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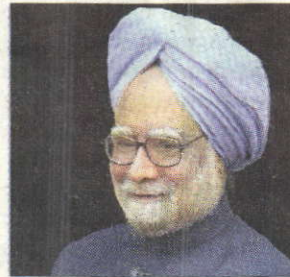
# India holds talks over refined fuel exports to Pakistan

Pakistan is close to removing petrol from the list of banned imports from India.

**NIDHI VERMA**  
BATHINDA

India has held talks over exporting refined fuels to its neighbour Pakistan, the head of Hindustan Mittal Energy said on Saturday, at the opening of the company's new refinery close to the border between the two countries.

Moves to stimulate trade flows and liberalise restricted investment rules have emerged as the key driver of peace efforts between the neighbours, whose fragile ties were shattered when



**Manmohan Singh**

Pakistani militants attacked Mumbai in 2008.

"There were government-to-government discussions. A delegation from Pakistan came but nothing has been finalised," said S. Roy Choud-

hury, chairman of Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) and Hindustan Mittal Energy.

Pakistan said last month that it was close to removing petrol from the list of banned imports from India. It allowed diesel imports in 2009, but no Indian supplies were sent in the face of preferential prices offered by allies such as Kuwait.

"We have significant refining capacity to enable us to export petroleum products," Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said at the official inauguration of the Bathinda

refinery.

Industry experts say fuel exports by India to Pakistan could be difficult as India's own fuel demand is rising, and Pakistan uses fuel of lower specification than what is being produced in Bathinda and other Indian refineries.

The \$4 billion Bathinda refinery, located 100 kilometres from the border with Pakistan and 175 kilometres from the city of Lahore, is operated by Hindustan Mittal Energy, a joint venture of state-run HPCL and Mittal Energy. REUTERS