

Kashmir needs a fresh approach

NEWSWATCH



M.K. NARAYANAN

Assumptions of various kinds, some of them clearly misleading, distort the true picture and obscure the grim reality of the situation that prevails in J&K today. Officials tend to be optimistic about the law and order situation which is largely based on their perception that ordinary people are fed up with the ongoing militancy, are overwhelmingly opposed to the foreign mercenaries, and wish to return to the ways of peace. The intensity of violence, the spate of ongoing incidents, and "hits" against high profile targets, on the other hand, seem to project a different picture. The numbers of radical Islamist mercenaries participating in the violent acts perpetrated by the Lashker-e-Toiba, the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (now joined by the Jaish-e-Muhammadi) have hardly diminished. There does not also seem to be any let up in infiltrations from across the border, notwithstanding claims to the contrary.

The prospect that such infiltrations are unlikely to dry up in the near future, despite the successes achieved by the SOG/STF and other security agencies, and that the battle against more and better trained militants has only been joined is proving to be highly daunting for the security forces. What is still more disconcerting for the security forces is that after a gap of almost three years, local involvement in militancy is once again on the upswing. More recruits are being recruited from within the state, and are being sent for training in camps on the Pakistan-Afghan border.

The well-planned assassinations of moderate leaders in the state, mainly those belonging to the National Conference, is continuing and has a debilitating effect on the ground situation. A few weeks ago, the state minister for power was blown up when a landmine exploded, as the minister's convoy passed over a culvert. This was the first instance, since insurgency surfaced in J&K, of a serving minister being killed. About a fortnight later, one of the most respected leaders of the Shia community in J&K and a leading member of the Shia clergy — Moulvi Iftikar Hussain Ansari, had providential escape when militants triggered an IED planted under the podium from which he was supposed to speak, killing 16 others. Many such instances of successful hits using Improvised Explosive Devices have been reported, and it is estimated that since January as many as 70/80 persons have died from IEDs alone. Roughly half of them have been security force personnel. Of the remaining, a substantial number have been politically activities or important personalities.

Srinagar's first case of a teen-aged "suicide bomber" should remove, whatever pretensions exist that "peace is at hand." The Class XII student who blew himself up while attempting to ram a car full of explosives into an Army barrack, set a new benchmark for violence in this militancy-ridden state. Suicide bombers, as the Sri Lankan government



'What is still more disconcerting for the security forces is that after a gap of almost three years, local involvement in militancy is once again on the upswing'

will confirm, compels most security rules to be rewritten. J&K has, since the Kargil war, been grappling with "suicide squads," but dealing with suicide bombers is a different matter, and methods and tactics will hence need to be different and many prescriptions changed.

Another myth being perpetrated is that a mere statement of intent to hold talks with militant leaders will substantially alter the ground situation and lead to an improvement. The demand that Delhi should hold talks with the leaders of the All Party Hurriyat Conference and other militants like Shabir Shah — if need be by-passing the National Conference and Dr Farooq Abdullah — is a long standing one and not new. It has been voiced in the past by academics, well meaning individuals, misguided elements, and out-of-work politicians who have a vested interest in "muddying the waters." The hypothesis that talks are needed to bring round dissident, disgruntled and alienated elements — as also militants of every hue — is in theory unassailable, but in practice those in charge cannot afford to overlook the political dynamics or the convoluted nature of

Another myth being perpetrated is that a mere statement of intent to hold talks with militant leaders will substantially alter the ground situation and lead to an improvement. The demand that Delhi should hold talks with the leaders of the All Party Hurriyat Conference and other militants like Shabir Shah, if need be by-passing the National Conference and Dr Farooq Abdullah, is a long standing one. It has been voiced in the past by academics, well meaning individuals, misguided elements, and out-of-work politicians who have a vested interest in 'muddying the waters'

the J&K problem. A great deal of care, therefore, needs to be bestowed on how to go about the task. Facile assumptions that the National Conference is the main stumbling block and a solution should be found by-passing the National Conference should be avoided for it cannot only be counter-productive but outright dangerous. The "devil" lies in the technicalities and the methodology of how the negotiations should proceed and be organised and this is as important as in the substance of the negotiations. The militants themselves are hardly a homogeneous group, and the differences among them will need calibration and taken into account. Whether some pre-conditions for holding talks should be insisted upon will need to be carefully weighed. Not everyone can be provided a place at the negotiating table, for we must be clear whether those desirous of negotiating are interested in doing so, or their intention is to blow up the negotiating table altogether.

Premature publicity and too much hype has already reduced chances of success, if and when the talks are held. The All Party Hurriyat Conference has possibly at best a vague outline of what is needed, but confronted with possibility of early talks they have engaged in "grand-standing" and posturing for the benefit of their constituencies within J&K and their mentors outside the country. The JEI leader, Syed Ali Shah Gilani, chairman of the APHC, has often functioned as Pakistan's mouth-piece, and true to form is insisting upon trilateral talks on the ground that Pakistan is a concerned party. Gilani says that what is taking place in J&K is not "terrorism" but a "fight for freedom." His prescription of dividing the state on religious grounds is, however, not shared by most other militant leaders, including Shabir Shah. Mirwaiz Omar Farooq, immediate past president of the APHC, also stresses the importance of a three-way dialogue among India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir, but sees no role for the National Conference, or old-timers like Mir Kasim. Their insistence that no conditions be imposed for participation in the talks virtually aborts Delhi's initiative.

The belief that an enlarged autonomy package is the panacea for all of J&K's ills is yet another assumption that has been touted for long, though without any sound basis. The current "autonomy debate" in the J&K Assembly — the SAC Report which

forms the basis of the debate envisages a return to the pre-1953 status for J&K and proposes a "Constitutional undertaking" between the State and the Union that no provision of the Constitution of India can be applied to J&K "beyond the ones extended under the 1950 order and the Delhi Agreement 1952," and further states that that the dilution of Article 370 should be rectified — is being seen by many as a contrived effort by the state chief minister and the National Conference to demonstrate their relevance as far as J&K's future is concerned in the context of likely talks between the Centre and the Hurriyat leaders. Admittedly, no compelling reasons exist at this juncture to convene a special session of the J&K Assembly to discuss the State Autonomy Committee's report which has been gathering dust for some time.

Whether greater autonomy would bring nearer the concept of "cooperative federalism" as its proponents claim, or would help create a conducive atmosphere for a harmonious balance between the needs of the State and its integration into the national mainstream, is a moot point. If the tumult inside the

The answer, however, does not lie in putting faith in stereotyped and outworn solutions and ideas. Mere articulation of the need for greater autonomy or 'apologies' for alleged mistakes committed in the past have little relevance in today's situation in J&K. Talk of restoration of 'Kashmiriyat' has little meaning when it is the sword that carries everything before it. Apparently, there is a cognitive divide between the worlds of the practitioners and the scholars of conflict resolution. Nowhere, perhaps, is this more evident than in J&K

the autonomy... serious misgivings expressed by... State — are any index, this gambit of starting a debate prematurely (before all aspects had been considered by pundits in Srinagar and Delhi) could result in a fresh maelstrom of conflict. This would be doubly unfortunate coming at a time when the state faces a revival of militancy, leading to the development of new fault-lines in an already divided state.

Protracted militancy and violence has drained the state of valuable resources and taken energies away from development and poverty alleviation. The prolonged presence within the state of sizeable numbers of security forces, intended to counter cross-border terrorism and the ongoing militancy, is hardly a healthy development. It has sometimes led to "excesses" while trying to put down mindless violence by militant groups. The endemic conflict has also resulted in the near break-down of the very fabric of the complex society that characterises Kashmir. Ethnic cleansing by the militants has resulted in forced migration and destroyed entire communities. As a consequence of the continuing conflict, a vast majority of the residents find themselves excluded from economic and technological progress available elsewhere. The continued focus on "low intensity war" and terrorism in J&K has also had negative consequences for an already fragile ecological zone.

The answer, however, does not lie in putting faith in stereotyped and outworn solutions and ideas. Mere articulation of the need for greater autonomy or 'apologies' for alleged mistakes committed in the past have little relevance in today's situation in J&K. Talk of restoration of 'Kashmiriyat' has little meaning when it is the sword that carries everything before it. Apparently, there is a cognitive divide between the worlds of the practitioners and the scholars of conflict resolution. Nowhere, perhaps, is this more evident than in J&K. What is needed is to create new knowledge, and new ways, of thinking about the problem of Kashmir. Without this an enduring solution cannot be found.

Circa 2000 is very different from Circa 1990 or for that matter Circa 1974. There are many more visible dimensions to the problem today than what existed at the beginning in 1947-48. There are many more forces at work, whether it is the Internet, satellite television, or religious fundamentalism such as radical Islam, apart from the militants, trying to shape the future of the state in the region. While there are an increasing number of facets to the conflict, there also appears to be an increasing number of possible components to any potential solution. A solution can be found only if this is appreciated.

There is hence need for an intellectual breakthrough. There is need to use current social science research and emerging information and communications technology to identify ways in which to develop "a new language" to think about the problem. There is need to integrate lessons from participatory research on sustainable development in the quest for conflict mitigation. There is a requirement for an intellectual focus to provide new knowledge and insights.

M.K. NARAYANAN is a former director of the Intelligence Bureau

Search operations to be suspended in J&K

Magisterial probe into massacre ordered

Arun Joshi
Jammu, November 23

THE UNILATERAL ceasefire announced by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee will be put into effect notwithstanding attempts by militant outfits to derail the process by violent actions.

"We have to honour our word," special secretary, Home, T.R. Kakkar, who flew in here to review the situation arising out of the killing of truckers on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway on Tuesday night, told a high-level meeting of senior state government officials.

The perception here is that there was a deeper motive behind Tuesday's killing of truckers.

Apart from sabotaging the unilateral cease-fire offer, the killers wanted to show that the highway that acts as a supply line to the Valley and on which Army and paramilitary police personnel travel daily, is unsafe.

The attempt to make the highway an insecure passage serves twin objectives.

It can cause scare among transport operators belonging to minority communities.

If the scare makes the transporters stop

their operations on the highway, Kashmir suffers, especially on the eve of Ramzan.

On the other hand, those with ulterior motives can then provoke the Muslims that it was the minority community that is responsible for not bringing supplies to Kashmir.

In the face of such attempts, the security operations on the highway, especially on the eve of Ramzan.

CYCLE OF VIOLENCE

- Feb 4: 3 Kashmiri Pandits killed in Teiwani village in Anantnag
- Feb 10: 7 members of two families killed near Pattan
- Feb 28: 3 Hindu women and a boy killed in Harni village near Mendhar
- Feb 29: 5 truck drivers killed near Qazigund
- March 22: 36 Sikhs shot dead in Chattisinghpura village in Anantnag
- Aug 1: 32 Amarnath pilgrims killed near Pahalgam
- Aug 2: 14 Hindus killed in Pogal area in Doda district
- Aug 17: 6 Hindus killed in Kot Dhara village in Rajouri
- Nov 21: 5 drivers shot dead at Sherbibl near Banihal



Graphic by VINEY

ty forces seem firm on giving shape to the ceasefire.

Li. Gen. J.R. Mukerjee, Corps Commander 15 corps of the Army, who is also the security advisor to the state government, held a meeting in Srinagar

According to modalities for implementation of the ceasefire, the Army or any other wing of the security forces will not go in for search-and-cordon operations. They would also not retaliate unless attacked.

The objective behind suspending search-and-cordon operations is to assuage the feelings of the local people.

The local people have complained of harassment during such operations. Lt. Gen. J.R. Mukerjee, sources said, also instructed the security forces not to go in for any anti-militancy operations.

"That does not mean that we should lower our guard at the military camps.

"We should guard against all sorts of attacks on our posts", he is reported to have said.

There is apprehension that the militants may mount suicide attacks on the Army and paramilitary forces' camps.

There is further fear that the militants may even try to target policemen on duty.

The posts, it was decided, should be guarded fully and retaliatory action against militants, especially in crowded places where there is a possibility of civilian casualties, should be avoided.

HT Correspondent
Jammu, November 23

THE JAMMU and Kashmir government has ordered a magisterial inquiry into the massacre of five truckers on the Jammu-Srinagar highway on Tuesday night, following demands by protestors. The bandh call in Jammu also evoked an overwhelming response. Life in Jammu and adjoining towns came to a standstill. Vehicles kept off the roads, shops remained shut and attendance in government offices was thin. There were also angry demonstrations in several parts of the city.

The police had tough time controlling a procession, which was marching towards the Civil Secretariat. There were minor clashes before protestors dispersed. A group of Shiv Sainiks also burnt Pakistani flags.

Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah after ordering the probe told a delegation of Sikhs that the massacre was the handwork of Pakistan. He said the world should take cognizance of this heinous crime and impose sanctions against Pakistan as was the case with South Africa.

Meanwhile, the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) demanded an independent probe into the massacre. A APHC statement said there was a need for an impartial probe because the killing of innocents were on the rise. It described the massacre as a gruesome act.

The APHC stated that probes into the Chittisinghpura massacre and killing of brick kiln labourers in south Kashmir have become need of the hour.

5 bus passengers shot dead in Doda

HT Correspondent
Jammu, November 24

AT LEAST five Hindu bus passengers were killed in a remote village in Doda district on Friday, sparking communal tension.

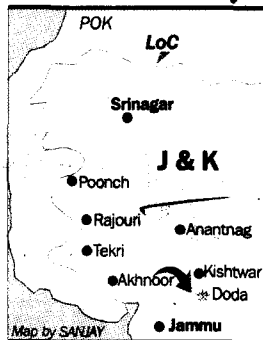
An indefinite curfew has been clamped on Kishtwar, the town close to the site of the killings. The bodies, recovered from a forest area close to Patti Mahal village, bore bullet marks.

The victims appear to have been lined up in a row and then killed. The police suspect Lashkar-e-Toiba militants who are active in Doda district.

25/11
However, no militant outfit has claimed responsibility.

According to the police, the victims were first abducted when they disembarked from a bus at Akhla village. They were then taken to the jungle, about 2 km away, before they were shot dead in cold blood.

The abduction of the villagers has caused tension in several towns in Doda district. Hindus



shopkeepers downed their shutters and started taking out protest rallies.

Extra troops have been deployed in the area.

The Army has also moved into high mountains looking for the killers.

This incident is seen as a second major blow to the

ceasefire announcement of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Five truckers were killed on the

Jammu-Srinagar National Highway on Tuesday night.

Meanwhile, a grenade was hurled at the office of Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP). The JKDFP is the party headed by Shabir Shah, a moderate separatist leader.

Though no one was hurt in the explosion, the building suffered extensive damage. The JKDFP office is close to the office of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) in Raj Bagh.

In another incident seven militants, three civilians and one special police officer were killed in Kashmir Valley.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

25 NOV 2001

Pan-Islamic outfits may disregard ceasefire

By Shujaat Bukhari

JAMMU, NOV. 26. With the formal ceasefire beginning Tuesday, just 48 hours away, the change in the stance of the separatist conglomerate, All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC), is significant. However, it is unlikely that the militants, especially those having pan-Islamic leanings, would reciprocate.

Unlike its earlier stand on the ceasefire, the APHC has responded positively to the offer made by the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee. When the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen announced a ceasefire in July, and the Government responded favourably, the Hurriyat had termed it a broken step.

Senior Hurriyat leader and Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front chairman, Mr. Yaseen Malik, has praised the peace initiative. The latest offer by Mr. Vajpayee — who has thrown the ball in the militants' court and that of Pakistan (which wields significant influence over the former) — has taken everybody by surprise.

Observers in Srinagar are sceptical about the Hurriyat succeeding in convincing the militants on the issue. As most outfits operating in the State have rejected the ceasefire, terming it a conspiracy against the "freedom movement", the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen has again insisted on a role for Pakistan for a meaningful dialogue.

Interestingly, the Hizb commander in Kashmir, Mr. Abdul Majid Dar, who made the July ceasefire public, has this time chosen to be silent. On the other hand, Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), the pan-Islamic outfit headed by Moulana Masood Azhar (who was released from jail in exchange of passengers of the hijacked Indian Airlines plane last year), has criticised the Hurriyat for making pro-ceasefire statements.

(According to PTL, in a statement in a local newspaper, a JeM

spokesperson warned of serious consequences if they did not stop issuing statements welcoming the unilateral ceasefire and expressing readiness to hold talks with the Centre. He said there would be no peace unless the Army is withdrawn from Kashmir. He said the parties welcoming the ceasefire offer had "no base in Kashmir nor had people ever accepted them as their representatives... The leaders of these parties were all set to hold talks with Centre which the outfit would never allow.")

The two incidents of killing of Sikh truckers and five Hindus in Kishtwar, immediately after Mr. Vajpayee's announcement, are seen as the first setback to the process by observers here. However, the authorities do not rule more such acts.

"We were expecting these incidents and cannot rule out similar ones in the future," said the outgoing IGP, Mr. Gurbachan Jagat. He, however, reiterated the Government's resolve to give peace a chance, keeping in view the aspirations of the people.

Ceasefire from first Ramzan midnight

NEW DELHI, NOV. 26. The unilateral ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir announced by the Centre will come into force from the midnight of the first day of Ramzan, Army headquarters sources said here tonight.

Although no announcement has so far been made in Kashmir, the Imam of Fatehpuri Masjid here announced that the holy month will start from November 28. The issue is understood to have been discussed today when the Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani and the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, called the Prime Minister at his residence, official sources said.

THE HINDU

21 NOV 2000

A fateful Ramzan for the subcontinent

27/11 By C. Raja Mohan HD-13

NEW DELHI, NOV. 26. This could be a memorable month for the subcontinent. The Ramzan ceasefire, unilaterally declared by India, is now in place. If the Kashmiri militants and the Pakistani military respond by ending violence in the next few weeks, a new political space may open up for substantive negotiations between New Delhi and Islamabad as well as the Government and the militants to find a lasting solution to the Kashmir dispute.

But does it make any sense to hope for a pause in the unending cycle of violence in the Valley? Optimism has long gone out of fashion in Indo-Pakistan relations, now at a new low.

In the melancholic world of diplomacy, optimism is usually frowned upon. It is often seen as elevating hope above experience. Optimism demands the nerve to make the case for change in direction. Pessimism rests on safer ground by suggesting that the present policy is the best possible one. An optimist risks failure by suggesting a new initiative. By doing nothing, the pessimist avoids it.

Yet, pessimism does not always triumph. If pessimists were always to win, there would hardly be any movement in a nation's foreign policy. Political leaders do take initiatives and launch their countries on a different course. Not all of these initiatives may succeed, but they have the power to chip away at the accumulated rigidity, reframe old problems and find innovative answers.

The success of the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's Ramzan ceasefire will depend upon the kind of "pre-negotiations" that take place in the coming days. Pakistan has found it hard to dismiss the Indian initiative. New Delhi has refused to take Islamabad's qualified "no" for a final answer. That in itself should suggest that we might be in for some complex Indo-Pakistan diplomatic signalling in the next few weeks.

But what indeed are pre-negotiations? These are "talks about talks" that amount to a process of bargaining and diplomatic manoeuvre that precedes decisions by the two parties to accept or reject negotiations to resolve outstanding disputes.

With India and Pakistan not on talking terms, the pre-negotiations are not going to be formal and face to face. But what about back-channels? In the days immediately after the Lahore summit in February 1999 and during the Kargil crisis, there were reports of a back-channel involving a senior Indian jour-

nalist, Mr. R. K. Misra, and a former Pakistani High Commissioner to India, Mr. Niaz Naik. The exposure of this channel may have reduced its efficacy now. We do not know if there are any new lines of credible communication between the two sides.

There will indeed be some — in the form of official statements, privileged communication through diplomatic missions, and interviews to newspapers. There will be any number of individuals proclaiming themselves as intermediaries and taking credit for outcomes between the two countries.

We have Syed Ahmed Bukhari, young Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid, apparently talking to the chief of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Syed Salahuddin. There has been a wedding diplomacy too. Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone, one of the Hurriyat leaders, seems to have done a splendid job conveying the sentiment in the Valley and New Delhi to the leaders in Islamabad.

There is always the danger of non-official channels adding clutter rather than clearing the path to peace. It is absolutely important that New Delhi and Islamabad ensure that

DIPLMATIC NOTEBOOK

messages to each other are unambiguous and convey the intentions clearly.

But nothing will speak louder than actions on the ground. An end to violence itself will be the biggest signal that the two sides can send to each other. India must now try and implement the ceasefire convincingly and Pakistan could respond by reining in the militants.

That brings us to the heart of the negotiations themselves. India says it has demonstrated good faith by declaring a unilateral ceasefire and is ready to engage both the militants and Pakistan if there is an end to violence.

Pakistan is signalling through the militants that it "wants India to improve the offer" by accepting tri-partite talks, release imprisoned militants and reduce the troop presence in the Valley. And India has responded suggesting that the cessation of hostilities must be unconditional and all other issues can be considered once a ceasefire takes hold.

Finessing these differences in the next few weeks will be critical for the success of the ceasefire. The trick may lie in avoiding any suggestion of conditionalities.

If the approach, instead, is one of "simultaneous and reciprocal" actions, it should be

possible to get a real movement. It should not be impossible for the leaders of the two sides to bridge the differences in the pre-negotiation phase.

The question of "tripartite" talks that Pakistan insists on is really a semantic one. If there is no violence, India is suggesting, it is ready for two separate sets of talks — one with the militants and the other with Pakistan. And no one is stopping Pakistan from talking to the militants. In short, the absence of violence can immediately activate all the sets of dialogues. India will also have no reason to maintain a large troop presence in the Valley and fill jails with militants if there is no violence and terrorism.

Whatever the particular features of a conflict, ceasefire and negotiations are at the heart of peace diplomacy anywhere in the world. In short, how do you get the parties to put down the gun and begin to talk? How do you get around the preconditions one side or the other lays down? How do you create the trust and confidence to stop fighting and start talking?

Ceasefire and negotiations are also in focus in another longstanding conflict in the subcontinent — the civil war in Sri Lanka. Mr. Erik Solheim, Norwegian envoy, trying to bring Colombo and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to the negotiating table, believes that his diplomatic efforts are at a delicate stage.

The LTTE leader, Mr. V. Prabhakaran, has hinted that he is ready for talks, if Colombo ends military operations and lifts the economic embargo.

The Government, on the other hand, says it will stop hostilities and talk to Mr. Prabhakaran only when there is a modicum of political understanding.

The challenge before Mr. Solheim is to promote an informal "pre-negotiation" that combines both the approaches. Mr. Prabhakaran's annual speech to his followers tomorrow might give some hint on whether there is flexibility in his approach.

If flexibility is the key to the success of pre-negotiations, here is an ancient proverb that Indian negotiators may do well to keep in mind. "Be not so soft as to be squeezed dry, nor so stiff as to be broken." Can India find the right balance between tactical and strategic considerations in dealing with Pakistan? Yes, if it has the vision to lead the subcontinent to a future very unlike the past.

THE HINDU

27 NOV 2000

Don't undermine ceasefire, Farooq tells Pak.

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, NOV. 26. The Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, today said despite the lukewarm response from militants, the State and the Centre were determined to go ahead with the unilateral ceasefire.

Dr. Abdullah, who was in the capital over the weekend, was involved in a series of meetings with the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, and the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, to firm up strategy and modalities of the implementation of the ceasefire.

The Chief Minister took a swipe at Pakistan and accused it of always trying to sabotage efforts to restore peace in the trouble-torn State. "They have made a habit of trying to sabotage peace initiatives. I pray better sense prevails this time." He called on all the militant outfits to reciprocate the Centre's "ceasefire in Ramzan".

It is Lahore-II: Advani

By Vinay Kumar

WAGAH CHECKPOST (Punjab), NOV. 26. Describing India's Ramzan ceasefire offer as "Lahore-II", the Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, today formally called upon Pakistan to respond positively

by stopping cross border terrorism and putting an end to infiltration in Jammu and Kashmir.

"I appeal to the Pakistani Government to take advantage of this offer and show its sincerity in restoring peace and goodwill. It can do so by stopping cross-border terrorism, effectively checking infiltration and putting an end to training militants in arms and explosives for pushing them in

Kashmir," Mr. Advani said. There was no question of Pakistan being involved in talks with the militants. The Minister was inaugurating the Viewers' Gallery and 'Swaran Jayanti Dwar' here.

Militants differ

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, NOV. 26. There is a clear difference in the perception of the Kashmiri leaders from either side

of the Line of Control (LoC) and Pakistan-based militant organisations on the ceasefire announcement. This was evident from the outcome of the first formal meeting of Kashmiri leaders on Saturday night at the residence of son of senior All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leader, Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone.

While Pakistan-based militant organisations have denounced the Indian ceasefire as a "gimmick", the Kashmiri leaders believe it should not be rejected outright and efforts should be made to prevail upon New Delhi to improve upon the offer.

One of the leaders told *The Hindu* that in the perception of Kashmiri leaders, outright rejection of the ceasefire would not further their cause and could prove to be damaging, particularly from the viewpoint of support from the global community.

"What else can you expect the militant outfits to say? After all, they are faced with a gun-to-gun situation in Kashmir and cannot expect to give up their position so easily. It would require a great deal of confidence-building on the part of all concerned to bring them round," he said.

Track-II diplomacy: Page 13

All eyes on Ramzan moon

By Shujaat Bukhari

JAMMU, NOV. 26. As militants intensified attacks on the security forces in the past 24 hours, killing four Army personnel, all eyes are on the Ramzan moon, expected to show up on Tuesday, the first day of the holy month when the unilateral ceasefire announced by the Centre will come into force.

The anti-ceasefire intentions of militant outfits such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba, Al-Badr, Harkat-ul Mujahideen and Jaish-e-Mohammad, could be gauged when hours after the Army's Northern Command chief, Lt. Gen. H.M. Khanna, issued directions to field commanders to stop combat operations, a group of Al-Badr militants attacked an Army camp in Putshai in north Kashmir.

However, the focus is on the first day of Ramzan, more so since the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, has linked the ceasefire to the holy month. Though the Hizb chief, Syed Salahuddin, has asserted that his outfit would intensify attacks, top security officials quoting ground reports said they may not strike. But nothing could be said about other *tanzeems* (outfits).

THE HINDU

They want more than words

Kashmiris are willing to give peace a chance, but they want practical measures to address the core issues.

SHUJAAT BUKHARI presents a cross-section of views.

IT WAS perhaps the overwhelming response to the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee's ceasefire announcement by Kashmiris at large which forced the separatist conglomerate All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) to describe the offer as a "positive change in thinking of Indian leadership". Tired of the

ceasefire announcement could be because of international pressure but says it still needs to be taken seriously. "Let the militants find out how sincere the Government is," he says. "We want peace and if it comes through such initiatives we welcome it," said Mr. Mohammad Jamal, a houseboat owner on Boulevard Road. Last year, when there was semblance of peace in the Valley, the rush of tourists had increased manifold, but this year it is dismal. Said a university teacher: "Militants should respond positively as the Government did to their offer in July, only then the process of a dialogue for permanent settlement can take off."

Though the militant organisations have so far rejected the ceasefire saying that it was aimed at sabotaging the "freedom movement", the mood

of the Valley is not against the move. All the mainstream political parties have welcomed the ceasefire and the APHC, has not rejected it. It had called the Hizbul Mujahideen ceasefire in July a "broken step" but this time it sees a positive change in the thinking of Indian leadership. "It could be positive development," said Mirwaiz Umar Farooq.

The change in the Hurriyat attitude itself is significant and could lead to the stage where the parties at least sit together. The Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, termed it the second "bold initiative" by Mr. Vajpayee after the Lahore declaration. The coming days in Kashmir could be decisive if the ceasefire takes off successfully on both the sides.



Women of a village near the Line of Control... getting on as best they can.

violence which has eaten into the vitals of their society, Kashmiris are willing to give peace a chance. But, at the same time, they want practical measures to address the core issues, which had led to the violence.

Decisions such as allowing the senior APHC leader, Mr. Abdul Gani Lone, to attend his son's marriage in Pakistan and the permission to Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Maulvi Abbas Ansari to participate in the OIC summit are also seen as a significant shift in the Indian policy on Kashmir.

From the man on the street to the academic in the university, they all see a ray of hope in this latest initiative from Delhi. Mr. Abdul Aziz, a pan vendor on Residency Road, believes the

Gamble in the Valley

Mr. Bill Clinton's achievement column.

Yet, the trump card is still in Pakistan's hand, and it has to determine for itself whether it should allow the "peace process" to take off. However, there are factors Pakistan will find hard to ignore. For a change, and probably for the first time, a visibly Muslim clerical personality, the Imam of Delhi's Jama Masjid, has become one of the facilitators of the peace process. The willingness of the Vajpayee administration to involve Imam Ahmed Bukhari is a remarkable essay in pragmatism, and is bound to yield a rich dividend. Pakistan will not find it easy to ignore the long-term implications of the Bukhari factor.

After all, the Shahi Jama Masjid in the old city of Delhi has been the site of incoercible anti-BJPism; only a few months ago the young Imam was being dubbed by the Sangh Parivar hotheads as an "ISI agent", and the BJP itself was ever willing to denounce as "politics of appeasement" all those who sought to enlist the Imam's presumed influence with the Muslim masses. Now, it is the same Imam Ahmed Bukhari who is being encouraged to establish communication with Syed Salahuddin and other groups on both sides of the divide.

Above all, neither Pakistan nor other groups on this side of the Line of Control will be able to doubt the capacity of the Vajpayee Government to sell a "settlement" at home.

The BJP Government is entitled to make much of the international endorsement of the Prime Minister's Ramadan initiative.

The Opposition parties too will have no option but to back the Ramadan initiative. And, who knows, General Pervez Musharraf may have calculated that the only way to end his international isolation is to allow the "peace process" to find its own equilibrium.

The quest for peace in Jammu and Kashmir has invariably been confused with absence of violence. HARISH KHARE on Mr. Vajpayee's ceasefire initiative.

side; Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone was allowed to travel to Pakistan to attend the wedding of his son to the daughter of Mr. Amanullah Khan, leader of the Pakistani faction of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front. Earlier, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq was allowed to attend the OIC meeting in Qatar, and must have seen for himself the inability of Pakistani diplomacy to excite international imagination over the "struggle" in Kashmir.

And somewhere in the background, no doubt, was the helpful nudging from the Americans. As it is, there is a whole lot of nervousness about the Taliban, and the Pakistani connection with Osama Bin Laden. The lame-duck Administration in Washington would be quite delighted if some kind of a "breakthrough" gets credited to the President,

For a change, there was some fancy footwork by the Indian

the ceasefire move. And before the announcement was made, there was considerable homework. Policy-makers in New Delhi are proceeding on the assumption that the All-Party Hurriyat Conference leadership finds itself unable to ignore altogether the public quest for an escape from unremitting and unending violence; the APHC has, on the other hand, to honour the tactical preferences of its Pakistani puppeteers. That the Hurriyat leadership is deeply divided must be the worst-kept secret in downtown Srinagar. It is also probably correct to suggest that at least some of the Hurriyat leaders have calculated that Indian electoral democracy perhaps provides the easiest route to power.

For a change, there was some fancy footwork by the Indian

the ceasefire move. And before the announcement was made, there was considerable homework. Policy-makers in New Delhi are proceeding on the assumption that the All-Party Hurriyat Conference leadership finds itself unable to ignore altogether the public quest for an escape from unremitting and unending violence; the APHC has, on the other hand, to honour the tactical preferences of its Pakistani puppeteers. That the Hurriyat leadership is deeply divided must be the worst-kept secret in downtown Srinagar. It is also probably correct to suggest that at least some of the Hurriyat leaders have calculated that Indian electoral democracy perhaps provides the easiest route to power.



A paratrooper stands guard in a Srinagar street.

Politics at a wedding

The 'valeema' after the Khan-Lone wedding had a totally different tone. The ceasefire announcement overshadowed everything, says

B. MURALIDHAR REDDY.

IT WAS unusual. A boy from Srinagar was getting married to a girl from the other side of the Line of Control. The high profile wedding in Rawalpindi last Sunday of Mr. Sajjad Lone, son of the senior APHC leader, Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone, and Ms. Asma Khan, only daughter of the



Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone, his son and the JKLF leader, Mr. Amanullah Khan...

with a situation of international isolation and serious economic crisis, the military Government is bound to feel the pinch of the Indian move in the days to come. There are limits to the autonomous functioning of Pakistan-based militant organisations as they look to the establishment to sustain their activities.

The much-publicised Khan-Lone wedding also sent out a subtle but significant message of the Kashmiris' desire for equidistance from both India and Pakistan.

The desire for a permanent peace and normality in the Valley was uppermost among the Kashmiris from either side who had congregated for the wedding.

It will no doubt be a battle between hardliners and pragmatists among the Jehadi groups and within the military establishment in the next few days.

IT IS A BOLD INITIATIVE, SAYS YASEEN MALIK

Army begins ceasefire process

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, NOV. 25. While in Jammu the Army today gave formal effect to the Centre's unilateral ceasefire by issuing instructions to all field commanders to stop combat operations against militants starting Tuesday next, in New Delhi, the initiative received a shot in the arm when the All-Party Hurriyat Conference leader, Mr. Yaseen Malik, led several Kashmiri groups in endorsing the Centre's offer.

Mr. Malik, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front chairman, at a seminar organised as part of Track-II diplomacy efforts, equated the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, with the slain Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, and said, "Mr. Vajpayee is old, and an honest man. He is the only charismatic leader in India today. This is a bold initiative and if he can give permanent peace to the people of Kashmir, generations of Kashmiris will remember him for centuries to come."

However, in the Valley, incidents continued unabated. Nine persons were injured when a grenade lobbed by militants at a moving security vehicle missed the target and exploded on the road in Baramulla district. Authorities imposed curfew in Kishtwar apprehending a communal backlash following the massacre of five Hindus in a remote village of Doda district on Friday. Six militants and a Special Police Officer were among eight people killed in incidents since last evening.

Applies to all militants

Shujaat Bukhari writes from Jammu:

The orders announcing the Ramzan ceasefire were issued by Lt. Gen. Hari Mohan Khanna, General Officer Commanding (GoC) of Northern Command, defence sources said. However, this will not apply to areas falling under the Line of Control (LoC). The ceasefire will apply to all organisations, irrespective of their allegiance, sources said.

"There will be no combat operation including cordon and search, busting of hideouts and the raids on the militant hideouts."

The Army clarified that the troops had been put on maximum alert and any attack on Army camps would be dealt with accordingly — there will be retaliation and no complacency shown on this count.

'Peace needs sincerity'

Vinay Kumar writes from New Delhi:

Welcoming the ceasefire announced by the Prime Minister, Mr. Yaseen Malik said peace could not be created in a vacuum and that the effort needed a "solid foundation".

At a symposium on 'Next Steps in Jammu and Kashmir: Give Peace a Chance' organised by the International Centre for Peace Initiative (ICPI), the JKLF chief drew a parallel with the Yitzhak Rabin initiative in Palestine. "He is dead, but his peace process has not died. He

faced criticism from his own party but he adhered to his initiative."

Making an emotional appeal for sincere efforts, he spelt out three basic parameters for peace: there should be an atmosphere conducive to talks, all parties concerned must be present at the negotiating table, and no party should impose any condition.

He criticised the Government for clamping down on non-violent ways of expression. Citing his own arrest in Jammu recently, he accused the Shiv Sena-BJP-RSS cadres of taking to the streets and demanding trifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir.

"It is against the national interests of India. The State must not allowed to be divided on communal lines. The secular, social fabric of Jammu and Kashmir must be maintained."

The GoM also had intensive interactive sessions with the Service chiefs as well as with all the intelligence chiefs.

Lone echoes Musharraf: Page 11

Improve upon initiative, Musharraf

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, NOV. 25. The Pakistan Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, today said his country was prepared to respond positively if India agreed to "improve" on the Kashmir announcement.

In the course of a one-to-one 90-minute meeting with senior APHC leader, Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone, Gen. Musharraf reiterated that Kashmir was the "core" issue and there could be no solution without Pakistan's involvement.

The meeting was at the invitation of Gen. Musharraf. Mr. Lone said he was surprised to discover that Gen. Musharraf was "straightforward, transparent, forthright and honest..."

he is very honest in seeking a solution to the Kashmir problem through dialogue."

Mr. Lone said Gen. Musharraf could respond positively if the Indian initiative was "improved upon". He, however, refused to elaborate what steps from India could evoke a positive response. He merely said Mr. Vajpayee was the top-most politician in the sub-continent and it was up to him to ponder the steps beyond the ceasefire.

Gen. Musharraf told Mr. Lone that whatever steps were contemplated in the context of Kashmir, there should be honesty in intent and purpose. He informed Mr. Lone of his meeting with the Janata Party president, Dr. Subramanian Swamy, three days ago.

THE HINDU

25 NOV 2000

HF 10 Afraid of peace? 27/11

THE KILLING of innocent civilians by the Kashmiri militant groups following Atal Behari Vajpayee's unilateral ceasefire offer provides some idea of the confusion which has gripped these outfits. Whether it was the murder of five truck drivers on the Jammu-Srinagar highway or of another five in Jammu's remote Doda region, the victims were all unarmed civilians belonging to the minority community. The objective of what the insurgents were seeking to achieve through these massacres remains totally beyond comprehension. Perhaps all that they wanted was to give the impression that they would do their damndest to subvert the proposed ceasefire even when it covered the Muslim holy month of Ramzan.

It is clear the killers were looking for soft targets. The choice of truck drivers as victims suggests that they must have been desperately wanting to perpetrate an act of terror which would attract attention. The fact that the fanatical groups such as the Lashkar-e-Toiba, which are believed to be responsible for these killings, are directly controlled by their masters in Pakistan makes them less responsive to the local sensitivities. Thus, even when the All Party Hurriyat Conference and its militant appendages, including the Hizbul Mujahideen, have voiced conditionally conciliatory responses to the ceasefire proposal, some of the groups can still be expected to keep violating it with a view to provoking the security forces and then blaming them for the violations.

There is a lesson in this gory episode. For a start, the ceasefire offer has put the Pakistani credibility to test. If more such incidents occur, Islamabad will have a trying time explaining its role to the world. Pakistani rulers and the militant groups controlled by them have been trying to sound somewhat conciliatory to the extent that the Pakistani Foreign Minister has accepted some responsibility in checking trans-border terrorism. This denotes the pressure of international opinion. There is little doubt that world opinion is turning against them. This will make Pakistan, and the militants, realise the need for restraint. Whether they will act accordingly is still uncertain. The reason is that both are afraid of peace breaking out in Kashmir, for that will mean the end of all that they had striven for with their acts of terrorism for more than a decade.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

27 NOV 2000

11 killed on day one of J&K ceasefire

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SRINAGAR, Nov. 28. — Guns failed to fall silent as 11 people, including five militants and four security personnel, were killed in a fierce encounter and a bomb blast on the first day of the Ramzan ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir today.

Five militants belonging to the Harkatu-ul-Jehadi-Islami and Teherak-e-Jehad groups were killed in an encounter with the security forces. The militants were trying to infiltrate into Saujian, in the Poonch sector, from across the Line of Control. Two civilians were killed and eight injured in the incident.

Security forces later seized five rifles, two radio sets, some documents and a large quantity of

ammunition from the killed militants, a defence press release said.

Four soldiers were killed and 14 injured when militants blew up their vehicle in the Nowgaon area of south Kashmir. The Hizbul Mujahideen has claimed responsibility for the incident.

Police repulsed militant attacks on the residence of a ruling National Conference leader, Mr Ghulam Nabi Mir, and a former minister, Sheikh Abdul Jabbar in the state since last evening, an official spokesman said.

A calculated risk, says Advani: Mr LK Advani today tried to allay the apprehensions of BJP MPs that the ceasefire might not yield the desired results and could even prove counter-productive if milit-

ants succeeded in using this opportunity to intensify violence, SNS adds from Delhi.

Mr Advani described it as a "calculated risk" and assured the members that enough precautions were taken to ensure that the militants did not take advantage of the situation.

He also expressed the government's determination to act tough if the ceasefire move did not bring a breakthrough in the peace initiative within a month.

The government would review after a month, depending on the response, on whether or not to extend the ceasefire. Mr Advani said the peace initiative was also addressed to Pakistan, which must stop aiding and abetting terrorism in the

Valley. The security forces would use all means to stop infiltration from across the borders as the ceasefire offer did not apply to the LoC.

The security forces have been asked not to carry out searches or engage in combat action but they have been kept in a state of readiness to retaliate in full measure if attacked, he said.

Thackeray wants truce reviewed: Mr Bal Thackeray has once again asked the Centre, Mr Vajpayee, in particular, to review their decision of observing unilateral ceasefire vis-a-vis terrorists in Kashmir.

In the third editorial in *Saamna*, Mr Thackeray said since the announcement of ceasefire 21 people had been killed by terrorists.

THE STATESMAN

29 NOV 2000

Ceasefire takes a beating as militants strike in Kashmir

By Dinesh Kumar
The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: Even as home minister L.K. Advani declared here on Tuesday that terrorists would not be allowed to take advantage of the government's unilateral Ramzan ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir, militants detonated an improvised explosive device (IED) in the Valley, killing three army jawans and injuring 12 others. The expectations of a dramatic de-escalation in militant violence in the state was thus belied just a day after the army suspended all combat operations.

A few hours earlier, another three army jawans were wounded in a skirmish with militants sneaking across the LoC near Poonch. Five militants and two civilians were killed and eight civilians wounded in the incident.

Observing that the government had taken a "calculated risk" in declaring the Ramzan ceasefire, Mr Advani said the terrorists would not be allowed to take advantage of the Centre's desire to restore peace in the state. The ceasefire decision, he said, was taken from a point of strength, keeping in view that over the past three months a maximum number of militants had been killed and "were on the run".

However, the IED blast reflected a ruthless defiance of the ceasefire which many Pakistan-based militant organisations had already rejected out of hand.

There was, however, some doubt about the genuineness of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen's claim of responsibility for the blast, which

destroyed an army vehicle carrying troops of the 36 Rashtriya Rifles, killing three and injuring 12. The incident occurred at Nowpora Doru, about 74 km from Srinagar, on the Srinagar-Verinag road around 2 p.m. on Tuesday. Observers here said a Pakistani jihadi outfit could well be behind the incident.

Hizbul spokesman Salim Hasmi claimed responsibility for the blast, saying "the unilateral ceasefire announced by the Centre is not a serious effort, but an attempt to ward off the international pressure on (India) to resolve the Kashmir issue".

In the earlier incident, five militants were killed in an exchange of fire with the army in the north of Faujian near Poonch around 9.30 a.m. while they tried to infiltrate from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). Army officers said the militants lobbed hand-grenades which wounded three soldiers. Two civilians also were killed and eight wounded.

PRICE OF PEACE

- Three army jawans killed as militants detonate improvised explosive device
- 5 militants killed near Poonch
- Centre has taken calculated risk to restore peace: Advani
- Hizbul claims responsibility for IED blast

THE TIMES OF INDIA

29 NOV 2000

Bhat wants travel curbs lifted, Hizb blast greets truce

Hurriyat for Pak ticket

FROM SANKARSHAN THAKUR

Srinagar, Nov. 28: The Hurriyat Conference has raised fresh demands and described the government's ceasefire, effected early this morning, as "no good" unless it is backed up by a "genuine desire" to resolve the Kashmir dispute.

"Unless there is evidence that New Delhi is serious about talking to us and to Pakistan and making some concessions, what purpose does it serve to have a one-sided ceasefire," Hurriyat chairman Abdul Ghani Bhat, said today.

"The ceasefire became necessary because there is a war and there is a war because there is a problem. Unless the government is ready to redress that problem, the ceasefire is no good."

Hours after the ceasefire took effect, the Hizb-ul Mujahideen struck, setting off a landmine blast that killed three soldiers. The incident, in which 12 people were injured, occurred in south Anantnag district when an army vehicle ran over a landmine.

In the Hurriyat's understanding Delhi's unilateral ceasefire has been prompted by mounting international pressure to resolve the Kashmir dispute, and so the separatists think this

might be a good time to extract more concessions from the government. A new demand being voiced in unison from various sections of the Hurriyat is that they be allowed to go across to Pakistan and to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) to discuss ways of resolving the Kashmir problem.

"Pakistan and Kashmiris in the Pakistani part are part of the dispute and we have to consult them before we can have any meaningful dialogue," Bhat said, adding: "If the government does not intend to grant us even that freedom, we will know just how committed it is to a resolution of the problem."

Ironically, just as Bhat was making a case for free travel across the western borders, the Hurriyat chairman received news that the passport of Maulana Abbas Ansari, a senior colleague, had been revoked by the Indian government.

"This is just what I am talking about. We do not want to make an issue out of one man's passport, it is too small an issue, but you cannot build trust with the people of Kashmir if you behave with them like this."

Demands for free travel permits to Pakistan and ready access to PoK — approachable by road from here via Chakothei — have been raised by another Hurriyat

protagonist, Mirwaiz Omer Farooq. "The Line of Control is a line drawn across the hearts of Kashmiri people, it has to be obliterated," the young religious leader of Kashmir said.

"Both India and Pakistan stand to benefit if Kashmiris from this side can talk to Kashmiris on the other side because there can be no resolution without that."

He also said Delhi's refusal to talk to Pakistan was a stumbling block. "It is impossible to achieve anything without involving Pakistan, India has to give up its rigidity and reluctance to Pakistan," Farooq said.

■ See Page 6

THE TELEGRAPH

29 NOV 2000

Operations suspended in J&K

PTI & SNS

JAMMU, Nov. 27. — Security forces today suspended combat operations in Jammu & Kashmir in line with the Ramzan ceasefire, hours ahead of the beginning of the holy month. But they are on high alert to thwart any attempt by militant groups to create violence activities in the state which remained peaceful.

Defence sources said cordon and search operations against militants had been stopped and raids would remain suspended during the holy month.

During the unilateral ceasefire, security forces have

been directed to stop offensives against militants and exercise restraint in case of any provocative actions by them.

Mr Farooq Abdullah asked militant groups to shun violence and help restore peace in the state.

Conveying his good wishes to the people on the eve of the holy month, the chief minister urged them to pray for the success of the Prime Minister's initiative for peace.

Field commanders have been instructed to exhibit restraint and "retaliatory action will be initiated only if all other avenues are closed," he said.

Advani appeal: The Union

home minister, Mr LK Advani, today asked Pakistan to "stop cross-border terrorism" in Jammu and Kashmir and avail of the peace initiative — the unilateral month-long ceasefire — announced by New Delhi, SNS adds from New Delhi.

The home minister said, "Militants can do what they want in Kashmir but now I am addressing Pakistan. Islamabad may say that the so called freedom fighters are responsible for the situation in the state. What Pakistan can do now is to immediately stop infiltration by militants and

■ See OPERATIONS: page 8

OPERATIONS:

(Continued from page 1)

their training in camps as also supply of weaponry and explosives like RDX to them."

He said, "This is the second peace initiative of India since the February 1999 Lahore bus ride of the Prime Minister, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee. Islamabad had missed that opportunity. This is the second one."

"One cannot say anything now. We are watching the situation," the home minister said when asked about the possibility of talks with militants groups which have so far spurned the Centre's ceasefire offer including the Lashkar-e-Taiyaba and the Jaish-e-Mohammad.

J&K DGP becomes DG (BSF): The J&K DGP, Mr Gurbachan Singh Jagat, has been posted as the director-general of the BSF. He will take over charge from Mr EN Rao on 30 November. Mr Jagat, a 1966 IPS batch officer of Punjab cadre, was deputed to head the J&K police in February 1997.

28 NOV 2000

THE STATESMAN

58K
LEH COUNCIL POLLS / 74 IN FRAY

Testing time for NC, Cong.(I)

By Shujaat Bukhari HD-17 10 30/9

SRINAGAR, SEPT. 29. The battle for 26 seats in the Leh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) has begun after the withdrawal of 68 candidates on Thursday. In the multi-cornered contest among the Congress(I), the National Conference (NC) and the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), 74 candidates are left in the fray for the elections slated for October 28.

As Thursday was the last day for withdrawal of nominations, the contest is triangular with seven Independents also in the fray. According to the Election Officer, Mr. Shibani Ji Revoo, the election for all the 26 seats would be held on October 28 and all arrangements are being made. As the Deputy Commissioner of Leh is also the Chief Executive Officer of the Council, he is supervising the

whole process with four IAS officers of the State having been appointed as the election observers for four blocks of the district.

"Though the dates for counting have not been announced as yet, in any case, the formation of new Council will take place before November 5," Mr. Revoo told *The Hindu* over phone. The State Government has also made arrangements for the smooth conduct of elections. In view of the communal tension, the police and paramilitary forces are also being deployed in strength.

With all the formalities for the first phase having been completed, the parties have started campaigning. In the 26-member Council at present, 24 seats are with the Congress(I) and 2 are with the ruling NC.

Headed by Mr. Thupstan Chhewang of Congress, the LAHDC has

also been demanding Cabinet Minister status for the Chief Executive and Minister of State rank for the Councillors.

On the other hand, the Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, did everything to marginalise his rivals in Leh. After his grand victory in 1996, during which he bagged three Assembly seats in the region,

Dr. Abdullah inducted two MLAs from Leh as Ministers in his Council and also nominated the influential Buddhist leader, Mr. Koushak Thicksay, as member of the Rajya Sabha.

In 1995, the NC boycotted the Council elections. Observers here see the Leh elections as a testing time not only for the Congress but also for the NC, which claims to have confidence of people in all the three regions of Jammu, Ladakh and Kashmir.

Hizb bans Kashmir census

FROM MUKHTAR AHMAD

Srinagar, Sept. 3: The Hizb-ul Mujahideen has banned the second phase of census in the Kashmir Valley, scheduled to begin from September 11.

In a statement, the Hizb asked the government to "call off the ongoing census in the state" as a "fair and credible census" was not possible.

Terming the census a "conspiracy against the majority community", the Hizb said: "Thousands have either gone underground as a result of excesses or crossed over to PoK. Thousands are missing and in jails. Holding a census in such conditions is a futile exercise."

The Hizb also appealed to the people of the Valley "not to cooperate with officials deployed for the census".

Threatening census employees with severe consequences, it said: "Kashmiris should let it be known to one and all that they will not sacrifice their goal of achieving the right to self-determination in exchange for the widening of the roads."

A police officer admitted that providing security to 22,000 employees was a difficult task. "But we will discuss the issue threadbare and steps will be taken to complete the census," he said.

THE TELEGRAPH

14 SEP 2000

J&K Govt releases Hurriyat leader

HT Correspondent
Srinagar, September 5

ONE OF the most prominent secessionist and All-Party Hurriyat Conference leader Sheikh Abdul Aziz was released today. The Jammu and Kashmir Government had revoked his detention orders a couple of days ago.

Sheikh Aziz is also the executive council member of All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) where his organisation Peoples League was represented by Bashir Ahmad Tota in his absence.

At the time of his arrest, he was heading Al-Jehad, the militant wing of Peoples League. He is the last of the Hurriyat executive council members to be released this year.

Observers are watching keenly how he would impact the thinking of All Parties Hurriyat Conference whose credibility and leadership has come into question in the recent months for its failure to draw a direction for itself and also for the people whom it claims to be representing.

Scores of Sheikh Aziz's supporters took profusely garlanded Sheikh Aziz in a procession raising pro-freedom slogans, a familiar way of greeting the secessionist leaders.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

6 SEP 2000

US endorses India's line on Kashmir

S. Rajagopalan
Washington DC, September 16

IN A total endorsement of the Indian line on Kashmir, the US has practically rejected the idea of third party mediation and broadly agreed with New Delhi that the Indo-Pak dialogue can be resumed only when the cross-border terrorist violence ends in the trouble-torn State.

A joint statement, issued after the talks between President Bill Clinton and Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee, was emphatic that "tensions in South Asia can only be resolved by the nations of South Asia and by peaceful means". That formulation effectively rejects Islamabad's insistence on third-party mediation on Kashmir.

The White House, in the meantime, came up with a clarification to bury the controversy triggered the previous day by President Clinton's use of the word "core" to describe the difficulties between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue.

There is no change whatsoever in the US's position and to read any "tilt" in the use of that word would be a mistake, said Mr Bruce Riedel, senior director in the National Security Council.

In a clear accommodation of the Indian viewpoint, the US has also dropped its earlier insistence on

immediate resumption of dialogue. As Mr Riedel put it, Washington now expects the revival "at the appropriate time when the atmosphere is correct".

The US's seeming displeasure with Pakistan was discernible from an observation by Mr Riedel, who said: "We have been concerned about connections between some elements in Pakistan and what goes on in Kashmir. We do believe that Pakistan has a role to play both in resolving the Kashmir problem and in helping to defuse tensions there".

The sanctions issue, however, remained in limbo with the US sticking to its line that India should sign the CTBT before the punitive post-Pokhran II measures can possibly be lifted. The one thing new in the statement is the

incorporation of India's commitment to continue its voluntary moratorium on further nuclear tests.

Mr Jaswant Singh, taking stock of the progress on several economic matters, was certain about the continuity of the new phase of Indo-US relations even after President Clinton relinquishes office. He quoted Mr Clinton as saying that he was leaving Indo-US relationship in such an excellent shape that his successor "can pick up the ball and run with it".

More reports on Page 10

COMMON GROUND

- US rules out third party mediation on Kashmir.
- White House clarifies Clinton's statement that Kashmir is the core issue, says no change in stand.
- Sanctions to remain with US sticking to its stand that India sign the CTBT.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

17 SEP 2000

Musharraf urges U.N. to 'act' on Kashmir

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

UNITED NATIONS, SEPT. 7 The Pakistani Chief Executive, General Pervez Musharraf, touched and harped on the expected theme of Kashmir in his address to the United Nations Millennium summit. Arguing that the world body had resolved many disputes and conflicts and its intervention had arrested human tragedies in Bosnia and Kosovo, Gen. Musharraf said that while the world body and the international community were seriously engaged in finding a solution to the Palestinian issue, "Kashmir cries for justice even after 52 years."

"Ten million people of the State cannot be denied their fundamental right to self-determination. The savage brutalities and killing of seventy thousand people by seven hundred thousand troops have only hardened their resolve. They seek honouring of the pledges made to them by the United Nations," the Pakistani leader said.

"If the people of East Timor could be given their freedom, why not the people of Kashmir? When one party to a dispute is intransigent in rejecting the use of peaceful means, the Security Council is empowered to act. The problem lies not in the (U.N.) Charter but in the lack of political will.

Until we produce that will, all talk of crisis prevention and dispute resolution will ring hollow,"

the General said. Pakistan stood for peace and was prepared to take bold initiatives to change the status quo through a dialogue with India "at any level, at any time and anywhere." Besides saying that Pakistan desired a no war pact, was ready for a mutual reduction of forces, it also sought a South Asia free from all nuclear weapons, he said.

The Pakistani leader also addressed another issue — that of international concern for democracy, saying that the people of his country never lost faith in democracy. "But autocracy in the garb of democracy led to dishonest governance and the collapse of institutions. We stand sincerely committed to rebuilding and strengthening the institutions of State to give the country a genuine and durable democracy," Gen. Musharraf said.

Touching on the subject of corruption, he said, "a particularly dark aspect of the misrule damaging democracy in Pakistan has been corruption. Paradoxically, we have heard long lectures on democracies from countries which have laws that actually encourage corruption, by giving ready asylum to plunderers and facilities for concealment of illicit wealth in secret accounts in their banks. Such transfers will not make them richer but the poor will certainly become much poorer."

THE HINDU

8 SEP 2000

TERMS OF ENDEARMENT: OUTFIT INSISTS ON INCLUSION OF PAKISTAN IN TRIPARTITE TALKS

Hizb still willing to discuss Kashmir issue

Islamabad
5 SEPTEMBER

THE HIZBUL Mujahideen said on Monday that it was still willing to discuss the Kashmir issue with New Delhi despite calling off a unilateral ceasefire last month.

"Our doors are still open for peaceful consultations...and a peaceful settlement," Hizbul Mujahideen group leader Syed Salahuddin told reporters. However, he added that his men were not in touch with Indian authorities after he called off the 15-day ceasefire on August 8 and no second ceasefire was in the offing. "There is no second ceasefire at all, no suggestion," Salahuddin said.

Salahuddin, termed supreme commander of the group, said New Delhi must agree to "meaningful" tripartite talks for settling the 53-year-old Kashmir dispute involving India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir.

"Meaningful means nothing less than tripartite talks," he added.

Hizbul, one of more than a



FREE AT LAST: Hurriyat leader Shiekh Aziz on his release in Srinagar after spending eight years in jail. — AFP

dozen Kashmiri groups fighting for independence or union with Pakistan, announced a ceasefire for three months on July 24 to pave the way for talks among India, Pakistan and Kashmiris. But on August 8 it called off the ceasefire, saying New Delhi had failed to agree to include Pakistan in the talks.

Last week, it threatened to widen attacks in India if the country's security forces "did not stop human rights violations in the approximately 45 per cent of Kashmir it rules."

Asked if there had been any contacts between his group and the Indian authorities after the ceasefire ended, he said: "No contacts. No liaison at all."

Salahuddin said his group had announced the ceasefire on its own rather than under pressure from any outside power like the US.

He said his group, through the brief ceasefire, succeeded in exposing the low morale of Indian forces in Kashmir and India's insincerity about resolving the dispute, and defeating "mushrooming conspiracies" by some groups to sabotage the Kashmir struggle.

"We gave a taste of peace to the Indian forces who are highly demoralised and depressed," he added. He said he had information about demands inside Indian forces for New Delhi to agree to trilateral talks. — Reuters

Indian envoy's children harassed in Pak

New Delhi

5 SEPTEMBER

INDIA SAID on Tuesday it has lodged a strong protest against Pakistan after an intruder broke into the house of an embassy official in Islamabad and tried to molest his young daughters. The Indian government has conveyed to Pakistani officials in Islamabad and in New Delhi that it expected strong action against the offender, a foreign ministry statement said.

It said the intruder entered the house of the Indian official on September 2 when his two girls, aged eight and six years, and the daughter of another official were alone. "At around 5 p.m. an intruder entered the compound and attempted to physically misbehave with them," the statement read out by a foreign ministry spokesman said. — Reuters

Kashmir's history is relevant in the search for a solution to its problem

Unhistorical claims

J.N. DIXIT

Kashmir has been a matter of continuous concern to India, particularly since 1989, when the current phase of terrorism and violence afflicted this state of special strategic and security importance to India. The patterns of violence, mercenary terrorist intrusions and the pernicious process of destabilization organized with Pakistan's active support are well-known and need no repetition. The situation was compounded by the alienation of the youth of the valley who became militants due to their frustrations. The world at large and even public opinion in India and Pakistan tend to perceive the problems related to Kashmir unidimensionally through the prism of India-Pakistan confrontations on the issue.

The historical background of Kashmir as a territorial and sociocultural entity and the current situation do not usually form part of the political discourse assessing the prospects of a solution. The second limitation on the process of thinking through solutions to the Kashmir problem is that all the analyses refer to the latest events of violence or the initiative for some sort of a dialogue.

This event-specific approach is relevant only to the extent of taking into account the most contemporary reality but it does not serve the purpose of structuring a durable solution responsive to the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Other facts must be recalled.

First, the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir which consisted of Jammu, the Kashmir valley, Ladakh, Mirpur, Gilgit and Baltistan with adjoining areas paying tribute to the *maharaja* of Kashmir, has an integrated territorial identity of about 150 to 160 years only. Therefore, the Jammu and Kashmir as it is discussed today was a creation of the Dogra imperium of the *maharaja*, Ghulab Singh, backed by the British East India Company and then the British government.

Then, the areas or sub-regions of the state of Jammu and Kashmir have distinct ethnic, religious and linguistic identities and different portions of the state of Jammu and Kashmir were governed by the Tibetans, Mughals, Afghans and Sikhs till the fourth decade of the 19th century.

Before the advent of Muslim sultanates and empires to India, Jammu and Kashmir had a recorded history of roughly 2,000 years when its civil society was influenced by different sects of Hinduism and Buddhism. Even during the Muslim period, Kashmir had a distinct religious and cultural identity permeated by Sufism and a tolerant Islam. Kashmir became a bone of contention between India and Pakistan because it was a Muslim ma-

jority state.

The point in recalling these facts is that India's claiming Jammu and Kashmir as an integral part of the Indian republic and Pakistan questioning this claim are based on India and Pakistan being succession states to the British Indian empire. The division of the territo-

The Kashmir issue is not, at the most fundamental level, a law and order problem. Nor is there any validity in dealing with it as a bilateral problem between India and Pakistan because Pakistan has no *locus standi* to discuss the future status of Jammu and Kashmir and the destiny of its peoples. The Pakistani



↳ The violence in Kashmir is now underpinned by a pan-Islamic jehadic ideology ↲

ries of this empire between the new entities of India and Pakistan was done on the basis of political decisions and legislation passed by the British parliament. So Pakistan putting forward any long term historical claims on Jammu and Kashmir cannot wash because Pakistan itself is an entity which came into being long after Jammu and Kashmir itself had achieved a composite identity.

Seminars and academic discussions on the contemporary situation in Jammu and Kashmir have led to some conclusions. First and foremost, for the last 50 years Pakistan has continuously indulged in a two pronged strategy to gain control over Jammu and Kashmir. The first element in this strategy has been to convert what is essentially a political issue into a military one by resorting to military force to resolve it. The second is to use the created military situation to campaign for international pressure on India to give up Kashmir to Pakistan on the basis of advocacies of tension in south Asia.

India is engaged in two conflicts in Jammu and Kashmir: First, neutralizing Pakistani aggression and intrusion and second, winning back the confidence and reviving the sense of belonging to India among the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

which requires determined resistance, even preemptive action by India.

Latest assessments indicate that the all round military capacity of Pakistan-supported militant groups, both indigenous and mercenary, has increased. These groups are now equipped with winter weapons, anti-aircraft weapons, state of the art communication equipment, night vision and telescopic targeting capacities. Pakistan has the ability to abort any dialogue with indigenous Kashmiri militant groups, if it feels that the peace process will take off, marginalizing Pakistan's claims to be involved in discussions on Kashmir.

Yet recent developments in Jammu and Kashmir indicate that the people are tired of violence. They are alienated from the militants and equally disappointed with their elected government. They are also exhausted with the presence of Indian security forces. Their inclination is to revive a dialogue aimed at ending the violence and fashioning a political compromise on the basis of which normalcy, peace and stability could be established in their region.

Despite elected governments in Jammu and Kashmir since 1996, the state government lacks credibility among the people. It is in this context that India's policies regarding Kashmir have to be fashioned. No definite prescriptions are possible regarding the initial steps India could take but realistic possibilities should be explored.

India should welcome any revival of the ceasefire and possibilities of a dialogue. We should be willing to talk to all opposition political and militant groups which indicate a willingness to desist from violence. We need not insist on their surrendering their arms, nor need we stipulate that only solutions conforming to the Indian Constitution can be discussed. No negotiation can take off if it is governed by specific pre-conditions. Those among the militant groups which insist that Pakistan should be a party to a dialogue, may be told that India has no objection to their consulting Pakistan in formulating their negotiating stance and that India will respond to their negotiating stances in a practical manner.

We may also indicate that India is not averse to having a separate dialogue with Pakistan on those aspects of the Kashmir issue in which Pakistan is involved in a manner where that involvement affects Indian interests. There would be international pressure on us to discuss the Kashmir issue with Pakistan. We should convey a policy approach on the above lines to the international community, suggesting that it persuade Pakistan to move away from the path of interference and violence. While initiating any journey of reasonableness on these lines we must be decisive and effective in neutralizing Pakistan's violence and war of attrition which it is conducting against India.

The author is former foreign secretary of India

Kashmir: illusion and reality

By Sudhanshu Ranade

10-11-2006

KASHMIR is in the news every single day. And yet it is so little understood. Again and again well-meaning intellectuals from both sides of the border harp on the need for greater people-to-people contact to pave the basis for a way out of the Kashmir imbroglio. But again and again it turns out that, even at the level of intellectuals, leave alone the people and Governments, there is no real meeting of minds on the issue.

The sharp and often acrimonious divisions among journalists and intellectuals from India and Pakistan, on what precisely the problem between the two countries is, was all too evident in July this year. But the thing goes much further and much deeper than that. This is seen for instance in the sharply different stereotypes that the children of the two countries are indoctrinated with about Muslims and Hindus, and the very different things they are taught about the history of 'Muslim India' (or 'India under Muslim rule'); particularly under Akbar and Aurangzeb.

Even in the heady dawn of these people-to-people exchanges, a decade ago, when it was decided with much fanfare to plant a tree to symbolise the growing friendship between the common people of the two countries, no agreement could be reached on what the tree should be called. In the end two saplings were planted; the Pakistanis called theirs *dosti*; the Indians named theirs *mithri*. The trees, surely, have since withered away. The intellectuals, sadly, are still with us.

Most people are simply not aware that Article 370 is not much of a concern to Muslims in India outside Kashmir. And they are not at all curious about why the Hurriyat Conference leaders, while calling on Pakistan's High Commissioner in Delhi whenever they get a chance, have never attempted to put their case before Indian Muslims outside Kashmir.

General Pervez Musharraf never misses a chance to tell the world that India is "waging a war" against Indian Muslims both in and outside Kashmir. Dutifully supported by 'journalists' and 'human rights activists' in India and Pakistan (to be more precise, by well-meaning propagandists), and, as if unaware of the ground realities in Kashmir (of the war that our troops have been forced to fight

blindfolded against the invisible, heavily armed, incredibly brutal and deeply treacherous enemy from across the border), General Musharraf pretends to be aghast at the way that 'poor Muslims' in Kashmir are being ridden roughshod over (or, in his words, 'humiliated, raped and killed'); by hundreds of thousands of 'armed and arrogant Hindus'; while trying somehow to wiggle his way out when people talk about the way hundreds of thousands of 'armed and arrogant Muslims' of West Pakistan brutalised (or 'humiliated, raped and killed') the poor Muslims of East Pakistan, and that too simply because they elected their own leader, rather than leaving it to leaders from the West, who had always been a hopeless and oppressive minority from day one.

Many Indians, both Hindus and Muslims, are cynical about the BJP president, Mr. Bangaru Laxman's recent effort to reach out to the Muslims. But most are totally unaware of the dramatic difference between the stand of the VHP and the RSS on building the Ram Mandir at Ayodhya. The VHP says it will do this, come what may. The RSS, meanwhile, has been repeatedly expressing the hope that some out-of-court settlement can be arrived at, with a degree of reparation and compromise, so that the troubling issue can be put behind us once and for all. Even so radical an RSS 'official' as the Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, has been saying for years that he believed the Babri Masjid demolition to have been a grievous mistake; and has been stressing over and over again that the BJP must move on from being a mere interest group to becoming a 'responsible party of governance'.

Even after the way that its 'commander in chief', Syed Salahuddin, sitting safely in Islamabad, sabotaged the efforts of the Hizbul Mujahideen in Kashmir led by Abul Majid Dar to usher in an era of peace and prosperity in Kashmir, most people

remain unaware about the uneasiness of the Kashmiris of the sort of 'support' that Pakistan has been giving to 'their' struggle. Most people are unaware, too, of the way in which this position was unambiguously expressed this July by the JKLF chief, Amanullah Khan.

Few are aware that even as Syed Salahuddin threatens to take to other parts of India Pakistan's war 'on behalf' of the Kashmiris', this war has in the meantime begun spreading to other parts of Pakistan. If things carry on like this, Ms. Bena-

Even at the level of intellectuals, leave alone the people and Governments, there is no real meeting of minds on the Kashmir issue.

zir Bhutto recently said in public, as Pakistan disintegrates under the weight of its unsustainable ambitions, Sindh and Baluchistan too could soon go the way of Bangladesh.

But most sad and most scary of all is the profound ignorance about the 'unofficial' nuclear doctrine of Pakistan that was spelled out this spring in the journal of the Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad; by the American Rodney Jones, an establishment 'non-proliferation' man turned warmonger and 'consultant'. Before quickly sketching his thesis in the space that remains, a preface is necessary. The map which appears on the cover of the journal shows all of Kashmir as being outside Indian territory — and all of Sikkim as well. Ostensibly for 'want of space', the map does not show any of the Northeastern States as being part of the undisputed territory of India.

Let us now let Rodney Jones speak for himself: "Kargil and the intensified nationalist feeling it inspired in India during the parliamentary election campaigns in September 1999 only strengthened the inclination in both (I) countries to build up strategic capabilities and to make them operationally available. Assuming the weapons and delivery systems are mobile, dispersed, and hard to detect at times of crisis, two dozen deliverable warheads might be considered sufficient. As long as the inventory is so small, Pakistan would be inhibited from relying primarily

on a retaliatory posture. Key export controls and other barriers to nuclear and missile proliferation have usually been instituted after key Indian acquisitions from abroad, but before Pakistan has had the time to do so. Pakistan has been forced by this uneven playing field to procure nuclear weapons and missiles wherever it could. Thanks to this, Pakistan can now assuredly cause 'unacceptable damage' to key centres such as Delhi, Mumbai, Calcutta, Chennai and Bangalore.

That Pakistan has not been well run under recent elected Governments is well known, but the cliché that Pakistan has become a 'failed state' is a regrettable digression from serious thought and analysis. Today, Pakistan's worst nightmare is the threat of Indian invasion, under some pretext or the other, to 'teach it a permanent lesson'; to impose on it lasting servitude to India's wishes; or even to break up Pakistan as it currently exists. India deliberately pursues a strategy of intimidation against Pakistan through crises and covert probes manipulated to wear it down psychologically. It tries to isolate Pakistan from its partners, to play on its internal divisions, and to distract the nation from normal social and economic activities by forcing the diversion of scarce resources.

While India pretends to aim at 'credible minimum deterrence', Pakistan, being a smaller country, would be better off pursuing what may be described as 'maximally credible nuclear deterrence'. Pakistani planners must seek to identify red lines. These would not be specified publicly, but they would be the thresholds that set nuclear strikes in motion. A first strike doctrine would be chosen not because it could disarm or defeat India, but because it would signify that Pakistani escalation, as a last resort, would be sudden and all out, with catastrophic consequences for urban India. Being the weaker of the two countries, this is the only real option available to Pakistan.

It should be emphasised that this expectation is not the same as a bluff, that could be shown up for what it is after the outbreak of a war, but rather a reputation earned in advance that presents the opponent with an impenetrable (un)certainty regarding what may happen in the course of an avoidable war.

'Where the heart is involved you don't hold polls'

Dr M
The Hizbul offer of a cease-fire and the National Conference's championing the autonomy cause may have deflected attention from the All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC), but the APHC remains a significant factor in Kashmir. Masood Hussain spoke to Prof Abdul Gani Bhat, who's just been elected the APHC chairman to find out how he views these developments.

118
cease-fire to precipitate the process.
But this must be viewed from another angle: what do Indians say? They say we welcome it. But will human rights violations end? Will it lead to the final settlement of the J&K dispute? These remain to be seen.

118
You have been negotiating at various levels after Clinton's visit. What have you discussed, where did it reach and what have been the hurdles?

I am guided not by emotions, by what happened yesterday, but by the sombre, hard reality on the ground. The situation now is materially different. India has gone nuclear, so has Pakistan. The situation has assumed a monstrous dimension. Any confrontation ensuing from a mistake, miscalculation, or even by design will spell total disaster. This explains the growing realisation of peoples of India, Pakistan and Kashmir that the dispute threatens nuclear peace in the sub-continent and must be addressed. Any step towards a final settlement of the Kashmir dispute must be with reference to (a) weaponisation, (b) globalisation and (c) the growing realisation in the entire south Asian region that the future must be ensured.

But what happened to the negotiations?

I do not think they had started at any level. Informal exchanges, yes; interactions too. But formal negotiations, no.

But you met many people.
Informally, yes. Remember that the government chooses a person and talks with an agenda for official level meetings. There is no agenda yet, only haphazard movements, directions and interactions and exchanges of ideas. That does not constitute negotiation by any standards.

But one of the APHC members did meet Brajesh Mishra.

I will only talk of what I did, what (Mirwaj) Umer did. No other member has talked about this, so I have no reason to believe that such a meeting took place. How do I know unless the member informs the APHC executive?
Nothing is on, formally, between APHC and Pakistan or India.
What was the other side's bottom

218
deliberations. I feel the APHC, Pakistan and India should consider any proposal, including Dixon's. But other options, like the Kashmir Study Group's, must also be deliberated by the three.

How do you say the APHC is the sole representative of the people of J&K?

We represent sentiment — not measured by a show of hands, but by the beat of hearts. Where the heart is involved you do not hold elections to prove your credentials as the true representatives of the people. Yassir Arafat never contested elections for a mandate, nor Nelson Mandela.

Why don't you contest elections?
We are ready to participate, provided they are held for the specific purpose of determining the future dispensation of J&K.

You have no representation in Ladakh and Jammu, especially in the non-Muslim belts. Isn't that a failure?

The political aspirations aren't identical. People in Jammu and Ladakh, perhaps not in Kargil, have their own political aspirations. But political aspirations in the rest of Jammu are identical to Kashmir's. But, in my opinion, communalisation of the situation isn't the subject. My subject, straightaway, is dispute settlement. Instead of proceeding on communal lines we must devise a solution that is acceptable to all. Communalisation may create occasional problems, but we must solve the dispute without considering which community goes where — with a sense of accommodation.

How do you rate the chances of survival of an independent Kashmir, if that ever becomes a reality?

I do not subscribe to the view that an independent Kashmir will be unviable. As chairman of the APHC, I have to abide by its constitution. It refers to UN resolutions and also to the right of self-determination. Whatever decision the people take must be respected by each party. On the viability of an independent Kashmir, certain people say 'no', but others say 'yes'.

What if the troops resort to killing of the militants?

There is a clear divide between people representing interests and those

347
representing sentiments — a divide so clear that even the blind see it. The government goes to the people who fell to the bullets of the boys, and APHC goes to those who fall to the bullets of the soldiers. That is the divide.

The Hurriyat does not doubt that killing innocents is a heinous and inhuman crime...tens of thousands...many more innocents are killed than militants.

You say the level of confusion has gone down, but let me remind you that you have been saying confusion has been helping major developments. What next?

Of course, confusion sustains the movement and it has increased and thickened, become denser. This is why APHC was offered a deal of negotiations. But look at the confusion. They now talk in different voices. Where is the pro-active policy? What did they do to their own representative, Dr Farooq Abdullah? First they said we will look into the autonomy issue, but they summarily rejected it. That is confusion — thickened, since it covers more people. Even the ones who were not confused earlier are so now. This sustains the movement.

What about the international response to the Kashmir mess?

I am an optimist, am sure the dispute will be resolved in the interests of peace. I believe there is wisdom around in India, Pakistan — even in Kashmir. The situation which developed, particularly after 1998, is a potential threat to nuclear peace.

The state authorities are accusing APHC leaders of amassing wealth; are you not helping the destitute?

At the moment we have no money. But I am going to appeal to the people to contribute in the Hurriyat Fund to enable use to help destitutes, who number over 70,000. About the allegation, the government of India did issue notices but my colleagues were honourably acquitted.

In 1986 you were a teacher and in 2000 you are speaking from the highest platform of the opposition. Whom you owe it?

To Allah.
Not Jagmohan, who dismissed you?

Yes, but as an agent of Allah.



Abdul Gani Bhat

us. We want the future to be determined according to the wishes of the people.

Some people say autonomy should come to both halves of Kashmir with international guarantees; could that be a permanent solution?

My best wishes to such people, but Kashmir was an autonomous state. Even if it now becomes an autonomous state, I do not think that will lead to a final settlement. This is just political fantasy.

There are so many solutions, from Sir Owen Dixon's to more recent ones coming from Farooq Kathwari's Kashmir Study Group. What is the Hurriyat's response to these options?

The Hurriyat will consider any outlining of the possible solution only if it takes into account the legitimate right of the people of J&K.
So you are ready to divide the state on communal lines too?

Right now, I don't know; the parties must discuss. Dixon wanted the dispute settled on the partition of the state between India and Pakistan. That is history. Whether the plan works or not it will be left to future

Musharraf's preachings convert none

HT Correspondent
New York, September 9

FOR ALL its media blitz, with General Pervez Musharraf granting interviews at the drop of a hat, Pakistan has not exactly converted many to its world-view of Kashmir. So would it seem from the fact that just two nations brought up the Kashmir issue at the UN Millennium Summit. One was Pakistan itself, the other Saudi Arabia.

The Indian diplomatic establishment, to be sure, is heaving a big sigh of relief, some of it to cover up its own deficiency in a better projection of New Delhi's viewpoint. The saving grace was Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's perfect foil for Gen. Musharraf's tirade two days earlier.

Another diplomatic goody to flow out of the summit for India is the growing support for the French-sponsored comprehensive convention against international terrorism, a matter which India has been pursuing actively as a victim of cross-border terrorism.

Gen. Musharraf, arriving in good time for the summit, addressed a press conference, gave interviews to UN-based correspondents and American media. Ahead of him, his Information Minister Javed Jabbar kept the pot boiling. But, mercifully for India, the results have been anything but encouraging for Islamabad.

The Indian side took abundant care to see that the paths of Gen Musharraf and Mr

Kashmir Issue

Vajpayee did not cross. While Pakistan has been teasing India with an invitation for dialogue, New Delhi has been resolutely opposing any interaction as long as Islamabad did not end the cross-border terrorism.

This post-Kargil line, hardened by the step-up in terrorist violence in recent times, will be put forth with equal force when the Prime Minister meets President Bill Clinton on September 15 during his state visit to the US. But then Washington itself has toned down its insistence

on dialogue by its emphasis in equal measure on ending violence to create a congenial atmosphere for talks.

In Mr Clinton's own address to the UN summit, there was only a passing reference to South Asia when he was making out a case for compromise over confrontation. Surely, this was a far cry from the time when Mr Clinton (before his Indian visit last March) described Kashmir as the most dangerous place on the planet.

Has India upped its ante against Pakistan to a degree that it could prove counter-productive? External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh disagrees with the premise. To newsmen's queries at a post-summit briefing, he said the Indian position has been explicit for quite some time now: Abjure violence if dialogue is to be resumed.

The Prime Minister, according to Mr Singh, has only placed the ground realities before the world body. Gen Musharraf, he said, has even sought to repudiate the validity of the Shimla Accord prescribing a bilateral settlement of problems like Kashmir.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

10 SEP 2000

Terror stalks J&K census officials

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, Sept. 9. — As Jammu and Kashmir prepares for a census, the 20,000-plus staff engaged as enumerators live in fear of the terrorists who have opposed the operation.

Hizbul Mujahideen recently said the census had no significance — thousands had gone underground, hundreds were missing and over 300,000 Kashmiri Pandits had fled the valley.

About a week later, the Lashkar-e-Taiyaba on Thursday threatened to kill all government employees who associated with the census. "The government has not taken measures for the return of the migrants to the valley, neither it has taken steps for

EDITOR KILLED

JAMMU, Sept. 9. — Mr Chander Vijay Awaz, editor of an English daily, *Dateline*, was killed and his wife injured in their house at Sarwal Colony here this morning by two criminals, police said. The accused have been arrested. One was identified as Ramachandra Mahapatra from Bihar. — PTI

creating a congenial atmosphere for the return of those who have gone underground," the Lashkar statement said.

The J&K government began the census process in early May this year. The state is determined to go ahead with the

second, final phase beginning 11 September, said the census director, Mr Feroz Ahmed.

The census department has allayed fears expressed by former Union environment minister, Prof Saifuddin Soz, about the reliability of the census operation. There's no scope for presenting a distorted picture of the state's demographic character, the department said.

While it is true that all people in a particular area on the date of counting are included, there are ways to identify migrants, people from other areas and members of the armed forces, an official spokesman said. There is no question of their presence being utilised to present a faulty population profile.

THE STATESMAN

10 SEP 2000

Pandits' plea reaches Clinton

WASHINGTON, SEPT. 10. The idea of a separate "homeland" in the Kashmir Valley for the minority Hindus is gaining support among the legislators in the United States, with a lawmaker from South Dakota advocating creation of "a self-governing union territory" for the "victims of ethnic cleansing".

10-14
The South Dakota State legislator, Ms. Mary Patterson, supporting the demand of the Kashmiri Pandit organisation "Panun Kashmir", has urged the President, Mr. Bill Clinton, to impress upon the visiting Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, to support the creation of "a self-governing union territory" in the

Kashmir Valley for rehabilitating "the victims of ethnic cleansing".

In a letter to the President, Ms. Patterson wrote, "conditions in that volatile region have remained unchanged and the non-Muslim minorities there continue to be slaughtered by the hired guns of Osama bin Laden with a remarkable regularity."

11/9
"Now that the Indian Prime Minister is visiting the U.S. addressing Congress and will meet you during the second week of September, the Democratic legislative party of South Dakota once again urges you to emphasise upon Mr. Vajpayee the need for establishing a homeland for victims of fundamentalism in Kashmir."

9. 8 38 v
Pointing out that the U.S. had been a champion against "ethnic cleansing" and "hate crimes", she wrote "to demonstrate the even-handedness and universality of our policy towards all minorities, it is important that the U.S. take the same firm stand for Kashmiri minorities as well."

"The establishment of a homeland in Kashmir for the exiled minorities is the best, most viable and pragmatic solution to the problems presently faced by them."

She noted that the proposal had been endorsed by the Democratic Senator, Mr. Tim Johnson.

— PTI

11/9

1.1 SEP 2001

Major, 10 men die in suicide squad attack by Lashkar

HT Correspondent ^{9.87}
Srinagar, September 12 ^{38K}

A SUICIDE squad of militants killed a Major and 10 soldiers in a camp of Rashtriya Rifles in central Kashmir this morning, sending a grim reminder of their reach and strike capability.

In retaliation, soldiers killed two 'Fidayeen' (members of the suicide squad belonging to the Lashkar-e-Toiba). ^{49-1 1399}

In the early hours of today, two militants wearing Indian Army uniforms entered the 34 Rashtriya Rifles Camp at Beerwa in Budgam district of central Kashmir, about 30 km from here, and started shooting the sleeping soldiers. Major Mahesh Pandey and 10 soldiers fell to their bullets.

Soldiers at the camp were taken unawares by the attack. Their retaliation came a little too late. The militants were trapped from all sides. Heavy gun fighting from both sides continued for hours before the militants were shot dead.

It took longer to eliminate the militants, sources said, because darkness worked to the advantage of the attackers. Militants were shooting in all directions while soldiers had to be careful about their target.

The Lashkar was responsible for a majority of such attacks during the past year that has left more than 100 soldiers and officers dead.

The group, while owning the responsibility for the attack, identified its 'Fidayeen' as Abu Bakar and Abu Tallaha.

Elsewhere in the Valley, night-long shelling by Pakistani troops killed a woman, left 12 villagers and damaged 23 houses, according to a UNI report from Baramulla.

Official sources here said today that Pakistani troops resorted to unprovoked artillery and mortar shelling besides small-arm firing in the Uri sector late last night, targeting both civilian areas and security force installations.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

SEP 12 1987

Kashmir 'core' issue sends Indians into tizzy

S. Rajagopalan
Washington DC, September 15

ON THE eve of his talks with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, President Bill Clinton on Thursday set the cat among the pigeons by using, perhaps unwittingly, the word "core" to describe the "difficulties between India and Pakistan" over the Kashmir dispute. If this expression has been a hot favourite with Islamabad, it has been plainly allergic to New Delhi.

During a chat with newsmen on a totally different subject, Mr Clinton, fielding a question from an Indian correspondent, said the US was strongly opposed to terrorism in all its manifestations.

Thereafter, he proceeded to remark that the US could play a positive role towards a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute, which has been "at the core" of the difficulties between India and Pakistan for more than half a century now.

It is tragic, said Mr Clinton, to think that this dispute is holding back the people living on the subcontinent, the very people who have come down and settled in the US and are doing extremely well. These people (be they Indians,

Pakistanis or Bangladeshis) are a "stunning success in this country," he remarked.

Mr Clinton's use of the word "core" came up at a Press conference that Mr Brajesh Mishra, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, addressed. Mr Mishra seemed bemused, but did not react to the reported observation. "Did he say core issue? I don't know," he said even as the correspondent in questions passed on a copy of the transcript of the President's observations to him.

Mr Mishra, asked if Prime Minister Vajpayee would discuss the Kashmir issue with Mr Clinton, shot back: "We have not come here to discuss Kashmir." He, however, conceded that Kashmir would "certainly come up in the context of the discussions on the situation in South Asia."

It is Pakistan, which has been seeking US mediation on the Kashmir issue, while India has stuck to the position that this is a bilateral matter to be sorted out by India and Pakistan in terms of the Shimla Accord.

The US has repeatedly said that it will be prepared to lend a helping hand if only both India and Pakistan want it to play a role in resolving the crisis.

email from Washington DC on Page 12

Protests by fringe groups

ONE FEATURE of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's visit to the US has been the series of protests by various fringe organisations. In New York, Sahmat, a left-wing Indian organisation sent representations against the BJP to the UN. People for Ethical Treatment of Animals, a fringe animal rights organisation, arranged for a cow to follow Vajpayee around. And in Washington, Khalistanis took an ad complaining about "the crafty Nazi-like BJP fundamentalist gang in Delhi".

Such protests are part and parcel of any prime ministerial visit, but Indian officials have been particularly concerned about the campaign launched by Christians. Most Indian Christians of any note have taken the position that the state of Christians in India is a matter for us to settle at home. The Catholic Bishops Conference and the leading Protestant organisation both turned down requests to come to Washington. More significantly, so did the widow of Graham Staines. But this has not deterred some Christian organisations that seem to believe that it is entirely acceptable to embarrass the Indian Prime Minister.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Hizb threatens to intensify strikes

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 17. The Hizb-ul-Mujahideen today threatened to enlist an increased number of "skilled militants" and acquire modern and sophisticated weapons while reiterating its offer to hold bilateral talks with the Centre if New Delhi accepted that the final solution to the Kashmir issue would be reached through a tripartite agreement between India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir.

"The outfit at present has plans to intensify action against security forces in Kashmir and other parts of the country, to increase the number of skilled militants, acquire more sophisticated weapons and at the same time garner more public support," the central adviser and divisional commander in the Valley, Mr. Assad Yazdani, said over the phone.

However, the outfit had not attached any new conditions for a new phase of ceasefire in the State.

Mr. Yazdani said the future ceasefire would be an absolute one and every outfit operating in the Valley would abide by it. "Let India respond positively first. All organisations, political forces and outfits which in anyway are involved in the freedom struggle, are highly respectable for the Hizb," Mr. Yazdani, who

also participated in the talks with the Centre, said.

The Hizb would enter into talks with the Centre on the Kashmir issue without immediate participation of Pakistan if New Delhi accepted it as a tripartite issue. "Yes, we are ready even for bilateral talks with India provided the final settlement of the Kashmir imbroglio is through tripartite agreement, as Pakistan being a party to the issue, cannot be sidelined."

The Hizb, which had been critical of the functioning of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference, today showed no signs of any rift with the organisation as Mr. Yazdani termed the "amalgam as a well-recognised political forum as far as Kashmir is concerned." On the new ceasefire offer, Mr. Yazdani said, "we have not given any specific date about its announcement." The outfit wanted peace restored in the State but it should not be at the cost of the Kashmir dispute, he said.

Asked what would be the fate of the minority community, which fled the Valley after the onset of militancy, the Hizb central adviser said, "every community, which belongs to Kashmir, will live in peace, tranquillity and brotherhood, once the issue is solved." "Ma-

hatma Gandhi also found a ray of hope in Kashmir when the whole of the sub-continent was burning," he added.

Tight security in capital

Meanwhile, security in the national capital was tightened following intelligence reports that some Pakistan-trained militants owing allegiance to the Al-Badr outfit, might try to cause disturbance during the coming festival season. Highly-placed sources said Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence agency had trained a batch of 12 militants at Ory in the North-West Frontier Province to carry out blasts in Delhi during the festival season.

The sources said raids had been carried out at several places in the walled city and a strict vigil was being maintained at all entry points into the national capital. However, Delhi police officials were tight-lipped at the development and refused to comment.

Meanwhile, the ISI had formed a "border action team" (BAT) to facilitate infiltration of militants, the sources quoted arrested militants as saying. The sources said the BAT had also received special training from the Islamic international jihad force of Osama bin Laden at its Auttuck camp. — PTI

At least one round of talks with the militant groups may take place before September

The scene is being set for a meeting between Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Chief Executive of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf at New York in September. Both leaders will be there to attend the United Nations General Assembly and a side summit will clear the deck for the long awaited India-Pakistan dialogue on Kashmir, with new partners and an entirely different thrust.

The details are presently falling into place. The All Parties Hurriyat Conference was embraced by the Vajpayee government as a representative of the people of Kashmir. And it was made known that the centre would like to talk to the Hurriyat leaders. Over and above, and, if necessary, without the National Conference and chief minister Dr Farooq Abdullah. This, created its own complications which have been shelved for the moment through quick and very astute handling by Prime Minister Vajpayee.

The Hurriyat has gone through an election with the pro-Pakistan Professor Abdul Ghani Butt being elected by just one vote, as the new chairperson of the group. He has been amongst those in the Hurriyat who has been advocating accession to Pakistan, and will definitely ensure Islamabad's voice in any proposed solution. In fact Professor Butt had told *The Asian Age* earlier that the Hurriyat was interested in talks only if it was convinced that there would be a meaningful solution at the end, and that there could be no lasting solution without Pakistan's full involvement in the dialogue.

And just as the Hurriyat was getting ready to play the role of the big brother in the region, the Hizbul Mujahideen came out with a unilateral cease-fire offer. This was immediately welcomed by the government in Delhi, almost as if our leaders were waiting for the announcement, and the security forces were instructed to respond in kind. The Hizbul made all the necessary noises about unconditional talks, and has now followed these up by announcing a three-member team for the dialogue with Delhi.

It is, of course, not a coincidence that the Jamaat-e-Islami chief, which is also the Hizbul's parent organisation, spent several weeks in the US prior to the

TOO FAST A LANE TO MAKE PEACE

BY SEEMA MUSTAFA



Qazi Hussain Ahmed (centre) chief of Jamaat-e-Islami arrives from the United States at Lahore airport. His US visit was not a mere coincidence (AP)

cease-fire offer. It is also not a coincidence that two indigenous Kashmiri groups have been placed squarely in the middle of the proposed dialogue with the cross border terrorist factor having been very cleverly eliminated. In that the Lashkar-e-Tayaba, the Harkat-ul-Ansar have been placed very neatly out of the picture with just the Hurriyat and the Hizbul being given the desired place and position in the dialogue. And it is also not a coincidence that both the groups are very much inclined towards

Pakistan, and will not entertain any solution without Islamabad's active participation.

Given the neck breaking speed at which matters are proceeding it will not be premature to say that at least one round of talks with the Kashmiri groups might take place before Prime Minister Vajpayee leaves for the US in September. Contact has already been established at all levels with the Hurriyat, and the Prime Minister's Office has been given a full feedback from a variety of sources. The Research and

Analysis Wing is just one input, former diplomats, journalists, servicemen form the rest.

The Hizbul has announced a three-member team, of whom one has already faxed a detailed statement to the Indian news agencies. Mr Mushtaq Ahmed Gilani has stressed upon the need for peace and an unconditional dialogue. He has also made it clear that the final solution will require the participation of Pakistan, India and the representatives of the people of Kashmir in the dialogue. In other words, he

It is, of course, not a coincidence that the Jamaat-e-Islami chief, which is also the Hizbul's parent organisation, spent several weeks in the US prior to the cease-fire offer. It is also not a coincidence that two indigenous Kashmiri groups have been placed squarely in the middle of the proposed dialogue with the cross-border terrorist factor having been very cleverly eliminated

has basically stated what the Hurriyat has been saying all along.

The Hurriyat is feeling left out in the process, particularly as a statement from the Prime Minister's Office referred to the Hizbul but not to the APHC. An omission that was noted and has now been commented upon by Professor Butt who is reluctant to give a clean chit to the government insofar as the peace process is concerned. But these are matters of detail and will probably be resolved once the government feels prepared enough to initiate

at least the first round of talks.

The Hurriyat has made it clear throughout that it will accept any solution that emerges from the negotiating table. This can be *azadi*, accession to Pakistan, secession from India, trifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir... "anything, what is acceptable to all is acceptable to us." Obviously this cannot be the position of the Indian government which is committed and wedded to the Constitution. It cannot accept secession, it should not even consider trifurcation, it will have to totally oppose *azadi* and can only commit itself to the status quo with more autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir.

The last will be totally unacceptable to the Hurriyat and the Hizbul. And if groups from Jammu and Ladakh are brought into the negotiations the picture will get more complicated, far more than Delhi will be able to handle by keeping its feet firmly fixed on the ground. This is not to mention Pakistan, which will bring its own manoeuvres and political chicanery into the dialogue. Given these facts it is interesting to note that all parties concerned are very keen for talks, almost as if they know that hidden under the apparent mess is a solution acceptable to all.

The stage is being set with a certain determination and precision. The talks are not being banded about as a political gimmick, and there is a sense of the inevitable in the statements from the APHC and the Hizbul as well as the centre. The ostensibly quiet maturity with which Islamabad has decided to applaud Delhi's initiative even as it waits to be invited is also not without significance. If the side summit takes place in New York then both the heads of government will return to their respective countries with the initiative firmly in place. US President Bill Clinton who will be addressing his last UNGA as head of government will have his feather in the cap, peace in South Asia replacing the CTBT ratification.

India is waiting for the drama to unfold with full confidence that its government will be able to ward off any dramatic twists that can turn it into a tragedy for the nation. Kashmir cannot become a bartering tool for vested interests, it symbolises the secular aspirations of the country and must retain the same.

The Hurriyat has made it clear throughout that it will accept any solution that emerges from the negotiating table. This can be *azadi*, accession to Pakistan, secession from India, trifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir... 'anything, what is acceptable to all is acceptable to us.'

Obviously this cannot be the position of the Indian government which is committed and wedded to the Constitution.

THE ASIAN AGE

11 AUG 2000

1 AUG 2000

1 AUG 2000

1 AUG 2000

Farooq hails talks with Hizbul

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BARAMULLA, July 31. — Dr Farooq Abdullah said today that the Centre was sincere about holding talks with the Hizbul Mujahideen. Talking to reporters at Sheeri near here after the passing out parade of the J&K Armed Police, the chief minister said other extremist outfits would soon feel marginalised, gradually fall in line and then lay down arms.

Asked what his role would be in the context of the centre's talks with the Hizbul, Dr Abdullah said, "I always have a role". There was nothing common between the talks and his autonomy demand. There was no need for him join in any talks, because "my Prime Minister is talking", he added.

Dr Abdullah said he was not sure what the outcome of the talks would be, but it was very clear that the government wanted to hold talks. "There is nothing clearer than this, and both sides must talk with sincerity of purpose," he said. Asked to comment on the Union minister of state for civil aviation, Mr Chamman Lal

Gupta's statement about the Cabinet's rejection of the autonomy report being final, Dr Abdullah said, "This is absolutely baseless. Mr Gupta forgets that he is a minister in the Union government". He said though the Hizbul cease-fire was a positive development, there was no excuse for lowering the guard.

"Realisation has dawned on the Hizbul that the gun can't substitute for talks". Pakistan too was seeking a way out, because it had realised that the LoC would not change. But he advised caution against some elements who might not accept the changed scenario as their bread and butter lay in continued violence. "They indulge in extortion and depend on funding from Pakistan", he said.

The chief minister hoped other militant outfits too would come forward for talks. "People are yearning for peace and want the gun culture to end," he added.

Expressing optimism about return of peace in the state, he cautioned police to be vigilant against the enemy who were using silencer guns to target men in uniform and civilians.

THE STATESMAN

LAU 24 2000

24 2000

6 armymen killed in rocket attack

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR JULY 31: After the ceasefire offer made by the Hizbul Mujahideen, other militant groups today intensified their attacks on the security forces, killing six armymen and one policeman in two separate incidents. Twelve others were wounded, police said.

According to defence sources, a group of unidentified militants last night fired a number of rockets at an army camp in Sunarwani village near Bandipore.

The attack was so powerful that six army personnel from the nearby brigade headquarters died on the spot and some barracks were damaged. Seven others were wounded in the attack for which the Lashkar-e-Taiba claimed responsibility. It was unhappy with the Hizbul ceasefire offer.

In the Mahrajbazar locality here, militants fired upon two policemen, killing one and critically injuring the other.

Five persons including three CRPF personnel were injured when militants hurled a grenade towards a picket in Rainawari.

The Director-General of Police, Mr Gurbachan Jagat, told *The Hindu* that foreigners were suspected to be behind the attacks.

Hizbul nominates Qureshi for talks

SRINAGAR, JULY 31. The Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), which declared a truce, tonight nominated the sep-

arate leader Mr. Fazil-ul-Haq Qureshi as its negotiator to hold talks with the Union Government for working out the modalities of the ceasefire.

The nomination was decided at a meeting of the field command council of the outfit in which all divisional commanders in the Kashmir Valley and Doda were present with Mr. Abdul Majid Dhar, chief commander of the outfit in Jammu and Kashmir in the chair, a HM statement said.

The statement said a final decision on the HM participation in the talks with New Delhi rested with the group's Pakistan-based supreme commander, Syed Salluddin. In Muzaffarabad, capital of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, the Harkatul Mujahideen said it would continue with its 'jihad' (holy war) as a ceasefire or dialogue with India would not yield any result towards resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

The Harkat chief, Maulana Farooq Kashmiri, told a rally on Sunday, "If dialogue or the ceasefire were the solution, then the Kashmir problem would have been resolved much earlier."

Meanwhile, the PoK Prime Minister, Mr. Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, said his Government would fully support whatever decision the Hurriyat Conference took for a settlement of the issue.

He, however, said a solution could be found only through tripartite talks among the Kashmiris, India and Pakistan.

THE HINDU

1 AUG 2001

Farooq for unconditional talks

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, JULY 31. The Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, on Monday insisted on holding an open and unconditional dialogue with the Hizbul Mujahideen and hoped that the other groups would soon realise the futility of the gun and come forward to participate in the peace process.

Talking to mediapersons in Sheeri Baramulla, after the reviewing the passing out parade of police personnel, Dr. Abdullah said talks should have to be open and unconditional from both the sides. "How can talks start if conditions are imposed".

Talks, he said, were going to be open and the Government of India (GOI) had made it clear. He, however, refused to divulge details about his meeting with the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee.

The Hizbul ceasefire was a window of opportunity which other militants should follow. "It is a visible change in their thinking," Dr. Abdullah said adding "a group which was killing people and advocating violence has real-

ised that it cannot solve any problem through the gun".

The Chief Minister said the other militant groups would be marginalised and would come forward for talks.

However, he warned of attempts by hardline militants who had termed the Hizbul ceasefire "betrayal". They will try to prevent the talks taking place and to sabotage peace process, he added. On the autonomy issue, Dr. Abdullah denied that the National Conference had become irrelevant. It is a continuous struggle and will not give up, he said adding that the proposed talks with the militants had nothing to do with the autonomy.

He said that he had received a positive response from the leaders he met in connection with autonomy issue recently as "we tried to remove misconceptions".

Mufti too

The former Union Minister and chief of People's Democratic Party (PDP), Mr. Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, also favoured talks with the Hizbul without conditions.

Addressing a convention of his party here, Mr. Sayeed welcomed

the ceasefire announcement as also the subsequent reactions from the Government and the Hurriyat Conference.

Terming the move as a golden opportunity for the Government, he said "it should not lose this opportunity as these do not come again and again".

He called for a positive approach towards the process so that a lasting solution to the Kashmir problem came up.

Senior PDP leader and the former MLA, Ms. Mehbooba Mufti, also stressed for unconditional talks and said that the stand of the PDP was vindicated with these developments.

"We have always been for dialogue to resolve the issue and the things are moving in that direction," Ms. Mufti said adding the ceasefire should be implemented in letter and spirit by both the sides.

There should be instructions to security forces, particularly the SOG, so that the people were not put to trouble any more.

Thousands of PDP workers attended the convention organised to celebrate the foundation day of the party.

THE HINDU

1 AUGUST 2000

Kashmir: a major development

By Harkishan Singh Surjeet

119-12 2/8

TWO IMPORTANT developments within a short span — the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly's adoption of the autonomy resolution and the equally dramatic announcement of a time-bound ceasefire by the Hizbul Mujahideen — have turned the spotlight on Kashmir. The BJP-led Government, expectedly, had "outrightly" rejected the autonomy resolution. However, under pressure from its regional partners, who hold a divergent view and in fact have been demanding more powers for the States, it has been forced to tone down its initial outbursts. In sharp contrast, the Hizbul's announcement has been welcomed both by the Centre and various other quarters.

Both these events, outwardly, seem unrelated. But it is the deep sense of apathy towards both the ruling National Conference and the militants that have compelled these forces to resort to these tactics. In the opportunistic alliance that the NC struck with the BJP, the people discerned the very antithesis of their aspirations. Both these parties subscribed to diametrically opposite views. As opposed to the NC, the BJP had been an ardent advocate of abrogation of Article 370, besides its anti-minorityism. The autonomy resolution should be seen as an attempt by the NC to overcome its alienation from the people, who despised this unholy alliance.

As opposed to the other States, Jammu and Kashmir's accession to the Indian Union came under entirely different circumstances. The Mountbatten Plan while dividing the country into India and Pakistan had provided for the creation of more independent States if the ruling princes so desired. Though Hyderabad and Kashmir were marked out, these nefarious moves were foiled. In Kashmir, the raiders sent in by Pakistan were challenged and defeated by the people who were led by the NC. These events forced Maharaja Hari Singh to sign the instrument of accession. This was a big achievement, as it shattered the plans of two other contending parties — the imperialists and the Maharaja who wanted it to be independent, and those who claimed religion to be a binding factor, Pakistan and the Muslim League.

Therefore, the issue of Kashmir should

The issue of Kashmir should not be confused with the question of devolving more powers to the States... The Government will have to tread cautiously while being generous on the question of autonomy.

not be confused with the question of devolving more powers to the States. It was in recognition of the special circumstances surrounding Kashmir's accession to India that Article 370 of the Constitution enjoined it with special status and autonomy, with its own flag and Constitution. The Centre had control over only three subjects — defence, foreign affairs and communications. However, from 1954 there has been a consistent erosion in the powers of the State. The Centre's jurisdiction was extended to all subjects in the Union List; subsequently the all-India services were extended to J&K through an amendment to Article 312 many other changes were introduced in the J&K Constitution reducing the powers of the State and incorporating them either in the Concurrent List or in the Union List. Again, at the time of the Indira Gandhi-Sheikh Abdullah agreement in February 1975, a clause was inserted that the NC should go into the erosion of Article 370 and a decision can be taken. But all these, unfortunately, remain unimplemented.

The Governments that came to power both at the Centre and in the State failed to tackle the real problems facing the people. Little was done for economic development, investment in infrastructure and the creation of more avenues for employment. This neglect by the Centre combined with its inability to protect and develop the linguistic and cultural heritage of the State also led to discontent among the people.

The BJP and its previous avatar, the Jan Sangh, or the Praja Parishad in Kashmir, were dead against Article 370. The Praja Parishad, in fact, backed Maharaja Hari Singh's effort to create an independent Kashmir. Even after Kashmir's accession, the Praja Parishad was a firm opponent of progressive measures such as distribution of land to the peasants, abolition of landlordism without compensation etc.

Given Kashmir's strategic placement — it borders China, Russia and Pakistan —

U.S. imperialism has always entertained an interest. After the liberation of Bangladesh, Pakistan intensified its intervention in Kashmir. This had the blessings of the U.S. Even the Clinton-Nawaz Sharif statement ending the Kargil conflict emphasised this point. It says Mr. Clinton will take "personal" interest in resolving the issue. Nothing can be more blatant. Unfortunately, despite the stated stand of the Indian Government disapproving any third party role, this statement had the prior approval of the Prime Minister.

The last elections, held during the tenure of the United Front regime at the Centre, had brought about a favourable situation. But it was not followed up by redeeming the promises made to the electorate who voted in large numbers defying the extremists and fundamentalists. Unfortunately, after the elections, the NC failed to live up to the expectations of the people. The situation worsened after the BJP assumed power at the Centre and the NC decided to join the NDA Government. On the one hand, the NC found itself alienated from the people; on the other, Pakistan used the situation to intensify its activities. The capture of Afghanistan by the Taliban saw increased intervention in Kashmir. The BJP-led Government was lulled into complacency after Vajpayee's much-hyped busride to Lahore. The decreased vigil resulted in the Pakistani intrusion in Kargil. Pakistan's present Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, who was then the army chief, has revealed that behind Kargil was the key issue of Kashmir. It may be recalled that initially Pakistan had denied any involvement in Kargil and maintained that it was the Mujahideen who had occupied the mountains. Simultaneously, however, around 2,000 insurgents were pushed into the Valley.

Broadly, there are three different streams in Kashmir. Those who are for continuing to be part of the Indian Union but with more powers to the States; those

who want it to be made part of Pakistan and those who want Kashmir to be independent. U.S. imperialism from the beginning has been seeking to make Kashmir independent so that it can have a strategic base. The release of the Hurriyat Conference leaders, most of whom are backed by Pakistan and want accession to Pakistan, was seen as an indication that the Government was initiating some moves for talks with these sections. This speculation got more credence with the unilateral announcement by the Hizbul leadership of a ceasefire and the subsequent naming of a team to conduct talks. Simultaneously, it has also stated that Pakistan should be involved in the negotiations. The Government is caught in a difficult situation.

Despite the complex nature of the issue and the divergent opinion, the Government has made no effort whatsoever to take the major parties into confidence before venturing into this exercise. This would have enabled the building of a united approach and would have vested it with more credibility and authority. At least on the question of third-party mediation, the unanimity should be reiterated. The Government will have to tread cautiously while being generous on the question of autonomy. Unfortunately, the NC has produced another report on regional autonomy within the State. The report advocates bifurcation of Jammu into Hindu and Muslim-dominated districts and similarly in Ladakh into Muslim and Buddhist-dominated districts. This is a very dangerous move. It is disruptive of national unity and cannot be entertained at any cost.

The incessant disturbances and the continuing conflict has injured the psyche of the ordinary Kashmiri. The bruise will take a long time to heal even after peace has been permanently restored. A very difficult task lies ahead. On the one hand is the autonomy resolution, and on the other is the Hizbul's ceasefire and willingness for talks. What steps the Government takes to effectively intervene in the situation have to be watched closely. Will it take measures that will bridge the gap with the people who have been alienated from the mainstream or play into the hands of the enemies of the nation? The answer will follow in the coming days.

THE HINDU

1 AUG 2001

1 AUG 2001

WATER CRISIS

Check On Population The Only Answer

By KB SAHAY

A FEW months ago about 10 crore people spread over several states in the country were reported to be reeling under severe drought-like conditions. Cattle in large numbers perished for want of water and fodder. Water had to be transported to the affected areas by tankers, trains and even naval ships: such was the severity of water scarcity.

But this water crisis was certainly not the usual kind of drought following the monsoon failure. In the present case the crisis had appeared almost

about a couple of months before the onset of monsoon this year. Moreover the country, on the average, has been getting normal monsoons for the past eleven years, including 1999-2000, the usual sectoral disparities in rainfall notwithstanding. Hence there is need for a comprehensive analysis of the country's water scenario.

It is no doubt that out of all the requirements of water the domestic requirement is the most critical one for human survival. But it is also true that this domestic need forms only a very small part of our total water requirements and availability. Even today when our population is over a billion, the total domestic need for water per year for the whole nation is hardly about 33 cubic km per year, that is, only three per cent of the annual fresh water availability of 1,150 cubic km which constitutes 700 cubic km of surface water and 450 cubic km of ground water. And yet crores of people and cattle suffered badly for want of drinking water.

MISMANAGEMENT

If petrol and diesel can be reached from one corner of the country to the other, there is no reason why there should be scarcity of water for domestic needs anywhere in the country at any time. Surely governments have failed in their duty to ensure regular supply of potable water for all despite all the promises of political parties. Hence the authorities have rightly been criticised for their mismanagement, apathy, flawed models of development, neglect of traditional methods of water harvesting and corruption that have led to the present scarcity even for drinking purposes.

Nevertheless, while worrying about non-availability of drinking water which is indeed very important, we must not lose sight of requirements of water for agriculture, power etc., as these too are very important for the nation's survival. The availability, requirement and management of water for non-domestic needs have a significant bearing on the availability of water for domestic purposes.

The main cause of the present crisis for drinking water affecting about 10 crores of our people is that the successive gov-

ernments have not cared to create adequate infrastructure and proper regulations to ensure availability of potable water to all for domestic purposes; and the present crisis is not because of any non-availability of potable water per se to meet even our domestic needs which is less than 10 per cent of our ground water availability.

It is estimated that in the year 2000, water requirements for agriculture and industries

arrangements to ensure drinking water for all. Second, pollution, non-conservation and runoff of surface water and over-exploitation of ground water for non-domestic use leading to massive depletion of ground water so much so that in many places potable water has become scarce both on the surface and under the ground even for domestic use.

The analyses made so far underscore the following points: (i) the most critical requirement of water is for domestic needs which consti-

tutes only a very small portion of the total availability of fresh water in India and hence ought to be available to all under any monsoon conditions provided of course the authorities take proper measures; (ii) since the total requirement of fresh water for the rest of India is now already too close to the availability and the demand is soon going to exceed the availability there is bound to be an ever worsening shortage of water in the country except in the Brahmaputra basin;

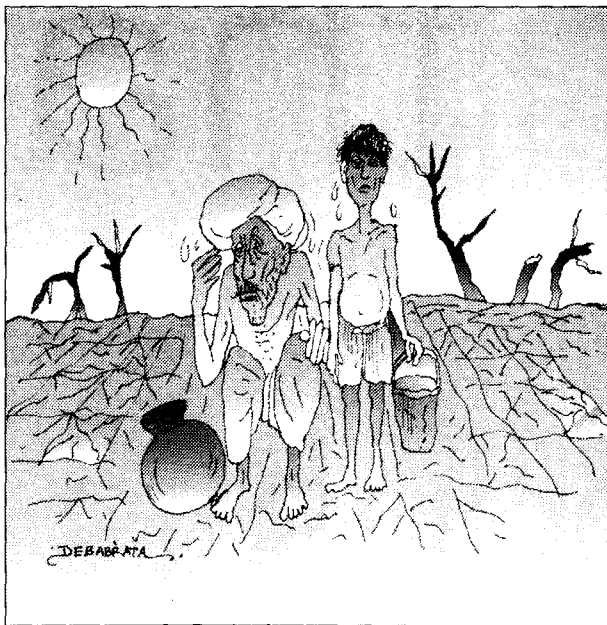
(iii) if suitable measures are not taken soon to stop pollution of surface water and over-exploitation of ground water, people will be deprived of even the domestic water supply despite all the talk of rain water harvesting; and (iv) the present crisis of domestic water in the country is not because the country does not have enough fresh water per year for drinking even under the worst monsoon conditions but because the ground water has been sucked excessively to meet mostly agricultural requirements which are no less important for the nation's survival.

MALTHUS KNOCKS

The need for agricultural water is going to increase every year as we need more and more foodgrain to sustain our population increasing by about 1.7 crore per year. It is being said that we need to double our foodgrain production in the coming 10 years. So the real problem is how to meet our ever-increasing needs of water for agriculture which alone is now about 75 per cent of the rest of India's total fresh water availability and is likely to become about 90 per cent of the total availability by the year 2025.

To solve this problem, many of the experts and officials would advise our farmers to use drip irrigation or even computer-controlled irrigation techniques as in Israel but would never like to emphasise the need to put a brake on our population which is the root cause of water scarcity in India. With every passing year this "pre-monsoon water crisis" will increase in intensity and spread if the population growth is not checked.

It is a pity that while the Malthusian symptoms are knocking at the door, the nation believes that it still has enough time to check its population growth.



(including energy) are as high as 630 and 87 cubic km per year, respectively. And these requirements are expected to rise to a staggering 770 and 228 cubic km per year, respectively, by the year 2025. Thus while meeting the domestic requirement of water ought not to be a problem any time, it is bound to become difficult to meet the growing non-domestic needs of water with every passing year even under normal monsoon conditions.

There is yet another major constraint in meeting our water requirements. The total availability of utilisable fresh water in India is 1,150 cubic km per year; but 29 per cent of this is available in the Brahmaputra basin where only three per cent of our population lives. Thus only 817 cubic km of utilisable fresh water is available for the rest of India having 97 per cent of population and 94 per cent of geographical land area. The only way to deal with this imbalance in water availability is by an inter-basin transfer of water from the Brahmaputra basin to the rest of India. This is not an easy task.

COMING CALAMITY

Now if we compare the rest of India's rising water requirements with its fixed availability of only 817 cubic km per year with highly polluted surface component, the extent of the crisis should be obvious.

As a matter of fact, the present crisis foreshadows the impending calamity. We must take note of the fact that even though the present total water requirements of 727 cubic km per year in the rest of India has not exceeded the fresh water availability of 817 cubic km per year, yet about 10 crore people starved of even drinking water.

There are mainly two reasons for this. First, the government's failure to make proper

The author is Professor, Centre for Biomedical Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi.

67 projects await ministry of environment's clearance

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 1. — As many as 67 projects, including some offshore projects, are awaiting clearance by the Union ministry of environment and forests.

Out of the 67 projects, Tamil Nadu has the maximum — 13 — followed by Karnataka (8), Maharashtra (7), Andhra Pradesh (6), Rajasthan (5), Orissa, Gujarat and Arunachal Pradesh four each, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh three each, Punjab and West Bengal two each.

Though the ministry claimed to have sought some additional information from 33 projects, including construction of Vijayanagar Thermal Power project in Karnataka, Bulk Drug and Chemical unit in Maharashtra, Sijimali Open Cast Bauxite mine in Orissa, Kollimalai Hydro-Electric project in Tamil Nadu and Ductile Iron Foundry at Howrah in West Bengal, it is sitting on 16 projects even after receiving complete information and eight other projects which were recommended by the expert committees.

The ministry has also reopened some pending proposals. The minister of state for environment and forest, Mr Babu Lal Marandi, has said the government will give environment clearance within 90 days of receipt of information.

Statistics reveal that five projects — expansion of pesticide units at Srikakulam, expansion of

production capacity of chlorpyrifos at Cheruvukommupalam, expansion of cement plant at Anantpur, 390 MW (ISO) expansion at Jegurupadu and expansion of Tummalapenta — belong to Andhra Pradesh.

Four others — construction of Haynliang-Changlagaon Road, Happoli-Joram Road, Tongecorla-Yarlung Road, and Manigaon-Tadadege Road are in Arunachal Pradesh.

Four projects of the Gujarat Government — expansion of Chinkarisation plant, product substitution plant, expansion of pesticide manufacturing unit and port expansion — are also pending with the environment ministry.

The Karnataka Government's eight projects which include 1x500 MW Vijayanagar thermal power project, Upper Krishna projects (state-I and II), Upper Krishna power project, expansion of Wadi cements open cast limestone mine of ACC Limited, 170 MW barge mounted power project have yet to see the light of day.

Out of three projects, including shore crude oil tank farm of Cochin Refineries, setting up of a beach resort at Chawara in Kerala, the environment ministry has sought additional information on two projects. Similarly, 1x500 MW Sanjay Gandhi Thermal Power Plant (State-II) and two open cast minings of Bharat Aluminium Company Ltd and Prism Cement Ltd of Madhya Pradesh are also lying with the ministry.

THE STATESMAN

- 2 AUG 2001

Amarnath pilgrims among 29 killed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
& ASSOCIATED PRESS

SRINAGAR, Aug. 1. — At least 29 people, including 15 Amarnath pilgrims, were gunned down and 39 injured when suspected foreign mercenaries fired on them on the outskirts of Pahalgam this evening, officials said late tonight.

Three militants were killed when security forces retaliated. Home ministry sources in New Delhi said the attackers belonged to the Lashkar-e-Tayaba.

Earlier today, the Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, Dr Farooq Abdullah, said 21 people — 11 Amarnath yatis and 10 security personnel and other civilians — died in the attack which took place at a kiosk

in Bandara, where pilgrims are served food.

Officials said a group of eight militants attacked a community kitchen at Ardoo Bridge where the pilgrims were having dinner around 7 p.m.

Two militants of a suicide squad stormed the kitchen and fired indiscriminately, killing 21 on the spot, the officials said. The Army, BSF and CRPF personnel on duty there hit back killing three militants.

A gunbattle broke out between the security forces and the mercenaries soon after the attack which came hours after Union home ministry officials contacted Fazal Huq Qureshi, a separatist leader named by Hizbul Mujahideen as its emissary, setting in motion the process of negotiations with the Pakistan-based outfit.

The dead and injured included many porters and men who hire horses that carry pilgrims up the steep slopes.

Thirteen people were admitted to a Srinagar hospital where the condition of three was serious, doctors said.

"We were standing by the river. Suddenly we heard gunshots. We couldn't

ON PAGE 7:

- Home ministry alarmed
- Challenge to peace move

see from where it was coming. I fell down... I realised I had been hit," said Nandu Agarwal, one of the injured.

"First there were some gunshots... Soon the security forces also began firing," said Muzaffar Wani, a Muslim businessman who sells trinkets. "It was chaotic. We couldn't see who was

firing at us," he said, lying on a hospital bed.

It was the first time that militants have killed pilgrims on their way to the Amarnath cave.

Army and paramilitary forces fanned out across the mountains to search for the assailants.

Some 20,000 pilgrims are camping in tents and hotels in Pahalgam, where they begin a 30-mile trek into the mountains.

In a separate strike, militants attacked a registration camp of Amarnath pilgrims in Jammu hurling grenades and opening fire from automatic weapons. But none was hurt. One militant was killed when policemen on duty at the camp fired back.

The chief minister condemned the attacks in Pahalgam and Jammu and

said: "It is an attempt to sabotage the peace process set in motion."

Dr Abdullah said this was an attempt by other militant outfits to create a state of confusion in the state at a time when a "silver lining has started appearing in the dark clouds of violence over Kashmir".

He asked people to maintain communal harmony.

Curfew has been imposed in Pahalgam. Security forces were put on high alert in Jammu division.

PM condemns attack: The Prime Minister, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, tonight condemned the militants' attack on Amarnath pilgrims.

He asked the state government to take necessary measures to provide adequate security for the pilgrims and treatment of the injured.

THE STATESMAN

1 AUGUST 2000

2 AUG 2000

1 AUGUST 2000

Challenge to peace move

2/8
9-81
SSK
55-2
KEITH FLODY
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 1. — Even as the highest levels of the government were assessing the reports from Srinagar and the Governor rushed back from the Capital, there was unanimity among strategic experts and Kashmir-watchers that a major challenge had been thrown to attempts to launch a peace process in the troubled region.

The apprehensions that a determined bid would be made to deflect the cease-fire move by the Hizbul Mujahideen have come true. The "non-local" militant groups have made it clear that they are not going to back off and are determined to create complications.

It is admitted, unofficially of course, that the weakness in the Intelligence-gathering apparatus persists. Radio intercepts had pointed to the other militant groups being directed by their mentors across the border to step up disruptive activities. But no potential targets could be identified. That the pilgrims were a soft target ought to have been realised.

An immediate offshoot will be security forces having to abandon their plans not to undertake pro-active missions against the militants, and that might result in them engaging the Hizbul Mujahideen too — thus nullifying the ceasefire

arrangement. And when the forces go on the offensive, the "collateral impact" on the civil populace creates tensions of another kind.

There would be a communal angle to the attack. The killings of Hindu pilgrims would result in the government coming under pressure, from elements in Sangh parivar in particular, to abandon the proposed talks with the Mujahideen and the Hurriyat Conference. A communal backlash would be just what the Pak-backed militants would want. The government would have to tread carefully in the next few days, said the analysts.

Much would now depend on how the Hizbul Mujahideen and leaders of the Hurriyat Conference react to the Amarnath attack. Should they fail to publicly condemn the killings, their status as peace-seekers would be questioned. Yet are they strong enough to take such a bold stance?

The biggest danger would be over-reaction, it would be playing right into the hands of the ISI, said the experts. The government will have to exhibit statesmanship at one level, and firmness at another. A balance has to be attained in an atmosphere that is bound to be emotionally charged. Yet failure to handle the crisis would be to douse the only spark of hope that the people of the Valley have seen in a decade.

THE STATESMAN

2 AUG 2000

2 000

40-1
2/8

Bid to scuttle peace talks: Govt. 95/8x

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, AUG 2. Confronted with the Opposition charge of failure of intelligence and security apparatus, the Government today said

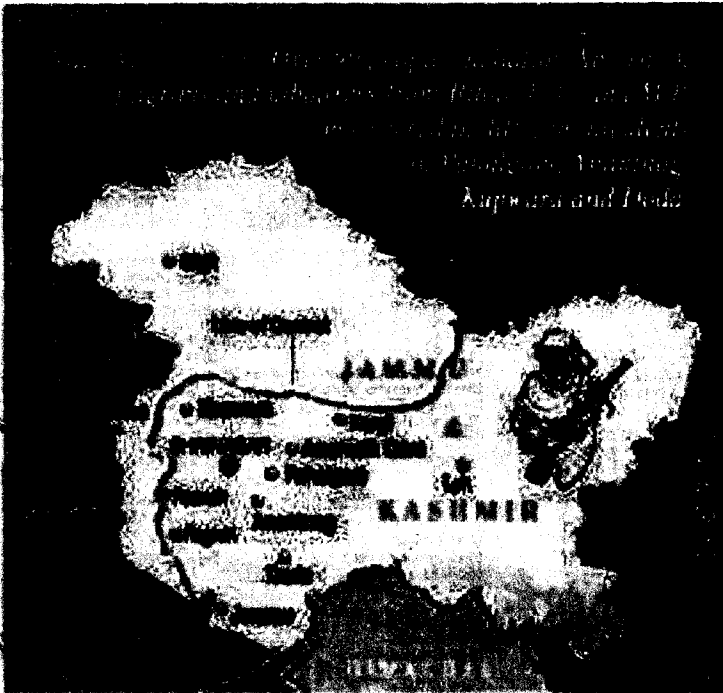
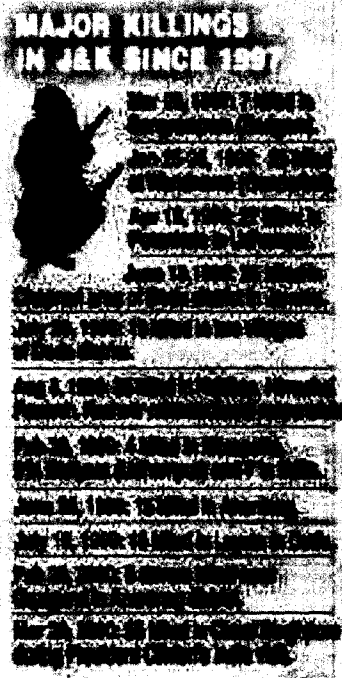
Tuesday's attack by militants on Amarnath pilgrims at Pahalgam was an attempt to sabotage the peace initiative in Kashmir following the Hizbul Mujahideen's offer of talks. Both the Prime Min-

ister and the Union Home Minister, said in the Parliament that rival militant outfits determined to derail the peace process were behind the attack which had claimed over 90 lives. Mr. L.K. Advani admitted the Government was apprehensive when it accepted the Hizbul's offer that "something like this" might happen, and it had instructed the security forces to remain alert.

Mr. Vajpayee and Mr. Advani said the Government was determined to go ahead with peace talks while continuing to be vigilant. The Amarnath "yatra" would continue with renewed security.

The Opposition in both Houses came down heavily on the Government saying the attack was the result of "complacency" which seemed to have crept in after Hizbul's offer and cessation of anti-militancy operations — a charge which Mr. Advani strongly repudiated.

The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Ms. Sonia Gandhi, in a brief but sharp intervention, asked why the Government failed to take appropriate measures when it feared something was likely to happen. The Amarnath pilgrims were obvious "soft" targets and the Government should have ensured maximum security. She saw in it a replay of the post-Lahore peace process which was followed by the Kargil conflict.



THE HINDU

8 AUG 2001

3 AUG 2001

3 AUG 2001

Saboteurs in Kashmir

THE GRUESOME manner in which nearly 100 people, including pilgrims bound for Amarnath, were murdered on Tuesday speaks of the criminal nature of some of the extremist militant outfits operating in Kashmir. Though the identity of those involved in Tuesday's killings at Pahalgam, where the pilgrims were attacked, and at Qazigund, where 19 Bihari labourers were killed in cold blood, is not immediately known, it is not difficult to figure out who are responsible for these heinous acts. Barely a day earlier, Lashkar-e-Toiba, the fundamentalist Pakistan-based militant outfit, had claimed responsibility for a rocket attack on an army camp in the north Kashmir town of Bandipore in which half a dozen soldiers were killed. These gory incidents appear to be part of a pattern indicating that more extremist militant groups — especially those playing host to the foreign mercenaries — would do their utmost to sabotage the dialogue process which they have refused to join.

The motivation behind these attacks might be two-fold — to take advantage of the security forces' restraint while they are committed to a cease-fire regime; and to provoke them into a retaliatory action that might later be interpreted as a violation of the cease-fire arrangement. Either way, the security forces have a difficult job at hand. The latest killings should also act as an eye-opener for those who have been urging India to drastically reduce its troop levels in the Valley. It should be clear why it is not possible to do so until the foreign mercenaries are either pulled out by their sponsors across the Line of Control or otherwise rendered inactive in the Valley. In view of the latest killings, the security cover for the Amarnath pilgrims and other such soft targets needs to be reviewed.

Year after year, the State Government's organisational abilities have come under increasing strain resulting in much hardship to the hapless pilgrims. It might perhaps be a better idea to allow the army a larger role in providing the cover apart from making logistical arrangements for the pilgrims. Notwithstanding the chilling death toll, however, which might create doubts about the proposed talks with the militants, there is reason for hope. The Hizbul Mujahideen's condemnation of the killings should stand out as a positive signal emanating from this shocking episode. It should also help define the Hizbul's position as the dialogue starts. In fact, international opinion should assert itself more forcefully so that the perpetrators of such acts of savagery are shown up for the fanatical outlaws that they are.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

3 MAY 1992

Mayhem in J&K: 100 killed in six attacks

Indefinite curfew in Jammu and Pahalgam • Govt suspects hand of Lashkar-e-Tayyeba

HTC and Agencies
Srinagar/Jammu, August 2

IN A series of planned massacres not witnessed before in the decade-long insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir, militants gunned down over 100 people, including 21 Amarnath pilgrims, and left scores wounded. The six sets of killings began around 7 pm yesterday and went on till dawn today.

Barely two hours after they killed 35 people (23 of them Amarnath pilgrims) in Pahalgam, heavily armed militants struck in Doda, Kupwara and Anantnag districts, killing at least 65 people in a series of attacks that was very clearly calibrated by groups that are out to sabotage the peace process in the state.

Of the 35 people killed in the attack on the pilgrimage base camp, eight were Muslims, mainly shopkeepers and porters.

The victims of the bloody attacks in Mirbazar-Qazigund and neighbouring Sandoo-Acchabal in

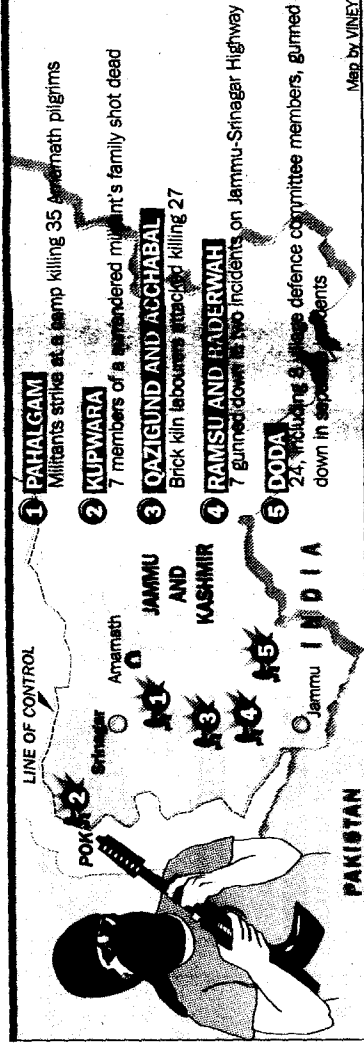
Clinton to speak to Pakistan

CONVEYING WASHINGTON'S deepest sympathies over the massacres in J&K, US President Bill Clinton on Wednesday night told Mr Vajpayee that he would speak to leaders of Pakistan and "do everything possible to contain such activities." **PTI, New Delhi**

Anantnag district were migrant labourers from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh.

The killers lined up the labourers who worked in brick kilns in Sandoo-Acchabal, segregated them from their women folk and then shot them outside their huts.

Militants shot dead seven persons in two attacks in Doda district, one of them in the remote village of Khodinadh near Banihal off the Srinagar-Jammu National



Highway. A village defence group was sprayed with bullets when it was on patrol in Doda's Dachan village, leaving eight dead and two wounded.

In Kupwara in northern Jammu and Kashmir, seven members of the family of an ex-militant who had surrendered were lined up and shot dead in cold blood.

The mindless killings led the imposition of indefinite curfew in all districts of the Jammu division and in Pahalgam. The Amarnath

yatra has been temporarily suspended.

In New Delhi, President K.R. Narayanan and Vice-President Krishnan Kant condemned the killings. The President said he was shocked and deeply grieved to learn of the mindless killings of innocent people.

"To kill pilgrims, labourers, ordinary and innocent men and women in the name of Jihad is the height of barbarism and inhumanity," he said. We must all stand together

and condemn such violence which is against our culture and ethos," Mr Narayanan said.

Home Minister L.K. Advani asserted that if Hizbul Mujahideen stood firm on peace initiative, government would respond "positively."

He also said that the Government suspects the hand of Lashkar-e-Tayyeba.

The J&K Government said photographs of unidentified bodies of the people killed in attacks would

be put on its official website. The photographs would also be published in national newspapers to help friends and relatives identify them.

The Hizbul Mujahideen condemned the killings and said they were the handiwork "of those who have no love for the freedom of people of the state." Hizbul chief commander Abdul Majid Dar said: "Islam do not allow killing of unarmed and innocent persons."

Referring to Kalaroo-Kupwara incident, Dar alleged the militants of Al-Badr outfit forced their entry into the house of an activist of Jamaat-e-Islami/ and killed all members of the family. The local Hizbul Mujahideen has sought permission from its high command in Pakistan "to take retaliatory action against Al-Badr," he said.

RSS chief K.S. Sudershan asked Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah to step down for few months for the Centre to deal effectively with Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

See also Page 10

Centre defers proposed contacts with Hizb VHP seeks President's rule in J&K

Anil Anand
New Delhi, August 2

THE SERIES of militant strikes in Jammu and Kashmir forced the Centre to postpone for the time being its proposed contacts with the Hizbul Mujahideen leadership for setting up a mechanism for talks on the implementation of the ceasefire.

All through the day, Home Ministry officials were busy assessing the ground queered up badly by fresh blood-letting in the Valley and the Jammu region. The Union Home Secretary, Mr Kamal Pande, who was supposed to leave today for Srinagar for establishing contact with the Hizb interlocutor, Fazl Haq Qureshi, called off his visit to be available for high-level consultations in Delhi.

Well-placed ministry sources indicated that if everything works according to the latest government plan, Mr Pande may leave for the Valley tomorrow to take stock of the situation. An advance party comprising Special Secretary T R

Kakkar and the Director General, CRPF, Mr Trinath Mishra, who had rushed to the border State today, have been asked to stay put in Srinagar in anticipation of Mr Pande's visit.

For want of quick intelligence inputs from the State, the Centre has been a bit hamstrung in putting its act together in the face of the unprecedented crisis. But the information-gathering agencies, it was explained, cannot be blamed for being slow, especially when most of the terrorist strikes, following the one at Pahalgam yesterday, have been in far-flung areas.

The available details of the incidents were shared by the government with the Opposition leaders at a meeting convened by the Prime Minister this morning. Among those who attended the briefing session included Mrs Sonia Gandhi, Dr Manmohan Singh, Mr Madhavrao Scindia, Mr I K Gujral, Mr Indrajit Gupta, Mr Somnath Chatterjee, Mr Sharad Pawar, Mr P H Pandian and Mr Rup Chand Pal. From the government side, Mr Vajpayee was

assisted by the ministers of Home, External Affairs, Finance and Parliamentary Affairs and PM's Principal Secretary B Mishra.

Mr Vajpayee told the agitated Opposition leaders, on whose demand the PM also made a brief statement in the Lok Sabha later, that the killings were Pak-abetted. While on the one hand Islamabad was claiming credit for the Hizb's talks offer, on the other it was encouraging cross-border violence.

However, Mr Scindia was the first to raise the issue in Lok Sabha. As soon as the House assembled for the day, he sought details regarding the circumstances leading to the ghastly massacre of innocent people. Lambasting the government for its callousness in taking appropriate security measures to safeguard the pilgrims' lives, he felt that the militants exploited this weakness to strike with ease.

He further said the government owed an explanation to the country for not making adequate arrangements to counter the possible retaliatory action by militants.

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, August 2

OUTRAGED BY the killing of numerous Hindu pilgrims bound for Amarnath, RSS chief K S Sudershan today asked Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah to step down for a few months for the Centre to deal effectively with Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

In a statement from Nagpur, he appealed to the citizens to exercise utmost restraint in this "most provocative situation" to ensure the safety and security of the pilgrims and others.

He said the killings were an attempt by Pakistan's military rulers to frustrate the peace initiatives in the State with the help of foreign mercenaries.

List of victims

THIRTEEN OF the 31 people killed in Tuesday's shoot out at Pahalgam have been identified:

Biran Kanta (Delhi), **Rattan Lal Raw** (Rajasthan), **Bishwanath Dass** (Bihar), **Romesh Prashad (UP) Ritu Raj Verma (UP)**, **Mushtaq Ahmed Rarray (Anantnag)**, **Narresh Goyal (UP) Niha Goyal (UP)** (Constable, Tourist Police) **Ishad Ahmed**, (Anantnag), **Mansoor Ali**, (AMU student, suspected militant) **Shabir Ahmad Shah** (Anantnag, suspected militant) **PTI, Srinagar**

"The Pakistani regime is a demonic power which does not possess an iota of human values,"

he said.

Expressing regrets over the State Government's "failure" to protect the life and property of citizens despite all assistance from the Centre, Mr Sudershan asked the Chief Minister to entrust to New Delhi the responsibility of dealing with Pakistan-sponsored terrorism for a few months.

Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) leaders V H Dalmia and Giriraj Kishore, on the other hand, demanded the immediate dismissal of the Farooq Abdullah Ministry and declared that "killings and peace talks cannot go together and the Army should be given a free hand".

They asked Hizbul Mujahideen to clarify its stand vis-à-vis other militant groups who were carrying out the killings.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

3 31 10 16 2 00

3 31 10 16 2 00

26 LABOURERS AMONG VICTIMS; TOLL RISES TO 91

Massacres rattle Kashmir

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, AUG. 2. A series of massacres by militants across Jammu and Kashmir since Tuesday evening, left 91 people including 26 labourers and eight members of a village defence committee dead and several others injured. The toll in the shootout at the Pahalgam camp for Amarnath pilgrims rose to 32, with three persons succumbing to their injuries.

Within five hours of the Pahalgam massacre, a group of militants descended on Katran village in the Qazigund area of south Kashmir and killed 19 labourers.

An hour later, another group struck at Sandu village near Achabal in the same district and shot dead seven brick kiln labourers. Sources said six militants barged into a hut and fired indiscriminately from automatic weapons. The labourers, hailing from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, are known as "Biharis" in the State.

All hell broke loose

Two of the three survivors of the Katran massacre told *The Hindu*, that three gunmen clad in Army fatigues came to the village around 10.45 p.m. and called out to the labourers. "They told us their vehicle was stranded in the mud a short distance away and sought help", said a shattered Jagdish from Rai Bareilly.

"By then 27 of us came out and were asked to line up at a spot 100 yards away. The gunmen immediately began firing and killed several of my colleagues on the spot. Three of us managed to crawl into



Women and children wailing over the death of their dear ones at Meerbazar in Qazigund. Militants gunned down 26 labourers from Bihar and Madhya Pradesh in two villages of south Kashmir on Wednesday morning. — Photo: Nissar Ahmad

a nearby paddy field," Jagdish said. He knew nothing of what happened after "all hell broke loose".

In the Jammu region, militants gunned down 23 persons belonging to the Hindu community in two separate incidents. According to an official spokesman, militants cordoned off Danmata and Kunda villages in Doda district early today, asked the residents to come out and opened fire, killing 15 villagers.

Eight members of a village defence committee were killed by the militants in an encounter at Dachan in the same district, the

police said and added that five other civilians were gunned down in the Gujjar Nar area near Banihal in Doda.

Five of family killed

Last night, militants entered the house of Mumtaz Ganai, a surrendered militant, in Kupwara district and shot dead his grandfather, father, mother, brother and wife. Ganai's sister was injured in the attack. The Kupwara SSP, Mr. Ashkoor Wani, claimed that the Hizbul Mujahideen, which had announced a ceasefire on Monday last, was behind the killing and that two of the militants had been identified.

Osama link?

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 2 Al-Qaida, a militant organisation associated with the dissident Saudi billionaire, Osama bin Laden, has claimed responsibility for the incident near Pahalgam. A representative of the outfit called up the Islamabad office of *The Hindu* to claim responsibility for the attack. Quoting Naseer Ahmed Mujahideen, commander of the group, the representative said the incident occurred after a clash between members of the group and the Indian security forces.

More reports on Page 13

THE HINDU

3 AUG 2000

3 AUG 2000

ND-13
3/8
9-8
SJK

GOVT. SHAKEN / BUT PEACE EFFORTS TO CONTINUE

Hizbul condemns killings

By Harish Khare

NEW DELHI, AUG. 2. The Vajpayee establishment, shaken by the worst-ever killings in the decade-long militancy in Jammu and Kashmir, has noted with satisfaction the Hizbul Mujahideen leader, Mr. Abdul Majid Dar's condemnation of the latest massacres. For most of the day those involved with the peace process were keeping their fingers crossed as to whether there would be any public expression of disapproval from Mr. Dar.

In a statement issued in Srinagar, the Hizbul has condemned the "brutal killings of innocent and unarmed civilians", describing these as the "best proof of acts of terrorism" and attributing the authorship of these killings to "those who have no love for the freedom of the people of the State."

Though the Vajpayee Government appears to have been rattled by the killings in the last 24 hours, as of now the inclination is to stick to the path of "peace" and persevere — though with greater caution — in the strategy of negotiating with groups like the Hizbul.

Both the Hizbul leadership and the Indian negotiators had anticipated some of these "teething problems", but the scale of the killings has left almost everyone stunned. And though the Hizbul Mujahideen commander, Mr. Dar had conveyed to the Indian interlocutors his condemnation

of the unprecedented violence, the senior officials expected him to give public expression to these feelings. This he did late in the evening in Srinagar.

It has been noted that in Mr. Dar's formulations these killings were against the tenets of Islam, and therefore could not be romanticised as "jehadi" acts. "Islam does not allow killing of unarmed and innocent persons." More significantly, Mr. Dar also identifies the Al-Badr as the culprit, at least in the Kupwara incident.

Had the Hizbul leadership not spoken up, the Vajpayee establishment would have found it difficult to carry on the peace process as if nothing has happened; it would have been problematic to firm up political support, inside and outside the ruling party, for the current strategy of engaging various militant groups in any kind of dialogue.

The Dar statement not only posits an antagonism between Al-Badr and the Jammāt-e-Islami (whose supporter's family was gunned down in Kupwara), but also questions the legitimacy of all other militant groups active in the Valley. Mr. Dar attributes the latest massacres to "these people (who) have used the movement to make ill-gotten money."

These are bitter and divisive words and were so far heard — or said — only about this or that section of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference; now the charge is being directed against the so-called "freedom-fighters".

Consequently, while the Vajpayee Government may have a moment of satisfaction over Mr. Dar's statement, it must be prepared, according to one senior official, for more bad news in the days to come.

Salahuddin envisages two-step process

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 2. The Hizbul Mujahideen chief, Syed Salahuddin, speaking during a meeting of key commanders of his outfit, said they envisaged a two-step process leading to the talks, starting with India's acceptance.

The second stage would be the appointment of a Kashmiri negotiating team in consultation with the "recognised Kashmiri leadership from both sides" of the border between the Pakistani and Indian zones of Kashmir.

But, he said, "the Hizbul may decide to negotiate by itself or give the mandate to somebody else and monitor the process," contradicting earlier comments by senior Hizbul representatives that the group did not want direct participation in the talks.

Syed Salahuddin said veteran Kashmiri campaigner, Fazal Haq Qureshi, had been appointed to fix the modalities of the three-month ceasefire with the Indian security forces. But, he said, the People's Political Front chief was not given any mandate to talk on the main issue "of the proposed tripartite negotiations."

THE HINDU

3 AUG 2000

3 AUG 2000

HD-1 TWO PANELS FORMED TO WORK OUT CEASEFIRE MODALITIES

Centre, Hizbul commanders hold talks

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, AUG. 3. In a major breakthrough, talks began here today between the Hizbul Mujahideen commanders and a Central Government team on a positive note. Both sides agreed to go ahead with the process and nominated two committees for the purpose.

It was for the first time that four commanders of the militant organisation had direct talks with the Centre's representatives along with three mediators. The Union Home Secretary, Mr. Kamal Pande, assisted by the Special Secretaries in the Ministry — Mr. M. B. Kaushal and Mr. Tilak Raj Kakkar — and the Joint Secretary, Mr. Verma, met the four Hizbul commanders — Mr. Riyaz Rasool, Mr. Masood, Mr. Farooq Riyaz and Mr. Zaffar. The People's Political Front chief and Hizbul-nominated mediator, Mr. Fazal-haq-Qureshi, and his two associates — Mr. Musadiq Aadil and Mr. G. M. Naikoo — were also present.

The four Hizbul men, two of whom were masked, drove to the highly-guarded Nehru Guest House — venue of the meeting — from an unknown destination. Later, Mr. Masood, spokesman for the outfit, said they would not discuss anything political but only work out the modalities for the ceasefire. "We are here to make the atmosphere conducive to address the core issue," he told waiting reporters. The mediator, Mr. Qureshi, denied any threat to his life. On the criticism by the All-Party Hurriyat Conference for accepting the responsibility, he said, "we will talk to them also."

Mr. Pande said the talks were held in a cordial atmosphere.

9-8r JK
"Today, it was agreed that the modalities for preparing the ground for the restoration of peace should be pursued seriously so that elements opposed to this process could be identified and isolated." Further talks would be continued by the two committees nominated for the purpose by the two sides. The Centre would be represented by Mr. B. Kaushal, Special Secretary (Home), the State Principal Secretary (Home), Mr. C. Phonsoung, and representatives of the Army and other security forces as members. The Hizbul committee would be headed by Mr. Saifullah Khalid, a top-ranking commander. "The committees will meet shortly in Srinagar", Mr. Pande said adding that Pakistan was not involved in the talks.

No early talks with Pak.; Cong. raps Govt. for killings: Page 13

Expressing the Government's desire to continue the process, Mr. Pande said, "the Centre is keen on taking the process to its logical conclusion and appeals to the people to support its efforts." "On behalf of the Government, I congratulate the Hizbul for taking the bold initiative of (declaring a ceasefire) particularly, because people of Kashmir earnestly want peace to be restored." The Prime Minister and the Union Home Minister had welcomed the ceasefire offer made by the Hizbul leader, Mr. Majeed Dar, on July 24, and gave the go-ahead for the dialogue process to be initiated.

It appears that today's meeting has pushed the deadline of August 8, fixed by the Hizbul for tripartite talks on the Kashmir dispute, to the background.



The Union Home Secretary, Mr. Kamal Pande (left) with the Hizbul Mujahideen commanders (from right) Mr. Saifullah Khalid, commander Masood, Mr. Riyaz Rasool and Mr. Farooq Mirchal after a meeting in Srinagar on Thursday. — Reuters

Salahuddin sets August 8 deadline for tripartite talks

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 3. The Hizbul Mujahideen has said that if the Indian Government does not respond to its demand for tripartite talks outside the framework of the Indian Constitution by 5 p.m. on August 8, it would be forced to reconsider its ceasefire declaration.

In a press statement here today, the Hizbul chief, Syed Salahuddin, said his organisation was disappointed with the Indian Government's "dilly-dallying tactics" in contrast to the "bold stand" taken by the Hizbul staking its own reputation of 12 years.

Asked if the Hizbul still insisted

on its demand even after the talks began in Srinagar earlier today between its representative and the Union Home Secretary, Mr. Kamal Pande, a Hizbul spokesman, Mr. Salim Hashmi, told *The Hindu* that the talks were limited to working out the "ceasefire protocol" and not related to substantive issues.

"The Indian Government should realise that the Hizbul is a militant organisation and not a political party. It cannot afford to let the situation continue in the absence of a clear-cut response to our points," he said.

The Hizbul has been asking the Government to clarify its stand

on the statement by the National Security Adviser, Mr. Brajesh Mishra, that the talks would be within the ambit of the Constitution and there was no proposal to involve Pakistan. On Wednesday, the Hizbul chief had said his group was still committed to peace. The Hizbul did not agree with India's allegations that the killings in the last two days were the handiwork of militants opposed to the ceasefire and at the behest of the Pakistan Government. The Pakistan Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has not rejected the charges but ruled out Pakistan using its moral and political influence with other militant groups to join the Hizbul offer.

In an interview to BBC Online, Gen. Musharraf said "there has to be reciprocity from India. As I said, it is not a one-way traffic going on. There has to be an invitation of dialogue. And then, this reciprocity will certainly encourage others. However, even after initiation of dialogue there has to be progress towards peaceful resolution". Gen. Musharraf accused India of being "insincere" in its efforts for peace. "Look at the rhetoric from the other side. Look at the Prime Minister's comments. He is talking only to the Hizbul Mujahideen. He is talking of keeping the Kashmir issue within the Indian Constitution."

In another development, the Personal Representative of United Nations Secretary-General for Pakistan, Mr. Francese Vendrall, called on Gen. Musharraf and exchanged views on "matters of mutual interest".

THE HINDU

34 AUG 2001

4 AUG 2001

3 AUG 2001

Leaders of most Kashmiri groups condemn killings

Vijay Dutt
London, August 3

THE LATEST carnage by terrorists in Kashmir has been condemned in the harshest possible words by most leaders of Kashmiri groups here, even by those who have in the past accused India of human rights violations in the Valley.

The reaction to the charge that Indian security forces were behind it to discredit Kashmiri militant groups has been equally sharp.

Syed Nazir Gilani, secretary general of the Jammu and Kashmir Council for Human Rights, told The Hindustan Times that no militant group could justify such dastardly killings. "It is the most tragic and such an act must be condemned. I would hold all Kashmiri leadership culpable", he said.

"We have been listening for years about security forces killing people", he said when asked if he believed the allegations that Indian forces shot so as to discredit militant groups.

Syed Gilani pointed out that armies all over the world were now engaged in peace process. There was no use finding scapegoats. The Indian Government and those interested in peace and stability should not run away from their responsibilities. They should try to make peace succeed, he added.

JKLF (UK and Europe) president Shabir Choudhary termed the carnage as barbaric. No human being could justify such a barbaric act, killing people who were on a pilgrimage, he added. "The killings must be condemned, whatever religious or political motive anyone or group might think justifies such a carnage".

He also said that it was clear that certain forces in the State and "outside it" wanted to derail the peace process. "Vested interests are out to jeopardise the peace negotiations". Regarding the charge against the Indian security forces, he said that one had heard of

their opening fire at some Muslim groups but "it is hard to believe that Hindus going on a pilgrimage would be killed by them".

Most, even British commentators in the media and leaders in various papers, do not give any credence to reflections on the security forces. Everyone is convinced that the massacre was perpetrated to derail the peace process. That has been given greater importance than the charges hurled from across the border.

In its lead editorial, The Guardian said, "These latest atrocities appear intended to stifle the tentative beginnings of a Kashmir peace process". It mentioned the ceasefire by Hizbul Mujahideen and the possibility of multilateral dialogue developing along with talks with Delhi. But other armed Islamic groups opposed the Hizbul Mujahideen ceasefire, denouncing it treachery.

"Was it these factions, linked under the umbrella of the United Jihad Council from which the Hizbul was expelled, which let loose the killers?" the paper asks. "They say not. As usual, everybody blames everybody. Yet whatever the shameful truth, this inhuman rampage must not be allowed to kill new hopes of peace in Kashmir. It matters too much".

Gen Musharraf, speaking on BBC Asia Today programme, acknowledged that the ceasefire had created an ambience for peace negotiations and condemned the killings. He refrained from attacking the Indian forces in the manner that militant factions in Pakistan had done. He surely knew the reaction in the West. He also knew that the West was now convinced that he had not restrained cross-border terrorism.

President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Liberation Front, Mushtaq Hussain also told this newspaper that nobody could ever believe that any human being would indulge in such a barbaric attack.

As the security forces failed to protect the people trekking to their shrine, the Indian Government must help families of the victims, he said.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

3 AUG 2001

4 AUG 2001

3 AUG 2001

Valley massacre reprehensible, outrageous: US

Washington, August 3 9-82

THE UNITED States today termed as "reprehensible and outrageous" the killing of over 100 people by militants in Jammu and Kashmir and welcomed Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's resolve to pursue the path of peace.

"We condemn these outrageous and inhuman massacres" which were clearly aimed at undermining the ceasefire declared by the Hizbul Mujahideen and the Indian security forces against the outfit, a State Department spokesman said shortly after President Bill Clinton spoke to Mr Vajpayee on phone and expressed his deepest sympathies and support for India follow.

- Availability of educated profession
- Infrastructure and environment (satellite and optical cable connectivity and stable power, real estate rate airports, quality of life, etc.).
- Commitment of the political leadership to electronic governance exports.

The successes of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have been well-documented. Their are noteworthy in spite of their having with poorer telecom and electricity than several other States. Under Karnataka has shaken off its earlier image and is implementing a State-wide broadband cable network.

In the Seventies and Eighties, Delhi

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

3 AUG 2000

4 AUG 2000

4 AUG 2000

Talks signal in condemnation chorus

FROM PRANAY SHARMA

New Delhi, Aug. 4: As condemnation from the international community pours in on the Kashmir assassins and "their backers", some world leaders have raised doubt whether a solution can be found without resumption of Indo-Pak talks.

The European Union, China and Japan today joined the worldwide criticism of the recent massacres, but Beijing, which is close to Islamabad, said the South Asian neighbours should resume their dialogue as soon as possible. Yesterday, UN secretary-gen-

eral Kofi Annan had said the same thing while speaking out against the killings.

Indian officials, however, drew satisfaction from the fact that key world players not only appreciated Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's resolve to go ahead with the talks with militants, but have also started pointing their fingers at Pakistan for the attacks.

"The terrorist attacks aimed at the civilian population can only elicit horror and indignation," the EU said in a statement today, adding that it "condemns most resolutely the perpetrators

of these attacks and their backers".

Japan, the main aid donor of India and Pakistan, also expressed its concern, "particularly at a time when the very positive move for putting an end to violence in Kashmir had just commenced". Tokyo hoped that "efforts for bringing about peace in the region would continue".

But while Japan was indirect in its signal for resumption of Indo-Pak dialogue, China was unambiguous.

Expressing "shock" at the mass murders, Beijing said it was against all forms of terrorism but

added that "India and Pakistan should resume dialogue and negotiations as soon as possible".

Aware that a section of the international community was keen to see the neighbours back at the negotiating table, Delhi tried to buttress its stand on not talking to Islamabad.

The Prime Minister told parliament this afternoon: "The briefing which we were given by the chief of the unified command and security forces made it clear that the perpetrators of these heinous crimes were foreigners. Arms and ammunition recovered from them

clearly establish their links with the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Toiba."

Pakistan setback

Pakistan was refused permission by the UN commission on human rights in Geneva to raise the issue of alleged human rights violation in Jammu and Kashmir, reports UNI. Lulia A Motoc, chairperson of the plenary session of the UN sub-commission for the promotion and protection of human rights asked the Pakistani representative not to violate the rules of the forum by raising the issue of human rights of another country.

THE TELEGRAPH

5 AUGUST 2001

5 AUG 2001

SONIA DEMANDS PROBE INTO 'SECURITY LAPSE'

We'll not allow violence to impede peace process: PM

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, AUG. 4. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, informed Parliament today that his Government would not allow violence to impede the peace process in Jammu and Kashmir. He urged all militant groups to come forward for talks, saying they should realise that people wanted peace.

Underlining the Government's carrot-and-stick approach, the Prime Minister said while the fight against terrorism would continue there would be no let-up in the efforts to restore peace and the dialogue with the Hizbul Mujahideen was part of this effort. "We will not yield to terrorism," Mr. Vajpayee said in an identical statements in the two Houses on his visit to the State following the latest massacres.

The statement was overshadowed by the Congress(I)'s strident demand for a judicial probe into intelligence and security lapses which, it contended, led to the killings. Its president and leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Ms. Sonia Gandhi, charged the Government with "inexcusable" slackness and said it was important to fix the responsibility for what had happened.

In the Lok Sabha, the Congress(I) members walked out protesting the Government's unwillingness to accept their demand, while in the Rajya Sabha, the senior leader, Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad, wanted the Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, to own moral responsibility for the killings and resign.

Confronted with a volley of demands for clarifications from the Opposition members in the Rajya Sabha, the Prime Minister said he would respond to them on Monday.

In the Lok Sabha, Ms. Gandhi insisted that nothing short of a judicial inquiry would satisfy her party. She said the Prime Minister at his press conference in Srinagar indirectly admitted that there had been a security lapse. He said "there were no serious security lapses. In other words, he admits that indeed there were security lapses," she claimed.

Ms. Gandhi, speaking amid interruptions immediately after the Prime Minister's statement, said the responsibility for the security lapse must be fixed and that's why her party wanted a judicial probe. The Government seemed to have "taken leave of its con-

BJP in knots on talks; Lashkar hand seen: Page 13 Editorial on Page 12

science" but "we in th Congress have not". She demanded "very strong measures" to ensure that "such insensitive slackness" did not occur again.

She also wanted the Government to tell the Opposition what it intended doing to prevent the recurrence of such incidents. Earlier, as soon as the House met, she said the "lapses on the part of the Government are inexcusable" and many questions needed to be answered.

The Prime Minister said foolproof arrangements for the Amarnath pilgrims were not possible as the occasion was like a "mela", but it did not seem that serious security lapses had occurred. The State Government had already ordered an executive inquiry and if necessary a judicial probe could be held later.

This did not satisfy the Congress(I) and its members walked out, with the deputy leader,

Mr. Madhavrao Scindia, accusing the Government of being "insensitive".

In his statement asking the militants to give up violence, the Prime Minister said: "It is futile for them to continue on the path of violence. They should come forward for talks with the Government for redressal of their grievances."

The perpetrators of Tuesday's carnage were foreigners and arms and ammunitions recovered from them clearly established their links with Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba, he said. His visit was intended to assure the people of the State that the entire nation was behind them.

In the Rajya Sabha, Mr. Eduardo Falerio wanted to know what steps the Government would take to convince Pakistan to close down terrorist-training camps there. Mr. Arjun Singh charged that the 'spirit of accountability' was slurred by sentiments.

Mr. Sanjay Nirupam (Shiv Sena) asked whether the Government was willing to hold talks with the Hizbul Mujahideen without any precondition, while Mr. Shankar Roy Chowdhary urged the Centre to ensure that no part of Jammu and Kashmir which is with India be ceded.

Mr. Kuldip Nayyar (nominated) said that after a recent meeting with Gen. Pervez Musharraf in Pakistan, he said both countries must hold fire to which the latter agreed. Mr. Nayyar said he had carried the message to the Prime Minister and was still awaiting his response.

The Janata Dal leader, Mr. S. R. Bommai, sought to know whether the Government had a master plan to counter terrorist activities and prevent recurrence of such events.

THE HINDU

5 AUG 2000

3 AUG 2000

'Bharat bandh' evokes mixed response

NEW DELHI, AUG. 4. The "Bharat bandh", called by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad to protest the killings of Amarnath pilgrims in Jammu and Kashmir, evoked a mixed response across the country today and remained largely peaceful.

Reports from different State capitals said the bandh had little response in Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Meghalaya and in some southern States but severely affected normal life in Assam and Andhra Pradesh.

Police used batons to disperse VHP activists who tried to forcibly close shops and offices and obstructed road and rail traffic in Malda and Nadia districts of West Bengal, where the bandh failed to evoke any response.

In Calcutta, several BJP activists including the party's State unit president, Mr. Asim Ghosh, were arrested after they burnt the Pakistani national flag and an effigy of General Pervez Musharraf.

Private offices, educational institutions, banks and financial houses, markets and shops across Assam remained closed and government offices registered thin attendance.

Indian Airlines and all other private carrier flights, however, operated flights as per schedule.



Police caning a VHP activist in South Mumbai on Friday, during a bandh called by the organisation to condemn the massacres in Kashmir. — Photo: Vivek Bendre

But the North-East Frontier Railway had to reschedule and cancel several trains.

A Hyderabad report said shops and business establishments remained closed in parts of the Andhra Pradesh State capital. Adequate policemen were deployed to maintain law and order.

The bandh evoked a mixed response in Madhya Pradesh. — PTI

Trains delayed

Our Mumbai Special Correspondent reports:

The bandh badly affected life in the metropolis without completely paralysing it. Several suburban trains were delayed after the bandh supporters staged dharnas on the tracks in some places. Several local BJP leaders were de-

tained. In some areas, shopkeepers downed shutters rather easily and in places where the activists tried to force compliance, the police acted.

Surat tense

Our Gandhinagar Special Correspondent reports:

Even as life returned to normal today in most parts of Gujarat, "exempted" from the "Bharat Bandh" due to the "successful" bandh on Thursday, the situation in Surat continued to be tense with one more person stabbed to death bringing the toll to four.

Despite the imposition of curfew last evening in some parts of Surat, a stabbing incident was reported late last night while one person was killed in police firing after a clash between two groups. Additional police personnel were deployed.

The Minister of State for Home, Mr. Haren Pandya, and the Director-General of Police, Mr. C. P. Singh, rushed to Surat last evening following the stabbing incidents, and are the city to supervise the situation. Mr. Pandya said the situation though tense was under control.

Pilgrimage continues: Page 9

THE HINDU

5 AUGUST 2000

5 AUG 2000

Ex-ultra predicts dialogue failure

SR-10
6/8

W

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR/NEW DELHI, Aug. 5. — A former top-ranking Kashmiri militant leader today predicted talks with Hizbul Mujahideen would fizzle out in a month or less. The statement of this man — now a National Conference lawmaker — came on a day Dr Farooq Abdullah issued a veiled criticism of the dialogue initiative, saying the Centre had cast the Hurriyat Conference completely aside.

Talking with the Hizbul is an exercise in futility, former supreme commander of the Jihad Force and the Al Fateh (which was formed after the Jihad Force and the Al Jihad merged), Mr Javed Hussain Shah, told **The Statesman** at his Shivpora home yesterday. The talks would meet the same

fate as earlier ones between militant leaders Babar Badr, Bilal Lodhi, Imran Rahi and Ghulam Mohammed Chaman, and then home minister, Mr SB Chavan, Mr Shah said.

Mr Shah, who said he had been watching the Hizbul closely since joining the mainstream, claimed the terrorist group was too badly split to push through a settlement that would be acceptable to all its members. The media, he said, had projected Abdul Majid Dar as the Hizbul's number two man — but it had missed out on the serious differences Dar has with his supreme comman-

der, Syed Salahuddin.

Salahuddin had endorsed Dar's ceasefire offer only to make the latter the target of groups like Al Badr and Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, as well as of ceasefire-opponents within the Hizbul, Mr Shah said.

Tensions in the Hizbul, according to the NC leader, were apparent from the fact that Dar did not cross over to the Indian side of the LoC in Kupwara, as is his normal practice — rather, he took a flight from Karachi to Dubai, and then flew to Srinagar via Delhi. He was afraid, said Shah, that he would

be killed by those who consider Salahuddin "their God", should he try crossing overland.

"When Salahuddin) nominated three members for discussing the modalities, Dar picked Fazalul

GUJARAT VIOLENCE

AHMEDABAD, Aug. 5. — Police fired in the air and teargassed a mob looting and setting afire some homes in Lambadia village in Gujarat's Sabarkantha district. Curfew was relaxed in phases in Surat, but incidents of arson and stabbing were reported as well. — PTI

Haq Qureshi, his own man, who was chief patron of Tehreek-e-Jihad-e-Islami in 1989 when MD (Abdul Majid Dar) was its chief commander."

The NC leader — himself on the terrorists' hit list since joining the mainstream — suspected the involvement of a Hizbul faction in the Pahalgam massacre. "There was a time the Hizbul controlled 120 militant outfits in the Valley, it won't be difficult for it to control just 10 groups now."

Pilgrims: A fresh batch of 3,246 Amarnath pilgrims left Jammu for Pahalgam under heavy security today.

THE STATESMAN

66 AUG 2 2000

- 6 AUG 2000

HD-13
5/8

Headway in talks with Hizbul Mujahideen

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, AUG 4. The negotiations between the Hizbul Mujahideen and the Government on framing the ground rules for a durable ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir appears to be making a headway.

The third consecutive day of talks today saw both sides veering to the view that Hizb cadres should withdraw from the battle zone after declaring their intent to hold fire.

According to highly placed sources in the Government, the official negotiators had earlier suggested that the Hizb should disarm itself and withdraw from the battle zones. Hizb negotiators however found the suggestion unacceptable. Despite the urgency imparted to the dialogue and the considerable progress made today, a final decision on modalities for a ceasefire was yet to be taken.

The enforcement of the

ceasefire is seen here as the precondition to pave the way for a political dialogue between the Government and the Hizbul Mujahideen and eventually with rest of the local Kashmiri groups that have been battling the security forces for nearly 12 years.

Sources here pointed out that the Government was keen to prioritise the opening of the Kashmir track of the complex peace process ahead of formally involving other interested parties in the dialogue.

Determined to deny externally-dominated jihadi groups a free run in the valley, the security forces have begun regrouping in the area.

The zone north of the Pir Panjal range has become the focus of their attention. Government sources however clarified that additional forces had not been sent following the recent massacres in the valley.

THE HINDU

5 AUG 22 2000

5 AUG 2000

10-13
5/8

Clear evidence of Lashkar hand in killings, says Govt.

9.8r
58K

NEW DELHI, AUG. 4. India today said there was "very clear evidence" of the involvement of Pakistan-backed Lashkar-e-Taiba in the latest massacres in Jammu and Kashmir.

"There is very clear evidence of the involvement of Lashkar-e-Taiba, based in Pakistan and supported by Pakistan," a Foreign Office spokesman told reporters. He said every peace initiative had been responded to by terrorist acts sponsored from across the borders.

Similar acts had taken place when the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, had undertaken the peace journey to Lahore and when the United States President, Mr. Bill Clinton, had visited India in March this year.

New Delhi has made it clear that the peace process in Kashmir would continue. Mr. Vajpayee told Mr. Clinton during a telephonic conversation that there

of no let-up in Pakistan-sponsored terrorist acts.

Japan's condemnation

In a statement circulated here, the Press Secretary of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the Japanese Government condemned these atrocities.

"The Government of Japan expresses its particular concern that these brutal acts of terrorism were perpetrated at a time when the very positive move for putting an end to violence in Kashmir had just commenced. Japan sincerely hopes that efforts for bringing about peace in the region would continue to be sustained," it said.

— PTI

Pak. rejects charges

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 4. Pakistan today rejected India's charges that it was behind the recent Kashmir

anism" for a full investigation into the incidents. In a statement here, a Foreign Office spokesman said the charges were baseless and said that if India was serious in "unearthing the truth" behind the killings it should agree to an impartial probe.

"India's lack of response to this reasonable proposal demonstrates clearly that it is only interested in exploiting these incidents for purposes of propaganda against the Kashmir freedom struggle and against Pakistan. India has no interest in determination of the truth," the statement said.

A Lashkar-e-Taiba spokesman declined to comment on the statement of the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, that it was behind the killings. "We are not aware of what he has said. We will give a befitting reply to the charges after we see what exactly he has said. The Lashkar-e-Taiba has already denied that it is behind the

THE HINDU

THE HINDU

5 AUG 2000

5 AUG 2000

Kashmir update

Will 'insaniyat' work?

It is only a truce amidst the continuing terror. How will the scenario unfold? Will the Kashmiris be happy with the outcome? *The Sunday Times* highlights the minefields on the road to peace

shrewdness of Vajpayee's move. With that one turn of phrase, he had simultaneously risen above the bureaucratic cackle and made direct contact with the locals. The Kashmiris are a highly emotional people. They wear their hurt on their sleeve. If the insensitivities of official India can alienate them, then, by the same token, they should react positively to a gesture of goodwill. And what better way to reach out than through the language of *insaniyat*?

What next? Will the dazzle of the Srinagar visual fade away, as visuals have so often in the past, in India and elsewhere? Will *insaniyat* become another cliché, a rhetorical flourish to be tossed around merely for effect? There is no doubt that oversized gestures generate oversized hopes. They did so in Lahore when Vajpayee got off a bus and walked into the arms of

In the past week, more than 50 militants belonging to radical pan-Islamic guerrilla groups have been killed in security operations across the Valley. The news would be routine, but for one worrying fact: all the militants were local boys. So were the two militants killed in the Pahalgam massacre.

Intelligence sources suggest that nearly 600 local youth, aged between 13 to 20, have gone across for training in recent months. This is a trend that has re-started after near-

trated almost entirely in Srinagar, began to take root all over the Valley and militant groups swelled. It was at this time that indigenous militancy passed into the hands of foreign militants.

The Hizbul Mujahideen, with a largely Kashmiri membership, continues to be the biggest militant group in the Valley. According to intelligence estimates, it has about 15,000 members. The Hizbul members are mostly old-style militants; they also have some respect for

announced itself with a bang, when in April 2000, it had a 19-year-old local boy drive an explosive-laden car into the headquarters of the Indian army in Srinagar — Kashmir's first human suicide bomber. Shell-shocked by the attack, the security forces changed their counter-insurgency tactics.

Besides, there are at least six top militants (all locals), called the 'pioneers of armed struggle', who managed earlier this year to sneak into training camps in PoK.

Who's who in the Valley

Will the shadow of the gun loom over the Hizbul-government talks? **Surinder Singh Oberoi** traces the worrying trends in the militant movement which culminated in Kashmir's longest night of terror

ly three years. Today, the new face of the Kashmiri militant is neither entirely foreign nor entirely Kashmiri — it is both. It is the culmination of a movement that started as an exclusively local affair, later passed into foreign hands, and is now taking root in home soil once again.

The first separatist group in Kashmir was the Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), which did not espouse fundamentalist Islam and sought *azaadi* for entire Kashmir. By 1990-'91, thousands of Kashmiris had taken to the streets demanding independence.

Unlike the JKLF, the newer groups were committed to Pakistan. Soon, the movement which was concen-

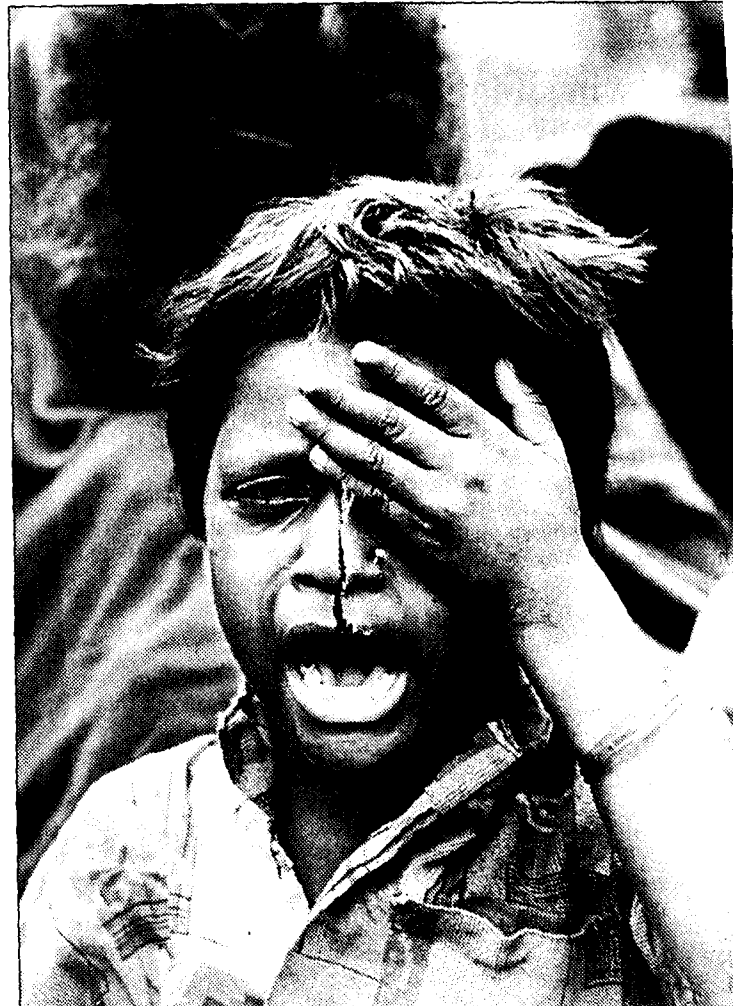
Kashmiriyat. In this respect, the Hizbul is very different from the Lashkar-e-Toiba, the Jaish-e-Muhammad or the Ansar-ul-Islam, which are more pan-Islamic and openly profess *jihad*. This lot may be fewer in numbers but is more radical, dedicated and ruthless.

The Indian authorities are worried that the militant groups are recruiting local elements in large numbers. The new underground guerrillas are a mix of foreign mercenaries, local boys and veteran local commanders. New organisations with local members, like the Jaish-e-Mohammed and Ansar-ul-Islam, are making their presence felt through sporadic acts of violence and press releases in the Valley. In fact, the Jaish-e-Mohammed

What are the reasons for the re-emergence of local militants in the Valley? First, encounter killings since the Kargil war have claimed a large number of surrendered militants and sympathisers. For their followers, it is better to die fighting than in captivity.

Then there are the boys who have watched their families suffer because of the continuing cycle of violence — families which were never compensated or rehabilitated by the administration. The young, who have grown up in an atmosphere of hatred and violence, now want to take revenge.

Third, there has been an increase in the number of religious seminars which preach *jihad*. Fourth, involving the locals is a tactical move



FEAR OVER THE VALLEY: Four-year-old Pooja howls before a cremation pyre. Her father was among the 19 Hindu labourers killed by Pakistan-backed terrorists in Katran Mirpur, south of Srinagar. More than 100 people were killed and injured in widespread massacres across Jammu & Kashmir in the course of a single day.

on the part of foreign mercenaries aimed at proving that the ongoing struggle is indigenous and not foreign-sponsored.

The battle-hardened Islamic militants, mostly from Afghanistan and Pakistan, who have dominated militancy over the last five years, seem to have completed their job of training local militants in guerrilla warfare.

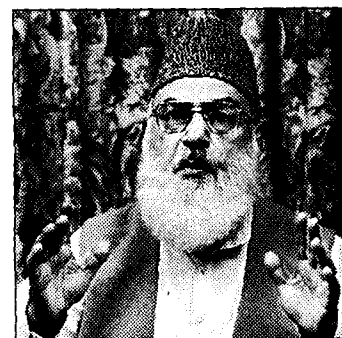
What are the implications of all this for the peace moves currently under way? The Hizbul's membership is mostly Kashmiri and it is the largest group. Therefore, the impact

of its ceasefire should be considerable. However, the Hizbul is funded by Pakistan. In other words, if the talks fail, the Hizbul could return to militancy with a vengeance. Moreover, it is not enough for the Hizbul alone to be brought aboard. With increasing local participation in foreign-supported *jehadi* groups, it is important that the talks are more broad-based. Otherwise, Tuesday's night of terror may not be the last.

(Surinder Singh Oberoi is a Srinagar-based journalist)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

6 AUGUST 2000



Qazi Hussain Ahmed, chief of Pakistan's right-wing party Jamaat-e-Islami, said that the Jihad must continue till India admits that Kashmir is not an integral part of India

FOR a change Pakistan is sitting back and, albeit with some anxiety, watching the show. It is not enjoying it because everything is not in its control.

Moreover, killings and massacres, the kind that have taken place in the aftermath of the ceasefire announcement by the Hizbul Mujahideen in India-controlled Kashmir, require a Roman appetite to be enjoyed — something which, sceptics notwithstanding, Pakistan has yet to acquire.

From Pakistan's point of view, the risk in the Hizbul decision is that it might end up weakening the Kashmiri resistance. Suppose nothing comes of the ceasefire except Indian filibustering and the desire to exploit a tactical opening? The Hizbul then will be driven to join battle once again. But will it be able to regain lost momentum? And how will it answer charges that it embarked upon a major initiative with little or no preparation? These are the questions it will have to address if India allows short-termism to destroy the olive branch held out by the Hizbul.

But as opposed to the risk which remains to be calculated, the good in the Hizbul offer, again from Pakistan's point of view, is immediately apparent. In one stroke, the focus has shifted from "cross-border terrorism", the stick with which India

India has lost the high ground

Pakistan is breathing easy. India's talks with the Hizbul are an admission of the indigenous nature of the Kashmiri resistance. So is it an 'ISI surrogate' now? What about the bogey of 'cross-border terrorism'? Will India have any stick to beat Pakistan with? Not likely, says **Ayaz Amir**



GIVING PEACE A CHANCE: From left, Home Secretary Kamal Pande with members of the Hizbul Mujahideen, Saif-ullah Khalid, Commander Masood, Riyaz Rasool and Farooq Mirchal at the Nehru Guest House at Srinagar on August 3.

was beating Pakistan since Kargil, to the internal situation in Kashmir. Negotiating with the Hizbul is a tacit admission of the indigenous character of the Kashmiri resistance. By the same token, it is an acknowledgment

that the Hizbul is not an ISI surrogate, the brush with which India has tried to tar every Kashmiri resistance outfit post-Kargil. If this were not so, would the Indian government be putting its prestige on the line by negotiating indirectly with the ISI?

VIEW FROM ISLAMABAD

No, the Hizbul initiative has laid to rest Pakistan's worst nightmare

killings are, even these, if not seen through the fog of partisan propaganda, point to the domestic nature of Kashmir's troubles. It is easy to blame the ISI just as it is easy to blame RAW for anything that happens in Pakistan. But to say that the ISI is behind the killings, that it can remote-control events from across the Kashmir mountains, is to as-

cribe to it an omnipotence and skill that even with the resources of the old KGB it would not possess.

Pakistan is beset by other troubles: IMF deadlines, out-of-season lectures on democracy, American cussedness — the last more pronounced since Bill Clinton fell in love with India and India rediscovered the United States. All the talk of Kashmir adventurism, the betrayal of the Lahore Declaration, militarism along the Line of Control was not letting Pakistan breathe. With the Hizbul entering into talks with the Indian government, this pressure has eased even if the talks so far are being conducted



Sayed Salahuddin, leader of the Hizbul Mujahideen, said that his group would give the government a time-frame to respond, but that the Hizbul would withdraw the ceasefire if India drags its feet too long.

at a desirably low level. The Hizbul, after all, is the Viet Cong of the Kashmiri resistance and who has India sent to negotiate with it — a home office mandarin! India should know best what is in its interests, although it is worth remembering that bureaucrats and guerrilla fighters do not make the most ideal of negotiating partners.

But what will come of the talks which have started on this low-key note in Srinagar? There may be some promise in the air but it is hard to believe that the twin can meet unless one side surrenders its entrenched positions. Can the Hizbul, stepping into Farooq Abdullah's shoes, forget the past and its sacrifices and negotiate bits and pieces of autonomy with India? Can India accept the notion of tripartite talks, eventually involving Pakistan, which the Hizbul and other fighter outfits insist on? Can India put the future of Kashmir on the discussion table? If both these positions are wide apart, it will not totally irreconcilable, it will require a tremendous conjuring act to bring them together.

(Ayaz Amir is a columnist for *The Dawn*, Karachi)

Where there's Bill, there might be a way

THE day the Amarnath Yatris were mowed down, the Republican convention in Philadelphia saw one of the oddest sights. A yellow-turbaned Khalistani activist was accosting delegates and pressing forward a leaflet condemning India's atrocities against Kashmiri Muslims, Christians and Dalits. Many delegates hurried on. Some opted to stop and chat with him. The timing of the denunciatory leaflets was indeed ironic.

A majority of senior policy-makers and the Republican leadership were too wrapped up in the convention for the appalling news to have any impact on them. The city's leading daily, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, and local networks carried fleeting items. There were no public expressions of sympathy. Privately, some Congressmen expressed concern at the unbridled violence in a state where nuclear-capable foes had squared off against each other.

Republican foreign policy experts and the National Security think-tank have already had interactions with representatives of the Indian government, notably National Security advisor, Brajesh Mishra. But in the key speech devoted to national security and international affairs, Condoleezza

For President Clinton the clock is ticking. On September 14, he will meet Vajpayee. It will be his last chance to diffuse potential flames from a South Asian tinder-box. But, says **Ramesh Chandran**, nothing can be done unless India is willing

correct posture: "We will not mediate in Kashmir unless both parties agree to it. We will encourage both India and Pakistan to directly engage in talks to reduce tensions in Kashmir."

After his successful visit to India, and the possibility of Indo-US relations taking a qualitative turn in the 21st century, there have been initiatives, including by private individuals and groups, to address this 50-year old intractable dispute.

VIEW FROM THE USA

Indian Americans of Kashmiri origin however ask: How much pressure is the Clinton administration prepared to bring on the military regime of Pervez Musharraf? They say no cobbled-up agreements with sundry terrorist factions will make the slightest difference unless they have the tacit approval of Pakistan which, in turn, is under the thrall of Jihadists and uncompromising fundamentalists. No doubt the US administration has exceptional clout on any Pakistan government. But US specialists recognise that any civilian or mili-

surprising that public perception here about who is behind the killings is befuddled.

Philip T. Reeker, the State Department's deputy spokesman, categorically refused to apportion blame as "evidence" was lacking. They pretty much said the same thing about Chinese M-11s in Pakistan when questioned for years by Indian correspondents. But he roundly condemned these "wanton acts of inhumanity" and praised Prime Minister Vajpayee's determination to go ahead with talks with the Hizbul Mujahideen.

One Administration source told *The Sunday Times* that although Washington understood the revulsion the BJP government probably felt in talking to the Musharraf regime, it would please the US to see the resumption of talks.

If a breakthrough can be achieved — even an enduring ceasefire — it would have happened during Clinton's watch. For the US President, the clock is ticking and when Vajpayee gets here to Washington on September 14, it would provide him one last opportunity. He can only wish that Indian and Pakistani leaders may not be as intransigent as Ehud Barak and Yasser Arafat.

Hizbul leaders stay away from talks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SRINAGAR, Aug. 5. — A meeting between Hizbul Mujahideen Commanders and Army officers at an undisclosed destination to work out ceasefire modalities failed to take place today as two of the four Hizbul commanders were not available.

Hizbul sources said the two had represented the outfit in the first round of talks with Union home secretary, Mr Kamal Pande, here on Thursday.

However, another report said the meeting couldn't be held today since Mr MB Kaushal, special secretary in the ministry of home affairs and principal secretary, (home) to the J&K government were busy in Delhi in connection with the chief ministers' conference. They were likely to reach here tomorrow for the talks.

The officials remained tightlipped about the meeting since the Hizbul had expressed displeasure over presence of a large number of journalists during the first round of talks.

Earlier, Mr Fazal Haq Qureshi, mediator nominated by Hizbul, said the two sides were meeting today at an undisclosed place to work out modalities for effective implementation of the ceasefire.

Asked if he would be joining the talks, Mr Qureshi said his role ended after the first meeting between the Centre and the Hizbul commanders.

The Hizbul Mujahideen and the Centre had agreed on 3 August to set up committees to negotiate the modalities of a ceasefire and make the atmosphere more conducive for peace in the Valley.

Meanwhile, the Hizbul Mujahideen expressed its confidence that the Centre would realise the "ground realities" and agree to inclusion of

Pakistan in the peace talks on Kashmir before the 8 August deadline set by the outfit.

"We are confident Delhi will realise the ground realities and agree to involvement of Pakistan in the talks before the 8 August deadline," the deputy chief commander-cum-chief spokesman of the outfit, Commander Masood, has said.

"Bilateral talks held in the past have proved futile and will not serve the purpose in future also", Commander Masood, who was one of the four Hizbul

CRICKET MATCH

SRINAGAR, Aug. 5. — The Army's 4 Rashtriya Rifles and the Hizbul Mujahideen had an unusual encounter yesterday. This time on a cricket field. The Hizbul won by 24 runs. The match in Khipora, Kupwara, was part of confidence building measures between the two sides, a Hizbul commander said. The Hizbul batted first, and bowled out the Armymen 24 runs short of the target. The match was a treat to people in this small village which had otherwise seen these two sides battling it out with guns. — PTI

leaders who represented the outfit in the first round of talks with the government representatives here on Thursday, said.

Curfew in RS Pora

Curfew was imposed in the border town of Ranbir Singh Pora, about 25 km from Jammu, and the Army and paramilitary forces were summoned to help the civil administration following violence in the wake of an act of sacrilege.

A mob resorted to stone pelting, arson and ransacking of government offices this morn-

ing, injuring 40 people and damaging six vehicles. It also attacked the police station, torched the tehsil building and the government treasury.

The trouble started when reports of the act of sacrilege were received in the town and the mob gathered to protest against alleged police ineptitude.

A battle between the groups of agitated youths and police continued for the whole day. Police have made four arrests in this connection.

Carnage condemned

The British Prime Minister, Mr Tony Blair, has condemned the killings of Amarnath pilgrims and other innocent people in Kashmir early this week.

In a message to Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee today, he said: "I am appalled by the recent killings in Kashmir. The deliberate targeting of civilians is a completely unacceptable terrorist act, and I wholeheartedly condemn these attacks."

A report from Mumbai says several Muslim organisations in Maharashtra condemned the J&K killings.

J&K denial

The J&K government today strongly refuted a newspaper report suggesting that the Pahalgam massacre was the result of refusal of the state government to heed to the home ministry plea to hand over control of the Amarnath yatra security to the Army.

Describing it as motivated and factually incorrect, an official spokesman said there was no suggestion from the Union home ministry to hand over the entire security of Amarnath Yatra to the Army.

■ More reports on page 10

THE STATESMAN

6 AUG 2000

WAR IN PEACE

Army Role In Kashmir Talks

By KEITH FLORY

COMPLICATED the task has always been for the Army in Jammu and Kashmir, and the last decade or so a constant question of life and death even without a Kargil or Siachen. Now the soldiers face an even more demanding challenge, one that is qualitatively different. Trying to adhere to a cease-fire agreement with one set of former adversaries, yet simultaneously contain the activities of at least two other major militant outfits.

Nobody in uniform has any illusions about the pitfalls in the path ahead. At one level they would certainly welcome the initiative for talks with the Hizbul Mujahedin, for though soldiers may be trained to wage war, peace is their ultimate goal. At another level they would be anxious for signs that the cease-fire is not one-way. They have to protect their own lives.

It is as yet too early to assess how things will pan out on the ground for the massacres earlier this week have queered the pitch even before the bowler had marked his run up, let alone the batsman take guard — and there are no umpires around in this situation. There will be a fair amount of muddle until things begin to settle down.

OPEN SEASON

Identification of the adversary is the real problem in a counter-insurgency operation. The innocent looking villager on a hill track in Kashmir can carry an AK-47 under his phirang. Given the traditional lack of local support to the security forces in the region, it is a hard task for the jawans — be they of the army or the para-military — to identify where the militants are holed up. Now they have the additional headache of trying to establish whether or not they belong to the Hizbul Mujahedin.

For the record some senior officers in Srinagar have said that they have a fair idea of where each militant group functions, the Home Minister has claimed that the matter was taken into consideration before the door was opened to the Hizbul. But other officers remain sceptical.

"If our intelligence inputs were so good that we could pinpoint militants and identify their outfits the problem ought to have been sorted out long ago, they would have been accounted for", a retired officer opined. The cease-fire could well be "unimplementable" he feared. "Militants do not carry labels, how will the soldiers know if he is from the Hizbul?"

For a while the jawans might

feel a little resentful that the people who were shooting at them until a couple of days ago are now "off-limits" a retired Major General conceded. But he pointed out that the training standards and discipline of the Indian soldiers were high enough to tackle that situation. "Vengeance is not the creed of the Indian Army."

The Army is aware that the struggle will remain protracted. An escalation of violence is inevitable for the other militant groups have their own

has been deployed in J&K will have any reservations about the importance of talking peace."

The possibility of the Hizbul cadres being targeted by other militant groups is a "live" one and maybe the security forces will be required to protect them. "It might not sound nice to say so, but that could be a blessing in disguise" said the officer, "for if the Hizbul decides to help the forces in detecting and neutralising the other groups, the situation on the ground could take a dramatic turn. There is nothing like local intelligence in tackling insurgency."

Even in the larger context the Hizbul's offer is more than welcome, said that officer. "It did not drop out of a hat. The Hizbul are essentially local Kashmiris, many of them took to arms in the early 1990's. They must have been in their early 20s then, and a decade of life with the gun is taking its toll. Some of them may be wondering if they have wasted their youth, missed out on education, a life at home and so on."

"The people of Kashmir are tired of militancy. Those who once raised the cry of Azadi know that it is unattainable. Their realisation, call it disillusionment if you will, has passed on to their kin who were drafted into militancy. For all the apparent success that the militants may have achieved, for the individual a life on-the-run must be Hell."

CLARITY NEEDED

Capitalising on that situation will put the Army to test. Its leadership in particular. Motivating the troops to operate in a changed environment will not be easy, yet there can be no backing off. Without falling into the snares that will surely be laid by those who see the Hizbul's action as throwing their plans off-track. An upgraded security effort will be necessary, even though it is impossible to provide total cover. Families of the Hizbul cadres could be singled out for harassment, or worse, by the other militant groups.

What the security forces would also desire is clarity in government policy. The off-on experience of Operation Bajrang and Operation Rhino in Assam still rankles. The political leadership will have to steel itself to taking violent setbacks in its stride. The steel will have to be shown by the collective political leadership. Attempts at gaining political mileage or trying to inject a communal element into the equation will impact on the troops on the ground. The soldier finds it hard enough to come to terms with the hopefully changing contours of militancy in J&K. He must not be allowed to be confused.



messages to deliver: that the Hizbul is not the dominant group, that they can continue to both terrorise the local populace and strike at the security forces at the time and place of their choice. Those master-minding militancy from across the border would be desperate to ensure that their efforts of the last decade are not squandered.

This is the season when the papers are open, the period traditionally used to push militants into the Valley and beyond. Hence there is reason to apprehend even more infiltration attempts, filling the void likely to be created with the Hizbul pulling out will assume top priority among those directing the militancy. Perpetrating outrages akin to those earlier this week will be part of the game-plan to keep Kashmir on the boil.

TALKING PEACE

The terms of the ceasefire, which are yet to be formalised, could hold the key. Should the Hizbul agree to confine its cadres to designated areas the task of the security forces would be considerably eased. Anti-militancy operations could then continue without running the risk of inadvertently violating the accord.

It would have been ideal, said an officer who has spent quite some time on the job in J&K, if more than one group were involved in the peace talks. "Divide and rule is a valid theory, but its efficacy depends on the numbers on each side of the divide. In this case the Hizbul might not turn out to be the major factor. But a beginning has to be made and nobody who

The author is Special Representative, The Statesman, New Delhi.

Next round of talks this week

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR AUG. 6. Even as the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) today alleged violation of the ceasefire by the Army in certain areas, it said that the next round of talks will be held any time this week.

Clarifying about Saturday's scheduled meeting of Hizbul commanders with security officials, a HM spokesperson said some commanders were not present in Srinagar. "Following the first meeting of August 3, the field commanders had to go to their respective areas to make a spot assessment and could not make it to Srinagar in time on Saturday," he said.

The Hizbul spokesperson said it had taken up the ceasefire offer with sincerity and was aware of its responsibilities. The Hizbul appealed to other militant outfits also to join the ceasefire.

'Ceasefire violated'

The HM's commander, Masood, told a local news agency that despite the ceasefire, many Hizbul commanders across the Valley were being harassed. Describing this as a violation of the ceasefire agreement, he said that in Gool Udhampur, Shabir Ahmed of Arnas was shot dead by the Army, while in Marhama Kulgam the troops of 9 Rashtriya Rifles beat up the people.

In Moolo Chitram, Turka Wangam, Sheikhpora, Dangerpora and adjacent areas, the troops from Ahgam and Arihal targeted civilians, he alleged. In Srinagar' Chattabal area too the Task Force and Army harassed the relatives

of Hizbul militants; and in Kanagan and Gotlibagh the Army has been pressuring the militants to surrender.

These developments, commander Masood explained, had forced the commanders to rush to their areas for stock-taking, and hence they could not make it to Saturday's round of talks.

Kaushal arrival today

Meanwhile, official sources said that the Special Secretary from the Union Home Ministry, Mr. M.B. Kaushal, who is heading the Centre's team of negotiators, is expected to arrive here on Monday to have the next round of talks with the Hizbul team headed by Mr. Saifullah Khalid.

However, it is not known if Mr. Kaushal will work out the modalities on his own or allow the security force officers to have a technical session with the Hizbul commanders.

Mr. Kaushal's team will have the Principal Secretary (Home) of Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. C. Phonsoung, and representatives of security agencies as members, and Mr. Saifullah will be assisted by the six HM commanders operating in the Valley.

Despite the August 8 deadline set by the Hizbul chief, Syed Salahuddin, the organisation's Srinagar chapter seems serious on taking the issue to its logical conclusion. This, despite the fact that the separatist All-Party Hurriyat Conference has opposed the ceasefire. "It is a broken step and cannot lead anywhere," commented the Hurriyat chief, Prof. Abdul Gani Butt.

Fernandes' call to militant groups: Page 13

No role for Pakistan:PM

NEW DELHI, AUG. 6. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, today firmly ruled out the involvement of Pakistan in the on-going peace talks between the Government and the Hizbul Mujahideen on the Jammu and Kashmir issue. *hamare aur hizbul ke beech mein kisi aur ki avashyakta nahin hai* (there is no need for anyone else to come in the talks between the Centre and the Hizbul), he told reporters after addressing a Sant Goswami Tulsidas Jayanti function here.

He was specially asked about the militant outfit chief, Syed Salahuddin's statement in Islamabad in which he asked India to get into tripartite talks to resolve the Kashmir issue, saying New Delhi should not waste the 'golden opportunity' provided by its declaration of unilateral ceasefire.

Mr. Vajpayee made it clear that the Government would continue the peace process. *hizbul ke saath baat zari rakhna hai* (we will continue our talks with Hizbul), he said.—PTI

THE HINDU

7 AUG 2000

7 AUG 2000

7 AUG 2000

NO GOING BACK ON DEADLINE: SALAHUDDIN

9. 58
58K

Hizbul sticks to its guns

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 6 The Hizbul Mujahideen has once again reiterated that it would be forced to reconsider its ceasefire declaration if India does not respond by 5 p.m. on August 8 to its demand for tripartite talks outside the framework of the Constitution.

In a statement issued here today, the Hizbul chief, Syed Salahuddin, warned that if India did not seize the opportunity, the situation would deteriorate and it alone shall be responsible for the situation.

Today's statement by the Hizbul chief is significant for two reasons. It sought to dispel any impression of "confusion" in the ranks of his organisation about the deadline, particularly after the Indian authorities had established formal contact with the Hizbul commanders in Kashmir.

More important, the statement made light of the first ever dialogue between the Indian Government and the Hizbul commanders in Srinagar last week. "Such talks have gone on for 50 years and taken us nowhere," the statement said.

"We have set the deadline keeping in view the obduracy and delay tactics which India has been employing for the last 52 years. Let there be no confusion on this count," the statement said in an obvi-

ous reference to reports from Srinagar quoting Mr. Fazal-Haq Qureshi, who is mediating between the Indian Government and the Hizbul, that the deadline is on account of a communication gap and could be extended.

'Tripartite talks vital'

The burden of Mr. Salahuddin's statement is that Kashmir is a disputed issue and there are three parties involved — India, Pakistan and the Kashmiris. There can be no solution to the problem without the involvement of the three parties. "Talks held by ignoring any of the three parties cannot make any headway. Such two-sided talks have always failed," he said.

On the failure of two of the commanders to show up for the second round of discussions in Srinagar on Saturday, the explanation of Hizbul leaders here was that "perhaps they were unwell".

Right from the day the Indian Government extended an invitation for talks in response to the ceasefire, the Hizbul has been insisting that a dialogue on substantive issues on Kashmir must be outside the purview of the Constitution and involve Pakistan and the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC).

THE HINDU

THE HINDU

- 7 AUG 2000

Tripartite talks must to resolve Kashmir tangle, says Hizbul

ISLAMABAD: The Hizbul Mujahideen on Sunday asked India to get into tripartite talks to resolve the Kashmir issue, saying New Delhi should not waste the "golden opportunity" provided by its declaration of unilateral ceasefire.

"If India does not enter into tripartite talks and the situation gets worse, the entire responsibility will rest on New Delhi," chief of the group Syed Salahuddin said in a statement here. The Kashmir issue is basically tripartite and the parleys can neither make progress nor prove useful in the absence of either side, Salahuddin added.

Clarifying his stand on fixing August 8 as the deadline for expiry of ceasefire in Kashmir, he said, "The deadline is not the result of any misunderstanding. Rather it has been set keeping in view the traditional stubbornness and delaying tactics of India."

Meanwhile, another militant outfit Al-Badar Mujahideen on Saturday termed the Hizbul's negotiations with the Indian government as meaningless.

Al-Badar chief Bakht Zamin Khan told a news conference in Karachi that the talks were "meaningless because they were being held between one group and the Indian government which is not ready to accede to tripartite talks involving Pakistan."

In Srinagar, the Hizbul said it wanted to retain weapons for their safety and security but was determined to maintain the ceasefire. This was conveyed by Hizb commanders to Union home secretary Kamal Pande during the first round of talks on Thursday, Fazal Haq Qureshi, mediator between

Hizbul Mujahideen and the government, told a local newspaper.

Reports from Jammu said the army and para-military troops patrolled sensitive areas in the R.S. Pura border town as curfew clamped on the town on Saturday in the wake of violent incidents continued on Sunday.

Jammu district magistrate R.K. Goyal said the town was peaceful with no reports of any untoward incident since Saturday evening.

The army was called out in the town on Saturday as rampaging mobs burnt two government offices, attacked a police station and burnt vehicles. Fourteen people were injured in the violence.

Jammu region was peaceful on Sunday after lifting of day curfew in five district headquarters and two towns of Doda district on Saturday. Curfew was imposed on Rajouri, Poonch, Udhampur, Kathua, Jammu, Baderwah and Kishtwar on August 2 in the aftermath of Kashmir killings.

However, defence minister George Fernandes on Sunday ruled out any change in the security set-up along the line of control (LoC) and international border (IB) with Pakistan after the Hizbul Mujahideen's ceasefire, and admitted inadequacy in security arrangements for Amarnath pilgrimage. "The security set-up along the Indo-Pak border will remain the same and no change will be made in it even after Hizbul's ceasefire," Mr Fernandes told reporters in Jammu.

Meanwhile, a batch of 1,903 pilgrims on Sunday left from Jammu to Pahalgam for onward journey to Amarnath. (Agencies)

PEACE MEAL

- Jammu peaceful. No untoward incident reported
- Fernandes rules out changes in security along LoC
- 1,903 pilgrims leave Jammu for Amarnath

THE TIMES OF INDIA

7 AUG 2000

RENEWED SECURITY FOR AMARNATH PILGRIMS

Committed to talks without preconditions: Vajpayee

By K. V. Prasad

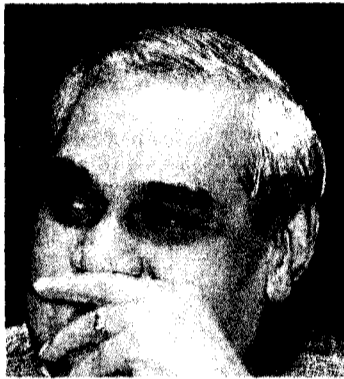
NEW DELHI, AUG. 7. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, today reiterated a commitment to the dialogue process without any preconditions — meaning that while the militants were free to raise issues outside the framework of the Constitution, the Government could respond only within its parameters. He cited the example of the ongoing "Nagaland" dialogue.

Replying to questions in the Rajya Sabha, Mr. Vajpayee chose the occasion to convey his Government's resolve to carry forward the peace process on its terms, undeterred by the hurdles created by a "difficult neighbour" and asked the Opposition to rise above politics in a "war-like situation".

Contradicting statements?

Noisy scenes were witnessed at the end of the speech when the Congress(I) leader, Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad, tried to highlight the "contradiction" between the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes' statement that the Pahalgam and other massacres could have been avoided if the security arrangement had been reviewed and the Prime Minister's assertion that security was adequate.

The verbal duel resumed after the break with Mr. Pranab Mukherjee raising it again. The Deputy Chairperson, Ms. Najma Heptulla, who was in the Chair adjourned the House for 10 minutes and announced later that Mr. Fernandes would clarify the matter. However, the agitated Opposition members insisted on a



clarification straightway, resulting in the adjournment of the House for the day.

Earlier, explaining the rationale behind the talks, Mr. Vajpayee said the Government wanted to bring the militants overground, engage them in a dialogue and stop the killings. Those who came for the talks with their faces masked could neither solve the State's problems nor were doing the country proud.

'No problem in talking to Pak.'

By Harish Khare

NEW DELHI, AUG. 7. Authoritative sources in the Government were keen on pointing out that nothing in the Prime Minister's statement in the Rajya Sabha today could be construed to mean that Mr. Vajpayee was totally ruling out talks with Pakistan. "We have spoken to Pakistan in the past. We have no problems in talking to them in the future either. But they must stop cross-border ter-

The Government would not cede any portion of land in order to arrive at a settlement, Mr. Vajpayee said adding that even during Kargil India had refused to hold fire as requested by Pakistan to allow its troops to retreat.

On the security for Amarnath pilgrims, he said a three-tier arrangement existed with the Army guarding the heights, the BSF maintaining vigil along the route and the CRPF taking care of the pilgrims' camps. The killings were carried out by two foreign militants of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, on a suicide mission.

Administrative probe

While intelligence inputs had indicated possible militant attacks, there was also a feeling that the pilgrimage itself would be spared.

An administrative inquiry committee under the General Officer-in-Command of the Unified Command, which included the Home Secretary and Deputy Commis-

sioner of the District, had been set up to probe possible security lapses. The Amarnath pilgrimage, he said, would continue with renewed security measures. Asserting that a nation of one billion could not be "deterred" by violence, Mr. Vajpayee said his Government would pursue the process of peace set in motion

Judicial probe into pilgrims killing ruled out: Page 15

while dealing firmly with terrorism. The country had to bear the burden of a "difficult neighbour" with "patience and restraint in order to discharge our higher responsibilities towards the region".

Referring to the statement of Mr. Kuldip Nayar (Independent) about the willingness of Pakistan's Chief Executive, General Pervez Musharraf, to hold fire, Mr. Vajpayee said the feedback from diplomatic channels did not indicate such a willingness.

rorism and help in restoration of peace," the sources explained.

It was pointed out that "the Government has never shied away from talking to any one. In the past, several rounds of talks were held with Pakistan till the Kargil episode. The Government has consistently maintained that prior to any meaningful dialogue, trans-border terrorism must end." According to authoritative sources, the "current ini-

tiative of the Hizbul Mujahideen has opened the way for restoration of peace in Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan must play a responsible role in this."

In this context, the Government also noted Mr. Abdul Majid Dar's interview (to BBC Hindi service) where the Hizbul Mujahideen commander said "if India feels that Pakistan is involved in cross-border terrorism then India can ask Pakistan to behave properly and come to the table."

THE HINDU

8 AUG 2000

Hizbul threatens to resume fighting

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 7. Echoing the sentiments of Pakistan, the Hizbul Mujahideen today virtually announced resumption of fighting in Kashmir from 5 p.m. tomorrow on the plea that India has failed to respond to its demand for a tripartite dialogue outside the ambit of the Constitution. With less than 24 hours to go before the expiry of the deadline for termination of the ceasefire, the Hizbul chief, Syed Salahuddin, took the extraordinary step of writing a letter to Ambassadors based in Islamabad accusing India of having "failed to give peace a chance".

Earlier, a spokesperson of the Pakistan Foreign Office accused India of being insincere in its pursuit of a negotiated settlement as per the resolutions of the United Nations and the wishes of the Kashmiri people. "Continuation of such a position on the part of India at this stage could kill progress towards resolution of the problem," he said in response to a question if Islamabad was satisfied with the recent initiatives by India.

In his letter to Ambassadors, the Hizbul chief said, "India has failed to respond cate-

gorically to our offer of peace and has dilly-dallied... thus failing to give peace a chance. Let the world community decide as to who is laying impediments."

Syed Salahuddin said the cadre of his organisation had fought against the Indian forces for the last 11 years and were still in a position to continue the "targeted combat missions and stun India. But we kept our guns silent temporarily in response to the Indian Prime Minister's statement at Pahalgam that dialogue with the Hizbul would be within the parameters of *insaniyat* (humanness) and not Constitution."

The HM accused Mr. Vajpayee of a u-turn on the statement by interpreting his offer as being within the framework of the Constitution and quoted him as saying that there was no need for anyone to come in between the talks between the Centre and Hizbul. "They intend to tie (clinch) the affair through a bilateral dialogue which is not an acceptable proposition. The Kashmir tangle can be solved only by a just negotiating process involving all the three parties — Kashmiris, India and Pakistan. Had India accepted a tripartite dialogue the other organisations involved in the armed

struggle could be convinced for a comprehensive peace.

"We hope you would use your diplomatic influence to persuade India to accept the rationale behind our unilateral ceasefire... By now it should be crystal clear that India has demonstrated its traditional intransigence and our sincerity is unquestionable," the letter said.

Rethink on ceasefire

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, AUG. 7. In a new turn of events, the Hizbul Mujahideen has threatened to revoke its decision on the ceasefire announced by the organisation on July 24 in view of the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee's, statement on Sunday that talks were possible only within the framework of Constitution.

Describing Mr. Vajpayee's statement as an effort to undo the attempts of Hizbul in restoring peace, the outfit's Commander-in-Chief (Operations), Mr. Abdul Majeed Dar, said the organisation was seriously considering whether to remain with the ceasefire.

Details on Page 13

THE HINDU

8 AUG 2000

Making a peace process work — I

By Radha Kumar

119-12/8/8

THE PAST weeks have seen dramatic events. One of the largest of the Kashmir militant groups, the Hizbul Mujaheddin, declared a ceasefire on July 24. The ceasefire was unilateral only in so far as it was not backed by other militant groups: in other ways it was conditional. It called for unconditional talks, inclusion of Pakistan in the peace process, and an end to reprisals and human rights violations, and it gave the Indian Government three months to begin implementing measures. The Government welcomed the ceasefire and the Army was put on strict orders to curtail its hot war against the Hizbul — which would have, in practice, also entailed a curb on Army-militant encounters. Meanwhile, the Government established contact with the Hizbul to work on details of the ceasefire. The first step has been taken with discussions on how to curb violence and prevent human rights violations in Kashmir.

It was just such a set of cease-fires by Republican and Unionist militias which allowed the peace process to begin in Northern Ireland in 1994. These too could have been seen as unilateral: that is, they were not reached mutually, either with each other or with the British Government, but one by one. To have seen them as unilateral, however, would have been to miss the point. The ceasefire by the IRA led the Unionist paramilitaries to follow suit. For the first time in Kashmir's decade of insurgency, it looked as if something similar could happen here. From press reports, it appeared that the Hizbul's ceasefire had the tacit blessing of the Pakistani Government. It was not unreasonable to expect that pressure on the other militant groups might follow. Indeed, the ceasefire offered a golden opportunity to Pakistan to show support for a Kashmiri peace process. Instead, the Pakistani Foreign Office's mixed messages, the Lashkar's attack on an Army camp in the Valley and ensuing press conference in Karachi, the barbaric attack in a marketplace crowded with pilgrims, and the upsurge of militant violence which left 100 dead in two days are grim reminders of how thorny the Kashmir issue is. But this is still the immediate aftermath of the ceasefire announcement, when attempts to derail it are inevitable, as is also the controversy in Pakistan. The question is,

will the Hizbul be able to hold its ceasefire through this upsurge and what can be done to make it die down?

Similar attempts to derail the ceasefires in Northern Ireland were regularly made, but the major paramilitary groups were persuaded to maintain, and on occasion return to, a ceasefire, largely because their political wings proved their commitment to peaceful negotiations through pressure on the paramilitary groups. In this, they were supported by the British and Irish Governments, and the large and influential Irish-American diaspora. The ceasefires paved the way for British-Sinn Fein

The question now is, can any forward movement be taken on talks, who will be in them, and what will be their scope? Fortunately, the Indian Government is currently taking the view that the militant upsurge must not derail a peace process. It has, at the same time, been silent on whether it will revise its position of "no talks with Pakistan". Formally, the Hizbul has called for tripartite talks, but its leaders have also shown that they are prepared for a step-by-step process. While urging tripartite talks, the Pakistan Government has also indicated it might be flexible. And the Hurriyat has said, at various times, that it

and Pakistan. In fact, the Northern Ireland cease-fires were prefigured by a joint declaration by the British and Irish Prime Ministers in December 1993 that: the people of Northern and Southern Ireland were entitled to self-determination, and Sinn Fein and other militant parties would be accepted in all-party talks only if they made a commitment to "a permanent end to terrorist activities". Ireland renounced its claim to the partitioned region in return for an open border and mutual Catholic-Protestant self-determination. The Framework Agreements which followed included an all-Ireland Council for trade and development, a British-Irish inter-governmental conference, demilitarisation, paramilitary decommissioning and police reform, power-sharing within the region, and devolution within Britain through the creation of Assemblies in Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland with which most powers would reside. Where once there were giant concrete blocks known as "Dragon's Teeth", today the border between southern and northern Ireland is hard to find.

Can one imagine a similar kind of joint declaration by the Governments of India and Pakistan, or a similar set of agreements for Kashmir? Clearly it is far too early to say. Nevertheless, there are some small signs of promise. There is a growing nationwide discussion of devolution which the Indian governing coalition is well-placed to develop. The British Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair, in fact devolved to Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland before starting all-party talks within Northern Ireland. Though systematic groundwork on the elements which would have to go into a Kashmir solution is yet to be undertaken, there are already several proposals in circulation. The next step is to begin evaluating these proposals in comparison with other peace agreements, in preparation for substantive talks. Currently, the Indian Government is displaying remarkable maturity in its commitment to a Kashmir peace process. If the Pakistani Government could bring itself to be similarly unequivocal, a major hurdle to talks would be overcome.

(The writer is Senior Fellow in Peace and Conflict Studies, Council on Foreign Relations, New York.)

Groundwork towards a possible Kashmir solution remains to be done... Ultimately, Kashmir will find lasting peace only if there is peace between India and Pakistan.

and Republican-Unionist talks, though these were delayed for over three years by British Army and Unionist opposition. Sinn Fein, which had been proscribed, became a recognised party. It is now in Government with Mr. John Hume's Social Democratic and Labour Party, and Mr. David Trimble's Ulster Unionist Party.

By comparison, the All-Party Hurriyat Conference is not exactly proscribed, nor do Parliament or the Army oppose its recognition, but it is yet to be instituted as a negotiating party. Given this position, it is surprising that the Hurriyat coalition has been so critical of the Hizbul's initiative — one of whose chief purposes was to push for the Hurriyat to be recognised as a leading party — but fortunately that hurdle appears to have now been partially crossed. But only partially.

The Hurriyat needs to take the further step of calling on other militant groups to support the Hizbul's initiative, and it needs consistent, if private, Pakistani Government support to do so. As several Pakistani commentators have pointed out, Pakistan's "now I support it now I don't" "policies not only hurt Kashmiris but Pakistanis too. For its part, whatever reservations it might have, the Indian Government needs to substantively reassure the Hizbul of its commitment to inclusive and open-ended talks."

supports all-party talks which would include leaders from Jammu and Ladakh and minority representatives. Judging by press responses, informed public opinion in India — and to a slightly lesser extent, in Pakistan — also favours an inclusive and open-ended peace process, which could begin on several tracks.

Unlike the situation in Northern Ireland, however, where much of the groundwork for talks had already been done long before they commenced, including draft agreements on its future constitutional and political shape, groundwork towards a possible Kashmir solution remains to be done. In this sense, whatever talks there are now can only be preliminary ones which will prepare for substantive talks to follow. Given this context, debate over whether or not the talks will be within the purview of the Indian Constitution is a red herring, especially given that the Constitution is itself under review, has been many times amended, and there are in any case a range of views on what Kashmir's constitutional relationship to India is, as the Kashmir Government's autonomy report makes clear. The call for tripartite talks is similarly premature, but it continues to be important to open a channel with Pakistan, even if initially only at an informal level. Ultimately, Kashmir will find lasting peace only if there is peace between India

THE HINDU

8 AUG 2000

Cong. alleges bid to politicise tragedy

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, AUG. 7. On a day of high drama in Parliament, the Congress(I) pulled all the stops out in its bid to embarrass the Vajpayee Government over the recent killings in Jammu and Kashmir even as the treasury benches accused it of trying to "politicise" a grim tragedy.

For the first time since the controversy erupted, the party's deputy leader, Mr Madhavrao Scindia, obliquely demanded the resignation of the Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, saying he should reflect whether he should continue in office after last week's series of massacres. The perception that there had been security lapses had been strengthened following the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes' reported statement that the massacres were "avoidable".

The Congress(I) refused to take "no" for answer even after the Government firmly rejected its demand for a judicial inquiry into the killings, and senior party leaders threatened not to cooperate with it unless its demand was met.

Both Houses were adjourned for the day, much ahead of the normal closing time, as the Congress(I) members disrupted proceedings leading to sharp exchanges with the treasury benches. The Lok Sabha was adjourned twice before finally rising for the day a little before 5 p.m. - after a noisy impromptu discussion on the pros and cons of the Congress(I)'s demand.

In both Houses, the party charged that the Government was running away from a judicial inquiry because it was afraid of the "truth" coming out. The Government's argument that law and order was a State subject and therefore the Centre could not institute a judicial inquiry was ridiculed by the Congress(I). The party leaders in the Lok Sabha said it was not an ordinary law and order issue and the Government was seeking refuge in technicalities.

In the Upper House, Mr. Kapil Sibal reminded the Government that the Centre had indeed ordered such an inquiry during the regime of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed. He was reacting to the Leader of the House, Mr. Jaswant Singh's plea that a judicial probe would be "untenable and unconstitutional".

The Opposition in the Lok Sabha was divided on the issue with the CPI(M) and the Samajwadi Party not sharing the Congress(I)'s enthusiasm for a judicial inquiry. While they were extremely critical of the Government's handling of the incident, they thought a judicial probe was not the answer.

The trouble began soon after the Question Hour with Mr. Scindia reiterating his party's demand for a judicial inquiry on the ground

that this was the only way to fix responsibility for the "lapses" that led to the killings.

The CPI(M) leader, Mr. Somnath Chatterjee, pointed out that "some accountability" had to be fixed.

"So many lives have been lost. The Defence Minister has corroborated security lapses. For nearly 40 minutes, the massacre went on. No accountability has been fixed. Where is the Home Minister? How these things happened? This is a very serious matter," Mr. Chatterjee said. Describing the BJP-led ruling coalition at the Centre as a "non-functioning Government", he demanded a full and detailed statement by the Prime Minister.

While emphasising that he was against playing "politics" on the Kashmir issue as it con-

Shekhar, suggested that the Prime Minister consult the Opposition leaders on the peace process and other issues related to Kashmir situation.

Wondering why the Congress(I) members were so excited, he said there was no precedent in Parliament's tradition that a judicial inquiry had been ordered because of "shouting" by the Opposition members.

Several Congress(I) members were on their feet and rushed to the well of the House defying repeated pleas by the Deputy Speaker, Mr. P.M. Sayeed who then adjourned the House. Another adjournment followed minutes after the House met again at 2 p.m.

When it resumed two hours later, the Speaker, Mr. G.M.C. Balayogi, allowed a few members to speak. Mr. Scindia said a Government which claimed to be transparent should not hesitate to order a judicial inquiry. The Congress(I) wanted truth to come out. He was supported by the CPI's Mr. Indrajit Gupta and the Muslim League's Mr. E. Ahmed. Even a BJP member thought that the administrative inquiry ordered by the State Government lacked credibility.

Mr. Somnath Chatterjee and Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav repeated what they had said in the morning. The Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, provoked angry reaction from the Opposition for some of his remarks, and when he turned down the demand for a judicial inquiry the Congress(I) members rushed to the "well" forcing the third and final adjournment of the day.

MPs denounce plea

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, AUG 7. Twenty MPs have issued a statement decrying the "petty politicking" by the Congress(I) in the name of massacres in Kashmir. The MPs, mostly from the BJP, have said that the Congress demand for a judicial inquiry into the killings in Kashmir was "inexplicable." They have charged that the principal opposition party was "playing into the hands of the Pakistani military establishment" which had alleged that the massacres had been perpetrated by Indian security agencies.

Among those who have signed the statement are Mr Vijay Goel, Mr Vinod Khanna, Ms Sangeeta Singh Deo, Mr Ramdas Aggarwal, Mr Balbir Punj, Mr Daleep Singh Judev, Mr B.P. Singhal and Dr Nitish Sengupta.

The Prime Minister has already ordered an administrative inquiry, the MPs have said, adding that the Congress demand could only give credence to Pakistani propaganda.

'No judicial probe'

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, AUG. 7. The Government today rejected in Parliament the Congress(I)'s demand for a judicial inquiry into last week's series of massacres in Jammu and Kashmir saying the Commissions of Inquiry Act did not permit the Centre to order such a probe in the State because of its special status.

In the Lok Sabha, where the Congress(I) stalled proceedings for much of the day, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, said law and order being a State subject the Jammu and Kashmir Government alone could order an inquiry.

In the Rajya Sabha, the Leader of the House, Mr. Jaswant Singh, said a judicial inquiry would be "unconstitutional" and would not serve the national interest. The Congress(I) reminded him that the Centre had ordered a judicial inquiry in the State during the regime of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad.

cerned the entire nation, the SP leader, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav, supported Mr. Chatterjee's demand for a statement by the Prime Minister. Mr. Yadav said that after the Defence Minister's reported admission on security let-up there was no need for a judicial inquiry. However, he said, Parliament should be taken into confidence on the ongoing peace talks with the Hizbul Mujahideen.

Mr. Siddip Bandhopadhyay (Trinamool Congress) sought compensation of Rs. 2 lakhs each to the next of kin of the dead and Rs. 50,000 to the injured in last week's massacre - a demand later also made by the Samata Party's Mr. Prabhunath Singh.

The Former Prime Minister, Mr. Chandra

'Demand for probe unacceptable'

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, August 7

ARTICULATING THE Government's stand, the BJP today said the Congress' demand for a judicial inquiry into the Jammu and Kashmir massacres was "untenable and unacceptable under the Constitution and not in the interest of the country."

The party also charged that the Congress' demand was similar to the demand made by Pakistan, which was seeking to lower the morale of the Indian security forces in the State by alleging that they were behind the massacre.

BJP spokesperson M Venkaiah Naidu said that while the Centre fully aided the State Government in maintaining law and order, it was not empowered to order a probe on its own under the Commission of Inquiries Act.

Under the special provisions of

the Constitution, which are applicable to Jammu and Kashmir, "public order" is a matter falling within the State list. Only the State Government can order any probe into a matter concerning "public order" under the Jammu and Kashmir (Commission of Inquiries) Act of 1962 and under Section 2 (a) of central Commission of Inquiries Act, 1952.

The Congress, however, refuted the Government's contention that a judicial probe cannot be ordered into the recent killings in Jammu and Kashmir.

Demanding that an inquiry be conducted by none other than a sitting judge of the Supreme Court, Party General Secretary Ghulam Nabi Azad dismissed the Government's contention that the Centre was not legally competent to order a judicial probe into the Kashmir massacre as it fell within

the state's jurisdiction.

He said the Centre was competent to institute an inquiry in matters relating to cross-border terrorism and national security.

An executive inquiry, Mr Azad told mediapersons, would not suffice particularly after the "conflicting statements" made by Prime Minister Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and the Defence Minister Mr George Fernandes on the contentious issue of security lapses.

Meanwhile, 20 MPs belonging to the NDA expressed distress over what they called "petty-politicking" by the Congress in the name of massacres in the Valley. In a statement, they said the principal Opposition party's demand for a judicial inquiry seemed inexplicable. "It is quite revealing to note the similarity in its demand and Pakistan's denunciation of the Indian armed forces for these killings."

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

8 AUG 2000

Vajpayee: Talks within ambit of Constitution but without strings

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, August 7

HT-12
878

SECURITY AGENCIES made elaborate arrangements for the Amarnath Yatra despite conflicting inputs about the possibility of terrorists' attack on pilgrims, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee told the Rajya Sabha today.

Replying to Elders' queries, the Prime Minister said intelligence officials did have information about the possible attack. In some quarters, he said, there was also feeling that the Yatra might be spared. The overall supervision of arrangements was by the Jammu and Kashmir Government, with the CRPF taking care of the pilgrims' camps, the BSF deployed on the route and the Army on the mountain tops.

In spite of this, two members of the Lashkar-e-Toiba's suicide squad were able to penetrate the ring and attack the pilgrims. It seemed the two did not carry weapons at the time of entry but made use of the weapons already kept in the camp premises, he said.

Mr Vajpayee said the team of the GOC of the Unified Command, the Home Secretary and the Deputy Commissioner would probe how the terrorists were able to break the security ring. The probe would be conducted promptly, he said.



9-8752K

Blaming Pakistan clearly for the massacre, the Prime Minister said the Pakistani terrorist campaign would not deter India from pursuing peace in Jammu and Kashmir. Every time India tried for peace, he said, Pakistan had responded by fresh terrorist attacks.

The Prime Minister said he talked about the human approach in Kashmir because he believed terrorism could be countered by this approach only. The dialogue in Kashmir was based on the Constitution but conditionalities would not impede the conduct of talks. This approach was followed in Nagaland.

Mr Vajpayee said the Government wanted the other side to talk because that was the only way their issues could be known. Seeking the Opposition's cooperation in the national crisis, he said he could not say what shape the talks would eventually take. If the other side did not respond, the Government would have to rethink.

Responding to Mr Kuldip Nayyar (Nom), the Prime Minister said the Government was "happy" to know that Pakistan was keen on a ceasefire. The Government had tried to confirm the information through diplomatic channels. He said India did want friendship with Pakistan but it must stop its anti-India hate campaign and cross-border terrorism.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

8 AUG 2000

Hizbul accuses PM of doubletalk

Massacre will not derail talks, says Vajpayee

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 7. — Last week's massacres would not deter India from the peace talks, the Prime Minister told the Rajya Sabha today. "We are doubly determined to continue to pursue peace in J&K even while keeping up our fight against terrorism sponsored by Pakistan."

Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee said too much should not be read into his comment that the talks with Hizbul Mujahideen were being held within the

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE and PTI

SRINAGAR, Aug. 7. — In a new turn to the ceasefire talk, the Hizbul Mujahideen today accused the Prime Minister of changing his stand and asked the Centre to come out with a "fresh and unequivocal" statement that the government wants an unconditional dialogue with it.

Hizbul's chief commander, Abdul Majid Dar, said Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee's statement that the talks would have to be held within the framework of the Constitution "dashed all hopes generated among the common people".

Dar, who had made the surprise announcement of a unilateral ceasefire, said a fresh statement from the government was necessary as the head of the government "changed" his stand within four days of bringing the Hizbul to the crossroads on whether or not to stand by its promise of ceasefire.

Terming Mr Vajpayee's statement as a "crude joke", he said: "The responsibility for the consequences will rest with the Government of India."

He said the ceasefire was a "bold step" and outcome of a "prolonged discussion .. We were fully aware that it would not be received with open arms and targeted by several individuals and groups, from both sides of the LoC."

Differences have surfaced within the Hizbul itself following supreme commander Syed Salauddin's decision to issue an 8-August deadline for the inclusion of Pakistan in the talks.

Highly-placed sources told **The Statesman** that Dar had requested Salauddin to review the deadline, which he declined, resulting in deepening of differences in the Hizbul leadership.

A wireless message intercepted today also confirmed that one group within the Hizbul was in favour of the ceasefire while the other was opposing it tooth and nail.

Sources said that in the inter-



A soldier boxes the ear of a boy during a search operation in Srinagar on Monday. — AP/PTI

cepted wireless conversation between Dar and Khalil Saifulla, the man nominated to head the six divisional commanders for negotiations, Dar told him that as Peer (Supreme Commander's code name) had refused to review the 8-August deadline, they should target the other faction and snatch their weapons.

Meanwhile, reiterating its

demand for a tripartite dialogue on Kashmir, the Hurriyat today termed the Centre-Hizbul talks as "an unmethodical and unsystematic political activity" that would take Kashmiri people nowhere. Hurriyat chief Prof Abdul Gani Bhat said Dar did not understand the intricacies involved and the designs of the Centre when he announced the ceasefire.

Advani not quitting

THE Centre today dismissed speculation that Mr LK Advani had resigned or had been divested of the charge of Jammu and Kashmir affairs in the wake of the Kashmir massacre. "They are talking of Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark," said Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mr Pramod Mahajan on the confusion in Congress circles over the issue. The party had mentioned this confusion at its routine briefing.

framework of *insaniyat* (humanity) and not the Constitution. Any settlement would have to be within the constitutional framework, he said, but there was nothing wrong in discussing matters beyond that domain during negotiations.

Not an inch of Indian soil would be surrendered or the national security compromised, he said. He also came down heavily on Pakistan. "Every time we have tried for peace through dialogue, Pakistan has responded by launching a fresh terrorist offensive. It happened on the day I travelled to Lahore. It has happened again, coinciding with the ceasefire."

Page 6

- Opp divided over probe into Kashmir killings
- Govt optimistic about talks with Hizbul

'REVIEW OF DECISION IF INDIA BREAKS BARRIER OF RIGIDITY'

Hizbul Mujahideen revokes ceasefire

By B. Muralidhar Reddy
ISLAMABAD, AUG. 8. In conformity with the build-up in the last few days, the Hizbul Mujahideen today announced the withdrawal of the July 24 ceasefire declaration saying India had failed to reciprocate its gesture and demonstrated "traditional intransigence".

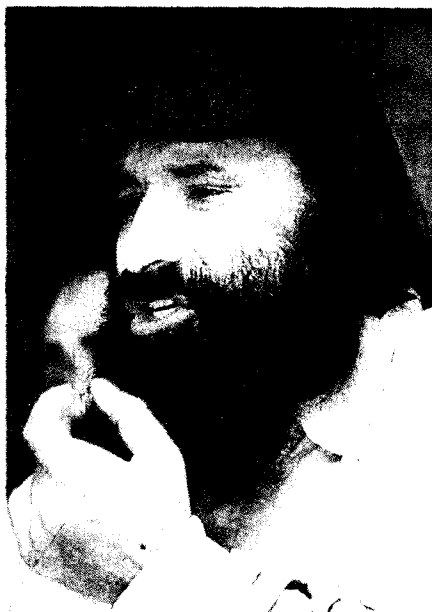
At a crowded news conference here, the Hizbul Mujahideen supreme commander, Syed Salahuddin, however, said his organisation was ready to "review and reconsider" its decision if India was prepared to "break the barrier of rigidity". He listed two conditions under which the outfit could revise its decision — tripartite talks involving

India, Pakistan and Kashmiris or implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution for a plebiscite to determine the will of the people of Kashmir.

"Our options are open and we can review and revise our decision once India breaks the barrier of rigidity. If it does we can persuade other armed resistance movements to join hands with us for a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute," he said and urged the international community to prevail upon New Delhi to respond positively.

Hectic parleys

The announcement was preceded by hectic parleys within the organisation. Mr.



The Hizbul Mujahideen leader, Syed Salahuddin, at a press conference in Islamabad on Tuesday.

Ghulam Nabi Sayeed and Mr. Ayub Thakur Quereshi, who run Kashmir movement organisations in the U.K. and the U.S., had arrived on Monday for consultations.

Syed Salahuddin said his organisation was in touch with all "freedom fighters" inside and outside Kashmir including the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC). At the same time, he said the decision to revoke the ceasefire was the Hizbul's. Reading from a prepared two-page statement, he listed the circumstances under which the unilateral ceasefire had been announced and the reasons behind the withdrawal. To a volley of hostile questions, he denied that the Hizbul's decision had divided the militant organisations.

'Not an emotional decision'

Asked whether revoking the ceasefire

would be accepted by the outfit's chief in Kashmir, Mr. Abdul Majid Dar, he said the decision on the ceasefire and its subsequent withdrawal was taken by the Central Command Council. "We are both bound by the decision of the Central Command Council. It is neither an emotional decision nor taken in a hurry. Mr. Dar is on record that a decision on the ceasefire at the end of the deadline would be taken by the Central Command," Syed Salahuddin said.

The invitation for the press conference left little doubt about the nature of announcement that was to follow from the Hizbul chief. Curiously the invitation mentioned that the press brief would be at 5 p.m. IST (Pakistan is half-an-hour behind India).

A week after announcing the ceasefire, the Hizbul set the deadline of 5 p.m. August 8 for India to respond positively or be prepared for the "consequences". It also put two conditions — involvement of Pakistan and Kashmiris in the dialogue and the talks for resolution of Kashmir dispute to be held outside the purview of the Indian Constitution.

In his statement the Hizbul chief accused India of having changed its stance and avoiding a categorical response to the demands made by his organisation. "Mr. Vajpayee's statements have been contradictory.

He criticised the statement of the BJP general secretary, Mr. M. Venkaiah Naidu, that the Constitution was full of *insaniyat* (humaneness) and alleged that minorities in India were victims of communal carnage. "They do not spare even low caste Hindus. In J&K licence has been given to the armed forces to shoot and kill at will and invade the privacy of the residents. Is this *insaniyat*?" Syed Salahuddin said that while he had no evidence, in his opinion the recent killings in Kashmir were engineered by Indian intelligence agencies to discredit the "freedom movement" as they had done in March when the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, visited the sub-continent.

Commanders go underground

SRINAGAR, AUG. 8. The 'commanders' of Pakistan based militant outfit Hizbul Mujahideen went underground in Jammu and Kashmir after the outfit today withdrew its unilateral ceasefire. The Hizbul commanders, who

represented the outfit in the first round of talks with the Government representatives on August 3, went underground in the State immediately after the news of the withdrawal of the ceasefire became known here.

The Hizbul chief commander, Mr. Abdul Majid Dar, who made the dramatic and surprise announcement about ceasefire on July 24 last, also went underground, the sources said.

Mr. Fazal Haq Qureshi, the mediator nominated by Hizbul Mujahideen to facilitate talks with the Government on the modalities of the ceasefire, is also not available. The Hurriyat Conference's executive committee meets tomorrow to discuss withdrawal of the ceasefire, declared in Jammu and Kashmir on July 24.

"We have nothing to say on the issue immediately. We are meeting tomorrow to discuss the issue and then react," a spokesman for the Hurriyat Conference chairman, Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat, said when contacted for his reaction on the Hizbul decision. — PTI



Mr. Abdul Majid Dar

THE HINDU

9 AUG 2000

Making a peace process work — II

10-12 9/8
By Radha Kumar

THE ENGLISH language press in Pakistan has begun to talk about autonomy as the solution in Kashmir. Several commentators add that Pakistan should acquiesce in, but not formally sign up to, such a solution. Pakistan should not ask for tripartite talks, says Mr. M. P. Bhandara in Sunday's *Dawn*, because it might lose its right to act as a monitor when autonomy begins to be implemented, and in the future. An unsigned article on the opinion page of *The News* goes even further: the solution, it hazards, is likely to regularise the Line of Control. As no leader will have the courage to sell this solution to the people, the author concludes, U.N. arbitration will be the best option. In other words, a debate over the constituents in the Kashmir talks has begun, which rightly takes the potential solution as its point of departure. Mr. Bhandara suggests that while staying out of tripartite talks, the Pakistan Government should support the Hurriyat Conference and the Hizbul Mujahideen in formulating a set of autonomy proposals which include: a two-thirds reduction of Indian troops in the State (whose current strength he puts at 700,000); a return to the 1950 order under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which should be made irrevocable; free and fair elections under the supervision of national and international human rights organisations; and a soft border along the LoC, with freedom of movement and trade to be regulated by the Valley's elected Government. The Hizbul Mujahideen, he suggests, might become the reconstituted police force for the Valley. 'Azad Kashmir' should have the same relations with Pakistan that the Valley has with India. If autonomy is seen to work, India and Pakistan can make Jammu, Ladakh, and the Northern Areas a part of the autonomy arrangements, or they can hold a plebiscite to choose which country they want to be a part of.

These proposals make an interesting comparison with the Kashmir Government's State autonomy report. On the overall question of Article 370, and the removal of the bulk of the amendments made to it from 1954, there is little difference. But the J&K Government's State au-

tonomy report recommends autonomy for the whole State, whereas Mr. Bhandara proposes it be tried first in the Valley. This is an interesting idea, but fraught with complications. If the Valley is to be given an exclusive status, the trifurcation of the State will become inevitable, with the attendant problems of haggling over whether and which parts of Jammu region should join the Valley. More troublesome still, the question of the Kashmiri Pandits' position in the Valley will be highlighted, with Panun Kashmir demanding its own

regions, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which were granted Assemblies and the rights to make economic and communication arrangements with each other. The fact that it had devolved nationwide did not stop Britain from recognising that Ireland had a special status, different from that of the other regions. Britain and Ireland formed an inter-governmental conference for Northern Ireland affairs, and created an all-Ireland Council for regional trade and development. Meanwhile, the two countries worked towards all-party

tal step has strengthened the peace.

The most striking difference, however, lies in the relation between India and Pakistan. Unlike Britain and Ireland, the Kashmir peace process has begun at a time when Indo-Pakistan relations are at their nadir. We do not need the Northern Ireland example to tell us that peace cannot be sustained when closely concerned neighbours are not engaged in it: further away from Cyprus, both Greece and Turkey made a settlement on the island impossible until recent rapprochement between the two has raised new hopes of overcoming the hostilities on the island. Mr. Bhandara and the unsigned commentary in *The News* are right, and also generous, in saying that Pakistan might be better served by allowing autonomy to emerge through talks between Government of India and Kashmiri leaders. But for any peace in Kashmir to be sustained, Indo-Pakistani hostility will have to end. Otherwise the borders will remain volatile and the temptation to engage in either cold or hot war will remain. In this context, Pakistan's Chief Executive, General Pervez Musharraf's offers to India on the air and through independent channels — though it is not yet publicly known whether these have been formally iterated — might allow a new departure. Thus far, Pakistan has refused to link the offer of a no-war pact with winding down support for militancy in Kashmir. If Mr. Kuldip Nayyar's recent revelation that Pakistan is willing to effect a wider militant ceasefire has any substance, however, it could plug the gap between a no-war pact and a proxy war. In itself, the statement needs to be probed through followup, especially so if it is accompanied by a process which might lead to militant decommissioning and demilitarisation. The new possibility, that it might be acceptable to replace tripartite talks by simultaneous parallel track talks, should surely spur India to begin preparing the ground for talks with Pakistan. Six months ago, no one thought a Kashmir peace process was even possible. Now that it has begun, it should not be allowed to waste away because of reluctance to negotiate with those whom you do not trust.

(Concluded)

Now that it has begun, the Kashmir peace process should not be allowed to waste away because of reluctance to negotiate with those whom you do not trust.

chunk. To this extent, Mr. Bhandara's proposal falls into a similar trap as that of the U.S.-based Kashmir Study Group (for a demilitarised independent vale of Kashmir), while avoiding its recommendation of independence for the Valley. The experience of Bosnia has shown that attempts to create new religio-territorial arrangements — with or without sovereignty — in a situation of breakdown can lead to further conflict and/or disintegration.

This problem also underlies the Kashmir Government's regional autonomy report, which proposes the creation of eight districts in the State. While it uses a combination of ethnic — in religious and cultural terms — demographics, geographic and economic criteria in defining the districts, attempts to adopt such measures in a situation in which there has been no devolution at all will only stimulate chauvinist interest groups. In this case, the Sunni majority districts will tend to draw into one bloc, leading to either Mr. Bhandara's or the Kashmir Study Group's configuration. For Ladakh, Shia domination over a newly-created Kargil district, with its potential stranglehold over the rest of Ladakh, could raise new fears of Shia-Buddhist tensions.

By contrast, the Irish peace process avoided sub-territorial questions by devolving at several levels hard on each other's heels. First Britain devolved to its

talks on devolution within Northern Ireland, to ensure that decisions emerged through a process of negotiations which was ratified by wide local representation. In the talks, the question was not of sub-territorial but of political and administrative devolution — forming a Northern Ireland Government, getting the Unionists to agree to power-sharing with the nationalists, setting up a commission for police reform, holding elections, and moving towards demilitarisation in tandem with militants' decommissioning.

The Kashmir and Ireland situations are not, of course, identical. Kashmir already has an Assembly, and though its powers and functioning are severely limited there is no local opposition to these limits being removed, unlike Unionist opposition in Northern Ireland. Similarly, Kashmiri administration and a Kashmiri police force will be welcomed if they are locally representative. And the present Kashmir Government supports the Union Government-Hizbul Mujahideen talks, even though they are not a part of them. These are promising elements which could make a Kashmir peace process easier than the Northern Ireland one, though anyone expecting a quick fix would be deluding themselves and setting the peace process back. Northern Ireland has taken seven years to come this far, but each incremen-

THE HINDU

9 AUG 2000

Hizbul's reasons & prospects

By Pran Chopra

10-12 9/8
Progress (of the Kashmir peace process) may follow a zigzag path, three steps forward alternating with two backwards, as happened on Tuesday evening.

IN THE week since the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) offered unconditional talks for a ceasefire, it has become possible to speculate (no more, yet) upon its reasons for doing so. The speculation is encouraged by a number of quick developments during the week. First, the Union Government made an equally unconditional and measured response. Second, the HM remained firm on the offer despite strong and public disapproval by Pakistan. Third, despite the bloody provocation of the murder of over 100 unarmed and innocent Indians, New Delhi remained fully responsive to the HM's offer. Four, the modalities proposed by HM for ceasing fire are realistic and reasonable. Five, the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, has given top priority to ending the alienation of the Kashmiri people in addition to countering militancy. Six, full cooperation has come from the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, despite the unwisely abrupt and humiliating rejection of the Autonomy Report by the Union Government, and despite the suspicion that Pakistan had instigated the ceasefire offer only to sideline the autonomy alternative. There have rarely been so many positive straws within so few days.

Five possible reasons for the HM's offer stand out against this background. One, the dominance of non-Kashmiris, particularly Afghan militants, which Pakistan has been increasingly imposing for a long time upon Kashmiris and which the latter resent. Second, the slow but steady turn of the Kashmiri tide from accession to Pakistan to independence, which is more popular with Kashmiri militants than with those who are more blatantly backed by Pakistan. Third, the widening gap between the HM and the militancy control council in Pakistan, as shown in the council's and the Lashkar-i-Toiba's strong denunciation of the ceasefire offer. Fourth, the increasingly obvious futility of militancy as a way of getting India out of Kashmir, and the high cost of the futility. Fifth, the growing international disapproval of the militancy itself and its aggressive use as a tool by Pakistan against India.

And all these causes suddenly gained added edge when, in recent weeks, the

prospect of autonomy, be it within India, proved so popular in the Valley. If our own Cabinet had not been so insensitive to it the agenda today would not have been how to reach a ceasefire but how to balance the State's aspiration for more autonomy within the Union with Jammu's and Ladakh's aspirations for the same within J&K. That would have simultaneously served the interests of the Union, the State, the regions, and taken the country closer to the goal now defined by the Prime Minister as ending Kashmiri alienation.

If all that is now water over the dam, what are the prospects today? Perhaps it is better to ask first what the prospects are not today, before asking what they might become tomorrow. Some limits are obvious. India will not agree — not yet — to make Pakistan a third party to the talks with the HM. Nor will India concede to the HM, in the present circumstances, what it refused on July 4 to Dr. Farooq Abdullah, the stoutest Kashmiri advocate of the State's continued accession to India. Nor is the HM so much at the end of its tether that it will be content with sops. Yet, the behaviour of both sides behind the scenes indicates a shared realisation that time is needed to hammer out a reliable ceasefire protocol.

Therefore nothing dramatically final will happen on account of the expiry of the deadline of 5 p.m. on August 8 set by the HM. Neither a breakdown nor breakthrough. There might be an interruption for stocktaking, which may look like a collapse. But the HM did not come thus far only to go back empty-handed and risk torment at the hands of those who have slammed it for offering a ceasefire in the first place. Nor did the Union Government risk turmoil in its own ranks or in Kashmir on the assumption, unwarranted in any case, that the HM is too tired now to carry on and will accept unreasonable terms. Both sides will try to show such success as they can, and at least will not shut the door on such future possibil-

ities as may arise, now that the largest Kashmiri organisation of militancy has changed the scene by taking this unprecedented step, and Mr. Vajpayee has changed it by redefining the Government's goal in Kashmir as ending the alienation of the people of the State from the rest of the country. Progress may follow a zigzag path, three steps forward alternating with two backwards, as happened on Tuesday evening. But dead ends may not become permanent even though the HM has violated its own offer of unconditional talks for a ceasefire by later imposing the condition that Pakistan must be made a party to the talks.

But new methods will be needed for future possibilities, so that several approaches may work symbiotically, not at cross purposes. A dependable ceasefire, with the modalities as transparent as security reasons allow but without necessarily calling for changes in political aims, will be obviously the first step, with as many militant outfits joining in as may accept the modalities. If the desire of the people of the State for safety from guns was the main push behind even such a large organisation as HM then its force cannot be ignored by other organisations also, and the price the violators may have to pay in terms of the public's disapproval can be a strong disincentive for violations. Plus of course the obvious fact that only in conditions of at least relative peace can further strategies be thought out by those for whom violence has not become an ideology, by whatever name it may be called.

Second, we should get away from the present disruptive debate over whether a discussion about modalities is within the Constitution or not. Both Constitutions have flexibility and leeway to permit tomorrow what they might not today, provided the permission is sought for objectives which have sufficient support for permissible amendments. Therefore, the Government and its critics, and to

some extent the HM as well, are needlessly tying themselves up in knots in demanding or refuting that the discussions be within or outside the two Constitutions. That is why the Prime Minister's statement in Parliament on Monday on this point was as timely as it was clear and emphatic.

There is a serious flaw in the State Government's Autonomy Report insofar as it demands unilaterally that the Union Government should withdraw such extensions of its jurisdiction over the State which Parliament legislated after the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah in 1953, its argument being that with the Sheikh in prison the State's Government and Legislature had lost the mandate of the people. There is a grain of political truth in that but not an iota of legal or constitutional justification. As long as it has been formed in conformity with the law, a Government does not cease to be legal merely because it is less popular than the preceding one.

But there would be no such flaw in either of two courses. Either the State Government should seek validity of the Autonomy Report not in its adoption by the State Assembly but in such consensus as may emerge over it in discussions between the two Governments. Or it should seek redress not through the Autonomy Report but through reconsideration, jointly by the two Governments, of the Accord jointly signed in the mid-1970s by Sheikh Abdullah and Indira Gandhi, and through such implementation of the existing Accord or such enlargement of it as the two Governments can agree on.

But while all these considerations and reconsiderations may help, prospects for the future do not depend so much on the constitutionality or legality of one option or another but on the test now rightly laid down by the Prime Minister for all options: which one, however novel or innovative its legal or constitutional status, will help more in ending the alienation of the people of the State from the rest of the country, and in ending the new alienation that has raised its head within the State, the alienation of the Valley from the other two regions, Jammu and Ladakh.

THE HINDU

1 AUG 2000

Pak.-based outfits hail Hizbul decision

9/8/84
By B. Muralidhar Reddy 119-13

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 8. Pakistan-based militant organisations engaged in fighting in Kashmir have welcomed the Hizbul Mujahideen's decision to end its 15-day old ceasefire and said the move would give a further fillip to the on-going "freedom struggle."

These organisations were angry with the Hizbul for its unilateral declaration of ceasefire and had dubbed it a "betrayal of the freedom struggle." Not only was the Hizbul chief, Syed Salahuddin, removed as chief of the United Jehadi Council, an umbrella outfit of the militant groups, but the Hizbul was expelled as a member of the 17 member Council.

The Jamaat-e-Islami, the most influential religious party in Pakistan, which faced embarrassment following the ceasefire has predictably applauded the latest decision and said "Jehad (holy war) is the only solution to increase pressure on India".

Though a majority of its cadre are drawn from Kashmir on both sides, the Hizbul is considered close to the Jamaat-e-Islami. The ceas-

9/8
sefire announcement that coincided with the visit of the JI chief, Quazi Hussain Ahmed, gave room to speculation in Pakistan that the

Pak. charge

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 8 Pakistan tonight accused India of destroying the possibility of a peace process in Kashmir by its 'negative and transparently insincere response.'

Quoting the spokesperson of the Pakistan Foreign Office, the State-controlled Radio Pakistan said, "negative and transparently insincere response by the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee and other officials have destroyed the possibility of a peace process." The spokesperson said if India was sincere in resolving the Kashmir dispute, it should hold talks with Pakistan and the Kashmiris without any conditions. "India must stop all repression against the Kashmiri people and freedom fighters and must respond positively to the call of the world community to resume dialogue with all concerned."

move was the outcome of the parleys between American officials and Quazi Ahmed.

Immediately after the Hizbul ceasefire announcement, Quazi Ahmed cut short his visit to the U.S. and returned to "clear doubts and apprehensions" about his organisation. He had accused the military government in Pakistan of having engineered the ceasefire. Three days ago, he was quoted as saying that the Hizbul would soon call off the ceasefire.

Reacting to the withdrawal announcement, Quazi Ahmed said that "we were against the ceasefire because we knew from the very first day that India is not sincere in resolving the Kashmir issue and will insist on talks within the framework of the Indian Constitution. I can assure that all the jihadi groups can stop jihad if India declares Kashmir as a disputed area, withdraws its forces and agrees to tripartite talks with Pakistan and the Kashmiris".

A spokesman of the Lashkher-e-Taiba said the holy war in Kashmir would gain further momentum with the Hizbul decision. A leader of Harkat-ul-Mujahideen described it as a "very wise move, otherwise the freedom struggle would have suffered a major blow."

THE HINDU

9 AUG 2000

Judicial probe will bring out truth: Cong.(I)

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, AUG. 8. As the deadlock over the Congress(I)'s demand for a judicial inquiry into the recent killings in Jammu and Kashmir continued, Parliament was disrupted for the second consecutive day today with the Lok Sabha adjourning without doing any work except question hour.

In the Rajya Sabha, which witnessed a Congress(I) walkout, there were heated exchanges over its leader, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee's reference to newspaper reports suggesting that many Amarnath pilgrims were killed in firing by Indian security forces. He said a judicial inquiry would bring out the truth.

The BJP reacted sharply describing it as Pakistani propaganda and urging members not to give credence to media reports. Mr. M. Venkaiah Naidu cautioned against playing into the "hands of Pakistan" which had lost three wars to India and was now trying to divide the people.

While the Rajya Sabha spent almost the entire day debating the issues arising out of the massacres in Kashmir, the Lok Sabha was virtually paralysed as the Congress(I) repeatedly blocked proceedings to press its demand.

The first hint of trouble came as soon as question hour ended and the Congress(I) benches erupted over the party's demand. Its deputy leader, Mr. Madhavrao Scindia, wanted to know why the Government was "running away" from such an inquiry, and even as he was speaking several of his party colleagues rushed into the "well".

Mr. Scindia said his party was not mak-

ing any allegations against anyone but wanted truth to come out as over 100 people had been killed. He shrugged off the Speaker, Mr. G. M. C. Balayogi's suggestion that he could raise the issue after the listed business was over. As noisy scenes continued, the House was adjourned until 2 p.m.

When it resumed, the Congress(I) members were on their feet again and sensing the mood the Deputy Speaker, Mr. P. M. Sayeed, who was in the Chair, adjourned

essence of inquiry and an administrative probe could achieve the task. A judicial probe would prove 'counter-productive', he felt.

The Congress(I)'s demand did not find much support from those on the Opposition benches either. Barring Mr. Ranjan Prasad Yadav (RJD), and Mr. R. Margabandu (AIADMK), who endorsed it, others including Mr. Ram Gopal Yadav (Samajwadi Party), Mr. R. K. Anand (JMM) and Mr. Pra-

agreed with Mr. Jaswant Singh's contention that a judicial probe by the Centre was "unconstitutional" and suggested that the Centre help the State Government bring out the facts.

Mr. Shankar Roy Chowdhury (Independent) cited several instances in the North-East and elsewhere when civilians were killed in the cross-fire between security forces and militants and that while inquiries were conducted in all cases, they inhibited responses of the soldiers.

The Congress(I)'s Dr. Karan Singh said the Prime Minister should persuade the Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, to institute a judicial probe while another senior leader said that though reports of some of the earlier probes may not have been made public, the Government of the day had taken corrective steps as recommended in reports.

Explaining the party's demand, Mr. Mukherjee said such a probe would establish whether there was a failure in the implementation of recommendations on arrangements for the pilgrimage as suggested by a Committee set up by the former Home Minister, Mr. Indrajit Gupta.

Mr. Arjun Singh countered the charge of the BJP's Mr. S. S. Ahluwalia against the Congress(I) of mishandling Kashmir affairs and criticised the ruling party's handling of the issue. Mr. Kapil Sibal said it was well within the Centre's right to order a judicial probe and cautioned that if it was not done, reports appearing in the media could attract international flak.

Motion in Lok Sabha?

NEW DELHI, AUG. 8. Stepping up its offensive for a judicial probe into Kashmir massacres, the Congress(I) was tonight seriously contemplating moving a motion in the Lok Sabha tomorrow for a discussion that requires voting on the issue.

Party sources said a decision on the issue would be taken early tomorrow. They said a discussion under rule 184 would expose the opposition parties which are "siding" with the BJP-led Government. The Congress(I) has the support of the AIADMK and the IUML on the demand for a judicial probe while most of the other opposition parties, including the CPI(M), are opposed to such a demand.

— PTI

the House for the day.

Replying to a discussion in the Rajya Sabha, the Leader of the House, Mr. Jaswant Singh, rejected the Congress(I) demand stating that while there was no need to find out the cause behind the terrorists attacks being sponsored by Pakistan, the State Government had already ordered an administrative probe into the incident.

The ruling alliance fielded the Law Minister, Mr. Arun Jaitely, who during his intervention stated that speed was the

ful Patel (NCP), said it was necessary to find out how the incident occurred but not in the manner the Congress(I) was suggesting.

The CPI(M)'s Mr. S. Ramachandran Pillai while stressing that responsibility should be fixed for the incident said the party was not for a judicial probe. Mr. J. Chittaranjan (CPI) suggested an all-party meeting could be convened by the Prime Minister on the issue.

The DMK leader, Mr. Viduthalai Virumbi,

THE HINDU

9 AUG 2000

THURSDAY, AUGUST 10, 2000

THE LOST OPPORTUNITY

A SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVE, widely seen as opening up a rare opportunity to push for peace in Jammu and Kashmir, stands aborted even before it could get off the ground, with the Hizbul Mujahideen calling off the ceasefire it had declared unilaterally on July 24. The Pakistan-based militant outfit, which had been insisting on the talks being "unconditional" — witness its harping on the Government of India coming out unambiguously on the 'within the constitutional framework' aspect — sprang a surprise by demanding a "tripartite" format (with participation by Pakistan also) and making continuation of the ceasefire beyond an unrealistic deadline of August 8 contingent upon the Centre agreeing to it. It was obviously a ploy by the Hizbul Mujahideen to pull out of the 'peace' process. Given the complexity of the pulls and pressures at work in Kashmir-related issues, it would be rather simplistic to attribute the revocation of ceasefire by the Hizbul Mujahideen to any one causative factor, as Government spokesmen have sought to do. Apart from the wrath it had invited from the other Pakistan-based militant groups, the Hizbul Mujahideen leadership itself would seem to be sharply divided on the ceasefire initiative, which has found favour mainly with the Srinagar segment.

On a different level, what stands out is the near total lack of ground work for the 'peace' initiative. If experience the world over is anything to go by, strategies for bringing the insurgent groups to the negotiating table and finding a political solution to the problems in question require an enormous amount of preparatory work to be carried out if they are to pay off even partially. But if the Government of India wanted to show some 'result' before Mr. Vajpayee's upcoming visit to the United States and the United Nations for the special millennium summit of its General Assembly, it went into the post-ceasefire talks with hardly any cohesive policy framework. The fact that the Hizbul Mujahideen is the most indigenous of the militant groups operating in

Jammu and Kashmir perhaps prompted the Centre to work upon the Srinagar-based segment of its leadership through subtle ways and do business with it in the post-ceasefire context. In the process, it seems to have got exaggerated notions of the HM's strength vis-a-vis the other militant outfits and its ability to deliver on the 'peace' front. If by doing business with the Hizbul Mujahideen, the Centre had believed it could play upon the indigenous-foreign divide in the militant movement, it has not quite turned out that way. After all, the Hizbul Mujahideen is as much from the stable of the Jamaat-e-Islami as almost every other militant outfit is, although some of them may be manned mostly by non-Kashmiri mercenaries from Pakistan and Afghanistan.

In a way, the ceasefire 'fiasco' can be traced to the failure of the Vajpayee Government to put in place a cohesive Kashmir policy, and this of course has to do substantially with the contradictions inherent in the coalition, as for instance on Article 370. The bottomline that needs to be recognised is that the multi-dimensional Kashmir problem warrants a suitably dovetailed multi-track approach — engaging the National Conference and other mainstream political parties in Jammu and Kashmir, the separatist groups under the Hurriyat umbrella and, above all, Pakistan at the diplomatic level. The record of the NDA regime in this area is anything but creditable. Consider the facts: the Centre sets free the Hurriyat leaders and sends out feelers for talks; as Dr. Farooq Abdullah, fearing marginalisation, gets the State Legislature to adopt the autonomy resolution, it peremptorily rejects it and subsequently, under pressure, settles for a national debate; and the latest of course is its brush with the Hizbul Mujahideen's 'peace' initiative. While all these do answer the requirement of a multi-track approach in the nominal sense, the critical element of a cohesive policy line is woefully missing, which is compounded by the Government's unrealistic rejection of a meaningful engagement with Pakistan.

THE HINDU

10 AUG 2000

✓ Ultras target Baramulla ✓ Army divisional headquarters

Policy haze after Hizbul talks flop

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 9. — The abrupt end of its brief engagement with the Hizbul Mujahideen has forced the Centre on the backfoot, as evident in the element of uncertainty about the next course of action.

Officials contended that subsequent developments could take more time. There were many reasons, they said, not the least of which was the impression that the Prime Minister's Office and the home ministry were pulling in different directions.

Sources said the PMO was more keen to push ahead with the talks while the home ministry had been taking a cautious stand and wanted to wait for a complete picture of the ground situation before responding to the Hizbul offer.

The government today admitted that the ceasefire withdrawal was a setback to the peace process. Home Minister Mr LK Advani told both Houses of Parliament that the Hizbul move was disappointing. The Centre also came down heavily on the All-Party Hurriyat Conference for "playing a negative role".

Mr Advani said: "From the beginning, the response of the Hurriyat leaders to the Hizbul offer was not just cold, they even labelled it a hasty move. It seems the Hurriyat leadership was acting under pressure from Pakistan, they certainly did not act in the interest of Jammu and Kashmir."

Reminding MPs that the

US DIALOGUE PLEA

WASHINGTON, Aug. 9. — The USA has asked the Hizbul to resume talks with India and said renunciation of violence and respect of the LoC were essential in finding a solution to the Kashmir dispute. "We welcome the initiation of discussions between India and the Hizbul and would encourage their resumption," said state department spokesman Mr Richard Boucher yesterday, expressing regret over the ceasefire withdrawal. — PTI

"offer of ceasefire was made by Majid Dar in Srinagar but withdrawn by Salahuddin in Islamabad", he said Salahuddin's words were actually that of Islamabad.

Defence sources maintained that the impact of the ceasefire withdrawal was still being assessed. A senior officer said: "There is a chance, though slim, that some kind of a local arrangement may still be worked out."

Refusing comment on Dr Farooq Abdullah's statement that the Centre was talking to other groups as well, home ministry sources said the next phase of the Kashmir initiative would unfold not in the next few days but over several weeks.

A major problem in case Hizbul's Kashmir leaders toe the line of their chief in Islamabad would be identifying another group with a network and grassroots support.

The end of a ceasefire would obviously result in an increase of encounters, sources said, but maintained that foreign mercenaries of other groups had lately become the more serious threat.

Barely two hours after the Hizbul withdrew its ceasefire offer, Army divisional headquarters at Baramulla was targeted by suspected Hizbul militants, adds UNI from Srinagar.

Sources said militants fired about five rifle grenades and some rockets at the headquarters in quick succession, following up with artillery fire at around 7.30 p.m. yesterday. The shootout continued for over an hour.

In two encounters, three militants, two of them of the Lashkar-e-Taiyaba, were killed in Kupwara today. Troops also gunned down a Pakistani militant in Baramulla.

Curfew on: The curfew in Rajouri and RS Pura in Jammu continued today. The curfew in RS Pura entered its fifth consecutive day. It was clamped after clashes between police and a mob over a "sacrilege".

In Rajouri, the curfew was clamped yesterday after one civilian, Mohammed Sadiq, was killed and at least 15 people were injured as the Army opened fire yesterday in Fatehpur. Trouble erupted when the Army destroyed the crop of local farmers.

■ Editorial: Hizbul says no, page 6
■ More reports on page 8

THE STATESMAN

8 AUG 2001

1 AUG 2001

HIZBUL SAYS NO

9.8.2000
Peace or sell-out? 5.1.2000

CLARITY now illumines the situation on the ground. The unilateral declaration of ceasefire by the Hizbul and the foreplay that followed was seen to have jeopardised the outfit's standing in the eyes of its leadership and its mentors in Pakistan, because of the strong impression generated, especially in militant circles, that the Hizbul was folding up and surrendering, rather than negotiating seriously. All this talk about disarming militants and regrouping them in special camps bore an uncomfortable resemblance to the processes of reconciliation that have been initiated in Nagaland and whose purpose is entirely different. This was probably not what the Hizbul people, at least in Pakistan, had in mind. Two, there is a difference of opinion within the Hizbul itself and this difference cuts across not only the Line of Control but also divides the ranks operating on this side of the border. There is a degree of militancy fatigue. Saleem Hashmi, the organisation's official spokesman in POK, said that the group had lost about 15,000 men so far and the absurdity of local Kashmiri youth with three months training taking on regular units of the Indian Army must have become obvious to many. The battle hardened mercenaries who fight for the Lashkar and the Harkat, their heads full of radical Islam, retain their enthusiasm mainly because for them both cause and fight are new. Abdul Majid Dar said the ceasefire decision had been taken after consulting the boys, their commanders and the people while Abu Ahmed Kulgami of Al-Badr was categorical that those who opposed the ceasefire were not aware of "ground realities". All this can only mean that a significant portion of Kashmiri sentiment is turning hostile to the idea. The inference that can be drawn is that the Pakistani faction wants to fight on, while some people on the Indian side want to bring this thing to an honourable conclusion.

Three, Salahuddin and his backers in the Pakistani establishment read the manoeuvre and responded in line with their interests. The whole point in talking to the Hizbul was to draw a clear line between this largely Kashmiri outfit and the others affiliated to the Pak-Afghan *jihadi* axis, in order to send the message to the international community: fighting in Kashmir has nothing to do with the people, it is being forced upon them from outside. Home Secretary Kamal Pande spoke about collaborating with the Hizbul to "identify and isolate elements opposed to this process". This made the whole thing look like a sell out, which was not the Hizbul's idea at all. Therefore, the insistence on bringing in Pakistan.

What have we learnt? That the whole manoeuvre was hasty and ill-conceived and neither side had a notion of what the other was prepared to give. Compassion — *insaaniyat* — is a clever, non-political word, but a dialogue with a militant outfit has political consequences that it has to deal with. When compassion is not meant to substitute the Indian Constitution as a political framework for dialogue, the consequences for the Hizbul were pretty clear — surrender.

THE STATESMAN

11 00 AUG 2000

1 0 AUG 2000

Door open for Hurriyat: Govt.

11/8 By Harish Khare 49-1

NEW DELHI, AUG. 10 Notwithstanding the collapse of the dialogue with the Hizbul Mujahideen, the Vajpayee government feels that the "peace process" has acquired a certain momentum and that the idiom of dialogue would continue to find favour with the people and groups in Kashmir. The breakdown of the dialogue is described as a mere "roadblock" and the hope is that the peace process would be resumed soon, rather than late.

On its part the Government is willing, according to authoritative sources, to engage the All-Party Hurriyat Conference in a dialogue. This clarification becomes significant in the context of the harsh language used against the Hurriyat by the Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, in Parliament.

The authoritative sources indicated "it is not our intention to tell the Hurriyat leaders that you are outside the dialogue ambit." However, the expectation is that the Hurriyat leadership would not insist on a tripartite (involving Pa-

kistan) format; any such insistence would invite an unambiguous "no" from the Government of India. 9.8.2000

Similarly, the Government is also willing to keep the door of an "unconditional" dialogue open with the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), but not with the Harkat-ul-Ansar or the Lashkar-e-Taiba. The dialogue could take place only "with our people"; whereas the Harkat and the Lashkar outfits were manned entirely by Pakistani nationals.

Interestingly, and contrary to the assertions made by the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, the "authoritative sources" suggest that the Government was neither hopeful nor would work for a split in the Hizbul Mujahideen — Islamabad-based Syed Salahuddin faction and the Abdul Majid Dar-led group possibly going different ways. The preference rather would be to "wait and watch" how the entire group, consisting almost entirely of indigenous Kashmiris, reassesses its strategy.

The Vajpayee Government's approach to the Hizbul Mujahi-

deen is still based on the formulations made by Mr. Dar during his press conference in Srinagar on July 24. At the conference, Mr. Dar made two interesting points. First, that the decision to offer a ceasefire was a collective decision taken by the Majilis-e-Shora and that "a consensus had emerged among the HM leadership on both sides of the border for a purposeful dialogue which should result in a peaceful solution of the problem." Second, Mr. Dar argued that before the ceasefire offer was made the HM leadership had gauged the public mood in Kashmir and "it was realised that desire for a peaceful solution of the issue by an unconditional and meaningful dialogue among all sections of society, including the local political leadership and the media."

On the ticklish question of whether any dialogue had to take place within the Constitution or outside its framework, the authoritative sources feel that the Government's approach is flexible and fair: "Do not ask us to give up our position; we are not asking you to give up your position."

THE HINDU

-11 AUG 2000

PHOTO-JOURNALIST AMONG DEAD IN SRINAGAR OUTRAGE

Car bomb blast kills 13

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, AUG. 10. At least 13 people, including a photo-journalist, two Armymen and a civilian, were killed and over 30 injured in a powerful bomb blast in Srinagar today. The condition of many of the injured, mostly security personnel, is stated to be critical.

People had been fearing the worst after the withdrawal of the ceasefire by the Hizbul Mujahideen on August 8; and the explosion of an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) planted in a car near the State Bank of India (SBI) branch on the Residency Road here, confirmed their fears.

First, a grenade was thrown from an unknown direction at around 12.15 p.m., and people on the posh Residency Road ran helter-skelter. As people deserted the streets, police and journalists, mostly camerapersons, rushed to the spot. When they were in the process of finding out what had happened, the IED planted in the car exploded at 12.30 p.m. with a big bang, killing at least seven people, all of them police personnel, on the spot. Among those killed was *The Hindustan Times* photographer, Mr. Pradeep Kumar Bhatia. A pall of gloom descended on the media fraternity as the news of his death spread.

Two police personnel succumbed to injuries taking the toll to nine. Two Army personnel were also killed, and a Major of the Kumaon Regiment was injured, official sources said.

The injured include Mr. Pankaj Dard (SP, East), Mr. Altaf Ahmed (SHO) and journalists Mr. Irfan Ahmed (Zee TV), Mr. H.U. Naqash (*The Asian Age*), Mr. Amin War (*The Tribune*) and Mr. I. Tariq (*Srinagar News*) Mr. Fayaz Kabli (Reuters) and Mr. Aijaz Hussain (*Excelsior*). The SDPO of Kothibagh, Mr. Kuldeep Sharma, died of injuries in the hospital, while the other two police personnel were out of danger.

The wall of the SBI branch was ripped apart,



The scene at the site of the car bomb blast on Residency Road in Srinagar on Thursday. — Photo: Nissar Ahmed

vehicles were mangled and bodies torn into pieces. A few hundred yards away from *The Hindu* office, a number of journalists escaped unhurt as they were still on their way after coming to know of the first blast.

Blood, tattered clothes and chappals were splattered all around the SBI lane. "I removed bodies of seven policemen," said Mr. Manohar Singh, a CRPF head constable. Soon after the blasts, shops were closed and traffic came to a grinding halt. Even as security forces were deployed in strength, half-a-kilometre away, at Amira Kadal, militants hurled two grenades injuring five people. In Baramulla, a BSF jawan and two civilians were killed and seven others injured when militants lobbed a grenade at a BSF patrol. It was followed by firing in which three people were killed. Police

sources said that Army killed a top commander of the Hizbul Mujahideen, identified as Abdur Rashid Hajam, in Kandi Kupwara in an encounter.

Lashkar, Hizbul own up

PTI reports:

The Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Hizbul Mujahideen have claimed responsibility for the twin attacks. A Lashkar spokesperson telephoned a local news agency, CNS, and claimed that an Ambassador car of the Jammu and Kashmir Bank, forcibly taken by its activists, was used in the blast. However, in Islamabad, the Hizbul Mujahideen spokesperson, Saleem Hashmi, claimed responsibility for the attacks.

Death of a Journalist: Page 13

THE HINDU

11 AUG 2000

BANDH IN VALLEY; CAR BOMB INJURED FLOWN TO DELHI

Army to refrain from operations but asked to keep the powder dry

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, AUG. 11. The Army is unlikely to launch fresh operations against the Kashmiri militants following the withdrawal of the ceasefire by the Hizbul Mujahideen and Thursday's bomb blast in Srinagar.

Highly-placed Government sources said the Army had been told to keep its powder dry but refrain from operations which could impede the possible revival of the peace dialogue with the militants, especially the Hizbul Mujahideen.

The Government is keen on engaging all the local Kashmir groups in talks, but will frontally take on the foreign-dominated Jehadi groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Harkatul Mujahideen.

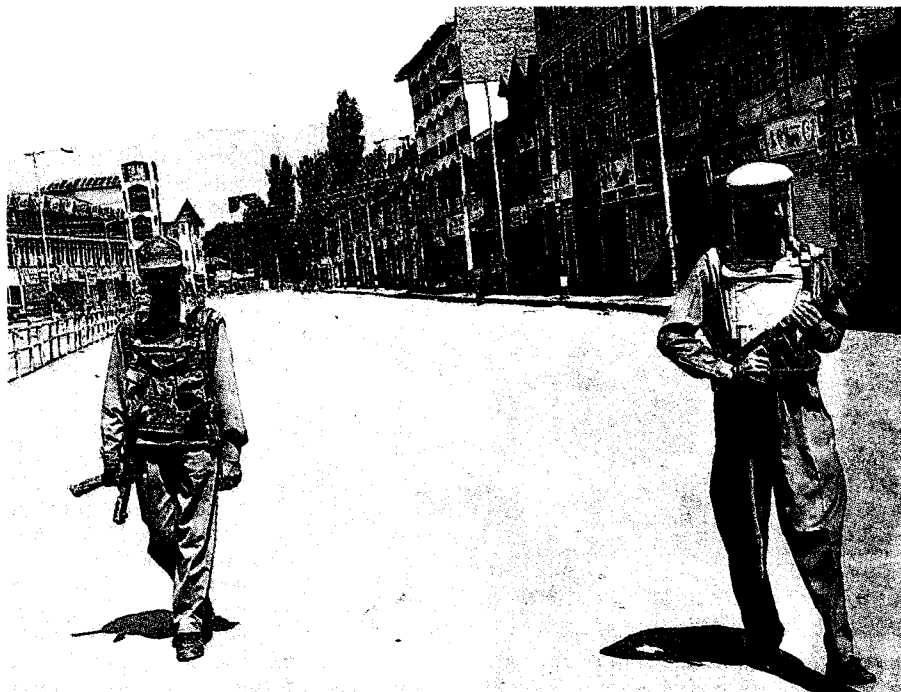
The security forces, however, will carry out routine counter-insurgency operations without making any exception for the Hizbul Mujahideen, they observed.

Strike affects life

Shujaat Bukhari writes from Srinagar:

While the media fraternity in Kashmir bid a tearful farewell to their colleague, Pradeep Bhatia who was killed in Thursday's car bomb blast, a general strike called by the National Security Organisation (NSO), an alliance of pro-India militant outfits, affected normal life in the Valley today.

Though most shops and business establishments did not open in the morning, gunmen of the NSO headed by an MLC were seen enforcing the strike. (According to PTI, the NSO is headed by Javed Hussain Shah, one of the first counter-insurgents and now an MLC.) Police and NSO members were seen swooping down on auto-rickshaws, buses and other vehicles for violating the bandh call. Policemen were



A deserted road in Srinagar on Thursday. — Photo: Nissar Ahmed

angry over the dastardly killing of their nine colleagues on Thursday.

Wreaths for Bhatia

Scores of Srinagar-based journalists paid homage to Pradeep Bhatia, photographer of *The Hindustan Times*, who was among the 14 killed and more than 30 injured. The body of Bhatia was brought from the Police Control Room to the press enclave on Residency Road, and journalists from all newspapers and agencies laid wreaths amid emotional scenes.

Nine of the 30 injured were flown to Delhi in a BSF plane for specialised treatment as their condition was worsening.

Salahuddin threatens 'major strikes'

By B. Murahdhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 11. The Hizbul Mujahideen chief, Syed Salahuddin, has claimed that his organisation would go for "major

strikes" in the next few days to force the India to hold talks with Pakistan. In an interview to *Jang*, an Urdu daily, the Hizbul commander was quoted as saying: "We will resort to heavy shelling in the next couple of days... as has not been done in the last 10 years. India would have to pay a heavy price for rejecting the ceasefire offer."

Asserting that any dialogue with India on the Kashmir issue would not be acceptable without the involvement of Pakistan, Syed Salahuddin said his organisation decided to go for a ceasefire in response to requests from diplomats of several countries including the United States.

He claimed that diplomats of western countries urged the Hizbul to extend the deadline, but his organisation decided against it in view of the "rigid stand of India". He has been quoted as saying that India cannot now blame the Pakistani intelligence agency, Inter-Services Intelligence, for terrorist activities in Kashmir as India had admitted after the ceasefire announcement that 90 per cent of the attacks are carried out by the Hizbul cadres.

In response to a question on the nature of help the Pakistan Army could extend to those engaged in fighting in Kashmir, he has been quoted as saying: "What help can the Pakistan Army give us? We have seen the results in the past. Had the Pakistan leadership taken timely action, the issue would have been resolved earlier."

The United Jehadi Council, umbrella organisation of the Pakistan-based militant organisations, has also been quoted in the Urdu papers as saying that it has decided to launch joint strikes against Indian military installations and other institutions. Another Urdu daily, *Ausaf*, said a joint strategy was being evolved to carry out the strikes.

ISI agent held: Page 13

THE HINDU

12 AUG 2000

After the aborted ceasefire

By V. R. Raghavan

In Kashmir, there is need to once again focus on the strategic direction. That lies in giving no quarter to the armed elements while offering every consideration to those willing to work for peace.

CEASEFIRE in Jammu & Kashmir would have been an unthinkable possibility even a year ago. That it nearly came into being is a measure of the distance covered by the political-military conflict in the State. This came about through assiduous efforts from the Government over some time. There is clearly some new thinking amongst the militant groups and the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC). There is inevitable disappointment over the collapse of the ceasefire proposal. There is, however, reason to believe that the ceasefire indicates the beginning of a new threshold in the dynamic of peace and conflict in the State.

It is useful to remember that a ceasefire was mooted some months ago by the Qaumi Mushawarati Council. Its leader had recommended a six-month-long ceasefire by which all militant groups move out to safe areas which would bring an end to violence and create the right environment for a dialogue to commence. The offer by the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM) was more limited, including the threat of ending the ceasefire if the Government did not commence a meaningful dialogue. Its 12 demands, including the reduction in security forces, release of political and militant prisoners, removal of bunkers from the towns, were predictable and merely tactical. They would have stood a better chance of being met if the ceasefire was not conditional from the start. The HM did not demonstrate a long term perspective.

A dialogue and a peace process are not one and the same. A meaningful dialogue, which the HM and the APHC seek, requires an environment free of violence by the militants and counter militant operations by the security forces. The mutually-agreed period of no armed conflict is part of the peace process. Any assumption that the threat of violence can be the catalyst for dialogue would jeopardise its success even before it began. A ceasefire cannot be conditional upon the Government acceding to demands in a given timeframe. A ceasefire is therefore the means to attain the end of a right environment of trust and freedom from the fear of armed action. It need not be made

sions of the dialogue partners. Its objective should however be clear, ie; of finding a political outcome which satisfies the peoples' aspirations for empowerment and peace. The objective cannot also be divorced from the essential condition of the outcome being honourable to all. The dialogue and the peace process should lead to removing the chaff of the pretenders to peace, from the grain of warriors for peace. The withdrawal of the ceasefire offer has laid the HM and APHC open to accusations of being anti-peace and therefore anti-Kashmiri.

The ceasefire offer had not come about in a vacuum. The mood of the people of Jammu & Kashmir, the pragmatism of some militant elements who realise the limits of militancy, a growing awareness of the human and social costs of the armed movement have all combined to the first step in the form of a ceasefire offer. There is a growing awareness of Pakistan's isolation and inability to do more than keep the fires burning in Jammu & Kashmir. The Government has responded constructively and speedily to the ceasefire offer, even if the latter was couched in threatening rhetoric and warnings of dire consequences. It had allowed a national debate of sorts on the State Autonomy Report and indicated its willingness to examine the issue further. It had released the Hurriyat leaders from prison and let them speak up. Their ambivalent statements have indicated the Hurriyat's inability to define a role for itself other than that directed from Pakistan.

The peace process needs to move by the process of two paces forward and one step back. It should not be allowed to become a fruitless endeavour of moving two step back and one forward. The ceasefire provided that possibility. In its withdrawal there is not the end but the making of a beginning, based on a better understanding of what is at stake. After the dust and smoke of the ceasefire and the senseless killings in its aftermath, there is need to once again focus on the strategic direction. That lies in giving in no quarter to the armed elements while offering every consideration to those willing to work for peace. The end of the first ceasefire is not the end of the search for a way forward.

ulation would be left vulnerable to the kind of senseless carnage witnessed on August 2. If security operations were continued, the HM cadres would be vulnerable. These operational dilemmas needed resolving if the ceasefire was to be meaningful and lasting. There would have been need for a great deal of cooperation between the HM and the security forces. If more militant groups had joined the ceasefire arrangement, its chances of success would have been significantly greater. The Government's response that it was willing to involve all groups in the dialogue if they eschewed violence was therefore a welcome step. The militants not joining the peace process has marked them in public perception as working for an agenda different than the well-being of the Kashmiris.

Assembly elections are due in Jammu & Kashmir next year. They have the potential of being a milestone in the State's history. The APHC and the militants are not unaware of the possibilities the elections offer. They know that another five years of National Conference rule will make things infinitely more difficult for them. On the other hand, Dr. Farooq Abdullah's Government has lost much ground by inefficient governance. There is a fair chance for his political opponents to gain a meaningful advantage by combining politically and abjuring armed violence. New Delhi has already stated its willingness to examine the furthest limits of autonomy in the State. Mature decisions based on a strategic vision can open a new future for Jammu & Kashmir and nothing less would do from the APHC and the militants.

A dialogue is the means and not the end in a peace process and cannot be a static entity. Its contours, components and participants will change as the dialogue progresses. Its direction would also shift depending on the tactical compul-

— indeed it would be a folly to make it an end in itself.

The history of ceasefires in situations short of war has been one of mixed results. Ceasefires are never easy to implement and nor do they always work smoothly. Certainly in cases where ceasefires are put into place between the state and sub-state groups, they have rarely worked without interruptions. Ceasefires launched as a public relations exercise are more often than not likely to fail and harm the interests of the people on whose behalf a military conflict is waged. Instances in former Yugoslavia, Northern Ireland, Sierra Leone, and in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh's Chittagong Hill tracts, in Assam and the other Northeastern States are proof of the fragility of the ceasefire idea. What ceasefires require more than anything else is the commitment amongst the principal interlocutors to keep the peace. It is apparent that while the HM was at least willing to look peace in the face, its colleagues and masters based in Pakistan were not.

Ceasefires are good opportunities to restore confidence in the population, to build trust amongst adversaries and to create a momentum for finding a solution. Unfortunately, ceasefires also have a long record of adversaries using them to regroup and rebuild their forces, to re-supply their cadres and to re-deploy for future armed operations. A ceasefire between two sides to a conflict is a difficult enough exercise. It is infinitely more complex to make a ceasefire hold when there are a number of armed groups operating independently, as is happening in J & K. Such groups had from the start disassociated from the HM ceasefire.

Since the HM's offer was not acceptable to other militant groups there was no clarity on how the ceasefire could have been implemented. If the security forces ceased operations everywhere, the pop-

THE HINDU

18 AUG 2007

Paswan in House privileges tangle

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 18. — The Chairman of the Rajya Sabha will examine if the privileges of Parliament were violated by the 13 August announcement — at a Press conference by the minister for communications — of the guidelines for the private sector's operating of long-distance telephone services.

Opposition members, led by Mr Nitilpat Basu (CPI-M) and Mr Suresh Pachouri (Congress), today contended that a "policy announcement" had been made outside the House when Parliament was in session, which violated both rules and conventions.

The communications minister rejected this argument. The National Telecom Policy of 1999 had provided for such services, they were in fact behind schedule, he said. Guidelines were not policy statements, "this is a matter of procedure, not policy".

Karnataka bans savage practice

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BANGALORE, Aug. 18. — The Karnataka government has banned the use of services of Koragas to consume nail and hair of sick persons with the belief that this will cure illness. The ban comes into force with immediate effect.

The Karnataka Koragas (prohibition of ajalu practice) Ordinance, 2000 promulgated yesterday, makes continuance of the practice, prevalent mainly in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts, a cognizable offence.

The offenders will be given a prison term not less than six months which may be extended up to five years and a fine not exceeding Rs 5,000, the state minister of social welfare, Mr Kagodu Thimmappa, said today.

The Ordinance prohibits treating Koragas, a tribal community, as inferior human beings and mixing hair, nails or any other inedible or obnoxious substance in food and asking them to eat it.

Asking Koragas to run like buffaloes before the beginning of *kambala* (buffalo race) has also been banned.

INDIA DIGEST

Himachal landslide

SHIMLA, Aug. 18. — Six people were killed and 15 injured near Kithu in Kulu after debris from a landslide at Rampur in Shimla district crossed the Sutlej last night. — UNI

Court on Amarnath

JANMU, Aug. 18. — J&K High Court has told the Centre and states to inform it within four weeks about the steps they would take for the safe conduct of Amarnath pilgrimage. — PTI

Bhagwat plea

NEW DELHI, Aug. 18. — The Supreme Court today dismissed the sacked Navy chief, Mr Vishnu Bhagwat's petition challenging the government's decision to dismiss him and strip him of the title of Admiral. The Bench comprised Mr Justice BN Kirpal and Mr Justice Shivraj V Patil. — PTI

Sexual harassment

PUNE, Aug. 18. — The NHRC will intervene in complaints of sexual harassment identified by voluntary organisations and cases of fund litigation, the NHRC chairman said today. — PTI

Sakshi Maharaj

NEW DELHI, Aug. 18. — Delhi High Court today issued notice to the Resident Commissioner of the UP government after an anticipatory bail plea was moved by Swami Sachidanand Sakshi Maharaj, facing charges of raping a minor. — UNI

Rape sentence

NEW DELHI, Aug. 18. — A person convicted of raping a minor should be punished with a sentence not less than 10 years, the Supreme Court ruled while setting aside an order of Andhra Pradesh High Court reducing the sentence of a convict in such case to five years. — PTI

We had an image problem: Advani

MOHAN SAHAY STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 18. — Admitting a rise in attacks against Christians, Mr LK Advani said today that it was the "task of the government to remove any sense of insecurity amongst Christians and other minorities".

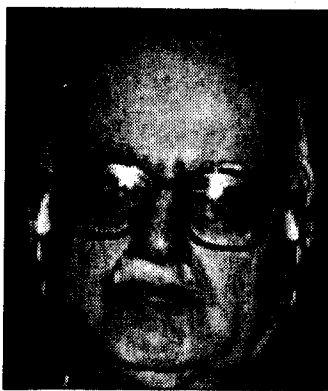
Replying to the special discussion on atrocities against linguistic and religious minorities in the Lok Sabha, Mr Advani, however, reminded the House that this task would not be achieved by the government alone. The Opposition would have to cooperate to strengthen the true concept of secularism in India which meant peaceful co-existence and respect for all religions.

The discussion initiated by Mr Moinal Hassan yesterday last-

ed well over six-and-a-half hours and the home minister had to defer his reply till today as the discussion ended well past 10 p.m.

Though the subject related to linguistic and religious minorities, the focus by and large was on the recent trend of assaults on Christians.

Except Mr Santosh Mohan Dev of the Congress and Mr B Mahtab, who spoke about the linguistic minorities of Assam and Orissa, most speakers, numbering more than 24, raised the issue of attacks on Christians.



Mr L K Advani

Mr Advani mentioned the BJP had formed the government at the Centre in 1998 and again in 1999.

"The handicap we have is about our image. Over the last 50 years when we functioned as Jana Sangh and then as the BJP, we have been targeted by all other political parties as being communal; anti-Muslim in particular," he said.

"You start with an image which is distorted. We are told that the government is communal and anti-Muslim. Well, it

will take some time to erase this image which has been there for the past 50 years," he added.

He quoted excerpts from a book by Rafiq Zakaria who admitted how the writer had mistaken notions about Sardar Patel being anti-Muslim. Zakaria, Mr Advani said, later admitted that Patel was a true nationalist who cared as much for Muslims as for Hindus.

Mr Advani regretted that he should be accused by Mrs Margaret Alva who during the discussion last night said he had joined the "hate campaign against the minorities".

"I have been a member of Parliament for the last 30 years and you can verify from records if I ever said any sort of thing preaching hatred against any community".

India should be more assertive: Chaudhry

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 18. — Ousted Fiji Prime Minister Mr Mahendra Chaudhry today urged India to be more "assertive" in protecting the rights of people of Indian origin and said he had discussed his "plan" of returning to power with the Indian government.

Speaking to reporters today after meeting Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, Mr Chaudhry said now that Mr George Speight had been charged with treason, the "logical thing would be to restore parliamentary democracy and bring back the ousted government".

He said the "most appropriate way of restoring democracy" could be an initial government of national unity, comprising all parties. On how India could play a more assertive role, he said: "India should protect people of Indian origin in Fiji and anywhere else in the world with the help of international agencies like the UN and the Commonwealth." He ruled out any military intervention by India, which has already taken up the issue with international agencies.

Military intervention, he said, would not solve the problem, but said sanctions should continue if Fiji did not move towards democracy. He also ruled out the necessity of fresh elections, but said he



Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee greets Mr Mahendra Chaudhry. Mr Jaswant Singh looks on. — A/P/PTI

would win if it were held according to the 1997 constitution.

Mr Chaudhry, who has been given a reception due to a Prime Minister on a private visit, said the Commonwealth would review progress towards democracy by 15 September. He said if democracy did not return by then, Fiji should be expelled from the Commonwealth. It has already been allowed to succeed.

He said returning to the "truly democratic" 1997 constitution was part of the problem and that there should be adequate checks and balances in Fiji so that democracy can be sustained and people of Indian origin are not humiliated as in 1987.

Mr Chaudhry said India had taken a cautious stand when the crisis broke out this time, mindful of the safety of people of Indian origin, but it was time it became more assertive. He said one reason for coups in Fiji was that the security forces comprised 99.5 per cent ethnic Fijians though 44 per cent of the population was of Indian origin. This has to be addressed.

Earlier, Mr Vajpayee assured him that India would continue to support his cause and take up the issue with the UN and the Commonwealth. The Prime Minister said there should be "international pressure and countries that believe in and practice democracy" should come forward and help in the restoration of democracy in Fiji.

The two met for about 45 minutes. Mr Vajpayee made it clear that India stood for a multi-racial, constitutional and democratic order in Fiji, adding that it would continue efforts to internationalise the issue.

In a morning meeting with Mr Chaudhry, External Affairs Minister Mr Jaswant Singh called the toppling a "criminal endeavour" and said it should not be allowed to succeed.

BARC scientist kills self

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

MUMBAI, Aug. 18. — Dr Avdesh Chandra Saxena, a 43-year-old scientific officer, committed suicide at his residence at Anushakti Nagar in the BARC Complex yesterday.

The suicide has shocked the entire scientific community. A battery of senior scientists, including Dr SD Garg, head of the training division of the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, attended his funeral today.

Dr Saxena, who held a doctorate in physics, joined the BARC in 1977 and was responsible for coordinating the 30-odd trainees sent annually from abroad on an International Atomic Energy Agency fellowship. His 14-year old son found him hanging from the ceiling fan around 1.30 pm yesterday when his wife was away. His body was taken to hospital for post-mortem.

Though he left no suicide note, BARC circles rule out any possibility other than suicide. But they are confused about the motive, for Dr Saxena was known to be sincere and hard-working. He had come up in life the hard way. "He should have enjoyed the fruits of his labour now", a colleague said.

Dr Garg said he "was very happy with his work. And he was normal. I spoke to him the day before yesterday and he gave no indication of any depression or any such intention".

68 Opp MLAs on fast in Andhra House

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

HYDERABAD, Aug. 18. — Sixty-eight Opposition MLAs began an indefinite hunger strike in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly today demanding suspension of the power tariff hikes.

The 65 Congress, two CPI-M MLAs and the lone CPI(ML) member began their fast at 1.45 p.m. after they were suspended from the House for three days.

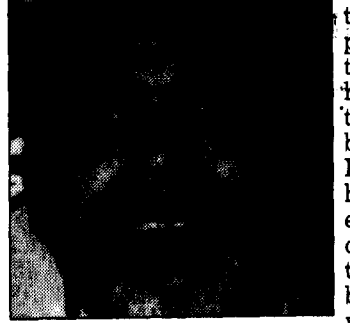
Leader of the Opposition, Dr YS Rajashekar Reddy said, "we are willing to sacrifice our lives till the government suspends the hikes. There is no question of going back on our fast". The Opposition MLAs were suspended when they were demanding that the power hikes be suspended till the House Committee gave its report on the issue. Earlier, Mr N Chandrababu Naidu announced constitution a House panel which would visit various states and inspect the power situation there. However, he rejected the

demand that the hikes be suspended.

The Opposition squatted in the Well, saying the committee would have no sanction nor would it serve any purpose unless the government suspended the hikes. Marshals descended into the House even before they were summoned and evicted the MLAs at mid-day.

Mr Naidu continued with his marathon reply to the debate on power tariffs for the next two hours even as the Opposition began its fast. He defended the hikes and rejected the Opposition demand to roll them back, saying it would thwart development.

Dr MV Mysora Reddy, Congress secretary, said at a Press conference that the extreme move had become necessary as Mr Naidu was refusing to appreciate the interests of the people. He described Mr Naidu's announcement regarding formation of a House committee as deceptive as its recommendations would have no bearing on the present tariffs.



Mr Chandrababu Naidu

Cable Bill to fill Packer's purse

SRINJOY CHOWDHURY STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 18. — The Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2000, has one inadvertent beneficiary: Australian TV mogul Mr Kerry Packer.

For, just before the Bill, already passed by the Lok Sabha and currently with the Rajya Sabha, Prasar Bharati signed a multi-crore agreement with him leasing him two hours on DD Metro, from 7 to 9 p.m. The Bill says every cable operator will have to "re-transmit at least two DD terrestrial channels and a regional language channel on the prime band, in satellite mode..."

This will benefit Mr Packer and perhaps the government. For, DD Metro has declined over the years. Probably a tenth of DD's earnings come from this channel. With viewers, advertisers have also gone away. This forced Prasar Bharati to auction time slots on the channel. And, Mr Packer was one of the big winners.

With the decline in viewership, many cable operators were not showing the channel, but now they would have to. As a result, DD Metro should earn more money and Mr Packer, who has one of the best slots, would benefit the most.

But officials believe that if the slots were auctioned after the Bill was passed, they could have fetched more money. The new Bill will make the channel hot property and money that should have gone to the government will go to Mr Packer.

BJP plans to repackage Hindutva

SUDESH K VERMA STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 18. — The BJP intends to re-package its Hindutva to ensure greater acceptance among minorities, especially Muslims and Christians. The idea, according to a BJP leader, is to send out the message that the BJP brand of Hindutva is different from the Hindutva propounded by Veer Savarkar, Hindu Mahasabha leader.

The next issue of the BJP organ will, therefore, avoid referring to the party's old demands like abrogation of Article 370, evolving a uniform civil code, and construction of a grand temple to Ram at the disputed site in Ayodhya.

Some BJP leaders concede that these are the most readily recognisable landmarks of the party's ideology, but point out that these could not stressed at this juncture as the BJP has kept them on hold in the 1999 NDA manifesto. "Not that we have run away from them", another BJP leader said.

The magazine is to be circulated at the party's national council meeting in Nagpur where the new president-elect, Mr Bangaru Laxman, is slated to take over from Mr Kushabhau Thakre.

The magazine would officially provide a new direction to the party cadre. It had been timed to complement Mr Laxman's call to BJP workers to work for the party's "geo-social" expansion, the BJP leader said.

"Hindutva is not anti-Islam or anti-Christian" as it was made out to be. A person from these communities would be a "political Hindu" if he lived in the country and accepted it as his or her motherland, he argued.

If a person could adopt a child and love him, the same could happen with the country, he added.

This was a departure from Veer Savarkar's notion of Hindutva which sought to marry the concepts of fatherland and holy land. Savarkar defined Hindutva as the history of all living this side of the Sindhu river, which meant all those who accepted Hindustan as the fatherland and the holy land, he pointed out.

The BJP now seeks to correct this concept by separating the idea of motherland from that of holy land.

This would be in keeping with the Prime Minister, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee's line that religion can no longer define national boundaries.

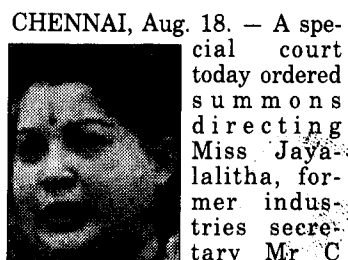
The new issue of the magazine would argue that a person could be privately affiliated to his holy land in Mecca or Jerusalem, and still be a Hindu by virtue of being a part of India. The aim is to present Hindutva as nationalism. The BJP leader said the party never accepted Savarkar's ideas.

There would be problems in the way of expansion if Hindutva was not clarified properly, he said.

A failure to do this so far, he said, was one of the main reasons why the party had expanded in the south and east.

Court summons Jaya after CBI charge-sheet

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE



CHENNAI, Aug. 18. — A special court today ordered summons directing Miss Jayalalitha, former industries secretary Mr C Ramachandran and SPIC Group chairman Mr AC Muthiah, all accused in the SPIC disinvestment case, to appear before it on 4 September.

Special Judge Mr AC Arumugaperumal Adithyan ordered the summons after the CBI filed a charge-sheet against them earlier in the day.

The CBI has charged Miss Jayalalitha and Mr Ramachandran of abusing official position when the former was chief minister to favour M Chidambaram, former SPIC chairman, cited as "diseased accused", and his son Mr Muthiah. The issue involved installing Chidambaram as chairman of SPIC and relinquishing the rights of the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation to invest in the zero-interest convertible bonds of SPIC, causing a loss of Rs 28.29 crore to the state exchequer.

The 1,000-page charge-sheet cites 27 prosecution witnesses, including Janata Party president Dr Subramanian Swamy, Miss Chandralekha, former IAS officer who headed TIDCO during the controversial disinvestment process and currently the state president of the Janata Party, and former chief secretary Mr N Haribhaskar.

On 15 December, 1997, Madras High Court directed Miss Jayalalitha, Chidambaram and Mr Muthiah to pay the government a compensation of Rs 28.29 crore towards the loss caused by them. The court was acting on a PIL filed by Dr Subramanian Swamy. The judge had also ordered a CBI probe.

Arafat briefs PM on Jerusalem deadlock

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 18. — Mr Yasser Arafat met the Prime Minister and the external affairs minister here tonight and briefed them on the deadlock over the future of Jerusalem.

He made an overnight halt here to brief the Indian leadership on the current position of the West Asian peace process, an external affairs ministry spokesman said. No details of the discussions were available.

Though little advance publicity was given to his visit, there was nothing secret or "hush"

about it, MEA sources said. Mr Arafat was visiting several nations seeking support for his stand during the latest talks at Camp David.

Mr Arafat has been jet-hopping across the Asian region over the past few days to explain why the recent talks failed to make a breakthrough. He has been seeking support for the demand of his people that they retain control of the major section of Jerusalem.

Mr Arafat visited Beijing, Tokyo, Jakarta and Dhaka before his overnight halt in New Delhi. The most significant of his recent comments

has been that it was possible to "review" his peoples' decision to declare an independent state of Palestine on 13 September.

There has been appreciation in the region of his indication of flexibility. If Palestinians unilaterally declare an independent state, the hopes of a peaceful settlement of the dispute would evaporate.

India has consistently supported the cause for a Palestinian homeland, within or exclusive of Israel, and has said that its new links with Israel has not been at the cost of its traditional ties with the Palestinian people.

J&K Cabinet approves action plan on immigrants

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, Aug. 18. — The Jammu and Kashmir Cabinet today approved an action plan for return of immigrants as recommended by the Kaul Committee with some changes recommended by an apex committee.

The interim report will be sent to the Centre for consideration after it is edited by the revenue department in consultation with the law minister.

Dr Farooq Abdullah's Cabinet considered the interim report of the sub-committee headed by the then financial commissioner of planning and development, Mr ML Kaul, to prepare an action plan for return of immigrants. The approved proposals have financial implications of about Rs 2,600 crore.

Earlier, the interim report was discussed by the apex committee for migrants headed by the revenue minister. The revenue minister, advisor to chief minister on minority affairs, the financial commissioner, representatives of Kashmiri Pandit migrants and socio-political organisations too discussed the issue. The package also envisages exemption of all taxes and non taxes like electricity, water supply charges and telephone rental.

According to the Kaul report, there were 56,689 migrant families in India in 1997, of which 31,490 families were in Jammu and 19,339 families in New Delhi.

Apollo Hospital a hell-hole

SIDDHARTHA KUMAR STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 18. — Mr PR Kumaramangalam is perhaps not the only person to have received "improper treatment" at Apollo Hospital.

Ask Mr Mahesh Aggarwal whose brother died at the hospital after being treated for eight months and spending Rs 7 lakh. Anand Aggarwal, 44, was admitted to the hospital with hydrocephalus — abnormal build-up of cerebro-spinal fluid in the ventricles of the brain — in October, 1999. After eight months, his brothers were asked to take him to AIIMS if they "wanted him alive".

Doctors "look after" too many patients at a time. "The fall-out is poor medical attention and coordination amongst the doctors. The hospital stay of the patients is extended, transforming the hospital into a money-making machine," alleged Mrs Uma Kumar, an ex-bureaucrat whose mother died at the hospital. With the government deciding to probe possible lapses in the power minister's treatment, she wants her mother's death to be investigated.

"Our doctor spoke to us only when he was trying to sell a special cot he had in his clinic for Rs 22,500. Otherwise, he took three minutes to see each patient," she said.

Her mother, Ramaa Krishnan (68), was admitted to the hospital on 20 May. Till she died on 16 June, she was given nearly 25 types of drugs by 10 specialists. "No one knows what worsened her condition," Mrs Kumar said. Though a PCR DNA analysis confirmed tubercular meningitis on 29 May, Dr Rakesh Aggarwal wanted the test done again on 12 June. "He did not know that the analysis had been done and relented only after the first report surfaced," she said.

Ramaa Krishnan was given medicines for septicaemia hours before she died. "They knew she had septicaemia. But they continued administering augmentin and amoxicillin which is resistant to klebsiella, the bacteria which causes the infection," Mrs Kumar said.

She was also given the European malarial vaccine initiative and falcigo, an anti-malarial drug though no malarial parasites were found in reports.

The CEO, Apollo Hospital, Mr Chander Shukla, refused to discuss specific cases. He said with the "super specialists", excellent post-operative care and medical audit the hospital had, poor coordination or negligence was not possible.

To prove that there was good coordination among the doctors, he said: "They are constantly in touch by using their mobile phones."

Cops kill JNU Hindi dept head's son

NAJIN VERMA STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

PATNA, Aug. 18. — They went to Lohati village in Gopalganj to nab some criminals but ended up shooting down 28-year-old Anand, son of the head of Jawaharlal Nehru University's Hindi department, Prof. Kumari Tiwary, a villager.

A social activist, Anand was the chairman of Krishi Shaakh Sahyog Samiti and owned a public telephone booth at Mirganj Bazaar.

The SP admitted that Anand had no criminal record.

The policemen even took Anand's gold chain and rings after killing him. "My son was wearing a gold chain and two

CRIMINALS GO SCOT-FREE IN RABRI'S DISTRICT

home district, to arrest some criminals. But the criminals began firing, injuring constable SK Singh and two others.

"Angry policemen then picked up Anand from his home and killed him," said Mr Sunil Kumari Tiwary, a villager.

Several Hindi litterateurs, headed by Khagendra Thakur, condemned the killing and demanded action against the guilty.

The Gopalganj DM, Mr SM Raju, has set up an inquiry committee, headed by an ADM, that'll submit its report in 15 days. "We've formed the committee to find out the facts behind the killing of an innocent." The state has gained notoriety for police brutality. Patna High Court recently took cognizance of the "high-handedness" of policemen at Senari village in Jehanabad last month. Police raided the village and allegedly beat up women and children.

On Wednesday, policemen allegedly suspended a Dalit, Ramchandra Majhi, upside down from a tree in Sahebganj and beat him up mercilessly. His sin: refusal to give the policemen his hen and goat.

Salahuddin insists on Pak role, dashes hopes of peace

Hurriyat offers to bridge India-Pakistan gap *Curfew imposed in Rajouri after massacre*

The Times of India News Service and Agencies

NEW DELHI: Efforts to initiate a peace process in Kashmir seem to have been pushed to the wall once again with the Pakistan-based Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin denying on Friday that the outfit would consider a resumption of dialogue with New Delhi without insisting on Pakistan's participation in the initial phase itself.

Hopes of peace being restored in the strife-torn state had brightened on Thursday with Fazal Haq Qureshi, principal negotiator appointed by the militant outfit for last month's aborted talks, announcing that Salahuddin had called him from Pakistan expressing his willingness to resume talks provided New Delhi gave an indication that Pakistan would be involved at the 'crucial phase'.

However, on Friday, disowning Mr Qureshi's announcement, Salahuddin said in a statement in Islamabad that the former "had no right to issue any statement on the Hizbul's behalf", and added that commander Masood in the Kashmir Valley and Saleem Hashmi were the only two authorised spokespersons for the outfit. Insisting on Pakistan's involvement in the talks, Salahuddin said, "The principled stand of the Hizbul is crystal clear. We consider Kashmir a dispute among three parties—India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir. There could be progress only if India is ready to accept this reality."

Highly-placed government sources here said there was a possibility of the talks being resumed if the Hizbul Mujahideen offered a cease-fire once again. The BJP also holds the view that a cessation of hostilities is a precondition for the resumption of talks.

Even as the issue of talks seemed deadlocked, Hurriyat chief Abdul Ghani Bhat on Friday offered a new formula—to form two groups of Hurriyat leaders for holding talks separately with the Indian and Pakistani governments to hammer out a solution.

"The seven-member executive committee of the Hurriyat proposes to break into two groups. The bigger group of four will talk to leaders in New Delhi and the smaller one to those in Islamabad. I trust this can take shape," he said.

He said this could satisfy both the Indian government—which has been opposing tripartite talks—and the Pakistan government—which wants to be a party to any final decision on Kashmir. Such meetings of Hurriyat leaders with the governments of the two countries would "bridge the gap" between the two countries, he claimed.

The Times of India News Service

JAMMU: An indefinite curfew was imposed in Rajouri town on Friday as tension built up following the massacre of six persons by militants at Kot Dhara village, 10 km away, on Thursday night.

All those killed were men, while the six injured included three women and two children. Four of the injured were admitted to the Rajouri army hospital and two to the civil hospital.

Troops of the Romeo Force later cordoned off the area and launched an operation to catch the militants.

An army report said a group of militants opened indiscriminate fire on three houses of the village at about 8 p.m., killing six persons and injuring six others. It said that a nearby CRPF post retaliated, but the militants escaped under cover of darkness.

Another report, however, said the militants first opened fire at the CRPF post, thus "containing" it, and then went about the massacre. This report said that a boy, who had also been hurt, rushed to Rajouri town and related the incident. He is said to have cried, "They have probably killed my entire family."

Defying the curfew imposed at 5 a.m. on Friday, about 2,000 residents of Kot Dhara and the adjoining villages brought the six bodies by truck to Rajouri town in the morning. They were accompanied by policemen who had gone to the spot.

Amidst wailing and shouting of anti-Pakistan and anti-administration slogans, they laid the bodies across a road in the central Jawahar Nagar area. A shamiana was put up over the bodies as the locals joined in the protest. Relatives of the victims continued to wait as the crowd raised slogans demanding that a senior leader from the Centre or the state should come and listen to them. The villagers alleged that the administration had failed to protect members of the minority community.

Police officers who tried to pacify the crowd were shouted down. Even the vehicles of Romeo Force GOC Maj. Gen. Khare and his officers, who came to pacify the villagers, were blocked. They were, however, allowed to proceed after repeated assurances that the villagers would be adequately protected.

Meanwhile, two militants of the Hizbul Mujahideen Tanzeem surrendered before the BSF on Friday at Rajouri. The militants, Mohammad Shabir and Mohammad Arif, laid down arms before GOC Romeo Force Maj. Gen. Richard Khare in the presence of BSF deputy inspector-general G.S. Shakhawat.

11990 AUG 2 1998

OUR PEOPLE' WELCOME FOR TALKS: FERNANDES

Hurriyat offer same old line, says Centre

By Harish Khare

NEW DELHI, AUG. 19. The Centre has shown "no interest" in the Hurriyat Conference's latest proposal for two-track talks with India and Pakistan. In the Centre's judgment, this is the "same old line" that the Hurriyat has been hawking around for some time, and which the Vajpayee Government has found unacceptable all along.

Authoritative sources were quite dismissive of the Hurriyat idea, and were inclined to see the "proposal" as the organisation's way to recover popular ground, which it is seen as having lost after putting a spoke in the Centre-Hizb-ul-Mujahideen dialogue wheel.

(Yesterday Prof. Abdul Gani Bhatt, Hurriyat chairman, was reported to have proposed that one Hurriyat team could talk with New Delhi, while another one could go to Islamabad. This was the good professor's idea to find a way out of the impasse of the "tripartite" formula — India, Pakistan and the people of Jammu and Kashmir — various militant outfits have been insisting on. Today, the Hurriyat chairman was reported to have clarified that the two-track talks proposal did not have the endorse-

ment of the umbrella organisation and that it was merely his personal view.)

The Centre's inclination, after the post-August 8 "deadline" massacres, is to let the various militant groups and their patrons in Pakistan gauge for themselves the desire for peace and dialogue in Jammu and Kashmir; the assumption is that even though the dialogue with the Hizb got aborted, it did bring out the popular urge for giving dialogue a chance to succeed. The Hurriyat leadership, according to officials, will have to address itself to this desire for peace and position itself on the side of dialogue, rather than confrontation. In the official thinking, Jammu and Kashmir seems to be going through a "melting pot" phase, and all sorts of ideas and groups are trying to figure out how best to respond to desire for peace.

On its part, the Centre is not averse to resuming the dialogue with the Hizb or any other group representing "our people". The Cabinet Committee on Security has periodically reassessed the post-August 8 situation, and the judgment remains that India should be seen as open to dialogue without any pre-conditions.

Even today, the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, was reported to have asserted that "technicalities" should not be allowed to become a stumbling block in resuming a dialogue. He repeated the Centre's stand that "our people" were welcome to "come, sit and talk".

The Centre feels it would be a while before the internal confusion in the Hizb gets sorted out. Till such time, any attempt to resume the peace process would prove unproductive. However, it is learnt that indirect contact with various Hizb leaders is very much intact.

Also, at home the Vajpayee Government cannot afford to ignore altogether the inflamed sentiments within the BJP and the rest of the Sangh Parivar over continued acts of terrorism. After the post-August 8 violence, the opinion within the BJP has hardened. The Vajpayee establishment would have to wait till the BJP's National Council session at Nagpur before taking the next step.

PTI reports from Srinagar:

The Hurriyat executive committee, which met here today, failed to take any decision on the proposal of Prof. Bhat. Due to lack of quorum, discussions on important issues on the agenda could not be held, a statement issued after the meeting said.

Hizb to wait for Hurriyat decision

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 19. The Hizb would like to wait for the decision of the Hurriyat's executive committee on Prof. Bhatt's suggestion before making any comment on the proposal.

"We have nothing to say at the moment. Prof. Bhat has said he is making the suggestion in his personal capacity for consideration by the Hurriyat executive council. We would be in a position to offer our comments only after it takes a decision", the Hizb spokesman, Mr. Salim Hashmi, told *The Hindu*.

In Muzaffarabad, capital of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, the Hizb chief, Syed Salahuddin, said that his group was prepared to halt its operations against troops in Kashmir if India was willing to recognise Kashmir as "a disputed territory" and hold talks with Pakistan to find a solution.

In another development, the Pakistan Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, said that he had no intention of retiring as Chief of Army Staff when his term ended in October 2001.

THE HINDU

20 AUG 2001

Salahuddin sets fresh terms for resuming talks

The Times of India News Service and Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Hizbul Mujahideen on Saturday put another hurdle in the way of the resumption of peace talks by insisting that India should recognise Kashmir as "disputed territory" as a precondition for any cease-fire.

"We can again halt our operations against Indian troops in Kashmir. But for this, India must accept Kashmir as disputed territory and agree to the inclusion of Pakistan in the talks," said the outfit's supreme leader Syed Salahuddin.

While the militant leader went about setting pre-conditions, defence minister George Fernandes said in New Delhi that "technicalities" should not come in the way of initiating a dialogue and asserted that the government was ready for talks without pre-conditions.

Strongly refuting that there were any differences in the government regarding the talks, he said that the government felt that the problem in Kashmir could be solved only through a dialogue.

"Those from the Hizbul Mujahideen are Kashmiris. They are Indians, our own citizens. We cannot hesitate to talk to them. What is wrong in talking to

them?" Mr Fernandes queried.

Asked if there was any pre-condition from the government's side, he said, "Where is the question of any conditions. When Pakistan says it wants to talk, we tell them that they should stop such things (cross-border terrorism). But to our own people we are saying leave this, come sit and talk."

Even as Salahuddin talked tough, the chief negotiator appointed by the outfit for last month's aborted talks, Fazal Haq Qureshi, told *The Times of India* on Saturday that he was still to hear from the Hizbul chief about disowning his statement, made on Thursday, that the outfit was willing to resume talks if New Delhi gave an indication that Pakistan would be involved even later, at a "crucial stage".

Mr Qureshi said, "Salahuddin has not conveyed his objections directly to me. He had talked to me over the phone on Wednesday night, conveying his desire to renew talks with the Union government. Since then, there has been no further communication."

Meanwhile, an emergency meeting of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference on Saturday failed to reach any decision on the issue of setting up two panels to negotiate with Pakistan and India separately, as had been suggested by its chairman, Abdul Gani Bhatt.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

20 AUG 2000

Hizb shoots down camps for Pandits

FROM MUKHTAR AHMAD

9/8/87 AND UNI

Srinagar, Aug. 20: The Hizb-ul Mujahideen today rejected a state government plan to rehabilitate migrant Pandits in camps in the Valley and threatened to use force if the government tried to "divide Kashmir on religious lines".

The Hizb's warning came a day after the state Cabinet okayed a proposal for bringing back Pandits who fled the Valley in the wake of militant strikes. The package, drawn up a few months ago, involves the formation of transit settlement camps in three places in the Valley.

The Hizb said in a statement it will not allow the creation of separate zones for people of different faiths. "We are not against the return of Kashmiri migrants. We want them to live in peace in all corners of the state. Muslims, who are the majority, have an obligation to protect the minorities.

"But when Muslims themselves are feeling insecure, how could they protect them?" it asked, warning the government against "communalising the situation by taking irresponsible steps".

The number of migrant families belonging to all religions is estimated at 56,689, of which 31,490 are in Jammu and most of the rest in Delhi.

The daunting task before the the government in persuading the Pandits to return was brought to sharp focus close on the heels of the Cabinet clearance to the rehabilitation package.

Militants shot at a Pandit, identified as Prithvi Nath, at Qazigund this afternoon. No one has claimed responsibility for the attack. Four members of a minority community were shot dead in Udhampur last night.

THE TELEGRAPH

Hizbul opposes govt. plan for migrants' return

The Times of India News Service

SRINAGAR: The Hizbul Mujahideen on Sunday strongly opposed the Rs 2,600-crore action plan for the return and rehabilitation of 58,000 Kashmiris who had fled the valley, alleging that it would create "communal zones".

In a statement here, a Hizbul spokesman said the outfit would use force to foil the plan's implementation, if its execution was approved by the Centre. The plan, okayed by the state cabinet on Friday, is now awaiting the approval of the Union government.

According to the plan, transit camps and settlements would be set up and security zones would be carved out at three different places in the Kashmir valley—Anantnag, Baramulla and Srinagar. Other recommendations included rehabilitation grants, repair of damaged houses, compensation for all kinds of property loss and relief and loans for employment.

It would benefit as many as 56,689 migrant families, most of them Kashmiri Pandits—31,490 families living in migrant camps at Jammu and 19,339 residing in Delhi. If the plan is implemented, all telephone, electricity and water charges and taxes due from the migrants would be waived. According to the plan, interest-free loans will be given for re-establishing business and trade and the repayment of outstanding loans would be rescheduled. The interest on house-building loans would be waived for government employees.

While acknowledging the right of the migrants to return home and

live a free life, the Hizbul said it did not consider the plan as a viable package to ensure their safety. The implementation of the plan would divide the Kashmir valley into "communal zones" which, it said, would lead to the state's "dissection on communal lines." "We cannot allow such a design to succeed," the outfit asserted.

It said that the majority community was obliged to protect the minorities. But even they have been made insecure. "It will be mere

wastage of money and time if the Union government went ahead with the state's action plan," the outfit said and suggested that the return of migrants should be preceded by measures to strengthen mutual trust among

various communities and efforts to solve the "basic issue."

The Hizbul statement comes as a hurdle to the government efforts to encourage the migrants to return home. The Pandits had migrated en masse in the wake of militancy along with several families of other communities. All efforts so far for their return had suffered setbacks. The return was made difficult by the Wandhama massacre a few years ago, followed by the massacre of Sikhs in Chithisinghpora this year.

The Hizbul threat follows the killing of four members of a family from the minority community in Udhampur, on Saturday. The police said militants forced into the house of one Mir Chand at Gool village and opened indiscriminate fire, killing four persons on the spot. A 60-year-old woman sustained bullet injuries.

HOME TRUTHS

- Plan would create "communal zones", says Hizbul
- Militants threaten to use force to foil implementation
- Centre still to approve recommendations
- Action plan would benefit 56,689 migrant families
- Militants kill 4 in Udhampur

THE TIMES OF INDIA

21 AUG 2000

Hizbul chief may return to J&K soon

Arun Joshi
Srinagar, August 20

HIZBUL Mujahideen 'supreme commander' Syed Salahuddin may soon return to Kashmir after nearly seven years in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), sources here indicated today. However, the time frame for his expected return was kept vague. Nor was it clear whether his proposed trip has Pakistan's endorsement.

Sources told *The Hindustan Times* that Salahuddin has decided to "evaluate the ground realities in Kashmir himself" and assess the morale of his men here.

Salahuddin was made the Hizb chief in 1992 when Master Ahsan Dar left the group. He remained in Kashmir little over a year and then

crossed over to PoK from where he guided operations of the guerilla group, regarded at the time as militarily the strongest in Kashmir.

Salahuddin is said to be "disturbed" by the decision of "United Jihad Council" to remove him as its chief. Sources said he finds

himself in a bind after he first endorsed the unilateral ceasefire and then called off a little over a fortnight later, apparently under pressure from Pakistan. "Salahuddin has decided to be with his own people in Kashmir before deciding whether to talk peace or



Syed Salahuddin

wage war against India," sources said.

Hizbul to split? The Hizbul Mujahideenis likely to split, PTI reports, quoting from the latest issue of Pakistani weekly *The Friday Times*. "Now that Hizbul Mujahideen has decided to go its own way under (self-styled) com-

mander Majeed Dar, further splits are being feared on both sides.

"Dar was able to announce the ceasefire after breaking a number of commanders belonging to the clique of Syed Salahudin, which forced the latter to accept the ceasefire," the weekly said.

It said that after the announcement of ceasefire, a split had already taken place in the Hizbul Mujahideen when self-styled commander Masood of Pir Panjal Regiment declared that he would not abide the ceasefire and continue to indulge in militant activities.

The *Friday Times* said an early split had taken place in Hizbul Mujahideen in 1997 between Kashmiri and non-Kashmiri militants.

The split also resulted in a mine-explosion at Kotli Camp in Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir in which several people, including Pakistani Army personnel, lost their lives.

Later in 1998, another split took place in the militant outfit when Bakht Zamin formed his own outfit 'Al-Badr'.

THE HINDUSTAN TIME

21 AUG 2000

Valley alive with anti-Hurriyat criticism cry

Bharti Jain

NEW DELHI 21 AUGUST

THAT IS nothing political in or about the Hurriyat Conference...in fact, the moment the Hizbul Mujahideen pronounced ceasefire, the Hurriyat ought to have joined heads to draw a strategy to either endorse the pronouncement or oppose it or detach itself from it. Instead, conflicting statements were made by the Conference, perhaps awaiting things to become clearer across the border."

This damning indictment of the Hurriyat comes from Hakim Manzoor, a retired civil servant in the Valley.

Moreover, the Srinagar-based weekly Khabar-o-Nazar deemed it fit to publish the scathing attack prominently.

This could not have been possible till recently, when the Hurriyat shuttled from one conference on "human rights" to another, parading itself as the

champion of the Kashmir cause.

Mr Manzoor showed that times are indeed changing. Having been pampered all these years by the human rights lobby and among the masses in the Valley, the Hurriyat is facing criticism of an unprecedented magnitude botching the aborted peace process initiated by the Hizbul Mujahideen with the Centre.

Its credibility has been questioned and life-styles of its leaders brought under scrutiny.

That is not all. Its alleged dependence on "embassies" — a forbidden subject in the Valley so far — has become a matter of comment.

Mr Manzoor makes no secret of why he is so angry with the Hurriyat. "Not that the Hurriyat was not conversant with the public mood in favour of restoration of peace. It is very well known that the people have been suffering, day in and day out, bone-breaking atrocities and are witnessing

scenes of death and destruction... the Hizb initiative was welcomed by Kashmiris excepting of course the vested interests who could foresee their heydays vanishing if the initiative succeeded in evolving a strategy to solve the Kashmir problem." Mr Manzoor wrote in the multilingual tabloid.

"During all these years, the party (All Party Hurriyat Conference) has established that it

PIPES OF PEACE

could and can do no more than opening its offices in Srinagar and New Delhi, purchasing Sumo cars, enjoying dinners from Embassies, feeling safe under the security cover provided by the government and issuing calls for hartals and statements condemning atrocities on the people of the Valley," says the commentator, alleging that the Hurriyat was selective even in condemnation of atrocities by "unknown" gunmen who it never

wanted to unmask.

For the agencies involved in Kashmir, Mr Manzoor's is not an isolated viewpoint. Rather, it is merely reflective of the mounting indignation over the role of the Hurriyat — a factor which forced its leaders to change their stance toward the ceasefire thrice. Sources point out that while the lavish living standards of the Hurriyat leaders and their alleged dependence on the "missions" was always the most ill-kept secret, even the critics were reluctant to speak out for fear of antagonising the Kashmiris.

In fact, the lead was shown by the Hizb only. It was the militant outfit which was the first to make an open attack on the Hurriyat, daring its leaders to send their wards to the battlefield "if they were convinced that militancy alone was the solution."

To sources, all this is a confirmation that the Hizb's ceasefire proposal was a risk worth taking.

The collapse of the ceasefire is considered to be a setback but only from the point of view of what could have been achieved had the peace process stayed on track. Disappointment notwithstanding, the sequence of events starting with the ceasefire offer is still regarded as a significant step forward.

The feeling among the agencies is that while the Hurriyat and Pakistan may draw comfort from the failure of talks, theirs have been a pyrrhic victory with their negative role having been exposed.

Sources claim that "the public mood continues to be overwhelmingly in favour of peace, while support for Pakistan has gone down." Also, in their estimate the security forces have gained in esteem by adhering to the ceasefire despite provocations, while the foreigner-dominated militant organisations have lost in the bargain.

Four gunned down in Doda

Hizb sings communal amity tune

PTI & UNI

SRINAGAR, Aug. 20. — Hizbul Mujahideen vowed today to prevent by force any move to create exclusive Muslim and non-Muslim zones in Jammu and Kashmir.

In the second strike on Hindus in three days, terrorists in Jammu division gunned down four members of two families, and left one seriously injured.

"We are eager to see those who have migrated from Kashmir return ... as they are permanent residents of the state.

We will not allow division of Kashmir on communal lines," Hizbul spokesman, Commander Masood, said in

response to a state government plan to set up transit settlements at three places in the valley to rehabilitate those forced out of their homes by militancy.

The plan was cleared by the J&K Cabinet on Friday.

"We reject the plan," the spokesman said, "and will use force, if necessary, to thwart it".

He said Kashmiri pandits and other minorities were "forced to migrate from Kashmir" in 1990 under a "conspiracy hatched by the then Governor, Jagmohan.

"We believe that all people of

this state, irrespective of religion, have equal right to settle in any part and lead an honourable life ... Communal harmony cannot be maintained by setting up security zones and transit camps for non-Muslims ... The administration should desist from taking steps which will give birth to suspicion in the minds of people ..."

An unspecified number of militants swooped on Ind village of Gool tehsil in Doda district around 11 last night, and opened fire on the families of Mir Chand and Soba Chand.

Mir chand (70), Madan Lal (15), Naseeba (60) and Monia (63) were killed on the spot. Krishna, Mir Chand's wife,

was seriously injured.

At Sogam in Kupwara, meanwhile, a Pakistani terrorist, Mohammed Salam Shad of the Jaish-e-Mohammed, was killed in an encounter with police. An AK-56, four magazines with 79 rounds, five grenades and a wireless set was found on him.

Masood Azhar: Pakistan has stopped Masood Azhar — the terrorist set free for IC-814 passengers — from addressing an anti-India rally at Sukkur in Sindh, and barred him from entering the province for three months, adds AFP.

■ Editorial: Hizbul speaks again, page 6

■ 1971 hijack accused ready to face trial, page 8

■ Hizbul likely to split: Pak weekly, page 8

THE STATESMAN

21 AUG 2000

HIZBUL SPEAKS AGAIN

5/16 2/1/8 ... in two voices 9/8/84

WHERE do things stand in Kashmir after the failure of the Hizbul initiative? As of now, worse than before, but things could change. The Hizbul blames the Government of India and says the ceasefire could still be renewed if the talks were made tripartite. There is very little chance of that happening in the immediate future and, besides, the whole incident has left a sour taste in the mouth of the Prime Minister and his Office which were the principal managers of the aborted dialogue. Retrospective analyses suggest that there were some differences of opinion between the PMO and the Home Ministry over how to proceed. The one round of talks held with the intermediary Fazl-ul-Haque Qureshi — who is not even a Hizbul man — was supposedly conducted under the direct supervision of Brajesh Mishra. There is no need to apportion blame, the entire process was mismanaged. As Richard Boucher, the US State Department spokesman points out, Hizbul queered the pitch by bringing Pakistan into a picture that featured only itself when it announced the ceasefire, while the Indians were busy making statements to the media that scared off the whole initiative even before it began.

The Hizbul is crying both foul and peace in the same breath, a reflection perhaps of the confusion within its ranks as of the various pressures it is being subjected to from across the Line of Control and the Atlantic. One other question has been somewhat cleared up: the fact that the Hizbul ceasefire was unanimously ridiculed by the Hurriyat leadership in spite of the close ties the outfit has with what many consider to be its political front, the Jamait-e-Islami. The Hizbul is angry with the Hurriyat for not backing them and even accuses it of sabotage. This at least means that the Hizbul continues to think that a ceasefire followed by a dialogue is worth pursuing. An offer has been made once again by Qureshi, and struck down from Islamabad by Salahuddin, which indicates the discrepancy between the point of view taken in Islamabad and the one prevailing among certain militants in the Valley. The offer bears traces of post-failure wisdom and it is also clear that what the pro-ceasefire militants — and the Hurriyat — want is a more comprehensive peace process similar to the ones undertaken elsewhere in the world, a resemblance the Government of India abhors with all its constitutional heart, since it implies recognising that there are no other interlocutors in Kashmir but hostile.

The Americans endorse the overall Hizbul-Pakistani position that Pakistan is to be involved at some stage. That is the point at which the whole idea is going to come unstuck. The Prime Minister exhorted the militants to “free themselves from Pakistan”, as if anybody is likely to listen. The outside world is not going to buy the proposition that the trouble in Kashmir is wholly of Pakistani inspiration, so let us not waste any more propaganda efforts in that direction. There may be a modicum of goodwill left for India in Kashmir and the Government will have to manage with that as best as it can.

THE END

2 1 300 2 00

After Hizbul, Pandits reject resettlement plan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR, Aug. 21. — A day after Hizbul Mujahideen vowed to stall by force the Farooq Cabinet's plan to set up three transit camps to settle Hindus flushed out of homes in the valley by militancy, Kashmiri Pandits themselves rejected the idea, saying they would not return till the situation improved.

In a statement, the Pakistan-backed Harkat-ul Mujahideen debunked the path of dialogue taken by Hizbul and the Hurriyat, declaring that the "only way" in Kashmir was that of *jihad*.

"Any type of talks with India are meaningless and fruitless and the only way to resolve the Kashmir issue is *jihad*," Harkat said. "Militant outfits in Jammu and Kashmir should not ... try to supersede each other in the race for talks"

In New Delhi, leaders of

Army-men killed

SRINAGAR, Aug. 21. — Militants killed four Army-men — two officers and two jawans — in J&K today.

Brig. Sher Gil and Col RS Chauhan of Rashtriya Rifles were killed after their vehicle hit a landmine at Zechaldar-Handwara, Kupwara, this afternoon.

Two grenades launched from a rocket projectile gun killed two jawans at an Army camp at Banihal. — PTI

Panun Kashmir, Kashmiri Samiti and the All India Kashmiri Pandit Conference reacted sharply to the proposal to establish the settlement camps.

"The proposal is completely impractical and ill-designed," said Panun Kashmir spokesman, Mr Ramesh Manvati. The plan did not "address political aspirations of Kashmiri Pan-

aits, nor (gave them) economic and other guarantees", he said.

"The idea of shifting the migrants from one camp to another is rubbish," said the president of AIKPC, Mr HN Jattu. "If such is the concept of rehabilitation of displaced people, then we are better off here."

According to Mr Manvati, "the only feasible way of rehabilitating the Kashmiri Pandits is to ... carve out a separate homeland with Union Territory status for the minorities."

Punjab vigil: Vigil on the Punjab border has been stepped up after reports that terrorists might infiltrate through the unfenced riverine belt of the Ravi and Sutlej, BSF I-G, Mr AS Aulakh, said, adds UNI.

Farooq: The J&K chief minister today described as "positive signs" statements of the Centre and Hizbul on the peace initiative, says SNS Srinagar.

■ Another report on page 8

THE STATESMAN

22 AUG 2000

APHC leaders' presence in capital sparks rumours of track 2 talks

By Bisheshwar Mishra
The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: The possibility of opening a second track for peace talks brightened on Monday with two top All-Party Hurriyat Conference leaders landing in the capital.

Abdul Ghani Bhat, All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) chairman, and his predecessor, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, are here ostensibly to see the ailing JKLF leader, Yasin Malik. However, reliable sources say the visit may be utilised to do some groundwork for opening a second channel of Kashmir peace talks.

Following the failure of talks with the Hizbul Mujahideen, the centre has been looking for a second track of negotiations.

The spokesman at the Kashmiri Awareness Bureau, the Delhi office of the APHC, Abdul Majid Banday, re-

fused to say whether Mr Bhat and Mr Geelani have any programme here other than meeting Malik.

Sources however, point out that their visit is in tune with the decision taken on Saturday at Srinagar that the APHC's seven-member executive committee would divide itself into two groups—one to hold talks in New Delhi and the other in Islamabad. Mr Bhat's argument was that "this would both meet the Centre's opposition to tripartite talks and satisfy Pakistan which wants to be a party to any final decision on Kashmir."

The APHC also offered to hold "back channel" talks with the Centre. However, the Centre is yet to make up its mind though its officials and other interlocutors have been in touch with the APHC leaders.

A Union home ministry official said, "All this is going on at the political level. Strictly speaking, we are not fully involved".

THE TIMES OF INDIA

22 AUG 2000

Prospects in Kashmir

THAT THE abortive peace process has had an unsettling impact on the militant groups in Kashmir is evident from some of the recent developments. For instance, although the suggestion made last week by a Hizbul Mujahideen mediator that the organisation was prepared to resume the talks was quickly shot down by Syed Salahuddin, the organisation's chief in Islamabad, it tended to lend some substance to the belief that not everyone in the outfit was pleased with the manner in which the negotiations were scuttled after just one preliminary meeting. Now, Salahuddin's reported decision to come to Kashmir to ascertain the ground realities can be seen as evidence of his realisation that he had lost touch with what was happening in the state.

It had been suggested even earlier that fatigue had set in among the militants because of the increasingly grim realisation that they were fighting a losing battle. It is also known that the ordinary people in the state had recognised this stark fact long ago and that their disillusionment had been aggravated by the mercenary role played by the foreign elements who had little understanding of the Kashmiri psyche. In addition to behind-the-scenes American pressure, these might have been some of the reasons why the Hizbul offered a cease-fire in the first place. But that very step may have also made it recognise, especially after Salahuddin's expulsion from the so-called United Jihad Council in Pakistan, that a gap had developed between the objectives and perceptions of the Kashmiri militants and the mercenaries nurtured by Pakistan.

The faint signs of hope which the prospect of peace had generated must have also conveyed to the indigenous militant groups the widespread desire in the valley for a return to normality. It was clear even then that if the talks had continued for some length of time, they could acquire a momentum which would be fatal for the insurgency. Evidently, that was something which the mercenaries could not allow. So far, the Vajpayee Government's cautious handling of the situation has placed the onus on the militants to make the next positive move. New Delhi cannot be displeased about reports, even in Pakistan, about a split in the militants' ranks, although that can also make them strike out in a desperate manner. Since the next few weeks will be crucial in demonstrating which way the wind is blowing, attention will be focussed on Pakistan's response since, like the mercenaries, it too will not relish the prospect of a return to peace.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

22 AUG 2001

Brigadier killed in J&K blast

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, AUG. 21. In a devastating landmine explosion triggered by militants in north Kashmir, two senior Army officers and a driver were killed and five soldiers injured.

In another attack in Banihal, three soldiers were killed and fifteen injured.

Reports reaching Srinagar said the sector commander of the Rashtriya Rifles, Brig. P. S. Shergill, was moving along with Col. Rajinder Chauhan in a vehicle towards Handwara, about 50 km from Srinagar, at about 4.30 p.m. As the vehicle reached Zachaldara

22/8
village, militants detonated the landmine. The vehicle was blown up killing the Brigadier and his deputy on the spot. At least five soldiers were injured. They were taken to the local hospital and then shifted to Srinagar. The condition of some of them is critical.

The impact of the blast was such that the vehicle was smashed to smithereens. The other vehicles in the convoy were also damaged.

Senior officers of the Army, para-military forces and police rushed to the spot along with large contingents of troops and cordoned off the area. No militant outfit has claimed responsibility

but foreign militant organisations are said to be responsible for the act, according to officials here. This is the first time in the last three years that an officer of the rank of Brigadier has been killed in a militant action.

Attack on Army camp

In a similar incident, militants attacked an Army camp in Banihal on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway. They fired a number of rockets towards the camp killing at least three soldiers and injuring fifteen. Reports said the building was extensively damaged in the attack. The Hizb-ul-Mujahideen has owned responsibility for the attack.

THE HINDU

22 AUG 2000

Hizb for another ceasefire in two months, says Dar

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, AUG. 22. In a surprising development, the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen has announced revival of the ceasefire called off by its supreme commander, Syed Salahuddin, on August 8 in Islamabad. It will also set up a co-ordination committee with the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) to remove misconceptions on the issue.

In an interview to a local news agency, CNS, here today, Mr. Abdul Majeed Dar, chief Hizb commander (operations), said: "In order to end the stalemate between the Mujahideen and the Government of India (GoI) efforts are on at the international level and in next two months the ceasefire will again be implemented," Mr. Dar said adding that it would be followed by fresh talks between the Hizb and the GoI.

However, he rejected the statement of the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, that the dialogue was on at the moment. The people had heaved a sigh of relief after the announcement of ceasefire but "the process was scuttled by some vested interests." However, "we realise the wishes of the people and it is because of that we want to have the dialogue."

Mr. Dar said that a solution to the Kashmir problem depended on tripartite talks as the Shimla, Tashkent and the Indira-Abdullah accords had proved futile. "Whatever solution comes up will be acceptable to Hizb irrespective of whether it is against Pakistan or India." Mr. Dar emphasised that even if the bloodshed continued

for ten more years, ultimately the parties had to come to the negotiating table.

Mr. Dar appealed to the pro-India and pro-freedom parties to extend their support in this behalf. However, he said the role of the APHC was important. But their silence over the ceasefire issue would not do. It means that there was no policy with the Hurriyat. The Hizb chief disclosed that a co-ordination committee between the Hurriyat and the Hizb would be set up. "We are ready to talk to the Hurriyat."

Mr. Dar denied that there were any differences in the Hizb and blamed the Government and "the Indian media for propagating it." All the Hizb decisions here and across the border were being taken with mutual consultation and "we are in touch with (Hizb supreme) Syed Salahuddin on a daily basis." Denying that any secret talks were on, he said whenever there was any such move it would be made known to the public and the press. Mr. Dar urged the GoI and the Farooq Government to adopt a "realistic approach" to put an end to the atmosphere of mistrust.

When contacted, the APHC chairman, Prof. Abdul Gani Butt, in Delhi said, "this not a big issue for any of us." Expressing pessimism over the success of ceasefire announced by Mr. Dar, he said, "I will be happy if the dispute is resolved." Disagreeing with the view that it would lead towards peace, Prof. Butt said, "I think peace has to be preceded by a resolution of the Kashmir dispute." On the co-ordination committee between the Hizb and the Hurri-

yat, he said this would be taken up in the executive.

Mr. Dar's announcement is seen as significant as the first call of ceasefire made by him in July was called off on August 8. The Hizb commanders had also started a dialogue with the GoI after the Army reciprocated the gesture by announcing a ceasefire. Though two committees were formed on both sides to work on the modalities, they could not meet as Syed Salahuddin withdrew the ceasefire ostensibly under pressure from Pakistan on August 8.

Kumaramangalam's condition worsens

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, AUG. 22. The Union Power Minister, Mr. Rangarajan Kumaramangalam, today continued to battle for his life in the Intensive Care Unit of the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences.

A medical bulletin issued this evening said his condition deteriorated further with "worsening hypotension, unresponsive to therapy" and with "deterioration in his haematological parameters". In other words, there was a further deterioration in his kidney function, his blood pressure was falling and he was not responding to treatment for that.

The doctors attending on him, however, continued to try and improve his condition. "He is being infused with high doses of drugs for supporting his (blood) circulation and he continues to be on artificial respiration and dialysis," the bulletin added.

THE HINDU

23 AUG 2001

CONG.(I) MOTION ON PAHALGAM MASSACRE REJECTED

Advani cites Pak. propaganda for not ordering judicial probe

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, AUG. 22. The Government today cited "Pakistani propaganda" as the reason for its reluctance to accept the Congress(I) demand for a judicial inquiry into the Pahalgam massacre, saying this would give Pakistan a handle to claim that Indians did not have confidence in their security forces.

The Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, responding to a Congress(I) motion in the Lok Sabha, said that Pakistan had launched a vicious anti-India campaign and even accused the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, of planning the massacre. In such circumstances, any talk of security lapses would add grist to Islamabad's propaganda mill.

The Minister's argument surprised even those who did not support the Congress(I) demand. Mr. Priyaranjan Dasmunshi — who sponsored the motion — taunted Mr. Advani, saying he was "sorry" to be in the company of a Home Minister who was frightened by the

propaganda of another country. The fact, he contended, was that the Government was afraid of being "exposed" as a judicial inquiry would bring out the "truth".

The Congress(I) motion was defeated by a voice vote but by then the party had managed to score a few debating points. It did not press for a division, saying it did not want to divide the House on a sensitive issue.

Earlier, Mr. Advani, in a brief speech, focussed on the "sustained" Pakistani propaganda and the "proxy war" it had unleashed in Kashmir. Even the Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman had been quoted as saying that India's "involvement" was "not ruled out". A judicial inquiry at this stage would create doubts in the minds of the people.

The State Government had already appointed a high-level three-member committee to inquire into the massacre and fix responsibility for any possible security lapses. After receiving its report, the Government would consider ordering a judicial probe, if it felt the

need. The Home Minister denied that the killings were the result of complacency following the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen's ceasefire and offer of talks.

The security for the Amarnath yatra this year was much more than in previous years; and if the incident still happened it was despite all the "necessary precautions" both by the Centre and the State Government.

A lapse might have occurred but he was not willing to accept it, he said asking members to await the inquiry panel's report.

Mr. Dasmunshi said Mr. Advani had not answered any of his questions, and instead come up with a "confused" response.

Even some of the ruling coalition's constituents, he said, felt there had been a security lapse and the only way to get at the truth was to order a judicial inquiry.

Earlier, members of the Samajwadi Party walked out expressing disappointment with the Home Minister's response.

THE HINDU

1982

Preparing for peace in Kashmir

By Harish Khare

ABOUT THREE years ago the nephew of a member of Parliament was kidnapped in north Bihar. The Hon'ble parliamentarian received a call in Delhi from the distraught family members back home in Patna; the message was: "please, do something; get our boy back". After advising his family members to keep their cool, the MP got in touch with a senior political functionary, who was known to be the turf leader of north Bihar in the matters of kidnapping. He remonstrated — in vain — with the turf leader asking how such a depredation could be visited upon a fellow-member of the political class; the only concession that could be made in this case was a discount on the ransom price.

The point of the story? The extraordinary clarity of the victim and the perpetrator about the rules and the etiquette in a conflict situation. A similar clarity has allowed the Governments of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to set in motion a process of negotiation in the matter of the kidnapping of the matinee idol, Mr. Rajkumar, by the sandalwood smuggler, Voerappan. What is more, neither State Government has allowed the righteousness of lawful authority to come in the way of dealing with an outlaw on terms of equality. The elaborate negotiations, through the mechanism of an authorised emissary, to secure the release of Mr. Rajkumar are an instance of the kind of skills and attitudes that need to be brought into play in any conflict situation.

Contrast this with the aborted dialogue between the Centre and the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen. Neither of the protagonists had any experience of the art of shaking hands, leave alone carrying on a dialogue. It is possible to suggest that there was shoddy ground-work before the much-publicised meeting of August 3 between the Union Home Secretary, Mr. Kamal Pande, and the Hizb "commanders". There was a definite lack of communication between the two sides on such basic matters as the time; the team from Delhi was waiting from 10 a.m. at the official guest-house in Srinagar, while the "commanders" showed up only after 1.30 p.m. Nor was there any agreement whether the

"meeting" was to be publicised or not; no one sure whose decision it was to allow the cameras in the conference room, constraining the "commanders" to put on improvised masks.

The litany of mis-steps is long and depressing. But there is only one over-riding lesson: when an opportunity for peace presented itself, no one was prepared with the mechanism of talking and securing peace. For more than a decade now, we in India (as also in Pakistan, and Jammu and Kashmir) have been so overwhelmed with the rhetoric of discontent, the discourse of conflict, and the instrumentalities of violence that no one seems to have devoted any thought, what to talk of resources, for the day when peace could break out.

This unpreparedness for peace is not surprising. After all there is a surfeit of conflict-managers, strategists, generals and colonels, self-styled mujahideen, autonomy-seekers, azadi-wallahs, human rights "workers", and other amiable busy-bodies who have become comfortably familiar with violence, guns, deaths, hartals, massacres, IEDs, etc. In India, Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir — as also in distant capitals — careers and fortunes have been made out of the decade-long bloodshed. A gargantuan "killing" industry has flourished. It is entirely natural that these forces and habits should be so inimical to the chemistry of a peace process.

Yet, it is absolutely imperative that the task of acquiring the tools and agents of peace-making is addressed. Honourable "peace", "agreements" or "accords" cannot be arrived at surreptitiously; the so-called "agencies" can only facilitate the beginning of a dialogue, but any lasting solution has to be anchored in the popular urges of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Nonetheless, the very idea of dialogue is incomprehensible, even if

in so deeply in our dominant thought process that others find it a bit hard to accept at face value our protestations of honourable intentions. We have grown so comfortable with a spurious notion of *deshbhiakti* that we have convinced ourselves that our "peaceful" intentions should be obvious to one and all involved in the Kashmir dispute.

The onus nonetheless is on us to find the credible arguments and advocates who can convey to the groups in the Kashmir Valley and to the elites in Pakistan the sincerity of our quest for peace, and, what is more, to convey that this quest is not something being shoved down our diplomatic throat by Washington. We have to send a convincing message that the Rashtriya Rifles hotheads do not exercise a veto over the peace process.

It would be unrealistic to assume that "peace" can be secured overnight in a conflict-zone that has wallowed in violence for over a decade. The dialogue, since aborted, with the Hizb was a conceptual breakthrough, and it is a challenge to our collective political imagination to sustain the "peace is possible" idea. Here perhaps the Vajpayee Government needs to watch against both the illuvian and the modern voices in its own Sangh Parivar backyard which see all these years developed a fashionable contempt for the idea of compromise and reconciliation as a liberals' hobby-horse. The basic task before the Vajpayee administration is to neither reward the most intransigent elements nor to penalise moderation — at home, in the Kashmir Valley, or even in Pakistan.

Above all, the quest for peace in Kashmir has to be a moral enterprise. The overwhelming reality is that the gun has failed, though it keeps sputtering. The geo-strategists and conflict-tacticians are suffering from intellectual fatigue. If the morally defensible proposition is that "peace" is in the self-interest of all — India, Pakistan, and the Kashmiris — then we have to take the initiative to move away from the entrapments of militarism and to start developing a constituency for peace.

The quest for peace in Kashmir has to be a moral enterprise... We have to take the initiative to move away from the entrapments of militarism to start developing a constituency for peace.

desirable, to all those myriad groups and individuals who over the years have taken recourse only to the idiom of the gun. Consequently, the balance of initiatives remains tilted in favour of the conflict-maker, rather than the peace-seeker. All the more the reason that professional attention and organisational resources are directed at the mechanics of seeing a dialogue through. The art is to move events carefully and shape them towards achievable and desirable goals; it means ensuring, for example, that the lines of communications remains open, that the peace process does not get derailed by perpetrators of tendentious violence/event/massacre, or by even that eager-beaver journalist out to "break the story" or by an ill-informed Opposition party.

In other words, there has to be a recognition that an altogether different set of skills and attitudes are required for securing peace, especially when the commitment to dialogue is obviously unequal. The plea is not to hand over the shop to a bunch of pacifists or disciplined practitioners of non-violence; the Kashmiris have discovered to their cost that the Indian state has the requisite coercive capacity to take care of all those who wish to challenge its might. If anything, by now, the average Kashmiri must be reasonably disinclined to the notion that Pakistan has the inclination or the means to intervene militarily on behalf of the "freedom-fighters". Peace cannot be brought about — nor has it ever been — by turning the other cheek.

Rather, the argument is that if India wants to build on the popular urge in Jammu and Kashmir to escape the interminable bloodshed, then we too have to make an effort to learn the art of speaking the language of reconciliation and forgiveness through credible emissaries and facilitators. The culture of militarism has seeped

STATECRAFT

THE HINDU

23 AUG 2000

HF 10
22/8

It hurts to be naive

It is one thing to desire peace in Kashmir and quite another to be prepared for it. For that, New Delhi must be more cautious of Pakistani intentions in the future, writes V.K. GROVER

THE CEASE-FIRE call by the Hizbul Mujahideen was welcomed by all right-thinking people. However, the history of the past 50 years should have taught one to err on the side of caution. It was not relevant whether the talks were to be conditional on being 'within the Indian Constitution'. The Government and people of India do not have to accept any solution which impinges on the territorial sovereignty of India.

There were, however, a number of scenarios and we had to figure out what had led to this move on the part of the Hizb. One important fact was that the cadres of this militant outfit were largely indigenous. If the Hizb had correctly gauged the pulse of the Kashmiri people, who were now looking for peace, then there was hope.

On the other hand, if it was a Pakistani ploy to gain international legitimacy, to force India's hand to begin the dialogue, then we had to exercise caution. The other militant outfits, whose cadres are filled with foreign mercenaries, had not gone along with the Hizb. Therefore, Pakistan had the weapon of unleashing terrorism in Kashmir at a time of its choosing even while New Delhi engaged the Hizb in a dialogue. This is precisely what Pakistan did to the poor helpless *yatis* to Amarnath and to the talks with the Hizb.

There seems to have been considerable backdoor diplomacy by America-based interlocutors backed by the US establishment. This would give the impression that the US is interested in a resolution of the Kashmir dispute. Again, was the US desire genuine or meant to save Pakistan from disintegration? Pakistan has failed as a democracy and economically is on the brink of disaster. The US does not wish to abandon Pakistan.

For the Indian side, it was equally important that the Hurriyat joined such a dialogue. If there had to be any real solution, it had to encompass all the political elements in the Valley and not just one militant outfit. The Hurriyat, again, is under the control of Pakistan, though some elements have differing views. One cannot forget that almost the entire leadership of the Hurriyat — even if it has differing views — is financed by Pakistan. At the same time, the Pakistani con-

PLATFORM

trolled outfits did not call a cease-fire. This should have set the alarm bells ringing.

Then we have the National Conference. Although Farooq Abdullah had welcomed the cease-fire, he could not have been overjoyed about any direct dialogue between the Centre and the Hizb and the Hurriyat. The leakage to the media on the venue of the meeting caused serious problems. The situation was highly complex and required a great degree of finesse on the part of the Government.

The record of successive Governments in finding solutions to thorny issues is not particularly



spectacular. As far as J&K is concerned, differing views between the RSS, the Home Ministry, the agencies and the PMO is likely to spell disaster. We have never had a Kashmir policy. The thrust has always been to have a pliable Chief Minister, rather than redressing the genuine grievances of the Kashmiri people.

Had the 1975 Sheikh Abdullah-Indira Gandhi accords been fully implemented, we may not have come to such an impasse. Any talks with the Kashmiri leadership — be it militant or civilian — will have to be on the lines of the 1975 accords. The pre-1953 position is not tenable.

Secondly, tripartite talks, which include Pakistan, should be firmly ruled out. Pakistan is at the root of the suffering of the Kashmiri people, and has its own domestic compulsions in not wanting a resolution of the problem. Any talks

with Pakistan can only take place once there is clear evidence of an end to terrorism in J&K. Under no circumstances should a dialogue with Pakistan be started by India unless certain conditions are met.

The Indian leadership fails to understand the psyche of the Pakistani leadership. The very existence of Pakistan is based on the two-nation theory. Trifurcation of J&K is unacceptable. Besides Jammu and Ladakh, there are others in the Valley that will not like to be part of a theocratic set-up. Besides, there has to be a place for the Kashmiri Pandits, who were chased out of the Valley.

Few realise the Kashmir problem is no longer purely an India-Pakistan issue. The concept of the Islamic Caliphate had been introduced in 1991-92 when the JKLF, which stood for 'Kashmiriyat', did not fit Pakistani designs. It was the Jamaat-i-Islami Pakistan (JIP) which was at the forefront of inarticulating the perception of an Islamic Caliphate. The Amir of JIP, Qazi Hussain Ahmad, speaking in Rawalpindi in February 1992, declared, "A great Islamic State spreading from Kashmir to Central Asia would emerge after the independence of Kashmir." The fundamentalist militant groups Pakistan has created are aiming for a 'Pax Talibana'. Pakistan may well become a victim to its machinations.

There are any number of Gujrals in India who would like to give Pakistan yet another chance for a dialogue. We must not lose sight of the fact that as long as Pakistan subscribes to the two-nation theory, it is unlikely to allow any genuine peace to return to J&K. US pressure is not going to bring about any change of heart. From Zulfikar Bhutto to his daughter, from Nawaz Sharif to Musharraf, the consistent aim has been to bring about the disintegration of India.

Pakistan already has enormous footholds in Kashmir. Are they going to let them go? There is also the unanswered question as to how much control Pakistan now exercises over its own creations.

We must explore even the smallest chance for peace and must talk to the Hizb or any other organisation if they again come forward. However, we must never misjudge or forget Pakistani intentions, while we have such a dialogue.

'Ceasefire only if India relents'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 23. The Hizb-ul-Mujahideen chief, Mr. Syed Salahuddin, has stuck to his stand that his group is prepared to declare a new ceasefire only if India is willing to hold tripartite talks involving Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir problem.

Talking to reporters at Muzaffa-

rabad, capital of the Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK), Mr. Salahuddin said that the Hizb chief in Kashmir, Mr. Abdul Majid Dar, had been misquoted as having said that another ceasefire could be arranged in the next two months with efforts being made at the international level.

The Hizb chief said that Mr. Dar had meant that the situation would only be clear in the next two months. "The ceasefire will be resumed only after India accepts our basic demands, whether in two days, two months or in 10 years."

Mr. Salahuddin said the basic objective of his organisation was to find a solution to the Kashmir issue and not to indulge in bloodshed. "We are prepared to take a step bigger than the ceasefire if India is prepared to meet our demands. Pakistan will back us in that step."

He denied that there was any division in the Hizb ranks in the aftermath of the revocation of the ceasefire and alleged that a disinformation campaign has been launched to discredit his organisation.

In another development Osama bin Laden has said that the Kashmir problem could not be resolved by any other means other than

9-6-83 JSK
jihad (holy war). In an interview to an Urdu weekly, *Ghazi*, he has been quoted as saying that fighting *jihad* against India was an Islamic duty of the Muslim world as India's hatred against Islam and Muslims was rising with every passing day.

He told the weekly that Kashmir was the "lifeline of Pakistan" and was inevitable for its economy and prosperity. Pakistan was the heart of the Muslim world while *jihad* was its soul.

In a related development, the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen chief, Maulana Fazlur Rehman Khalil, said that even if Gen. Musharraf supported the ceasefire, his organisation would continue to fight for the "liberation" of Kashmir. Those who were talking of a renewal of talks with India were making attempts to create a rift among the Mujahideen.

Maulana Masood Azar, who was released from an Indian jail in December last in exchange for the passengers of the hijacked Indian Airlines plane, echoed similar sentiments while addressing public gatherings in the Sindh province. The administration had put a ban on his public appearances but he seems to have given a slip to the authorities.

ALL IN THE GAME



22 34 AUG 2000

21 AUG 2000

Blast arrests prove anti-civilian designs of Lashkar

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 24 AUGUST

THE ARRESTS of Lashkar-e-Toiba activists, including a Pakistani national, in connection with the August 10 blast in Srinagar has once again put the spotlight on the macabre designs of the Islamabad-backed terrorist outfit. The blast killed 15 people, including civilians.

The Jammu & Kashmir police force's success in unravelling the involvement of Lashkar is sure to add to the heaps of evidence against the outfit, which barely escaped being designated a Foreign Terrorist Organisation by the US state department.

The involvement of Lashkar activists in a series of incidents that have resulted in the death of innocent civilians has been known to all. However, the jihad outfit has been able to escape

being listed by the state department, claiming that it targets only security personnel.

It has been able to get away with murder because of the definition used by the state department for what constitutes a terrorist act. In the state department's scheme of things, only an organisation indulging in the killings of civilians is liable to be declared a terrorist organisation. That was the reason why Harakat-ul-Ansar — another jihadi outfit active in Kashmir — was categorised as terrorist outfit soon after it carried out the abduction of a group of foreign tourists.

Now that the August 10 blast has helped establish what the Indian agencies have always maintained, the Lashkar was certain to issue a statement disclaiming its involvement in the incident which claimed the life

of a Delhi-based photo journalist, Pradeep Bhatia, and several others. Indications are that the statement will be put out by late this evening, repeating the by-now-familiar protestations of innocence.

The estimate of the agencies, however, is that the explanation of the militant outfit cannot

tracking once the impact of the outrage sunk in. Accordingly, one Saleem Hashmi, called the Islamabad office of the British Broadcasting Corporation at 4.15 on behalf of the Hizbul Mujahideen, to claim the responsibility for the incident in Srinagar.

On being told by the BBC

RIPPING OFF THE VEIL OF INNOCENCE

that it was unable to credit them with the killings since they had already been owned up by the Lashkar, a persistent Hashmi is learnt to have pleaded that the both the claims should be reported.

With the BBC refusing to oblige as long as Lashkar had not withdrawn its "claim", Abu Osama, another spokesperson of the Lashkar entered the picture to repudiate the version given

earlier by his comrade — Abu Bara.

Agencies noted how Masood Tantrey, the regular spokesperson of the Hizbul, who also happens to be a deputy commander positioned just below Majeed Dar in the organisational hierarchy, has been conspicuously silent as Islamabad-based Saleem Hashmi was busy calling up the media to claim responsibility for the spate of killings.

They view the business of heaping the blame at Hizbul's doorstep was being carried out as much for saving the Lashkar as for sabotaging the chances of the revival of the peace process. The gameplan is to force the security forces to give up the restraint they continue to display towards the Hizbul even after the collapse of the ceasefire.

The suspicions were more

than confirmed when Hashmi speaking on behalf of the Hizbul wasted no time in claiming the responsibility of killings of security personnel just after an explosive device was hurled at army personnel near Baramullah. As it transpired, security personnel had escaped major injury. The motive behind the obfuscation is to compel the security forces to go after their alleged Hizbul tormentors so that the fragile trust that has developed is shattered.

Transfer of responsibility for the terrorist acts to the Hizbul will also make it difficult for the government to justify engagement with the group. Domestic public opinion cannot be expected to support such a move if Hizbul keeps coming across as the outfit which is incorrigibly opposed to India and its citizens.

The Economic Times

25 AUG 2003

We're trying to rope in more groups in peace talks: Dar

Arun Joshi
Srinagar, August 24

IN A new twist to the behind-the-scene efforts to broker another ceasefire, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen commander-in-chief Abdul Majid Dar today revealed that his group was in touch with other militant outfits in the Kashmir Valley to work out a "comprehensive ceasefire".

In an interview to *Al-Safa*, an Urdu daily, Majid Dar said other steps were underway to bring peace in the Valley. The Hizbul leader, however, said "any step on our side would be consequent to the Indian Government's reaction".

Majid Dar, who has suddenly started speaking to the media after remaining inaccessible following the collapse of the peace talks, did not identify the groups the Hizbul was in touch with nor did he outline the contours of the talks.

But he once again reiterated that some international personalities along with the "Indian intelligentsia" were trying to broker a resumption of the peace efforts. "More groups may come and join the peace process" this time, he said. Squarely blaming the Indian Government for the failure of the

peace efforts, Majid Dar said his group had withdrawn the unilateral ceasefire announced on July 24 because of the "discordant and different voices by India on Kashmir". He said only tripartite talks between India, Pakistan and the Kashmiris could offer "an opportunity to all the parties to sit face to face and air their views".

Asked why it could take two

in-chief" Abdul Majid Dar is to come over-ground anytime now, if sources close to him are to be believed. This is so because other options before him are almost closed. Dar is eyeing the situation in Kashmir and holding regular meetings with his colleagues—some of them Hizb militants and others who had offered open support to his peace initiatives a month ago.

The Hizb leader has not joined active military operations even after the ceasefire was withdrawn on August 8. Even on Tuesday he had said that "blood-shed in the next 10 years would not bring about a solution".

Sources said it was an indication of what he has been telling people. "It shows his growing disillusionment with violence and blood-bath," sources said.

He had said on Tuesday that his group would like to set up a co-ordination committee with All-Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC). Since APHC is not a banned organisation, sources said the co-ordination cannot be held secretly as that would go against Dar's own statement: "We don't believe in secret dealings but transparency."

Pakistan mission staffer expelled

MALIK MUHAMMAD Rafique, a staff member of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi, has been asked to leave India before August 31. He had been found "indulging in activities incompatible with his official status". **HTC, New Delhi**

months for a fresh ceasefire, Majid Dar is quoted by the newspaper as saying: "By that time there will be a conducive atmosphere". He denied that any secret talks were on between the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and the Centre. Majid Dar said his group would give up all operations if the "security forces reciprocate". **DAR TO COME OVER-GROUND:** Hizbul "commander-

10 Pak soldiers killed in major Poonch clash

Srinagar, August 24

INDIAN TROOPS killed at least 10 Pakistani soldiers who had attempted an early morning attack on a post in Mandi sector in Poonch, about 240 km north of Jammu, reports our correspondent.

One Indian soldier died and another injured in the gunfight that was continuing till the last reports came in.

Pakistanis came under the cover of darkness at 4 am planning to attack one of the smaller Indian posts, an exercise similar to the one they had attempted three days ago at Kalsiyar in Rajouri. Four Pakistani soldiers died in the cross-firing. "The Pakistanis carried away most of their dead and wounded. Only two bodies and three weapons were left behind," Maj Gen P P S Bindra said. **Detailed report on Page 11**

George still hopeful of J&K talks

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, Aug. 25. — Mr George Fernandes today said he was confident talks with Hizbul Mujahideen would revive in the next two months, and the issue of Pakistan being a party to them would not then be raised.

"Hizbul Mujahideen's proposal (for a ceasefire) came out of nowhere and then it faded away. I believe that there will be a revival of this proposal," the defence minister told Karan Thapar on BBC's Hardtalk India.

Asked if Hizbul might still continue to insist on tripartite talks involving Pakistan, Mr Fernandes said he was not too sure "whether this proposal would be put across in all seriousness".

So would the issue of involvement of Pakistan in negotiations be forgotten or watered down in the next two months?

"Yes", Mr Fernandes said. The government had "well established" contacts with the Hizbul in Jammu and Kashmir.

The defence minister said the Hurriyat Conference represented no mainstream political or insurgency-oriented movement in Jammu and Kashmir. Nor was there anything new in Hurriyat chairman, Mr Abdul Ghani Bhat's proposal to talk simultaneously with India and Pakistan — the Hurriyat has been talking continuously with Pakistan, Mr Fernandes said, and their leaders had been in Delhi only this week to meet with officials at the Pakistan High Commission.

2578 ✓
Asked if there was a split between Pakistan- and India-based Hizb commanders, Mr Fernandes said there were indeed reasons to believe that "strong differences" existed. Those on the Indian side were "keen" that talks should resume, the ones on the Pakistani side wanted Islamabad to be a party.

Was Abdul Majid Dar, the Hizbul commander in J&K, being protected?

Dar was "very safe", Mr Fernandes said. "It is our duty to protect anyone who needs protection".

On the contradictory statements coming from Hizbul chief Syed Salahuddin and Dar on the resumption of negotiations, Mr Fernandes said: "I want to believe Majid Dar."

The defence minister was emphatic the ceasefire declaration was not the result of US pressure. He agreed with Thapar that New Delhi was trying to put the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle together in Kashmir, and said wisdom and patience was the need of the hour. "We live in hope and work in hope and experience shows one should not lose hope."

Geelani: Former chief of the Hurriyat, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, today said tripartite talks involving Pakistan, or implementation of UN resolutions on Kashmir, were the only two ways to resolve the issue permanently.

The Hurriyat, Mr Geelani told the Friday congregation at the historic Jama Masjid here, was ready for talks to find a lasting solution.

THE STATESMAN

25 AUG 2000

Nine ultras killed in Kashmir

PTI & UNI

SRINAGAR, Aug. 25. — Nine militants have been gunned down by security forces in Jammu and Kashmir since last evening. Terrorists abducted a woman, and shot at a BSF post, but the security forces suffered no casualties.

Three Lashkar-e-Taiyaba terrorists were killed in a gunbattle with the Army near Behramgala in Jammu's Poonch district today, an official spokesman said. Another Lashkar militant was killed in an encounter in the Surankote area, also in Poonch.

A fifth militant was killed today in Baramulla.

Last evening, Rashtriya Rifles's Romeo Force gunned down two ultras of the Hizbul Mujahideen's Pir Panjal regi-

ment at Doda's Chapaimarg forests. One of the killed militants has been identified as one Raja Jagir Bhadar, self-styled commander of the HMPPR Tanzeem, Doda. The other is Sayeed Majeed of Surankote.

Two Kalashnikovs with six magazines, five grenades and a radio set was found at the encounter site.

At Kalani village in Poonch, Rashtriya Rifles jawans killed a foreign mercenary of the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen. He has been identified as Abdul Jhabar of Ganjoo Mandi in Pakistan.

Security forces recovered an AK-56, a magazine and 26 rounds, and a remote control set for an improvised explosive device from Jhabar.

A fourth militant was killed

by security forces yesterday in an encounter in the Saujian area of Poonch district.

In the Behramgala incident today, a group of terrorists was seen moving in the upper reaches of the Pir Panjal near Bagla Gas village about 1 p.m. The Romeo Force went after them, and the terrorists, seeing the column, opened fire.

In the shootout that followed, the Rashtriya Rifles troops eliminated the three terrorists without suffering any casualties, Army sources said. One sniper rifle, two AK-56s with six magazines, 164 rounds of AK ammunition, one Pika belt, 123 rounds of Pika ammunition and one radio set was found on the slain terrorists.

Their identities have not been established yet, but from the sling of their rifles, it has been

ascertained that they belonged to the Lashkar.

Last evening, militants shot dead a former policeman, Abdul Gayoom Khan, in his house at Takiya Khan Mandi in Baramulla district.

The wife of the slain militant leader Farooq Ahmad Dar, was abducted from her house at Aloosa, also in Baramulla district, last night, the spokesman said. A combing operation was on in the area to trace the woman.

At Bomai in Sopore, ultras fired at a BSF post. The jawans retaliated, but no one was hurt in the shootout.

Security forces recovered a huge quantity of arms and ammunition from the Saki Dhara forests and Wand Tatrian village in Jammu region.

THE STATESMAN

25 AUG 2000

APHC will stand united, says Bhat

27/8 By Harish Khare HD-11

NEW DELHI, AUG. 26. Professor Abdul Ghani Bhat, chairman of the All Party Hurriyat Conference, is hopeful of swinging the entire organisation in favour of his proposal that two Hurriyat teams simultaneously engage New Delhi and Islamabad on the Kashmir issue. He says the APHC executive is yet to take up the proposal formally, as some of the important members are out of Srinagar.

Acknowledging that there are differences among various members ("just as there are differences between the Prime Minister and the Home Minister, and between RAW and IB"), Professor Bhat says "no member has the luxury of going out of the Hurriyat."

Asserting that since he is the 'first democratically-chosen chairman' of the Hurriyat, he is bound to "go by democratic norms" of argument and debate. "I trust all my colleagues are reasonable, who believe in principles rather than intransigence; and, I think reasonableness means that you are prepared to be imaginative and open," explains the re-

tired professor. (The Centre has been unexcited about his proposal, arguing that the Hurriyat was not even unanimous about it and that the proposal did not require Pakistan to desist from supporting cross-border terrorism.)

Of course, the Hurriyat chairman claims, tirelessly, that his organisation alone represents the heartbeat of the Kashmiris, and all other voices — Dr. Farooq Abdullah or Mufti Mohammad Syed or Shabir Shah — are irrelevant in the search for a "lasting solution" to the Kashmir crisis. And, he hopes that the proposed two Hurriyat teams would engage "brilliant minds in Islamabad and New Delhi, though not necessarily the scintillating minds in Srinagar."

Prof. Bhat returns to Srinagar early next week, and hopes that he would be able to secure an agreement within his organisation on a collective and united response in a fast changing situation.

(But Mr. Yasin Malik is hospitalised in Delhi and the possibility of his travelling to Srinagar

in the near- future is ruled out; similarly, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq is away on "study leave" and is not expected back till another month).

Though there is no change in the Hurriyat's stand that the Kashmir dispute is a tripartite business and can be solved only by involving "India, Pakistan and the people of Jammu and Kashmir," the APHC leader believes in the efficacy of American interest and intervention in helping to find a way out of the stalemate.

He believes that the compulsion of economic globalisation propels the United States to ensure that there is a "lasting peace" in Kashmir; moreover, nuclear weaponisation of South Asia, according to him, has introduced a parity between India and Pakistan, and this parity has put an "onerous responsibility on the rulers in New Delhi and Islamabad" to find a negotiated way out.

The professor also hopes to meet the Hizb commander, Mr. Abdul Masjid Dar, to try to understand the Hizb's perception of the people's mood in the Valley.

THE HINDU

27 AUG 2000

Tripartite talks, not Hizb, the key: Hurriyat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, Aug. 26. — The Hurriyat Conference today said a ceasefire by Hizbul Mujahideen would not return peace to Kashmir. The only solution, according to Mr Abdul Ghani Bhat, lay in tripartite talks between India, Pakistan and the people of the Valley.

"Talks among the three parties have to take place and there is no alternative to it. The ceasefire offer has to come from Pakistan, India and the people of Kashmir," the newly-elected chairman of the Hurriyat said in an interview to Eenadu TV.

What did (the Hizbul's) ceasefire call of last month result in? Where did you reach? It did not work. It did not hold."

The Hurriyat chairman warned that if the issue was not resolved across the table, "there were apprehensions that it is extremely likely that a war may erupt and if it does, it will mean an atomic confrontation".

Hizb denial: Hizbul Mujahideen today denied it was in touch with the Centre as had been claimed by Mr George

Fernandes in an interview yesterday. In New Delhi today, the defence minister ruled out pursuing terrorists across the LoC, saying attacking and destroying their camps in PoK would result in the death of innocent civilians.

Militants killed: Seventeen militants, most of them foreigners, and a special police officer were among 19 people killed in the Kashmir Valley since last evening, adds UNI. Some suspected people were taken into custody during house to house searches and identification parades.

On the LoC in Jammu, Pakistan Rangers attacked the BSF border outposts of Gallar, Khora, Mangachak and Narainpur, provoking return fire from the Indian troops. Last night, security forces gunned down a Pakistani trying to sneak across the LoC at the SP-II post in Samba sector.

Around 10 last night, militants fired rockets at Bantalab Kunjar, destroying two electricity towers. Police said the rockets might have been fired from across the border.

27 AUG 2000

THE STATESMAN

A PROXY WAR

Strategy Of Restraint Has Failed

By GURMEET KANWAL

IT has been evident for some time that the Jammu and Kashmir issue is stagnating and has reached a strategic stalemate. Armed militancy has passed almost completely into the hands of foreign mercenary terrorists sponsored by Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence Directorate who are wedded to Islamic fanaticism and live by a shoot-loot-and-scoot philosophy. Indigenous Kashmiri militant outfits like the Hizbul Mujahideen have been completely marginalised and they resent this foreign domination of their cause. Barring sporadic incidents of terrorism which can never be completely eliminated, the security forces have succeeded in establishing a reasonable degree of control over the internal security situation and as much normalcy has returned to J&K as is militarily possible.

It is axiomatic that there can be no permanent military solution to an insurgency. It is ultimately a battle of "hearts and minds" and only a political solution can address and eliminate the real and perceived causes of militancy and assuage the feelings of hurt and bitterness fostered by several decades of poor governance and political mismanagement.

Under the prevailing circumstances, Abdul Majid Dar's unprecedented unilateral offer of a three-month cease-fire on behalf of the Hizbul Mujahideen had come as a breath of fresh air. The dramatic cease-fire offer as well as the central government's positive though somewhat ambivalent response had been welcomed by the Kashmiri people and J&K's ruling National Conference. The only note of discord was sounded by the Hurriyat leadership, apparently because Abdul Ghani Bhatt and the other leaders felt nervous about being left out in the cold.

MOMENTUM

Regrettably, the cease-fire was short-lived because Pakistan panicked at the positive momentum generated by the first meeting between the Hizbul and the government representatives. Favourable prospects for peace in J&K unnerved the Pakistan army and the ISI. Though Islamabad had approved the Hizbul's initial cease-fire move, to score some diplomatic brownie points, Pakistan's military rulers belatedly realised that their control over the militancy in Kashmir would be gradually eroded if the peace talks made headway. Hence, they sabotaged the cease-fire getting Syed Salahuddin to withdraw the offer due to India's unequivocal refusal to include Pakistan in the talks. Meanwhile, their hired hatchet men in the Lashkar-e-Toiba, Harakat-ul-Mujahideen, Jaish-e-Mohammadi and other non-Kashmiri terrorist organisations carried out several brutal massacres to once again terrify innocent Kashmiris.

The Indian government now finds itself at a strategic crossroads in Kashmir. Even a small misstep can almost irretrievably set back the cause of peace. Before venturing further on one of several difficult paths, the nation must take stock of the decade-old proxy war and the payoffs of India's muted response. Since 1993-94, the hub of Kashmiri militancy has shifted to Islamabad, with its forward headquarters at Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. India has paid a high price for Pakistan's low-cost, high-payoff strategy of "bleeding India through a thousand cuts".

Pakistan has sowed the seeds of the culture of violence in Sufi Kashmir and caused immense damage to India's deep-rooted secular fabric. This has generated an inevitable backlash from the fanatical ele-

ments on the fringes of the majority community. The cult of the Kalashnikov and the car bomb IED (improvised explosive device) has gradually spread to almost all the corners of India.

Till end-1999, among the security forces, army casualties alone had amounted to 1,184 killed and 3,394 wounded. In addition, Pakistan-sponsored terrorism has claimed the lives of approximately 30,000 innocent civilians and forced about 2,80,000 persons to become refugees in their own country. The damage to public and private property has been estimated at over Rs 2,000 crores. Throughout this prolonged period of proxy war, India has shown tremendous restraint and immense tolerance in the face of grave provocation.

India's restrained response was viewed in Pakistan as a sign of weakness and was



exploited to gain and consolidate a foothold in the affairs of Kashmir. It is inconceivable that any other nation would have acted with the sense of responsibility that India has in not launching trans-Line of Control operations to eliminate known militant hideouts and training camps and interdict routes of infiltration inside POK even though such operations are sanctioned by international law.

Three issues underpinning the present wave of the terrorism unleashed by Pakistan need to be clearly understood if reasoned responses are to be formulated. Firstly, most of the terrorists now operating in J&K are foreign mercenaries and not Kashmiri "freedom fighters" as Pakistan has been unsuccessfully trying to convince the world. The average Kashmiri citizen no longer supports the terrorists and has seen through Pakistan's gameplan. He has now moderated his views to lean towards a more sober interpretation of his original concept of *azadi*. However, fear of the terrorists' guns keeps him from providing "actionable" intelligence to the security forces to eliminate them.

TRAINED

Secondly, the present generation of mercenary fundamentalist Islamists, inspired by Osama bin Laden and the success of the Taliban experiment, is better motivated, better trained and equipped with more sophisticated automatic weapons and explosives than the motley array of uneducated and unemployed youth and criminals undergoing jail sentences sent by Pakistan's ISI to prop up militancy in J&K in the past. Thirdly, sporadic incidents of terrorism against widely dispersed targets by motivated *fedayeen* (suicide squads) cannot be completely prevented, no matter how many additional battalions of security forces are pumped into J&K. A terrorist willing to die can always strike at a time and isolated place of his choosing. Worse, with some luck, he can hope to get away before the security forces can react.

The mounting casualties and Pakistan's sustained campaign of terror clearly prove that India's strategy of restraint has

failed to achieve the desired results. The experience gained over the last ten years has shown that a reactive counter-insurgency policy, limited to military action within India's borders, can only expect to achieve a semblance of superficial control that lasts as long as the security forces remain deployed in the area. An increase in the deployment of security forces does not produce a corresponding decrease in the level of terrorist incidents. In fact, it only leads to an increase in security forces casualties.

The time has come to review India's Kashmir strategy and institute stronger steps to neutralise Pakistan's proxy war. The government needs to follow a two-pronged approach to finding a lasting solution to the Kashmir problem. While it must persist in smoking the peace pipe with all the genuine representatives of the Kashmiri people to find a political solution and win the battle of hearts and minds, it must simultaneously adopt proactive measures to reach across the country's borders with Pakistan to eradicate the menace of trans-border terrorism from its roots and turn the screws on the Pakistan army.

It needs to be recognised that the real problem between India and Pakistan is Pakistan's rogue army. The Punjabi dominated Pakistan army, that is the foremost among Pakistan's elite, such as the mullahs and the Maliks, has a vested interest in destabilising India through covert means. It will never allow the Kashmir issue to be amicably settled, as there would then be no justification for Pakistan to maintain a 450,000 strong force. The only language that Pakistan's military junta is likely to understand is that of reciprocal violence — directed not against civilians inside POK but against Pakistan's army deployed on the LoC.

INFILTRATION

This can be done by the systematic decimation of forward Pakistani army posts through which infiltration takes place by massive 155-mm artillery assaults. Unless the regular Pakistan army suffers casualties in ever increasing numbers, it will have no disincentive to stop its covert terrorist operations against India. India must exploit its superior artillery firepower, so vividly demonstrated in winning the Kargil conflict in 1999, to make the cost of sponsoring a proxy war prohibitive for Pakistan. The Pakistan army could be expected to retaliate in kind but, because of its failed economy, will not be able to match India's artillery barrages over a period of six months to one year and will be forced to sue for peace on India's terms.

The Indian army need not get involved in "hot pursuit" operations with dubious gains. Other trans-LoC pro-active measures should be launched to raise the cost for the ISI and the Pakistan army to train, equip and infiltrate foreign mercenaries into J&K. In military terms these could include raids on terrorist camps, hideouts and staging areas close to the LoC by specially trained surrendered and rehabilitated Kashmiri militants who volunteer for this purpose; the ambushing of army convoys; missile, rocket and artillery attacks on headquarters and administrative installations; and the covert destruction up of bridges, culverts, power stations and other military infrastructure and facilities supporting army deployments.

Such measures may appear to be contrary to India's pacifist worldview. However, India's limit of tolerance has long since been crossed. The time has come to talk to a recalcitrant adversary in the only language that he understands. Even Mahatma Gandhi would have approved of this form of self-defence.

The author is a Senior Fellow at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi.

Mohanpur latest victim of arsenic menace

51-3
27/8
OINDRILA MUKHERJEE
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

MOHANPUR, (North 24-Parganas), Aug. 26. — Ajoy Kumar Patra, (17), a resident of Mohanpur in Titagarh was identified as an arsenicosis patient at the School of Tropical Medicine, Calcutta, on 2 August. Subsequently, 13 members of Gopal Patra's family have been identified as suffering from the disease, thanks to arsenic contaminated water.

Arsenic contamination has spread in a major way in many areas of this district. Locals wait for the predicament, much without government help.

Mohanpur is the latest victim. The neighbouring Jaffarpur village already has 17 confirmed arsenicosis cases. Mr Ashok Das, secretary, North 24-Parganas Arsenic Contamination Protection Committee, said that according to their survey, around 15 lakh people in the district were drinking arsenic contaminated water. More than 4,000 people were affected and 133 people dead in the last six years, he informed.

The normal level of arsenic content in water, according to the WHO, is 10 micrograms per litre, and the maximum permissible limit as accepted by the Indian government, is 50 micrograms per litre. Gopal Patra's tubewell is found to contain 800 micrograms per litre, according to tests conducted by the School of Environmental Studies, Jadavpur University.

Today, a special clinic was organised in the area at the initiative of SES. In all, 19 villagers out of around 50 were diagnosed with arsenicosis by as early as 9.00 am.

Dr Deepankar Chakravorty of SES said that out of 176 tubewells that had been tested for arsenic contamination in his laboratory, 60 per cent were found to be over the normal level as stipulated by WHO, and 40 per cent was over the maximum permissible limit. At least 44 out of around 1,000 tubewells in the village have been contaminated with arsenic, ranging from 200 to 600 micrograms per litre.



(Left) One of the family members of Gopal Patra has arsenicosis on her soles. (Right) Patra's tubewell locked to prevent its use. — Shyamal Maitra

Gopal Patra's nephew, Krishanu (6), showed alarming symptoms of both severe Keratosis of the soles as well as Melanosis, according to Dr KC Saha, former head of the dermatology department, School of Tropical Medicine, who was at the clinic.

Patra's sister-in-law, Geeta, too has been severely affected. A few years ago, Patra's father and sister died of cancer. Both had severe marks on their bodies, resembling those of Ajoy, the son who, after being diagnosed at the STM on 2 August, was forcibly admitted to SSKM Hospital.

People turned up by the hordes to attend the special clinic, anxiously displaying any sores or scars which they had.

One of the steps to be taken by the volunteers at the site is

to paint all "unsafe" tubewells red and "safe" ones green, so that villagers may know which ones to avoid.

Mr Chakravorty said: "We will talk to the people and try to reassure them, and teach them to try and solve the problem themselves".

The stress on self-help has come in the wake of several years of government inaction. The inhabitants of Mohanpur had in a letter informed the gram panchayat in March 1998 about the incidence of arsenic contamination in their area, with at least two tubewells marked "unsafe". Panchayat officials took no action, the panchayat member of Mohanpur, Mr Debnarayan Chatterjee, said.

A resident of the area, Ranjan Acharya, said: "Panchayat offi-

cial keep asking us not to spread panic. They take no action and seem to be interested only in suppressing the situation".

The public demand is for fresh, uncontaminated tap water, and surface water supply. State's finance minister, Mr Asim Dasgupta, whose Assembly constituency Mohanpur lies within, paid the Patras a visit recently and reportedly ordered the Gram Panchayat to bore a tubewell about 800 feet deep. Residents vouch that local authorities quit after boring around 430 feet.

"So far none of the tubewells in our houses has been tested," said a resident.

The CPI-M gram panchayat pradhan, Mr Ashutosh Biswas, denied any knowledge of the survey or tests conducted.

Sunken Hopes

Lessons from Nuclear Sub Tragedy

By PRAFUL BIDWAI

IN March 1994, Aleksandr Nikitin, then a 44 year-old former submarine captain, published a report on the appalling state of safety in Russia's Northern Fleet, which handles the bulk of the country's nuclear-powered submarines. Using publicly available information, he painstakingly documented the Fleet's declining operation and maintenance standards, accumulating and overflowing radioactive waste, steeply falling budgets and morale, the growing scarcity of spares, and warned of a series of disasters. Nikitin was arrested in February 1995 and charged with espionage and treason, punishable with death. Finally, last year, he was acquitted by the courts, but now faces another trial on the same charge.

Welcome to the Kafkaesque world of nuclear weapons and submarines. The *Kursk* tragedy hasn't ended. The submarine's two nuclear reactors, with a 380 MW output, still lie 108 metres deep inside a damaged hull amidst torpedoes, high explosives and other hazardous material. They contain an estimated 1,200 kg of highly enriched uranium, mostly U-235, with a half-life of a mind-boggling 710 million years. Huge quantities of the radioisotope will continue to menace the marine environment and humans for millions of generations to come.

Even assuming that the reactors were not damaged by the explosives that sank the submarine, dismantling the potent cocktail of uranium, hundreds of fission products including deadly plutonium, and chemical explosives, will entail large radioactivity exposures. The job will be incomparably more onerous than accessing the sub's rear hatch — a week-long, super-expensive, multinational effort. Abandoning the sub would mean leaching radioactivity into the environment.

The *Kursk* is only one disaster that Nikitin forecast. "Much bigger ones are waiting to happen around Murmansk and Severomorsk", he told me two months ago in Stockholm. This area of the Kola Peninsula holds 21,000 nuclear fuel assemblies and one-fifth of the world's 1,200 nuclear reactors, in patently unsafe conditions. More than 200 reactors are literally rotting aboard 110 submarines which have been taken out of service.

The Fleet, which receives less than half its designated minimum budget, has no money to dismantle the nuclear cores. Indeed, "it often lacks money to buy rations for the crew", says Nikitin, whose case has been followed by many international experts on nuclear issues for some years now. The result: scores of subs are corroding and sinking as their

reactor compartments fill with water — presaging an ecological catastrophe. As bankrupt Russia's military budgets shrink — now to less than half the level of India's — training, maintenance and safety norms plummet further, making disaster likelier in the world's largest nuclear arsenal.

Russia's *specific* troubles are only one part of the nuclear submarine story. The other two parts are *generic*. Nuclear submarines everywhere are extraordinarily disaster-prone. And nuclear establishments everywhere operate secretively. Nuclear subs have had serious accidents ever since they drove the Cold War's most furious phase of arms racing when safety hardly mattered. Today, wreckages of American, British as well as Russian subs lie on the earth's ocean floor. There have been numerous accidents aboard US, French, British and Russian submarines. "Greenpeace" has documented 121 "incidents" in the last

IN BRIEF

- Much bigger tragedies than that of the *Kursk* are waiting to happen in the Russian navy
- Nuclear submarines have inherent safety problems
- Secrecy is a characteristic of nuclear establishments across the world
- India's nuclear submarine project has been a huge and expensive failure

case, 10 of which caused reactor damage. There were also two core meltdowns — a nuclear reactor's worst accident — in 1979 and 1989. Nuclear subs have inherent safety problems because they, like bombs, pack huge amounts of energy in small volumes and operate in conditions much harsher than civilian power reactors, themselves seriously accident-prone. A small error gets magnified into a big crisis.

The authorities' handling of the *Kursk* crisis further compounded the catastrophe. They first denied, and then tried to deflect attention from, its gravity. For four critical days, they refused offers of foreign assistance out of "national pride". President Vladimir Putin refused to cut short his holiday. The British and Norwegians too delayed sending in assistance. Russia's nucleocracy refused to disclose relevant information, including the sailors' names, the sub's location, and the accident's circumstances. According to independent sources, there were two internal explosions, not a major collision,

as claimed. Journalists had to bribe naval officers to get the victims' list. Their number too was raised without explanation from 116 to 118. When relations confronted them, the bosses used heavy-handed methods: forcibly injecting sedatives to silence questioners.

Such sordid behaviour is typical of all nuclear establishments. Whether in the US or USSR, France or Iraq, China or Pakistan, these "Dr Strangelove outfits" are marked by excessive secrecy and dominated by unaccountable "experts" who cynically exploit their privileged access to information. Secrecy cuts across the democracy-dictatorship barrier. For 40 years, the US refused to divulge facts about its terrifying radiation experiments on humans, including injections of poisons. The N-5 have always suppressed or denied unpleasant facts about their nuclear programmes. Transparency and nuclear activities just don't go together. Nuclearism, with its "national security" mindset, its abiding faith in violence and mass destruction, has little use for "idealistic" things like human rights. Nuclear weapons and democratic accountability are mutually antagonistic.

All this applies *a fortiori* to India. The Atomic Energy Act (1962) betrays utter contempt for accountability. It allows arbitrary suppression of all information — patently unconstitutional, according to V K Krishna Iyer. The atomic energy department (DAE) is easily one of our most secretive. It has much to hide: uranium mining hazards in Jadugoda, excessive irradiation of power-plant workers, waste mismanagement, numbers regarding explosive yields. Worse, we have our own Nikitin: former Captain B K Subba Rao who too was charged in 1988 with spying and jailed for 20 months — until fully exonerated by three courts. His real crime? Questioning the DAE's nuclear sub (Advanced Technology Vessel) project, a spectacular Rs 2,000 crore failure. Evidence of "espionage"? His IIT-Bombay Ph.D thesis.

However, we have an additional, special problem; unacceptably poor, sub-Russian safety and reliability in India's nuclear and defence establishments — witness 202 Air Force plane crashes in nine years, the Main Battle Tank project mess, the Purulia arms drop, the distinction of having six of the world's 10 dirtiest nuclear reactors. It won't do to deny India's poor safety culture and disaster-proneness. It would be disastrous to let hubris drive us towards nuclear catastrophe. We must freeze our nuclear and missile programmes and return to the global disarmament agenda.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

30 AUG 2000

The road to peace is long and winding

PERHAPS THE most revealing development in the troubled State of Jammu and Kashmir is that the Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, has taken off for a three-week holiday abroad. The good doctor was never known to be terribly concerned with the problems of governance, but his decision to leave the State at a time when attempts are on to revive the "peace process" is not without implications. It is easy to infer that either the Chief Minister knows for sure that no substantial breakthrough is around the corner, or that he feels so sidelined that he does not care to stick around when serious players are talking serious business. What is mystifying is that just before he left, the Chief Minister felt it necessary to make a statement that secret talks were on with various militant groups. A clear case of mischievous aforethought.

The other equally revealing development was the nearly week-long sojourn in New Delhi of two senior Hurriyat Conference leaders — the former chairman, Syed Geelani, and the current chairman, Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhatt. The two leaders spent long hours, spread over three days, at the Pakistani High Commission, presumably exchanging ideas, getting new advice and instructions on "secure lines". Though there were unconfirmed reports about the APHC chairman meeting some "Indian officials", neither of the leaders felt the need to interact with their many friends and well-wishers. For now, it seems, they are happy to be seen as being at the beck and call of the Pakistani military establishment.

Despite Dr. Abdullah's not-so-subtle attempts to pooh-pooh the peace process, and despite the APHC leadership's all-too-blatant attempt to sabotage the Hizb-Centre dialogue, the hard reality is that every 'player' feels constrained to assess the depth and the durability of the popular urge for peace in the troubled State. This urge was well articulated the other day by the Hizbul Mujahideen commander-in-chief, Mr. Abdul Majid Dar: "Hizbul Mujahideen is fully aware of the wishes of the people (for peace) and that is why it wants a dialogue." He said neither India nor Pakistan or the militants could ignore this desire. On the non-violent side, the popular sentiment is being forcefully spelt out by Ms. Mehbooba Mufti, a leader of the People's Democratic Party. At very well attended public meetings, she has been arguing that the people should unite to force India, Pakistan and the militant groups to engage in unconditional talks.

Yet there is a certain "once bitten, twice shy" wariness, at least at the very top of the Vajpayee establishment. There is a realisation that during the last round — or rather the aborted round — of negotiation, both sides rushed to occupy the chairs at the conference table without bothering to tie up the loose ends.

The process got ed and provoked so much that the very idea of peace had a bad name. The Vajpayee Government cannot be expected to allow Hizb or any other group or in to get away with the notion of tolerance will produce tactical advantages in negotiations.

Also, there is a notion that a 'solution' cannot be imposed in a huge peace process will be tried affair and will rest the ball in New Delhi, Islamabad, Srinagar. In such a protracted war, there is a

time to be active, and there is time to sit back and let things cool a bit; for now, the inclination in New Delhi is to allow various groups to assess their own commitment to changing the paradigm in Kashmir. Nonetheless, the Vajpayee Government's best laid plans can add up to nothing if its various functionaries cannot curb their desire to hog the headlines. For example, the officials are quite dismayed that the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, has recklessly pronounced himself on various tactical and strategic matters about Kashmir, when the requirement of the moment is clearly to observe rules of reticence. Mr. Fernandes speaks for

There is a realisation that a 'solution' to the Kashmir issue cannot be found or imposed in a hurry. The peace process, writes HARISH KHARE, will be a protracted affair and will test the political skills in New Delhi, Islamabad and Srinagar.

Peace, but not at any cost

There is a constituency for peace in Kashmir but not for 'abject surrender'. SHUJAT BUKHARI reports.

IT WAS in the middle of June that Kashmir shot back into prominence politically. On June 19, a special Assembly session adopted the resolution on autonomy. The Centre rejected it. Then the action shifted to the separatist camp with the All-Party Hurriyat Conference electing a new chairman, and the Hizbul Mujahideen chief commander, Mr. Abdul Majeed Dar, announcing a ceasefire, since withdrawn. All these happenings are linked to the flickering hopes for peace in the Valley.

Despite the initial scepticism, once the Hizb's Islamabad-based supreme commander, Syed Salabuddin, had endorsed the ceasefire, the move was seen as genuine. People then started hunting for the factors that led to the decision. "If it (the ceasefire) is an end in itself, it will not last long," remarked a Kashmir University teacher. "If it is a step towards an end, it could be historic," he added. Beyond doubt, the move had generated hopes of a new beginning in smouldering Kashmir.

The jubilation on the streets was more visible and people could not hide their happiness after the Army reciprocated the ceasefire. "Everyone wants peace," said a tea-stall owner in Lal Chowk.

But, the failure of the talks between the Hizb and the Government came as a rude shock to the people; the devastating militant actions which followed further dashed their hopes. Though Mr. Dar has held out hope again, the problem in Kashmir has turned out to be so complex that no one is ready to believe any develop-

ment unless it takes off successfully. In Srinagar, the growing view is that the ground realities beg for peace, which was of course admitted by Mr. Dar himself while announcing the ceasefire on July 24. "If a (new) ceasefire holds for even three months, it will be difficult for even the Hizb to go back," says a political analyst who is optimistic about a peace process taking off.

However, the whole drama could produce another bunch of Babar Badris and Imran Rahis who entered into a dialogue with the then Union Home Minister, Mr. S. B. Chavan, and finally ended up liabilities for the Government rather than contributing to the peace process.

Despite the chain of massacres on the eve of talks claiming the lives of over 100 people mostly Hindus, a change in the ground situation had been apparent in the towns. And reports from the countryside had also suggested that the confrontation was gradually easing. But matters worsened again. The killing of Brig. B. S. Shergill and Col. Rajendra Chauhan in Handwara and such other incidents are like a nightmare for the common man. As the militants detonate IEDs and vanish into the dense woods, the wrath of the security forces has to be faced by the locals for what they have not done. Interestingly, the allegations about violations of the human rights by security forces, had come down between July 24 and August 8.

Undoubtedly, there is a constituency for peace in Kashmir but not for 'abject surrender'.

the military establishment, which is uncomfortable at the thought of concessions and negotiations.

To the extent the Vajpayee establishment's energies, for now, are directed at the Prime Minister's upcoming visit to the United States, it is unlikely that the Centre will be taking any major initiative. By the same reckoning, both the militants and the Pakistani brass will want to raise the visibility of the "Kashmir issue" on the international radar; the Americans have been helpful in this regard. An alarming report — purported to be a CIA study — of a nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan over Kashmir is being bandied about; the idea is to stampede New Delhi into agreeing to a dialogue with Islamabad without insisting on an end to the cross-border terrorism. And, of course, the Jaswant Singh formulations proceed on the assumption that the U.S. will cheerfully tighten the screws on Pakistan; ironically, the APHC and other groups in Kashmir believe that the U.S. is honour-bound not to abandon their "struggle" for human

rights, dignity, honour, etc. All these pressures and counter-pressures will be in play right till the end of the Prime Minister's American visit.

Substantive movement "on the ground" will have to await the outcome of the Vajpayee sojourn in the U.S. But, meanwhile, the onus will be on the Hizb leadership. It will have to demonstrate its capacity to keep its cadres intact under one banner; the Hizb leadership can add to its bargaining power if it can persuade the other militant groups to join hands with it in restarting the peace process.

Above all, the Hizb leadership will have to find ways and means to deprive the warring APHC groups of the veto over peace. After all, it is the Hizb cadres who have paid with their blood, while the Hurriyat Conference crowd has been quite content to call heartals. If the Hizb remains steadfast in its search for a peaceful way out of the decade of bloodshed, it will force the Hurriyat Conference's highly compromised leaders to fall in line with the popular mood.

THE HINDU

27 AUG 2000

BJP open to talks with militants to resolve J&K issue

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 28 AUGUST

THE BJP, on Monday, threw its weight behind the Centre's decision to hold talks with the indigenous militants, even if there was no immediate lull in Pakistan-sponsored violence in Jammu and Kashmir. The political resolution adopted by the party's national council, hailed — ignoring in-house criticism — the Centre's decision to engage the Hizbul Mujahideen in a dialogue for restoring peace to the troubled state.

"The government should not hesitate to talk to those Indians who are willing to give up violence and sit across the table. This is no doubt an uphill task, given the fact that Pakistan will spare no effort to undermine all peace efforts," the resolution said.

This was a repeat of what the home minister, Mr L.K. Advani, had told the Parliament earlier this month, in defence of the Centre's Kashmir policy. Talks with the Hizbul has not gone down well with some sections of the party, which believed it to be a departure from the party's reliance on a hardline approach, thereby excluding talks as the solution to insurgency.

The RSS has expressed its discomfort. Protests against the talks have been used as a screen by the dissidents within the BJP itself.

The resolution is, however, not wanting, in so far as tough talking against Pakistan and the ISI is concerned. "A clear message needs to be sent to terrorists and their masters across the border that every Indian's life is precious and will be defended, and that indulging in cross-border terrorism cannot continue to

remain a cost-free option," the resolution said.

The support for the talks — though it hardly came as a surprise — from the national council should serve the purpose of making the Centre's bid to revive talks look more credible, both to the militants and the international community.

The Centre's policy towards Kashmir, occupied a chunk of the resolution. Deliberations on it in the national council saw the Union law minister, Mr Arun Jaitley, coming up with a spirited rejoinder to the "new dissident," Ms Sushma Swaraj, who had, on Saturday, attacked the Centre's

handling of the situation in the valley.

Mr Jaitley joined the issue with Ms Swaraj calling the Kashmir policy a success. He said, the three-pronged strategy consisting of punishing the terrorists, holding talks with those interested in peace, and securing international support against terrorism has been effective. "Unlike in the past, when we had to resist Pakistan's efforts to internationalise the dispute, we have succeeded in focusing international attention on cross-border terrorism. It is Pakistan's role in the conflict which has been internation-

alised," Mr Jaitley said.

He quoted figures to argue that more militants have been killed by security forces in this year than ever before, and defended the talks by saying that it had helped alienate the militants from the Kashmiri youth.

That the talks and its failure and the consequent resentment of some within the party have become an important item of internal discourse could be seen from the forceful assertions made by Mr L.K. Advani. He defended the security forces and denied the charge that talks had caused them to lower the guard.

Hizb insists on Pakistan's role in negotiations

Srinagar
29 AUGUST

A WEEK after top Hizbul Mujahideen (Hizb) leader in Jammu And Kashmir Abdul Majid Dar hinted at resumption of talks within two months with the Centre, the militant outfit on Monday threatened to extend its armed stir to other parts of India till New Delhi agreed to involve Pakistan in the talks to resolve the Kashmir issue.

"Hizb will continue its armed struggle against India and extend it to other parts of the country," till it agreed to involve Pakistan in the talks to resolve the Kashmir issue, the outfit said in a statement after a meeting of its central command council in Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir with its supreme commander Syed Salahuddin in the chair.

In the statement, faxed to the news organisations here from Muzaffarabad, the outfit also warned "those busy in sabotaging the freedom movement" against doing so.

It said Hizb would fully encounter the Indian government "campaign to harm popularity and organisational unity of the organisation. Besides military front, Hizb would expedite its activities on diplomatic and political front as well."

The outfit accused India of jeopardising the "conducive atmosphere" created after the Hizb's unilateral ceasefire "through its traditional stubbornness and unrealistic attitude." —PTI

RSS decision on spokesperson worries BJP

Our Political Bureau
NAGPUR 28 AUGUST

THE BJP has yet another cause for concern, with the RSS deciding to have a spokesperson for itself.

The Sangh's disagreement with the BJP on a host of issues has been out in the open for long and the BJP has learnt to live with it. However, the prospect of an RSS spokesperson airing the differences, is one which the party is not too comfortable with.

Recently, Mr M.G. Vaidya, the first-ever spokesperson of the Sangh, chose to time a reiteration of the Sangh's scheme for the trifurcation of Jammu & Kashmir, with the BJP's national council deliberations.

The BJP has already disowned the view, which, in its opinion, could be counter-productive, if implemented. Having to answer queries from the hordes of reporters camping here, the BJP leaders regret the idea that the Sangh should have a regular spokesperson. For them, it marks a departure from the Sangh's practice of maintaining a low profile, even while sticking to and propagating their controversial and unorthodox positions.

Aware of its dependance on the other parties for retaining power at the Centre, the BJP is concerned over its possible differences of opinion with the RSS.

The conflict becomes inevitable, given the overlap of functions, although the RSS touts itself as a cultural organisation.

The Economic Time.

29 AUG 2000

HD-13
29/8

Hizb threatens to intensify struggle

9/8
SbV

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 28. The Hizb-ul-Mujahideen has threatened to spread out its activities to other parts of India if the Indian troops do not stop 'increasing atrocities' on Kashmiris.

A press statement by the Hizb chief, Syed Salahuddin, said here that the Supreme Council of his organisation met in Muzaffarabad, capital of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir, today and took a series of decisions on the 'struggle' in Kashmir on the basis of recent developments.

It restated the Hizb's stand that there could be no talks with the Indian Government unless it agreed for involvement of Pakistan and Kashmiris and was prepared to discuss outside the framework of the Indian Constitution. The statement said the unilateral ceasefire by the Hizb

had exposed the hollowness of the claims of the Indian Government that it favoured a peaceful solution to the Kashmir problem.

The Supreme Council took note of statements by some individuals suggesting a split in the ranks of the Hizb and warned them to desist from such 'disinformation' campaign. The statement specifically referred to the reported statement of Syed Ali Shah Geelani that the July 24 ceasefire was announced by Mr. Abdul Majid Dar without consulting Syed Salahuddin and denounced it as baseless. Pakistan tonight accused India of "unprovoked and indiscriminate firing" across the Line of Control (LOC)."

A Foreign Office spokesman said "the Government of Pakistan once again calls upon India to respect the LOC and refrain from acts aimed at terrorising the civilian population living near it".

THE HINDU

29 AUG 2000

HD-13

Hizb fires another salvo at Hurriyat

29/8

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR AUG. 28. In yet another strongly-worded reaction to the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leadership's stance on ceasefire, the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen has condemned the statement of its chairman, Prof. Abdul Gani Bhat, saying that it was 'broken step'.

In a statement here this evening, the Hizb divisional commander for central Kashmir said "Prof. Bhat's statement is condemnable". "We are surprised that the people watching the bloodshed and atrocities on people for over seven years could not even take the half-broken step, and before talking about others they should first have a look at themselves," he said. People here were 'shocked' over the Hurriyat statement on ceasefire which was 'changed three times' and a ma-

majority of the organisation's leaders were not able to understand Prof. Gani's recent proposal of sending its leaders to Delhi and Islamabad for talks.

The Hizb urged Prof. Bhat not to talk much about the militant movement without an introspection.

The session of Majlis-e-Shoura of the Jamat-e-Islami remained inconclusive on the ceasefire issue on the third day today. The Jamat, apart from electing office-bearers, is discussing the differences between its senior leader and former APHC chairman, Syed Ali Geelani, and its chief, Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Bhat, on the ceasefire.

Sources said that the Shoura favoured seeking an explanation from Mr. Geelani for contradicting the Jamat stand on ceasefire and other issues.

THE HINDU

29 AUG 2002

Muslims' future linked with Kashmir: Farooq

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, OCT. 2. The future of over 22 crore Indian Muslims is directly linked with Kashmir, and in case it "secedes", it could lead to a communal backlash; it is because of Kashmir that the credentials of Muslims of the country are being "suspected". This was the view held by the Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, when he spoke at the valedictory session of the two-day conference on 'Kashmir Today — Challenges and Prospects', on Sunday.

The conference was organised by the Kashmir Foundation for Peace and Developmental Studies (KFPDS). "If you think there is going to be a dialogue (between India and Pakistan) or that the Kashmir problem is being solved, you are mistaken... This is not an issue of the people but an issue of land, and neither of the two is in a position to make any compromise."

Expressing dismay over the increasing communal tendencies in the country, he said, "The secession of Kashmir or carving a separate State of Jammu will lead to a communal backlash worse than that of 1947. The future of 22 crore Muslims in India is directly linked with Kashmir." Dismissing the possibility of a "separate State", he said if that happens Muslims in Doda, Poonch, Rajouri and Udhampur will not stay in Jammu, and that could result in another state, followed by bloodshed. For the development and posterity of Kashmir "we all must accept the fact that we are Indians and they (PoK people) are Pakistanis".

Dr. Abdullah said the anti-Kashmiri Muslim feeling had been nursed by persons like Indira Gandhi and the entire Muslim community in India is today facing the repercussions.

Reiterating his earlier stand, he said the only solution is to accept the "Line of

Control as the permanent border" so that "we maintain our relations of trade and interact with each other; but I do not know whether that would be possible in my lifetime. I am not an Indian stooge." Pakistan was a party to the dispute but "so many things have changed in the last five decades, there is no need to talk to them".

"India will not let Kashmir free even if it costs the destruction of whole of India... Any compromise will lead to the killing of Gen. Musharraf or the fall of Mr. Vajpayee," he added. This despite "my belief that only a Hindu fundamentalist party such as the BJP can talk to Pakistan with ease unlike the Congress." He said there is no option but to accept the finality of accession and that PoK is a part of Pakistan.

The former Foreign Secretary, Mr. Salman Haider, in his paper made observations about all the three regions of the State — Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh. "We encountered feelings of anger, dissatisfaction, distrust, suspicion and mistrust towards the Government," he said about Jammu, besides, "lack of communication between Jammu and Srinagar and a vast difference in the political aspirations of the two". Among a few groups, they found a vocal demand for a separate State for Jammu though a significant minority does not support it.

He said the Regional Autonomy Committee report might have fuelled the separatist feelings; but the Pandits yearned to return to Kashmir. "There is a desire for peace, resentment against violence and a sense of deep hatred against India and the security forces, with people feeling brutalised," Mr. Haider said reflecting on what he gathered from Kashmir in the company of Prof. Amitabh Mattoo (Jawaharlal Nehru University) and Prof. Rekha Choudhary (Jammu University).

Prof. Hari Om, a historian from Jammu

University, pleaded for a separate state for Jammu. He said the vast differences between the political aspirations of the people in the three regions did force Mr. Haider and his colleagues to have a separate set of observations and recommendations for the regions. Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh were never a single unit so why should they be kept together, he asked.

Former Central Minister, Prof. Saifuddin Soz, said a trifurcation would have dangerous consequences and the theory has gone to the extent that some people in the Congress(I) even support it. He, however, favoured dilution of powers to the regions and said the rejection of autonomy report by Delhi was a misfortune for the political leadership there.

Mindless violence, jaded sensibilities

THE SCENE stood out of the thousand and one images in Kashmir that greet a visiting journalist. There was this old man relieving himself in a graveyard in Sopore, dedicated to the "freedom-fighters". The aged man obviously meant no disrespect to the memory of the "boys" who sacrificed their lives for "the cause"; he just could not care. Not long ago, a halo of romantic martyrdom and revolutionary apotheosis was crafted posthumously on these "boys"; today the romance has given way to resentful hopelessness.

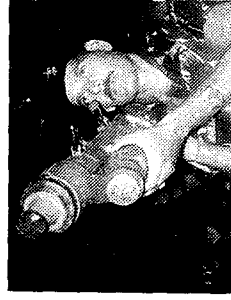
And that, in a way, is the defining image of Kashmir. The landscape of violence remains entirely familiar, entirely comprehensible; yet there is that tiredness with guns and vendors of violence. Only the likes of Syed Geelani still attend the ritual of *Nimaz-e-Jenaza* (obsequies). At one such gathering a few days ago near the Kupwara Jama Masjid, the senior Hurriyat Conference leader

The people of Kashmir, in whose name every antagonist pretends to be shedding blood, are thoroughly tired of this ritualised violence, writes HARISH KHARE who was recently in Srinagar.

pleaded: "Let's call the martyr a witness to our resolve never to betray this sacrifice. Let us not trade martyrs' sacrifice for roads, ration cards and Government jobs." Syed Geelani and his kind are refusing to see the reality of the Kashmiri people's hunger for normality and for rebuilding their devastated economy, and for rediscovering the lost social harmony. Civil society seems increasingly anxious to get on with the job of peaceful reconstruction.

The markets are bursting at the seams not only in downtown Srinagar, but also in smaller cities; cosmetics, electric appliances, readymade garments and other wares are available in abundance. There is a construction boom. The buildings which were torched in the early 1990s and stood for years as witness to the unsettledness of the age have been converted into jazzy shopping arcades, the new monuments to middle class yearnings. For the less well-placed, pirated cassettes of Bombay films are available with the vendors at Lal Chowk, the heart of downtown Srinagar.

Travel out of Srinagar and you can see prosperous-looking houses under construction on both sides of the highway. The marriage season is on and throughout the Valley elaborate *wazzwans* (formal Kashmiri dinners) are being hosted; the other day the marriage of a daughter



An Armyman holds up a mortar launcher used to counter artillery fire from across the Line of Control.

many as 40 Kashmiri Pandits (from Jammu).

There are other signs of normality too. An Urdu *mushaira* took place in Srinagar after a gap of 14 years. An all-India police football tournament was organised in Srinagar and, according to one local newspaper, about 20,000 people attended the final. Banks have relaxed loaning norms; a lok adalat in Bandipora settled 49 civil and criminal cases in a day; the district administration in Srinagar advertises in newspapers the days of "public hearing" of grievances. "Before 1996, a political activist heard only one kind of grievance. 'Our boy has been picked up by the security forces; please have him released.' Today, I am flooded with demands for ration shops, water connections, sewage, and other civic amenities," points out Mr. Ajay Sadhota, Minister for Food and Civil Supplies in the Farooq Abdullah Government.

Amid these outbreaks of normality, violence remains unabated. Unsentimental strategists continue to plan and execute violence with clinical detachment. There seems to be an unending supply of militant cadres, young and impressionable, only too eager to be tutored in the art of bomb-making and planting IEDs, trained to handle all the accoutrements of a terrorist. On the other hand, up at the army brigade headquarters, excited colonels and excitable majors plan on how to hunt, trap and

kill these practitioners of violence; the "agencies" on both sides of the Line of Control are busy bribing and counter-bribing the "guides" who chaperone clutches of "boys" safely across to the nearest bus stop in the Valley. The thoroughly brutalised brass on both sides keep on experimenting with young lives. The people of Kashmir, in whose name every antagonist pretends to be shedding blood, are thoroughly tired of this ritualised violence.

While the "boys" and uniformed men and officers continue to lose their lives the political crowd merrily keeps on trying to encash these deaths. Individually each of the "movement" leaders would want to maximise his leverage and position in any peace initiative; but collectively the Hurriyat Conference remain a divided house, and can agree only or sabotaging the peace. Only Mr. Shabi Shah diligently maintains grassroot contacts throughout Jammu and Kashmir, and keeps talking the traditional language of inclusiveness.

Dr. Farooq Abdullah and his National Conference crowd would publicly welcome the peace process, but privately resent New Delhi trying to talk to those officially branded terrorists, that too at the expense of "Farooq Saheb", who had stood by India in good times and bad.

The Congress(I) remains defunct as ever; the only noise the Congressmen make is when they quarrel among themselves. Among the non-Hurriyat voices, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed and his intrepid daughter, Ms. Mehbooba Mufti, continue to keep up the democratic discourse.

For now, there is an elaborate stalemate. Unless the "outsiders" somehow intervene to unhinge this structured stalemate, there is no respite from clinical, uninvolved violence. The only indeterminate variable is how desperate is the Hizbul Mujahideen's old and tired leadership for peace and power, and whether this leadership is intelligent enough to short-circuit the ISI strategy of marginalising this group in the scheme of things in the Valley.

Even the die-hard pro-Pakistan Syed Geelani cannot be delighted about the latest ISI stratagem of pitting the Islamabad-based, newly-devised Kashmir Jihad Committee, with Qazi Hussain of Pakistan's Jamat-e-Islami as the final word in "policy", leaving only operational autonomy to the Hizbul Mujahideen. The 12-member Kashmir Jihad Committee, formed on September 1 at Mansora (in POK), is a device to virtually dry up the Hizb's political options.

On its part, the Vajpayee Government is unable to think its way out of the stalemate; it neither has the political leeway nor the imagination to put its past behind it and to strike a bold compromise. That puts the onus on the Kashmiris themselves to see how best to salvage their lives and inner space from the encroachments made by the security forces and the "movement-wallahs". On latest evidence, the Valley is slowly learning the trick.

THE HINDU

21 OCT 2001

Divide and Rue

Towards Polarisation in Jammu & Kashmir

By AMITABH MATTOO

11-12 8/10
A visit to Jammu and Kashmir is a reminder that one of the most vital parts of the Union of India continues to remain seeped in despair. Today, however, there is a dangerous new tendency, backed by powerful forces, that is demanding a trifurcation of the main regions of the state, Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, into separate administrative units.

Posing as an imaginative solution, this demand, if conceded, could lead to violent social disruptions in the state and create a communal polarisation that would not just irretrievably destroy the cultural and social fabric of the state, but have dire consequences for communal relations in the rest of India. In addition, trifurcation would forever end the possibilities of reviving the plural traditions of communal harmony in the state that had once made it a symbol of the very idea of India.

The demand for a division of the state, per se, is not new. The UN mediator Sir Owen Dixon had recommended a partition of the state in 1950, and elements within the Praja Parishad agitation of the early 1950s had also sought that Ladakh and Jammu be detached from the Valley if full integration of the state was not achieved quickly. But, in its new avatar, several factors have coalesced to produce a potentially explosive situation.

The most important is the widespread feeling within Jammu and Leh of deprivation as well as political and economic discrimination by politicians from Kashmir. While this feeling of deprivation may have some grounds, it is being exploited by sectarian political groups who are demanding separate statehood for Jammu and Union Territory status for Leh. They argue that separation from Kashmir will ensure better governance, more economic opportunities and a greater share of political power for Jammu and Leh besides helping them to distance themselves from the militancy. In its most extreme form, ideologues of this demand suggest that it is in the national interest to limit the area of operations of the security forces.

This logic is dangerous for at least four reasons. First, trifurcation will destroy the composite identity of the state, which has existed as one unit since 1846, and send a dangerous message to the whole nation. If Hindus, Muslims and Buddhists cannot live together in one state, can they do so in a larger entity? Second, it will most probably lead to a transfer of Muslims from various parts of Jammu and also Doda

Rajouri and Poonch, assuming that the whole province is made into a separate state. Finally, it will lead to such deep communal polarisation that bloody communal riots will inevitably follow.

Two factors have fuelled these regional tensions. First is the Regional Autonomy Committee (RAC) report released by the state government in April 1999. Vastly different in scope and imagination from the State Autonomy Committee (SAC) Report, the RAC recommends the reconstitution of Jammu and Kashmir's existing provinces into eight new ones. The most controversial part of the recommendations is the manner in which Jammu province is sought to be broken up along communal lines. All Muslim majority areas are sought to be detached from Jammu ostensibly because they share a different ethno-linguistic character. Although the report is only recommendatory, it has creat-

even Kargil. While the report argues that areas outside the Valley have been included because these areas are imbued with the cultural traditions of Kashmir, it is no coincidence that all parts included are Muslim majority areas. Interestingly, Kathwari, who for most of this decade was persona non grata in India, was given a visa to visit Jammu and Kashmir, earlier this year.

Regional harmony, it should be clear from experience, cannot be ensured through partitions, but through a decentralisation and devolution of financial and economic power that will treat the panchayat as the primary unit of governance. Jammu and Kashmir is not Assam or Uttar Pradesh where the carving out of smaller states will provide for better governance; in fact, it is a recipe for disaster.

In addition, two recommendations made by a non-governmental committee, which included former foreign secretary Salman Haider and Jammu-based academic Rekha Chowdhary are worth considering. First, the central government, taking cognizance of the serious situation prevailing in the state, must constitute a special task force which is dedicated full time to Jammu and Kashmir. The task force must be made responsible for initiating and furthering a political dialogue and monitoring and assisting in governance and developmental activities.

Second, given the urgent need to help bridge the suspicions and mistrust that have developed between different regions and groups, the state government must take immediate steps to help restore trust and confidence among various regions and ethnic groups in the state. It could also constitute a state task force to facilitate a comprehensive dialogue within Jammu Kashmir.

Finally, the return of Kashmiri Pandits to the Valley is crucial for the revitalisation of the traditions of pluralism and communal harmony. A visit to Pandit camps near Jammu indicates that there is still a deep desire to go back to Kashmir, and that the values of Kashmiriyat are, by and large, still intact. It is unfortunate and irresponsible, therefore, for Dr Farooq Abdullah to have suggested recently that Kashmiri Pandits do not want to return to the Valley because they were full of resentment against the Kashmiri Muslims and because they had found better opportunities elsewhere.

(The author is chairperson, Centre for International Politics, Organisation and Disarmament, JNU)

IN BRIEF

- Trifurcation of the main regions of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, if it comes about, could have dangerous consequences
- It will send out the signal that the government is seeking to increase the political marginalisation of Jammu
- Regional harmony cannot be ensured through partitions
- The return of Kashmiri Pandits is crucial for the revitalisation of pluralism and communal harmony

ed an impression within Jammu that the state government is seeking to increase its political marginalisation even further.

The second is the controversial Kashmir Study Group Report, *Kashmir: A Way Forward*, released in February 2000. Chaired by an American businessman of Kashmiri origin, Farooq Kathwari, the members of the Study Group included a number of prominent South Asian academics and diplomats from the US and Europe and three prominent American Congressmen. Painstaking in its details, the report suggests, as one of its plans, the creation of a hypothetical Kashmiri state, sovereign but without an international personality, which includes not only the Kashmir Valley, but also Doda and potentially Gool Gulab Garh tahsil of Udhampur as well as Poonch and Rajouri (all within Jammu) and

Govt. ready for talks with militants: Advani

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, OCT. 20. The Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani today claimed that the security forces have "neutralised" as many as 1,210 militants in Jammu and Kashmir. This high score, the Home Minister attributed to the greater coordination between the security forces, and cited this figure as the evidence of the vigour and success of the Vajpayee Government's all-out offensive against cross-border terrorism.

Addressing the members of the Consultative Committee of his Ministry, Mr. Advani pointed out that the figure this year was higher than militants killed in any calendar year since 1996.

He informed Parliamentarians that the Government was prepared to hold talks with the militants provided they gave up arms and came to the negotiating table. Mr. Advani said, he and the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, would be visiting Srinagar on October 22, to make an on-the-spot assessment of the situation.

Mr. Advani pointed out stating that major countries such as the U.S., Canada, Britain, France and Israel had agreed to set up Joint Working Groups with India to tackle cross-border terrorism.

He also defended the Government's decision to reject the autonomy resolution adopted by the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, arguing that accepting it would have meant a return to the

pre-1953 status which was unacceptable to the Centre. His remarks came following observations by some members that the resolution should not have been rejected outright. Nonetheless, Mr. Advani said, the Centre, had an open mind on greater devolution of powers to States including Jammu and Kashmir which would lead to efficiency in administration and faster development.

The members, while taking note of the steps taken to check militancy in Jammu and Kashmir, cautioned the Government against complacency in this regard. They also suggested that the situation in the State should also be tackled through economic development and social upliftment of people.

The Home Minister assured Parliamentarians that their suggestions would be taken into consideration to further improve the situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

PTI reports:

The Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, tonight welcomed the reported move by some Kashmiri militant groups including the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen about jointly floating a political party to contest the next Assembly elections in 2002.

"I welcome the move and pray that good sense should prevail upon all militant groups so that the ethos of Kashmir is restored," Dr. Abdullah said.

THE HINDU

2002

Advani rules out trifurcation of J&K

SRINAGAR, OCT. 22. The Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, tonight rejected the RSS demand for the trifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir saying the Centre was not in favour of division of the border State.

"We have made it amply clear so many times that we think the State as a whole should be thought of and we do not favour trifurcation," he told presspersons after attending meetings of the Unified Headquarters, which is dealing with militancy, and State legislators here along with the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, and the Chief Minister, Mr. Farooq Abdullah.

The RSS leader in charge of Kashmir affairs, Mr. Indresh, had recently asked the Chief Minister to bring a resolution in the State Assembly for trifurcation of the State, saying there was both logic and merit in such a move.

Referring to the two meetings, Mr. Advani said they briefed him

and Mr. Fernandes with the problems being faced by the people, the security forces and the Government.

"The meetings also gave us a sense of satisfaction that the State Government and the security forces have once again secured an upper hand against militants in the State," he said.

At the Unified Command meeting, all the three Corps commanders, gave a candid assessment of the situation they were facing. The Director General of Police also gave an account on the contribution of the State police in the battle against militancy. On the role of the State police, Mr. Advani said, "in the north-east and Jammu and

Kashmir where we have this problem of militancy, the ultimate analysis is that it is the State Government and the State police which have been the principal contributors in the battle against militants." He said that in the course of the discussions it was emphasised by everyone that the fight against militancy should be accompanied by acceleration of the development process. The third step had to be State's willingness to hold a dialogue with the elements willing to leave aside their arms and come to the negotiating table," he said.

On talks with militants, Mr. Advani said though Pakistan subverted the talks, "the longing for peace among common people on both sides of the border has become very conspicuous." The incident also demonstrated that India was keen to free the region from violence and anarchy "inflicted on us from across the border," he added. — PTI

President watches 'Mission Kashmir'

NEW DELHI, OCT. 22. Taking time off his hectic schedule, the President, Mr. K. R. Narayanan, along with the first family watched Vidhu Vinod Chopra's Bollywood thriller 'Mission Kashmir' at a special screening at the Rashtrapati Bhawan here last evening.

The film's producer-director, Vidhu Vinod Chopra and the movie's star cast including Hrithik Roshan, Sanjay Dutt and Sonali Kulkarni specially flew down from Mumbai for the exclusive screening. "It took us a whole day to put up the show. We had to instal the DTS as the sound system and the projector in use at the President's house is of Lord Mountbatten vintage," Chopra told reporters later. The Kashmir-born filmmaker said the first family was quite impressed by the film, which he described as an "effort to say what is Kashmiriyat (the Kashmiri identity)." — PTI

THE HINDU

23 OCT 2000

Pak facing global isolation on Kashmir

H BULA DEVI
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

FRANCE RULES OUT MILITARY SOLUTION

NEW DELHI, Oct. 26. — There is mounting global pressure on Pakistan to stop cross-border terrorism, following India's deft handling of the Kargil situation on the diplomatic front. The USA, Russia and Britain have already asked Pakistan to stop its offensive posturings. The country has also been expelled from Commonwealth. Now, France, a major EU nation, has asked Pakistan's military regime to use its influence and rein in the militants fighting in Kashmir.

Pakistan is a major buyer of French military hardware, but this has not stopped the French Ambassador to Islamabad, Mr Yannick Gerard, from asking Pakistan to create a suitably congenial atmosphere so that a dialogue may be resumed with India to solve the Kashmir issue in the spirit of the Lahore declaration.

Pakistan has purchased Exocet missiles and Agosta submarines and a lot of other military hardware from France. But the French stand clearly indicates that it has been consistent in making its political formulation, telling Pakistan that there can be no "military solution" to the conflict over Kashmir.

Mr Gerard reportedly said at a seminar in Lahore that the EU had been urging both nations since the Kargil conflict to respect the Line of Control, agree to cessation of firing and end violence to create a congenial atmosphere necessary for peace.

India, on its part, despite pressure from various countries to hold a dialogue with Pakistan, has stuck to its position that internal security of the nation is its top priority, and no dialogue with Pakistan is possible unless it stops cross-

border terrorism and creates a congenial atmosphere.

Interrogation of arrested militants has proved how these were sponsored by the ISI with help from terrorist groups. The major incidents which have proved the point include IC 814 hijack on 22 December last year, the brutal killing of 35 male members of the Sikh community in Chattisingpora village in Anantnag on 20 March this year and the Kothi Bagh bomb blast in Srinagar on 10 August.

A confidential home ministry says: "Today Gen. Pervez Musharraf is facing increasing difficulties, both internally in Pakistan and internationally, there is a possibility that a frustrated and desperate general may resort increasingly to bolder anti-Indian activities as diversionary tactics" and the SFs and intelligence agencies are alert against such possibilities.

India's concern over Kashmir is obvious. In the past decade, Pakistan-sponsored militancy has officially taken a toll of 24,000 lives. According to the report, about 1,500-2,000 foreign mercenaries are active in Jammu and Kashmir. They have been "pushed in by Pakistan to retain control on the flagging militancy".

Expressing concern over the situation, the report says these mercenaries "mainly belong to Pakistan, PoK and Afghanistan" which highlights the "alarming role" being played by Pakistan as a centre for Islamic fundamentalists.

Pakistan has drawn on its experience in Afghanistan to wage a systematic, low-intensity war in J&K, home ministry officials say. Its tactic has been to employ foreign mercenaries and militants from Pakistan or PoK, encourage exfiltration of youth to PoK or Pakistan, train them and send them back with arms and ammunition.

THE STATESMAN

27 OCT 2000

Lack of co-ordination between PMO, MHA killed talks

Bharti Jain
NEW DELHI 13 AUGUST

THE COLLAPSE of peace talks with the Hizbul Mujahideen has brought to the fore the lack of coordination between the PMO and the home ministry, with the latter blaming South Block for the goof-up in assessing the mood within the militant outfit.

Highly placed sources in the MHA maintained that it would not have been easy for Pakistan to sabotage the peace process but for a combination of three factors — haste on the part of some agencies to get the talks going (possibly to time them with the Prime Minister's September visit to the US), insufficient groundwork by the intelligence agencies and a completely wrong assessment by them on how the Hizb leadership would behave during the course of the peace process.

Although the ceasefire between the government and the Hizb could not be sustained due to Pakistani pressure, the home ministry believes the undue haste and eagerness on the part of the PMO to appropriate credit only facilitated its derailment.

The charge about the haste will have favourable reception in the quarters which believe that the PMO was in a rush to show a good balance sheet before the PM's US visit in September.

Those who believe in this US connection theory point to the involvement of the US citizens belonging to the so-called Kashmir Study Group. Two representatives of the group had visited Islamabad to persuade Hizb supreme com-

mander Syed Salahuddin soon after he decided to play spoilsport.

The war of words between North Block and South Block — which is reminiscent of the bad blood created during the government's mismanagement of the Kandahar hijack episode — has also focused on the failure to get Salahuddin out of Pakistan.

The failure of RAW to shift him out of Pakistan ensured that he remained vulnerable to pressure from the Pakistani military

chief commander Abdul Majid Dar from PoK to Srinagar by a commercial flight via Dubai. The other divisional commanders were brought via Nepal.

Although there was a plan to bring over Salahuddin, the failure to do so has raised doubts in the MHA about whether it was the intelligence agencies which could not persuade him to cross over.

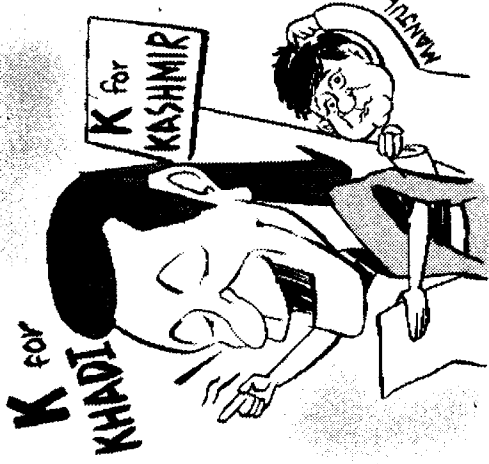
It was only after the Hizb conveyed its decision to announce the ceasefire that the Intelligence Bureau, which is controlled by the home ministry, came into the picture.

Intelligence inputs on goings-on within the Hizb were being directly sent to the PMO and North Block was only left to go by the assessments that came up during Cabinet meetings. All this, when the task of talking to the militants was entrusted to the Union home secretary.

Though Hizb leaders, who met the home secretary, gave the impression that they were willing to give peace a chance, the later developments placed as unfounded the intelligence agencies' assessment that time was ripe to start a dialogue.

MHA is critical of the undue haste shown by the intelligence agencies, allegedly under pressure from the PMO, to start the talks without assessing the support base of Majid Dar, his equation with Salahuddin and the hold of Hizb interlocutor Qureshi, a Hurriyat loyalist, on the commanders.

The agencies also could not provide correct inputs on how the Hizb would behave once the ceasefire came into being and the talks got underway.



bosses.

If the MHA sources are to be believed, the North Block bosses were never informed about the approaching ceasefire, although they knew that RAW had been in touch with the Hizb leadership for the last one year. The home ministry is said to have learnt of the Hizb offer as late as July 20, four days before the ceasefire was actually announced.

Of course, before that the intelligence agencies — with the PMO's blessings — had arranged for the crossing over of the outfit's

INDIA STILL OPEN FOR DIALOGUE: ADVANI

Situation in Kashmir changing rapidly: PM

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, AUG. 17. Reiterating that India wanted peace in Jammu and Kashmir, the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, today blamed Pakistan for exercising its influence for withdrawal of the ceasefire that derailed the recent peace process.

Sounding a note of caution to Pakistan, Mr. Vajpayee told a meeting of the BJP Parliamentary Party here, "we are fully ready to deal with any kind of situation effectively." In his Independence Day address, he had said that while on the one hand Pakistan proclaimed its readiness for dialogue, on the other it aided and abetted cross-border terrorism.

Admitting that the situation was "rapidly changing" he said instances of infighting among militant groups had come to light, referring to the recent clash between the Pakistan-backed Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen cadres in Rajouri district.

Several party MPs suggested that, perhaps, the information flow about incidents in Jammu and Kashmir had not been handled properly by the Government.

Briefing reporters later, the party spokesperson, Mr. M. Venkaiah Naidu, said several MPs felt "positive aspects" of the security forces' preventive action in the State often went unreported as also incidents of village defence committees effectively handling dangers posed by the militants.

While incidents of militants' strikes got wide publicity, attempts by the security forces to defuse bombs, seizure of explosives and encounters with militants were not given similar

exposure. The manner in which MPs raised the issue seemed to suggest that there was dissatisfaction in the BJP over the handling of the Kashmir affairs by the Prime Minister's Office and the Union Home Ministry.

Responding to the MPs' concerns, the Prime Minister said the media was free to report the events from its perspective. He, however, refrained from spelling out any corrective steps being contemplated by the Government. Earlier, the Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, said the Government was still open to talks with all those in Kashmir who shunned the path of terror and violence.

Mr. Advani assured the MPs at-

tached to the Consultative Committee for Home Affairs that the Government would continue efforts to bring normality to the border State through dialogue.

Referring to the withdrawal of the ceasefire by the Hizb, he said the State's people were "extremely unhappy" over the prospects of peace being sabotaged by Pakistan.

'Ban Deendar Anjuman'

The members of the Committee were almost unanimous in their demand for banning the Deendar. Mr. G. M. Banatwalla, Mirza Abdul Rashid and Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad, said the Deendar had nothing to do with the Muslim community and demanded that its activities be fully exposed.

Efforts on to resume talks: Qureshi

SRINAGAR, AUG. 17. Mr. Fazal-ul-Haq Qureshi, who participated in talks with the Centre as Hizb-ul-Mujahideen's emissary before the ceasefire, said efforts were on in India and Pakistan to resume dialogue between the Centre and separatist groups.

He said future dialogue would be held between New Delhi and Hizb and other militant groups would join when the dialogue reached at a "certain point", Mr. Qureshi told reporters here on Wednesday. Stating that it was not practical to include Pakistan in the initial dialogue process, he said there should be some agreement to associate Islamabad when the talks reached a "certain stage". — PTI

B. Muralidhar Reddy reports from Islamabad:

The Hizb has disowned the statement made by Mr. Qureshi that the militants could consider resumption of negotiations with the Indian Government without insisting on involvement of Pakistan in the first phase. A spokesman of the Hizb said there was no change in the stance of his organisation that there could be no dialogue on Kashmir without involvement of Pakistan and the negotiations would have to be outside the purview of the Indian Constitution.

"These were the two points on which we insisted and when the Indian Government failed to respond to our demand, we called off the ceasefire. Whatever Mr. Qureshi has said is in his individual capacity," the spokesman added.

18 OCT 2001

A diplomatic track on Kashmir

By C. Raja Mohan

AS PAKISTAN responds with bloody violence to the Indian initiative for a political reconciliation in Kashmir, there will be a strong temptation in New Delhi to call off the figdlig peace process. The Government has wisely resisted that so far. While continuing to engage the militant groups in the Valley, India needs to step up its diplomatic efforts to rally international opinion behind its peace initiative in Kashmir. If New Delhi is bold enough, it could attempt to exploit the long-standing international concerns about Kashmir to find a lasting solution to a dispute that has become a festering sore on India's body politic and undermined New Delhi's larger ambitions in the global arena.

Any suggestion of adding a diplomatic track to India's internal efforts in Srinagar is bound to draw a howl of protests about the dangers of "internationalising" the Kashmir dispute. Having focussed for decades on a "bilateral" solution to the Kashmir dispute with Pakistan and devoted its diplomatic energies to preventing an international intervention in the Valley, can India rethink its diplomatic strategy on Kashmir? But the time for a reassessment of India's external strategy on Kashmir may be now. A number of factors make it an urgent imperative. Islamabad has always argued that "bilateralism" will never be able to resolve the Indo-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir, and that either third party mediation or international intervention is necessary to resolve the dispute. India on the other hand has insisted on bilateralism. But can India move away from its diplomatic postures of the past?

Any honest assessment of the bilateralism of the past will reveal its many shortcomings. Take the most recent case of the Lahore initiative. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, went to Lahore in February 1999 to inject new life into the on-again, off-again bilateral Indo-Pakistan talks at the level of Foreign Secretaries. Mr. Vajpayee got an agreement in Lahore that the two sides would pursue an approach in which there would be a discussion of the Kashmir issue and simultaneously other issues, including bilateral cooperation, were to be addressed. But within weeks India had to go to war to vacate the Pakis-

10-12
Q In shaping an external component to its policy on Kashmir, New Delhi needs to clearly define the likely outcomes and the boundary conditions to the process.

tani aggression in the Kargil sector. The lesson for India from Lahore is simple — Islamabad has no desire to respect any bilateral agreements with India. Nor is it interested in any serious peace process. Its approach is rooted in the belief that a total victory in Kashmir is possible through the low cost campaign of terrorism and destabilisation.

If Pakistan is not keen on travelling together with India in promoting regional peace and prosperity, is New Delhi in a position to unilaterally impose a solution on Pakistan? If India had the power to do so, nothing could have been better. But any honest answer to the question will have to be in the negative. India does not have the

WORLD VIEW

judgment of the possible results from that process.

In any reconsideration of Indian diplomacy on Kashmir, the key factor will be an understanding of the changing international equations and how they affect the interests of New Delhi and Islamabad. Over the last decade, much has changed in great power relations with India and Pakistan. Thanks to the end of the Cold War, there is a new bonhomie between India and the West, the United States in particular. From a "zero-sum" approach during the Cold War, the U.S. and other Western nations are developing their separate policies towards the subcontinental rivals on the basis of the inherent interests in both countries. India's rapid economic growth in the 1990s, and the endemic financial crisis in Pakistan have begun to differentiate the Western policies towards the two nations, Pakistan's drift towards extremist policies has also alarmed the major powers and many of Islamabad's neighbours.

As India looks at the outlines of a diplomatic strategy to complement its peace initiative in Kashmir, two important factors stand out. First, whether India likes it or not, the international community is concerned about the situation in Kashmir. The worries that the Indo-Pakistan ten-

sions over Kashmir could erupt into a conventional conflict and escalate quickly into a nuclear one continue to drive those policies towards the subcontinent. But India does not have to necessarily start with the assumption that the West will inevitably be hostile towards Indian interests in Kashmir. In fact, the Kargil crisis saw an important shift in the U.S. approach, which forced Pakistan to unconditionally and unilaterally withdraw from across the Line of Control. Since then the U.S. has argued that the status quo in Kashmir cannot be changed by use of force. During his visit to the subcontinent, the American president, Mr. Bill Clinton, warned Pakistan against attempts to "redraw borders in blood". The diplomatic challenge before India is to move beyond the traditional posturing against "internationalisation" of the Kashmir dispute and look at ways of using global concerns about a nuclear flashpoint to its own advantage.

Second, the emphasis of India must be more on political outcomes rather than on the process alone. The results from the incipient peace process are more important than the mechanics of it. This does not mean, however, that India would accept externally dictated solutions in Kashmir. In shaping an external component to its policy on Kashmir, New Delhi needs to clearly define the likely outcomes and the boundary conditions to the process.

The tendency to avoid thinking about final solutions to the Kashmir problem has not served India well. India needs to develop some clarity on both the eventual destination of its Kashmir policy and on how to get there. Elsewhere on the diplomatic front, decisiveness has helped India overcome many of its long-standing dilemmas. The Government has acted boldly to end the protracted nuclear ambiguity. It is also pressing China to accelerate the talks resolving the prolonged boundary dispute. There may be room now for a similar imaginative approach on Kashmir. A serious diplomatic effort aimed at addressing these issues that have hobbled India throughout the last half a century can only be beneficial. After all, diplomacy is about problem-solving and not political posturing.

18 INJURED IN GRENADE ATTACK

Hizb, villagers attack Lashkar hideout

By Our Special Correspondent

SRINAGAR, AUG. 16. Three militants were killed in a clash between the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen in Rajouri district while nine others, including a Hizb district commander, were killed in various militancy-related incidents across the Kashmir Valley since Tuesday morning. Eighteen civilians were injured in a grenade attack at Bijbehara in Anantnag district this morning.

The DIG, Rajouri-Poonch range, Mr. Ram Lubhaya, said, "the infighting between the two groups, which had been raging for quiet some time reached its peak following the killing of a religious leader, Haji Mumtaz, in Mehrot village last month."

"The killing was strongly resented by the people of the village as well as the Hizb militants," Mr. Lubhaya told *The Hindu* over the phone from Rajouri. According to him, a group of Lashkar militants beat up Haji Lal Hussain of Mehrot village during the intervening night of August 14 and 15, accusing him of supporting Army and police operations in the village.

Taking strong exception to the attack on Hussain, several Hizb militants joined by a group of villagers attacked a Lashkar hideout at Nikki Mori Dok, around 75 km from Rajouri town, on Monday and smashed it.

A fierce gun battle ensued and was continuing when the last reports came in, the DIG said adding that two Lashkar militants and one Hizb member were killed in the exchange of fire. A villager, Mr. Majid Gujjar, was injured in the encounter.

Four Lashkar militants had managed to flee, Mr. Lubhaya said adding that the clashes were the outcome of the "relentless operations by police and 'Romeo Force' as the militants had resorted to harassing people as also the local militants".

Reports said Army personnel had reached the area but were yet to begin any operation.

In Kupwara, Hizb militants intensified attacks against the security forces. According to Mr. Dilbagh Singh, DIG of Baramulla-Kupwara range, an encounter with security forces at Magam near Handwara resulted in the deaths of the Hizb district commander, Nazir Ahmed Wani alias Nissar, and platoon commander, Mohammad Sidiq. Nazir was said to be in charge of Kupwara district, Mr. Singh said.

At the Ragni post in Karnah near the Line of Control an unidentified militant was killed by security forces while two militants were slain in a clash with security forces in the Rangabal Machil sector.

Two civilians of the Machil Squad, who were assisting security forces in operations, were also killed. In Wularhama of north Kashmir, unidentified gunmen shot dead two civilians — Nasrullah Lone and Salam Mir — in their own houses, police said.

Militants lobbed a grenade at a security forces vehicle at Bijbehara on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway.

The grenade missed the intended target and exploded on the road injuring 18 persons. They were immediately rushed to the hospital, where the condition of one was said to be critical.

THE HINDU

17 OCT 2000

ISI sets ultras on pro-peace mates

51-6 16/10

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, Oct. 15. — The Inter-Services Intelligence, in an effort to take over control of Hizbul Mujahideen in Jammu and Kashmir, is believed to have asked militants of various other outfits to target "elements" favouring a peace process.

The killing of Abdul Majid Dar's close aide Noor-ul-Amin was part of the ISI plan to eliminate militants who favour a ceasefire, sources said.

Indian security agencies are keeping a close watch on the activities of militants, besides giving a "shadow cover" to likely targets, officials said.

A Jamaat-e-Islamia cadre, Noor-ul-Amin was shot in Baramulla, north Kashmir. He had openly supported Dar's desire for peace when he announced a unilateral ceasefire on 24 July, sources said, quoting wireless intercepts and revelations by arrested militants.

Pakistan has already taken over command of the Hizbul on its side of the border, by handing it over to the Jamaat, an outfit loyal to Islamabad. It is now reported to be working towards a similar "take-over" on this side of the border.

More attacks like the one on Amin are feared in Kashmir valley. Threats to people like Mr Fazalul Haq Qureshi, the official interlocutor appointed by the Hizbul for talks with the Centre during its unilateral ceasefire offer in July, have increased.

Mr Qureshi, who declined the offer of security cover by the Jammu and Kashmir government, has since been shifting from one place to another, the sources added.



Mr Farooq Abdullah sings a ghazal at a function to celebrate four years of his government. In Srinagar on Sunday. — API/PTI

The sources said even Hurriyat leaders could be targets as some militants would try to target them and later put the blame on security forces.

Hurriyat leaders have refused to accept security cover but the state government still deploys guards outside the residence of these leaders, who also tail them whenever necessary. This is yet another indication that Pakistan has lost confidence in this year, Hizbul's self-styled chief Syed

Kashmiris and is now relying more on foreign mercenaries. The sources said that though Majid Dar's offer for a ceasefire had come as a surprise, reports had suggested that Hizbul was at loggerheads with ISI, especially after the formation of Maulana Masood Azhar's Jaish-e-Mohammed.

The sources quoted reports saying that in June this year, Hizbul's self-styled chief Syed

Salahuddin had a heated argument with the ISI and Pakistani army for dumping the Kashmiris.

The Hizb 'take-over' in Pakistan

The Hizbul has denied reports of the take-over in Pakistan. But recent media reports indicate that the takeover has been effective on the ground.

A fight between the two factions of Hizbul in Kotil district of Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir has not just resulted in dozens of casualties within the cadres of the two factions, but also claimed the lives of three local citizens, The Friday Times has reported.

The fighting began when Jamaat leader, Rashid Turabi tried to replace Masood Sarfaraz, a Hizbul commander. The weekly quoted sources in the PoK Jamaat as saying that a number of complaints — ranging from arbitrary use of funds to mismanagement in the training camps — against Sarfaraz prompted Turabi to replace him. Sarfaraz, the weekly said, is a nephew of so-called former president of PoK, Sardar Sikander Hayat, who had helped the Hizbul commander in carving out a separate niche for himself.

The Friday Times described the increase in armed groups fighting in Kashmir as signs of indiscipline, a phenomenon that had already been witnessed in Afghanistan at one stage in the development of its resistance movement earlier against the soviets.

Experts warn that sustenance of armed groups and the tendency of Intelligence agencies to control them by creating and encouraging splits can lead to more such ~~fightings~~ in the future, the weekly said.

'No talks without Pakistan'; 6 gunned down in Rajouri

Qureshi cannot speak for Hizbul, says Salahuddin

DPA, SNS, PTI & UNI

ISLAMABAD, Aug. 18. — Syed Salahuddin, Pakistan-based Hizbul Mujahideen supreme commander, today disowned Fazl Haq Qureshi's statement that the outfit could consider resumption of talks with New Delhi without insisting on Pakistan's inclusion in the initial phase.

"Qureshi has no right to issue any statement on Hizbul's behalf," Salahuddin said in a statement here, insisting that Pakistan should be involved in any future talks.

He said the Hizbul had only two spokesmen — Saleem Hashmi and commander Masood. "Nobody else has either the right or authority to speak on behalf of Hizbul Mujahideen," he said.

Salahuddin said: "The principled stand of the Hizbul is crystal clear. We consider Kashmir as a dispute between three parties — India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir. There could be a progress if India is ready to accept this reality." Qureshi was the Hizbul negotiator during talks with New Delhi.

In Srinagar, Qureshi told **The Statesman** early today that Salahuddin had been awaiting the Indian government's response to his "renewed proposal" for a comprehensive ceasefire in which other militant outfits, besides the Hizbul, would participate.

"I have been directed by Syed Salahuddin over the telephone that I should persuade the gov-

ernment of India to agree to his revised ceasefire proposal which includes granting assurance to the Hizbul for the inclusion of Pakistan at a later stage after a dialogue between New Delhi and other militant commanders is started," the People's Political Front president said.

Salahuddin's offer has much weight this time as he is in touch with other militant outfits at his base camp in

HURRIYAT FORMULA

SRINAGAR, Aug. 18. — The Hurriyat Conference chief, Prof Abdul Ghani Bhat, has offered a new formula — to form two groups of APHC leaders for talks with Indian and Pakistani governments to find out a solution to the Kashmir problem. "...The bigger group of four will talk to leaders in New Delhi and the smaller one to the leaders in Islamabad. I believe this can take shape," Prof Ghani said here. — UNI

Pakistan, Qureshi said at his residence at Soura in Srinagar.

Qureshi, hopeful about resumption of the dialogue that collapsed on 8 August, said the interruption in the peace process was temporary. He said he had communicated Salahuddin's offer to the Indian government and that the ball now lay in its court. He said there was no alternative now except to accept the offer.

It would be quite unfortunate if the Indian government did not accept or sit on the offer,

Mr Qureshi said. "One should understand the position of Syed Salahuddin as he is in that part of Kashmir which is controlled by Pakistan."

Asked why the talks broke down, Qureshi said the Hurriyat Conference was responsible for it to a great extent.

APHC's negative response to the peace process sent a wrong message across the border. "Aur aap ko to pata hai ISI ke bare mai (you already know about the ISI)", said Qureshi.

Killings: Militants shot dead six people and injured seven in Sankri village in Rajouri district last night, a report from Jammu said.

Even as the authorities imposed an indefinite curfew in Rajouri town soon after the incident, a mob protesting against the killings attacked a convoy of officials injuring an assistant commissioner and set ablaze the vehicle of the deputy commissioner.

OIC members: Many members of the Organisation of Islamic Conference do not support Pakistan's "propaganda" projecting Kashmir as an Islamic issue, Dr Ahmed Qurie, speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, said today.

Dr Qurie told Mrs Najma Heptulla in Delhi that the OIC members supported India's stand on Kashmir.

'No hot pursuit': The External Affairs Minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, told the Lok Sabha today that India was not following hot pursuit policy to attack terrorist camps across the LoC in Pakistan.

THE STATESMAN

19 OCT 2000

Devolution not division

Advani is right to veto the proposal to carve up J&K

FOR some months now a disturbing proposal which contravenes everything that this country stands for has been doing the rounds: The carving up of J&K into three distinct entities comprising the Valley, Jammu and Ladakh. The demand was perceived by most observers as being a communally motivated one, and the fact that the RSS had been one of its prime promoters has only added to the general impression. Union Home Minister L.K. Advani is therefore to be commended for having rejected the proposal outright. In the process, it is to be hoped, he has also nipped in the bud potentially inflammatory campaigns along these lines.

The rationale for the trifurcation of the state is simple. Indeed, it borders on a dangerous oversimplification. Jammu & Kashmir, it is argued, has always lacked organic unity, since the Valley happens to be Muslim dominated; Jammu, Hindu dominated; and Ladakh, Buddhist dominated. What's more, it is the leaders from the Valley who dominate the 87-member Assembly, leaving the political aspirations of the people of Jammu and Ladakh unaddressed. While there may be some validity in these complaints, the answer does not, cannot, lie in slicing up the state like a pie. Earlier this year, politicians from both Jammu and Ladakh had objected stoutly to the Regional Autonomy Commission Report, mooted by the Farooq Abdullah government, on the grounds that it seeks to separate Muslim Kargil from Buddhist Leh and the Hindu-dominated districts of Jammu from the Muslim-domi-

nated ones. Yet, the logic of trifurcation is a similar one. Once religious identity becomes a basis for creating states and sub-states, the whole fabric of a society, already under severe stress, can get torn asunder. As has been argued, time and again, once Jammu comes into being, what is to prevent leaders in Doda, Baderwah, Poonch and Rajouri from demanding their own fiefdoms. Many of them harbour deep grouches, not just against the indifference of Farooq Abdullah and company, but that of Jammu's political big guns as well. In Ladakh, too, the consequences will be similar.

The answer to the state's existential conundrum then lies in encouraging the process of devolution of power within the state — something that the home minister himself had emphasised when he revealed that the Centre had plans to enter into a dialogue on the autonomy issue with the J&K government. Certainly, the Abdullah government's move to hold panchayat elections is a step in the right direction and will help the process of regional devolution considerably. In a state where, as Rajiv Gandhi had once pointed out, only about 15 paise of the development rupee reaches the people it is meant for, the involvement of local communities in the developmental and political activities of the state cannot be emphasised enough. Meanwhile, politicians who have made a fine art of hate politics, whichever community they emanate from, must be firmly kept at bay. The two-nation theory has perpetrated enough damage in the sub-continent. It must not be given another lease of life.

INDIAN EXPRESS

24 OCT 2000



Shabir Ahmad Shah, a Kashmiri separatist leader, kicks a policeman during a demonstration by the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party in Srinagar on Friday. — AP

Shabir Shah

28/10 arrested HD 1
By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, OCT. 27. As most parts of Kashmir Valley observed a general strike called by the All-Party Hurriyat Conference, Mr. Shabir Shah, the president of the Democratic Freedom Party, was arrested today along with 15 supporters from the City. Security forces foiled a major infiltration bid in Kupwara sector and killed six militants.

Life in Srinagar and other parts of Kashmir was affected in view of the strike to protest the "entry of Indian troops in the Valley on this day in 1947." For the last 11 years the separatists have been calling for strike on this day. Shops and other business establishments, schools and banks remained closed. Attendance in Government offices was also thin. However, traffic was plying normally.

Mr. Shabir Shah led a procession of his activists from Lal Chowk protesting against what he called "forcible occupation of Indian troops". They were holding banner and wearing black badges besides moving jointly in one chain. However, police stopped the processionists near the traffic police headquarters.

THE HINDU

28 OCT 2000

Lone straw of hope

Will Hurriyat leaders return with peace offerings?

COULD the frequent flier points notched up by Hurriyat leaders actually be proportional to the chances of reviving the "delayed, not derailed" dialogue between Kashmiri separatist leaders and the Centre initiated earlier this year? At first glance, the equation may seem somewhat unbalanced, but since the season of hope is persisting well beyond the first snowfall in the Valley, it is a tempting line of speculation to pursue. Looked at from a particular angle, the patterns in the kahwa leaves do seem to spell hope. Hope reflected in two conciliatory gestures made by the Indian government. First, two Hurriyat leaders, Mirwaiz Omar Farooq and Abbas Ansari, were accorded permission to attend the Organisation of Islamic Conference summit in Doha earlier this week. Second, the government made official a long overdue sanction to Abdul Ghani Lone to journey to Rawalpindi to attend his son's marriage to JKLF chairman Amanullah Khan's daughter on November 19. But is this mere observance of the constitutional right to freedom of movement or is it part of a wider strategy to rescue the peace process in Jammu and Kashmir?

As with all else in the strife-torn state, according certainty to what is at best speculation can be immensely hazardous. Yet, pronouncements by Hurriyat leaders are heartening, the foremost being their stated perceptions of a healthy shift in New Delhi's policy. Adding import to this is their renewed emphasis on the "Kashmir for Kashmiris" basis of their

movement and the attendant effort to distance themselves from Islamabad. New Delhi cannot but extract optimism from the echoes this week of this Kashmiri-foreigner fissure in the separatist movement. While the OIC once again demonstrated its predilection for issuing condemnatory statements against India, the two Hurriyat leaders present at the summit provided a rare note of caution. Farooq reportedly refused to be drawn into criticism of India, and instead reiterated his case that the solution of the Kashmir imbroglio lay in negotiations. And Lone, whose son's forthcoming nuptials have brightened the prospects of reunifying the "Kashmiri" separatist organisations, too has been making vocal efforts to wipe out any pro-Pakistan stains on the Hurriyat.

Whether all this is enough reason to expect a complete resuscitation of the peace talks by the end of the year is still not clear. For all their conciliatory gestures, Hurriyat leaders attending the Lone-Khan wedding in Pakistan — besides Lone, Farooq and Ansari too will be present — are likely to make some contact, no matter how informal, with the Pakistani government. At the very least, one will have to await their return to determine with even a modicum of certainty what control Islamabad exercises over the Hurriyat leadership. Moreover, given the oneupmanship that ensued when New Delhi agreed to negotiations with the Hizbul Mujahideen this summer, the Hurriyat needs to provide proof of its sincerity by matching its earlier calls for negotiations with a deed or two.

INDIAN EXPRESS

16 NOV 2000

110-14 Why APHC leaders kept off wedding?

By Shujaat Bukhari 20/11

SRINAGAR, NOV. 19. Even as the marriage between Mr. Abdul Gani Lone's son and Mr. Amanullah Khan's daughter received much attention for the fact that the Government of India had to grant permission to Mr. Lone and others to travel to Pakistan, the separatist All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) tried its best to remain aloof.

Notwithstanding Mr. Lone's announcement that the wedding would be solemnised by the former APHC chairman, Mirwaiz Mohammad Umer Farooq, the latter opted out. The Mirwaiz flew to the Qatari capital of Doha for the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) meeting along with another leader, Moulvi Abbas Ansari. Later, they were to fly to Islamabad to attend the marriage, which was solemnised today. However, they returned home giving no reasons from staying away.

Sources said the two leaders had been asked by the Hurriyat high command not to attend the marriage for "political reasons". In an interview, the APHC chairman, Prof. Abdul Gani Butt, said Mr. Lone and the others, who were in Islamabad, had been told to confine themselves to attending the "event".

Sources here revealed that the Hurriyat wanted to be away from the affair for two reasons. The APHC was not in favour of individuals talking to Pakistan — an important party in the Kashmir dispute. Secondly, it did not want to recognise Mr. Amanullah Khan as chairman of the JKLF (Aman) as the JKLF is represented in the APHC by Mohammad Yaseen Malik, who heads the more powerful fac-

tion. While much fuss was created over official clearance for Hurriyat leaders to visit Pakistan, the fact is that most of the leaders including Prof. Butt and Mr. Yaseen Malik did not even seek permission. While Mr. Lone was preparing for the visit, Prof. Butt, Mr. Malik and an executive member, Sheikh Abdul Aziz, were in Delhi. And, Mirwaiz Farooq was waiting to leave for Doha. Another former APHC chairman, Syed Ali Geelani, told a local newspaper he had no intention of visiting Pakistan.

The much talked about marriage has brought to the fore Mr. Khan's position vis-a-vis the "freedom struggle". As the developments followed it became evident that Pakistan tried to isolate the stalwart of the "Kashmir liberation movement".

Sources said the applications for visas from Mr. Khan's guests were sent to Pakistan's Internal Security Ministry for clearance which ultimately was not granted. Many of those who travelled from Kashmir and Delhi to Islamabad had to approach Mr. Lone at the last moment who wrote to the Pakistan Embassy in New Delhi for granting visas. Mr. Lone took with him a select group of people, mostly friends and relatives. Three prominent journalists from Delhi collected visas and tickets from a close aide of Mr. Lone.

Mr. Khan had invited nearly 500 people from India including the President, Mr. K. R. Narayanan, the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, and the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah.

THE HINDU

20 NOV 2000

This wedding can make a difference for Kashmir: Lone

Anil Anand
New Delhi, November 15

SENIOR HURRIYAT leader Abdul Ghani Lone is reticent to be drawn into any controversy regarding the political significance of his son's wedding with Pak-based JKLF chief Amanullah Khan's daughter. But he hastens to add: "I would consider myself fortunate if it helps in any manner to resolve Kashmir problem".

Speaking to *The Hindustan Times* on the eve of his departure for Islamabad Lone senior described New Delhi's decision to issue him the passport -- at the last moment -- as a positive development.

"This is a significant gesture which cannot be ignored", a beaming Mr Lone commented though he still felt that Indian Government's sincerity to solve Kashmir crisis lacked credibility.

The Kashmiri leader felt that the Government could have avoided the confusion created on the issuance of passport to him. "It would have been better had they allowed the entire Hurriyat top-brass to attend the wed-

ding without creating any fuss. After all, the wedding will provide an opportunity to the Kashmiri leaders from both sides to interact and exchange views on the prevailing crisis in the Valley", he felt.

Mr Lone vehemently denied that he has any political agenda up his sleeves which he would pursue during his stay in Pakistan. "I do not want to betray the Government of India as my passport has been issued for a specific purpose (read wedding). But certainly most of the Opposition leaders in Pakistan are on my guest list which include former PM Nawaz Sharif's wife Kulsoom and a close aide of Benazir Bhutto", he disclosed.



Abdul Ghani Lone

Discarding speculation regarding the political impact of Lone-Amanullah Khan combine on Kashmir's political scene or that the wedding was a "planned political act", he sharply reacted: "A marriage is a marriage. Why read more into it. I have not even talked to my would-be daughter-in-law as yet. The marriage and my passport are peripheral issues. The core issue remains Kashmir and the plight of the Kashmiris," he said.

Ex-Kashmiri militant leaders float new outfit

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, NOV. 19. Parting ways with one-time counter-insurgent leader, Mr. Kukka Parray, a host of former militant leaders today floated a new political party, the J&K Awami Conference, and urged both security forces and militants to announce a ceasefire for six months to facilitate an atmosphere of peace in Kashmir.

Mr. Liaqat alias Hilal Hyder, the erstwhile vice-president of the Awami League headed by Mr. Parray, led a number of his associates in publicly disowning the counter-insurgent outfit, Ikhwan.

"Self-styled attorneys, instead of responding to the aspirations of the people, have been misleading them by slogans detrimental to the unity of the State as well as inter-provincial relations," Mr. Liaqat told a press conference here.

The new party, he said, would strive for the restoration of peace. "India and Pakistan no doubt were on the warpath resulting in proxy war and violence, yet we the people cannot be held to ransom," he said.

Till both the countries came to a roundtable to find a solution to the problem, the people of the State could not be mute witness to death and devastation, he said adding "let us now pay full attention towards our problems of unemployment, corruption, education, health and other problems."

Mr. Liaqat, who is the convener of the new party, introduced his colleagues to the media. Mr. Parray had recently dismissed these leaders from the Awami League saying their performance was poor. A top functionary of the new party, Capt. S.K. Tickoo, urged the militants and security forces to announce a ceasefire for six months in order to pave the way for peace.

When it can work in northeast why not here, he asked. Capt. Tickoo said, "the resolution of the issue should not come in the way of our development, so we have decided to float this party to work towards that."

THE HINDU

20 NOV 2000

No conflict with J&K militants during Ramadan

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 19 NOVEMBER

PRIME MINISTER Atal Behari Vajpayee, on Sunday, unveiled a major initiative in trouble-torn Kashmir by announcing suspension of proactive combat operations against militants during Ramadan, starting next week.

Announcing the decision, Prime Minister Vajpayee said in a statement here that he hoped the measure "will be fully appreciated and all violence in the state and infiltration across the line of control and the international border will cease and peace will prevail". The formal announcement of unilateral ceasefire preceded several high level meetings in Delhi. It

was wrapped up after consultations with the Jammu & Kashmir chief minister, Mr Farooq Abdullah, on Sunday.

In his statement, Mr Vajpayee said: "The holy month of Ramadan, during which Prophet Mohammed exhorted one and all to live in peace and harmony, is soon approaching and the government has, therefore, instructed the security forces not to initiate combat operations against militants in Jammu & Kashmir during this pious month in the Islamic calendar."

The move on the part of New Delhi is significant for three reasons.

■ One, it is a signal to the domestic Muslim community that it is sensi-

tive to their sentiments. At a time when it is tackling terrorism exported from Islamabad, it would help the government to side with local sentiments. There have been remarkable changes in the mindset of the average Kashmiri after the government responded to the ceasefire offer from Hizbul Mujahideen in August.

■ Second, it will signal to the international community, particularly the Islamic bloc, that India favoured peace in the state and the government would not be found wanting in initiatives to further this end.

■ And third, it would mount pressure on Pakistani dictator Parvez Musharaff to substantially qualify his recent statements

that Islamabad was willing on talks with India. By taking a proactive peace initiative, Mr Vajpayee has succeeded in telling Pakistan that India was not rigid and it was for Pakistan to respond to the cessation of hostilities in the valley.

The prime ministerial initiative is sure to have its impact on the reflexes of the militants, particularly from the Hizbul Mujahideen, operating in Kashmir. That Pakistan faces a "principal-agent" problem — the interests of the Pakistan and those of the militant groups are not fully aligned — was evident during the August ceasefire. It may be recalled that Majib Dar was keen on a dialogue with India, but had to ultimately abandon it because of

pressure from his mentors in Islamabad.

The initiative could well be a shot in the arm for the prodialogue section within the Hizbul Mujahideen. Although it is not expected to bring much dividend in the short-run, the differences in the approach of those operating within India and from across the border will aggravate in the long run. Already, Pakistan is suspicious of the activities of militants in the valley and is constantly exerting pressure through the Jehadi Council on them to step up confrontation with the security forces.

In the international community, this would compound troubles for General Musharaff.

Second shot at peace in Kashmir

Atal in Ramzan ceasefire offer

FROM OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Nov. 19: In the second peace overture in four months, the government today announced that a unilateral ceasefire would come into force in Jammu and Kashmir from the onset of the holy month of Ramzan this weekend.

In July, it was the Hizb-ul Mujahideen which had declared a ceasefire and Delhi had reciprocated.

The government has made known that the ceasefire is a gesture to some factions of the militant groups, including the All-Party Hurriyat Conference and the Hizb. However, addressing reporters after a National Democratic Alliance meeting, defence minister George Fernandes did not want to identify the groups the ceasefire was addressed to.

Till late tonight, the Hizb did not react, but the Al-Badr and a former chairman of the Hurriyat rejected the offer.

In a statement, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said: "We have continued our efforts to normalise the situation in the state and to hold talks with all those who are prepared for a dialogue. The holy month of Ramzan, during which Prophet Mohammed exhorted one and all to live in peace and harmony, is soon approaching. The government has, therefore, instructed the security forces not to initiate combat operations against militants in Jammu and Kashmir during this most pious month in the Islamic calendar."

It appears that at the past few meetings, the Cabinet Committee on Security has been discussing Kashmir with suggestions that the Indian government make one more peace overture, though

things went awry last time and led to a spate of killings across the state.

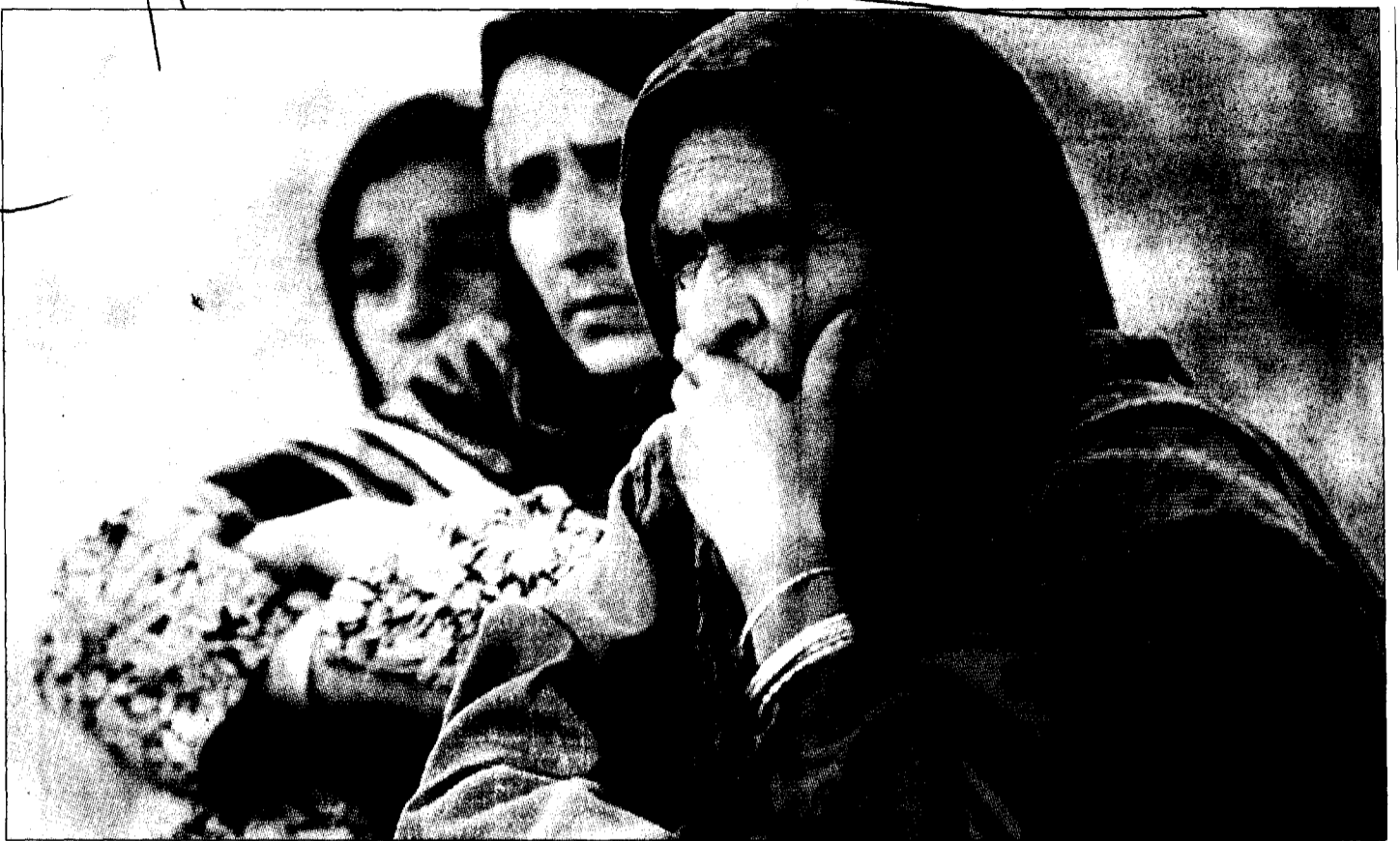
The Vajpayee government is taking a risk because in the last Parliament session it had come under severe attack from the Opposition for having entered into a dialogue with the Hizb and allowing blood to spill in Pahalgam where Amarnath pilgrims were killed.

That the government is making strong overtures to the militants is apparent from the wording of the Prime Minister's announcement: "During my visit to Srinagar on August 3 this year, I had underscored the need for resolving all issues in the spirit of *insaniyat* (humanism). Mine was a sincere appeal for cooperation to bring to an end the long trail of violence which has claimed so many precious lives and inflicted untold misery on all sections of the state's population — Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and Sikhs."

Government sources said without specifying names that different factions of militant organisations wanted this gesture from Delhi.

The announcement coincides with the marriage of the son of the Hurriyat chairman, Abdul Ghani Lone, with the daughter of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front chairman, Amanullah Khan. This wedding has allowed a number of representatives of different Kashmiri militant groups to come together in Islamabad.

Vajpayee was also among those invited. Pakistan junta leader Pervez Musharraf did not turn up despite intense media speculation. Lone is holding a reception tomorrow where representatives of the Pakistan-backed Lashkar-e-Toiba are also expected. (See Page 8)



HOPE ON THE HORIZON: Women in the Valley. (AFP)

Advani falls in line with PM

FROM OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Nov. 19: There are differences of opinion in the government on whether a unilateral ceasefire should be announced so early in Jammu and Kashmir after July's aborted peace process.

The matter is believed to have been discussed at the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) on Friday and L.K. Advani agreed with the decision. But sources said the home minister "was in favour of a different approach".

They said Advani "went along" with the Prime Minister,

but advised Vajpayee to take chief minister Farooq Abdullah into confidence before making the announcement. Vajpayee met Abdullah this morning.

Talks of a government-sponsored ceasefire had been in the air for the past few weeks. The CPM unit of Jammu and Kashmir had been demanding such a step and the Delhi imam is expected to appeal to militant outfits to accept the ceasefire when he visits Srinagar tomorrow.

A day after the CCS meeting, Advani left for a day-long tour of the Rann of Kutch and Mumbai and returned late last night. This morning he discussed the matter again with Vajpayee.

It was decided that the government would issue a statement on reviving the peace process which the Hizb-ul Mujahideen had initiated on July 24 by declaring a ceasefire with security forces. But within days, the talks had been aborted when the Pakistan-based Hizb faction insisted on the inclusion of Pakistan in any tripartite meeting.

Advani differs on initiating a peace process, especially after the failed talks of July, sources said. However, the home minister agreed with the PMO as he may have felt that this was the right moment, with the All-Party Hurriyat Conference virtually facing a split over including

Pakistan in talks.

But officials are sceptical whether militant outfits will welcome the ceasefire. The Hizb's Islamabad-based chief Syed Salahuddin said a week ago that even a government-initiated ceasefire would not be acceptable.

He reiterated his earlier stand that Islamabad be included in any peace talks. The events preceding the Hizb's declaration of the ceasefire were not shared with the home ministry.

The Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) had reportedly been working on the Hizb ceasefire from June 1998 and the Intelligence Bureau had been involved since the beginning of this year.

THE TELEGRAPH

20 NOV 2000

Russia, UK hail J&K ceasefire offer 2/11

The Times of India News Service
and Agencies

MUMBAI: Despite the rejection by the militant groups, the Centre's offer for a unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir during the holy month of Ramzan has found a number of takers with many political parties and world powers like Russia and the UK welcoming it.

"Its impact will be good for Kashmir. People in the state will welcome it. It will put Pakistan and the militants on test," AICC general secretary Ghulam Nabi Azad said.

National Conference leader and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah said, "If all goes well, the ceasefire can be extended. This is a major step to restore peace in the state and more and bigger steps will gradually follow," he told reporters.

Commenting on the practicability of the ceasefire in view of its rejection by most of the militant outfits, he said, "We anticipated that some groups would object to it be-

cause their bread and butter lies in the killing of innocents. Let the world know who wants killings and who wants peace." He said that the gesture had been received well in the state, adding that even the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) was divided on the issue, with one section describing it as "a step in the right direction" while the other was negatively inclined.

However, the Hurriyat is still to announce its stand. JKLF leader Javid Ahmad Mir, who is a member of the Hurriyat executive, said, "The executive members are meeting on Tuesday to decide whether to favour the ceasefire or to reject it."

The Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid Maulana Syed Ahmed Bukhari has also welcomed the ceasefire and asked Pakistan "to take all possible steps for maintaining peace in the Valley" during Ramzan. In a statement, the Imam asked Kashmiri leaders, including those of the Hurriyat, to extend all cooperation to

the Centre's move.

Russia said India deserved to be "congratulated" for announcing the ceasefire. "My only reaction is that India must be congratulated" for the ceasefire declaration, visiting Russian first deputy minister for foreign affairs V.I. Trubnikov said.

Visiting British minister of state for foreign and Commonwealth affairs Peter Hain also welcomed the ceasefire and said he hoped the militants and those supporting them would respond positively.

Meanwhile, Pakistan's foreign office spokesman Riaz Muhammad Khan said in Islamabad that the views of the Kashmiri leadership, specially the Hurriyat Conference, would be of importance.

"We cannot overlook the fact that India had tried to exploit the Hizbul Mujahideen's ceasefire offer last July to sow dissensions within the freedom movement and exclude Pakistan from the negotiations for a solution," he said.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

21 NOV 2000

Hurriyat welcomes govt's truce offer, but sets conditions

The Times of India News Service

SRINAGAR: The All-Party Hurriyat Conference on Tuesday described Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's offer of a unilateral ceasefire in the state during the month of Ramzan as a positive process, but reiterated its known stand of tripartite talks involving Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir problem.

The Hurriyat's executive committee, its highest decision-making body, held a three-hour-long meeting on Tuesday. A statement issued after the meeting said that the APHC, which is a conglomerate of 23 separatist outfits, would participate in any positive and result-oriented process without deviating from its constitution.

Senior APHC leader Abdul Ghani Lone, who is now in Pakistan, had earlier asked the militants to accept the offer. The moderates among the APHC had welcomed the PM's offer, but had suggested that it should be extended beyond the Ramzan month to create an atmosphere of goodwill.

Most of the militant outfits have, however, rejected the PM's offer.

Meanwhile, in New Delhi, the Congress, otherwise critical of the BJP, has welcomed the government's offer of a unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir since it was aimed at de-escalating the tension and violence in the Valley.

The Shiv Sena, on the other hand, was sceptical. Union industries minister Manohar Joshi of the Sena told journalists on Tuesday that he hoped that it would not be like the "Lahore bus misadventure". Party MPs Sanjay Nirupam and Satish Pradhan, Rajya Sabha members, and Anant Geete may raise the matter during the ongoing winter session of parliament.

Questioning those opposed to the ceasefire, Qureshi asked "are they assured of winning this war only in one month period of Ramazan? if not why are they bent upon continuing this violence when there are no prospects of winning such a war?"

► See Edit: Message of Peace,
Page 10

THE TIMES OF INDIA

2000

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2000

THE CEASEFIRE OFFER

HD-12/2/11

THE PRIME MINISTER, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's dramatic announcement of a cessation of anti-insurgency combat operations in Jammu and Kashmir during the month of Ramzan is an interesting development. The unilateral move, limited though it is, provides an opening for the resumption of the dialogue after the August fiasco which saw the collapse of a 'peace' initiative, triggered by the Hizbul Mujahideen's ceasefire offer. While Mr. Vajpayee has sought to place the gesture in the context of his earlier call for the resolution of Kashmir-related issues in the spirit of 'insaniyat' (humanism), the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, has put it as a response of sorts to "suggestions" the Government received from "several quarters", whom he preferred not to identify for obvious reasons. That the ceasefire initiative came at a time when quite a few of the top Hurriyat leaders were in Pakistan for a wedding is considered significant in that it addressed the perceived expectations of a positive step, although the leaders themselves did nothing more than stick to the 'right-to-self-determination' line — on record, that is. On the ground, there has been a sharp escalation of terrorist violence especially over the past few months, what with several daring attacks on the camps of security forces by suicide squads and landmine blasts, not to speak of the diabolical murder of the Shia leader, Agha Syed Mehdi. This and the recent damning expose of the security forces' highhandedness and violation of human rights must have reflected in the Government's calculations.

There can be little doubt that the ceasefire offer creates some space for dialogue, a process which indisputably holds the key to the vexed Kashmir problem. That the initiative should not be dismissed peremptorily is also unexceptionable. But the crucial question is how exactly the Vajpayee regime proposes to use that 'space'. Going by its known approaches to Kashmir-related concerns, whether it is the restoration of Constitutionally-ordained autonomy or the

handling of militant outfits of different hues, one cannot but be sceptical on this score. Its strategy, as far as can be discerned from its track record and policy articulations, seems to be to draw a distinction between what it sees as 'indigenous' groups, as against those which are supposed to be dominated by Pakistan-trained foreign mercenaries. In fact, one reason why the 'talks' with the Hizbul Mujahideen last August failed even before the process could get off the ground was the Centre's perceived attempt to play upon the indigenous-foreign divide in the militant movement; the Hizb, having made a unilateral ceasefire offer, chose to pull out hastily by insisting on a tripartite format, with Pakistan as the third participant.

No less disconcerting is the Vajpayee Government's palpable lack of earnestness in fulfilling the legitimate aspirations of Jammu and Kashmir on the 'autonomy' front. If the Centre's responses have, from the start, been determined by political exigencies rather than by Constitutional commitments, there has been no credible initiative or forward movement in this area beyond some cursory negotiations with a designated ministerial team of the State. Given this context where the Government is blatantly unwilling to restore to the State its special status as guaranteed under the Constitution (the core of which is Article 370), whatever exercise is embarked upon by way of using the ceasefire-created space for dialogue with separatist groups will lack credibility and is unlikely to be meaningful. Further, it is bound to get stymied by the Vajpayee regime's unrealistic stance against an engagement of Pakistan. In the absence of a cohesive multi-track approach that recognises the three distinct strands of the highly complex Kashmir problem — represented by the National Conference and other mainstream political parties; the separatist groups under the Hurriyat umbrella; and inevitably, in the final analysis, Pakistan — a solution is likely to remain elusive.

THE HINDU

21 NOV 2000

'INDIA SHOULD AGREE TO TRIPARTITE TALKS'

Hizb, Lashkar reject ceasefire offer

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, NOV. 20. The Pakistan-based militant organisations operating in Jammu and Kashmir have rejected the Indian ceasefire announcement as a "fraud" and vowed to continue the "struggle for the right to self-determination" of the people of Kashmir.

The Hizb-ul-Mujahideen leaders deliberated the announcement and issued a carefully-worded statement issued by the Hizb chief, Syed Salahuddin. He said the ceasefire for the sake of formality made no sense. India should concede that Kashmir was a disputed territory and agree to a tripartite dialogue if it was really sincere in going beyond the announcement.

Mr. Salahuddin, chairman of the United Jehadi Council, an umbrella organisation of all Pakistan-based militant outfits, held parleys with leaders of various other groups. Late in the night, the Council endorsed the stand of the Hizb and the Lashkar. In a statement after a marathon meeting, the UJC wanted to know "what is the point of the ceasefire? They stop killing one month and then start killing again."

Of all the anti-India statements, the most vocal was that of the Lashkar, which had objected to the Hizb ceasefire announcement in July as well. The Lashkar spokesman, Mr. Yahya Mujahid, said, "if India is sincere in its announcement it should withdraw its forces from Kashmir and end all military activities there. The announcement is nothing but rubbing salt in the wounds of Kashmiris. We reject it outright and resolve to escalate our actions against the Indian forces".

The Jamaat-e-Islami chief, Quazi Ahmed Hussain, termed the ceasefire announcement an



Border Security Force personnel enjoy reading a newspaper in Srinagar on Monday, a day after the announcement of a ceasefire. — Photo: Nissar Ahmad

"eye-wash". The senior All-Party Hurriyat Conference leader, Mr. Abdul Gani Lone, here in connection with the marriage of his son, said it was a "good gesture" and wanted the militant outfits to respond positively. The former Inter-Services Intelligence chief, Maj. Gen. (ret) Hamid Gul, felt the Indian offer was made under pressure from the United States.

Mixed response in J&K

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, NOV. 20. The ceasefire announced by the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, in Jammu and Kashmir yesterday has evoked a mixed response.

While mainstream political parties welcomed it, the separatist groups were sceptical. A spokesman of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference said an extraordinary

meeting has been convened tomorrow to discuss the issue. "A temporary ceasefire is not a solution," declared the former APHC chairman, Syed Ali Geelani, while another former chairman, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, said, "it could be a positive step," but insisted on a political solution.

The general secretary of the ruling National Conference, Sheikh Nazir Ahmed, said, "it should be a permanent ceasefire otherwise people will continue to get killed" and urged the Centre to begin talks with Pakistan.

Major step, says Farooq

PTI reports from Jammu:

The Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, today said the ceasefire announced in the State during the month of Ramzan could continue "if all goes well" and described it as the "first major step towards peace in the State."

THE HINDU

21 NOV 2000

Kashmir dispute a bilateral issue, says EU team

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, NOV. 21. Pakistan has told the visiting delegation of senior European Union (EU) officials that the content of the Lahore Declaration was a valid reference for the military regime in its efforts towards resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

The delegation told a news conference here this evening that Pakistan referred to the declaration when it voiced its concern over the Kashmir conflict and the need for an early solution through bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan.

To repeated questions, the delegation said it considered Kashmir a bilateral problem between India and Pakistan and there was need for new initiatives and dialogue to resolve the issue.

The delegation is currently on a visit to Pakistan for an assessment of the political and economic conditions in the country. As expected, it raised the issues of return to democracy, nuclear proliferation and the problems in the region arising out of the attitude of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

The visit is significant as it marks resumption of political contacts between the EU and Pakistan since the military take-over in October last year. At the

same time, the EU officials have sent out clear signals that the visit does not mean re-establishment of full ties between the two sides. The mission members met the Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf. Besides, they had meetings with the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Swamy calls on Pak. Foreign Minister

The Janata Party president, Dr. Subramanian Swamy, called on the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, here this evening and exchanged views on various subjects.

Dr. Swamy said in the course of the hour-long meeting they exchanged views on the situation arising out of the refusal of India to allow a SAARC summit meeting, the situation in Afghanistan and the problems posed by fundamentalist forces in both India and Pakistan.

Mr. Sattar told Dr. Swamy that Pakistan desired resumption of normal ties with India. Dr. Swamy is scheduled to meet the Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, tomorrow evening.

THE HINDU

22 NOV 2000

'ALLOW US TO TALK TO PAK., MILITANTS'

HD-1
27/8

Ceasefire a positive move, says Hurriyat

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, NOV. 21. Calling for a comprehensive process to resolve the Kashmir issue, the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC), in its response to the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee's ceasefire announcement, today said it should be allowed to talk to Pakistani and militant leaders to make the process meaningful.

The Hurriyat response came after a marathon meeting here of the executive with Prof. Abdul Gani Butt in the chair. While the leaders refused to speak to media-persons, a spokesman said, "the announcement by Mr. Vajpayee reflects the positive change in the attitude of the Government of India."

"If the announcement is in tune with peace, prosperity, restoration of relations between neighbours and serious efforts devoid of traditional politics are made to resolve the Kashmir issue, it reflects the positive change in Indian thinking," he said adding that all the aspects of the issue were discussed threadbare at the meeting. Moulvi Abbas Ansari, Syed Ali Geelani, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, Sheikh Abdul Aziz and Javed Ahmed Mir, who represented the JKLF chairman, Mr. Yaseen Malik, who is away in Delhi, were present.

Clarifying that the Kashmir is-



The All Parties Hurriyat Conference leaders, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Mr. Umer Farooq, Professor Abdul Gani, Shiekh Abdul Aziz and Maulana Abbas Hussain Ansari, attending a strategy meeting at Hurriyat headquarters in Srinagar, on Tuesday. — AP

sue was not India's internal matter, the spokesman said, "until attention is paid to settling the problem amicably, peace is not possible".

The APHC also demanded that its leaders be allowed to negotiate with the Pakistani leadership as well as the militant leaders so that a result-oriented process for restoration of peace could be started. In the interest of peace it was necessary that a comprehensive political process be started.

In another development, the Jamaat-e-Islami of Jammu and Kashmir urged the Central Gov-

ernment to agree to tripartite talks.

Hizb retracts a bit

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, NOV. 21. In a significant shift in stand, the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen today insisted that it had not rejected outright the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee's ceasefire announcement.

Claiming that the media had not done justice to the Hizb chief, Syed Salahuddin's statement, a spokesman, Mr. Salim Hashmi, said, "the media has made out as

if we have rejected the announcement without bothering to look at our formulation."

Pointing out that the Hizb would welcome the ceasefire if it could lead to resolution of the conflict, he said the formulation for such a process had three components. First, India should acknowledge Kashmir as a disputed territory; India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir must be involved in any dialogue; and the solution should be acceptable to Kashmiris.

The Hurriyat meeting in Srinagar earlier could have prompted the Hizb "clarification". If the APHC, a conglomerate of the parties that matter in Kashmir, welcomed the announcement, could the Hizb afford to ignore it?

New Delhi's move has indeed posed a serious dilemma for the Hizb. After all it has been clamouring for an initiative from India since calling off its ceasefire in July. And when it did come, the Hizb was caught between the devil and the deep sea.

Considering the hostile backdrop against which Mr. Salahuddin had to formulate his response, it is no wonder that it took him over 24 hours to make a formal announcement. The Lashkar-e-Taiba's denouncement of the offer made his task more difficult.

More reports on Page 13

BID TO DERAILED CEASEFIRE: J&K MINISTER

Sikh drivers shot dead on Srinagar highway

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, NOV. 22. At least five truck drivers were shot dead and six wounded when unidentified gunmen struck on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway late last night. Four of them were Sikhs while the fifth was a Hindu. It is not known who was behind the crime but police maintain that it was the handiwork of militants.

Said a visibly shaken Pawan Kumar, who was injured in the shooting: a group of gunmen wearing army uniform descended on the highway near Sherbeebi, 180 kms from here, stopped the trucks and ordered the drivers and conductors to get down saying they were searching for a terrorist. As soon as the travellers alighted they were asked to show their identity cards. This was followed by an indiscriminate firing.

The dead are Jagdish Singh, Reshpal Singh, Rajindra Singh, Akshay and Tej Ram.

Panic has gripped the area even as the security forces launched a combing operation.

The Minister of State for (Home), Mr Mushtaq Lone, when contacted in Jammu said the killings were an attempt by militants to derail the ceasefire announced by the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee.

Hizb charge

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, NOV. 22 The Hizb-ul Mujahideen has accused Indian intelligence agencies of having



The bodies of the truck drivers who were shot dead on the Srinagar-Jammu Highway on Tuesday night.

— Photo: Nissar Ahmad

engineered the killings of four Sikhs and a Hindu in Kashmir last night to "facilitate the Indian Government to wriggle out of the ceasefire announcement."

In a statement here, the Hizb chief, Syed Salahuddin, said the killings had echoes of the Chhatisinghpura episode in March this year, when a number of Sikhs were massacred in a village even as the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, was on a visit to India.

Syed Salahuddin alleged that the Indian Government was trying to give a 'communal colour' to the Kashmir conflict as it was not

serious about resolving the problem according to the will of the people of Kashmir.

In another development, some militant organisations based in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) have claimed that suicide squads killed at least 30 Indian soldiers in an overnight attack on two army posts in Kashmir. Three militants were killed and four others injured in retaliatory fire, a representative of an outfit alleged.

Meanwhile, the former Prime Minister of PoK, Mr. Quayoom Khan, has welcomed the ceasefire announcement.

THE HINDU

22 NOV 2001

Sena attacks PM's Kashmir peace moves

Our Political Bureau

NEW DELHI 22 NOVEMBER

PRIME MINISTER Atal Behari Vajpayee's peace initiative in Kashmir on Wednesday came in for sharp attack from within the alliance when the Shiv Sena supremo Bal Thackeray said the Ramzan ceasefire was a naive move. He also questioned the Prime Minister's motive behind the announcement.

"The ceasefire may make mahatmas of some leaders but our soldiers who will be killed by militants will not become martyrs despite having guns in their hands," said Mr Thackeray.

In a hard-hitting editorial in the party mouthpiece Samna, Mr Thackeray said the people of Jammu and Kashmir were "trapped in an Islamic slaughterhouse" because of the offer during Ramzan. He suggested that the government should "surrender to the militants" instead of making a ceasefire offer.

His party MPs followed up the protests against the decision by staging a walkout in the Rajya Sabha.

In his signed editorial in Samna, Mr Thackeray asked: "What are we trying to show the world? Look how our soldiers are dying when they are being shot at and bombarded from across the border?"



WATCH OUT: A.S. Aulakh, inspector general, Indian Border Security Force, Punjab (left) watches a solar clock at Torkham on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border in North West Frontier Province on Wednesday. — AFP

He said it was a move aimed at boosting the image of some politicians.

"They have been strictly ordered that you can die but spare the lives of terrorists and show the world what a peace-loving people

we are." He said if the government decided to face militant violence with ahimsa or non-violence, it was being naive.

Ridiculing the Centre's decision, the editorial said: "Why announce ceasefire in the Valley

only, implement it all over the country. Islamic fundamentalists pose a serious threat to VVIPs of the country including the President, the Prime Minister and ministers in the government, it said.

The Economic Times

23 NOV 2000

Militants gun down five truckers in Kashmir

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, Nov. 22. — Militants killed five people, four of them Sikhs, and injured six in two separate attacks on private carriers last night on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway near Banihal in Doda district.

Seven terrorists wearing Army uniforms stopped four trucks (JKU 4119, JkO2G 1425, PJS 4005 and PB07E 9315) coming from Srinagar at Sher Bibi and Kharpur, police said.

On the pretext of checking the goods carriers, they ordered the drivers to get down, checked their identity cards, segregated them on the basis of their religion and fired at them.

Two of the dead have been identified as S Jagjeet Singh of Baramulla and S Rashpal Singh of Dhariwal, Punjab.

This is the second such highway killing in a year.

The IG, Kashmir, said a massive combing operation has been launched. Security forces have also been asked to help.

The injured are: S Ranjeet Singh of Chandoosa, Baramulla; S Lakhwinder Singh of Dhariwal, Punjab; Anil Kumar of Dhariwal; Pawan Kumar alias Nikka of Dharibal; Samrinjit Singh of Jagirpora, New Delhi; and Mangal Kumar.

Chief minister Dr Farooq Abdullah and the minister for transport and information, Mr Ajatshatru Singh, have condemned the killings.

The Governor described it as

“a senseless act of enemies of peace”.

He said all right-thinking people would condemn the barbaric act of militants.

Appealing to the people to face the situation with fortitude, the Governor hoped that they will maintain peace and tranquility in the state. Mr Saxena expressed his sympathy to the bereaved families.

Dr Abdullah, in a message, said killing of innocents is an act by militants to terrorise people and create ill will between various sections of society.

The victims, he said, were trying to bring essential supplies to the valley, even in adverse conditions.

“Militants won't achieve anything by spilling blood of innocents,” he said.

The incident has exposed the ugly face of elements inimical to peace, who emerge with their inhuman tactics whenever any hope for restoration of normalcy is rekindled in the state. Dr Abdullah appealed to the people to maintain amity at all costs and not fall into the enemy's trap. To the bereaved families he said: “Each one of us share your agony.”

Two NC men killed

Militants gunned down two National Conference men in the villages of Konibal Pampore in Pulwara and Khumriyal in Kupwara, and triggered an explosion outside the house of a Jamaat-e-Islami member in the Valley today.

FORCES TO RETALIATE

NEW DELHI, Nov. 22. — The external affairs minister today said the ceasefire in J&K didn't mean security forces wouldn't retaliate to militants' attacks. The forces have been told to fight in self defence, Mr Jaswant Singh told the Lok Sabha. — SNS

Ceasefire welcomed: — Shabir Ahmed Shah's J&K Democratic Freedom Party and the JKLF have welcomed the Centre's ceasefire offer during Ramzan, PTI adds.



A peace march organised by the J&K People's Welfare Forum in Srinagar on Tuesday. — AP/PTI

Ultras kill women they don't marry

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

MAHORE (Pir Panjal), Nov. 22. — People living in Pir Panjal mountain ranges are marrying off their teenaged daughters so that they don't become militants' targets. The militants, in turn, have now started killing women whom they fail to marry.

The most recent example is that of Gulzar Bano, 20, wife of Mohammad Rafiq of Sheladada village killed by militants on 5 November.

Militants barged into Mohammad Rafiq's house and dragged him out of the house. They threw him in nearby fields later, after brutally torturing him.

The militants then lobbed grenades at the house. When

Gulzar Bano rushed out, she was fired upon by militants waiting for her outside the house. Gulzar Bano — five months pregnant — died on the spot.

Almost a year ago, Gulzar Bano's mother, Rehana Bano, wife of one Ghulam Mohammad, was butchered by militants when she refused to marry her two young daughters, Jamila and Gulzar, to foreign mercenaries.

On 19 January, militants entered her house and asked her to prepare a meal for them. As Rehana suspected foul play, she sent her daughters out from the back door and saved them from the militants' clutches.

On learning about the young girls' escape, militants dragged

the mother out of the house and butchered her. Later, the girls' relatives got them married but militants continued to stalk them even after they were married.

Senior police officials at Mahore Tol said militants had been trying to take revenge on the girls and they killed a pregnant Gulzar Bano.

According to army and police officials, Gulzar or Rehana Bano's case is not an isolated one; there have been many cases in the entire tehsil which touches Kashmir valley on one side, where Pakistan-backed mercenaries have targeted women. Later, they killed them dubbing them informers.

As the tehsil is situated in the remotest part of Jammu region, militant atrocities on women

are rarely known to the outer world. However, facts have started emerging with the police now very active and the deployment of a full brigade of the Indian Army in this hotbed of militancy.

In another incident, a girl in Sangaldan village in Gool heights of Udhampur district, was shot and killed by a Hizbul Mujahideen militant when she refused to accept his marriage proposal.

According to sources, Sharief Gujjar, a Hizbul militant, barged into Parveen Akhtar's house last night and proposed to her. She turned the offer down, saying she would never marry a person who had killed her father. Gujjar dragged her out of the house and shot her dead.

THE STATESMAN

23 NOV 2000

Hurriyat condemns killing

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, NOV. 23. The All-Party Hurriyat Conference has expressed shock and grief over the killing of five truck drivers on the Srinagar-Jammu highway, on Tuesday. In a statement today, a spokesman said it was not the first incident of this kind.

Referring to the Chattisinghpura massacre and the killing of Amarnath pilgrims in Pahalgam after the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen announced a ceasefire, he wondered who could have benefited from these killings which followed the ceasefire announcement by the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee. The killings had taken place on a highway that had round-the-clock presence of troops. The Hurriyat had extended its sympathies to the bereaved families and urged the international human rights groups to investigate the killings.

Sikh team for probe

A Sikh delegation called on the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, and demanded an inquiry into the incident and protection to the minorities in Kashmir. Dr. Abdullah charged Pakistan with engineering inhuman acts in the State and called for global cognisance of heinous crimes against humanity. "Sanctions like those imposed against South Africa could perhaps stop Islamabad from abetting and sponsoring such acts," he said, adding that realisation in the international community was growing about 'Pakistan's machinations against humanity.'

Protest in Baramulla

Over 500 Sikhs took out a procession in Baramulla

town to protest the killings. Reports said the Sikh-dominated area, Nanak Bhavan, observed a complete shutdown. Traffic was disrupted in the locality.

The demonstrators raised slogans against the killers and demanded Government action. The police did not allow them to march ahead. Some youth turned violent and burnt tyres on the road.

'Bid to sabotage ceasefire'

UNI reports:

In Talwandi, Bathinda, the Punjab Chief Minister, Mr. Parkash Singh Badal, today condemned the killing of five truckers at Banihal in Kashmir on Wednesday, saying this was a clear attempt to sabotage the ceasefire offer made by the Prime Minister.

Hizb for meaningful dialogue

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, NOV. 23 The Hizbul Mujahideen has reiterated that it would respond positively to the latest initiative of the Government on Kashmir only if it leads to a "meaningful dialogue" towards resolution of the conflict.

The Hizb spokesman, Mr. Salim Hashmi, told *The Hindu* that "let the Indian Government go ahead with the ceasefire but it would be meaningless if it did not lead to some solution".

He was responding to a query on the statement made by the Mr. Vajpayee, that India was determined to make the ceasefire a success.

THE HINDU

20 NOV 1990

VAJPAYEE ASKS SANGH PARIVAR TO FALL IN LINE

Ceasefire will stay: PM

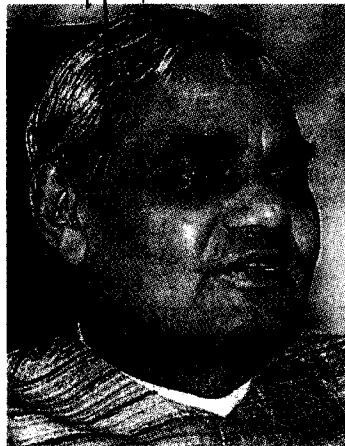
By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, NOV. 23. An impromptu and provocative parliamentary intervention by a Shiv Sena member today provided the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, an opportunity in the Rajya Sabha to assert that "there is no going back on the ceasefire" offer in Jammu and Kashmir. The Prime Minister also used the occasion to serve notice on the Sangh Parivar to fall in line with the Government's strategy of seeking peace through dialogue with militant groups.

The Shiv Sena, an ally and partner in the National Democratic Alliance Government, dramatically disassociated itself from Mr. Vajpayee's Ramadan initiative by staging a protest inside and outside the two Houses of Parliament. Reacting to the killing of five drivers by the militants on the Srinagar highway, the Sena angrily demanded that the ceasefire be withdrawn. (However, the party found itself totally isolated in this demand).

In the Lok Sabha, the Shiv Sena, more or less, suggested that the Vajpayee Government was even more spineless than the Congress Governments.

It was in the Rajya Sabha, however, that the Prime Minister allowed himself to be provoked enough to intervene to state a thing or two. He told the members that there was "due consideration, due preparedness" behind the



unilateral ceasefire declaration, and that the Government was fully mindful of the "rumblings" within the militant ranks. No doubt the Government had 'apprehensions of such mischief', but 'we have taken a risk.' As Mr. Vajpayee saw it, there was no lowering of the guard by the security forces but what was necessary was for everyone to keep his cool in the face of calculated provocation from the hardliners among the militant groups.

The Prime Minister also said that the killers of the Sikh drivers on the Srinagar highway were reportedly seen dressed in army uniforms. This was nothing but "old tactics designed to smear our security forces". He expressed anguish that quite a few at home were willing to share the 'suspi-

cion' that our forces could be involved in such a dastardly stratagem.

As soon as the Lok Sabha met, the Sena MPs trooped into the well of the House, lamenting the Srinagar highway massacre. Neither the Speaker, Mr. G.M.C. Balayogi, nor the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, could persuade the Sena members to let the House proceed with question hour. Having advertised their differences with the Government, the Sena MPs staged a walkout.

Unwittingly the Sena provided Mr. Vajpayee just the opportunity to occupy high political ground, forcing the entire Opposition to applaud the Government's initiative. Earlier, the Prime Minister was gratified to have received an assurance from Dr. Najma Heptulla, the Deputy Chairperson (and a prominent member of the Congress) that "your bold decision will be acclaimed by all the parties. The Government will have the support of the Parliament in pursuing this fresh peace initiative."

In sharp contrast to the Congress proclivity for nitpicking outside the House, Ms. Heptulla conveyed to the Prime Minister her "sincere admiration and appreciation for the bold offer," which she described as reflecting "the courage of a mature nation that is convinced of the strength of peace and non-violence."

Quite contrary to the Sena's calculations, its contrariness goaded

almost the entire political spectrum into lending an endorsement of the Vajpayee Government's Ramadan initiative. The ruling party's floor managers could not have asked for a more satisfying denouement.

Steps to protect truck drivers

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, NOV. 23. Following the killing of five truck drivers on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway on Tuesday, a high-level team of the Union Home Ministry arrived in Jammu today to discuss the security situation with the State Government.

Headed by the Special Secretary, Mr. T. R. Kakkar, the team met the Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah. The killings, which came shortly after the ceasefire announcement by the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, was discussed with an emphasis on protection of the minorities in general and the national highway in particular.

It was decided that no traffic would be allowed on the highway after 6 p.m. Traffic movement would also not be allowed before the road opening party of the Army completed the sanitising exercise. Dr. Abdullah said that two more truck terminals would be constructed in Qazigund and Ramban to ensure that drivers were not stranded on the highway.

Hurriyat condemns killings: Page 13

THE HINDU

24 NOV 2000