

Jibes begin to sting, India to withdraw

HT-1
22/9

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, September 21

STUNG BY the criticism of its UN Force Commander and pressure from regional players, India has decided to pull out its 3,059-strong contingent from the 13,000-member UN peacekeeping force in Sierra Leone.

A spokesman for India's UN mission has been quoted as having said: "We have decided to withdraw from Sierra Leone as part of a routine rotation out of the mission so as to give other member States a chance to participate in the mission".

The spokesman denied that criticism of the mission it headed or disputes between the UN Force Commander, Major General V.K. Jetley, and his Nigerian subordinates and other officials played any part in the decision.

However, at the heart of India's decision to pullout lies the fact that Nigeria had publicly called for Gen Jetley's ouster.

Nigeria's Chief of Army Staff Major General Victor Malu declared on September 7 that Nigerian troops would refuse to serve under Gen Jetley in the UN mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).

The Nigerian Army Chief had called for Gen Jetley's resignation after he reportedly accused Nigerian officers of undermining the UN mission and profiting

from Sierra Leone's diamond deposits in a memo that was apparently leaked to two local newspapers.

Highly placed Government sources said the move to pullout troops was taken at the highest level yesterday.

The decision, according to the military establishment, was taken to pre-empt any move to replace Gen Jetley. "It is a question of national pride," a highly placed official said.

The move to withdraw its troops also came as a surprise to the defence establishment here as it

was in the midst of adding more muscle in the form of troops and force multipliers to the Indian contingent

there. It is understood that the Indian contingent will remain in Sierra Leone till the UN finds a replacement.

The decision comes after Chief of Army Staff General V.P. Malik went on record saying that he opposed "regional arrangements in peacekeeping" as this approach creates a distinct handicap in conflict resolutions.

The Indian Army has pumped some of its best troops, including 5/8 Gorkha Rifles and 18 Grenadiers, into peacekeeping operations in that country. The Indian Air Force inducted Mi-35 attack helicopters along with Mi-17 and Chetak helicopters to push the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels to a corner.

Sierra Leone Peace Mission

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

22 SEP 2000

Indian soldiers arrive in Freetown

NEW DELHI, JUNE 30. Twenty-one Indian peacekeepers, released by Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels at Pendembu, tonight reached the Sierra Leonean capital of Freetown to a hearty welcome, Army sources said here.

The peacekeepers, including two officers and a junior commissioned officer, were flown from Monrovia, capital of Liberia, by a special United Nations aircraft and were received at the Lungi airport by the Indian envoy, Mr. Neelam Dev, and Maj. Gen. V.K. Jetley, Indian commander of the U.N. mission in Sierra Leone.

"They were hale and hearty and were jubilant on arrival at Lungi," the sources said. *S-Africa*

After their release yesterday, the peacekeepers were transferred to Monrovia. The troops would be debriefed and re-deployed after they rejoin their unit. The Indian peacekeepers had been held in Pendembu near the Liberian border since May.

The U.N. Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, welcomed the latest release, acknowledging the role that the Liberian President, Mr. Charles Taylor, had played.

The RUF rebels are, however, still surrounding 222 other Indian peacekeepers and 11 military observers at nearby Kailahun, but the U.N. does not consider them hostages as they have not been disarmed.

Liberia's Defence Minister, Mr. Daniel Chea, warned that any attack on the rebels would complicate efforts to secure a safe passage for the surrounded peacekeepers. — Reuters, PTI, UNI

THE HINDU

1 JUL 2000

OAU summit: PM's envoy to press for release of Indian soldiers

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, July 7

MR K.V. Rajan, a secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, will be going as the Prime Minister's special envoy to Lome where the summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) nations begins on Monday. His brief will be to press for the release of the 224 Indian peacekeepers held semi-hostage by Sierra Leone rebels since May 2.

An Indian presence at the OAU summit is expected to considerably boost the diplomatic activity on this sensitive issue, sources here said. The United Nations Secretary General, Mr Kofi Annan, is also scheduled to be present during the three-day meet in the Togonese capital.

Sources also disclosed that the size of the UN legion in Sierra Leone may be increased soon. This will necessitate a Lt-Gen taking charge, superseding the Indian Maj Gen Vijay Kumar Jaitly. Mr Annan is known to be insisting on an Indian chief despite W African pressure that one of the ECOWAS countries have the right to nominate a force commander. "But that would mean a return to the ECO-MORG situation which the UN wants to avoid," says an official.

The release of 21 soldiers of the 5/8 Gorkha Regiment last week with the help of Liberian president Charles Taylor has reinforced the belief that the remaining part of the two-month crisis can be resolved with multilateral pressure on the Revolutionary United Front. Mr Taylor was one of the founders of the RUF and it was his intervention which finally resulted in the freeing of the Indians held in Pendembu.

Mr Annan has already threatened "stern action" if the 224 surrounded in Kailahun are not released latest by July 13 when OAU summit concludes. "The UN forces in Sierra Leone are already sufficiently armed if Mr Annan gives the signal for conversion of the mandate from peace keeping to peace enforcement — once that green signal is given anything may happen", sources said.

Indian sentiment has been bruised by disclosures that the Pendembu 21 had been forced to give up their arms and the RUF stripped them off their uniforms before handing them over to Liberian authorities.

Indian troops rescued in Sierra Leone

16/7
Freetown, July 15 9 AM

UN TROOPS today rescued all 220 Indian peacekeepers and 11 military observers trapped by rebels inside a UN base in eastern Sierra Leone, a UN spokeswoman said. Two Indian troops in the UN force were slightly injured.

The 220 Indian soldiers, who had been unable to leave the rebel-held town of Kailahun since May, were liberated and on their way by road to the nearby town of Daru, said spokeswoman Hirut Befecadu.

The 11 military observers, of various nationalities, were flown by helicopter to Freetown.

The UN team took action after it received word that rebels were preventing the UN force in Sierra Leone, known as Unamsil, from sending the trapped peacekeepers food or supplies.

"With a distress signal received from (the detained troops in) Kailahun, regarding the dwindling food and medical stocks, there was no alternative to a military option," the statement said. "The Revolutionary United Front (RUF) illegal actions, which have been universally condemned and for which appeals had been made by Unamsil for quick resolution, yielded no results."

Kailahun, which has served as the rebels' headquarters since they launched the war in the early 1990s, is about 320 km east of Freetown.

A UN official speaking on condition of anonymity said the convoy remained wary of a possible ambush on the road to Daru, a dirt track through rain forest controlled by the rebels.

The UN rescue team consisted of troops from Ghana, India and Nigeria. UN force commander Maj. Gen. Vijay Jetley oversaw the mission from a UN base in Daru, a UN statement said.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

15 JUL 1997

India to keep peace, not enforce it: Jaswant

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, July 16

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS Minister Jaswant Singh told mediapersons today that India will continue to be a part of the peace keeping mission in Sierra Leone but had no intentions of getting the UN mandate changed from "peace keeping" to "peace enforcement".

Yesterday, 220 troops and 11 military observers were extricated from the encirclement of the heavily-armed RUF rebels at Kailahun in a brilliantly planned and executed military operation.

UN Force Commander Major

General V.K. Jetly, in "Operation Kukhri", used superior military tactics and awesome air power to outwit the RUF rebels.

According to Lt-General Nirmal Chander Vij, Director General Military Operations (India), the UNAMSIL used Indian Air Force Mi-35 attack helicopters to attack RUF positions. He said that the RUF have been hit hard with three of its rein-

forcement carrying vehicles destroyed at Manowa Ferry.

Lt-Gen. Vij said the Indian troops have recovered eight light machine guns, seven rocket

launchers and a truckload of ammunition abandoned by the RUF in Pendembu. Two Indian one tonne vehicles, which had been taken by the RUF, were recovered.

The two Indian soldiers

who sustained shrapnel injuries in yesterday's commando operations have been admitted to hospital. RUF's collateral losses are not known.

Jaswant Singh said that use of the military option at Kailahun had become unavoidable after extensive diplomatic efforts by the United Nations and India and the political initiatives at the highest level had been exhausted.

The External Affairs Minister complemented the Indian Force Commander for successfully carrying out the operations in Sierra Leone and thanked a number of other countries for able support.

Troops airlifted

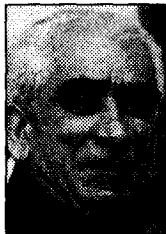
SOME 150 Indian peacekeepers were airlifted to safety on Sunday and helicopters supporting the dramatic two-day United Nations rescue operation were trying to evacuate the others, a senior UN official said.

AP Wirephoto

THE HINDU

India will not pull troops out of Sierra Leone, says Jaswant Singh

NEW DELHI: A day after the evacuation of 221 Indian peace-keepers in Sierra Leone, who spent ten weeks as captives of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebels, external affairs minister Jaswant Singh ruled out that India would withdraw from the UN peace-keeping operations in the island nation.



Jaswant Singh

"Of course, we are continuing," Mr Singh told reporters when asked whether India would rethink on persisting with its troops in Sierra Leone.

Two Indian para commandos sustained shrapnel injuries and were immediately evacuated, director-general of military operations (DGMO) Lt Gen N.C. Vij said and added that the RUF, which put up stiff resistance, suffered a number of casualties.

Indian troops seized one medium machine gun, eight light machine guns, seven rocket launchers and one truck load of ammunition abandoned by the RUF at Pendembu. As part of the effective air operations, Indian attack helicopters destroyed three RUF vehicles carrying reinforcements at Manowa ferry.

"Our resolve to contribute to the UN operations is not diluted in any manner," Mr Singh said while observing that the Indian troops had faced difficult situations as part of UN peace-keeping missions but this had not acted as a "deterrent".

Asked whether India favoured a change in the UN mandate to arm troops with "peace enforcement" powers, Mr Singh observed that the "whole operation of UN peacekeeping is becoming more complex."

He hoped the issue would be examined by UN member states at the forthcoming millennium summit.

Mr Singh said the Indian troops were "extricated"

from Kailahun in a brilliantly planned and executed military operation nicknamed Operation "Khukri" during the last 36 hours. The troops have now been moved to Daru.

With extensive diplomatic efforts by the UN and India, and political initiatives at the highest level to persuade the RUF to lift the siege being unsuccessful, the use of force to secure the freedom of movement of UNAMSIL peacekeepers became unavoidable, he said. The go ahead for the military option was given by UN secretary-general Kofi Annan and the UN department of peace-keeping operations.

The military operations, which commenced at 6 a.m. on July 15, were personally supervised by UNAMSIL force commander major general V.K. Jetley from Daru, Mr Singh said.

Terming the operation a "complex" one, Mr Singh said it had involved securing a link between the columns from Daru and Kailahun at a mid-way place in Pendembu.

Explaining the situation, Mr Singh said the total distance was approximately 72 km and the RUF had over 1,000 rebels in the area, with Pendembu being its brigade headquarters.

The DGMO said the operation was planned in two phases. The first phase, undertaken on July 13 and 14, was the preparatory stage to establish an air and logistics base at Kenema and build reserves of 18 grenadiers at Daru. The second phase, which commenced on Saturday, involved dropping heliborne troops at three places to get control of the Daru-Kailahun road.

About 300 troops were helidropped at the Indian air force helicopters at Kenema, Geihun and Three Bridges area. The returning helicopters also picked up military observers and certain troops in their flights, Lt Gen Vij said. (PTI)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

17 JUL 2000

Fernandes to meet Sierra peacekeepers

9-Africa
SF 8 19/7
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, July 18. — The defence minister is visiting Sierra Leone to meet the members of the largely-Indian UN peacekeeping mission and compliment them on their success over the weekend. The siege of over 200 Indian soldiers had been broken by Operation Khukri.

Mr George Fernandes, who left here tonight, is scheduled to spend a couple of days in Sierra Leone and interact with the constituents of UNAMSIL who have been through extremely difficult times while trying to bring peace to the troubled nation. He will be accompanied by senior Army and Air Force officers.

The defence minister had yesterday lauded the conduct of the rescue operation. In a message to Major General VK Jetley, who commands the UN force, he said the Operation Khukri was "unavoidable" and necessary to "uphold the image of UNAMSIL and its constituents."

"Despite all political and diplomatic efforts the RUF had refused to follow the path of reason," Mr Fernandes said. He lauded their action as "a classical land-air operation with brilliant planning and

equally decisive execution."

"The fact that most of the constituents were from India made this operation even more important and critical from the point of view of the prestige of the country in general and the armed forces in particular," the minister observed.

The body of the Indian soldier who died in the operation is expected to be brought here tomorrow. Havildar Krishan Kumar, a driver, had been hit by gunfire while transporting the rescued troops to a safer place.

Annan's praise: The UN secretary general, Mr Kofi Annan, today praised Maj-Gen Jetley and his contingent for leading an "effective, highly efficient and professional operation" in rescuing 233 peacekeepers surrounded by rebels for the past 10 weeks, PTI adds from UNHQ.

"The courage and remarkable discipline and determination displayed by all bring credit to them, their countries and to the UN", Mr Annan said. The fact that peacekeepers were able to bring all their weapons, vehicles and other essential equipment with them was an added cause for satisfaction.

The American and British ambassadors had also supported the operation.

THE STATESMAN

HD-14
25/7

Indian troops ready for new missions in Sierra Leone

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Africa

By Atul Aneja

FREETOWN, JULY 27. After successfully freeing Indian peacekeepers in eastern Sierra Leone, Indian para-commandos are bracing themselves for new missions.

With the U.N. Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) determined to use force, if necessary, to bring the warring factions to the negotiating table, increasing involvement of special forces in the coming days could not be ruled out. With inclement weather and a treacherous jungle terrain hampering movement of ground troops, the UNAMSIL forces are launching aerial missions increasingly.

The para-commandos, who are preparing for a conventional assault, are training hard. Two months after they were airlifted from the Kashmir valley and hastily inducted without passports, they are now better acquainted with the jungle terrain. "We did not initially understand the vegetation here. This was a big drawback as we are trained to live off the land," said Maj. Harinder Sood, who heads a company of Special Forces belonging to 2 Paras. The network for acquiring detailed field intelligence is now nearly in place. Besides, the forces are now better acquainted with local conditions, including language and social customs.

The biggest asset of the Special Forces is their high morale. The precision strike to free the encircled Indian forces in Kailahun during "Operation Khukri" on July 15, without any major loss, has contributed to this. Their task during the operation was to quickly land by helicopter, and secure a corridor through Kailahun town along which the 221 encircled peacekeepers could be extricated.

A British Chinook helicopter, which had night flying capabilities, landed 34 commandos in Kailahun while six were disembarked close to the complex of houses where the peacekeepers were lodged. Eleven military observers who had been living in this complex for the last two months were airlifted to safety within minutes. The rest of the encircled forces, belonging mainly to the 5/8 Gorkha Rifles, which had been informed of the rescue mission at the last-minute, meanwhile loaded

the 16 vehicles in their possession with essential "war materials" including ammunition. Within half-an-hour, the over 200-strong convoy was on its way, led by 6 para-commandos on foot.

Meanwhile, the remaining commandos, apprehending a RUF attack, set up ambushes at key points to secure a corridor till the main square of Kailahun. A second Chinook helicopter dropped another 38 commandos at Jimila, about two km short of Kailahun's main square. This force advanced rapidly and linked up with the convoy which was already moving at this junction. In the absence of attack helicopter support, a decision was taken to rapidly advance on foot towards Geihun. The troops, now chased by the RUF, who fired rocket propelled grenades, marched at a furious pace to reach Geihun by 10.30 a.m., where they were met by the UNAMSIL force commander, Maj. Gen. V.K. Jetley. By this time, around a 100 paratroopers from the 18 Grenadiers had been dropped close to Geihun.

With the forces beefed up after a

link-up at Geihun, the column now headed for the rebel stronghold of Pendembu, further south. Pendembu, meanwhile, was attacked by Gorkha troops, who had advanced from their battalion headquarters at Daru. By 6.30 p.m., the column reached Pendembu and linked up with the Gorkhas. The Special Forces thereafter undertook mopping operations involving house-to-house searches for rebels for the next four hours. The next morning, IAF helicopters airlifted around 350 people to safety in Daru, while the remaining party made its way by road.

According to Maj. Sood, this operation ensured that the shell-shocked RUF cadres were denied reinforcements. Artillery and helicopter gunship attacked the Monowa Ferry junction from where RUF reinforcements could arrive. Simultaneously, attacks were launched towards Buedo, northeast of Kailahun and the Tongo diamond mining area, another important base of the RUF to ensure that their diversion was complete.

THE HINDU

28 JUL 2000

400 Indians encircled in Sierra Leone

Udayan Nambodiri
New Delhi, June 6

9. Africa
HT-1
THE SIERRA Leone crisis got murkier today amid reports of 400 more Indian soldiers attached to the UN peace mission for the civil war-ravaged west African nation being "surrounded" by Revolutionary United Front rebels. The incident occurred in the eastern part of the country near Kalahum town and the troops belonged to the 5/8 Gorkha Regiment.

211
This takes the total number of Indian troops rendered ineffective for UN duty to 623. But Defence Headquarters, prior to the latest development, admitted to only 23 soldiers of the same regiment being held "hostage". The remaining 200 being held on the Sierra Leone-Liberia border, in official view, are "not non-operational" as they have not been disarmed. But the fact remains that they are ineffective for all intents and purposes.

India has 1,612 soldiers of the 5/8 Grenadiers and 1,500 of the 18 Grenadiers apart from elements drawn from Assam Rifles, mechanised infantry and other components in the west African country. This is part of the estimated 13,000 UN force posted in the country under the overall charge of Major-General V. K. Jaitly.

Sources here described the latest incident as part of a series of military-diplomatic blows rained on India. Over the past month, a clutch of African nations, led by

Nigeria, have spoken out against the command of Maj. Gen. Jaitly. They want him replaced by an officer from the region. On May 27, the 16-country Economic Cooperation Organisation of West African States (ECOWAS) passed a resolution demanding his removal.

Zambia's President Fredrick Chiluba yesterday lashed out at the Indian general, holding him responsible for a detachment of his soldiers being taken hostage. Addressing a prayer service for the soldiers in Lusaka, the President alleged that Gen Jaitly had sent the Zambians into hostile territory without logistical support.

The Indian response to this varies between the cryptic and the limpid. While upholding its commitment to the UN and ruling out any question of withdrawal in the face of opposition, diplomatic moves to persuade the west African Governments of the importance of prudence at this critical juncture have obviously come to nought.

India has downplayed the extent of the damage to troop morale by the RUF's month-long hostage drama. It considers only 23 soldiers of the 5/8 Gorkhas as "non-operational" because they have been disarmed. The two company garrison being held on the border with Liberia are being allowed to keep their weapons and armed personnel carriers. But they are effectively encircled by armed RUF militia rendering them ineffective.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

7 JUN 2000

Release of Indian troops in Sierra Leone imminent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 7

THE release of 23 Indian peace-keeping soldiers, detained by rebel militiamen in northern Sierra Leone for the past nine weeks, appeared imminent today as they were shifted by their captors to border with Liberia, according to reports reaching Army headquarters here.

The soldiers, who were detained at Kujiva by the rebel Revolutionary United Front (RUF) militiamen, have been taken to near the border town of Pendembu.

"These soldiers are fully armed and are being provided regular food supplies from their base location at Daru," an Army spokesman here said.

The move of the 23 Indian hostages comes even as reports said that two companies of the

Gorkha Rifles located at Kailahun in eastern Sierra Leone continued to be in a stand-off position with the heavily armed RUF cadres, who have surrounded them.

Besides the Gorkhas, eleven other UN military observers of different nationalities are also among those besieged.

According to UNASMIL sources, the shifting of Indian hostages to the Liberian border "appears to be in line with what RUF done earlier". Elaborating, they said that the RUF, whenever they wanted to release the detainees, moved them to Pendembu before releasing them on Liberian soil.

An Army spokesman here said that top RUF Commander, Brig Issa Sesay in the Kailahun sector had assured the company Commander that his forces had no "animosity with UNASMIL forces".

INDIAN EXPRESS

8 JUN 2000

Delhi haze over state of troops in S Leone

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, June 7. — The government today couldn't come out with a clear statement on the condition of Indian troops in Kailahun, Sierra Leone, though it denied reports that 400 India soldiers were surrounded by Revolutionary United Front fighters.

The defence and external affairs ministries said 213 Indian soldiers of two companies of a Gurkha battalion and 11 military observers of other nationalities were in a "stand-off" position with the RUF at Kailahun. Only 23 Indian soldiers, the government said, were detained at Pendembu.

But the government didn't explain what the "stand-off" was and gave no information on the condition of the troops.

Unofficially, the Army said there was no stand-off at all. UNAMSIL spokesman, Lt-Col J Sandhu, was quoted as having said yesterday that the two companies had been surrounded. The external affairs ministry spokesman said he was not aware of any such report.

DGMO: The Director-General of Military Operations, Lt-Gen NC Vij, may visit Freetown in Sierra Leone soon, senior officials said today.

The plan to send Lt-Gen Vij was made a few days ago and

now the government has to clear it. The DGMO would be one of the first senior lieutenant-generals to visit a "frontline" area. Senior officials confirmed his trip but didn't say when he would leave.

Apart from the stand-off and detention from May 3, the major problem for Indian Army officers in Sierra Leone is the lack of coordination between various military personnel in the region. The Indians have British and Nigerians troops for company.

The Indians are part of the UN but the British and Nigerians are on their own and often their agenda differs. The Nigerians are reinforcing their

position and two or three of their battalions (each has 800 men) are moving in. Officials said they have considerably more clout, for the USA sees them as the regional power.

The "independent" position of the British and Nigerians has created operational difficulties. Lt-Gen Vij's trip may help ease the problems.

Why was such a large contingent of Indian troops sent to war-torn Sierra Leone? An official said "collective" security was the major issue of the times. India wants a permanent seat in the UN Security Council and a forceful presence would help buttress that demand he said.

THE STATESMAN

21 Indians taken hostage

HT Correspondent and PTI
New Delhi, June 9

IN A further worsening of the situation in Sierra Leone, 21 of the 23 detained Indian peacekeeping soldiers have been taken hostage by rebels, who made stiff political demands reneging on their promise to release them.

The personnel comprising two officers, one junior commissioned officer and 18 other ranks, were disarmed last evening by the rebels at Pendembu, their brigade headquarters, and "have been made hostage", an External Affairs Ministry spokesman told reporters today. Two soldiers somehow got away in a food truck that was sent into their camp.

"The RUF leadership has now made a set of demands to the Unamsil. This is entirely unacceptable," he said.

The development has also put a question mark over the status of the 213 officers who, regardless of official details, are for all intents and purposes held prisoners at Kaliaham.

The RUF, a rag-tag army now controlling more than two-thirds of the West African country, has issued four demands for their release.

First, the RUF wants the negotiation process for the resolution of the civil war revived and full implementation of the ECOWAS mandate. Second, they have demanded the immediate release of one of its leaders, Moday Sankoh and his handing over to any ECOWAS member-government. Third, all RUF personnel and collaborators held to date must be released. Finally, they want Major General V K Jaitly, the Indian commander of the estimated

11,000-strong Unamsil force to forward their demands to all concerned. The Indian Government has appealed to

United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan to seek the release of the troops. The spokesman said India's permanent representative at the UN has contacted Mr. Annan and the Under Secretary-General in charge of peacekeeping missions. "They share India's concern and have stated that the RUF's demands are unacceptable."

As for the two companies of troops in a "standoff position" in Kaliaham, the spokesman claimed that "at the moment they are in a place where they are deployed and there is no cause for alarm". However, there is growing concern that the RUF, which has completely sealed off all the roads leading to the Indians' position, may take them

hostages as well.

The RUF had been holding the 23 for over five weeks before moving them to the Pendembu camp on Tuesday. Senior officers of the Indian Army had been negotiating for their release and had been returning with favourable responses. The rebels' attitude was curious because on the one hand they were allowing the troops to keep their weapons, while on the other, restricting their movements.

India, instead of acting directly, is using its good offices with the UN to work out a solution to the problem. A joint team of Army, Air Force and External Affairs Ministry officials are present in Freetown doing their bit, while diplomatic efforts are being made through the ECOWAS governments. Significantly, the UN did not issue a single statement of protest even as the "detention" crisis and "standoff" ran parallel for over a month.

Peacekeepers in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone rebels set terms for freeing Indian soldiers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SR-10 11/6
Africa

NEW DELHI, June 10. — There has been no change in the situation of the 21 Indian soldiers taken hostage by the RUF in Sierra Leone in Pendembu on Thursday. The 213 Indian soldiers in the stand-off in Kailahun also continue to be cut off with the surface access blocked and all surface roads and the hinterland in the control of the RUF.

In return for the release of the 21 hostages, the RUF has demanded the implementation of the ECOWAS mandate, the release of Foday Sankoh and all RUF personnel and a revisitation of the Lome peace accord.

Asserting that it was the primary responsibility of the UN to secure the release of the soldiers who were part of a UN peace-keeping force, the external affairs spokesman said India was not going to engage with anyone in negotiating demands. Asked about the steps taken by the UN and whether India was satisfied with them, the spokesman said the UN had so far issued statements. India could only hope that the action taken would be calibrated in a way that would achieve the objectives. "We hope there will be further intensive efforts," he said.

The spokesman said the Indian delegation, which had arrived in Sierra Leone day before, had met the President of Sierra Leone, the special representative and the special adviser of the UN Secretary General, the heads of diplomatic missions and others. The DGMO was expected to move to Daru in South East Sierra Leone soon. Contact was also being maintained with the RUF field commanders he said. Asked whether the issue was being taken up at the political level, the spokesman said India was in touch diplomatically with the relevant countries and would have to tailor its action in a manner consistent with the objective of getting the hostage soldiers released.

"Let us not forget that the UN has primary responsibility," he said.

THE STATESMAN

11 JUN 2000

AD-11 Indian diplomatic effort in Sierra Leone 11/6

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JUNE 10. The 21 Indian soldiers continue to be held hostage in Sierra Leone, even as New Delhi has launched a feverish diplomatic exercise to get them released.

The External Affairs Ministry spokesman today said the five demands raised by the Sierra Leone's Revolutionary United Front (RUF) for the release of the soldiers were non-negotiable. India was looking for United Nations activism to get the hostages released as the soldiers were functioning under the U.N. flag.

India has also initiated a major diplomatic effort, engaging key players who can influence the RUF. These countries include the United States, which has active contacts with the Liberian leadership, known to be closely linked to the RUF leader, Foday Sankoh. His release is one of the key demands of the RUF.

The spokesman said the Indian response to the crisis was being calibrated to the developments on the ground as well as to the international response.

Meanwhile, the visiting Indian official team in Sierra Leone has met a wide cross-section of people who can influence the developments in the country. It includes the representative of the U.N. Secretary-General, the Presi-

dent of Sierra Leone, Mr. Ahmed Tejan Kabbah, who is also the Defence Minister. *J. Africa*

Kofi Annan warns rebels

In a related development, the U.N. Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, has warned the hostage-takers that they are committing a "serious crime" for which they would be held accountable. In a statement, Mr. Annan said he was concerned at the detention of the U.N. staff in Kailahun and Pendembu, not far from the border with Liberia. Mr. Annan has particularly called upon the Liberian President, Mr. Charles Taylor, to exert his influence to get the Indian soldiers released without further delay.

THE HINDU

PM plea to Nigeria on hostages

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, June 11. — The Prime Minister has personally taken an initiative to secure the release of 21 Indian soldiers held hostage in Sierra Leone. He requested the Nigerian President over the phone today to use his influence in the region to free the soldiers.

The government has been saying for the past few days that it is the UN's responsibility to secure their release since they were under its mandate.

This argument has presumably worn thin with no sign of progress in the affair, so that

Mr AB Vajpayee has had to step in. The Nigerian leader, Mr Olugesun Obasanjo, promised to make every effort to ensure the Indian soldiers' release, the external affairs ministry said. He said he would get in touch with other

■ **Editorial: Take Liberia too, page 6**

regional leaders as well.

India has been in touch with several countries in the region, as well as the USA and UK, through diplomatic channels in the past few weeks. But high-level political efforts have been initiated only now to get the

soldiers freed.

The 21 soldiers were taken hostage on Thursday when the RUF disarmed them, presenting four demands as a condition for their release. The hostages were held first at Kuivah and then the RUF brigade headquarters at Pendembu.

A four member delegation from the defence and foreign ministries, Army and Air Force is in Sierra Leone. But its brief is to examine all aspects of Indian presence in the country.

The UN confirmed in Free Town today that the 21 soldiers are still in rebel custody, adds AFP.

THE STATESMAN

7 JUN 2000

Indian peacekeepers get a rough deal

Udayan Namboodiri
New Delhi, June 11

NEARLY SIX weeks have lapsed since ragtag rebel forces in Sierra Leone took about 253 UN peacekeepers, including 245 Indian soldiers, captive. But there is little sympathy from the world community - the incident is treated as a footnote in the realms of official and semi-official analyses on the civil war in the West African country. The Indian Government too is downplaying the seriousness of the situation.

Today, Prime Minister A B Vajpayee is learnt to have telephoned Nigerian President General Olusegun Obasanjo and managed to secure an assurance from him that he would get in touch with other ECOWAS leaders so that 21 soldiers including two officers of the 5/8 Gorkha Rifles held as "hostages" in Pendembu are released.

However, nothing was said about the 231 others, including some observers of undisclosed

nationality, who are held semi-hostage -- a description still vehemently denied by official sources -- in Kailahun. Even the UN Mission for Sierra Leone spokesman has admitted in interviews that their situation is serious. The Indian Government, after much humming and hawing over the past five weeks, said last week that though the "hostages" are still armed and receiv-

News Analysis

ing rations, they are cut off by armed militia, most probably by the Revolutionary United Front.

The international Press' apathy to the plight of the Indians can be understood. After all, in the absence of any hue and cry raised by the Indian Government and the media, what can possibly be their interest in highlighting the Indians' ordeal. Besides, there is a tendency to belittle the South Asian regiments now engaged in the futile peace-

keeping. The western Press hints that the Indians, Bangladeshis and Nepalese troops were there to make some extra money and, implicitly, walked into this adventure.

If the Indian Government had done a brief reconnaissance before committing its crack troops -- who include the 18 Grenadiers of Tiger Hill fame -- they may have second thoughts. It should have been clear from the start that the task in Sierra Leone was not one of keeping peace that did not exist, but actually enforcing peace on reluctant parties.

The weak-kneed Indian official response uses the country's unstilted faith in the UN mandate as a prop. The External Affairs Ministry spokesman harped tirelessly throughout last week that India decided to send some 3,000 troops and observers to the hopelessly complex place out of a seething desire to uphold peace. But in the process the Indians are getting regarded as something between babes in the woods and mercenaries.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

12 JUN 2000

Jetley warns Sierra rebels over hostages

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, June 12. — Major-General VK Jetley, who commands the UNAMSIL has warned rebels in Sierra Leone that he would initiate "all the necessary action" to safeguard his troops.

He has accused the Revolutionary United Front of violating the Lome peace accord by detaining 21 soldiers and restricting another 234. In a statement issued yesterday he warned that any harm to the troops would have serious consequences for which the RUF would be responsible.

The warning from Maj-Gen Jetley is significant because the UN force may be compelled by circumstances to shed its neutrality and engage with the RUF to protect its own troops.

1376
9 Africa
This would also increase the stress on the Indian soldiers who have already been under pressure because of the refusal of some other contingents to obey the UN Force commander's orders.

(Local commanders of Sierra Leonean rebels holding 21 Indian UN peacekeepers say the captives' future is out of their control, a UN spokesman said today, adds AFP from Freetown. "The RUF commanders inform our people that the 21 are safe and well, but their release is now beyond the control of the local commanders, it's being handled at a higher level," the spokesman, Mr David Wimhurst, said.)

Asked what the major-general's statement implied about the mandate of the troops, the foreign ministry spokesman here said the UNAMSIL's mandate, from

Chapter VI, under which the troops were functioning, also provided for action under parts of Chapter VII in certain circumstances.

Maj-Gen Jetley asserted that the UNAMSIL would remain impartial but added that the security of troops was his prime responsibility.

DGMO expected back: Lt-Gen NC Vij, DGMO, who went to Sierra Leone last week, is expected to return soon. On his way back, he will meet British military officers in London to discuss "coordination issues".

Lt-Gen Vij went to Free Town after problems of interaction arose between Indian peacekeepers and British and Nigerian forces that were not part of the UN peacekeeping force.

THE STATESMAN

13 JUN 2000

UN tag shackles Gen Jetley

Shishir Gupta
New Delhi, June 15

THE PEACEKEEPERS in Sierra Leone are armed to the teeth, yet virtually crowded out by a host of diplomatic initiatives by countries operating with or without the UN mandate in that civil war ravaged West African country.

Highly placed Government sources said despite having flown in three Mi-35 attack helicopters, three 105 mm field guns and 120 mm mortars with long range shells over a fortnight ago, the Force Commander, Major Gen V K Jetley is still awaiting authorisation from the UN to use them. The reason apparently is that artillery cannot be used in such operations, the mandate being peacekeeping and not peace enforcement.

The Mi-35 helicopters are currently awaiting clearance at Hastings, south of Lungi airport, after having being tested for airworthiness. These aircraft were earmarked for patrolling Government-held areas and to deter the RUF rebels. The IAF's Mi-8 and Cheetah helicopters, on the other hand, have flown around 350 sorties, their operations confined to dropping food supplies and evacuation of casualties.

Regardless of the Ministry of External Affairs's cautious optimism, the ground situation in Sierra Leone, these sources said, is that of confusion with Gen Jetley having to route through the UN and other foreign interlocutors even basic queries about the safety of Indian troops held hostage by the RUF.

It is understood that during discussions with top UN officials, the Indian team led

by DGMO Lt Gen Nirmal Chander Vij, sought permission for deployment of artillery and attack helicopters to deter the RUF rebels. Earlier, the Indian peacekeepers had impressed upon the visiting Indian delegation that the UN should play a more pro-active diplomatic role to make the warring factions stick to the provisions of the Lome Accord.

Efforts stepped up to secure soldiers' release

INDIA ON Thursday stepped up diplomatic efforts to secure the release of 21 Indian peacekeepers being held hostage by rebels of Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in Sierra Leone, even as UN Secretary General Kofi Annan asked West African countries to assist in ending the ...passe.

An External Affairs Ministry spokesman claimed there was no hindrance to the supply of rations to the 21 hostages in Pendembu as also to 213 Indian soldiers in Kallahun where the stand-off with RUF continues.

HTC, New Delhi

The Indian team and the UN officials have had extensive discussions at the UN Headquarters on the conduct of peacekeeping operations in the hostage issue. Gen Vij and his colleagues also met the UN Under Secretary General for Peacekeeping, Bernard Miyet, and several other officials of this department.

It is believed that with the Indian diplomacy virtually taking a backseat, Gen

Jetley finds his hands tied militarily and diplomatically he is at the mercy of countries such as the United Kingdom, Nigeria and the United States. It is the UN and these countries that are talking to the RUF for the release of the detained 21 Indian peacekeepers at Pedembu.

The Indian force profile in Sierra Leone comprises two battalions of crack 5/8 Gorkha Rifles, the famed 18 Grenadiers, two mechanised companies with 14-16 armoured personnel carriers (APCs), a composite artillery unit and other elements. They showed their might earlier this month when the 400-strong Indian contingent equipped with APCs took control of the Rogberi junction.

The UN had deserted this position after it came under attack from the RUF rebels. When the rebels opened fire at the Indian contingent with rocket propelled grenades, the famed 18 Grenadiers scattered them with heavy machine gun fire.

The problem is that Gen Jetley has been told to restrict himself to the peacekeeping mandate even at times when the security of his troops is involved. Although the Indian Force Commander's credentials as a leader have been questioned time and again by a number of organisations, he earned his spurs in Operation Bahadur in Siachen as a Brigade Commander and as the GOC, 11 division. The military establishment here feels that Gen Jetley should be taken into confidence about all diplomatic initiatives to ensure the success of peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone. The UN should pressurise the RUF rather than leaving it to the Force Commander to threaten the rebels.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

16 JUN 2000

~~Indian hostages~~ in Sierra Leone

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MJK

UNHQ, June 24. — Twenty Indian peacekeepers detained by the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone have been shifted to a Red Cross compound at Pendembu, the UNO has said.

No other details were available and it was not clear whether the change of location would lead to the soldiers' release. Liberian President Mr Charles Taylor has been trying to secure their release.

The condition of the remaining 222 Indian peacekeepers and 11 military observers surrounded by RUF at Kailahun has not changed. RUF detained the 20 soldiers early this month, while the others were taken captive in May. — PTI

THE STATESMAN

25 JUN 2000

India talks tough on Sierra Leone

Udayan Nambodiri
New Delhi, June 28

9-AM/12
12/28

A "SLUR campaign" aimed at removing Major General V K Jaitly from the command of the 13,000 strong United Nations Mission for Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) is allegedly being waged by the ECOWAS group and elements of the Sierra Leone media.

Sources here say India will not tolerate interference in this matter and would pull out its entire force of two battalions and support groups if the UN succumbs to pressure from those wanting the Indian commander to be replaced.

Subtle moves like increasing the size of the UNAMSIL contingent to facilitate Maj Gen Jaitly's replacement by a Lieutenant General of African nationality are reported to be sponsored by the ECOWAS group. It is learnt that Foreign Ministers of this coalition last week met the UN authorities in New York and submit-

ted such a proposal.

Though official reaction was not available, India has made it clear that should Maj Gen Jaitly be superseded in natural outcome of an increase in the peacekeeping force's strength, the superior officer should also be an Indian.

Almost the entire ECOWAS grouping wants Maj Gen Jaitly removed. The Nigerian Government, which has contributed more than 3,000 troops to UNAMSIL, feels the command should go to it. The Zambian Government has criticised the Indian commander in the past.

India feels the criticism is based on loose foundations. "It is always difficult commanding a multinational force because different armies have different traditions and values," sources here said.

According to them, Maj Gen Jaitly has been attacked unfairly for ordering troops into conflict situations they are not oriented to act in.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

29 JUN 2000

Match-fixing: South Africa to seek India's explanation

7 APR
9 APR
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JOHANNESBURG, APRIL 8. The South African Government and cricket establishment today reacted sharply to the manner in which the Delhi police handled the alleged match-fixing scandal in which five of its players have been named. The Government said it would contact Indian authorities to voice its concern.

The Foreign Minister, Mr. Aziz Pahad, had given an assurance that the government "would seek an explanation for reports that players' telephones were tapped while they were on an official cricket tour of India", the UCBSA spokesperson, Mr. Bronwyn Wilkinson, said in a statement.

The Government would also seek an explanation from their Indian counterparts "regarding the process by which the allegations against the players were made public".

Cronje denies charges

Earlier, captain Hansie Cronje vehemently denied the charges of match fixing made on Friday by the Delhi police saying they were "without substance". "I am stunned," he said in a statement distributed by the UCBSA.

"The allegations are completely without substance. I have been privileged to play for South Africa since 1992 and I want to assure every South African that I have



Hansie Cronje... under cloud

made a 100 per cent effort to win every match that I have played."

"It has been an honour to play for South Africa and I would never do anything to let my country down." — AFP

More characters tumble in

By Sutirtho Patronobis

NEW DELHI, APRIL 8. Shady characters from the underworld, a "failed film actor", dubious non-resident Indians, mercenary cricketers and manipulative bookies — all of them seem to have wanted their share of the rich pie of match-fixing and betting in cricket judging by police investigations here. The interro-

gation of Rajesh Kalra — the only person to have been arrested in the sensational scandal allegedly involving five South African cricketers — seems slowly but surely set to blow the lid off the racket.

The Delhi police today questioned another man identified as Kishen Kumar. While no senior officer was available for details about the person who apparently is admitted to a hospital, it is learnt that he was the "failed actor". Senior Crime Branch officers had earlier denied involvement of any film actor in the racket saying no actor's name had come up during Kalra's interrogation.

There was, however, reason to raise questions about the police claim. For one, it was learnt that an actor — brother of an erstwhile music baron — was a regular visitor at Kalra's home in Greater Kailash Part II here.

During a visit to Kalra's residence on Friday afternoon, his domestic help, Ram Prasad, unwittingly revealed the name of this actor as Kishen Kumar and said he often visited his master's house.

The police also shrugged off queries about the involvement of members of the underworld in the racket. It was, however, learnt that a "syndicate" connecting Dubai, Karachi and Mumbai could have been behind involved.

9 APR 2008

Betting row: SA summons Indian envoy

■ South African foreign minister asks Indian Govt to hand over tapes to facilitate own investigation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JOHANNESBURG, APRIL 9

A fresh diplomatic row has erupted between India and South Africa with Pretoria seeking an explanation from New Delhi on the tapping of the telephone of cricket captain Hansie Cronje accused of involvement in match-fixing during the recent Indian tour.

Indian High Commissioner Harsh Bhasin was summoned by the Government in Pretoria and asked why the Indian police had tapped Cronje's cell phone without informing South African authorities. The South Africans are understood to be demanding a full explanation from their Indian counterparts in New Delhi.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aziz

Pahad demanded that the Indian Government hand over the tapes so that South Africa could conduct its own investigation. "We want to conduct our own investigation. If there is any substance to the allegations, we will take the necessary steps," Pahad told the *Sunday Times* newspaper. Pahad said the South African High Commissioner to India Maite Nkoane-Ramashada listened to the tapes and was convinced the accent on the tape was not South African.

Cronje vehemently denied allegations of match-fixing. "I deny speaking to anyone of the players on tour and I deny accepting any money from anyone for match-fixing. Obviously, I am disappointed that after such a successful tour this had to happen. I know the country is behind me and I have lots of

fans rooting for me," he told the *Times* at a holiday cottage in the Cape province.

The Delhi Police registering charges against Cronje and teammates Herschelle Gibbs, Nicky Boje, Pieter Strydom and Henry Williams continued to make big news in South Africa for the second day running. All the Sunday newspapers in the country carried the story as front page leads.

It's not our Harisie. Both voices on tape Asian a headline in *Sunday Tribune* of Durban read. The story said that the voices on the tape purportedly containing a conversation between Cronje and London-based NRI Sanjeev Chawla, one of the two Indian businessmen named, did not belong to a South African.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Police have written a letter to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) seeking its help in getting the Interpol to track down Sanjeev Chawla, a co-accused in the case and believed to be in London.

"We have written a letter to the CBI requesting them to track down Chawla through the Interpol," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) P K Srivastava told PTI on Sunday. Rajesh Kalra is the only accused in the case to be arrested so far.

Asked whether any clues pointing to the involvement of Indian players or the under-



Rajesh Kalra, the only accused to be arrested in the betting scandal, being produced in Patiala House Court in New Delhi on Sunday — Express photo by Naveen Jora

world mafia in the scandal have come to light during the interrogation of Kalra, the DCP said. "No. So far, no Indian player's name or involvement of any underworld mafia has come to light." However, he said every angle is being probed and also the possibility of involvement of any other player apart from those named in the case.

The Delhi Police could not question Kishan Kumar, brother of slain music magnate Gulshan Kumar as he has been admitted to a hospital. Kishan Kumar's name had figured in the disclosures made by Kalra during interrogation.

A Delhi court on Sunday extended by four days the police remand of Rajesh Kalra even as the Enforcement Directorate (ED) sought his custody to interrogate him on alleged hawala transactions.

Kalra, who was interrogated throughout the night, was produced before a city court following the expiry of his two-day police remand. He was produced at 1515 hrs amidst tight security. Duty Magistrate Barkha Gupta extended the police remand of the accused till April 13 while keeping in abeyance the ED application till then.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

10 APR 2000

Troops to remain in Africa warzone

Delhi wades into Sierra storm

9 Africa 15/5
FROM K.P. NAYAR

New York, May 14: India is rushing in where others fear to tread. In addition to a second Indian battalion which is due to leave for Sierra Leone for peace-keeping operations tomorrow, New Delhi has promised the UN one mechanised unit, one special forces unit and one attack helicopter unit, says Fred Eckhard, spokesman for the UN secretary general here.

[An Associated Press report said rebels released 18 hostages, including 11 Indian soldiers.]

Although the additional troops and equipment are being rushed to Freetown amid hopes of an imminent release of the rest of the Indian peace-keepers held hostage by the rebel Revolutionary United Front (Ruf) of Sierra Leone, India's determination to push ahead has drawn international attention here.

India's perseverance in the African peace effort comes at a time when the US is being criticised for its unwillingness to commit even a single soldier and other major powers are being accused of being callous towards the tragedy.

Even as New Delhi committed more troops and equipment,

India's permanent representative to the UN Kamlesh Sharma told a special session of the Security Council here: "Even though India has troops on the ground (as hostages), we have no intention of pulling out (of Sierra Leone) and (we) very strongly urge the council not to consider this as an option."

Sharma went one step further and suggested that it would be logical for the council to consider enlarging the scope of the UN operation in Sierra Leone from one of peace-keeping to one of peace enforcement. "In our opinion, the UN's mission in Sierra Leone (Unamsil) needs to consolidate." But he added: "In the present circumstances, it cannot implement many of the tasks given... Unamsil presently does not have the troops, the equipment or the logistics needed to mount a peace enforcement operation."

India's unexpected willingness to be sucked into the African operation has evoked surprise because the assessment here and in key Western capitals is that Africa is on the brink of a conflict with ramifications all across the continent. The major powers have no hope of any lasting peace in Sierra Leone even as they fear renewed fighting between Uganda and Rwanda. The weekend saw

clashes between Eritrea and Ethiopia flare up again. In addition, there are worrying reports from Angola and Sudan where civil strife has been rampant.

A Security Council delegation visited seven African states last week in a desperate effort to avoid a continent-wide conflict, but the mission has been unsuccessful. The delegation's leader, US ambassador to the UN Richard Holbrooke, acknowledged at the end of the mission that it had failed.

But what's more puzzling about the growing Indian involvement is that it is becoming increasingly clear that it is a thankless job. While South Block's motives in Africa may be altruistic, India is being criticised for what went wrong in Sierra Leone, where the Ruf took UN peacekeepers hostage nearly 10 days ago.

Zambia's President Frederick Chiluba said after meeting the delegation that Major General Vijay Kumar Jetley, Commander of Unamsil, had sent the peacekeepers into unknown territory with out-of-date maps and shortage of vital equipment. Chiluba has reason to worry because the majority of the nearly 300 soldiers taken hostage are Zambian.

7 5 MAY 2000

7 9 MAY 2000

Indian hostages safe in Sierra Leone: Malik

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, MAY 9, 1996

1075 WITH more than 1,612 Indian troops depolyed as United Nations peacekeepers in strife-torn Sierra Leone, the Defence Ministry today described as "grim" the situation in the island nation amidst reports of a looming military confrontation.

As rebel leader Foday Sankoh of Revolutionary United Front (RUF) continued to hold hostage 500 United Nations peacekeepers, including 35 soldiers of the Indian contingent, reports indicated that Britain and United States had despatched warships and carrier groups to Sierra Leone.

Chief of Army Staff Gen V P Malik said the Indian hostages "are safe" and efforts were on to secure their release.

His remarks at a function at the Army headquarters came as reports said that forces of rebel leader Sankoh and his counterparts in the Seirra Leone army - both of which were to be disarmed under United Nations supervision - had entered the capital Freetown.

INDIAN EXPRESS

30 MAY 2000

31 00 MAR 2000

South African envoy seeks access to tapes

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, APRIL 10. India today said that the "law will take its own course" regarding the investigation on the cricket matches which were allegedly "fixed" by the South African captain and a couple of Indian businessmen.

According to a Foreign Office statement, the Delhi police have registered a case of criminal conspiracy, fraud and cheating

Ties with India will not be hit, says Pahad

By M. S. Prabhakara

CAPE TOWN, APRIL 10. The South African Deputy Foreign Minister, Mr. Aziz Pahad, today said the relations between India and South Africa run very deep and would not be affected by the recent controversy over the allegations of match-fixing against leading members of the South African cricket team. Mr. Pahad earlier met the Indian High Commissioner, Mr. Harsh Bhasin, at the Union Buildings.

The 40-minute meeting between them, the first official level meeting between the two countries here since the match-fixing case broke, was described by an official of the High Commission as "very cordial, open and friendly".

Detail on Page 13

against the South African cricket team captain, Hansie Cronje, and "certain individuals of Indian nationality." The case has been registered on the basis of evidence which the Delhi police believe will sustain in a court of law, the statement added.

The statement was issued following a 45-minute meeting be-



The South African High Commissioner to India, Ms. Mashabani, with the Joint Secretary (Africa), Mr. Pavan K. Varma, after meeting officials of the External Affairs Ministry in New Delhi on Monday. — Photo: R.V. Moorthy.

tween the South African High Commissioner to India, Ms. Maite Nkoana Mashabane, and the Joint Secretary in the Africa division of the Foreign Office, Mr. Pavan Varma. The two sides decided to remain in touch in the coming days. India had informed the South African side about the case before going public, the statement observed.

The South African High Commissioner, speaking to a private television channel, however, maintained that there was no advance official word about the case from the Indian side. In response to queries, she said the "first official information" was only received during the meeting with Mr. Varma.

The South African side, she said, had asked for the tapes in which the alleged conversation

related to match-fixing had been recorded.

'Intrusive surveillance'

Ms. Mashabane indicated that the "intrusive surveillance" against the players should have been first cleared with the South African authorities. But the crime branch of the Delhi police said no such surveillance had been maintained against Cronje.

On the contrary, it asserted, the mobile telephones of only "some Indian businessmen" had been monitored. No bugging devices for recording any of the conversations had been used, it said.

The Central Bureau of Investigation has said it would forward a Delhi police request to the Interpol for obtaining the voice samples of Cronje and a London-based Non-Resident Indian, Mr. Sanjeev Chawla.

3 APR 2000

SA denies being told, India mum

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, April 10. — The South African High Commissioner, Ms Maite Nkoana Mashabane, today denied the Indian position that Pretoria had been informed before Delhi police publicised the case against Hansie Cronje and four team-mates.

The external affairs ministry repeated the Indian stand today, issuing a statement that "in conformity with the close and cordial relations we have with South Africa, we had informed the South African side prior to the case being made public."

But Ms Mashabane, emerging from a meeting with the joint secretary (Africas), Mr Pavan Varma, told reporters the meeting was the first official communication on the subject.

The external affairs ministry refused to respond to Ms Mashabane's remark, providing no clarification on the contradictory stands. Today's meeting had come at Ms Mashabane's request.

Confusion prevails on other fronts too. Yesterday, the Indian High Commissioner in Pretoria, Mr Harsh Bhasin, had said he hadn't been summoned to the South African foreign office as reported by agencies, nor had he gone there.

Neither has there been any clarity on what procedure would be followed in the police case. Though India has no extradition treaty with South Africa, the ministry has asserted: "The law will take its own course."

Ministry sources, however, suggested that if the court took cognisance of the case and decided to issue summons, the summons would be processed by the South African judiciary subject to their concurrence.

The mood of anger and disbelief in South Africa, however, seems to reflect Pretoria's unhappiness over the issue and unwillingness to accept the claims of Delhi police at its face value, putting a question mark over the success of further investigations.

Ms Mashabane today said she had asked for access to the tapes during her meeting with Mr Varma and that her government's position on the charges is simple: Everyone is innocent until proved guilty.

The external affairs ministry, however, did not provide any details of what was discussed at the meeting. It merely said the discussions were held in a cordial atmosphere and both sides recalled their close relations, agreeing to stay in touch over the issue.

The ministry statement said: "Delhi Police has registered a case of criminal conspiracy, fraud and cheating against certain individuals of Indian nationality and the South African cricket captain Hansie Cronje on the basis of evidence which they believe they will be able to sustain in a court of law. The law will take its own course."

THE STATESMAN

11 APR 2000

from the front page

It shd've come on April 1

own investigations," Wessels said. "And this country (South Africa) is where the fightback against corruption in sport should start... Knowing the players the way I do I cannot believe that they would be involved in something like this..." Wessels wrote.

Questions are being asked about the veracity of the Indian police's probe and why they only released such hard evidence on Friday, a week after Cronje's side left Sharjah to return home after being involved in a series against Pakistan and India and almost three weeks after the side had left India.

There are also suspicions about the manner in which the investigation was conducted and the tapping of mobile phones and the room telephones of the players. Both, it is being claimed, show a state of paranoia by the Indian police or those involved in what is also seen as a smear campaign. It is understood that while they played the tapes of the "alleged conversations" and issued written transcripts of what was said, the style of the vocabulary and grammar of the language used was not that of Cronje's.

In normal conversation, Cronje comes across quite strongly but not as brusquely as made out in the tapes and usage of 'yeah' instead of the normal 'ja' is one of the areas in question while other bits of conversation do not tie in with his voice presentation. The name

Williams, most likely Henry Williams, who was injured in the first game of the limited-overs slogs, was not involved in this particular tie, alleged to be the third of the series and played at Faridabad and which South Africa went on to win.

Another reason why there is a feeling of a "frame-up" or that it was a "hoax in bad taste" is that it is believed the Indian police responsible for the so-called probe would not release the tapes for private listening. All of which smacks of serious indifference to those who are being charged.

There is a strong feeling that had the story broken on April 1, it would have been likened to a very poor April Fool's joke. Indian police have argued they were acting on a tip-off and used highly sophisticated equipment to tape the conversations. If this is the case, why have they waited so long to lay charges and arrest one businessman, who is said to be involved.

Former South African Test players Craig Matthews and Fanie de Villiers came to the aid of the players involved with Matthews saying that players such as Williams and Strydom were far too straight to get involved in anything which had the slightest whiff of a shady deal.

(The author is a veteran South African cricket journalist and also International correspondent for CricInfo)

The truth is out, and so is Hansie Cronje

Reuters

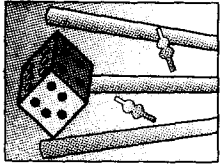
SA board drops captain after he admits to having received money

DURBAN: The South African cricket board on Tuesday dropped captain Hansie Cronje after he admitted that he had not been "entirely honest" in his denials of the match-fixing charges.

Bronwyn Wilkinsons, communications director for the United Cricket Board of South Africa (UCBSA), stated that the board's managing director Ali Bacher and president Percy Sonn had received a call from Cronje in the early hours of Tuesday. He made it clear that the board had withdrawn Cronje, not sacked him outright, from the team for the three limited-overs matches against Australia starting in Durban on Wednesday. Vice-captain Shaun Pollock takes over as captain and veteran all-rounder Dave Callaghan has been drafted into the team.

Addressing a press conference here, Mr Bacher said, "Hansie phoned me and Mr Sonn at 3 a.m. this morning and told us that he had not been entirely honest with us regarding his involvement. We immediately decided that it would be in everybody's best interests if he stood down from the series." He stated that Cronje had confessed to having received between \$10,000 and \$15,000 during a triangular series in South Africa in January-February. India and Zimbabwe were the other teams that had participated in the tourney. However, Cronje is reported to have denied taking part in any match-fixing in India.

Mr Bacher said the money, which Cronje had not banked, involved "providing information and forecast, but not match-fixing". According to him, Cronje was contacted by a local South African and a London-based bookmaker of Indian origin during the triangular series. He added that Cronje was also continually harassed by bookmakers while on tour in India. The managing director of the UCBSA announced that the South African government would launch an inquiry into the allegations soon. Cronje has captained South Africa in 138 one-day internationals, with the team winning 99 of them. The former captain, whose team lost to India 3-2 in the One-day series last month, had on Sunday said he was innocent. (Apress)



Taped conversation has far-reaching significance: police

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: The Delhi police has a strange problem at hand. Despite its best efforts, it has not been able to find someone who can decipher the Afrikaans language for the police.

Police sources say a substantial part of the conversation between Hansie Cronje and a South African national is in Afrikaans. Officials feel it's of crucial importance as the prime accused in the match-fixing case, Sanjeev Chawla, too has talked to the same person at regular intervals and from the same location as Cronje.

According to commissioner of police Ajai Raj Sharma, Cronje probably confessed because his conscience was weighing heavily on him. But the investigators in the case suspect that Cronje admitted to having been dishonest and accepting money only after he got to know that the police had in their possession his conversation with a fellow South African.

"Cronje admitted to his guilt within hours after the news of his conversation with the African national appeared in the press and on the Internet," said a police source. The disclosure was reportedly made at 3.30 a.m., South African time.

A source said that both Chawla and Cronje speaking to the same person at regular hours was strong circumstantial evidence. "But we are sure that when we get what's in the conversation, it could be clinching," the source added. Given what they already had on the conversation between Chawla and the "middleman", the source was positive that the talks between Cronje and this man would be of far-reaching significance.

The calls were first made from the Taj Regency hotel in Kochi by both Chawla and Cronje on March 8, a day before the first One-day international was played. They reportedly made calls to the same person later as well.

According to the police source, although there were a few people in the South African high commission who could decipher the language, it would not be right to involve them in the exercise.

12 MAR 2000

THE TIMES OF INDIA

12 MAR 2000

12 APR 2000

Envoy reminds UN of Somalia disaster

India rebuffs robust role in Sierra Leone

FROM EVELYN LEOPOLD

United Nations, May 12 (Reuters): India and Jordan rebuffed a call by several African nations for a more robust UN mandate in Sierra Leone, saying it could endanger their troops in the beleaguered west African country.

With close to 500 UN soldiers, mainly Zambians, captured by rebels from the Revolutionary United Front, African envoys told the UN Security Council late last night they should let troops use more force to restore a crumbling peace accord.

"The test of the UN mission in Sierra Leone shows very clearly that the mandate and resources are not and never were appropriate to the situation," said Algerian ambassador Abdallah Baali on behalf of the Organisation of African Unity.

Envoys from Mali, Namibia as well as Bangladesh, among others, backed Baali at the council debate called by African nations.

The peacekeepers were sent to Sierra Leone under chapter 7 of the UN charter, which allows for the use of force. But their mandate is limited mainly to their own defence and to protect civilians.

The UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) currently has a force of 8,900 troops, with others

en route. Secretary-general Kofi Annan urged the council to lift its authorised ceiling of 11,100 in order to accommodate the new troops.

India who commands the peacekeepers in Sierra Leone and has about two dozen troops among the captives, said an all-out offensive was foolhardy and might injure the hostages.

While the Security Council should review the mandate regularly, India's ambassador Kamlesh Sharma said UNAMSIL did

UN gears up for rebel advance

Freetown, May 12 (AP): UN peacekeeping troops and pro-government forces geared up for a possible rebel advance on the nervous capital, where up to 30,000 frightened villagers have sought refuge, a UN humanitarian official said today.

Sierra Leone soldiers and pro-government militia drove rebel forces further from Freetown yesterday, army spokesman Prince Nicol said. The fighting near Newton, 40 km east of Freetown, pitted the forces of the RUF, against the recently rearmed army and the pro-government militia made up of traditional hunters, he said.

not have the troops, equipment or logistics to mount an enforcement action at this time.

"There are some who believe that the UN cannot do what needs to be done now in Sierra Leone, and that force should be deployed and used by others, with the blessings of the Security Council," Sharma said.

"As long as UNAMSIL is in place, we cannot warn too strongly against this. Somalia showed us the dangers inherent in forces outside UN command taking military action in a theatre where peacekeepers are deployed," he said.

In 1993, the US engaged in unilateral action in Somalia, with disastrous results for its own and UN troops.

Sharma said UNAMSIL needed to pull in its soldiers spread around the country "trying to do a job that presently cannot be done". With well-equipped reinforcements arriving, the mission had to concentrate on defending Freetown and government buildings.

Jordan, which is adding two companies of special forces in addition to a battalion promised earlier, backed India. "We do not feel it is wise for the council to consider new initiatives while we are deploying our troops," said Jordan's ambassador., Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Husseini.

REPRODUCTION

THE TELEGRAPH

3 MAY 2001

A political relationship saved

By K. K. Katyal

NEW DELHI, APRIL 12. Cricket is disgraced but Indian diplomacy — the India-South Africa relationship, to be precise — is saved. What the sacked South African cricket captain, Hansie Cronje's admission of "an error of judgment" in his contacts with bookies means to the game is evident from the shocked reaction of the fans all over.

What it has meant to a crucial segment of foreign relations, the carefully-nurtured ties with South Africa, is not fully realised. When the Delhi police first came out with the sensational disclosures, the widespread rage in South Africa (even though it was confined to the Whites and the media, mostly dominated by them) threatened to derail the ties with India. This was so despite the emphatic assertions by the two High Commissioners, Mr. Harsh Bhasin in South Africa and Ms. Maitre Nkoana Mashabane here, that there would be no diplomatic fall-out on the sports field.

In South Africa, there was no dearth of dire

warnings of a setback to bilateral relations. Even sections of Indians, cricket-lovers especially, expressing disbelief over allegations of wrong-doing by an icon, wondered whether the Delhi police had not carried their misplaced enthusiasm to a dangerous limit. Shouldn't the police have been restrained from intruding into the sacred precincts of diplomacy? Think of the scenarios if the situation had taken a turn in the opposite direction — if, for instance, the case against Hansie Cronje had turned out to be "rubbish"; as described by him in his very first reaction. It would have unleashed a barrage of the angriest ever criticism directed at the foreign policy establishment.

This would have been seen as part of the alleged casualness, shown by the present government in its dealings with South Africa. Was it not responsible for squandering the gains made by its predecessors first by leading the crusade against apartheid and then by forging close ties with Mr. Nelson Mandela, in his ca-

acity as President of the first representative regime? Some sections here, as was known, had been unhappy with the Indian "over-reaction" at the 1998 NAM summit to Mr. Mandela's reference to Kashmir and the projection of his subsequent clarification as an apology. Blaming the government for mucking up relations with South Africa, the Congress(I) in what was seen as a case of parallel diplomacy, had planned to despatch a party delegation in a bid to undo the damage.

Sport and diplomacy have had a peculiar relationship. We are familiar with the cricket diplomacy, sought to be practised by the martial law ruler of Pakistan in the eighties, Gen. Zia-ul-Haq. On one occasion, he virtually invited himself to a cricket match in Jaipur in what was essentially a diplomatic manoeuvre. The Chinese had perfected the art of ping-pong diplomacy and they were pleased with the results. In this case, the sport threatened to upset the diplomatic apple-cart. Luckily, the tragedy was averted.

of Africa ✓

3 APR 2000

Extradition part of inquiry: envoy

NEW DELHI, APRIL 13. South Africa today said the issue of extradition of the sacked cricket captain, Hansie Cronje, to India would be part of the process of full-fledged inquiry by an independent judicial commission into allegations of match-fixing during his recent tour of India.

The commission, headed by a senior South African judge, would make recommendations including imposition of penalties against Cronje and other players if the allegations were found true, the South African High Commissioner to India, Ms. M. E. Nkoana Mashabane, told reporters here.

Asked whether Pretoria would assist the Delhi police in deciphering certain conversation in Afrikaans in the tapes, the envoy said, "we will extend full cooperation to Indian authorities. But we will wait till we get a request from the Indian police through the External Affairs Ministry."

Cronje has acknowledged "not



The South African High Commissioner, Ms. M.E. Nkoana-Mashabane, at a press conference in New Delhi on Thursday.

having been entirely honest with everybody", and to having been in contact with certain individuals who had been trying to influence matches. He also indicated that he received money in a sep-

arate incident not related to South Africa's tour of India," Ms. Mashabane said quoting a statement released by the South African Sports Minister, Mr. Ngconde Balfour.

Terming the incident unfortunate, Ms. Mashabane said "the relationship between our country and India remains unaffected by this issue". — PTI

I always played to win: Cronje

CAPE TOWN, APRIL 13. The former South African cricket captain, Hansie Cronje, today denied he had ever manipulated the results of a match and said he had always played to win.

"All I will say is I was not involved in fixing or manipulating the results of cricket matches. I always played to win," he said in a statement faxed to Reuters.

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India, Nigeria strive for special ties

By Atul Aneja

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ABUJA (Nigeria), MARCH 28. India and Nigeria today intensified their efforts to forge a special relationship by giving greater economic content to their warm political ties.

Both countries, on the first day of their joint commission meeting which was described by the visiting External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, as the "commencement of a new era of meaningful and expanding economic interaction," discussed the wide canvass of economic opportunities available to them.

Specifically, both sides discussed the signing of a contract for the transfer of assured oil supplies to New Delhi. India sees Nigeria as central to fulfilling its energy security needs. In case the contract for the sale of six million tonnes of Nigerian crude is signed, Nigeria will fulfil nearly 25 per cent of India's oil requirements. Nigeria, according to official sources, produces "sweet crude", which has a low sulphur content. This oil is suitable for Indian refineries.

Indian authorities point out that higher transportation costs are not coming in the way of import of Nigerian crude, despite the longer geographical distances involved. Transportation costs are sought to be slashed by India by working out an arrangement with U.S.-based shipping firms. Sources point out that empty American oil tankers on their way to the Persian Gulf can pick up Nigerian crude and transport it to India on a concession.

Besides energy, India sees Ni-

geria as a major destination for investments. The meeting focusses on ways to use Indian expertise to revive Nigeria's economy, derailed by long years of military rule.

With a new democratically-elected Government of President, Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, in place, Nigeria sees India as an important source technology for reviving its heavy industry. Not surprisingly, both sides discussed the possible joint forays in the railway sector. Specifically, the participation of the Indian Railway Construction Company to rehabilitate the crucial 870 k.m. rail link between Nigeria's capital Abuja with the commercial hub of Lagos on the coast received considerable attention.

They also discussed the revival of Nigeria's Soviet equipped Ajaokuta steel plant along with the establishment of a captive 110 MW power plant by the Bharat Heavy Electricals for it. Collaboration in the spheres of power and telecommunication also featured.

The discussions on economic tie-ups took place within a larger political framework. Politically, India sees Nigeria, along with Egypt and South Africa, as its strategic partners who can propel its interests in Africa.

India also has high political stakes in Nigeria on other counts. Nigeria is also seen as potential island of stability which can counter the rising tide of radical Islam stretching from Afghanistan to Chechnya. While backing the secular Government of Mr. Obasanjo, New Delhi is aware of the obstacles in the way.

Nigerian President arrives in Capital

New Delhi, January 24

NIGERIAN PRESIDENT Olusegun Obasanjo arrived here today on a five-day State visit to India, mainly aimed at further consolidating bilateral ties with special focus on stepping up cooperation in small scale industries and agriculture.

Obasanjo, who is leading a high-powered delegation, will be the chief guest at this year's Republic Day celebrations.

The Nigerian leader, a trusted and close friend of India, is being accompanied by Governors to two States, four key Ministers, the National Security Adviser, the Minister of State for Defence and the Chief Economic Adviser.

During the visit, Obasanjo will meet his Indian counterpart K R Narayanan and Vice-President Krishan Kant and have wide-ranging discussions with Prime Minister A B Vajpayee. (PTI)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

25 JAN 2000

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Immense opportunities for improving ties with Nigeria

By Our Special Correspondent *AFRICA*

NEW DELHI, JAN. 24. The familiarity of the Nigerian President, Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, with India gives the Foreign Office reason to believe that there are immense opportunities of improving bilateral ties under a democratic dispensation in Nigeria. In addition, India is a major customer of Nigerian crude which is particularly suited for our refineries, and both countries have cooperated in key sectors like power, steel, refineries, telecom and railways. The past association of Indian PSUs will come in useful for Nigeria at this juncture because it is seeking to implement economic reforms and restructuring as well as a privatisation programme in phases.

Nigeria is India's second largest trading partner in Africa after South Africa but the last Nigerian President to have presided over a Republic Day parade was 17 years ago. "For a country of this importance, high level interaction has been less than frequent,"

admitted a Foreign Office official.

President Obasanjo's familiarity with India is also evident from the three changes he sought in his itinerary. Visits to the offices of BHEL, TCIL and IRCON were included on his specific request, said the Foreign Office official. His recognition of Indian expertise in two areas — small scale industry and agriculture — should also open new vistas in these areas which reflect increasing Indian involvement on a pan-African scale. "Across Africa, somehow the fact that 50 per cent of India's output is from small and medium enterprises makes a tremendous impact. It is the type of technology which can be absorbed in Africa," said the Foreign Office official.

Though many PSUs like HMT, TCIL, RITES, Petroleum India International and C-DoT are already involved in various phases in this West African nation, the private sector is also making its presence felt. Tata buses and trucks are already well known and Bajaj recently sold 5,000 two-wheelers.

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A GUEST FROM NIGERIA

INDIA AND THE West African nation of Nigeria have much to contribute to each other in terms of shared evolutionary experience and expertise in industry and agriculture and have so much in common that it is surprising the interaction between the two has been negligibly small compared to the scope. By having that country's democratically-elected President as the guest of honour during this year's Republic Day celebrations, India has launched a major effort to set the relations right — and send the signal that it seeks to revitalise its links with a part of Africa that had remained neglected for long. For a broader focus on the continent there could have been no better choice than Mr. Olusegun Obasanjo, Nigeria's campaigner for good governance whose outspoken support for democracy was a feature of the last Commonwealth summit. "We do not make any distinction between good military government and bad military government. For us, military government is bad as a matter of principle and from our own experience," he remarked in Durban as the summit was debating the issue of suspending Pakistan following the coup there. He has impeccable credentials to speak on the subject: he is among the few military rulers to have organised democratic elections and respected the verdict by handing over power to a civilian government.

Mr. Obasanjo's strong comments in Delhi against the menace of terrorism and his appeal to India that they jointly articulate their common concerns at international fora stem from Nigeria's traumatic experience with violence and terrorism. It is one country that has been immeasurably harmed by its raw material wealth. Its rich and plentiful oil contributed to the outbreak of the disastrous war in 1967 when the people of the Biafran region tried to secede and take the natural wealth with them. One million people died in that conflict. Oil also contributed to a vitiation of the economy by

inducing dependency on one product and corrupted national life. With a democratic government installed last summer after years of ruinous military rule and the consequent promise of internal stability, there is renewed opportunity for India to forge closer ties and explore new avenues of cooperation. The visit of Mr. Obasanjo must boost the effort to expand the ties, as symbolised by the decision to reactivate the joint commission that remained dormant for much of the past decade because of the military rule in that country. Nigeria is this country's second largest trading partner on the continent after South Africa and can benefit by India's experience as it pursues its own ambitious economic liberalisation programme. Major areas of cooperation include key infrastructure and agro-based industries and the oil sector.

Multi-ethnic, multi-religious Nigeria, much like India, is a country that has yet to realise its rich potential. Described once as a jewel of Africa, Nigeria has seen more downs than ups since gaining independence in 1960. On balance, the oil wealth and the resourcefulness of the population, the largest on the continent, have been outweighed by the bloody Biafra war and six violent changes of government. The result has been that Nigeria remains on the list of the poor whereas its potential should have turned it into a giant on the continent, rivalling Mr. Nelson Mandela's South Africa. There is an emerging new threat to the democratic polity. A country already divided nearly equally — and quite uneasily — between a Muslim north and a Christian south is witnessing the arrival of religious fundamentalism that can pose the biggest challenge to national unity. The introduction of the shariah law in October in the northern State of Zamfara, to be followed by two other States, is said to be heightening tension and provoking fears of a break-up of the country.

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