

# No special grants for new states

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Sept. 22. — The finance ministry has rejected the demand for ad hoc grants-in-aid to the three new states of Jharkhand, Chhatisgarh and Uttaranchal, official sources said.

With the parent states of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh in dire financial straits, members of Parliament had made vociferous demands for special Central grants for the new states.

The home minister, Mr LK Advani, had assured the Lok Sabha during the debate on passage of the state reorganisation Bills that all possible Central assistance would be extended to the new states. But he was not categorical about making the finance ministry agree to dole out grants-in-aid to the new states.

Mr Advani had drawn attention of the Lok Sabha members to clause 86 of the State Reorganisation Bills, 2000, in which the President has overriding powers to take any deci-

sion to remove "any difficulty which arises in giving effect to the Act" by which the new state is created.

According to a home ministry official, the new states once they come into existence and start functioning, would not have any difficulty with funds as the finance ministry is engaged in "ascertaining the cash balance that would go to the new states from the consolidated funds".

By the time the new states were notified in the official Gazette of India, the government hoped to apportion the cash balance between the parent states and the new states, officials here said.

The parent states have shown their books of accounts, which hardly promise anything to the new states. With just five weeks to go before the new states are notified, there is no indication from the Centre that it would meet the crisis that is likely to crop up from day one.

The new states may find it difficult to meet their wage

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bills and other administrative expenses given the state of the economy in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh where government employees, including school, college and university teachers do not get salaries on time.

In Bihar, for instance, all universities are closed as the faculty members have struck work in protest against non-payment of salaries. Even the school teachers of government-run schools have not been paid for three months.

At the moment, the finance ministry is busy bifurcating the grants between the parent states and the new states as per the recommendations of the finance commission under Article 280 of the Constitution.

In any dispute between the parent state and the new state on sharing the financial assets and liabilities, the arbitration of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India would be final. The President shall, by order, determine the share of the parent state and the new state.

THE STATESMAN

23 SEP 2000

# Israeli PM faces no-trust motion over peace deal

Jerusalem, July 31



Ehud Barak

**I**SRAELI PRIME Minister Ehud Barak is expected to survive a last-ditch no-confidence vote on Monday designed to halt his drive for a peace deal with the Palestinians.

If he survives the last possible no-confidence vote before Parliament breaks for a summer recess on August 6, Mr Barak will win three months' reprieve to pursue a peace process that has led to the defection of key members of his ruling coalition.

The latest blow to Mr Barak's administration came from Foreign Minister David Levy, who threatened yesterday to resign unless the Prime Minister tried to form a unity government able to react effectively to potential Palestinian violence after West Asia peace talks collapsed last week.

But Levy's ultimatum was softened by his promise not to vote

against Mr Barak today, putting off until Wednesday his decision on whether to quit.

Apparently trying to win Mr Levy over, Mr Barak issued a statement yesterday saying he planned to devote more time to the socio-economic issues.

Mr Barak also said that he is ready to make peace, or at least an "interim peace accord", with the right-wing opposition in order to govern the country.

"I am ready to make peace, or at least reach an interim peace accord, with the opposition to continue to guide the country, ensure

the opening of school classes in September, prepare the budget for the coming year and deal with social problems," Mr Barak said.

Analysts say Mr Levy's desertion could set off an avalanche from government, forcing a general election by the end of October, when Parliament recon-

venes.

The collapse of Mr Barak's government and early elections before he forges a deal with the Palestinians could be the death knell to a peace process inched forward by US President Bill Clinton.

(Agencies)

## US ready to resume W Asia peace talks

Tokyo, July 31

THE US is ready to resume mediating the West Asia peace talks when all sides have had a breather, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said today.

"We are prepared to continue when the parties kind of catch their breath," Ms Albright said in an interview with the national television network Japan Broadcasting Corp.

"We didn't get the agreement that we hoped for, but we're not through," she added at the end of a 48-hour visit to Japan after attending a south-east Asian security summit.

Despite the break up of the Camp David summit between Palestinian Leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak without agreement on July 25, progress had been made and subjects previously off limits had been opened up for discussion, Ms Albright said.

Ms Albright warned the Palestinian leader against unilaterally declaring statehood, saying he would fail to get international backing. Palestinian statehood must be part of a comprehensive agreement. (AFP)

### Katzav is new Israeli President

**R**IGHT-WING candidate Moshe Katzav was elected Israel's President by Parliament on Monday, defeating Nobel Peace laureate Shimon Peres, parliamentary speaker Avraham Burg said. In a shock result, Katzav defeated Peres, a former prime Minister, by a margin of 63 to 57 in a second round of voting. Reuters, Jerusalem

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

1 AUG 2000

# Khatami losing the battle for reform? KDR/16

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), AUG 9. With the closure of the last liberal newspaper, Iranian conservatives have mounted an all-out effort to muzzle the voice of reform in the country. Pro-reform politicians have ample evidence that the majority of Iranians support them but if they were to opt for a confrontation on the streets they would play into the hands of the conservatives. At the rate at which avenues for democratic protest or change are being closed down, the pro-reform camp, especially the President, Mr. Mohammed Khatami will have to soon evolve a method of dealing with the conservative campaign.

Yesterday, the conservative-dominated judiciary closed down *Bahar*, the last newspaper espousing the pro-reform point of view. In justification, the judiciary said that the publishers had failed to heed past complaints and published "fabricated stories and outright lies". Other reports, however, suggest that the newspaper was closed down because it carried a statement by Mr. Mohammed Reza Khatami, the President's brother and the biggest winner in the February Parliamentary election, wherein he had criticised a recent directive by the Supreme Religious Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Through his directive, Mr. Khamenei had prevented Parliament from initiating any moves to repeal a restrictive press code enacted by the conservatives before they were deprived of their majority in the elections. Yet another senior journalist was taken into custody the day before.

*Bahar* was the 24th publication to be closed since the conservatives launched their crackdown in April. The most visible aspect of Mr. Khatami's reform programme has thus been shot down quickly. This does not necessarily mean that pro-reform news and opinions will not be disseminated at all since Iran has a tradition of what they call "night journals" publications which are produced and distributed clandestinely. But the open liberal atmosphere, which was swiftly overwhelming the



An Iranian news vendor shows the last edition of the only effective reformist Farsi language daily *Bahar* (Spring), that was ordered shut down by a hardline press court in Teheran on Tuesday. — AP

country and adding its own momentum to the reform campaign, has been suppressed.

Although few Iranians read the pro-conservative press, the conservatives control radio and television and have been using them for partisan purposes. For instance, they have been giving prominent coverage to the demonstrations before Parliament mounted by anti-reform vigilantes. The demonstrators were dispersed after the Interior Ministry declared that they had not given permission for the rallies and the Ministry also castigated the

electronic media for covering "illegal rallies". (Usually the State-run media is punctilious about not paying any attention to "illegal activities"). In another demonstration of conservative brazenness, State radio blasted the Interior Ministry for imposing censorship.

Those demonstrating before the Parliament were reportedly mostly members of the Basij, the quasi-official militia which owes allegiance to conservatives entrenched in the Iranian establishment. The demonstrators accused the pro-reform majority in Parliament of being "hypocrites" and "mercenaries" who were trying to implement a "U.S. agenda of reform". Some reports said volunteers had even torn up portraits of the President, a person whom the conservatives were not confident enough to criticise till recently.

Even as the conservative campaign gets into full swing there has not been an adequate response from the reform camp. Some reform parliamentarians scuffled with conservative counterparts after Mr. Khamenei's directive on the press code was read out and the head of the committee that drafted the repeal Bill resigned from his post. But as yet there has been no discernible effort to mobilise the vast majority of pro-reform Iranians against the conservatives. One major problem the reform leadership faces is that the mobilisation of the people could prove counter-productive. In any large-scale mass action it would be difficult to exercise control.

If any future confrontation between pro and anti-reform demonstrators turns violent, the conservatives can use the pretext to mount a coup and thereby destroy whatever has been achieved by the reform campaign so far. Moreover, most reform leaders are not in favour of a total overthrow of the prevalent system either. They are aware that no one can foresee where a mass upsurge will take Iran. Perhaps the President is the only person who can square the circle. But he too will have to act soon.

THE HINDU

10 AUG 2000

# Peace in West Asia

By Qamar Agha

ISRAELI AND Palestinian leaders have failed to find common ground during the intense negotiations recently at Camp David. The failure was attributed to persisting differences over the core issues: the status of Jerusalem, the return of the Palestinian refugees, Jewish settlements in occupied territories, borders of the Palestinian state and water sharing. The talks have failed but both the leaders, the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Ehud Barak, and the Palestinian Authority President, Mr. Yasser Arafat, have promised to work towards a negotiated settlement and to avoid violence. It was not even possible for either side to bridge the gap on core issues, none of which they had earlier discussed, in just 15 days. Besides, all the issues under discussion in Camp David were highly emotive and had the potential to trigger violence. The two leaders could not make any compromise on core issues without building public opinion.

Mr. Barak has blamed Mr. Arafat for the collapse of the peace talks and Mr. Arafat has declared that he cannot compromise on the territories any further. He said what the Palestinians were asking was only 23 per cent of the historic Palestine that existed till 1948. Mr. Arafat's refusal to sign a peace deal and succumb to the U.S.-Israeli pressure are considered a Palestinian victory in Israeli-occupied Arab territories. The Camp David outcome has even enhanced Mr. Arafat's prestige in the entire Arab world. He is recognised as a credible and trusted leader of the Arab people.

The U.S. approach to the summit was to get a peace deal signed, pump money in the region and if violence erupted to let security agencies deal with the problem. The U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, too has blamed Mr. Arafat for the failure of the talks and has refused to see the Palestinian point of view. Mr. Arafat, known for his brinkmanship at such negotiations, was not prepared to sign a partial accord which did not give him full sovereignty over East Jerusalem where he wants to locate the capital of the Palestinian state. Mr. Barak also had serious problems back home. The Zionists have over the years

been propagating that "united" Jerusalem is the "eternal" capital of Israel. They also claim that Judea and Samara (West Bank) are a biblical land where Jews have a religious duty to settle. Nearly 180,000 Jews are settled in these territories. Israel adopted this confrontationalist policy when the cold war was at its peak and it had the support of the West. Now, in a fast changing international situation, the U.S. wants Israel to settle its dispute with the Pal-

Mr. Arafat was also under pressure not only from the Palestinians but from the Islamic community all over which is demanding that he should not cave in on the issue of Jerusalem, home of Al-Aqsa, Islam's third holiest site. Mr. Arafat understands that it will be politically suicidal for him if he gives up Jerusalem, where 600,000 Jews live in the western half of the city and 200,000 Palestinians, who include Christians, in the east. Israel occupied

## There are too many issues to be sorted out between Israel and Palestine before the September 13 deadline.

estonians. Ironically, both sides are dependent on its economic support. Besides this, a large majority of the Israeli population, particularly the younger generation, wants peace with the Palestinians. They are the ones who voted for Mr. Barak on his promise that he would bring peace with the Arabs. But there are equally powerful extremist organisations in Israel opposed to any concessions to the Palestinians. Israeli society stands divided now.

The other problem for Israel is that its political system does not allow it to make peace with the Palestinians. Over the years, Israel has developed a political system based on coalitions, which strengthens the policies of expansion of its territories, confiscation of Arab land and building of settlements in the occupied Arab territories. Therefore, whenever the chances of making peace brighten ultra-nationalist organisations withdraw their support to the Government. No coalition can survive without the ultra groups' support. Just before leaving for Camp David, the Barak Government was reduced to a minority. Mr. David Levy, his Foreign Minister, has since resigned accusing Mr. Barak of making too many concessions to the Palestinians. Even if he had signed the accord, it would not have been ratified by the Israeli Parliament. To overcome this difficulty, it was decided that a final peace accord will be put to a referendum.

the Gaza Strip. Mr. Barak is reportedly willing to relocate only 20 per cent of them. The rest will remain where they are and they will also be allowed to retain "Israeli citizenship" but will be "subject to Palestinian laws". According to some reports, Israel had also suggested leasing West Bank land from the Palestinians over a long period as Jordan has done after signing a peace treaty with Israel in 1994. But the Palestinians are demanding dismantling of the settlements. They are insisting that under U.N. resolution 242, they have the right to get back all their territory occupied by Israel. The Palestinians argue that Israel maintaining its sovereignty over the settlement blocks, which are scattered all over their territories, will "rob Palestinians of a state of geographical contiguity".

Sharing of water and outlying the borders of the Palestinian state were other two core issues which have to be sorted out. Land is at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Palestinians have made it clear that since they have foregone claims to the Palestine of British mandate before the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, Israel should vacate the Arab territories it occupied in 1967. Mr. Barak is prepared to transfer 90 per cent of the West Bank to the Palestinians in phases. The rest will remain with the settlers or are needed for security reasons. But he was in no mood to compromise on Jerusalem. The Israelis also control points at the Jordanian border. Israel says a narrow strip dividing West Bank from Jordan should remain under its control. So far both sides have not been able to sort out these differences.

There are too many issues to be sorted out before the September 13, 2000, deadline. As it is, Mr. Barak's position has weakened after Camp David because of his failure to secure a peace deal with Mr. Arafat; his Government is in minority. Now his priority is to forge a new coalition which will not be an easy task. Mr. Barak has two more options — to form a national unity Government or go in for early elections. In either case, the West Asian peace process will be on hold.

Another contentious issue between Israel and Mr. Arafat could not make much progress was the question of 3.6 million U.N.-registered Palestinian refugees scattered throughout the Arab countries. Mr. Arafat wants Israel to recognise U.N. General Assembly resolution number 194 which says Palestinian refugees should have the right to return to their homes. Israel has maintained that it will neither grant them the right to return nor accept any moral responsibility for them. However, Mr. Barak is willing to accommodate 100,000 Palestinians back to Israel; but only under a programme of "family unification" not on the basis of the "right to return". Instead, Israel favours an international fund to rehabilitate refugees in the countries they occupy now.

The issue of Jewish settlements in the occupied Arab territories also remained unsettled at Camp David. There are about 17,000 Jewish settlers in West Bank and

# Arafat gets little support for Statehood

By Kesava Menon

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), AUG. 12. There is exactly one month to go before one more of the deadlines, of a series in which few have been fulfilled, pops up in West Asia. The Palestinian Authority President, Mr. Yasser Arafat insists that he will declare Statehood on September 13, irrespective of whether a final agreement with Israel has been signed or not. But even the Israeli army, which usually reacts in tough terms to such warnings, appears to believe that Mr. Arafat will find a way around this self-imposed injunction.

Mr. Arafat is currently on a tour of the Nordic countries, rapidly adding to the list of capitals that he has visited in the last three weeks — 15 countries in 18 days. As in other places he is expected to relate his views on the Camp David talks held last month and urge his hosts to add their diplomatic weight to the West Asian negotiations. Above all, he wants to gauge the support he is likely to receive for a Statehood announcement on September 13 and request his hosts to extend a promise of recognition. Or at least, that is what the official communiqués will state. The actual story is far more complicated.

Russia's reaction to Mr. Arafat's intentions appears to typify the response that the Palestinian Authority President received in most capitals, whether in the West or in Arab countries.

While the Russian leadership reiterated its firm view that the Palestinians had an inalienable right to Statehood, it also discouraged Mr. Arafat from sticking to



The Iranian President, Mr. Mohammed Khatami (left), and the Palestinian leader, Mr. Yasser Arafat, shake hands in the Saad Abad Palace north of Teheran, on Thursday. — AP

his September 13 deadline.

Saudi Arabia and Egypt have been staunch supporters of Mr. Arafat in his pursuit of the negotiating strategy with Israel. While they cannot be as openly sceptical about the value of the September 13 deadline as the Russians have been, their very reluctance to declare support for the deadline speaks volumes in itself. Iran has been derisive about Mr. Arafat's decision to negotiate with Israel but even the Iranian leaders, who received Mr. Arafat on Thursday, skirted the issue of the September 13 deadline. Like the Egyptians before them, the Iranian leadership preferred to stress on the inadmissibility of a settlement

which left Jerusalem wholly under Israeli control.

So Mr. Arafat's deadline does not appear to be sacrosanct to anyone else. It is also possible that the deadline may not be as sacrosanct even to Mr. Arafat as his statements make out to be. The lack of international backing for a Statehood declaration on September 13 may actually help Mr. Arafat fudge or postpone the declaration. He will have the plausible argument to make to his people that the declaration will make little sense in the absence of a firm commitment from any country that matters for recognition. There is the possibility that the Palestinian on the street will

be incensed if the deadline passes without a declaration.

Mr. Arafat is also in no position to declare Statehood against the wishes of the U.S. administration. A unilateral declaration of Statehood will prompt an Israeli reaction. The Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Ehud Barak has warned that he will annex those parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, that are still under Israel's control but should pass over to the Palestinians under a just deal, if the unilateral declaration is made. The Israeli argument is that if such a declaration is made and the Palestinians receive recognition from a significant number of countries, then Israel will be in the position of an illegal occupier and thus potential target for all kinds of action.

It is another matter that Israel is, under the terms of the relevant Security Council resolutions, an illegal occupier of Palestinian territories. But under the Oslo agreement, the Palestinians have committed themselves to sort out their problems with Israel through negotiations and not by taking any unilateral action.

## China to host talks

PTI reports from Beijing

China today invited Mr. Arafat and the Israeli leader, Mr. Shimon Peres, to Beijing to give fresh impetus to the peace process.

"Arafat will pay a working visit to China on August 14 at the invitation of Chinese President Jiang Zemin," Foreign Ministry spokesman, Mr. Zhu Bangzao, said. Mr. Peres, Israeli Minister for Regional Cooperation, will visit China from August 16 to 17.

THE HINDU

13 AUG 2000

# W Asia talks to resume

REUTERS

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JERUSALEM, Aug. 13. — A senior Palestinian official said yesterday that Israelis and Palestinians would resume peace talks at the end of August to forge a final deal by mid-September and settle their differences over Jerusalem.

Arab leaders reasserted Moslem claims to the city and Egyptian President Mr Hosni Mubarak forecast that violence would erupt if Mr Yasser Arafat gave any ground on the issue. "Any concession on Jerusalem will make the situation explode in an uncontrollable way and terrorism will resurface ...," Mr Mubarak said in the *Rose El Youssef* magazine.

Israel captured East Jerusalem from Jordan in the 1967 war and, in a move not recognised internationally, regards all of Jerusalem as its "united and eternal capital".

The Palestinians want East Jerusalem as the capital of the future independent state they have said they will declare this

## HAMAS NO TO PEACE

DUBAI, Aug. 13. — Officials of two militant Palestinian groups have said that Palestinians must abandon peace talks with Israel and turn to resistance to ensure their rights.

The officials from Hamas and the Islamic Jihad also warned Mr Yasser Arafat in an interview with *Al-Khaleej* that they would not support an independent Palestinian state built on compromises. Islamic Jihad spokesman Sheikh Nafiz Azzam called for a reevaluation of the Palestinian stance after the failure of six years of negotiations and the recent Camp David summit. — Reuters

year with or without a peace deal with Israel. But Mr Mubarak said the Palestinians might postpone their declaration to avoid any confrontation with Israel.

The Palestinian official said the venue for this month's meeting was not known. It would be at the level of negotiators and not of leaders, he said. He added that talks would receive an added impetus when West Asia trouble-shooter, Mr Dennis Ross, arrived from USA next week.

Negotiations between Mr Arafat and Israeli Prime

Minister Mr Ehud Barak collapsed last month at Camp David near Washington after they failed to agree on the status of Jerusalem. Officials from both sides have been trying to drum up support for their respective stands by meeting world leaders.

Mr Arafat is due to leave Gaza today for China, Malaysia and Japan. Israeli foreign minister Mr Shlomo Ben-Ami, visiting Spain, said it was possible that there might be a second peace summit before the 13 September deadline for a deal.

Mr Mubarak said: "I told Mr

Barak this is the toughest phase because it touches on religious beliefs." He understood from Mr Arafat that at Camp David, Israel had offered the Palestinians only religious jurisdiction over Moslem holy sites in Jerusalem, with broader sovereignty going to Israel.

He quoted Mr Arafat as saying: "No one in the Arab world or Islamic countries dares to agree to such an offer" and added that the assessment was correct. "We can't force (Arafat) to agree to a decision that does not achieve legitimate rights and aspirations of the Palestinians," Mr Mubarak said.

His views were echoed by Saudi Arabia and Iran after talks in Jeddah between Iran's deputy foreign minister Mohammad Sadr and Saudi Arabia's King Fahd and crown prince Abdullah. Irna reported that Sadr delivered a message from Iranian President Mohammad Khatami, calling for a united Moslem stand over Jerusalem to "counter the threats posed to the holy city".

THE STATESMAN

14 AUG 2000

# West Asia talks may resume

**JERUSALEM, AUG. 13.** A senior Palestinian official said on Saturday that Israelis and Palestinians would resume peace talks at the end of August in an effort to forge a final deal by mid-September and settle their differences over Jerusalem.

Israel said it was hoping for U.S. intervention to revive the talks. "Until (U.S. West Asia envoy) Dennis Ross returns to the Middle East — probably in the next two weeks — there will not be formal negotiations with the Palestinians," a spokesperson for the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Ehud Barak, said. However, she added: "Israeli and Palestinian negotiators have forged very amicable relations and there are still informal contacts between us." A U.S. embassy official said Mr. Ross was expected back in the region on about August 20.

Meanwhile, Arab leaders reasserted Muslim claims to the city that is holy to three religions and the Egyptian President, Mr. Hosni Mubarak, forecast violence would erupt if the Palestinian leader, Mr. Yasser Arafat, gave any ground on the issue. "Any concession on Jerusalem will make the situation explode in an uncontrollable way and terrorism will surface again and find a strong excuse to be active again," Mr. Mubarak said.

The Palestinians want east Jerusalem as the capital of the independent state they have said they will declare this year. The Palestinian official, who is close to Mr. Arafat, said the venue for this month's meeting was not yet known. It would be at the level of negotiators and not of leaders, he said.

The official said talks would receive an added impetus when

U.S. West Asia trouble-shooter, Mr. Dennis Ross arrived in the region next week. "We expect talks to pick up after Dennis Ross arrives in the region on August 20," he said.

Negotiations between Mr Arafat and the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Ehud Barak, collapsed last month at Camp David near Washington after they failed to agree on the status of Jerusalem. The Israeli Foreign Minister, Mr. Shlomo ben-Ami, visiting Spain, said it was possible that there might be a second peace summit before the September 13 deadline for a deal.

Mr. Mubarak said the peace process was at a crucial stage. "I told Barak that this is the most dangerous and toughest phase of peace talks because it touches on religions and roots of religious beliefs," he said.

He understood from Mr. Arafat that at Camp David that Israel had offered the Palestinians only religious jurisdiction over Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem, with broader sovereignty going to Israel. He quoted Mr Arafat as saying: "No one in the Arab world or the Islamic countries dares to agree to such an offer" and added that Mr. Arafat's assessment was correct.

The U.S. Secretary of State, Ms Madeleine Albright, said yesterday that there were no immediate plans to make a concerted effort to accelerate the peace efforts.

In another development, the Palestine Liberation Organisation's Central Council has decided to meet before the end of August to re-examine the proclamation of an independent state. — AFP, Reuters

THE HINDU

1 AUG 2000

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# Turkey: so near, yet so far

By C. Raja Mohan

ANKARA, AUG. 18. Few countries in this part of the world have as much common between them as India and Turkey do. Yet, for five decades they chose to look away from each other.

India and Turkey share the values of democracy and secularism. They face similar national security threats — terrorism, religious extremism and secessionism. India and Turkey have had historic links and profound similarities in their inherited cultures.

But there is very little going on between the two nations. Political contacts are too infrequent. High-level exchanges are rare, and business dull. The reasons for the past alienation between India and Turkey are not hard to find.

India chose non-alignment as the core principle of its foreign policy. Turkey is firmly aligned with the United States and is part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Turkey's friends were India's adversaries and New Delhi's partners Ankara's rivals. As they now try and put behind the wasted decades of the Cold War, India and Turkey start with a near clean state.

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It is well known that the Prime Minister of Turkey, Mr. Bulent Ecevit, is an Indophile. He had learnt Sanskrit and Bengali well enough to translate portions of the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Gitanjali*. The ageing Mr. Ecevit came to India earlier this year and made the uncomfortable trip to the Viswabharati University near Calcutta.

The goodwill for India in Turkey goes right down. Our escort here told us he had learnt Sanskrit and is fascinated by tales from India. When he makes enough money to travel abroad, he said, India would be the first stop. Corporate executive of a leading pipeline

construction company told us about her visit to Bombay a few years ago to join a camp of Siddhayoga. A receptionist at our hotel gave us his address, insisting that we should send him a picture of Lord Shiva.

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But goodwill alone does not help build a solid relationship. Commerce and movement of people do. Unlike the other parts of the Middle East, there is hardly any Indian presence here. The Indian communities in Istanbul and Ankara are in low hundreds. The first software engineers from India are beginning to drift down here.

Trade is minimal between the two. Ankara's commerce with five Central Asian countries is

## A TURKISH JOURNAL-III

more than a billion U.S. dollars; in contrast, trade with India is barely \$300 million.

Turkey is a major destination for international tourism. But hardly anyone from India manages to get here. Istanbul with its many attractions could be a convenient way station for Indians travelling to Europe and North America. The similarity of culture and familiar *pilao*, *nan*, *korma*, *kabab* and *kofta* in the Turkish cuisine should make Indians very comfortable here.

There are no direct flights from India to Turkey. Even the most determined international traveller would wince at the prospect of three hops through the Gulf to reach the other country.

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The fascination for India's mysticism here does not always translate into a real awareness of modern India. The *kitabevi*, bookstores here, are now marketing the Turkish trans-

lation of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. But on the cover of the book is a calendar kitsch of Shiva, Parvati and Ganesh!

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There is a new sense of urgency in both New Delhi and Ankara on the importance of catching up. Turkey, which has focused until now on joining the European Union, is now looking at a larger foreign policy profile in Asia. Among the top priorities are India, Japan, and China. And as India pays renewed attention to its extended neighbourhood in the Middle East, Central Asia and Persian Gulf, it will find Turkey a natural partner.

India and Turkey have a common interest in promoting stability in Afghanistan and Central Asia. As two secular states, they have a high stake in ensuring moderation and modernisation of the politics in the region. New Delhi and Ankara are both victims of extremism and terrorism and can do a lot together.

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India and Turkey have also recognised the importance of not looking at each other through the prism of Pakistan. The close military ties between Ankara and Islamabad in the past tended to dampen the prospects for Indo-Turkish relations.

The military establishments in Turkey and Pakistan are, however, headed in different directions. The armed forces in Turkey are the guardians of secularism and modernity. In Pakistan, the Army has become an ally of Islamic radicalism and international terrorism.

In a reflection of the changing realities, Mr. Ecevit refused to stop over in Islamabad when he came to India last March despite enormous pressure from Pakistan. The emerging agenda of Indo-Turkish cooperation should soon make Pakistan less central to the bilateral relations.

THE HINDU

19 AUG 7m



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## Kurds warily greet Turkey assurance on rights

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ISTANBUL (TURKEY), AUG. 19. Turkey's decision to end a 34-year holdout and sign two U.N. conventions this week guaranteeing the social and political rights of minorities was greeted with tempered enthusiasm among the country's Kurds.

Since 15 years of conflict between the army and Kurdish guerrillas ended last year, Kurdish leaders in south-eastern Turkey have been looking to the Government for progress on granting new rights to the region, including assurances that Kurdish can be spoken freely and that young people can be educated in Kurdish. Allowing the language to be used officially remains a sensitive issue for Turkey, and Parliament can attach restrictions to the conventions before ratifying them. But the Government is intent on improving its human rights record in hopes of joining the European Union, and better relations with the country's 12 million Kurds is regarded as crucial, in part be-

cause the Kurds have vocal political allies in Europe.

"Certainly it is a step of maximum importance for Turkey to sign these conventions," said Mr. Serafettin Elci, a Kurdish political leader and former government Minister. "However, what usually happens here is that the implementing of the conventions doesn't take place. If they can manage to put these conventions into practice this time, it will help Turkey in bringing tensions down and in solving the Kurdish question." The U.N. Covenants date to 1966, and 130 countries have signed them. The signers agree to protect freedom of speech, adhere to restrictions on torture and forced migration, and promote economic and social rights of minorities.

Mr. Volkan Vural, Turkey's Ambassador to the United Nations, signed the agreements in New York and said they signified the importance Turkey attributes to human rights. Mr. Vural returns to

a new post in Ankara next week to help oversee Turkey's effort to join the European Union. Turkey's Constitution does not recognize Kurds as a minority, defining them instead as Turks. The Government has argued that they have the same rights as other citizens, while Kurds demand the right to use their language and culture to maintain an ethnic identity.

The worst human rights abuses in recent years occurred in the predominantly Kurdish south-eastern part of the country, where the army fought a brutal war with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party. Since the ceasefire last year, the state of emergency has been lifted in most of the region and police and military checkpoints have been relaxed.

But human rights advocates said the authorities had refused to loosen the tight rein and Kurdish activists are still being arrested and tortured regularly. — *New York Times*

THE HINDU

20 AUG 1988

# Istanbul's spirit of freedom

2/8  
By C. Raja Mohan

49-13

**ISTANBUL, AUG. 20.** Constantinople, as this city was known for nearly 16 centuries until 1930 when Mustafa Kemal Ataturk renamed it, is part of modern India's historic memory. The fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453, we have been told, led to the European search for a new sea route to India, the arrival of Vasco da Gama and all that followed.

For nearly two millennia, Constantinople was the nerve centre of the world's historical development. Sitting astride the Bosphorus that divided Europe and Asia and linked the Black Sea and the White Sea (as the Mediterranean is called here), Istanbul was coveted by many empires that rose and fell in this part of the world.

On a cruise along the "Golden Horn," a curved estuary that divides the European part of the city into two, you get a spectacular view of the ancient Istanbul built on seven hills. Each hilltop is marked out by a large monument made less forbidding and more feminine by its slender minarets. In Istanbul you confront more than just the history of many empires. You are at the main theatre of the on-going war between Islam and the West, or more broadly between tradition and modernity and the Orient and the Occident.

In the bustling Istiklal (freedom) Street at the heart of modern Istanbul, there is no doubt who the winner is. If freedom is defined, in American terms, as the pursuit of life, liberty and happiness, there is an excess of it in Istiklal. Arm in arm, young men and women dressed in high Western fashion roam around with gay abandon late into the night.

This long cobbled street, shut to automobile traffic, is full of shops displaying everything from expensive Western brands to cheap

Turkish clothing. Restaurants are everywhere. Stepping into one of the side streets of Istiklal, you enter many old cavernous markets filled with revellers on the side-walk cafes and bars enjoying kebabs and Raki, the traditional Turkish liquor.

At one end of Istiklal is the huge Taksim square, with its memorial for the Turkish war of independence led by Ataturk in the 1920s. Ataturk fought against the western powers who tried to carve up the remnants of the once mighty Ottoman empire and founded modern Turkey. Ataturk followed the nation's victory against the West, with a breath-taking project to forcibly Westernise Turkey.

\* \* \*  
An evening breeze wafts over the sea waters that garland Istanbul as you relax in Taksim

## A TURKISH JOURNAL — IV

square under the overpowering shadow of Ataturk. The vigour of Istanbul's Westernised youth is stimulating. But there is a creeping doubt as well. Is the apparent Europeanisation of Turkey real? Will it endure? Is it really necessary? Remembering the oppression in the rest of Asia in the name of religion or from the failed projects for a third way between Westernisation and tradition, you can only marvel at the conscious Europeanisation of Turkey under Ataturk.

Is there a backlash? Istiklal and Taksim may celebrate the triumph of Western values. But the conservative hinterland remains a source of support for Islamists, who have been contained but not defeated. Even in urban Istanbul, you see young girls dressed in skirts and denim tops but wearing a scarf to cover their heads. They are making a point against Ata-

turk's banning of the veil. The battle, then, between religion and modernity rages on.

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Ataturk's Istanbul might have some lessons to offer on how to handle this conflict — not just for other Islamic countries, but for India as well. For more than a decade, India has been paralysed by the conflict over the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya. Ataturk had an easy solution.

The Assophiya museum here is the site of one of the oldest Greco-Roman temples. After the city converted to Christianity, the magnificent St. Sophia church was built on the ruins of the temple. During the iconoclastic phase of the Ottomans, the church was made into a mosque and its frescos were painted white.

Ataturk turned the mosque into a museum and got American experts to remove the whitewash covering the frescos. Entering the building you find the preserved remains of the old temple. Its gigantic dome reveals both Christian frescos and Islamic calligraphy.

\* \* \*  
Driving along the European side of the Bosphorus straits, we find the prosperous suburbs of Istanbul. We stop at Ortakoy and walk into a little market, full of eating places and trinket shops. The muzzein's call for evening prayers from a nearby mosque is rather muted and hardly stirs any one.

We dine at one of the restaurants on the enchanting Bosphorus waterfront. As the evening dissolves into night, a full moon rises over the undulating hills on the Asian side of Istanbul. It is time to take a break from thoughts about the unfinished war between religion and modernity. For the infectious spirit of freedom is too strong to resist in Istanbul.

THE HINDU

21 AUG 2000

# Arafat wants Jerusalem status cleared

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JERUSALEM, Aug. 20. — Mr Yasser Arafat has demanded that Israel resolve the most contentious issue of Jerusalem while the Jewish state ruled out a new peace summit in the near future if Palestinians did not show flexibility in ending the 52-year-old conflict.

"Before he (Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak) ends the conflict, he must resolve the most important issue of Jerusalem, which is not only important to the Palestinians, but also to the Arab nation and Christians," Mr Arafat told reporters in Gaza on his arrival from New Delhi.

The Palestinian leader had held meetings with Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and Mr KR Narayanan in New Delhi on the last leg of his Asia tour to drum up support for unilateral declaration of Palestinian statehood.

Israel's acting foreign minister, Mr Shlomo Ben Ami, ruled out the possibility of a follow-up summit to the last month's Camp David negotiations if the Palestinian leadership didn't reflect flexibility on core issues.

According to reports attributed to the Prime Minister's office, Mr Barak has told the US special envoy, Mr Dennis Ross, that as long as Israel didn't see any signs of flexibility from Mr Arafat, another US-sponsored summit was not required.

Mr Ross is now touring West

Asia, holding talks with Arab and Israeli leaders to narrow down gaps for a final peace deal before 13 September, the date set by Mr Arafat for declaration of an independent state.

Mr Barak has made it clear that he views a declaration ending the conflict as a precondition to a Palestinian declaration of statehood.

"If the Palestinian leadership is truly prepared to deal with the challenge of setting up a Palestinian state and solving the plight of its people, it must understand that the condition for it is the end of the conflict with Israel," the Israeli Prime Minister said at a function on Friday.

"We will know in several weeks if Yasser Arafat is open to a peace accord or if we are heading towards an impasse," Mr Barak told a weekly Cabinet meeting.

Palestinians, on the other hand, have accused Israel of being inflexible by demanding to "annex large parts of the West Bank" and sovereignty over most of Jerusalem.

"The Israelis think they can outsmart the world by claiming they were flexible while we were the hardliners," reports from Gaza quoted a senior Palestinian negotiator as saying.

Palestinian negotiators who met Mr Ross denied that Americans had presented any new proposal and ruled out chances of a new summit in the near future.

THE STATESMAN

21 AUG 2000

# Rethinking the Cyprus question

110-17 By C. Raja Mohan 2218

**LEFKOSA (NORTHERN CYPRUS), AUG. 21.** There is a tinge of sadness to the strange beauty of the semi-arid northern Cyprus. Its pretty little towns, washed by the eastern Mediterranean sea, are littered with the remains of Greco-Roman settlements, Byzantine churches, Moorish fortresses, protective walls built by Venetian pirates and Ottoman mosques.

The streets of the capital city, Lefkosa, better known as Nicosia, are lined with palm trees and desert shrub. Picture postcard houses that dot the city are shaded from the scorching afternoon sun by carefully-tended creepers of vine.

A high per capita income, total literacy and a fabulous coastline should make Northern Cyprus a paradise on earth. But they do not.

The capital is full of monuments for those alien in the bitter communal carnage that tore apart Cyprus nearly three decades ago. The Turkish Cypriots commemorate the Turkish military intervention in 1974 which they believe saved them from extinction.

Partition is always a messy business wherever it occurs. Cyprus with its 8,00,000 thousand people is no exception. It is now divided between north, where the Turkish Cypriots run their own administration and the south where Greek Cypriots manage the affairs. An ugly green line runs through the island and across the capital city.

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Greek and Turkish Cypriots had lived here for centuries in peaceful co-existence. The British leased the island in 1878 from the Ottoman empire that was on its last legs.

When the British vacated in 1960, they left the island with a complex power-sharing arrangement between the two communities. The structure quickly fell apart, as ethnic hatred gripped Cyprus. The Turkish community was ousted from positions of power and pushed into small enclaves. Turkey intervened in 1974 and carved out an independent Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus for its ethnic kin. Barring Turkey no other country has recognised this small community of 2,00,000 as a separate nation.

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Since the early 1960s, the so-called Cyprus question has been on the international agenda, but was declared to be "insoluble". The

two Cypriot communities and their respective "motherlands" — Greece and Turkey have since been locked in an endless confrontation. The historic animosities and persistent military tension in the Aegean sea between Greece and Turkey add more layers of complexity. But there is a ray of hope now from the "proximity talks" between the two communities brokered by the United Nations. The indirect talks are expected to clear the ground for a full-fledged negotiation between the two sides on a lasting settlement in Cyprus.

Three rounds of talks have been held and a fourth one is due in mid-September at New York. The United Nations Secretary-General has put before the two sides "a set of ideas" on how to approach a final solution.

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In a conversation with visiting Indian journalists, the President of the Republic of Northern Cyprus, Mr. Rauf Denktash, was not too

## A TURKISH JOURNAL — V

optimistic. He said he has laid on the table a comprehensive proposal for a "confederation". But he does not expect the Greek side, which wants a federal solution, to agree.

Turkish Cypriots believe the Greeks think time is on their side. The European Union is now considering the application of Greek Cypriots for membership on behalf of the whole Island. The Greek side, it is believed here, is just waiting for the Turkish Cypriots to fall in line. But Mr. Denktash refuses to compromise on one core issue. He insists that his community cannot be seen as a minority seeking rights within a united Cyprus. Mr. Denktash argues that nothing less than the recognition of Turkish Cypriots as an equal partner in the creation of a new Republic of Cyprus can help move the talks forward.

By unfairly recognising the Greek administration of south Cyprus as the legitimate Government of the entire island, Mr. Denktash contends, the world has given little incentive for the Greek side to negotiate with any seriousness.

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Much of the international diplomatic effort on Cyprus would be aimed at bridging the difference between the ideas of federation and

confederation in the coming months. The changed international context has generated a new mood of optimism. So has the earthquake one year ago that shook both Greece and Turkey and brought about an outpouring of public sympathy in both countries to the other.

Turkey, which is looking for an EU membership and a larger political role in Eurasia would like to see an early move towards a final solution to the Cyprus problem and improved relations with Greece. The European Union and the United States may also be in a position to nudge Athens in demonstrating some flexibility.

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The evolving diplomatic dynamic suggests that the time may have come for India to review and rethink its own position on Cyprus. Given the compulsions of the non-aligned movement and the listless relations with Turkey in the past, India has tended to back fully the Greek Cypriot position on Cyprus.

The unfolding negotiations between the two communities call for greater balance in India's approach. The Turkish Cypriots do not expect New Delhi to formally recognise their existence. But they do argue that it is only fair that India should at least listen to their side of the story. Many major powers, including the U.S., do not recognise the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. But they do keep open channels of communication. Must India deny itself forever even informal contacts with Northern Cyprus?

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Driving back from Lefkosa to the picturesque Kyrenia coast, we reflect on the determination of the Turkish Cypriots. While they are prepared to negotiate an honourable settlement, they appear resigned to an extended international quarantine.

On the waterfront of the ancient harbour of Kyrenia, there is revelry late into the night. There is no sense of the burden of international sanctions that Northern Cyprus has long endured. Back at the hotel, hordes of tourists are enjoying music and food at a celebration of "Cyprus nights".

Notes from "Kaanun", a stringed instrument from the Ottoman times, lighten the mood. There is a brief but arousing whiff of wild jasmine in the air. But the pain of partition and the trauma of separation linger on.

(Concluded)

THE HINDU

22 AUG 2000

## ARAFAT'S PEACE PILGRIMAGE

CAUGHT IN THE steady stream of VVIP visits to Delhi, the Palestine leader, Mr. Yasser Arafat's 24-hour halt in the capital during the weekend for the cause of peace went almost unnoticed. The talks in Delhi were an important part of Mr. Arafat's last-ditch effort to garner global support for his plan to declare an independent Palestine state by the middle of next month. A staunch supporter of Mr. Arafat's PLO, India had for decades extended moral and material assistance for the fight to re-establish the Palestinian homeland. But changing geopolitical equations and changing priorities in Delhi have seen re-adjustments of policy. There can be no denying that under the present ruling coalition there has been a refocussing of the priorities as Delhi has sought to build closer relations with Israel even while reiterating the country's traditional ties with the Arabs. Mr. Arafat should therefore have anticipated that the red carpet would be missing in Delhi. The lack of warmth and the failure of the Nobel laureate's visit at this critical juncture to excite or evoke any special interest reflect an apparent waning of interest in the Palestinian cause in Delhi.

The aging former revolutionary had turned an itinerant peace envoy following the failure of the summit sponsored by the U.S. at Camp David. Hailed as a conquering hero for his refusal to compromise with Israel over key issues, he must have returned home from the marathon summit sessions more worried than victorious, mindful of the heavy burden on his shoulders. If the region was not to erupt again in violence, he had to keep his promise of declaring Statehood by September 13. But without agreement with Israel, this would be a disastrous step. His last hope rested on canvassing support for his cause in world capitals. The first phase of his pilgrimage took him to friendly Arab countries

and then to European supporters. The last phase included talks in Beijing and Tokyo before landing in Delhi. The advice he received unanimously everywhere: unilateral declaration of statehood could be suicidal. He was urged in all capitals to delay the announcement and get the peace process back on track.

With India's stake in the stability of the region, and the Government's newly-acquired interests, Mr. Arafat would have received the same message in Delhi. The next fortnight and more will be crucial as efforts continue to re-launch the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and forestall a return to violence. That the failure at Camp David did not result in an eruption of anger attests to the stakes that all sides have developed in peace and peaceful coexistence. The marathon at Camp David failed because neither the Israeli nor the Palestinian negotiators had the strength and the domestic support to disguise compromise as victory over the status of Jerusalem. A Government crisis in Israel tended to divert attention from the fact that the blame for the failure rested on the Jewish state, which has remained unyielding on the strength of assured American support in this Presidential election year. There can be no stable Palestinian state without full sovereignty over East Jerusalem since any compromise by Mr. Arafat over this emotionally divisive issue can ignite violence, engulfing the entire region and threatening well-entrenched regimes. This explained the anxiety of Egypt and Saudi Arabia to prevent an Arafat surrender at Camp David. The issue has defied diplomacy since 1937 when the first attempt was made by Britain to divide the territory of Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. But time, the eternal healer, may be running short now.

THE HINDU

25 AUG 2000

# Barak says he has 'other' plans

*H. Amia*  
*W*  
JERUSALEM, AUG. 24. In a clear warning to the Palestinians, the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Ehud Barak, said on Thursday he would not make peace at any price and that if negotiations failed, he would ask the hawkish opposition party Likud to join his Government. The Palestinians dismissed Mr. Barak's warning and the Likud rejected his offer.

Mr. Barak said it would become clear within a few weeks whether a peace treaty was possible. He and the Palestinian leader, Mr. Yasser Arafat, have accused each other of intransigence and have said they will not budge from positions adopted at July's West Asia summit at Camp David.

In interviews on Israel's two main radio stations, Mr. Barak said he was aware that the Likud leader, Mr. Ariel Sharon, could not join the coalition as long as peace talks continued. Likud is staunchly opposed to concessions Mr. Barak has offered Mr. Arafat, including Palestinian statehood in most of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"I know that today they (the Opposition parties) can't join, but maybe in a few weeks, they will be able to do so," Mr. Barak told Israel army radio, adding that he believed the peace talks had a 50-50 chance of success.

Mr. Barak said that if peace talks failed, he would direct his at-

tention to domestic problems. Earlier this week, he had announced a "social revolution," saying he planned to adopt a constitution within a year, pass civil marriage laws and make English and math mandatory subjects in all schools.

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The Prime Minister said that the secular Likud would be a nat-



ural partner in carrying out such sweeping changes. Mr. Barak also noted that Mr. Sharon has already served as Foreign Minister and could be Foreign Minister again. "If it will not be possible to reach an agreement with our neighbours, the real way is to expand the Government,

to establish a very broad government," he told Israel radio.

Mr. Barak's courting of the Likud came as the Israeli acting Foreign Minister, Mr. Shlomo Ben-Ami, met in Alexandria the Egyptian President, Mr. Hosni Mubarak, and the Foreign Minister, Mr. Moussa, to hear their proposals for a compromise with the Palestinians on the future of Jerusalem, the issue that led to the collapse of Camp David talks.

Mr. Barak lost his parliamentary majority on the eve of the summit when three right-wing parties quit his coalition because they objected to concessions he was about to make to the Palestinians. — AP

THE HINDU

25 AUG 2000

## INTENTIONS AND INTRANSIGENCE

THE POLITICAL INITIATIVE by Jordan's King Abdullah to salvage the West Asia peace process at this critical juncture is aimed at encouraging both Israel and the Palestinian high command to stay the course for a possible "final" accord. The young monarch's mission is no less designed to ease the frustration of the Clinton Administration over the persistent failure of the Arabs and the Jewish state to bridge the gap between them on the core issue of Jerusalem's status. While both sides continue to profess their matching political intentions for a peaceful settlement, each sees the other as being singularly intransigent. As the author of the Camp David process, the U.S., too, is still engaged in West Asia, with an emissary, Mr. Dennis Ross, trying to see, independent of the Jordanian King and the Egyptian President, how far the Israelis and Palestinians can be hustled towards another round of summit-level parleys under Washington's own measured mediation. For the moment, though, the U.S. State Department has clarified that another Camp David-style summit is not on the cards. While this has obviously triggered speculation that the West Asian peace process may be grinding to a halt, the latest flurry of diplomatic activity involving some Arab leaders and the U.S. itself will suggest that the last word has not yet been said on this subject. All the same, there is a message in King Abdullah's latest visit to Tel Aviv, a rare event for a Jordanian ruler, and his insistence that Israel and the Palestinians must not squander the present chance for a final settlement. It simply is that time is running out on two counts — the emotive Palestinian urge to declare the creation of a sovereign state by or after September 13, a deadline in focus for some time now for a firm peace deal with Israel, and the countdown for the inevitable exit of Mr. Bill Clinton, a man with an avowed dream of a negotiated

peace in West Asia, from the White House.

The Palestinian helmsman, Mr. Yasser Arafat, is still keeping the world guessing about his gameplan for a unilateral proclamation of a sovereign state across the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Central to this move is the question of Arab East Jerusalem. During his recent tour of several key countries in a quest for international support for a new Palestinian state with or without Israel's acquiescence, Mr. Arafat hinted that the September 13 timeline might not be sacrosanct and that a collective decision would be made by a group of leaders including him. While the Malaysian Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, indicated his general support for an independent Palestinian State, the Japanese leader, Mr. Yoshiro Mori, counselled a delay in the move to proclaim a sovereign entity. While the views of other countries too, including those of India which is being taken into confidence by Israel too as evident during Mr. Shimon Peres's latest visit to New Delhi, can make a difference to Mr. Arafat's thinking, wealthy Japan's stake in West Asia's resources and stability is well known.

The Israeli leader, Mr. Ehud Barak, is keen on a complex web of checks and balances in regard to East Jerusalem that would effectively deprive the Palestinians of the substance of sovereignty in that place. Tel Aviv has even begun to warn of a possible new conflagration if Mr. Arafat were to decree the formation of a plenipotentiary state without a prior agreement with the Israelis. While Tel Aviv feels emboldened in this regard by Washington's disposition against any unilateralism that could destroy the peace process, sabre-rattling is certainly not in order, be it of the political kind by the Palestinians or the diplomatic sort by the Jewish state, which indeed needs to cast the peace net wider to include Syria, now under a new leader.

THE HINDU

26 AUG 2000

## Deadline in West Asia

INDIA IS known for its long-standing support for the Palestinian cause. That Israel should keep India informed about the progress and difficulties in the peace process is a measure of New Delhi's fast expanding ties with Tel Aviv. India has only limited clout as far as the Israeli-Palestinian talks are concerned. However, New Delhi has reasons to feel happy about the country being increasingly looked upon as a major international player. Indian leaders have understandably impressed upon both the sides to continue dealing with their disputes through negotiations.

Yasser Arafat is under pressure from within his own ranks to go ahead with the unilateral proclamation of independent Palestine. But such a course of action is fraught with dangerous consequences. Israel has time and again threatened that if Mr Arafat declares independence on his own next month, Tel Aviv may envisage annexing Palestinian territories or extending Israeli law to the strategic Jordan valley. The issue of Palestinian statehood has been postponed many times and it is Mr Arafat who has often been forced to make a compromise. It was the 1994 interim agreement on Palestinian autonomy which had fixed May 4, 1999, as the date by which time it was expected that a final settlement with Israel would be negotiated under the Oslo accord.

The five-year transitional period ended in May last year. At that time an international consensus emerged calling for an extension of one year. The Palestinians cannot be expected to accept a perpetual transitional period or subjecting the possibility of setting up the Palestinian State to the whims of the Israelis. But Mr Arafat will do well to avoid unilateral actions that may grievously damage the peace process. The Ehud Barak Government has its own difficulties. It may not survive till October. Time is running out for President Bill Clinton as well. The international community would have to ensure that the focus is not lost in West Asia and that things are not allowed to drift at this crucial stage.

THE HINDUSTAN TIME.

28 AUG 2000



# Parties suffer from siege within

HT Correspondent

Bhubaneswar, January 31

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EVEN AS the filing of nomination papers for the first phase of elections here is to end today, all major political parties seem to be struggling to put their houses in order before the poll.

While almost all senior leaders in the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) are upset over seat-adjustment with their alliance partner BJP, the turmoil within the Congress seems to be reaching its own peak.

However, Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president J B Patnaik seems unperturbed by developments in the last one week during which three ministers in the State have been openly critical of party functioning. But political observers view it as a major set-

back to the growing aspirations of the party, as a result of the tension in the BJP-BJD combine.

Mr Patnaik's own candidature has not been announced till now, but the denial of tickets to ministers Raghunath Patnaik and Bhagwat Prasad Mohanty has led them to publicly protest against his

having been given the party ticket. While Mr Lenka and Mr Mohanty have been critical of the PCC Chief, Mr Bibhudendra Pratap has been seething over the brush off given to him apparently on the suggestion of Chief Minister Hemanand Biswal.

While Mr Lenka's political clout in his own constituency may not be sufficient to raise hackles in the State, his letter to party president Sonia Gandhi along with protests from other ministers can cause major damage to the party's already fading prospects.

**New Delhi:** AICC secretary Anil Shastri would be reaching Bhubaneswar tomorrow on a "fire fighting" mission amid reports of a mini rebellion against "unfair" ticket distribution for the coming assembly elections.



leadership. MLA Bibhudendra Pratap Das was also not granted ticket along with Anantram Majhi, who had vacated the Laxmipur Assembly seat in favour of former Chief Minister Giridhar Gamang.

Mr K. C. Lenka has surprisingly joined hands with them despite

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

1 FEB 2000

# Arrested Dara confesses to killing Staines

FROM DEBASHIS BHATTACHARYYA

**Kuliana (Mayurbhanj), Feb. 1:** Dara Singh, arrested at a Keonjhar village last night, has confessed to killing Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two sons at Manoharpur on January 23 last year.

Deputy inspector-general (eastern range) S.K. Pradhan said Dara today admitted to all the crimes he was accused of — killing the Staineses, a Muslim trader and Catholic priest Arul Doss.

But he denied working for any political party or religious body, including the Bajrang Dal. According to Pradhan, Dara said he had killed the missionary because he was converting tribals. He also admitted to killing Sheikh Rahman, a Muslim trader in Pariabada, but refused to give a motive. Dara said he hated Christians. "I wanted to stop all conversions by Christians," he was quoted as saying.

His confession was recorded at the Kuliana police station today in the presence of senior officials. He was brought to Kuliana, about 15 km from Baripada, district headquarters of Mayurbhanj, for questioning this afternoon. Later, he was taken to Karanjia, about 150 km away, to be produced before the sub-divisional judicial magistrate.

He was remanded in judicial custody. The hearing is expected to take place tomorrow. A senior

police officer said Dara was totally composed and had not broken down once since his arrest. "He ate heartily and even hummed a tune," the officer said.

Dara was lured by undercover police officers into a trap with the offer of a gun at Gohira village late last night. The arrest ended a year-long search for the most wanted fugitive in recent times.

Pradhan said a Dara associate had tipped off the police on Sunday that he was desperately looking for a firearm. Word was sent to Dara that a gun dealer would meet him in the village on Monday night and give him a rapid-fire gun at a throwaway price.

Posing as the seller, the officer in charge of Thakurmunda police station, Balaram Sagar, met him around 11 pm while armed policemen surrounded the village. But Dara smelled a rat while talking to the undercover officer. "He told me that this place was not safe and wanted us to discuss the deal later," Sagar said. As he tried to

bolt, Sagar pounced on him and pinned him down. The officer said he was determined to net Dara after he gave the police the slip in Sudangbahali jungle in Keonjhar on December 9.

DIG Pradhan said Dara was arrested in connection with six cases, including the killing of Doss and Rahman. "We could not arrest him for the Manoharpur incident since the CBI was dealing with that," he added. The CBI has already filed a chargesheet. A CBI team today reached Kuliana and questioned him. Pradhan said he was handed over to the crime branch of the state police.

Dara, a wiry man, wore a faded, red T-shirt. His face was partly covered as he will be lined up for identification later. His eyes were bloodshot and he had a stubble. The police had a tough time controlling the crowd that thronged the station to see him.

Hailing from Etawah in Uttar Pradesh, he had been operating from Keonjhar and Mayurbhanj for the past 15 years. Originally called Ravindra Kumar, he does not remember who changed his name to Dara Singh.

With his arrest, minorities, especially church officials, who were living in fear for the past one year, feel relieved.

In Bangalore, Gladys Staines expressed satisfaction over the arrest. She said: "He will not kill others now." Gladys was on way to visit her daughter Esther, who is studying in Ooty.

## Anjana case

**Bhubaneswar, Feb. 1 (Agencies):** Former Orissa advocate-general Indrajit Ray was today convicted by the designated CBI court in the Anjana Mishra case and sentenced to three years rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs 5,000.

■ Full report on Page 8

THE TELEGRAPH

- 2 FEB 2000

Three students die as protesters torch bus

# Jaya gets year's RI in Pleasant Stay Hotel case

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHENNAI, Feb. 2. — The former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Miss Jayaram Jayalalitha, was today convicted and sentenced to undergo one year's rigorous imprisonment in the Pleasant Stay Hotel case. This triggered violence in the state in which three college girls were burnt alive by AIADMK supporters.

Miss Jayalalitha was convicted for criminal conspiracy, misconduct and for abusing her position as a public servant.

The Special Judge II, Mr V Radhakrishnan, who delivered the judgment, however, suspended the sentence of all the five accused in the case, giving them time till 3 March to file their appeals in the High Court.

The judgment, passed around 10.30 a.m., triggered violence across the state, with AIADMK partymen going on the rampage, stoning and setting fire to buses.

Enraged partymen set fire to a Coimbatore Agriculture College bus near Dharmapuri in the state, burning alive three college girls and seriously injuring five others this afternoon.

The government sent a police team to Dharmapuri to arrest an AIADMK functionary, TK Rajendran, who allegedly led the mob which torched the bus. Forty-seven girls were travel-

ling in it.

Enraged partymen set fire to three more buses. Over 50 buses in the state were damaged in stone-throwing.

The state DGP, Mr FC Sharma, said 1,008 people had been arrested.

The air was thick with tension in the court hall as Miss Jayalalitha came in at 10.05 a.m., accompanied by Mrs Sasikala and the latter's two nephews, Mr VN Bhaskaran and TTV Dinakaran, a Lok Sabha member.

A battery of AIADMK lawyers and senior party leaders were present to lend moral support to their leader. The special court, housed in the Chennai Collectorate building, was swarming with policemen. Entry was restricted only to visitors with passes and journalists with identity cards.

Soon after the judge pronounced his verdict, Miss Jayalalitha, looking upset, left the court premises supported by Mrs Sasikala. Except for declaring her innocence and stating that she would appeal to the High Court against the sentence, she declined to talk to the journalists.

Earlier, when she was asked by the judge if she had anything to say, Miss Jayalalitha said her lawyer would reply.

Reacting to the order, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and

the DMK president, Mr M Karunanidhi, said: "The verdict is a lesson to all corrupt politicians and all those intending to be corrupt."

Miss Jayalalitha, convicted under Section 120 B (criminal conspiracy) and Section 13(2) read with 13(1)(d) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, was awarded one year's RI for both charges with Rs 1,000 as fine each.

However, the imprisonment will run concurrently, the judge said.

The AIADMK leader thus escapes the Election Commission stricture which disqualifies a person from contesting elections if he or she is sentenced for two years or more in a case.

The judge acquitted her of the charge under Section 477 A of the IPC (falsification of records).

Miss Jayalalitha, the former Local Administration Minister, Mr TM Selvaganapathy, and former Municipal Administration secretary, Mr HM Pandey, were accused of permitting the construction of the seven-storey Pleasant Stay Hotel in the Kodaikanal hill resort, flouting rules.

The two promoters of the Pleasant Stay Hotel, Mr Rakesh Mittal and Mr Palai

■ See JAYA: page 8

## JAYA:

(Continued from page 1)

Shanmugham, were also accused in the case.

The 74-page verdict said the promoters had put up a multi-storeyed building disregarding the sanctioned plan. According to the plan, the building should have only the ground floor and the first floor. Later, they built five floors, violating recommendations... claiming that the five floors were in the basement. When the file seeking permission for the additional five floors came up before the then Municipal Administration Secretary, Mr PC Cyriac, he objected to it.

He even forwarded a note to the then Chief Minister, Miss Jayalalitha, and Mr Selvaganapathy, the then local administration minister, asking for recirculation and reconsideration of the file.

The note was ignored. On the very day, Mr Cyriac was "shunted out" and Mr Pandey was brought in.

"The claim of the accused that it is only a routine transfer and had nothing to do with the refusal of Mr Cyriac to toe the line, is not acceptable", the judge observed.

Mr Selvaganapathy had chosen to make an order relaxing the building rules to the hotel, the judge said. "The file had gone to Miss Jayalalitha straight from Mr Selvaganapathy, clearly indicating that she had conspired with the other accused to grant pecuniary advantage by passing orders and abusing her position as a public servant," the judge added.

He further pointed out that the action of Miss Jayalalitha in having an amendment passed in the Assembly and a subsequent government order, amending the hill rules to favour the Pleasant Stay Hotel promoters, despite a High Court order quashing an earlier government order and the Supreme Court upholding it, proved that Miss Jayalalitha had acted dishonestly by abusing her position.

Referring to the appeal by Miss Jayalalitha and Mr Selvaganapathy seeking immunity under Article 194 of the Constitution, the judge observed that when the first government order was issued without sanction (in 1994) of law, there was no contemplation of bringing in any legislation.

# 4 ADMK men held for arson

## Self-immolation by Jaya sympathiser; TN mourns victims

HT Correspondent  
Chennai, February 3

FOUR AIADMK functionaries have been arrested and 12 more are wanted in connection with the torching of a college bus at Dharmapuri on Wednesday in which three girl students were burnt to death.

A 30-year-old AIADMK sympathiser committed suicide by setting himself afire in Villupuram district today on hearing about the conviction of his leader Jayalalitha.

A grief-stricken student in Coimbatore tried to kill himself in the same way to condemn the killing of the three girls, police said. Elsewhere, more than 4000 volunteers of the AIADMK have been arrested in connection with incidents of violence.

Yesterday, the college bus was set on fire by some AIADMK workers who were reportedly protesting against the conviction of party chief J. Jayalalitha in the Pleasant Stay hotel case.

Despite Ms Jayalalitha's staunch denial that her party workers were involved in the arson, the police announced that search is on for 12

AIADMK men. This includes Dharmapuri union party secretary Rajendran, at whose behest the operation was reportedly carried out.

The ruling DMK is going all out to exploit the ghastly tragedy politically. After announcing a compensation of Rs 2 lakh each to the dead girls' families, the government today declared a holiday for schools and colleges on Friday. The DMK's students wing will be taking out a protest rally in Chennai tomorrow.

According to other students travelling in the ill-fated bus, a gang of four people who came in an Ambassador car, stopped the bus. Ignoring the girls' pleas that they were students, they ordered them to get down. Even as they were getting off the bus, one of them threw a petrol bomb that

ignited in flames trapping, the three girls inside.

A pall of gloom descended on this textile city today as grief-stricken students and staff of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University took out a silent march and paid a tearful homage to the three students.

Sporting black badges, more than 800 people, including 300 women, passed through the main roads of the city demanding action against those who took part in the act of vandalism.

The processionists carried placards displaying slogans like "Politics not at the cost of life" and "Today our colleagues, tomorrow?".

Security was tightened throughout the area. Traffic was stopped on the procession route as a precautionary measure. Later, student and staff representatives met the

district collector and presented a memorandum demanding an inquiry into the ghastly incident.

Educational institutions in the state will remain closed tomorrow as a mark of respect.

Meanwhile, the bodies of the three victims - Gayatri, Kokilavani and Hemalatha - were handed over to their families after autopsy last night at the Government Hospital at Dharmapuri.

The state unit of the ABVP said a demonstration by college students would be held tomorrow.

The Tamil Maanila Congress has described as "barbaric and uncivilised" the incident where three girls were burnt alive.

**HTC adds from New Delhi:** While reserving comment on yesterday's judgement on Ms Jayalalitha, the BJP called on the Tamil Nadu government to maintain law and order in the state.

BJP general secretary M. Venkaiah Naidu said chief minister M. Karunanidhi should deal with those indulging in violence. "While punishment can only be delivered by the law courts, the state government must ensure that the culprits are brought to book".

### 'No setback'

J. JAYALALITHA today said she had lot of legal recourses to get the Pleasant Stay hotel case conviction set aside. She also said that the verdict was not a setback to her. "In fact, it will generate lot of sympathy for me," she told reporters in an informal chat, after leading a silent march to the memorial of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister N. Annadurai, on his 31st death anniversary here.

PTI, Chennai

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 4 FEB 2000

# Two prime accused in T.N. students' killings surrender

The Times of India News Service

CHENNAI: One of the main accused in the killing of three girl students, AIADMK's Dharmapuri unit secretary D.K. Rajendran, and another partyman, A. Muthu, surrendered in the court of the Salem judicial magistrate on Friday. The names of both figured in the FIR. Six people have been arrested in the case.



J. Jayalalitha

The Tamil Nadu government on Friday ordered a crime branch-CID probe into the arson in Dharmapuri in which three students of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) were burnt alive. The incident was part of a series of violent acts in the state, allegedly perpetrated by AIADMK

activists, that followed a special court verdict against party chief J. Jayalalitha on Wednesday. The demand for an inquiry had come from several quarters, among others from the staff and students of TNAU. Ms Jayalalitha, who claimed her supporters had nothing to do with the incident, had also demanded a CBI probe.

Educational institutions in Tamil Nadu remained closed on Friday as a mark of respect to the three TNAU students who were killed. Students took out processions and demonstrated against the incident in various parts of the state. Condolence meetings were also held. In Coimbatore, there was some tension on the TNAU campus, with students demanding that chief minister M. Karunanidhi visit the city and listen to their grievances against the authorities who had failed to save their fellow students' lives.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

5 FEB 2000

# Basu asks FIs, PSUs, NGOs to aid riverfront development

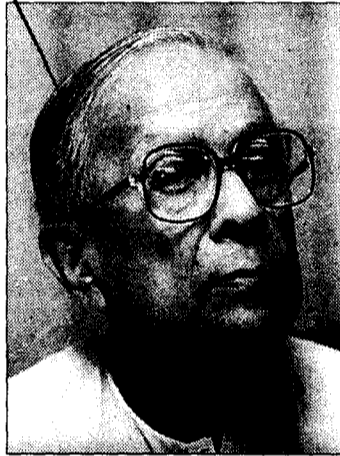
Our Calcutta Bureau  
CALCUTTA 9 FEBRUARY

WEST BENGAL chief minister Jyoti Basu, on Wednesday, sought wholehearted support from industrial houses, financial institutions, non-government organisations and PSUs for arranging funds for working out a comprehensive strategy for developing the entire riverfront between twin-cities Calcutta and Howrah to attract tourists and promote socio-economic development on either side of the river.

Addressing a two-day workshop on "A Meeting by the River," for action on the Hooghly riverfront, Mr Basu said a positive attitude supported by practical solutions should help in implementing the project. "There is need for huge resources, but availability of funds may not be a difficult proposition as the entire development programme will be commercially viable," said Mr Basu.

Though the immediate focus will be on the riverfront development, such an integrated development along the riverfront will also create further scope for the promotion of tourism.

The two-day workshop on the riverfront development was



Basu: Action time

jointly organised on the initiatives of the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority (CMDA), British Deputy High Commission, the Calcutta Port Trust (CPT) and the Indian Chambers of Commerce (ICC) with the technical expertise of the London River Association.

Ashok Bhattacharya, minister-in-charge of municipal affairs & urban development, Government of West Bengal, also spoke on the occasion. Mr Bhattacharya said: "It was necessary to develop a well-planned strate-

gy for developing the entire riverfront between Rabindra Setu and Vivekananda Setu in the initial stage. The experiences with the London River Association, which has worked extensively in the Thames riverfront development, will be of great help to city planners and policy makers in Calcutta."

Apart from the direct impacts like development of river cruise and tourism, regeneration of the local economy and employment will help the physical status of the city and will attract both domestic and foreign private investment.

Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) president K.R. Bangur said it was unfortunate that the riverfront is the backyard of the city instead of being the cynosure of Calcutta.

"Age and obsolescence of structures, degradation of public spaces, distorted land-use pattern, excessive traffic congestion have resulted in environment concerns and are problems that need to be addressed. It is time that the city should break the negative image associated with it and convey a feeling of growth, optimism, dynamism and hope," Mr Bangur said.

**The Economic Times**

10 FEB 2000

## SINKING ARTERY

5/2/68 25/2/68 ✓ Too little, too late

FACED with the prospect of being damned if you do and damned if you don't, CMC has decided to throw in the towel. The ambitious project to "concretise" the city's main arterial stretch has been abandoned. A committee assigned to conduct a preliminary survey finds that parts of Chittaranjan Avenue are sinking, with water gushing out near Shyambazar five-point crossing. That the CMC confirmed the subsidence several years after the Metro Railway completed work on this stretch is itself a commentary on its sluggish, even lumpen, approach to development. Equally late in the day has been the startling discovery that large portions dug up by the Metro were filled up with garbage instead of sand. If the railways are to blame for this criminal neglect so is the CMC. Mounds of garbage must have been readily available on CR Avenue — some at the entrance to Calcutta Medical College and Hospital — as the conservancy department, saddled with ghost employees, seldom does its duty. Improved roads might help the Left Front in the civic polls in May. But roads will remain as appalling even after a new mayor-in-council takes over. Repair work is cosmetic, as cosmetic as the CPI-M's plan to replace Prasanta Chatterjee with another mayoral candidate.

The desperation of road-planners is itself an admission of the fact that virtually nothing was done over the past five years — between one civic election and another. With time running out, the city fathers seem to be in a state of nerves. They have backed out of the CR Avenue project with no prescription on how subsidence can be tackled. A seminar on flyovers only exposed inadequacies. And now road repairs all over the city are on hold owing to Indian Oil's allegedly irregular supply of bitumen. Central to the face-off is the Rs 75 lakh that CMC owes IOC on account of bitumen supplies and Rs 90 lakh that IOC owes the corporation as taxes. As the tax-payer citizen suffers between the two ledgers, Jyoti Basu's March deadline for road repair has gone haywire. Books of accounts have come to the rescue of a slothful civic administration.

THE STATESMAN

25 FEB 2000

# Buddha sees ISI hand behind Kamtapuri stir

HT Correspondent  
Jaipalguri, February 27

THE KAMTAPURI movement for a separate State in North Bengal was being aided by some foreign agencies, including Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), Deputy Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharyya alleged here today.

The Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO), the underground wing of the movement, he said, had received arms training from the United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA).

Bhattacharyya was speaking to reporters after a convention of the CPI(M)'s North Bengal district units to chalk out a strategy to fight the Kamtapuri movement. The convention was a closed-door affair and the media barred from it.

Although the State government and the CPI(M) have been harping on the Kamtapuri threat, other Left Front partners, particularly the Forward Bloc, have not been as enthusiastic in fighting the movement politically. In fact, local CPI(M) leaders have often com-

plained that sections of FB and Trinamool Congress leaders of some North Bengal areas had joined hands with the Kamtapuris to embarrass the CPI(M) and the government.

Bhattacharyya made it clear that his party — the CPI(M) — would continue to fight the Kamtapuri separatists politically and hoped that other Left Front partners would join the Marxists in the fight. The Centre's decision to create more States, he complained, had encouraged the Kamtapuri demand, but his party would oppose any move to carve out new States from West Bengal.

He dismissed the Kamtapuri contention that the Rajvanshis were a distinct ethnic community and their language different from Bengali. "The language spoken by Rajvanshis is a dialect of Bengali and the Rajvanshis are Bengalis. We are saying this after talking to experts." But he admitted that the Kamtapuri movement was different from such separatist movements in North Bengal in the past. Earlier, some "discredited and dispossessed landlords" had organ-

ised a similar movement. "Now, the Kamtapur People's Party (KPP) and other Kamtapuri agitators have raised this demand, saying Rajvanshis are a different community and their language is not Bengali."

He accused the Kamtapuris of misleading and trying to divide the people. The Kamtapuri agitation, he claimed, was fast losing its influence because the KPP and the KLO had failed to rally the people to their side.

Reacting to reports that the Kamtapuris and the KLO, in particular, were taking shelter in some areas in Bhutan, Bhattacharyya said the State government had already brought the problem to the notice of the Bhutan King. "Bhutan is a friendly country and its King is a knowledgeable person," he commented.

He denied that the government had neglected North Bengal, saying that districts like Bankura and Purulia were economically more backward than North Bengal. But the government has still decided to set up a development board for North Bengal.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES  
28 FEB 2000



## MOB FURY

51-6  
1971  
Ten people stoned to death

SOUTH 24 Parganas on Thursday saw yet another grotesque show of people taking the law into their own hands. Ten robbers — we are now told there were only two robbers, the rest were onlookers — were stoned to death by a mob in broad daylight while a crowd watched with glee. Bodies bore multiple injuries and faces were mangled beyond recognition bearing evidence of the extent of public fury. West Bengal has set a national record in lynching with more than 75 cases reported in three months. The offences tend to occur in rural areas where police stations are understaffed and inept, with corrupt policemen often in league with criminals. The fear of criminals being released for money if they are handed over to police and thus free to commit fresh crimes, is often the cause of mob action. In this case, residents claim that even after six months of repeated complaints the police refused to act.

The seeds of killing without legal sanction were laid by police themselves when they killed alleged Naxalites in fake encounters rather than apprehend them and bring them to trial. National attention was focused on West Bengal in 1981 when 17 Anand Margis were burnt alive in broad daylight — an inquiry was ordered but the report never saw the light of day. Two years ago in another spate of lynchings, Home(Police) Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya claimed on the floor of the assembly that lynching was not a law and order problem but a sociological one. If this is the minister's reaction to crime then it is not surprising that mobs continue to take the law into their own hands. In these circumstances the possibility of innocent people falling prey to mob fury cannot be ruled out — eight out of ten in this case. Last year a six-year-old girl was killed when a mob stoned the car in which she was travelling after it ran over a goat near Calcutta — such cases cannot and should not be repeated. Spontaneous action by angry citizens can also be used as an excuse to hide orchestrated, premeditated murder which is what appears to have happened in Sonarpur. Such abuse of the law cannot be tolerated. While lynching and public frustration can be understood, it cannot be condoned. The failure of the police to enforce the rule of law is the cause; unless this is addressed, such lawlessness will continue to shame the police, the minister and the Government of West Bengal.

THE STATESMAN

17 JAN 2000