarh based journalist and lawyer, Sukhbir Singh Osan. The staff and manager of the site were threatened number of time by the Indian Police. On 29 March 2000, France based organization Reporters sans Frontier's (RSF) also objected to various restrictions imposed by the Indian Government on the staff and manager of the web site 'Burning Punjab' RSF General Secretary Robert Menard issued a letter to the Indian authorities opposing unwarranted 'censorship'.

It's worth mentioning that 'Burning Punjab'—[www.burningpunjab.com](http://www.burningpunjab.com) is an endeavor of IHRF. International Human Rights Forum (IHRF) is engaged in propagating the cause of Human Rights worldwide. Organization is taking special care for the welfare of state victims and is lending a helping hand to hapless and helpless to mitigate their sufferings. The activities of the IHRF have been appreciated by one and all irrespective of politico-religious affiliations. During the cult of violence in Punjab, Kashmir, Delhi, Assam, Bengal and elsewhere, the IHRF played a significant role in exposing inhuman & barbaric treatment and excesses committed by the State against the innocent & law abiding citizens.

About web site Burning Punjab: Burning Punjab is Punjab's first ever media site on Sikh Holocaust. It deals with the situation in East Punjab. Site contains news & views,