

From Anil Rana in  
GANDHINAGAR

## The politics of water

GUJARAT

TWO maps of Gujarat, one showing areas of "acute scarcity" and "scarcity" of drinking water, and another the drinking water supply command area of the Sardar Sarovar Project — the superimposition of the SSP map on the first map shows a surprising neat fit: the drought prone

areas where even drinking water becomes a commodity all covered by the SSP supply. The irony could not be more telling than in the present drought conditions in the areas where drinking water had been made available through ships, rail tankers, road tankers, pipelines, tube-wells and every other means, except through the taps. All because the SSP is mired in controversies of environment, big dam vs small dam and even the efficacy of small check dams and rain-water harvesting — which is today dependent on monsoon rains — as compared to a gigantic project which harnesses a surface water resource and sends a supply to scarcity and acute scarcity areas.

The "acute scarcity" areas on the map are Bhuj, Surendranagar, Jamnagar, Junagarh, Amli, Bhavnagar, Palanpur and Mehsana districts. Those marked "scarcity" are the districts of Ahmedabad, Himmatnagar, Khada and Godhra.

"If the Sardar Sarovar Project had been completed and not been stuck up in controversies, the present situation of drought would have been very different," comments Jay Narayan Vyas, the Gujarat Minister for Narmada Development and Major Irrigation Projects. "Just four per cent of the Narmada water which flows into the sea and is wasted is sufficient to look after Gujarat's drinking water needs for ten years, and 18 years if only the drought

affected areas are supplied."

The actual irrigation potential through all the present major and medium schemes is only 12 lakh hectares, whereas the SSP alone will provide irrigation facilities to 19.24 lakh hectares. Further the projects will provide safe drinking water to 8,215 villages and 155 urban centres.

Vyas pointed out that under the Sardar Patel Participation Water Conservation Scheme around 10,000 check dams are being constructed and this shows that rain water harvesting is not being overlooked by the government.

Gujarat, though known as an industrial state, uses around 40 per cent of its power for agriculture. "The farmer needs water not power and if the agriculture sector presently utilises 2100 MW of power it is a great loss elsewhere. To provide 2,100 MW of power, counting transmission losses, etc," the minister said, "power stations generating 6000 MW will have to be set up. The cost of this will be a staggering Rs 33,000 crore at present day costs and this alone justifies the coming up of the Sardar Sarovar Project."

The Minister added that the SSP was no inter-state project where out of the 1,450 MW power generated, Madhya Pradesh is to get 57 per cent, Maharashtra 27 per cent and Gujarat about 16 per cent.

The delay in the dam's completion has however kept the canal network unhindered.

THE STATESMAN

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# Waiting for deliverance

EXPRESS FOCUS DROUGHT

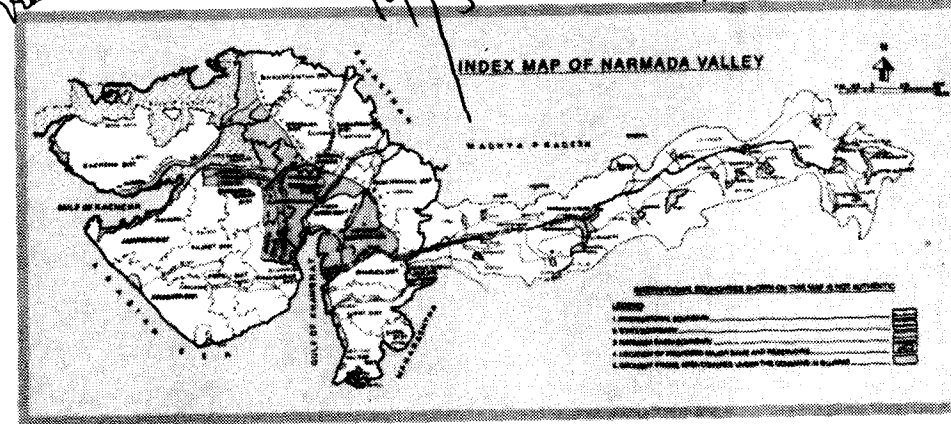
For the residents of the drought-affected areas in Gujarat and Rajasthan, the Supreme Court's verdict on the Sardar Sarovar Project could well be the final solution to their water woes, says **VIPIN PUBBY**

**E**VEN as Booker prize winner Arundhati Roy was waxing eloquent at the Cannes film festival about the "terrible things" happening to the millions of people adversely affected by the Sardar Sarovar Project, the common refrain among the drought-affected people in Saurashtra, north Gujarat and Kutch, besides Rajasthan, was that she could at least pay a visit and see for herself the plight of the millions in the sun-baked areas.

With the Supreme Court completing the final hearing and reserving its judgment on a petition filed by the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA), all eyes are now on the final verdict expected in a few months. The dam's

construction has been held up since about a year pending the petition, though construction of power houses and the canal network is underway. The apex court had halted the dam's construction in 1995 at a height of 80.3 metres. Subsequently, under an interim order in February 1999, it had allowed the dam's height to be raised to a height of 85 metres.

For residents of the area reeling under the worst drought in a century, the million-dollar question is, will the Narmada waters reach them by the next summer. Officials say that once the Supreme Court gives the green signal, the waters should reach the parched land in six months, although it may take another year-and-a-half



for the project to be completed. This would include completion of powerhouses to generate 1,450 MW of electricity.

However, for the residents of 8,215 villages and 136 towns in Saurashtra, North Gujarat and Kutch and 131 villages in Barmer and Jalore districts of Rajasthan who are to benefit from the Narmada waters, the power generation can wait. Although the area has gone through 24 droughts during the last 76 years, this has been one of the worst ever droughts for them.

With the total failure of the mon-

soon last year in the drought-prone area, which even otherwise receives a scanty rainfall of upto 400 mm, the situation this year is grim. The total available storage in 135 dams of Saurashtra and Kutch has been reduced to less than two per cent, that too in just three dams. The ground water table is depleting at a phenomenal rate of about one metre per month. It is now rare to find water at less than 1,000 feet and the success ratio of handpumps has been reduced to about 50 per cent.

Besides, the salinity ingress has advanced to six kilometres from the

coastline and the advancing Rajasthan desert is threatening to take more areas into its grip.

The Narmada water project, initially conceived by Sardar Patel in 1946 and revised to its present shape in the eighties, is being awaited anxiously by the Gujarat government and those likely to benefit.

While the dam's height has gone up to 85 metres, the officials say that a minimum height of 110 metres is required for water to flow into the main

canal. The canal head powerhouse has already been completed and work is on at full steam for the main powerhouse. Over 95 per cent of the main canal has been completed and work is on to complete a distribution network of about 66,000 kilometres of sub canals. It is the world's largest irrigation canal with a capacity of 40,000 cusecs.

The project, the largest of its kind in Asia, is aimed at irrigating 18 lakh hectares of land in Gujarat and 0.75 lakh hectares in Rajasthan. It has a catchment area of 88,000 square kilo-

metres.

However, the NBA claims that the figures regarding benefits from the dam are exaggerated. The organisation believes that 3,20,000 people would be directly affected (as against the Gujarat government's claim of 40,709 families) and asserts that the dam would indirectly, but adversely, affect one million people in Madhya Pradesh. Those opposed to the dam call it "anti-people and anti-environment", while Gujarat's Narmada and Major Irrigation Projects minister says the project is "only anti-drought, anti-disparity and anti-despair...". He claims that liberal and scientific ways have been formulated for the rehabilitation and re-settlement of the affected persons while the NBA stresses on the plight of these people. The claims and counter claims have been debated over the years.

But while the state government has been giving the impression that the flow of the Narmada waters was the panacea for all problems, the fact is that large areas of Saurashtra currently reeling under the drought are not going to benefit from the Narmada waters, as these do not fall under the command irrigation area of the proposed canal network.

Thus the worst affected districts of Rajkot, Jamnagar, Junagadh, Amreli and parts of Surendernagar and Bhavnagar will continue to face a similar

situation if the government does not take effective alternative measures. Authorities say these areas have a topography of a reversed bowl and cannot be connected with the canal.

Multiplicity of departments and agencies dealing with the problem of water shortage in Gujarat, play of politics which have led to stalling of various water projects and lack of a long-term perspective planning for rain water harvesting in the drought-affected areas has led to the situation turning from bad to worse each year.

Unfortunately, due to its over-dependence on Narmada waters, the state government had been neglecting other schemes to improve the situation. Nearly 80 per cent of its irrigation budget is earmarked solely for the Narmada project at the cost of other smaller and long-term measures. There is little evidence of any improvement even though the government claims that thousands of check dams have been constructed and measures were being taken to harvest rain water. As per a government admission, nearly 43 per cent of power in the state is used for digging deep bores and drawing out water in the state.

Yet, those likely to benefit from the Narmada waters are eagerly looking forward to the verdict of the Supreme Court, which has held hundreds of hearings and has 80,000 pages to study before coming out with its judgment.

# Castling to a new role

His demands reek of Tamil chauvinism. Is southern brigand Veerappan looking beyond ransom and amnesty at a political future in Tamil Nadu? Gabriel Vaz reports from Bangalore

**P**OLITICS, they say, makes strange bedfellows. So too, it seems, does Veerappan. Under normal circumstances, it would be difficult for Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to see eye to eye on anything at all starting with the Cauvery issue. But thanks to the antics of the infamous sandalwood smuggler, the two states have been working hand in hand for the past three weeks.

Ever since the fateful Sunday night of July 30 when Koose Muniswamy Veerappan (55) kidnapped Kannada film icon Rajkumar — and three others — from his farmhouse in the Gajanur district in Tamil Nadu (just across Karnataka's borders) the two state governments have been under a siege.

Karnataka's IT-savvy chief minister Somanahalli Malliah Krishna was forced to forget his ongoing quest for onepmanship over arch rival Chandrababu Naidu, and make common cause with Tamil Nadu's Muthuvel Karunanidhi to free the 73-year-old Kannadiga heart-throb from the brigand's clutches. He had no choice. The effect of this masterfully timed yet sensational kidnap was such that for close to two weeks schools and colleges, bars, pubs and liquor shops remained closed in many parts of the state. The entire Kannada film industry decided to observe a voluntary bandh till the return of the 'Annavaaru' (elder brother), as the thespian as reverentially known.

Fueled by the initial emotional outbursts of thousands of Rajkumar fans and stoked by the violence and vandalism that followed in its wake, the kidnapping brought alive fears of another Tamil-Kannadiga ethnic clash. Obviously, memories of the 1991 riots in Bangalore and surrounding

areas, over the Cauvery dispute tribunal's interim award, are difficult to erase.

The result: both state administrations swung into action to avert what could easily have turned into much more than a law and order problem. As Krishna shuttled between Chennai and Bangalore, he and Karunanidhi spent most of their time strategising, scouring documents, holding closed-door parleys with senior ministers and trusted officials in their respective states. With the focus on Veerappan, though, governance was relegated to the back-burner.

As the film industry downed its shutters and work came to a standstill in several commercial and industrial enterprises, Bangalore's bottomline took a beating. The loss of revenue as the city's famed pubs closed shop and the consequent decline in the arrival of tourists and businessmen have hit hotels hard. Add to that the production slowdown in IT enterprises and the revenue loss works out to a whopping Rs 300 crore.

Meanwhile, India's most notorious outlaw, more diabolic and sinister than others of his ilk, is still calling the shots. The joint emissary of the two governments and editor of Tamil biweekly Nakkeeran, R Raja Gopal — who has so far met the dreaded bandit six times in his forest lair — has left again to plead for Rajkumar's release. But so far he hasn't had much luck. "I have achieved only 25 per cent success," he admits. "I will consider my mission a 100 per cent success only after I secure the release of the hostages."

So what makes Veerappan different from others in the rogues gallery. Going by painstakingly prepared police dossiers, he has killed at least 138 people, including 32 policemen and 10 foresters;

poached 2,000 elephants for ivory (estimated to be worth roughly Rs 25 crore) and smuggled sandalwood valued at Rs 100 crore.

Carrying a reward of Rs 40 lakh — Rs 20 lakh each by the two state governments — he has some 135 cases pending against him (59 in Karnataka and 79 in Tamil Nadu). The elite special task forces (STFs) that were constituted by the two governments and the operations by the centrally-deputed Border Security Force (BSF) to nab the elusive brigand have drained the exchequer of Rs 180 crore.

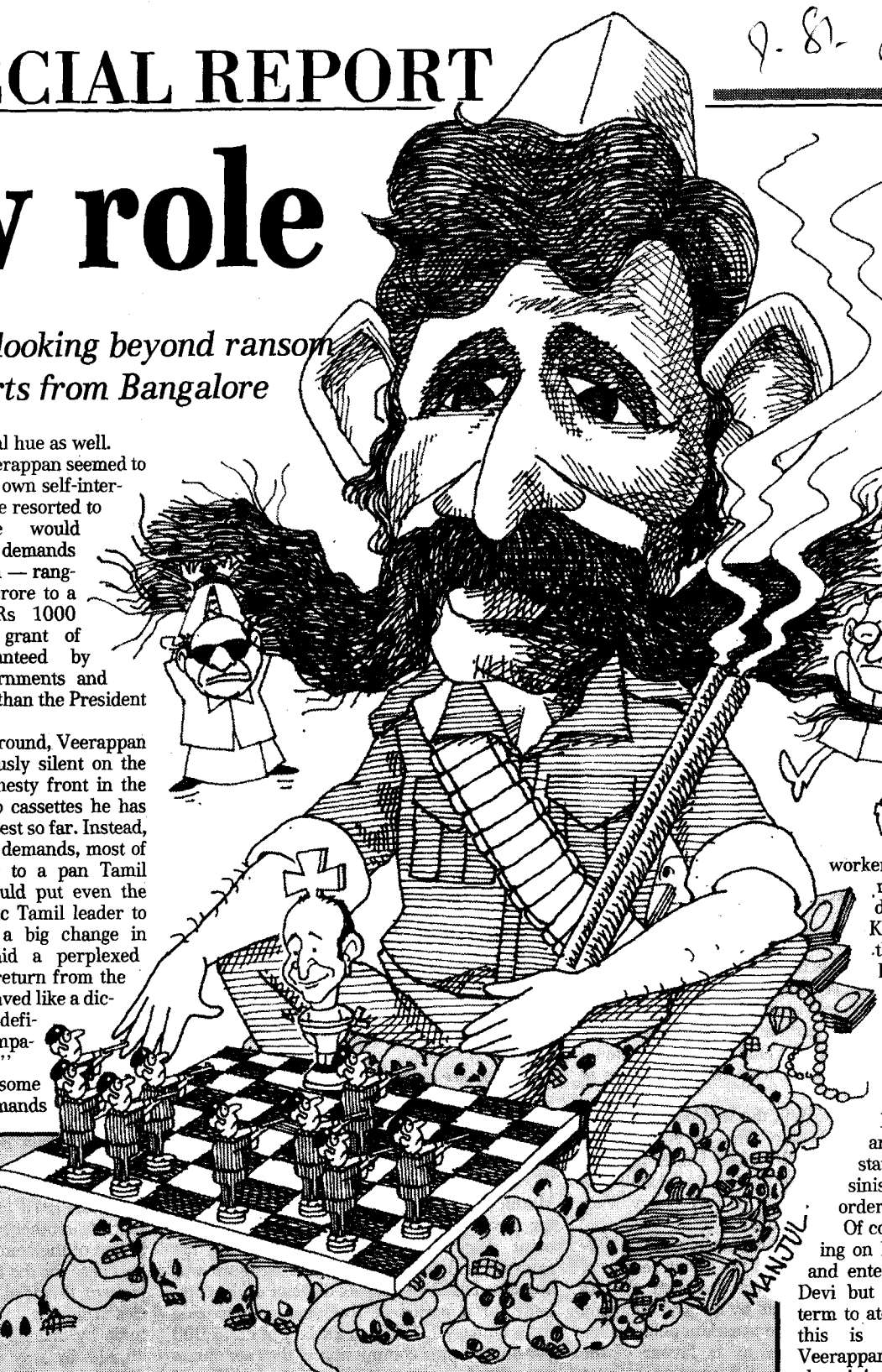
Quite apart from the hole he has burnt in the treasury pockets, the reason why Veerappan is so dangerous is the finesse with which he seems to be crossing the thin line that divides a common criminal from an awe-inspiring anti-hero. Already the tribals and other villagers living in the secluded 60-odd hamlets along the thickly forested

Karnataka-Tamil Nadu/Kerala border consider him their very own Robin Hood as much for his ruthlessness as for his generosity. And with his latest antic, that stature could easily

acquire a political hue as well. In the past, Veerappan seemed to be guided by his own self-interest. Whenever he resorted to abductions, he would invariably make demands for hefty ransom — ranging from Rs 3 crore to a mind-boggling Rs 1000 crore — and grant of amnesty, guaranteed by both state governments and no less a person than the President of India.

But, this time round, Veerappan has been studiously silent on the ransom and amnesty front in the four audio/video cassettes he has sent from the forest so far. Instead, he has listed 14 demands, most of them pertaining to a pan Tamil agenda that should put even the most chauvinistic Tamil leader to shame. "I saw a big change in Veerappan," said a perplexed Gopal after his return from the forest. "He behaved like a dictator. And he is definitely in the company of extremists."

There may be some truth in that. Demands



like scrapping the Cauvery tribunal and referring the water dispute to the International Court of Justice, conferring second official language status on Tamil in Karnataka, making Tamil a medium of instruction up to the tenth standard, unveiling Tamil poet Thiruvalluvar's statue in Bangalore and of course granting generous compensation to Tamil victims of 1991 Cauvery riots and releasing TADA detainees in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, all point to a brand new agenda.

Add to that huge demands for coffee and tea plantation workers, suitable relief and rehabilitation of Kolar district Dalits in Kambalappalli along with the fact that the written list containing the charter of demands were signed by extremist outfits like Tamil National Liberation Army (TNLA) and Tamil National Retrieval Force (TNRF) and the Veerappan saga starts sounding far more sinister than a law and order problem.

Of course he had been harping on his desire to surrender and enter politics a la Phoolan Devi but without serving a jail term to atone for his crimes. But this is the first time that Veerappan is pandering to Tamil chauvinism, trying to win over the support of not just his backward class Padayachi Gounder community or the Vannians but the Dalits

and plantation workers as well. If this combination — which has the potential of deciding the political complexion in several districts of Tamil Nadu — clicks, the outcome in next year's Assembly elections could be anybody's guess. Naturally, any Dravidian party — like Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) or Pudiya Tamizhagan (PT) — that is in cohorts with Veerappan will be able to reap rich political dividends.

Unsurprisingly, Veerappan's political check-mate has put Tamil Nadu in a tizzy. Karunanidhi's arch-foe and AIADMK supreme Jayalalitha has flayed both chief ministers for spinelessly caving in before a criminal and has asked them to quit to pave the way for an army operation under President's rule to put an end to the Veerappan menace. For good measure, she has also demanded that her favourite ex-police chief Walter Isaac Dawaram be put in charge of joint STF operations to nab the brigand, conveniently forgetting that both she as CM and Dawaram as her DGP had achieved precious little earlier.

Unlike Tamil Nadu, the political scene in Karnataka is placid with almost all political parties standing solidly behind Krishna. After all, elections in Karnataka are four years away and none of the parties stand to gain if Rajkumar comes to harm. Besides, several chief ministers — from Veerendra Patil to former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda — have had little success dealing with the bandit.

The situation is fraught with so many intangibles that almost everybody — from Rajkumar's family to sundry stars and starlets and Krishna himself — seem to have rediscovered God. Short of divine intervention, the only hope is Gopal's negotiating skills. Any action against the brigand, jointly by the two states, separately or with Central assistance, will have to wait until Rajkumar is safely back home. But one thing's for sure, this could be the first move in a well-thought-out gameplan to restructure the bandit's image.

■ With inputs from D Govardan in Chennai

## JUNGLE TERROR

1955: Ten-year old Veerappan shoots down a tusker near Gopinatham upon his initiation into a new life of elephant poaching by mentor Selvan Gounder.

1965: Arrested near M M Hills but manages to escape.

1980: Forms his own gang, by which time over 300 elephants are killed for their ivory tusks.

1984-86: Kills four forest officials of Karnataka in Thithimathi and Bandipur forest ranges.

1986 December: Arrested in Bangalore on the eve of the SAARC summit and shifted to Boodipadaga forest guest house in Chamarajanagar, from where he escapes.

1987 July: Abducts and kills TN forest chief Chidambaram on Palar bridge.

1989 January: Beheads five suspected police informants near Gopinatham.

June 30: Kidnaps five forest staff, who are later released.

August 4: Karnataka forest guard Mohanaiah shot dead for intercepting a sandalwood-smuggling lorry.

August 7: Kidnaps three TN forest officials near Begur, whose mutilated bodies recovered after 19 days.

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January 6: Veerappan strikes back by killing two Karnataka policemen.

January 23: Police recover sandalwood worth Rs 1.5 crore in Silvikal forest range.

February 13: Veerappan retaliates by torching two buses with 22 people, including 15 civilians at Gargekandi.

April 9: Kills three police sub inspectors and one reserve police constable, who were returning from Hogenakal in a jeep.

April 12: Karnataka forms special task force to nab Veerappan.

June 17: Kills Gopi Nayaka, a native of Gopinatham, suspecting him to be a police spy.

July 10: STF kill Gopalan and Marimuthu, associates of Veerappan.

1991 September: STF intensifies operations and arrests over 100 supporters of Veerappan since inception.

November 10: Beheads deputy conservator of forests P Srinivas after luring him into his forest hideout through surrender drama enacted by Veerappan's younger brother Arjunan, who was released from jail on bail.

1992 February 19: STF kills Veerappan's trusted lieutenant Gurunathan.

May 20: Veerappan hits back by killing five policemen inside Ramapuram police station near Kollegal and decamps with arms and ammunition.

May 21: Karnataka pleads for BSF help to nab the brigand.

June 28: Four associates of Veerappan gun killed in a shootout at MM Hills.

August 14: Mysore SP Hanikarishna, SI Shakeel Ahmed and four STF men shot dead near Meeniyam.

November 22: Centre drops plan to send in Army.

1993 April 9: Veerappan mines a police convoy near Palar bridge killing 23 persons, including 15

police informers. TN's SP Gopalakrishna survives the blast with serious injuries.

April 12: Karnataka and TN constitute joint task force, announce Rs 40 lakh reward for information leading to the bandit's capture.

May 24: Six STF personnel and eight Veerappan associates killed in an ambush near MM Hills.

October 13: Wife Muthulaxmi, nephew and five other women relatives arrested by STF in TN's Dimbam forest range.

October 19: Veerappan kills five Soliga tribals in Sathyamangalam range suspecting them to be police informers.

December 4: Abducts TN's Dy SP Chidambaram, his brother-in-law and an headconstable near Coimbatore.

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1996 April 7: Offers to surrender if granted amnesty by President.

May 25: Two Veerappan associates discuss surrender terms with TN.

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October 8: Veerappan strikes again. Kidnaps noted wildlife photographers Krupakar and Senani along with four others (of the 22 tourists kidnapped, others were freed in the beginning itself) at Bandipur, who are released after 12 days.

December 21: Attacks Vellithiruppur police station near Erode and decamps with cash and guns.

1998 July 19: Veerappan's associate Madesh killed in an encounter near Sathyamanagala.

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July 30: Kannada matinee idol Rajkumar and three others kidnapped from the actor's farmhouse at Gajanur.

## The thin red line

Society is no longer quite so sure where crime ends and heroism begins

**A** JOKE doing the rounds of Parliament this week was that if you really want the women's reservation bill to be passed, just ask Veerappan to include it in his list of demands. Lawmakers running to a lawbreaker for help? Alarming, the prospect isn't ludicrous — it's all too possible.

Veerappan's latest avatar as an upholder of Tamil rights only serves to highlight how blurred the line has become between criminals and champions of 'causes'. Particularly in India, where cynicism about almost every institution of civil society is endemic. This erosion of popular faith in the traditional icons — policeman, bureaucrat, political leader, religious head — has led people to seek succour without looking too closely at where ever it comes from.

As Centre for the Study of Developing Societies' Yogendra Yadav says, "People like Phoolan, (perhaps Veerappan too) join politics not because the public wants it that way but because political space in being gradually vacated by those who bemoan lack of clean public life."

Paving the way for those with other motives to step in. The chattering classes' favourite pastime of "politics-bashing" only reveals the quality of people attaining political centrestage — people whose money or muscle power rather than altruism or expertise help them reach public office.

If they can do so, why not anyone else. Veerappan for instance. The "culture of illegality" — as political scientist CP Bhambhri calls it — encourages people to accept any kind of turpitude. And take the same path themselves, either out of compulsion or even pragmatism. For the unspoken truth is that might very often is right. Besides every area's own tales of the criminal-bureaucrat-politician nexus, Veerappan's life story emphatically endorses that if you are big (and rich) enough, you're above the law. If a man with innumerable murder cases against him and long years of poaching ivory and sandalwood can get away with it, then who's to stop anyone else? Bhambhri avers that "all kinds of dacoits, murderers and rapists



HAIRY TALES: Gopal (left) and Veerappan

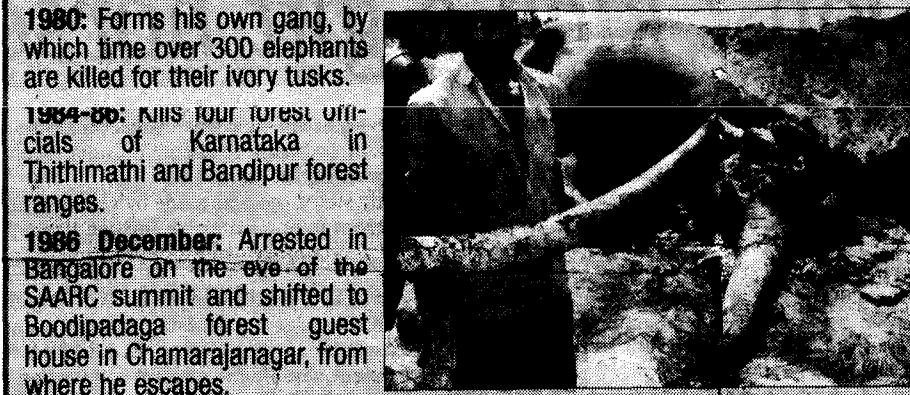
are being built up by the mass media", but the message is undeniable. As Yadav puts it, "Though Veerappan's a man who's changed his image to suit his purpose, what's important is that he has the government kneeling. So the conclusion is that if you're small, you'll be punished. So become like Veerappan and you'll be safe."

It all depends, eventually on which side of the prism you view a criminal from. Joint Commissioner of Police Ajay Chaddha says, "you defy the law for a long time and you become a law unto yourself." Fellow CP (Training) Kiran Bedi avers that "social positioning of criminals shape their sociological profile" and characterises at least Veerappan's image as being mainly fear-driven.

But common people are only too willing to rationalise a criminal's actions if he ultimately benefits them. Politicians use their muscle-power to win and then can't deny their sinister benefactors a wider role when the time comes. Caste considerations add their mite to the sordid picture — lawbreakers like Phoolan and Veerappan have a fair share of open endorsers among lawmakers, as Bhambhri points out.

It is almost like a conspiracy of convenience, cemented by a deep cynicism. Ultimately, as Yadav says, "We can't applaud the causes and regret the consequences." The buck stops with us.

■ Sobha Menon & Binoy Sharma



ALL FOR IVORY: A poached tusker

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THE VISION THING: Krishna (left) and Karunanidhi



PAWN IN THE GAME: Rajkumar

## The reel bad guy

The good-bad lines are getting more and more blurred in popular cinema

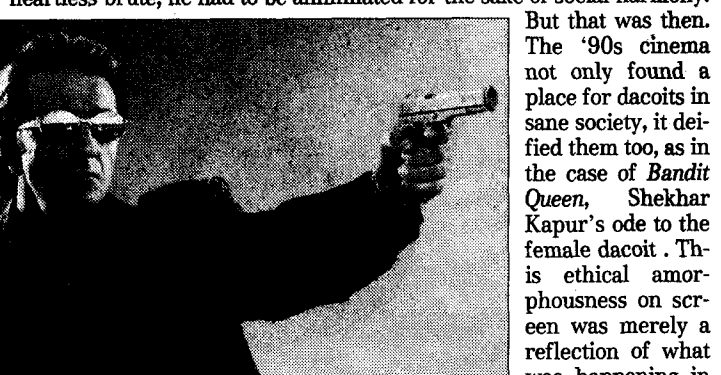
**O**n the one hand there is Veerappan who is metamorphosing from dacoit to activist, after five decades of crime. But more alarming is the transformation that's taking place on the outside. Rajkumar, in his taped message after weeks of captivity, confesses 'his (Veerappan's) path is good...some of his demands are exalted'. Gopal, the journalist-turned-official emissary insists: "He has changed a lot. His approach and attitude have changed. He declares himself a Tamil extremist and talks about convening an inspection committee to take decisions. He even quotes Che Guevara." The CMs of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka are actually conceding to most of his demands and are apologetic about those they cannot concede. But more importantly, there is the hairdresser Shivarama Bhandini who is currently specialising in a new hair-cut — a Veerappan moustache on the back of the head.

Now when did we hear that last. When Dev Anand unleashed the we-want-a-Dev-puff-hairdo voodoo; when Rajesh Khanna dressed up the nation in Guru kurtas; when Amitabh Bachchan lent the baritone edge to the vox populi; and now, when Hrithik Roshan has sent it into the gym, to acquire designer biceps and abs. Obviously, somewhere down the line, Veerappan is crossing over — from forest brigand, killer and crook to activist and anti-hero. Not a difficult feat, going by popular cinema which has always serendipitated the anti-hero.

Popular culture's predilection for the 'khalnayak as nayak' became more pronounced in the 1990s, with the concept of pure evil and pure good being replaced by the idea of the bad-is-good hero. This was starkly different from the anti-hero - the good-bad guy - immortalised by Amitabh Bachchan in the 1970s and 1980s. Despite his anti-hero stance, the legendary Vijay Verma (the role Bacchan replayed time and again since Deewar) was never all bad. Ideologically, he never transgressed the value system.

A definition of this anti-hero can be found in the blockbuster *Sholay* where the Thakur (Sanjeev Kumar) says: "Woh (Dharmendra and Amitabh) badmah hain, lekin bahadur hain. Khatarnak hain, is liye khattron se khelna jante hain. Burre hain, magar insaan hain" (They are crooks, nevertheless they are brave. They are dangerous because they know how to play with danger. They are bad, yet they are human).

Juxtaposed against these good-bad guys was the all-bad guy, Gabbar Singh. Popular cinema in the '70s offered no justification for his evil. A heartless brute, he had to be annihilated for the sake of social harmony.



GUNS AND POSES: Sanjay Dutt in Vaastav

But that was then. The '90s cinema not only found a place for dacoits in sane society, it deified them too, as in the case of *Bandit Queen*, Shekhar Kapur's ode to the female dacoit. This is ethical amor-phousness on screen was merely a reflection of what was happening in society itself where anti-social elements were entering Parliament, criminals were winning elections from jails, corruption in high places was going unpunished and Harshad Mehta was accorded the sobriquet of the Big Bull, despite being allegedly guilty of a mega buck scam. In the new millennium, the grey areas between good and bad seem to be growing wider, with larger-than-life icons being investigated for charges of match-fixing, without actually affecting the game of cricket. Hence the importance of films like *Vaastav* or *Satya*, which lionise figures like Bhikhu Mhatre (Manoj Bajpai) and imbues the underworld with warmth, camaraderie and compassion too.

Going by the cinematic truth, it seems absolutely possible that Veerappan might make this transition from villain to hero without a hitch. After all evil in popular cinema is gradually being divested of its negative shades and characters like Dr Hannibal Lecter (*The Silence of the Lambs*), Balru Bharam (*Khalnayak*), Bhikhu Mhatre (*Satya*) have been accorded as heroes and winners. Doesn't seem strange if Veerappan is too: accolladed and accepted, in new colours and a new role.

■ Nikhat Kazmi

'HUNGER STALKS MEN, WOMEN, CHILDREN'

# Help tide over drought, PM appeals to people

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, APRIL 23. The Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, today appealed to the people to contribute generously to the National Fund for Calamity Relief to enable the Government to meet the severe drought conditions in several States, especially Gujarat and Rajasthan, admitting that funds released to affected States were inadequate. *J. G. Anurag*

Mr. Vajpayee's countrywide appeal over television and radio today has come a day before the expected debate in the Lok Sabha on the drought situation tomorrow even as Opposition parties prepared to grill the Government charging it with inadequate and delayed action.

Both the Congress(I) and the CPI today issued strong statements — the Congress(I) charging that the drought had come when the farmers and the poor people were already reeling under the impact of increase in the prices of food and fertilizers and the CPI warning there were famine-like conditions in many districts. The CPI also demanded an all-party meeting to discuss the grave scenario.

The Prime Minister is expected to make points on how the Government has tackled the situation through a reply to the debate tomorrow itself even as BJP sources indicated that it would like to keep the issue "above politics".

Later in the week, the Lok Sabha is also expected to debate the recent increase in prices of petroleum products and the cuts in subsidies of food and fertilizers, an issue which has been agitating the National Democratic Alliance



Villagers waiting for water near a well in a drought-affected village in Gujarat on Sunday. — PTI

(NDA) partners as well as BJP MPs, not to speak of the Opposition.

The Prime Minister's appeal pointed out that more than five crore people had been affected by the drought. "In village after village, hunger stalks men, women and children," while cattle were affected because of lack of water and fodder.

The Union Government has already released some funds to the States to help meet the situation. "However, given the severity of the drought" and the need to find food for a large number of people and fodder for cattle, "these funds are inadequate." Mr. Vajpayee said that each person can help in the situation by making a contribution "no matter how

small the amount". He noted that people had contributed generously towards relief for those affected by the super cyclone in Orissa last year, and he was sure that they would now come forward to "lend a helping hand to (their) brothers and sisters in Gujarat and Rajasthan".

Government sources indicated that relief money had already been released to Gujarat and Rajasthan, the worst affected states: nearly Rs. 88 crores has been released to Gujarat this month in two instalments of Rs 43.7 crores each, and Rs. 112 crores have been given to Rajasthan also in two instalments. Many other States, including Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa and Assam had received one instalment of relief money.

In Gujarat, the drought is said to be the worst in a century, and in the desert State of Rajasthan, the drought has made worse a condition which is chronic in many of its districts. This year 26 of the 32 districts are reported to be badly affected that the Chief Minister, Mr. Ashok Gehlot, is himself touring the villages. In Gujarat, the Chief Minister, Mr. Keshubhai Patel, has nominated Ministers in the State Government to oversee the relief work in specific districts.

The Prime Minister was certain that with help from all the difficult challenge would be overcome. The Prime Minister's Office will be coordinating the relief work with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Food and Civil Supplies.

**Politics hampers relief in Gujarat: Page 15**

THE HINDU

24 APR 2000

# PM appeals for help, drought states backtrack

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI/JAIPUR, April 23. — While Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee today described the drought conditions in Gujarat and Rajasthan as "severe", Rajasthan government today said it was not alarming. Gujarat government officials also underplayed the situation saying though there was a drinking water crisis, no death had been reported.

In a broadcast to the nation, the Prime Minister put the figure of those affected in Gujarat, Rajasthan and some other parts of the country at 50 million. He appealed to the people to contribute to the National Relief Fund.

But the Rajasthan government, which has so far been claiming the worst drought in the state ever, today took a U-turn, saying drought situation there was merely a "media hype" and the situation was not that serious.

This assessment comes only a week after the Rajasthan Chief Minister, Mr Ashok Gehlot, met the Prime Minister in New Delhi to seek special central assistance, claiming that famine-like conditions were prevalent in the state.

It seems the state has chosen to take two separate stands — one to highlight the severity of famine when it comes to taking assistance from the Centre, and one to term reports on drought as media hype when it

## Rain relief

AMBARI (Gujarat), April 23.

— Heavy showers last night brought relief to millions affected by the drought here and in other north Gujarat areas. Unconfirmed reports said the town recorded 30 to 35 mm of rainfall accompanied by gusty winds. In many places, the downpour was greeted by people who offered puja in temples.

— UNI

comes to exposure of the administration's failure to provide drinking water and fodder to the drought-hit villages.

A senior official in the Chief Minister's office denied any information of cattle deaths or "huge migration of people" from the drought-hit districts. "All this is routine affair and there's nothing very special this year", he said.

The official says: "Rajasthan had a bumper crop this year and the state doesn't face any crisis situation". On government records, no cattle died of starvation in Rajasthan.

The state government is at the receiving end for its failure to solve the water and fodder problems. The relief works, which should have been started well before last December, were started last month only. A severe water crisis is prevalent in most villages in west Rajas-

than. And, though the state government has opened fodder depots, the villagers have no money to pay for the fodder.

The state public health minister had admitted that the government could not start relief works in time because of paucity of funds and due to "other priorities". Interestingly, while Mr Gehlot demanded Rs 1,144 crore from the Centre to carry on the drought relief works, he has decided to spend only about Rs 400 crore on relief work.

Meanwhile in Gujarat, the entire state was reportedly reeling under an unprecedented drought-like situation. State government officials, however, said though there has been a severe drinking water crisis, there has been no report of any death due to that.

In New Delhi, the crisis management group under the ministry of agriculture today briefed the Minister for Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr Sundarlal Patwa, on the drought conditions. The meeting hardly focused on mitigating the sufferings of the affected people. "The meeting was all about to prepare the minister to face Parliament which will hold a special debate on drought tomorrow", officials said.

The figure of 50 million is based on an estimate by the state governments. The crisis management group has no authentic figure of those affected or statistics to estimate the extent of relief needed.

THE STATESMAN

24 APR 2000

TUESDAY, APRIL 25, 2000

## WATER CRISIS

ONE OF NATURE'S scourges is making its periodic visitations on large parts of the country. Officially the country has enjoyed 12 consecutive years of a 'normal' monsoon, but particular areas did not escape a deficiency in rainfall in 1999. Though that should have alerted the administration to the emergence of a regional drinking water and fodder crisis, as is often the case the Central and State Governments are only now waking up to its severity in drought-affected areas of western Rajasthan, the Saurashtra and Kutch regions of Gujarat, Malwa in Madhya Pradesh and Telengana in Andhra Pradesh.

Since the next two months are going to be a critical period, the response to the appeal for public contributions by the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, has to be immediate and overwhelmingly positive if the people in the affected towns and villages are to be helped tide over the summer. The Centre cannot escape its own responsibility to provide more funds than it has so far. The decisions that the Centre has recently taken — larger allocations of cereals at lower prices and the provision of more grain for 'food-for-work' programmes — are important but insufficient given the challenges before the 2000 monsoon hopefully brings the drought to an end. There will be corruption in the use of such funds, as the allegations of misappropriation during the relief operations after the Orissa cyclone of last November demonstrated, venality shows no respect for the human condition. But the likelihood of corruption is no reason to close the tap on financial assistance. The horrifying reports from the afflicted areas of women walking more than 10 km to fetch a pot of water, of towns receiving water once a week for less than a hour, of 'water riots' and of cattle dying in 'cattle camps' because of a lack of fodder should have galvanised the local administration into action. While some State Governments are indeed doing their best to cope with a difficult situation, it is astonishing

that Mr. Keshubhai Patel, Chief Minister of Gujarat, still insists that there is "absolutely no crisis" in any part of the State. There can be no ambiguity about the emergency action that is required. First, new borewells have to be dug, existing ones deepened if possible, damaged hand-pumps repaired and in the extreme 'water trains' arranged — all for drinking water. Second, since employment disappears as the crops wither in the fields, public works programmes that combine cash with kind payment are essential to prop up incomes. Third, expensive it may be but if necessary fodder has to be transported to the affected areas to prevent large-scale death of livestock.

The immediate task is to alleviate the blight of this summer, but there is a long-term agenda that the country should not lose sight of. The severity of the drinking water shortage in Gujarat and Rajasthan tells us that the 'water crisis' that many have warned will strike India in the 21st century has already arrived. A crisis has been brewing over years in different parts of the country as groundwater resources have been over-exploited, water-intensive crops grown in dry areas and Government-planned projects implemented with little regard for local concerns and local conditions. When a monsoon fails, it does not cause a crisis, it only worsens one — whose severity increases in areas that traditionally receive only moderate amounts of rainfall. But this need not be the case. As the fairly large experiments in Alwar by the Tarun Bharat Sangh and in Ralegaon Siddhi by Mr. Anna Hazare have shown, dry areas can be made green and drinking water available for all with people's involvement in a methodical harvesting of rain water and a careful use of available surface and groundwater resources. If the ongoing crisis gives a new direction to the harvesting, use and conservation of the country's water resources then it may yet have given a painful but necessary lesson for a better future.

THE HINDU

25 APR 2000

# Bhujbal loads Srikrishna gun to fire at Thackeray

FROM SUJAY GUPTA

Mumbai, March 18: After soft-peddalling on the next course of action on the Srikrishna Commission report, the Maharashtra government has decided to use it to turn the heat on Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray.

In an interview to **The Telegraph**, Chhagan Bhujbal, who holds the home portfolio, said: "Nothing stops us from asking the police commissioner to act on the report. The implications are obvious and we are going to do it."

Government sources said the state government had decided to toughen its stand after Opposition leader and former chief minister Narayan Rane started personal attacks on Bhujbal. Their stand-off culminated in ugly incidents on Wednesday with Shiv Sena and ruling party legislators coming to blows in front of the Assembly. Many MLAs had to be hospitalised.

The Democratic Front govern-

ment also appears to have got a go-ahead from both Congress president Sonia Gandhi and Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar.

Bhujbal, a one-time Thackeray loyalist, said once the Mumbai police are asked to act on the report "faithfully", there will be "no need to take further action against Thackeray".

"The chief minister had sent me a note asking me to examine whether the 30-odd criminal cases against Bal Thackeray which were quashed by the Shiv Sena could be re-examined and revived. Once we ask the state police and security agencies to implement the report faithfully, we will achieve what we have set out to," he said.



Thackeray and Bhujbal: Heat is on



Bhujbal: Heat is on

which could look like vendetta. Bhujbal has begun a "clean-up" of the Mumbai police by "removing elements who have strong links (with the Sena)". He said: "We have to ensure that we have a force that is fair and will not hesitate to take action".

The home minister went on a transfer-sprees, removing over a hundred policemen, including joint commissioners, in the last 90 days. He has severe differences with police commissioner R.N. Mendonca, who held the post when Bhujbal's house was raided during the Sena regime.

Insiders said it is a matter of time before the official is removed, though Bhujbal would not say anything. "I will say nothing now. I know what to do," he said.

## Sena chief security

The government has decided not to meet the Opposition demand of withdrawing its order to descale Bal Thackeray's security. Bhujbal, in a letter to the Union home minister L.K. Advani, wrote: "As per the norms of Z+ scale, the requirement is of 43 security personnel daily. As against this, the state is providing 158 personnel to Balasaheb Thackeray for his security."

Bhujbal said the Sena government had increased Thackeray's security to 206 personnel and 11 vehicles in 1997. The present government scaled it down to 158 personnel and seven vehicles. "Sixteen other members of his family have security, which amounts to 263 people and 10 vehicles. The government spends Rs 2 crore every month on this alone," Bhujbal said.

# The great Gujarat water trick

ANIL RANA  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

PATAN (Gujarat), May 6. — When Mr LK Advani went visiting drought-hit Gujarat last weekend, the state government took him to precisely those villages where the devastating natural calamity had had practically no impact.

And lest the beans be spilled on the government's carefully set up edifice of deception, the common, suffering people of the state were not allowed to go anywhere near the Union home minister.

Mr Advani — along with Cabinet colleague Mr Sunderlal Patwa — went ga ga at a press conference over the "miracle" they had just seen: cows and buffaloes in panjrapoles (cattle shelters) in completely dried-up districts being given green fodder.

The greatly impressed rural

development and agriculture minister had told the reporters even he could not serve green fodder to his cows back home in Madhya Pradesh at this time of the year.

And Mr Advani himself had marvelled at how few people had come to him with complaints despite the state being in the grip of such a "severe natural calamity".

The truth is that the green fodder — "miracle" — the home minister saw at the *panjrapoles* in Sami and Santhalpur talukas of Patan district, is the product not of the state government's efficiency in drought management, but the gift of a little-known subterranean pipeline that has been supplying sweet water to 132 villages of the Radhanpur and Santhalpur talukas for 14 years now.

The underground water supply system — officially the Santhalpur Regional Water

Supply Scheme — is locally known as the "Netherlands pipeline".

The name derives from the fact that the Dutch government helped Gujarat through finance and knowhow when the pipeline was laid in the 1980s.

The pipeline stretches from Sihori to the villages on the far end of the Rann of Kutch. For more than a decade now, it has been the source of drinking water for the villages it run through. And this year, as ponds have dried and wells turned murky — it rained on a mere six days last monsoon in Santhalpur — the "Netherlands pipeline" has turned into a wellspring of life for the villagers and cattle of the area.

The first phase of the "Netherlands pipeline" was completed in 1986. It cost Rs 97.7 million, and served 71

■ See DROUGHT: page 10

THE STATESMAN

27 MAY 2000



# As business dries up, water is freebie in drought-hit Rajkot

By Shyam Parekh

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AHMEDABAD: Free gold and silver, holiday packages and lucky draws are history. It's precious water that's the best incentive for sales promotion in drought-hit Rajkot, where otherwise business is bleak this summer.

Hit by one of the worst water crisis ever, this largest city of Saurashtra is finding innovative ways to entice customers and ensure the cash boxes keep rattling.

"Buy a refrigerator or television set, and get water free for rest of the summer," says one innovative advertisement. "Buy any of our products, and you will get 500 litres of water free for four days a week, for next two months," says another ad, one of the many that are flooding local newspapers, vying for attention along with the usual advertisements for sale of water.

Bhavesh Patel, who belongs to Viravav village, opened a showroom for consumer goods in the city's posh Kalawad Road six months ago. He was the first to hit upon this 'bright' idea last month. It is now a rage.

Considering the plummeting sales, Mr Bhavesh, who had first-hand experience of water crisis, said it was only natural to think of what his customers would need most through the torturous summer. "We decided to offer free water with TV sets of size 20" or more, and refrigerators of 310 litres or more. Being dealers of Samsung products, we launched the scheme for this brand, though there is no financial support from the company, except for sharing the advertisement costs," he says.

The products were selling at normal market rates with the added benefit to the buyer of 500 litres of water every day for 45 days. "The response was very

good. We reversed the trend of dropping sales, sales actually soared by over 20 per cent. This was when the rest of the people in the town were scratching their heads to remain in business," says Mr Bhavesh.

Today, he is supplying water to over 60 customers.

However, going into the economics, he admits that the scheme has cut down his profits considerably. "We have to spend about Rs 2,500 to Rs 3,000 per customer to supply water. Rickshaw-wallahs of my village have helped me supply water at lower costs."

Not to be left behind, Patel Electronics, another leading dealer of electronic equipment, jumped onto the water wagon. "Our scheme includes supply of 500 litres of water for four days in a week for two months to any customer who buys an oven, a fridge, a washing machine, a TV or other products. The scheme was open for one week in April," says proprietor Jitesh Patel.

Sales have risen, he says, and now he is planning to supply free air-coolers too, looking at the constantly rising mercury.

Companies agree the incentive has worked wonders. "Our sales have picked up three-fold after we offered the scheme. We took Rajkot as a test case, since such commercial water supply networks are not available at other places," says Nitiraj Chudasama, senior executive (sales) of Samsung in Ahmedabad.

However, it's not the just business that is affected by the drought. Employees of leading companies posted in Rajkot too have been affected. A cellphone major has started giving a monthly water allowance of Rs 1,000 to all its employees.

# Gujarat Chief Minister reports to PM on drought relief work

**BARODA, MAY 14.** The Gujarat Chief Minister, Mr. Keshubhai Patel, has sent a detailed report to the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, on strategies adopted by his Government for helping the people of the drought-affected areas. The report, which was sent two days ago, following Mr. Vajpayee's instructions, contains details of the relief plan for the drought-affected State, according to official sources.

During his visit to the drought-affected areas of Panchmahal and Dohad districts in central Gujarat yesterday, Mr. Patel said the report clearly stated that due to fail-

ure of monsoon last year, both the rural and urban areas suffered a serious water crisis but timely activation of relief plans helped the State tackle the situation effectively.

The report said 9,421 villages in 17 out of 25 districts of Gujarat, including four metropolises and 79 cities, were affected by the drought. Water in almost all the reservoirs of Saurashtra, Kutch, and north Gujarat had dried up and only 2.43 per cent water remained. Anticipating drought conditions after the failure of monsoon last year, the State Government had started its relief

works and made arrangements for drinking water through various supply schemes for Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Jamnagar and Surendranagar, covering 130 lakh people in more than 9,000 villages.

Completing almost every project for urban water supply upto March, the Government had made arrangements to supply over 10 crore gallons of water per day at the cost of Rs. 300 crores.

The completion of about 80 group schemes out of 157 in rural areas, solved the water problem of 9,500 villages. These schemes would provide water to over 1,521

villages, while the remaining projects would be completed by June next.

The report to the Prime Minister further said that over 3,000 villages in the drought-affected areas of the State were being supplied water through tankers every day. And more than one thousand villages would be added to the list.

Mr. Nalin Bhatt, chairman of the Gujarat Electricity Board, said in Baroda today that he had asked his officials in the drought-affected areas to ensure uninterrupted power supply to water tanks, so that filling of water tanks and tankers was not affected. — PTT

# Deadline ends, Gopal receives signal

By Our Tamil Nadu Bureau

**CHENNAI, AUG. 19.** After a two-day wait in the forests, the journalist-emissary, Mr. R.R. Gopal, received signals from the fugitive-bandit Veerappan this evening. He is likely to meet Veerappan late Saturday night or early Sunday and resume negotiations for the release of the abducted actor, Mr. Rajkumar, and three others.

Sources said Mr. Gopal contacted the *Nakkeeran* office and informed that he had established contact with the brigand and he was proceeding to his hideout.

Earlier in the day, there was a sense of unease in the Government when the deadline set by Veerappan for the Karnataka and Tamil Nadu Governments to convey their responses ended today.

In Tuticorin, police's Q-Branch grilled a close associate of Maran alias S. Senguttuvan, head of the TNLA, in connection with the April 1999 blast near the Sterlite copper plant.

The TNLA activist, identified as 'J.K.' alias Jayakumar, alias R. Natarajan, was involved in the railway track blast case in Cuddalore district on the eve of the U.S.

President, Mr. Bill Clinton's visit to India. Police said Maran and another ultra, Ponnivalavan, were also involved in the Sterlite blast.

## TADA charges dropped

Our Mysore Staff Correspondent writes:

On expected lines, the TADA-designated judge, Mr. Rajendra Prasad, today dropped the TADA provisions against the 51 associates of the forest brigand, Veerappan, housed in the Mysore Central Jail.

The judgment follows the State Government's decision to drop

the TADA provisions against the detenus as demanded by Veerappan for the release of the four hostages.

## Centre gives nod

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, AUG. 19.** The Centre today approved the release of the five extremists as demanded by Veerappan.

Home Ministry sources said the Centre's final approval was mandatory. A high-level meeting was held at the Home Ministry last night to formalise the Government's approval.

THE HINDU

AUG 20 1999

# Court nod for freeing Tada detainees

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BANGALORE, Aug. 19. — The principal district and sessions judge, Mysore, today allowed the Karnataka government to withdraw the charges against 51 Tada detainees lodged in Mysore jail for the past eight years.

The government appealed to the court after Veerappan demanded that the detainees be released. This was one of the pre-conditions that the forest brigand had set for freeing Kannada actor, Dr Rajkumar, held hostage since 30 July.

The petition was opposed by Mr Abdul Karim, father of Shakeel Ahmed — the police officer killed in an ambush by the brigand in 1992. The judge, Mr Rajendra Prasad, allowed the special public prosecutor,

Mr Ashwin Kumar, to withdraw cases under Sections 3 and 5 of the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Prevention Act even as he overruled Mr Karim's appeal.

The court will take up the bail applications of the detainees from Monday. The government will not oppose the applications, Mr SM Krishna said.

The chief minister said Mr RR Gopal, emissary of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, had reached the forests though heavy rain had prevented him from making contact with the brigand.

He said he was awaiting information from his counterpart in Tamil Nadu on the second mission of Mr Gopal.

**No word from Gopal:** There is no word yet from Mr Gopal on whether he has established contact with Veerappan even

as the 8-day deadline, set by brigand for Tamil Nadu and Karnataka governments to meet his demands, elapsed today, PTI adds from Chennai.

Mr Gopal's office here said it was awaiting information from the emissary. The Tamil Nadu government is silent over the emissary's mission.

Mr Gopal is carrying documents from both governments on the action taken so far to meet the demands. But the demand on the release of five Tamil extremists is defying a solution as the ultras have refused to seek bail and are insisting on withdrawal of all cases against them. The government is still examining the issue.

Mr Gopal was still awaiting "signals" from Veerappan, adds UNI. Police and *Nakkeeran*

sources said Mr Gopal, with three of his colleagues, was still waiting in the forest for Veerappan's men to take him to the brigand. They believed that the emissary might get some signals from the brigand tonight.

**TNCC plea:** In a bid to put an end to the acrimony between the AIADMK and the Congress over Dr Rajkumar's abduction, the TNCC vice-president today appealed to leaders of both the parties to maintain restraint, adds PTI.

Mr R Anbarasu wanted the AIADMK presidium chairman, Mr K Kalimuthu, to express regret for his remarks against Mrs Sonia Gandhi. He said caution and restraint should be maintained "without exceeding the optimum limit to maintain political decency" in exchange of views on politics.

THE STATESMAN

20 AUG 2000

# T.N. sends positive signals

By Our Special Correspondent

**CHENNAI, AUG. 20.** While the Government-emissary, Mr. R.R. Gopal, is all set to resume negotiations with the brigand, Veerappan, after reaching his hideout today, the Tamil Nadu Government sent positive signals on dropping some of the 15-odd cases against the five Tamil militants jailed in the State. *ND-1*

The Tamil biweekly, *Nakkeeran* office here is yet to receive any definitive word till late this evening on the resumption of talks to secure the release of the Kannada actor, Mr. Rajkumar, and three others; an Erode report said the emissary had handed over the responses of the Tamil Nadu and Karnataka Governments, to the brigand's demands. *2/18*

It said that besides giving a cassette to Veerappan, Mr. Gopal had also passed on the medicines he

had brought for Mr. Rajkumar. The hostages had been shifted through six places by now and Mr. Gopal had met the outlaw in a "new place in the Thalamalai forest", the report claimed.

Sources in Chennai said that something "positive" was expected to emerge tomorrow, amid Government's consideration of the legal issues related to withdrawal of all the other cases against the five Tamil ultras, belonging to the TNLA and TNRT extremist outfits, "proceeding on the right lines".

With the five militants declining bail offers in the other cases, which the Government thought would be an easy way out to facilitate their release, officials are now poring over legal niceties and case-histories to help resolve the imbroglio.

At the same time, with the aid of *Nakkeeran* Associate Editor,

Mr. Kamaraj, efforts are also on to persuade the prisoners to move bail applications on the 'hard' cases. The release of the five has been one of Veerappan's key demands. *9. 8r. Kannada*

Even as cases "difficult to withdraw" were being examined separately, the State Government received a telex message last night from the Union Home Ministry clearing its move to drop some of the cases against the ultras.

These pertained to cases where damage to Central Government property was involved and certain others which came under the purview of legal provisions in the Central list, it is learnt.

Before processing each case, sources said, they were "speeding up things", but without any procedural deviation and after obtaining the required sanctions from various quarters.

THE HINDU

21 AUG 2000

# Gopal sends fresh photos <sup>KK</sup>

PTI and HTC  
Chennai/Bangalore, August 23

JOURNALIST-emissary R.R. Gopal, engaged in negotiations with forest brigand Veerappan to secure the release of Kannada film icon Rajkumar and three others held hostage by him, today sent fresh photographs about the parleys to his magazine's office here.

Tamil bi-weekly 'Nakheeran' associate editor A Kamaraj, in a statement here, said Gopal had sent the photographs regarding his second round of negotiations with Veerappan. Kamaraj said he was awaiting further information on the status of the parleys.

Earlier in the day, the Madras High Court restrained AIADMK

leader Ms. Jayalalithaa from issuing any statement against Gopal.

Admitting a defamatory suit filed by Gopal against Ms Jayalalithaa, Justice A. Ramamurthy directed Ms Jayalalithaa to refrain from issuing any statement against Gopal during the pendency of the suit.

## **Rajkumar abduction case**

The suit could also be a ploy to gain Veerappan's confidence since Jayalalithaa had wanted Veerappan to be hunted and killed. An overt anti- Jayalalithaa move by Gopal could help in improving the emissary's bargaining position.

Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Karunanidhi disclosed

that the Rajkumar kidnap episode was in a crucial phase with Gopal carrying on negotiations with Veerapan regarding his demands. He Karunanidhi told reporters today that one of Gopal's associates had met officials today and passed on the information that talks were still on and more details were expected later today.

The Chief Minister said that there had been no fresh demands from Veerappan and the talks centred only on the demands he had already made.

In Bangalore, Karnataka Chief Minister S.M. Krishna also said that Veerappan had made no new demands and only the earlier ten demands of the forest brigand were being negotiated.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

24 AUG 2000

# Gopal back with new tapes from Veerappan

HTC and Agencies  
Chennai, August 24

**T**HE GOVERNMENT emissary "Nakkeeran" editor R R Gopal today returned to Chennai and handed over two video and one audio tapes from forest bandit Veerappan now holding Kannada film idol Rajkumar hostage for more than 25 days.

Gopal returned to Chennai on Thursday morning after his second meeting with Veerappan. According to sources, the audio tape contained a message in Kannada from Veerappan to Tamil film star Rajinikanth who had sent a Kannada taped message to Veerappan through Gopal urging him to release Rajkumar immediately.

After Gopal's two and a half hour meeting with Mr. Karunanidhi, he told waiting media persons that Karnataka Chief Minister S.M. Krishna would come to Chennai on Friday morning to discuss Veerappan's response.

Gopal refused to divulge any further details on his talks with Veerappan or Chief Minister Karunanidhi.

Considering that Mr. Krishna is coming back to Chennai, even as the two

Governments had prepared to free the detainees as demanded by Veerappan, could be an indication that there are

fresh demands or specific modalities on how the prisoners have to be released. Associate editor of Tamil bi-weekly

## Jaya moves HC to vacate stay

Chennai, August 24

ALADMK LEADER Jayalalitha today filed an application in the Madras High Court seeking to vacate the interim injunction granted yesterday restraining her from making any 'defamatory' statements against 'Nakkeeran' editor R R Gopal in connection with his role as official emissary to negotiate with outlawed Veerappan.

In her application, which is yet to be taken up for hearing, she contended that the injunction was unsustainable in law as it affected her freedom of speech guaranteed in the Constitution.

Jayalalitha claimed that her remarks against Gopal in a recent statement were not defamatory as alleged by him. Gopal, while obtaining the court restraint, had contended that her description of him as a 'blackmailer

who extorted money in the name of Veerappan seriously affected his reputation and exposed him to public contempt and odium.

Jayalalitha, however, contended that she could not keep quiet on the Veerappan affair when 'such an open outrage is occurring in the State, reducing the honour of the Tamil Nadu Police for want of administrative guidance'.

Noting that criminal cases had been registered against Gopal both by Tamil Nadu and Karnataka Governments, she said it would not be defamatory to speak about the 'upgradation of an accused to the status of an emissary'.

Her remarks on Gopal were made in good faith and in public interest, and hence, the injunction should be vacated, she said.

(PTI)

Nakkeeran A Kamaraj, Chief Secretary A P Muthusami, Home Secretary Shantha Sheila Nair, Additional Director General of Police A X Alexander and Inspector General of Police (Intelligence) G Ramanujam were present at the meeting.

There was no official word on the contents of the cassettes.

Krishna said yesterday that efforts to secure the release of Rajkumar and three others being held hostage by Veerappan since July 31 were close to a decisive stage.

Tamil Nadu Government announced that the cases pending against five Tamil extremists whose release was demanded by Veerappan were being withdrawn.

So far, the modalities for releasing five Tamil extremists jailed in Tamil Nadu and Veerappan's 51 suspected associates held under TADA in Karnataka seemed to be the main outstanding issue delaying resolution of the crisis.

For Krishna, his proposed visit tomorrow will be the fourth airdash to Chennai since the crisis broke. He had come down here on July 31, August 6 and 11 to discuss the issue at various

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

25 AUG 2000

# Bail granted to 51 'Veerappan aides'

By Our Staff Correspondent

MYSORE, AUG. 28. On expected lines, the Principal and Sessions Judge, Mr. Rajendra Prasad, today approved granting of bail to 51 detenues, supposed to be associates of the forest brigand, Veerappan. Reading out the operative portion of his order, the judge stated that the bail applications of the accused be allowed and they be released on their executing a bond for Rs. 10,000 and one surety for the likesome, or providing cash surety for Rs. 20,000.

The bail applications which were filed by the four defence counsels earlier was heard today.

One of the counsels, who had filed applications on behalf of 21 accused, impressed upon the court that in granting bail, the court would assist the State machinery in expediting the release of the abducted film actor, Mr. Rajkumar, and three others held captive by Veerappan.

He pointed out that the prosecutor in his submission earlier on the bail applications had maintained that the accused, housed in Mysore jail, were directly or indirectly involved in offenses under Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the TADA, which had been withdrawn. The defence counsel said

that considering the gravity of the situation, the accused should be granted bail. He brought to the notice of the court that those already on bail had not violated any bail conditions.

The advocate for Mr. Abdul Kareem, father of the slain police officer, Shakeel Ahmed, who was killed along with Harikrishna, SP, by Veerappan in an ambush on August 14, 1992, made a submission to the court that the special leave petition (SLP) filed in the Supreme Court was admitted today and the hearing was posted for Tuesday. He prayed the court to reserve its ruling in this case till

the SLP was heard in the Supreme Court. Mr. Rajendra Prasad, overruling this submission made on behalf of Mr. Abdul Kareem, maintained that these accused while on bail must appear before this court when required.

The accused must not tamper with evidence and also not repeat any of the offenses. As regards to the bail conditions for which submissions were made by the defence counsels earlier, the judge said that relaxation of conditions for bail would be taken up at the next hearing.

**Gopal set to leave for forest: Page 13**

THE HINDU

29 AUG 7 11m



# 10-1 25/8 Veerappan adds 'riders' to demands

By Our Special Correspondent

CHENNAI, AUG. 24. The much awaited reply from the forest brigand Veerappan to the "responses" of the Tamil Nadu and Karnataka Governments to his 14-point charter of demands for the release of the Kannada actor, Mr. Rajkumar, and three others, will be discussed by the Chief Ministers of the two States here tomorrow.

The Government emissary and journalist, Mr. R. R. Gopal, who returned from the Sathyamangalam forest this morning, after his second round of talks with Veerappan, handed over a video cassette to the Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, containing fresh clarifications sought by Veerappan.

According to sources, while Veerappan has not set any fresh conditions, he has added "riders" to his earlier demands and is understood to have expressed "disappointment" with the responses of the two Governments. The brigand is said to be "furious" with the Karnataka government for "not yet clearing the legal decks for releasing his 51 accomplices detained under the TADA

Act". After a two-and-a-half-hour meeting with Mr. Karunanidhi, the *Nakkeeran* editor told reporters that the Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr. S. M. Krishna, would arrive here tomorrow for consultations with his Tamil Nadu counterpart before the two make known their latest responses.

The emissary is likely to leave for the jungles on his third mission late on Friday or on Saturday.

After viewing the cassette, Mr. Karunanidhi contacted Mr. Krishna and conveyed to him its contents. He also had a brief discussion with senior officials.

A copy of the cassette has been sent to Bangalore.

Mr. Gopal's meeting with Mr. Karunanidhi was kept under wraps and there was some confusion about the venue initially with reporters given to understand that it would take place in the Secretariat. However, around 10.30 a.m. the emissary arrived at the Chief Minister's residence taking everyone by surprise.

With the decks cleared for the withdrawal of all the cases against the five extremists jailed in Tamil Nadu, the legal issues related to

the release of the 51 TADA detenus in Karnataka are still causing anxious moments here.

## Rajkumar sounds a note of caution

BANGALORE, AUG. 24. Kannada film icon, Mr. Rajkumar, has spoken against any action by police to rescue him.

In a message, sent through a video cassette brought to Chennai by journalist-emissary, Mr. R. R. Gopal, this morning, Mr. Rajkumar said it would be improper if the police launched a rescue mission by force.

The message addressed to the Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr. S. M. Krishna, and his Tamil Nadu counterpart, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, was telecast by the private Kannada channel, Udaya TV.

"They (the Veerappan gang) will escape since they know the terrain very well. We (himself and three other hostages) will get trapped," Mr. Rajkumar warned. "At any cost, police should not come here (to the jungle). It is not necessary."

He also appealed to the Kannada film industry to resume nor-

mal activities, which remained suspended following the actor's abduction. "I felt bad that the industry has come to a standstill rendering thousands of people jobless. It should not happen. (Film) shooting should resume."

Mr. Rajkumar requested Tamil super-star, Mr. Rajnikanth, to visit his residence here and counsel courage to his sons. — PTI

THE HINDU

25 AUG 2000

SPECIAL LEAVE PETITION HEARING POSTED FOR FRIDAY

HD-1  
30/8

# S.C. stays release of Veerappan associates

287  
Kande

By T. Padmanabha Rao

**NEW DELHI, AUG. 29.** The Supreme Court today directed that pending further orders none of the 115 "Veerappan aides" shall be released on "bail" or otherwise.

A bench, comprising Mr. Justice S. P. Bhattacharya, Mr. Justice Syed Shah Mohammad Quadri and Mr. Justice N. Santosh Hegde, issued the order while listing for hearing a special leave petition (SLP) for September 1.

The SLP from Mr. Abdul Kareem, a retired police officer and father of sub-inspector Shakeel Ahmed who, along with a Superintendent of Police, was killed allegedly by Veerappan in 1992, was directed against the August 19 order of the Designated Court, Mysore,

according "consent" to the Special Public Prosecutor for withdrawing charges for offences punishable under Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act — TADA — against certain accused (51 Veerappan aides).

The Bench allowed the Karnataka Government to file its counter-affidavit.

Earlier, when Mr. Ch. Badri Nath Babu, counsel for the petitioner, "mentioned" the SLP during the 'pre-lunch session' for an urgent hearing, the Bench ordered that none of the accused-respondents be released on "bail" or otherwise and said the SLP would be heard in the post-lunch session.

A total of 115 accused (including Veerappan) were cited as respondents.

The 51 accused, who were ordered released on "bail" by the Principal and Sessions Judge, Mysore, on August 28, are included in the list of 115 accused.

When the SLP was taken up for hearing, Mr. Harish N. Salve, Solicitor-General, submitted that the order made by the court during the pre-lunch session was immediately communicated to the authorities and that, in accordance therewith, none of the accused-respondents (in the SLP) had been released.

The SLP contended that the impugned August 19 order had "resulted in an unprecedented miscarriage of justice as the learned Designated Judge failed to appreciate that the permission (to withdraw 'TADA' charges) was sought on grounds extraneous to the interest of justice and therefore the judgment is liable to be set aside by this court (apex court)."

The SLP also pleaded that "the Designated Judge failed to appreciate that the application filed by the prosecution under Section 321 of the Cr.P.C. indicated that the police machinery in Karnataka became totally ineffective and it gives a signal to the general public that this kind of concessions given by the State Government enables the potential criminals to become hardened criminals so that whatever heinous offences they may commit they can escape from the clutches of criminal justice and even become elected representatives of the people and sit at the place of enactment and spoil the morality of the general public..."

A related SLP against the order dated August 28 made by the Principal and Sessions Judge, Mysore, granting bail to certain accused (Veerappan aides) was also before the court.

THE HINDU

30 AUG 29

# Compulsions will be explained to SC: K'taka

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BANGALORE, AUG 30

THE Karnataka government will file its counter-affidavit on September 1 in response to the petition filed before the Supreme Court challenging the government's decision to drop TADA charges against suspected associates of forest brigand Veerappan to secure the release of abducted Kannada filmstar Rajkumar and three others.

Karnataka Minister for Law D B Chandregowda told reporters here that the state would narrate before the apex court the "compelling situation" under which the government had to take a decision in the interest of maintaining law and order.

The Supreme Court had on Tuesday granted a stay on the release of suspected associates of Veerappan through bail, on a special leave petition filed by Abdul Karim, father of a police sub-inspector who was killed by the Veerappan gang in 1992.

Dropping TADA charges against 51 detenus who were in Mysore jail for the last eight years was one of the major demands set by the bandit for releasing Rajkumar and three others who have been in his custody since July 30.

Chandregowda said the government had only dropped five charges booked against suspected supporters of Veerappan under TADA. "The state still feels that dropping of charges under TADA, an Act which has been annulled already, is well within its powers," he said.

## Militant's father asks HC to block deal with Veerappan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
CHENNAI, AUG 30

ANOTHER father files a plea, but this one's different from the one Abdul Karim filed in memory of his son who was killed by Veerappan. P S Annamalai, the father of Manikandan, one of the five Tamil extremists whose release has been sought by Veerappan in exchange for the freedom of Kannada star Rajkumar and three others, on Wednesday approached the Madras High Court seeking to prohibit the handing over of his son to Veerappan.

On a writ petition from Annamalai, Justice K Govindarajan has asked the District Judge, Tiruchirappalli to send a magistrate to the Tiruchi prison to ascertain whether Manikandan was unwilling, as was being claimed by his father, to be taken to the jungles after his release.

The court has said the district judge should send his report on September 8 and posted the case on that day.

The petitioner contended that after his son refused to seek bail as requested by a police official, he was informed on August 21 that charges against him were to be dropped and that he would be taken to the jungles, where he would be exchanged for Rajkumar.

As this was sought to be done against Manikandan's will, the pe-

itioner wanted the court to prohibit his handover to the "illegal custody" of Veerappan.

Manikandan is alleged to belong to the Tamil National Liberation Army, an LTTE-trained militia, which was allegedly involved in an attack led by Veerappan and his men on a police station at Vellithiruppur in Erode district in December 1998.

His detention under the National Security Act was revoked on August 14 in deference to Veerappan's demand for his release. Later, the government decided to go by Veerappan's demands to drop charges against him and four other extremists.

The petitioner, however, has contended that his son was only a sympathiser of the LTTE, who was first arrested in 1995 for putting up a poster of LTTE leader V Prabhakaran.

"This was the starting point of the foisting of a number of false cases," Annamalai said, adding that his son had not been convicted in any case so far.

Questioning how the respondents were authorised to handover his son to an outlaw, petitioner said there was no guarantee for his safety in the forest.

The other ultras whose release has been agreed to by the government are Sathymurthy and Muthukumar (both TNRT), 'Radio' Venkatesan and Ponnivalavan (both TNLA).

INDIAN EXPRESS

31 AUG 2000

## Crime and Reason

The Supreme Court has done well to pour the cold water of reason on the emotional drama being enacted in the aftermath of Veerappan's kidnapping of Kannada film star Rajkumar. The court has, rightly, stayed the release of 30 jailed members of Veerappan's gang and the withdrawal of cases against 115 others as part of the bargain sought by the bandit in return for release of the actor who's already been held hostage for a month. The stay order should have a sobering effect on the governments of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu who seemed compelled to give in to Veerappan's demands. The high profile and popularity of the hostage, and the emotions aroused by his kidnapping, have been used by the political leadership in the two states to justify the surrender of state authority to an outlaw. The petition on which the court acted is also underscored by emotion — that of a father whose only son was among 28 police officials killed by Veerappan and his gang. The petitioner said that justice was being denied to the "victims of Veerappan's barbarity and banditry" and if his associates were released "many innocent civilians and brave forest officials will suffer irreparably". Far from undermining the rule of law, the plea buttresses the primacy of a principle which the authorities concerned have sought to disregard. Such abdication of responsibility only helps to magnify the media-created myth of Veerappan as a modern-day Robin Hood who is a moral law unto himself.

Following the court's judgment, those who have helped to mythify Veerappan must now demystify him; the so-called 'Bandit King' is no cult hero but a criminal, and a notoriously brutal one at that. He has killed over 130 people, including officials of the police, the BSF, the forest service and the Special Task Force set up to catch him. He has killed at least 2,000 elephants for ivory. His main business, with a turnover of Rs 120 crore, is sandalwood smuggling. The charges against him are legion. Despite the gravity of his offences, however, he has been projected as a colourful crusader pitted against the power of the state. This is a dangerous distortion; only too often elements within the state appear to have been in overt complicity with him. More than once operations planned against him have been scuttled at the last moment, with the official in charge of the exercises being transferred or moved to other duties. There have been reports of Veerappan being privy to decisions taken by state cabinets. Even a draconian measure like TADA, from which there was no escape for thousands of innocent citizens, was virtually nullified in his case; the TADA court readily consented to the special public prosecutor's plea to withdraw charges against Veerappan. The clandestine, and often not-so-hidden, connections between politics and crime has today become a catchword. The bizarre case of Veerappan, necessitating the Supreme Court's intervention, exemplifies such unholy alliances. If Veerappan has his way this time, it is not only he who will be the victor; the real winner will be the pernicious system of which he is only a virulent symptom.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

31 AUG 71 PM

# Ahmed Patel quits, crisis in Gujarat Congress deepens

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, July 5

THE FACTIONAL war in the Gujarat Congress has taken a serious turn with Mr Ahmed Patel resigning from the post of AICC treasurer. The resignation letter, which was sent to Congress President Sonia Gandhi today, has come after AICC general secretary Prabha Rau's statement that the suspension notice issued to Mr Bharat Solanki by the PCC president C. D. Patel was illegal.

Mr Patel also called on Mrs Gandhi this evening to explain the circumstances that forced him to take the drastic step. "The matter now rests with the Congress president," sources close to 10, Janpath told The Hindustan Times after the AICC treasurer's hour-long meeting with the party chief.

Significantly, at a meeting which Mrs Gandhi held later with AICC office-bearers it was decided that the party's disciplinary action committee will meet on July 8.

Ms Rau's statement reportedly gave a boost to the Madhavsinh Solanki lobby in the State and dealt a blow to the Patel group's demand that the suspension be ratified. Interested Congress circles made their own contribution to the crisis by gleefully interpreting her comments as a reflection of the

high command's disapproval of the rushed manner in which suspension notices were issued without adhering to party rules.

In his resignation letter, Mr Patel, who enjoys majority backing in the Pradesh unit, blamed a small group in the Gujarat Congress, led by a former Union Minister (read Madhavsinh Solanki), for launching a personal attack on him as they were averse to his position in the AICC. "This group, which is smitten by jealousies and (is) having sinister designs, has achieved nothing for the party and does not enjoy public support. Its designs have foundations in its frustration of having lost office. This group is out to malign me personally through a media trial," Mr Patel claimed in the letter.

The RS MP clarified that he was quitting because he was incapable of matching his detractors' nefarious activities. "They have made me the target of media attack and are doing considerable damage. I feel that my presence is indirectly contributing to irreparable damage to the party," the resignation letter said. Claiming that he had fought such elements in the past, he recalled his earlier, unpublicised March 15 resignation while stating that he would like to work for the party without the 'shackles or burden' of any office.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

7 6 JUL 2007

# Veerappan wants 5 TN convicts freed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
CHENNAI, AUG 7

FIVE Tamil Nadu prisoners whose release outlaw Veerappan has demanded are understood to be members of two extremist outfits in the state, reliable sources who heard the cassette containing the demands said.

The sources said the cassette specified five prisoners and sought their release as one of the conditions for release of Kannada thespian Rajkumar and three others held hostage by the outlaw since July 30.

Two of the convicts were stated to belong to Tamil Nadu Liberation Army (TNLA) and others to Tamil National Retrieval Troops (TNRT). Names of the ex-

tremists, according to these sources, are: Venkatesan and Ponnivalavan (both TNLA), Sathyamurthy, Manikandan and Muthukumaran (TNRT). Joint response of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to this particular demand was that it will be considered favourably.

Significantly, the 10 demands were not in voice of Veerappan, but that of an unnamed associate. Veerappan, sources said, makes only a brief introductory remark and hands over task of reading out the demands to another person.



Veerappan

The 10 demands, in exactly the same order as released by the government yesterday, were made in pure Tamil and not in conversational language usually used by Veerappan, they said.

The sources said the demand for adequate compensation to the families of nine murdered Dalits was a reference to the March 11 carnage in a Dalit locality at Kambalapalli village in Kolar district of Karnataka.

The TNLA, an extremist outfit started in 1980's, has been involved

in a number of blast cases, attacks on police stations and raids on armouries. It is now said to have split into a number of groups. Many of its members are in jail.

The TNRT was an outfit whose members had undergone training under LTTE in 1990. Its existence was discovered by the state 'Q' Branch-CID during probe into the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case.

Two TNRT leaders, Ravi and Mahesh, were charge-sheeted in the Rajiv Gandhi case. Ravi is undergoing life imprisonment, while Mahesh was acquitted by Supreme Court from charge of conspiracy to kill Gandhi. Some TNRT members were convicted in a state police case under TADA.

Karnataka Chief Minister S M

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

INDIAN EXPRESS

8 AUG 2000

# New tape on way

G.C. Shekhar  
Chennai, August 9

ANOTHER AUDIO tape, which is expected to reach Chennai later tonight or on Thursday morning, will define the course of events in the Rajkumar kidnap episode.

The tape containing Veerappan's stand on the response of the two Governments to his 10 demands is being brought

by *Nakeeran* editor Gopal's colleague Sub-

bu. Subbu is bringing some photographs to establish that Gopal had indeed made direct contact with Veerappan and Dr. Rajkumar. According to a Press note issued by Kamaraj of *Nakeeran*, they had information that Dr. Rajkumar and other captives were safe and healthy.

Tamil Nadu DGP F C Sharma confirmed that photos showing Dr.

Rajkumar and the tape containing Gopal's conversation with Veerappan and Dr. Rajkumar were awaited. He added the police anticipated further delay in the release of Rajkumar and others.

Reports from Erode said one of Veerappan's associates escaped from the forests and has surrendered. Tamil Rajiv Congress leader Vazhapady K Ramamurthy alleged

## Rajkumar Abduction

that PMK leader Dr Ramadoss enjoyed a close nexus with Veerappan. He alleged that PMK used Veerappan's money for election expenses. It is due to this proximity that the Karnataka Chief Minister had approached him to intervene in the matter.

But Dr Ramadoss denied that he or his party were in any way connected with Veerappan or his demands.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

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10 AUG 2000

# Veerappan comes out with fresh demands

By Our Special Correspondent

**CHENNAI, AUG. 11.** Notwithstanding four fresh demands by the forest brigand, Veerappan, as the kidnap episode involving Kannada thespian Mr. Rajkumar entered the 13th day, the Tamil Nadu and Karnataka Governments tonight inched closer to a solution to the crisis.

Addressing a joint press conference at the Secretariat here with his Karnataka counterpart, Mr. S. M. Krishna, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, said that apart from the 10 demands already raised, the brigand had now sought referring the Cauvery dispute to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) at The Hague, for adjudication.

After a three-hour discussion with Mr. Krishna, who flew down from Bangalore for urgent consultations following the official emissary and *Nakkeeran* Editor, Mr. R. R. Gopal, returning from the forest early today with a video cassette and a Veerappan-signed paper containing the new demands, Mr. Karunanidhi said they

al Retrieval Troops (TNRT) just as Karnataka had agreed to release the TADA detenus there, enacting a Law to make Tamil as the medium of instruction up to the 10th class in Tamil Nadu, payment of compensation to the rape victims of Vachathi and Chinnampathi in Dharmpuri district are the other new demands, he said.

On the Governments' response to these fresh demands, Mr. Karunanidhi said Mr. Gopal will again go to the forest, within a week or even earlier, to explain to Veerappan "our position" on all these issues. The eight-day deadline set by the brigand was only for communications back the Governments' response, he said.

Stating it was impossible to refer the Cauvery dispute to the ICJ, the Chief Minister said compensation to the rape victims referred to had already been paid under the previous regime following a High Court directive.

Legal issues were involved in introducing Tamil medium up to the 10th class as Tamil Nadu's earlier order in making it the instructional medium upto fifth

class was now before the Supreme Court, he said.

The Government had also ordered the release of the five prisoners asked for, while their actual release will be "simultaneous" with the "final settlement" (release of hostages), Mr. Karunanidhi said, adding, Veerappan had signed the demands also on behalf of the TNLA and TNRT.

Mr. Krishna saw "improvement in the situation", though some of the demands will have to be gone into in greater detail. He denied a suggestion that the Governments were treating Veerappan with kid gloves.

Mr. Gopal at a separate press conference clarified that neither ransom nor general amnesty was part of the demands made by Veerappan.



A video clipping showing the meeting of Veerappan with Mr. R. R. Gopal and Mr. Rajkumar at an undisclosed location in the forest. — Photo: Vino John

were now hopeful of an early release of the hostages.

Explaining the fresh demands, Mr. Karunanidhi said Veerappan had termed the Cauvery River Authority to implement the Tribunal's interim award as

"unnecessary", while asking for referring the dispute to the International Court of Justice.

The release by the Tamil Nadu Government of five prisoners of the Tamil National Liberation Army (TNLA) and the Tamil Nation-



# Gopal returns with fresh demands and cassette, but little else

By Srinivasa Prasad  
The Times of India News Service

CHENNAI: The response of the governments of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to Veerappan's demands for the release of Kannada actor Rajumar have failed to satisfy the bandit.

This was clear from a video-cassette that *Nakkeeran* editor R.R. Gopal brought to Chennai after five days of negotiations with the bandit. The cassette was presented to Tamil Nadu chief minister M. Karunanidhi on Friday morning and its contents were telephonically conveyed to Karnataka chief minister S.M. Krishna.

According to Gopal, Veerappan has placed fresh demands for the release of the Kannada film star and three other hostages and has given the two governments eight days' time to respond. Mr Gopal told a crowded press conference that the outlaw had also sought some clarifications on the responses of the two governments to his earlier demands.

Mr Gopal said he had presented Veerappan's stand to Mr Karunanidhi and both chief ministers were discussing them. "It is for them to discuss the demands and brief the press."

Mr Krishna rushed to Chennai to hold discussions with his Tamil Nadu counterpart. The meeting continued until late into Friday night. Throughout the day, officials of both states refused to disclose the contents of the videotape.

The meeting of the chief ministers began at 5.30 p.m. at Fort St George, the secretariat of the Tamil Nadu government, and showed no signs of ending even after three-and-a-half hours. The indications to a large number of mediapersons waiting outside the venue was that Mr Krishna and Mr Karunanidhi, along with their respective police chiefs and other top officials, watched the cassette more than once. Going by the sheer length of the meeting, the talks with Veerappan undertaken by Gopal appear to have made no headway.

It was not immediately clear what actually the hitch was in the response of the two governments to Veerappan's demands. Although sources in both states maintained that payment of ransom was the main demand of the bandit, Mr Gopal denied at the press conference that Veerappan

wanted money. "Veerappan is a changed man," he claimed, adding that the bandit was now interested only in working for the "welfare of six crore Tamils". According to *Nakkeeran* sources, Veerappan is unhappy with the lack of progress in the release of the five prisoners (belonging to two Tamil extremist outfits), although Mr Karunanidhi has promised to "consider the demand favourably".

Mr Gopal, however, for the record, claimed that Veerappan was not under the influence of extremists. "Veerappan is very much in command in the jungle," he declared. Whatever the fresh demands of the bandit, it was clear by Friday night, 12 days after the kidnap of Rajkumar and three others, that there was no hope of their immediate release.

According to an unconfirmed report released in Bangalore, Veerappan was prepared to release at least one hostage (not Rajkumar) and allow him to leave the jungle with Mr Gopal. But the report goes on to say that no hostage was prepared to leave without Rajkumar.

Asked about the involvement of a Tamil extremist group in the hostage crisis, Mr Gopal confirmed that Veerappan had the backing of an extremist group, but saw no reason to suspect that the brigand was in their clutches. "It is 100 per cent true that extremists are with him. In fact, Veerappan considers himself a Tamil extremist, but he is certainly the captain."

► See Edit: IT's Just not Enough, Page 12

THE TIMES OF INDIA

1 2 AUG 2 00

# 10-1 Karnataka reply today

By Our Special Correspondent

BANGALORE, AUG. 13. Karnataka will send its reply on Monday to the clarifications sought by the forest brigand, Veerappan, on his demands for the release of the Kannada matinee idol, Mr. Rajkumar, and three others.

The Chief Minister, Mr. S.M. Krishna, today presided over a meeting of the high-level committee set up following the abduction on July 31. It was attended, among others, by the Home Minister, Mr. Mallikarjun Kharge.

Mr. Krishna instructed the Commissioner of Police, Bangalore, Mr. Madiyal, and the police authorities in other centres to beef up security as schools and colleges are opening on Monday.

The State Government is not attaching much importance to the announcement made by a group of organisations that their members would enter the forest to secure Dr. Rajkumar's release. Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Kharge said he had no information about the announcement. Everyone should exercise restraint as the Government was dealing with a delicate issue.

According to official sources,

## Fans plan rescue

By Our Staff Reporter

BANGALORE, AUG. 13. Five thousand fans of Mr. Rajkumar will set out on Monday to rescue their hero.

The fans are from over 50 organisations, including Karnataka Dalit Sangharsha Samiti (KDSS) and Dr. Rajkumar Abhimanyala Sangha. According to the KDSS State committee president, Mr. N. Murthy, 1,000 people would leave for Mysore from the railway station here at 8 a.m. tomorrow.

From Mysore, they would travel to Chamrajnagar and later move on foot to Gajanur,

he told presspersons here on Sunday. He said the organisations had decided at a meet here on Saturday to "tackle" Veerappan. "Our group will comprise 10 battalions of 500 people each."

On the possible consequences of their action on Mr. Rajkumar and the other hostages, Mr. Murthy maintained that they had "no violent intentions of any kind". They had been forced to resort to the mission because Veerappan was holding the two State Governments hostage. "We have waited for two weeks. Now we are tired of inaction."

the State Home Secretary, Mr. Prakash, apprised the Union Home Secretary, Mr. Kamal Pande, about the situation. PTI reports from New Delhi:

The Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr. S. M. Krishna, tonight said this was "not the right time" to launch police operations against the forest brigand, Veerappan, holding the Kannada film star,

Mr. Rajkumar, and three others hostage. "An attempt was made earlier. We had set up a task force. The previous governments did try... But right now we are in a very delicate stage which is that one of our very popular film stars is held captive by Veerappan. So, I suppose this is not the right time to talk in terms of action," he told "Star News". — PTI

THE HINDU

14 AUG 2000

MONDAY, AUGUST 14, 2000

## ESCALATING BLACKMAIL

HAVING FORCED THE Tamil Nadu and the Karnataka Governments to react favourably to most of his ten demands, Veerappan has submitted an additional chapter of four demands in exchange for the freedom of his captive — the iconic Karnataka filmstar, Mr. Rajkumar. If some of the ten demands were not easy to satisfy, the present list is more difficult to fulfill. In fact, at least two of the demands — the reference of the Cauvery dispute to the International Court of Justice and making Tamil the medium of instruction up to the 10th standard in Tamil Nadu — are naive and unrealistic. The International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations and constituted to settle disputes between U.N. members and not States within the Indian Union. The question of extending Tamil as the compulsory medium of instruction has to be seen against the background of the recent Madras High Court ruling. The court held that parents have a right to determine their children's education, squashing a Tamil Nadu Government order which sought to enforce Tamil as a medium of instruction in nursery and primary schools. Quite obviously, neither demand can be met.

Of course, whether these demands really constitute the nucleus around which the actual negotiation is being conducted for the release of Mr. Rajkumar and three of his relatives is a matter of doubt. Although the Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have denied that Veerappan has demanded a ransom, it is hard to understand why, after having someone as influential as Mr. Rajkumar in his captivity, he would want to pitch purely for demands that are of a political and ostensibly selfless nature. What Veerappan wants for himself — be it a ransom or an offer of general amnesty — is something that will become clear only as the hostage drama plays itself out. The new

picture being painted of the brigand, one he has clearly assisted in drawing, is that of a romantic and revolutionary hero who is motivated by broad societal interests. But it is clearly asinine for this sandalwood smuggler-turned-elephant poacher-turned-serial abductor — who has killed over 130 police and forest department officials — to try and portray himself now as a latter day Che Guevera.

Veerappan's attempt to metamorphose into a altruistic do-gooder of sorts has coincided with his now obvious dependence on elements belonging to the Tamil extremist fringe. It was only a couple of years ago that the Special Task Force (STF), which was constituted with the specific purpose of nabbing him, had boasted that its operations had resulted in reducing his gang to a mere half-a-dozen. If this figure was correct, then it appears that Veerappan's gang has grown considerably since then. The question is whether this growth was fuelled wholly by the partnership he seems to have struck with groups such as the Tamil National Liberation Army (TNLA). Such alliances are dangerous, rendered even more so by the suggestion that the forest brigand has established a link with Sri Lankan Tamil militant groups. If these facts are true, did the Tamil Nadu's intelligence wing detect them and if not, why not? Moreover, did the STF, which repeatedly drew attention to the arrests of his accomplices and other such minor victories, have a clue about Veerappan's growing circle of extremist friends? In the face of such a growth, why were the STF operations scaled down, particularly on the Tamil Nadu side? Chief Ministers Mr. Karunanidhi and Mr. S. M. Krishna may now strain themselves to find a solution but the fact is the whole situation is a result of the total lack of administrative will. Once this crisis is over, the public will want some answers from them.

THE HINDU

14 AUG 2000

# Uncertainty in Goa: Cong muddle keeps politicos guessing

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
PANAJI, AUG 16

THE political scenario in Goa is once again in state of flux, with new equations emerging following the latest development — the second split in the Congress Legislature Party (CLP).

Thus, with the air thick with rumours, there is considerable confusion, with not a soul having any clear idea of what is really happening politically in the state capital of Panaji.

Making a scathing attack on the Congress high command for overdepending on the advice of PCC President Luizinho Faleiro, the leader of the breakaway Congress faction, Mormugao MLA Shaikh Hassan, addressing the press at Panaji, warned that the continuance of Faleiro as the PCC chief could even pave the way for a third split in the 10-member CLP. He talked about the possibility of four more MLAs crossing sides if Faleiro was not immediately removed from the post of the state party president.

Hassan disclosed that at least eight MLAs had flown to Mumbai, three months ago, and petitioned AICC general secretary

replacement of Faleiro as PCC President.

He said that although Rao had then accepted the demand, her subsequent visit to Goa and her speech challenging the MLAs to defect if they were not satisfied with the State party leadership, had clearly proved that Faleiro had succeeded in prevailing upon her as he had done in the past.

Although the breakaway group also demanded the replacement of the current CLP leader Ravi Naik, it was clear that the group's ire was directed primarily against Faleiro, who they termed, was flagrantly encouraging 'coteries' in the Congress party.

Shaikh Hassan, while reiterating unconditional support to the Sardinha Government, however, could not say as to when the breakaway group would join the Government. Scotching rumours of the BJP being unhappy with the new political development, Hassan claimed to have met the BJP Leader Manohar Parrikar, who he claimed, had not shown any displeasure with the breakaway group's action.

BJP Leader Manohar Parrikar, speaking to *The Indian Express*, said that the new development

## M out for resources

The recent senate decision is a fallout of this meeting.

Indian Institute of Technology acting-director Prem Vrat said that the senate has constituted a small committee to work out the modalities for future collaboration with the industry.

He said the institute welcomed collaborations which were participatory in nature and mutually-beneficial for which industries need not be physically located in the campus.

The IBM research centre, according to the Faculty Forum, was mostly interested in exploiting the brightest IIT students and did not want to work on joint projects with professors.

The company's industrial culture did not allow mingling of its staff with the institute faculty, according to an official of the Forum, who said that the Institute did not gain much from IBM's presence in the campus.

The committee constituted by the senate would explore other avenues of revenue-generation, including donations from rich IIT alumni.

e's profitability

## is bleak

or metal burst into the plane's ripping open at least one of the fuel within.

ie spilling fuel caught fire, perhaps use of the two powerful afterburning jets blazing a few centimetres (es) away. Both of those engines usually failed.

ie solution seems obvious: armouring, possibly with Kevlar, to repel ; of high-speed rubber.

but I don't know whether it would ost-effective solution," said aero-engineer Malcolm English, the of leading industry monthly *Air national*.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Bomb hoax at Delhi, Mumbai delays A-I flights

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, AUG 16

HOAX calls against the backdrop of an Independence Day red alert resulted in two bomb scares on Air-India flights heading for international destinations since Tuesday night.

The first flight (AI 112) headed for Mumbai from New York was forced to land in New Delhi due to a hoax call to a television channel, leading to a ten-hour delay. The flight was carrying 291 passengers.

The next one, a Mumbai-Delhi-London Air-India flight (AI 111) was delayed by two hours on Wednesday morning at the Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport in Mumbai.

AI-111 was scheduled to depart from Mumbai at 3.50 am on Wednesday, but the the flight carrying 284 passengers finally took off at 5.50 am. An Air India spokesperson said an unidentified person had called the Airports Authority of India in Mumbai to say there was a bomb on board the aircraft, but a search turned up nothing. A thorough check was undertaken by the bomb disposal squad and the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security in Mumbai, said the airport police here.

Explaining the delays caused, an AI spokesperson told *The Indian Express* today that safety is always of prime concern, and it therefore takes preference over passengers' convenience.

In Delhi too, the bomb disposal squad of the Delhi police, assisted by other security agencies and sniffer dogs, searched the plane for several hours soon after it landed at Indira Gandhi International Airport at 10.49 pm.

As the plane, which reached Delhi after a halt in London, remained parked in the bay of the Airport, security personnel and fire tenders took up positions for any eventuality. A thorough search was also conducted of the baggage on board the aircraft, including the cabin and cargo hold, airport sources said.

INDIAN EXPRESS

7 AUG 2000

7 AUG 2000

# Gopal leaves on mission to meet Veerappan

By A. Jayaram

**BANGALORE, AUG. 1.** The information from Chennai that Mr. R. R. Gopal, editor of the Tamil bi-weekly, *Nakkeeran*, had left on his mission to secure the release of the Kannada matinee idol, Mr. Rajkumar, and three others from the clutches of the forest brigand, Veerappan, was received with relief by the State Government.

Throughout the day, the Government had waited anxiously for Mr. Gopal to venture into the forests even as the four hostages spent a second day in the brigand's custody.

According to the Chief Minister's Secretariat, Mr. Gopal left for the forests on the Tamil Nadu-Karnataka border from Perambalur, where he had gone to condole the death of *Nakkeeran* reporter, Selvaraj, who was murdered last night. Before leaving on his mission, Mr. Gopal did not call on the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, as was expected.

It was feared that Selvaraj's murder might delay Mr. Gopal's

mission. The Karnataka Government, in a letter sent through the Tamil Nadu Home Secretary, assured Mr. Gopal of full protection.

## Undeclared bandh

Meanwhile, normal life continued to be affected in Bangalore and several other cities in the State, some of which witnessed bandhs called by local organisations against the kidnapping. An undeclared bandh was observed in Bangalore.

The Government extended the holiday for schools and colleges for another day in view of the prevailing tension. Government offices and courts reported thin attendance. The bazaars were deserted and industries and private offices remained closed.

Barring stray incidents of violence and disruption of movement of vehicles through road blocks, the State capital remained peaceful. Personnel of the Rapid Action Force conducted flag marches in the city's western and northern areas. The marches had a salutary effect and helped "control" troublemakers.

The Chief Minister, Mr. S. M. Krishna, for the first time since the kidnap, issued a stern warning to anti-social elements and formed a high-level committee comprising the Home Minister, Mr. Mallikarjun Kharge, and senior officials to monitor the situation.

Later talking to mediapersons, Mr. Krishna denied reports that Tamil Nadu and Karnataka had intensified the operations of the Special Task Force against Veerappan. Describing the reports as a "canard", he reiterated that the STF operations had been called off and appealed to the electronic media to be careful while reporting on the kidnap.

## Rajnikanth, others offer to mediate

**BANGALORE, AUG. 1.** Prominent film stars of the tinsel world including the Tamil superstar, Mr. Rajnikanth, have offered to meet the sandalwood smuggler, Veerappan, to secure the release of Kannada matinee idol, Mr. Rajkumar,

and three others who had been kidnapped by the bandit from Gajanur on July 30.

The popular Kannada film hero, Mr. Ambareesh, addressing a press conference here in the company of the actress and MP, Ms. Jayaprada, said Mr. Rajnikanth had informed him that if the official emissary of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, Mr. R. R. Gopal, persuaded Veerappan, he was willing to walk into the forests to call on the latter. Mr. Ambareesh said he was ready to accompany Mr. Rajnikanth and added that Mr. Vishnuvardhan, another Kannada actor, had also expressed willingness to join the film stars' delegation to the bandit.

Ms. Jayaprada, who starred opposite Mr. Rajkumar in his latest blockbuster "Shabdavedi", said that if allowed, she would also join the team. The actress said she would tie a *rakhi* (symbolising a brother-sister relationship) on the brigand's wrist and plead with him to release Mr. Rajkumar, revered by the entire film industry.

— PTI

THE HINDU

- 2 AUG 2000

# Karnataka pins hopes on Gopal's mission to rescue actor Rajkumar

**The Times of India News Service**

**BANGALORE:** Two days after the kidnapping of Kannada superstar Rajkumar and three others by forest bandit Veerappan, the Karnataka government is pinning its hopes on the success of the mediation mission by Chennai-based Tamil magazine editor R.R. Gopal.

Gopal left for the forest where Veerappan is believed to be holed up with the 73-year-old actor on Tuesday evening, an employee of the magazine, *Nakkeeran*, told *The Times of India*.

Veerappan had kidnapped Rajkumar, his brother-in-law and two of his associates at gunpoint on Sunday night from the actor's farmhouse in Tamil Nadu, 5 km from the Karnataka border, plunging the ten-month-old Congress government of chief minister S.M. Krishna into a major crisis.

After hectic parleys between Mr Krishna and Tamil Nadu chief minister M. Karunanidhi on Tuesday, the states decided to despatch Gopal, who has met Veerappan in the past on similar missions, to negotiate with the brigand and secure Rajkumar's release.

Normal life was disrupted in Bangalore and parts of the state for the second day, but the situation appeared to have improved with the police taking tough preventive measures against potential trouble-makers. Patrolling on the streets intensified and the elite Rapid Action Force was deployed.

Gopal would have left Chennai for the jungles immediately, but his departure was delayed due to

the murder of one of his correspondents at Perambalur, 200 km from Chennai. The murder, an official clarified, had nothing to do with the Veerappan drama.

As demanded by Gopal, the Karnataka government decided to close a police case filed against him in 1996, Karnataka's director-general of police C. Dinakar told reporters after the meeting of a high-powered committee to review the situation. He said the case had been registered by the Kollegal police in 1996 for "certain actions which were thought to be illegal and anti-state". Mr Dinakar added, "Since Gopal is doing us a favour, the latter's desire is it should be closed."

Mr Dinakar said as the case was still in the stage of investigation, he would study the file and close it. "I will bring a happy end to the case," he maintained.

Mr Krishna said the state government had suspended all operations in connection with Veerappan since Monday to ensure the safe release of Rajkumar. He dismissed as a "canard" and "untruth" reports that the operations were continuing.

Earlier, a high-level meeting comprising the CM, home minister Mallikarjun M. Kharge, home secretary M.B. Prakash, principal secretary S.V. Ranganath and top police officials decided to station K.R. Srinivasan, inspector-general (training), in Chennai as a nodal officer to co-ordinate the efforts of the two states.

The committee will constantly monitor the developments in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

► **See Edit: Hostage to Terror, Page 10**

THE TIMES OF INDIA

- 2 AUG 2000

# Karunanidhi optimistic as Gopal enters forest

By Our Special Correspondent

CHENNAI, AUG. 2. Even as the journalist-emissary, Mr. R.R.Gopal, entered the Sathyamangalam-Thalavadi forests bordering Tamil Nadu this morning, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi counselled courage to the abducted film star Mr. Rajkumar's son, Mr. Shivraj Kumar, who called on him here this evening.

Anxious to know the latest situation, Mr. Shivraj Kumar, accompanied by the Kannada thespian's son-in-law, Mr. Ram Kumar, airdashed to Chennai, but were tight-lipped except saying that they had come on "behalf of our family".

The duo were virtually whisked away into a waiting car after their brief meeting with Mr. Karunanidhi at his Gopalapuram residence, while Mr. Shivraj Kumar parried a query on whether they would also be meeting Mr. Rajnikanth, Tamil film star, on efforts to get the release of Mr. Rajkumar and three others taken hostage by Veerappan.

Mr. Karunanidhi, speaking to the media later, however said that he had told Mr. Shivraj Kumar that Mr. Gopal, Editor of the Tamil magazine, *Nakkeeran*, was expected to make first contact with Veerappan either tonight or tomorrow. The brigand's demands will be known after that and "I hope that the outcome will be good," said Mr. Karunanidhi.

The Chief Minister said he had also spoken to Mr. Rajkumar's wife, Mrs. Parvathamma, over the



The abducted thespian Mr. Rajkumar's son-in-law, Mr. Ramkumar (left) and son, Mr. Shivraj Kumar, seen with the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, at the latter's residence on Wednesday. — Photo: Vino John

phone and requested her not to worry, adding that everything would end well.

Expressing concern over Mr. Rajkumar's health, Mr. Karunanidhi said though Veerappan had been charged with several crimes, in "matters such as this" the brigand had shown some sympathy in the past. "Given the deteriorating health of Dr. Rajkumar, I hope Veerappan will ponder over this aspect to ensure that the film actor was out of harm's way and release all the hostages," Mr. Karunanidhi said.

Asked if Mr. Gopal had made any request to the State Government as in the case of Karnataka before leaving for the forest, Mr. Karunanidhi, referring to Karnata-

taka closing a case against the journalist, said there was no case against him in Tamil Nadu and hence the question did not arise.

An Erode report said that Mr. Gopal, two of his staffers, Mr. Sivasubramaniam and Mr. Balamurugan, besides Mr. Subbu, a video cameraman, had reached Thalavadi by car and proceeded to the forest on foot.

Sources say they would have either trekked towards Bandhipur, 20 km from Dhoddagajanure, from where Mr. Rajkumar was abducted three days ago, or to Then-gumarata, 15 km from Thalavadi and await instructions from Veerappan. Mr. Gopal and his colleagues are well-stocked with food and other requirements.

THE HINDU

3 AUG 2000

9-6r  
Kannada  
4/8  
HD-1

# Gopal contacts Veerappan aides

By Our Special Correspondent

**CHENNAI, AUG. 3.** Four days after the abduction of the Kannada film star Mr. Rajkumar and three others, the official emissary, Mr. R. R. Gopal, today established "contact" with the sandalwood smuggler Veerappan's men.

According to informed sources, the brigand's aides met Mr. Gopal, editor of the Tamil magazine *Nakkeeran*, last night and twice today near Thalavadi in Erode district of Tamil Nadu.

Though he received the "go-ahead" signal from the forest brigand last night, the emissary decided to enter the forest only in the evening. For, the movement of villagers would be minimal, "there would be no police snooping" and the brigand preferred a "late evening appointment."

Mr. Gopal and his aides would have to walk a minimum of four hours to reach the interiors of the forest, where Veerappan is said to be hiding with the four hostages. This morning, Mr. Gopal contacted his Chennai office and said "negotiations and preparations

were on" for the trek to Veerappan's "den". Earlier in the day, the Tamil Nadu Director-General of Police, Mr. F. C. Sharma, told reporters here that Mr. Gopal's mission had been hampered by heavy rain. The DGP said the police were not monitoring the emissary's movements and "he is operating on his own".

The "top priority" was the safe release of the hostages, the DGP said. No time-frame could be fixed for getting the hostages released, he said adding, "we should allow time for negotiations to take place and progress." The question of drawing up a contingency plan in case Mr. Gopal's mission failed did not arise, he said.

PTI reports from Bangalore:

Addressing a press conference, the Karnataka Home Minister, Mr. Mallikarjun Kharge, confirmed that the emissary had established contact with Veerappan's associates and the medicines sent through him had reached Mr. Rajkumar.

Daughter removed  
from school: Page 13

THE HINDU

4 AUG 1971



# Gujarat bandh turns violent, one killed *Sena will not back today's VHP bandh*

The Times of India News Service

By A Staff Reporter

**GANDHINAGAR:** One person was killed, a place of worship torched and several business establishments damaged in different parts of Gujarat as violence broke out on Thursday during the Viswa Hindu Parishad-sponsored state bandh to protest against the killing of 100 people, including Amarnath yatris, in Kashmir.

Incidents of violence and arson were reported from Ahmedabad, Sabarkantha and Surat, where one person was stabbed to death. Curfew was clamped on Khedbrahma town in Sabarkantha district after a mob went on the rampage, setting "specific" shops on fire.

In Ahmedabad, stray incidents of violence, including the torching of a place of worship, were reported as VHP activists roamed the streets, enforcing the bandh by stoning shops and other business establishments which had stayed open and deflating the tyres of public transport vehicles. Traffic in Gujarat's largest city remained off the roads and educational and business establishments remained closed.

The police had to fire over 35 teargas shells to disperse violent mobs indulging in stone-throwing in "sensitive areas". One person was arrested in connection with the attack on a place of worship near Chamunda bridge on Naroda Road, right in front of the Saher Kotda police station. Incidents of stone-pelting were also reported from some areas of the walled city, including Saraspur, where a footwear shop was looted.

Buses of the Ahmedabad municipal transport service were withdrawn following stone-throwing. Some buses of the state transport service were also stoned in the rural areas. The damage has been estimated at Rs 50 lakhs, along with a revenue loss of Rs 3 crore due to the withdrawal of the buses.

► Picture on Page 7

**MUMBAI:** The Shiv Sena will not take part in the nationwide bandh called on Friday by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad to protest the killings of about 100 people, including Amarnath yatris, in Kashmir. However, the Mumbai BJP has decided to support the bandh.

City BJP president Vinod Tawde said his party would not only participate in the bandh actively, but also perform 'mahaartis' in the evening.

VHP activists intend to block vehicular and rail traffic at various places in the city as a part of their agitation. In a statement, chief of the Mumbai VHP Mohan Salekar appealed to shopkeepers, businesspersons and various associations to down their shutters voluntarily and support the bandh. "All BJP MLAs, corporators, office-bearers and workers shall come out in the open to canvass for the bandh," he added.

He demanded compensation of Rs 5 lakh each for the kin of those killed and Rs 50,000 to those injured in the massacre. Calling for an immediate stop to the "Pakistan-sponsored killings in Kashmir", he said the Farooq Abdullah government should be dismissed and steps should be taken to improve security for Vaishnodevi and Amarnath yatris.

Meanwhile, several leaders, including MPCC president Govindrao Adik, MRCC president Murli Deora and general secretary of the Raza Academy Syed Noori, have denounced the killings in Kashmir. The Raza Academy and other Islamic organisations will stage a dharna near Shalimar Hotel, Bhendi Bazar, at 4 p.m. on Friday. Mr Noori said the militants in Kashmir were grossly misusing Islam to justify their actions. "It is wrong to portray the violence in Kashmir as a jihad," he observed.

... and swarms nitched high on the an- inghpora village in Anantnag district.

# Rajkumar warns against rescue mission

## 'Veerappan's demands should be fulfilled at the earliest'

## Bandit in impregnable position, not in hurry now to end impasse

The Times of India News Service

By Srinivasa Prasad  
The Times of India News Service



Rajkumar

BANGALORE: Bandit Veerappan has delivered an audio cassette to the Tamil Nadu authorities which contains a short speech by kidnapped Kannada superstar Rajkumar. The actor has assured his fans that he is safe

and sound and has warned of serious consequences to those held hostage in case of a rescue mission.

Rajkumar's voice has been authenticated by his family here. The actor has appealed to the authorities to accept Veerappan's demands as early as possible. He did not, however, spell out those demands.

In characteristic cloak-and-dagger fashion, Veerappan's associates delivered the cassette to a journalist in Pondicherry who then relayed it to officials in Chennai late on Thursday night. The tape was made

public in Bangalore on Friday by chief minister S.M. Krishna. The cassette reached Mr Krishna through Tamil Nadu chief minister M. Karunanidhi.

Assuring listeners that he was safe, Rajkumar said there should be neither fear nor anxiety about him. "I will come back soon," he said.

The 73-year-old actor-singer said, "He (Veerappan) has something in his mind. He has a demand. This should be fulfilled at the earliest."

The actor has also appealed to the Centre as well as the Karnataka and Tamil Nadu governments not to send any forces on a rescue operation. Rajkumar said he had heard over the radio that police forces would surround them and launch such an endeavour. He cautioned that such action would have "serious consequences".

Describing the kidnapping incident as "accidental", Rajkumar, who spoke in a composed, calm and confident tone, said it was a new experience for him. He added that he and Veerappan had learnt something from each other.



R.R. Gopal

BANGALORE: With the safety of celebrity hostage Rajkumar assured through an audio-cassette—a clever move by kidnapper Veerappan—the bandit appears to be in no hurry to make further moves, say officials of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

The delivery of the cassette, officials explain, is a development completely independent of the mediation mission undertaken by editor R.R. Gopal of the Tamil magazine, *Nakkeeran*.

Meanwhile, it is still not clear whether Mr Gopal has met Veerappan in the jungle. But whether he has already met Veerappan or is still on his way to meet him, Veerappan is expected to continue the drama for some more time.

By prolonging the drama, Veerappan also wants to make doubly sure that nobody is following Mr Gopal to his hideout. The ever suspicious Veerappan, according to *Nakkeeran* sources, is taking the utmost precautions to prevent overzealous officers from tailing Mr Gopal.

The tape has served one important purpose for Veerappan: the two governments are now less likely even to think of a dare-devil rescue mission. By assuring all concerned that Rajkumar is safe, Veerappan has removed any sense of urgency that might have weighed with chief ministers S.M. Krishna and M. Karunanidhi.

The two CMs can now be expected to think twice before discussing any offensive for another reason—through Rajkumar's voice, Veerappan has delivered a threat of "serious consequences" in case of a rescue mission.

"Veerappan is now in a stronger position," a senior Karnataka police official said candidly. "It's difficult to say no to his demands."

# Forgive him: Rajkumar

HT Correspondent  
Chennai, August 4

EVEN THE finest script-writer would not have envisaged such a twist in the tale: the hero pleading the villain's case. But kidnapped Kannada film idol Rajkumar has done just that.

He said, in a seven-minute long taped message sent to TN CM M.Karunanidhi through Veerappan's nether network of couriers, that his abductor "should be given a chance to reform and lead a new life".

"During the last two days I've had long discussions with him and the two of us have learnt a lot about each other. And I feel that he wants to lead normal life. Why not give him a chance? I hope the two governments would consider his demands and accept them."

The message, in Kannada, was played to Rajkumar's son Sivarajkumar (who is now camping in Chennai). He confirmed that it was his father's voice. Sounding relaxed, Rajkumar says that he has been treated and looked after "like a brother". "I am actually enjoying my experience in the forest and even my health is quite fine."

## CRY FROM THE WILDERNESS

- I am being looked after well.
- They (Veerappan and associates) are like our brothers.
- I don't want you (fans) to target Tamilians or any other community.
- I pray to the Karnataka CM, Central and Tamil Nadu governments not to undertake any rescue exercise.
- I urge the government to accept Veerappan's demands.



Tamil Nadu DGP F C Sharma was quick to point out that the tenor and mood of the actor's voice clearly indicated that he was not speaking under duress.

In fact, Rajkumar happily narrates the story of his kidnapping with elan. He talks of how Veerappan walked in when he was relaxing after dinner and asked who Rajkumar was.

"When I introduced myself as Rajkumar and asked him what he wanted Veerappan replied, 'Only you sir.' I said, okay let's go. I

assured my wife that I'll be alright and walked away with him."

But the Kannada star does not hide the pain and disapproval of his fans' behaviour in attacking Tamil targets in retaliation for the kidnap.

"Karnataka is a state where Kannadigas, Tamil and Telugus and others have lived in peace for decades. Do not attack Tamils or indulge in any violence because that would only give me a bad name," he tells his fans in the tape.

"Veerappan is correct when he says that he and his men will escape the moment forces enter. But only the four of us (captives) will get lost in the jungle. So withdraw all forces," Rajkumar says in his message.

One thing is quite certain. When Rajkumar returns from the forests, he could be expected to make a film of this real life drama. While there are no prizes for guessing who the film's hero will be, it remains to be seen if Veerappan will be in a position to replay his character before the cameras.

After all, one of the original demands linked to his offer to surrender was that a film should be made on his life.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

AUG 2000

CHENNAI, Aug. 6. — The following are Veerappan's 10 demands for releasing Rajkumar and 3 others, and Tamil Nadu's and Karnataka's responses:

**1. Permanent solution, based on justice, to solve the Cauvery water problem.** Before this, Cauvery Tribunal's interim order should be implemented and 205 tmc of water released to TN immediately and there shouldn't be any complication on this in the future.

**Response:** To implement the tribunal's interim order, the Cauvery River Water Authority has been set up with the Prime Minister as its chairman. In case of any problem in giving 205 tmc of water, the authority will take appropriate decision. The tribunal's final verdict will be out soon.

**2. Adequate and justifiable compensation for Tamil victims of the 1991 Cauvery riots.**

2,000 transferred from TN. The authority, expected to complete its work within 12 months, has got an extension up to 31 May 2001 with the approval of Supreme Court.

**3. In Karnataka, after the Kanadigas, Tamils form a bulk of the population.** So Karnataka should accept Tamil as an additional administration language.

**Response:** According to the Centre's instructions, the state has issued orders (No. Dpar 15 hml 99 dated 20 May 1999) stating that in areas where the linguistic minority constitute more than 15 per cent of the population, govt notices, orders, rules should be issued in the minority language too. This is common to all states, including TN and Karnataka.

**4. Karnataka should take immediate steps to open/inau-**

gurate a statue of poet Thiruvalluvar in Bangalore.

**Response:** Both the CMs have agreed to instal statues of Thiruvalluvar and Sarvajna in Bangalore and Chennai.

**5. The Justice Sadashiva Commission was appointed to probe atrocities committed by TN and Karnataka's (special) task force (set up to nab Veerappan). But Karnataka High Court ordered a stay against the commission.**

**Response:** Karnataka should take immediate steps to vacate the stay order. It should ensure that the commission's report is made public. The state should give a Rs-10 lakh compensation to each rape victim, Rs 10 lakh each to the next of kin of those murdered and Rs 5 lakh each to people otherwise affected. Policemen found guilty by the commission should be punished.

**Response:** On 19 June 1999, the National Human Rights Commission set up a two-member panel to look into villagers and tribals' complaints of harassment against the STF.

**Response:** Mr Justice Sadashiva, former Karnataka HC judge, and Mr CV Narasimhar, former CBI director, panel members on 28 June 1999.

Following NHRC's directions, Karnataka through an 11-October 1999 order provided staff, office accommodation and other essentials to the panel, which will recommend to the commission steps to be taken to redress the justified grievances. The panel will hold hearings in a manner deemed appropriate.

The panel has held three sittings. A writ petition is pending before Karnataka HC against the panel's formation and

its further proceedings have been stayed. Karnataka will take steps to get the stay vacated after which the NHRC will make its final recommendation.

Necessary steps to comply with NHRC recommendations, including compensation payable to the victims, will be taken.

**6. Innocents in Karnataka jails should be freed.**

**Response:** Tada charges will be dropped immediately leading to the release of prisoners in Karnataka jails.

**7. Adequate compensation should be paid to the families of the nine SC/STs killed.**

**Response:** After getting information on the affected SC/STs, the demand for compensation will be considered favorably.

**8. To solve the problems of Nilgiri tea farmers, the minimum procurement price of**

# Veerappan's demands & TN, Karnataka's response

been increasing and the price of green leaves has gone up to about Rs 9.50 from Rs 4.50 within three months.

**9. Five people in TN prisons should be released.**

**Response:** The demand will be considered favorably.

**10. Besides finding an immediate solution to the problem of TN's Manjolarai estate workers, an order must be issued fixing minimum wages for coffee and tea estate workers in TN and Karnataka at Rs 150 a day.**

**Response:** Estate workers in TN now get a minimum wages of Rs 74.62 a day. If expenditure on housing and medical facilities, creches, education, warm clothes and canteen is taken into account, the wages come to about Rs 139 a day. Minimum wages for TN estate workers is more than that in Kerala and West Bengal. Further increase in wages in TN and Karnataka, however, could be settled through negotiations.

green leaves should be raised to Rs 15 a kg immediately.

**Response:** The Centre and TN have taken steps to solve the tea farmers' problems.

TN has reduced sales tax of tea from 8 per cent to 4 per cent and cut Central sales tax from 4 per cent to 2 per cent.

The Centre has given a subsidy of Rs 5 a kg of tea where the selling price is below Rs 55.

Tea import has been contained because import duty has been increased to 35 per cent from 15 per cent.

The Centre, on TN's request, announced further concessions on 24 July 2000 and hiked the subsidy to Rs 8 from Rs 5 a kg.

It has banned the sale of tea, in India, imported by tea exporting agencies and agencies in the export processing zones.

Procurement price of tea has

# Brigand demands Rs. 50 crores

By S. Rajendran

**BANGALORE, AUG. 5.** On the seventh day of the Rajkumar kidnap crisis, the second cassette sent across by the forest brigand, Veerappan, has 11 demands although his voice could be authenticated only with one particular demand, sources told *The Hindu* here on Saturday. All other demands were apparently placed by a Tamil militant organisation which is believed to have joined the Veerappan gang sometime ago.

It was said that the only demand in which Veerappan's voice was loud and clear pertained to the payment of Rs. 50 crores as compensation for the killing of his brother, Arjunan. As per police records, Arjunan had committed suicide on transit from Mysore to Coimbatore. Veerappan has also placed demands pertaining to his wife and the tribal people who have stood by him for years in the Chamarajanagar-Sathyamangalam forest belt.

Sources said the demands placed before the Government included recognition to Tamil as the additional official language of the State since Tamils constituted the second largest

population in the State, release of waters in the Cauvery as per the interim award of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (215 tmc ft in a water year as per the monthly schedule), appropriate compensation to the victims of the 1992 Cauvery riots in the State (particularly Bangalore city), inauguration of the Tiruvalluvar statue erected in Bangalore long ago, conversion of the TADA cases registered against the associates of Veerappan in Mysore into routine criminal cases to ensure that the accused were released on bail, etc.

## Krishna coming for talks

By Our Special Correspondent

**CHENNAI, AUG. 5.** The kidnap crisis is all set to enter the crucial negotiation phase with Veerappan having sent a fresh audio cassette addressed to the Chief Ministers of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

To discuss the fresh demands, the Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr. S.M. Krishna, is arriving here tomorrow for a second round of discus-

sions with his Tamil Nadu counterpart, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, since last Sunday's abduction.

Even as the cassette had been sent to the journalist-emissary, Mr. R.R. Gopal, through the brigand's aide, Mr. Karunanidhi heard the tape this morning. The cassette from Veerappan's hideout, on reaching Mr. Gopal — still camping in the forest — was brought to Chennai late last night by Mr. Balamurugan, a staffer of the Tamil bi-weekly, *Nakkeeran*, who accompanied his editor, sources in the magazine said. It was then handed over to the Chief Minister's office.

## Gopal yet to make contact?

The fact that the cassette was sent by Veerappan to Mr. Gopal implied that the magazine editor was yet to "meet" the outlaw. Confirming this, Mr. Karunanidhi told the media at the Secretariat today Mr. Gopal might meet Veerappan later today.

Mr. Karunanidhi also spoke to Mr. Krishna over phone after receiving the cassette, when the Karnataka Chief Minister informed him that he would come down to Chennai on Sunday to discuss the further course of action.

THE HINDU

5 AUG 2 1991

RELEASE OF CAUVERY WATER, TADA DETENUS SOUGHT

# T.N., Karnataka accede to Veerappan's major demands

By T. Ramakrishnan

CHENNAI, AUG. 6. The Tamil Nadu and Karnataka Governments today acceded to the "major demands" placed by the forest brigand, Veerappan, and urged him to release the veteran Kannada actor, Mr. Rajkumar, and three others, held hostage for the last one week.

After a two-hour closed-door confabulation, Mr. M. Karunanidhi and Mr. S.M. Krishna, Chief Ministers of the two States, told a press conference, "We have responded favourably to all the 10 demands. We hope wisdom will prevail."

Earlier, Mr. Krishna, accompanied by the Union Minister for Tourism and Culture, Mr. Ananth Kumar, the Karnataka Home Minister, Mr. Mallikarjuna Kharge, and senior officials of his Government, arrived in Chennai to discuss with the Tamil Nadu Government the official response to Veerappan's demands. The Tamil Nadu Electricity Minister, Mr. Arcot N. Veerasamy, was present.

## Ransom not sought

To a question whether Veerappan had demanded amnesty and Rs. 50 crores as ransom, Mr. Karunanidhi said he had not received such demands. According to a statement listing the brigand's



The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi (centre), his Karnataka counterpart, Mr. S.M. Krishna, and the Union Minister for Tourism and Culture, Mr. Ananth Kumar (extreme right), at a press conference in Chennai on Sunday. — Photo: S.R. Raghunathan

demands and the responses of the two Governments, the "demands" include implementation of the interim order of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal, adequate compensation and protection to the Tamil victims of the 1991 riots in Karnataka on the Cauvery issue, the release of "innocent persons" kept in Karnataka jails and five detained in Tamil Nadu prisons, and steps for unveiling a statue of the saint poet

Thiruvalluvar in Bangalore.

In their response, the Tamil Nadu and Karnataka Governments agreed to install and unveil statues of Thiruvalluvar, and the Kannada poet, Sarvajna, in Bangalore and Chennai. The Chief Ministers would participate in the functions. While Karnataka agreed to drop the TADA charges against some prisoners, Tamil Nadu would consider "favourably" the question of releasing five persons.

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister said the responses of the two Governments would be conveyed to Veerappan through a messenger sent by Mr. R.R. Gopal, official emissary and *Nakkeeran* editor.

## Extremists' backing?

On whether any Tamil chauvinist group had joined hands with Veerappan, Mr. Karunanidhi said, "There are reports to suggest this perception, but there is no confirmation yet... Veerappan himself may have turned a Tamil extremist." He, however, said there was nothing wrong in displaying deep love towards one's mother tongue; but one should not indulge in terrorism.

On the voice of the person in the cassette received on Saturday, Mr. Krishna said, "We are no voice specialists or analysts. We believe that it is Veerappan's as we got the cassette from him."

## 'Gopal met brigand'

In Bangalore, Mr. S.M. Krishna, told reporters soon after his arrival from Chennai, "Mr. Rajkumar, Mr. Gopal and Veerappan and others are in a house and not in a *guhe* (Kannada for cave) or jungles." Mr. Krishna added: "We have also got a response for this response... Some kind of response to convey to us that our response has reached them." (PTI reports.)

THE HINDU

7 AUG 2000

# His demands and the response

*P.S. Karnataka*

**CHENNAI, AUG. 6.** The following are Veerappan's demands and the response of the Tamil Nadu and Karnataka Governments:

● Demand 1:

A permanent solution to the Cauvery issue should be found based on justice. The interim order of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal should be implemented and 205 tmc ft of water released immediately. There should not be any complication in future.

Response:

The Cauvery River Authority has been set up with the Prime Minister as Chairman to implement the interim order. The Authority will decide on any problems. The Tribunal's final verdict will come soon.

● Demand 2:

Adequate and justifiable compensation should be paid to Tamil victims of the 1991 Cauvery riots. Also, Karnataka should protect life and property of Tamils.

Response:

The Karnataka Government constituted the Cauvery Riots Relief Authority in May 1999, as directed by the Supreme Court. The Authority received about 10,000 claims including 2,000 transferred from Tamil Nadu. The deadline for its work had been extended with the Supreme Court's approval up to May 31, 2001.

● Demand 3:

Tamil should be declared additional administrative language in Karnataka, as Tamils form the second largest community in that State.

Response:

As instructed by the Centre, Karnataka is-

sued orders in May 1999 that in areas where the linguistic minority constituted over 15 per cent of the population, Government notices should be in the minority language as well.

● Demand 4:

Karnataka should immediately install the Thiruvalluvar statue in Bangalore.

Response:

Tamil Nadu and Karnataka will unveil the statues of Thiruvalluvar and Sarvajna in Bangalore and Chennai respectively.

● Demand 5:

Karnataka should act immediately to vacate the stay order of the Karnataka High Court, on the Sadashiva Commission, set up to probe alleged Task Force atrocities. The Commission's report should be made public, and Karnataka should grant compensation — Rs. 10 lakhs to rape victims, and kin of those killed, Rs. five lakhs to others affected. Guilty police officers should be punished.

Response:

The Karnataka Government will take steps to get the injunction vacated.

The NHRC, acting on complaints about harassment of the villagers and tribals by the Task Force, constituted a two-member panel in June 1999 to probe. This committee, comprising Mr. Sadashiva, former Karnataka High Court Judge and Mr. C.V. Narasimhan, former CBI director, held three sittings. The Karnataka Government will comply with the NHRC's final recommendation.

● Demand 6:

Innocent detenus in Karnataka jails should be released.

Response:

TADA charges will be dropped immediately, leading to the release of prisoners.

● Demand 7:

Adequate compensation for families of nine SC/STs killed (in Karnataka).

Response:

Compensation will be considered favourably.

● Demand 8:

The minimum procurement price for green leaves should be enhanced to Rs. 15 immediately to help farmers in the Nilgiris.

Response:

The Centre and Tamil Nadu had acted to raise procurement price for tea and brought it to around Rs. 9.50 from Rs. 4.50.

● Demand 9:

Five persons who are now in Tamil Nadu prisons should be released.

Response:

The demand will be considered favourably.

● Demand 10:

Solve problems of Manjolai Estate workers in Tamil Nadu, and fix minimum wages for coffee and tea estate workers in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka at Rs. 150 per day.

Response:

Estate workers in Tamil Nadu get a minimum wage of Rs. 74.62 per day. If expenditure on housing, medical facilities, and welfare measures is taken into account, the wages come to Rs. 139 per day. The wage is higher than that of Kerala and West Bengal. Further rise in wages could be settled through negotiations.

THE HINDU

7-7 AUG 2001

## Veerappan wants 5 TN convicts released now

9/8/8  
9/8/8  
9/8/8  
Krishna today said the government was yet to hear from forest brigand Veerappan on release of Kannada thespian Rajkumar and three others held hostage by him since last nine days.

"We have no update on any development other than yesterday's in which both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu responded to the 10 demands of Veerappan", he told a press conference here.

Krishna said the government had credible information that the bandit and his gang along with the hostages were holed up in a 15 km radius of Gajanur, from where the actor was taken into captivity on July 30.

Krishna said according to information received by the state, members of the gang spotted an electricity board lineman working on a pole about 10 to 15 km away from Gajanur yesterday and suspected

him to be a policeman drafted for surveillance on the gang.

However, on being convinced after questioning that the stranger was an electricity board employee, the gang members paid him Rs 200 and ordered him to get "mutton curry". Krishna said identity of the lineman was yet to be established.

In another incident, reported from Satyamangalam forest range, the gang accosted a villager, who was searching for his missing cow, but let him go, when they were convinced that he was not a policeman.

Krishna said these incidents indicated that Veerappan and his gang were holed up in forests in radius of 15 kms of Gajanur.

The CM said he had no telephonic conversation with Tamil Nadu counterpart M Karunanidhi on the crisis today.

INDIAN EXPRESS

28 AUG 2000



# Opposition backs Krishna Govt. strategy

9 87  
Kannada

By Our Special Correspondent

**BANGALORE, SEPT. 9.** The Karnataka Government today received a shot in the arm in its efforts to obtain the release of the Kannada actor, Mr. Rajkumar, and three others with the leaders of the Opposition parties, by and large, standing by it.

The Chief Minister, Mr. S. M. Krishna, summoned a meeting of political leaders here to share with them the outcome of his talks with his Tamil Nadu counterpart, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, yesterday. Unlike the meeting earlier this week, where the Government's handling of the situation came under fire, today's meeting saw some leaders even suggesting a way out of the imbroglio.

Bolstered by the Opposition's support, the Government decided to continue the negotiations with the forest brigand Veerappan, apart from pursuing the case in the Supreme Court. The Government was, however, non-committal on when the emissary, Mr. R. R. Gopal, would undertake another mission to the forests.

The Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, Mr. K. H. Srinivasa, said the Government should immediately ask the Centre to promulgate an Ordinance to abate the pending TADA cases. The ordinance would automatically result in the release of detenus and by seeking such an ordinance, the State would not be offending the Supreme Court, he said.

At the last meeting, Mr. Srinivasa had urged the Chief Minister to invite Mr. Karunanidhi to visit Bangalore to assuage the feelings of the local people and infuse confidence among the Tamils. Sources in the Government pointed out that Mr. Karunanidhi's statement that he was here to share the agony of Kannadigas following the abduction had made a big impact.

The floor leader of the Janata Dal(U) in the State Assembly, Mr. P. G. R. Sindhia, and the party's State unit president, Mr. C. Byre Gowda, said they had suggested that the Government prepare an alternative strategy and that it

should not hesitate to seek Central assistance.

The Home Minister, Mr. Mallikarjun Kharge said the Government would be ready with its arguments to be submitted to the apex court in two days and that the Opposition leaders' suggestions would be incorporated.

According to sources in *Nakkeeran*, Mr. Gopal is unlikely to leave on his fourth mission to the forests before the Supreme Court ruling on the release of the 121 TADA detenus in Karnataka and the five ultras in Tamil Nadu.

THE HINDU

10 SEP 2000

# Gopal ready for fourth mission

By Our Special Correspondent

CHENNAI, SEPT. 10. The official emissary of the Tamil Nadu and Karnataka Governments, Mr. R. R. Gopal, today reiterated that he was ready to set out on his fourth trip to the forest hideout of Veerappan to secure the release of the Kannada actor, Mr. Rajkumar.

"I am willing to go anytime the Karnataka and Tamil Nadu Governments want me to," he said here.

## Rajkumar fans to meet PM

By Our Staff Reporter

BANGALORE, SEPT. 10. The Akhila-Karnataka Dr. Rajkumar Abhimagnigala Sangha will approach the President, Mr. K.R. Narayanan, and the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B.

Vajpayee, seeking their intervention to get the abducted Kannada thespian released if the Supreme Court does not come out with a "favourable ruling" on September 14.

The Sangha president, Mr. Sa. Ra. Govindu, told presspersons here today that the forum leaders, along with MPs from the State, would meet the Prime Minister and the President after September 15.

Disclosing details of the emergency meeting of the Sangha held on Saturday, he said that to exert pressure on the Centre, the Sangha, along with the Karnataka Film Chamber of Commerce, the Karnataka Film Artistes' Association, the Karnataka State Film Technicians' Association and other Kannada organisations, would launch a State-wide agitation from September 15.

Mr. Govindu said it was decided to maintain peace during the agitation. He endorsed the strategy adopted by the State Government to end the hostage crisis as the "right one", and added that Mr. Rajkumar would have been released by now if not for the legal hurdles.

The Sangha wanted to be a party to the 'Veerappan associates release case' pending before the apex court and plead the court to release the brigand's associates. It had spoken to the State Advocate-General, Mr. Jayaram, in this regard, and would appoint its advocate.

Taking into consideration Mr. Rajkumar's age, Veerappan should release him immediately and understand the legal hurdles that had cropped up in releasing the TADA detenus, he added.

# SC puts off hearing in Veerappan case till October 11

By Our Legal Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The chances of Kannada matinee idol Rajkumar being freed by forest brigand Veerappan after 50 days in captivity receded further on Tuesday with the supreme court putting off till October 11 the hearing of petitions in this regard.

A bench comprising Justice S.P. Bharucha, Justice S.N. Phukan and Justice Shivraj V Patil fixed the new date for hearing on the plea of the Karnataka government counsel and solicitor general Harish N Salve. The court granted the Union government time till Wednesday to file its reply to a PIL moved by lawyer B.L. Wadhwa on the issue. It deleted the Andhra Pradesh government as a party to the case.

The Bench rejected pleas to allow the 51 accused, against whom the Karnataka government had withdrawn TADA charges, to file bail applications before trial courts during pendency of the appeal by Abdul Karim. The latter's son, Shakeel Ahmad, was among the 28 police officials killed by Veerappan.

"Nothing of that kind will be allowed," the bench was categorical as it told the counsel, "None of you

thought that anything was required to be done in this issue till a petition was filed in the apex court".

In all 115 accused were arrayed as respondents in Karim's appeal. As many as 85, including Veerappan, were absconders and not represented in the court.

While hearing 76-year-old

Karim's petition, the court had, on September 1, indefinitely stayed the release of Veerappan's associates while criticising the Karnataka government for succumbing to the demands of the outlaw.

Besides Karim, the 51 detainees, lawyers Wadhwa and Adarsh Ganesh, and an NGO, Women's Voice, have petitioned the apex court. It asked the parties to complete their pleadings by October 9.

The lawyer of Women's Voice, Gopal Subrama-

niam, said the common charge against 12 women detainees among the 51 was providing food to Veerappan and his gang and passing information to them. The counsel argued that as they might have complied with Veerappan's demands out of fear the court should not interfere with their release orders passed by the Mysore special judge on August 19 this year.

## Gopal told to leave on fourth mission

The Times of India News Service

CHENNAI: Government emissary

and Nakkheeran

editor R.R.

Gopal has been

persuaded by

the govern-

ments of Tamil

Nadu and Kar-

nataka to leave

for the Sathya-

magalam forest

on Wednesday night. Talking to

journalists at his residence in

Gopalpuram on Tuesday

evening, Tamil Nadu chief minis-

ter K. Karunanidhi said that the

decision to send Mr Gopal on his

fourth mission was taken despite

the Supreme court fixing Octo-

ber 11 as the hearing date.



Veerappan

MP-13 **T.N. deposition irks Karnataka** mg

By S.K. Ramoo

**BANGALORE, SEPT. 21.** The S.M. Krishna Government is clearly unhappy over the Tamil Nadu Government's latest affidavit before the Supreme Court, complaining that it did not inform the latter of the visit of Mr. Rajkumar to his farmhouse at Gajanur, in Erode district, on July 30.

Replying to a public interest litigation petition, the Tamil Nadu Government on Wednesday blamed the Karnataka Government for not informing it of the visit of Rajkumar to the State. The response, which was received with surprise here, has added a new dimension to the entire abduction episode. The Tamil Nadu Government pointed out that it would have provided adequate security to the actor and his family if the Karnataka Government had informed it about Mr. Rajkumar's visit.

The top echelons in the Karnataka Government view the latest development as an "ingenuous and clever" move by the Tamil Nadu Government to convince the apex court that it was not responsible for the abduction of the Kannada actor by Veerappan. According to them, the Tamil Nadu Government said it had shared the information with the Karnataka police that there was a possibility of Veerappan kidnapping the actor. It had put the blame at the doors of the Karnataka Government. The Tamil Nadu Government was absolving itself of blame. It had sent a rejoinder to the Karnataka Government's response that the onus of getting the actor released greatly rested with it (the Tamil Nadu Government) as the actor was abducted from and was being held hostage

in the forest of that State.

A spokesman of the Karnataka Government said it was not the time for "mutual recriminations and trading of charges". Both the Governments should work together to secure the freedom of the hostages without further delay, he noted. Bickering and conflicts should not come in the way of their joint endeavour to end the abduction drama on a happy note, he felt. It was at the behest of the Karnataka Government that the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, persuaded *Nakkeeran* Editor Mr. Gopal, who was acting as an emissary of both the Governments, to meet the outlaw for the fourth time and plead with him to release the hostages.

The Karnataka Home Minister, Mr. Mallikarjun Kharge, who met Mr. Karunanidhi two days ago in Chennai, reportedly stated that the patience of Mr. Rajkumar's fans and supporters was fast wearing and it might ultimately result in violent reprisals targeting over 18 lakh Tamils residing in Karnataka. He apparently wanted this message to be conveyed by Mr. Gopal to the outlaw in clear terms.

The leaders of Rajkumar's fans associations and several Kannada organisations have become restless over the inordinate delay in securing the freedom of the actor. Several towns and cities apart from Bangalore have been witnessing bandhs and agitations followed by sporadic violence during the last couple of days. A State-wide bandh was being planned to bring to the notice of the Union and State governments that they would not put up with the impasse any longer.

The sons of Mr. Rajkumar have expressed their anguish and concern over the state of health of their 73-year old father, who has been forced to live in the harsh conditions of the forests. They have said that they would volunteer to become the captives of Veerappan if he freed their ailing father. Cable TV operators all over the State stopped transmission for a day on Wednesday to express their displeasure over the impasse. The Kannada film industry on Thursday took out a mammoth procession and presented a memorandum to the Governor at the Raj Bhavan. All the leading lights of Kannada cinema took part in the rally. A slight setback in the health of Ms. Parvathamma, wife of Mr. Rajkumar, who was admitted to a private hospital, has caused widespread anxiety.

Apprehending violent retaliation against the Tamils in the State, a prominent Tamil organisation presented a memorandum to the Governor to impress upon the Government the need to provide them adequate security. In another development, 17 Tamil organisations, including the Bangalore-based Tamil Sangham, have despatched fervent appeals to the forest brigand through Mr. Gopal to release the hostages without further delay. They have conveyed their fears of violent reprisals, if the impasse is not broken early.

**'T.N. has not blamed us'**

By Our Special Correspondent

**BANGALORE, SEPT. 21.** Tamil Nadu's affidavit before the Supreme

Court on Karnataka's failure to inform it about Mr. Rajkumar's visit to the Gajanur farmhouse from where he was abducted by the brigand, Veerappan, has not complicated the process of obtaining the actor's release.

This was the stand of the Karnataka Law Minister, Mr. D.B. Chandre Gowda, who at first said this was not the issue before the Supreme Court and the State and he did not want to get into a controversy.

The issue before the court was the powers of the State under Section 321 Cr.P.C. to drop cases against the TADA detenus whose release Veerappan had sought.

On persistent questioning, however, Mr. Gowda, who was briefing the press about today's Cabinet meeting, said he did not think that Tamil Nadu's affidavit would complicate the Rajkumar release issue.

Tamil Nadu, he said, had not blamed the Karnataka Government. He could not make any further comment as he was yet to get a copy of Tamil Nadu's affidavit.

Asked what the State, which was depending on the cooperation of Tamil Nadu, thought about the latter's stand, Mr. Gowda said this was not the time to say anything. The two governments were working together (in the court) and many senior advocates were appearing for them.

Mr. Gowda did not agree that Tamil Nadu had betrayed the State by the stand it had taken. It had not gone back on its original stand either. Karnataka would reply to what Tamil Nadu had said, if at all it was needed.

# Bandh hits life in Mysore

By Our Staff Correspondent

**MYSORE, SEPT. 22.** The bandh called by various pro-Kannada organisations on Friday, protesting against the delay in securing the release of the Kannada matinee idol, Mr. Rajkumar, disrupted life in Mysore city. Police said the bandh was peaceful.

The K.R. Circle and surrounding areas, hub of business activity in Mysore, wore a deserted look due to the closure of business establishments. Members of Kannada organisations urged traders who had opened their shops to down the shutters in solidarity with the actor's family. However, medical shops, milk parlours and STD booths were allowed to remain open, except in a few places.

After addressing nearly 1,000 protesters who had congregated at the K.R. Circle around noon, leaders of various political parties took out a procession to the Deputy Commissioner's Office. The Mayor, Mr. Narayan, the MLA, Mr. H. S. Shankarlinge Gowda, Mr. G.T. Devegowda and Mr. Dase Gowda called for a concerted effort to secure the safe and

early release of Mr. Rajkumar. Members of the Sarvajanika Hitharakshana Vedike, the Vishwamavena Vidyarthi Vedike, the Kannada Nadu Horatagarara Kendra Samithi and the Abhinaya Chakreshwara Dr. Rajkumar Abhimanigala Sangha organised the bandh.

While the Government had announced a holiday for the educational institutions as a precautionary measure, cinemas, petrol bunks and hotels remained closed. Government offices such as those of the Deputy Commissioner, the Mysore City Corporation, the Mysore Urban Development Authority and the University of Mysore also remained closed. Most private organisations recorded thin attendance.

With both the KSRTC and the private bus operators withdrawing services, commuters found it hard to reach their destinations. A majority of the autorickshaws were off the road.

Maxicab services were also withdrawn following threats. A maxicab operator said vehicles plied in the early morning, but

were forced to withdraw services later.

## Parvathamma 'stable'

Our Bangalore Staff Reporter writes:

The condition of Ms. Parvathamma Rajkumar, who was admitted to the Mallya Hospital here on Wednesday, is said to be stable. Sources in the hospital said Ms. Parvathamma's health had improved and she was showing definite signs of recovery.

## Gopal yet to meet Veerappan

By Our Staff Reporter

**ERODE, SEPT. 22.** The Government emissary and *Nakkeeran* editor, Mr. R. R. Gopal, was yet to make contact with the forest brigand Veerappan. According to sources, heavy rain in the Thalawady and Thalamalai forest areas of Sathyamangalam taluk had made it difficult for a meeting to be arranged.

Mr. Gopal was likely to meet Veerappan tomorrow morning, the sources said adding the Kannada actor, Mr. Rajkumar, and the three others were in good health and were in a "safe place".

THE HINDU

23 SEP 2000

# Centre approves of prisoners' release for freeing Rajkumar

Imran Qureshi

BANGALORE 24 SEPTEMBER

THE CENTRAL government has supported moves by Karnataka to free the detained associates of forest brigand Veerappan in exchange for Kannada matinee idol Rajkumar, now in his ninth week of captivity with the bandit.

"Withdrawal of prosecution could be permitted in the larger interest of the public," the central government has said in an affidavit filed in the Supreme Court. "Ultimately, the test which may be applied by the court in order to determine the validity of grounds of withdrawal in a particular case is the requirement of public justice outweighing the legal justice of the case," the affidavit says.

The court is hearing an appeal against Karnataka's decision to release 121 associates of Veerappan who have been

detained in jails in Mysore, key city in Karnataka, under a defunct anti-terrorist law. The release of the detainees is a key demand of Veerappan for freeing Rajkumar.

"Withdrawal from prosecution can be permitted not merely on paucity of evidence but also on

## CAPTIVITY SAGA

other relevant grounds as to further the broad ends of public policy, order and peace," says the affidavit, filed in the name of Durgadas Gupta, the joint secretary in the ministry of home affairs.

The state government "had not acted against rule or law and/or against public interest on the basis of narrow sectarian or political reasons," the affidavit says.

Retired police official Abdul Kareem, whose son, sub inspector

Shakeel Ahmed, was gunned down by Veerappan eight years ago, has challenged the release of the detainees. In staying the release, the Supreme Court had asked both Kareem and the Karnataka government to submit their documents by October 11, when the case will be heard.

In essence, the court was questioning the bona fides of Karnataka in withdrawing the cases filed under the defunct anti-terrorist law.

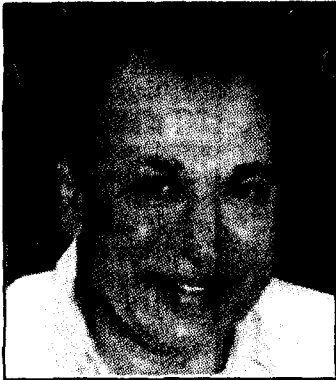
The court had blasted the Karnataka government for bowing to the "illegal demands" of Veerappan in agreeing to release his detained associates. It had asked the Karnataka government to quit if it could not maintain law and order, an apprehension that the state had expressed if Rajkumar's release was delayed.

— IANS

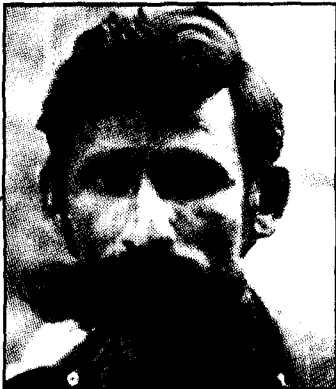
The Economic Times

25 SEP 2000

# Karnataka icon Rajkumar kidnapped by Veerappan



Kannada film star Rajkumar (above) and Veerappan



**BANGALORE BURNING:** The flaming remains of an effigy of forest brigand Veerappan on a Bangalore thoroughfare on Monday. Mrs Rajkumar had to go on television to appeal to fans for calm. Photo: AFP

**HTC and Agencies**  
Bangalore/Chennai, July 31

**I**N A sensational kidnapping, leading Kannada film star and cine demi-god Dr Rajkumar and three of his associates were on Sunday night abducted by dreaded smuggler-gangster Veerappan at Gajanur.

By this evening, the Tamil Nadu Government agreed to send, within the next couple of days, an emissary to Veerappan to secure the release of the hostages. R R Gopal, the editor of Tamil magazine *Nakeeran*, is to be the emissary.

Gajanur, Dr Rajkumar's native town, is situated on the fringes of the thick MM Hills forests on the Tamil Nadu side of the border with Karnataka, some 400 km from here.

Dr Rajkumar, revered by millions of fans in the State, was at

Gajanur for the house-warming ceremony of his newly built bungalow when Veerappan struck at 9.30 pm, fully armed and accompanied by 12 of his henchmen.

The kidnapping sent shock waves across Karnataka and all commercial activity came to a grinding halt in Bangalore. One person was stabbed to death. Sensing the mood, Dr Rajkumar's wife, Parvathamma, and his son appealed for calm.

This is by far Veerappan's biggest "catch" in his unending saga of crime and terror. According to Parvathamma, the armed men entered the farmhouse where nearly 15 people, including the cine-star, were relaxing after dinner.

When they asked for "saar" (Rajkumar), declaring they wanted to take him away, the film star got up and asked them to take him but leave the others.

Veerappan told Parvathamma that they would treat Rajkumar, 72, with care and respect and ensure that no harm was caused to him. Thereafter, he gave her an audio cassette, asking her to give it to the Chief Minister and warned against alerting the police.

Along with Dr Rajkumar, his brother-in-law, S A Govindaraju, a relative, Nagappa, and an associate director, Dr Nagesh, were taken away "to look after the film star."

According to Chief Minister S M Krishna, the cassette contains Veerappan's message, asking a State representative to meet him to discuss his demands.

Dr Rajkumar's youngest son, Raghavendra, told reporters that the State intelligence had warned the family of the threat to the actor and had requested them to inform the local police if he intended to travel beyond Mysore, which is

Veerappan's territory. Though this upset Dr Rajkumar, he did not go for security. However, he stopped going to Gajanur. "Why will he want me? What will he get from me? I am prepared to hand him my shirt and dhoti if he wants," he was quoted as having said.

But with the police warning having come a year ago and Veerappan completely inactive, the family had begun overlooking precautions.

Therefore, on Sunday night, Veerappan took Dr Rajkumar and those present completely by surprise. No resistance was offered. Immediately after the abduction, a shocked but composed Parvathamma rushed to Bangalore. It was 2 am before she could inform Karnataka Home Minister Mallikarjun Kharge about the abduction.

Related reports on Page 14

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

1 AUG 2000

## TRAIL OF BLOOD

*Veerappan's strikes since 1989, when he drew first blood*

- 1989 ● A forest guard is shot dead by sandalwood smugglers
- Karnataka govt orders a manhunt after three forest officers are killed
- A special task force is set up to capture Veerappan
- 1990 ● Two Veerappan gang members are killed. The bandit strikes back, killing two policemen
- Karnataka and Tamil Nadu announce 'Operation Snap' to get him dead or alive. Rewards declared
- In April, a patrol vehicle is ambushed, killing four policemen
- In November, the gang guns down a top forest officer. He is beheaded and the torso put on display
- 1991 ● ADMK govt comes to power and disbands the task force
- 1992 ● A police officer is killed in an ambush, forcing the govt to bring back the task force. A new officer takes charge
- 1993 ● A task force convoy is blown up by Veerappan's landmines. Civilians, policemen and forest staff killed
- In May, the task force resumes operations.
- The Centre sends the BSF into the forests
- 1994 ● A top vigilance official and two others are kidnapped in Coimbatore. A task force charge frees them after 27 days in captivity. Veerappan's brother and two other gang members surrender
- 1995 ● In November, three top forest officials kidnapped in Erode. A ransom of Rs 5 crore sought. After 21 days, Rs 3.5 lakh is paid unofficially, hostages set free
- In December, Veerappan attacks the task force, killing two. The attack was to avenge the death of his brother who took poison in custody
- 1996 ● A task force officer loses two fingers in an ambush. A constable is killed
- 1997 ● In July, 10 forest personnel are kidnapped. One sent back with a cassette. In August, another hostage reaches Chennai with mediator R. Gopal. Others released later
- 1998 ● In May, Veerappan allegedly kidnaps three persons, including two mediamen. No confirmation from the govt.

THE TELEGRAPH

AUG 2000



T.N. OFFERS ALL HELP; ACTOR'S WIFE APPEALS FOR CALM

# Veerappan kidnaps Rajkumar, 3 others

By A. Jayaram

**BANGALORE, JULY 31.** The forest brigand, Veerappan, on Sunday night struck at the farmhouse of the Kannada thespian, Mr. Rajkumar, at Gajanur in Tamil Nadu and kidnapped the actor and three others.

The abduction of the matinee idol sent shock waves throughout Karnataka and mobs went on the rampage on Monday. Four Tamil newspaper offices in Bangalore were attacked while one person was killed in the violence. Schools and colleges in the city were closed and a 10,000-strong police force began patrolling the streets.

A 12-member armed gang, led

by the elusive sandalwood smuggler, descended on the farm house around 9.30 p.m. last night and took away the actor, his son-in-law, Mr. S. A. Govindaraj, another relative, Mr. Nagesh, and an assistant director, Mr. Nagappa. The actor's wife, Mrs. Parvathamma, and their car driver, Mr. Hanumantha, were spared.

Veerappan sent an audio cassette, through Mrs. Parvathamma to the Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr. S. M. Krishna, listing his "demands" and wanted an emissary to meet him.

Addressing a press conference at his residence-cum-office here this morning, Mr. Krishna said the demands would be placed before

the State Cabinet. Later, Mr. Krishna flew to Chennai to meet his Tamil Nadu counterpart, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, and discuss ways of freeing the hostages. He was accompanied by Mrs. Parvathamma, the Home Minister, Mr. Malikarjuna Kharge, the Chief Secretary, Mr. B. K. Bhattacharya, and the Director-General of Police, Mr. C. Dinakar.

According to Mrs. Parvathamma, she and her husband left for Gajanur (near Talawadi) on Friday to make arrangements for the "graves" at a new house within the farmhouse.

## Intrusion at night

Around 9.30 p.m. on Sunday,

she and the others were watching television when about 12 armed men barged in and demanded in Kannada: "We want sir". Veerappan, whom she was able to identify, was leading the men. When the shell-shocked inmates demanded



Mr. Rajkumar... the thespian

of the abductors why they had entered the house, Mr. Rajkumar advised them to remain silent.

Several people including some farmhands, were present when the actor and three others were taken hostage in pouring rain. The entire operation was over in less than five minutes.

Mrs. Parvathamma, who arrived in the city early today, said

the kidnappers warned her against informing the police. All those who had entered or surrounded the house were armed with guns which appeared to be AK-47s, she added. The three others were beaten up by the kidnappers before being taken away.

## Warning ignored

Mr. Raghavendra Rajkumar, the thespian's younger son and an actor himself, said that about a year ago the police had warned his father of a kidnap threat from Veerappan if he ventured beyond Mysore. However, Mr. Rajkumar dismissed the threat saying the smuggler would get nothing from him, except a "shirt and dhoti".

The abduction was not wholly unexpected as police intelligence reports had spoken of Veerappan's resolve to carry out something dramatic. The lull in his activities over the last few years was also considered ominous.

Mr. Krishna and Mrs. Parvathamma appealed to the people to remain calm and maintain the peace.

The Chief Minister said all efforts were being made to get the hostages freed and that the Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, had been informed of the kidnap. Mr. Krishna, however, refused to say whether Central assistance had been sought.

**More reports on Page 13**  
**Editorial on Page 12**

## Nakkeeran editor, emissary

**By Our Special Correspondent**  
**CHENNAI, JULY 31.** The editor of the Tamil bi-weekly *Nakkeeran*, Mr. R. R. Gopal, will leave here tonight to meet Veerappan as the emissary of both the Tamil Nadu and Karnataka Governments, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, said this evening after a meeting with the Union Tourism and Culture Minister, Mr. Ananth Kumar.

Mr. Gopal had met the outlaw in the past several times, including as the emissary of the two States in 1997. Even as intelli-

Karnataka and Tamil Nadu governments to secure the release of Rajkumar.

The Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, spoke to the Karnataka and Tamil Nadu Chief Ministers, Mr. S.M. Krishna and Mr. M. Karunanidhi on telephone this morning and told them that the Centre was willing to launch a joint strategy for securing Rajkumar's safe release, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Mr. Pramod Mahajan told the House during zero hour.

Details on Page 15

## Advani's assurance

**NEW DELHI, JULY 31.** The Central Government today assured both Houses of Parliament it would extend all possible assistance to

# An unexpected crisis for Krishna Govt.

By S. K. Ramoo

**BANGALORE, JULY 31.** The people of Karnataka woke up on Monday morning to the shocking news that the popular matinee idol, Dr. Rajkumar, had been kidnapped by an armed gang led by the notorious forest brigand, Veerappan. They received the news with a sense of disbelief.

The abduction comes as an unexpected crisis for the Chief Minister, Mr. S.M. Krishna, and his nine-month-old Government. The adulation that millions of fans have for the film star has to be seen to be believed and they expect the State Government to act swiftly to obtain his release.

The Krishna Government is already under tremendous pressure and it has gone on record that the health and safety of the film star is paramount and that it will strive to ensure that the charismatic star does not come to any harm. The Chief Minister, who has so far taken correct and appropriate measures, flew to Chennai and met the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, to seek the latter's co-operation for the release of Dr. Rajkumar.

An informal emergency meeting of the Cabinet in the morning conveyed the Government's concern over the episode. Mr. Krishna is definitely a worried person as he is well aware that any delay in securing the freedom of the actor, can lead to a grave law and order problem. There is fear and uneasiness, and bouts of violence have already been unleashed in Bangalore. In Bangalore and several other

cities in the State, bandhs were observed without anyone giving a specific call. In areas such as Chamarajpet, J.P. Nagar, Banashankari and Jayanagar in Bangalore, gangs blocked roads and stoned passing vehicles. Shops and other commercial establishments, including petrol bunks, were closed. Schools and colleges have been closed for two days.

The elusive bandit masterminded the abduction in a daring manner. The State police force and its intelligence agencies have been taken by surprise. This is all the more dismaying because one of Dr. Rajkumar's sons, Mr. Raghavendra Rajkumar, said his family had been warned by some individuals two months ago that the actor should not travel to his Gajanur farmhouse in Satyamangala taluk in Periyar District of Tamil Nadu, without taking adequate precautions. The police intelligence agencies have either failed to get the information or had glossed over the information they received.

The outlaw has struck where it hurts most. For millions of adoring fans, Dr. Rajkumar's kidnap is akin to sacrilege. The Krishna Government is not in a position to adopt a tough and uncompromising stand against the bandit. It will have to negotiate and even compromise in order to get the actor released. It is expected that one of his demands will be a hefty ransom and amnesty for all his killings. In recent months, he has demanded blanket pardon for all his criminal actions. He has been held responsible for the killings of over

100 persons, including forest and police department personnel.

Governments in Karnataka, without exception, have been guilty of empty bravado in claiming that the poacher and smuggler would be apprehended soon.

On the other hand, Veerappan and his gang have been ruling the roost from their forest hide-out by openly defying the Special Task Forces of both Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

THE HINDU

- 1 AUG 2000

# 'It now depends on the apex court'

By Our Special Correspondent

**CHENNAI, SEPT. 6.** The joint initiative by the Karnataka and Tamil Nadu Governments to secure the release of the Kannada actor, Mr. Rajkumar, and three others held captive by the brigand Veerappan suffered a jolt today, with the emissary, Mr. R. R. Gopal, returning empty-handed from the Sathyamangalam forest.

The release of the hostages will now hinge on the Supreme Court's verdict in the separate petitions before it, challenging the release of the TADA detenus from the Mysore prison and five Tamil ultras jailed in Tamil Nadu, both of which are non-negotiable to Veerappan.

Mr. Gopal, editor of the Tamil bi-weekly *Nakkeeran*, returned here this morning to report to the Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, that his third forest mission had failed, as Veerappan was insistent that the 121 TADA detenus and the five Tamil militants, "should be released" by the re-

spective courts. Later, he told reporters at the Secretariat that "the talks (with Veerappan) have ended," but added that the talks have not "broken down" as yet.

Referring to the brigand's two "very important demands" Mr. Gopal said the former kept assert-

ing that as both the State Governments had given an assurance on releasing the detenus, "I take their word and they should all definitely be freed." The talks ended on that note.

Mr. Gopal said he explained to Veerappan that in both cases the release had run into legal hurdles with cases filed before the Supreme Court. "Hoping that there may be some development in the apex court, I delayed my departure from the forest with a view to returning with Mr. Rajkumar and the others." But Veerappan firmly drew a line winding up the talks, said Mr. Gopal adding, "I realised that there can be no further negotiations until the Supreme Court gave its verdict and decided to return."

Asked when Mr. Rajkumar's release would be in sight, he said, "it now depends upon the Supreme Court."

Making it clear that it was now upto the two Governments to decide on whether or not he should undertake a fourth mission, Mr.

Gopal saw his role as trying to bring a "meeting point" between Veerappan and the two Governments.

Stating that the brigand had made no fresh demands, Mr. Gopal said the actor's health was fine. He had adjusted to the forest environment and sent an audio tape to his family.

On whether Veerappan was convinced about the Governments' responses to his other demands, Mr. Gopal said, "we achieved progress on those issues during the negotiations." Regarding the Karnataka High Court's stay against resumption of the Sadhasivam Commission of inquiry into the STF's "excesses", he said, "I left the forest before this news reached us."

After showing Veerappan the copies of the orders of the two Governments and their explanations, he had brought back the documents. They would be given to Veerappan only after the hostages' release.

## CM to leave for Bangalore tomorrow

By Our Special Correspondent

**CHENNAI, SEPT. 6.** The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, will go to Bangalore on Friday for another round of talks with his Karnataka counterpart, Mr. S. M. Krishna, on resolving the hostage crisis.

Mr. Krishna had made four visits to Chennai to discuss the issue, he told reporters here this evening at the DMK headquarters.

THE HINDU

27 SEP 2000

# Act swiftly, T.N., Karnataka told

By Our Special Correspondent

CHENNAI, SEPT. 7. The Union Minister of State for Finance, Mr. Dhananjaya Kumar, today called upon the Karnataka and Tamil Nadu Governments to "act swiftly" to bring an early end to the hostage crisis involving the Kannada film actor, Mr. Rajkumar.

Addressing a press conference here, Mr. Kumar, who represents the BJP from the Mangalore Lok Sabha constituency, said he was only "expressing the concern of the people" that the crisis was dragging on and that the efforts and strategy adopted by Karnataka had not yielded results.

Asked if he was advocating Central intervention, the Minister said the Centre could consider providing assistance only if it was asked for. He would not even proffer an "advice" on how to handle the matter at this stage since unsolicited advice would only "add to complications". The Karnataka and Tamil Nadu Governments had been emphasising that they were competent to handle the issue, he said, refusing to say whether he would suggest a commando operation to rescue the hostages.

Mr. Kumar said there was practically no Government functioning in Karnataka for the past 40 days and files were not moving. "As a prudent Government, should you not have al-

ternative plans to deal with the situation? Why earn the wrath of the judiciary, if the State Government felt that it was doing the right thing in releasing detenus in response to Veerappan's demands," he asked.

Claiming that there were differences of opinion between the Karnataka Government and its police chief and also within the State Cabinet. "The (two) State Governments cannot go on for long in this fashion, dealing with such a known criminal."

## S.C. accepted our plea: Krishna

By Our Staff Reporter

BANGALORE, SEPT. 7. The Chief Minister, Mr. S.M. Krishna, will meet his Tamil Nadu counterpart, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, in Bangalore on Friday to discuss the next move on the Rajkumar kidnap crisis.

"Dr. Rajkumar was kidnapped in Tamil Nadu and is being confined in that State. It is, therefore, fitting that Mr. Karunanidhi comes here for talks," Mr. Krishna told mediapersons here.

Asked if the Chief Ministers would discuss alternative arrangements in view of the journalist-emissary, Mr. R.R. Gopal's failure to se-

cure the actor's release, Mr. Krishna refused to be drawn "into a public dialogue on the issue". Asked if any Union Government representative would be involved in the talks, he stated he was "not aware of any such development".

The Chief Minister clarified that the Supreme Court had not turned down Karnataka's plea for an early hearing on the Special Leave Petition (SLP) filed by Mr. Abdul Kareem, father of Shakeel Ahmed, the police sub-inspector killed by Veerappan. "We have made our next move and the S.C. has accepted our contention that an early hearing on the SLP is warranted," he said.

## No change in strategy

The Minister of State for Information and Publicity, Prof. B.K. Chandrashekar, told presspersons that although the State Government was considering various options to secure the release of Mr. Rajkumar, it would, for the present, pursue the same strategy.

Prof. Chandrashekar said the Government would get the "broad directions" it might have to follow in the next two or three days. Only after the two Chief Ministers meet tomorrow would the next course of action be decided, he said.

THE HINDU

7.8 SEP 2001

from the front page

## Mumbai HC admits State's appeal

done," observed Justice Sahai.

Secondly, he said, while the Magistrate ruled that prosecution is time-barred under Section 468 (limitation of time to take cognisance) of the Criminal Procedure Code, he has done so in isolation and not conjunctively with Section 470 (3) (exclusion of time-limit). If taken together, the period between applying for sanction and the grant of sanction, would fall within the time-limit.

Thirdly, he said, the order was

further pressed, "What should the police do if tomorrow they have to file a remand application where sanction is necessary? Do they have to follow similar guidelines of the magistrate's order? Sahai replied, "The public prosecutors represent the State and police and they should be vigilant."

Vakil also prayed for passing a ruling for expeditious hearing. "At this rate, it will not come up for four years. The effect of the judgment was such that next day there was reaction from the press, electronic

Sahai

# Mumbai HC admits State's petition in Thackeray case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, AUG 8

THE Mumbai High Court today admitted an appeal filed by the Maharashtra Government challenging the July 25 order by a magistrate who dismissed the case against Bal Thackeray relating to alleged inflammatory writings in *Saamna* during the riots in 1993.

Admitting the petition moved by public prosecutor P R Vakil, Justice Vishnu Sahai said the state government's case was "arguable" as the impugned order of the magistrate was "improper." The judge however, refrained from listing the reasons for admitting the appeal in writing in order to "prevent any prejudice during the final hearing of the case."

However, Justice Vishnu Sahai refused to grant a stay on the operation of the order passed by additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate B P Kamble. The judge also refused to expedite the hearings and asked State counsel P R Vakil to make an application to the Chief Justice in this regard. He added if both sides agreed, he would give a date the very next day.

The petition filed under Article 227 of the Constitution of India and Section 468 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, seeks to set aside and quash Magistrate Kamble's judgement on July 25, 2000 on a remand application. Kamble had discharged Thackeray, *Saamna* editor Sanjay Raut and publisher Subhash Desai in a common judgement and also termi-

### Srikrishna report to be reviewed

THE State Cabinet today decided to review the Action Taken Report (ATR) on the Srikrishna Commission report. Earlier, the Cabinet also discussed the ATR and the affidavit being filed by the Government in the Supreme Court on a petition seeking implementation of the riot panel report. In the affidavit, the Government has stated that it was ready to implement the recommendations made by the Srikrishna Commission without considering what the previous government said in the ATR, the sources said.

nated proceedings of the case.

Furnishing reasons for admitting the case, Justice Sahai said it was an "extremely arguable" matter and he was doing so prima facie on three grounds. But he said he would not record these in his ruling as it may prejudice the judge who hears the matter whenever it comes up for hearing. The first reason, he said, was that the magistrate misconstrued the word "cognisance" under Section 190 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC). "Cognisance in this case was based on a police report which is popularly called chargesheet. The magistrate was alive to the fact that the chargesheet is still to be submitted. Cognisance of the chargesheet can be taken later. Prima facie it could not be

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

INDIAN EXPRESS

9 AUG 2001

# Karunanidhi, Krishna to meet PM on Rajkumar kidnap issue

HT Correspondent  
Bangalore, September 8

THE CHIEF Ministers of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu will meet Prime Minister A B Vajpayee after his return from the United States to seek his advice on ways to end the crisis over the kidnap of Kannada superstar Rajkumar by bandit Veerappan.

At a joint Press conference here of Karnataka Chief Minister S M Krishna and his Tamil Nadu counterpart M Karunanidhi, the two, however, made it clear that they did not see Central intervention necessary at this point. "If we feel the need we will ask for the Centre's help," Mr Karunanidhi said.

The two Chief Ministers decided to pursue negotiations with bandit Veerappan while simultaneously plead with the Supreme Court to dispose speedily the petitions against the release of TADA detainees in Karnataka and the five extremists in Tamil Nadu. The SC hearing is on September 13.

Mr Karunanidhi said he will go to Delhi along with Mr Krishna soon after the Prime Minister returns and apprise him of the situation. "We will also speak to Home Minister L K Advani on the issue," he said.

The visit of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister to Karnataka comes amidst rising tension in the State over the continuing hiatus in the release of Rajkumar.

Kannada organisations of all hues have chalked out programmes to pressure the two governments to do "something" fast. Mr Karunanidhi's visit to Bangalore, the first since the kidnaping on July 30, is to reassure people in Karnataka about the

seriousness of his government in ensuring a quick end to the crisis.

The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister said he could have met Mr Krishna anywhere, but he chose to come to Bangalore to "reassure Kannadigas and Tamilians in the State about his intentions to speedily resolve the crisis". The two Chief

Ministers set aside speculation over continuing Nakkeeran Gopal as the emissary on the grounds that he had gained the trust of Veerappan. "Gopal was successful in his mission. But for the SC stay the situation would have been different. He will continue to be our emissary," Mr Karunanidhi said.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

9 SEP 2000

# New strategy depends on SC verdict: CMs

By Our Special Correspondent

BANGALORE, SEPT. 8. Tamil Nadu and Karnataka today agreed to consider a new strategy to secure the release of the Kannada film star, Mr. Rajkumar, and three others from the clutches of the forest brigand Veerappan, depending on the verdict of the Supreme Court in a connected special leave petition (SLP).

The decision was taken at a meeting between the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, and his Karnataka counterpart, Mr. S. M. Krishna. It was decided to take steps to get the matter before the court settled at the earliest. Also, the time was still not ripe for seeking Central intervention in the crisis.

Later, talking to presspersons along with Mr. Karunanidhi, Mr. Krishna said the "two

Governments agreed to continue with the line of action pursued so far regarding the release of the detenus on bail". They hoped that the Supreme Court would dispose of the case (an SLP filed by Mr. Abdul Karim and two others by Delhi-based advocates) at the earliest.

Mr. Krishna noted that the release of the hostages had been delayed because of the court's intervention. Earlier, "some arrangement had been arrived at with Veerappan."

On the offer of Central assistance made by two Union Ministers of State, Mr. Karunanidhi said the time was still not ripe for it. He denied as "false" the criticism that the Centre had not been taken into confidence. He was in touch with the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, and the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani. His Home Secretary was also keeping the

Union Home Secretary (Mr. Kamal Pande) informed.

Mr. Karunanidhi said both he and Mr. Krishna would meet Mr. Vajpayee on the latter's return from the U.S. depending on the court's verdict. Mr. Krishna did not see any reason for replacing the emissary of the two States, Mr. R. Gopal. The factor considered in choosing an emissary for such a crisis was his ability to establish contact with the abductors.

## 'I am also in tears'

PTI reports:

Mr. Karunanidhi said the kidnapping had not only hurt the people of Karnataka, but also their brethren in Tamil Nadu. "I am also in tears like the people of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu," he said.

THE HINDU

. 9 SEP 2000

## HC sets aside charges against Bhatt, Pathak

The Times of India News Service

AHMEDABAD: The Gujarat high court on Wednesday set aside the charges framed against former state health minister Ashok Bhatt and Union minister of state for defence Harin Pathak, both of whom resigned recently, and directed the sessions court to hear the case again on November 21. The accused were provided all documents and given a chance to make submissions.

The order was issued by Justice A.K. Trivedi in response to the petition moved by Ghanshyam Mehta and Mayur Dave.

The decision is expected to give a new lease of life to the two former ministers. The court's decision came even as the two joined a huge procession in the city to thank people who had stood by them in "their hour of crisis."

Government pleader Arun D. Oza stated that it was found on

perusal of the order dated November 7, passed by the additional sessions court of Ahmedabad, that the charges against the accused had been framed without taking into account certain documents, namely the inspection report of the court.

The court ordered that the charges as framed by the additional session court in charge were not only contrary to the law, but also in violation of the direction given by the high court.

The government pleader also stated that the order of the committee constituted by the high court referred to in the application would be tabled in the sessions court, after supplying copies to all the accused on or before November 21.

The state government was directed to produce on record the report submitted by the court

committee after supplying copies to all the accused. The accused have been given the liberty to make submission with respect to charges and to claim discharge on the basis of the paper supplied.

Advocates S.B. Vakil and J.M. Panchal appeared for the petitioners. The charges were framed against the two ministers and eight others for unlawful assembly, injury to policemen on duty, attempt to murder and murder during communal riots on April 22, 1985. A police constable, Laxman Jabbabhai Desai, was attacked and killed by a mob while another, Ratiram Yadav, was injured.

Reacting to the court decision, Ashok Bhatt said, "We have achieved 50 per cent of what we set out to achieve. Let us see what the outcome of the November 21 hearing is." Harin Pathak could not be contacted for his comments.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

17 NOV 2000



# Haryana DGP not charged with abetment to suicide

Hitender Rao  
Chandigarh, November 19

THE CBI has charged the Haryana Director General of Police, Shambhu Pratap Singh Rathore with molestation and indecency, and not with abetment to suicide in the Ruchika molestation case.

All this while the CBI had been delaying the filing of the charge-sheet against Rathore on the pretext of adding Section 306 of the IPC. The investigating agency had been seeking the opinion of the legal cell in this matter.

The CBI had charged Rathore only with Sections 354 (assault or criminal force on woman with intent to outrage her modesty) and 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman) of the IPC and not Section 306 (abetment to suicide), a non-bailable offence. Both the

sections mentioned in the CBI's challan - 354 and 509 - are bailable.

Legal experts say that though the CBI has filed an application before the designated court for condoning the delay in the filing of the charge-sheet, the DGP could take recourse under Section 468 of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) which bars a court from taking cognizance after lapse of the period of limitation.

The sections 354 (imprisonment for two years) and 509 (simple imprisonment for one year) being applied by the CBI, can be challenged under section 468 of the CrPC. Things would have been different had the CBI applied section 306 of the IPC (imprisonment up to 10 years).

Legal experts point out that resorting to section 468 of the CrPC would not help Rathore since the delay had occurred due to inaction of State Government.

## THE STORY SO FAR

**August 12, 1990:** Fourteen-year-old, Ruchika Girhotra allegedly molested by S P S Rathore.

**August 19, 1990:** Ruchika's family brings the matter to the notice of Chief Minister who orders the then DGP to conduct an inquiry.

**September 3, 1990:** DGP indicts Rathore in his report, paving the way for registration of molestation case.

**Sept 27, 1990:** Law department gives it nod to register a case.

**Jan 25, 1991:** Home Minister, Prof Sampat Singh refers the case to the new DGP, Mr R K Hooda who recommends departmental action against Rathore.

**December 29, 1993:** Ruchika commits suicide. Chief Secretary recommends filing of case.

**1997:** The Punjab and Haryana High Court orders investigation in the case by the CBI following the filing of a petition by the mother of Ruchika's friend, Mrs Madhu Prakash.

**Nov 17, 2000:** CBI files challan against Rathore in a designated court at Ambala accusing him of molestation.

**Nov 18, 2000:** Hearing of the case fixed for Nov 27.



THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

20 NOV 2000

# BJP-led coalition dons the mantle in Goa

**PANAJI, OCT. 24.** The BJP today assumed the reins of power for the first time in Goa heading a coalition government with Mr. Manohar Parrikar sworn in as the Chief Minister after the beleaguered Mr. Francisco Sardinha bowed out of office without facing a confidence vote in the State Assembly.

Mr. Parrikar, 45, a metallurgical engineer from IIT and leader of the BJP legislature party, was sworn in along with a 14-member Council of Ministers by the Governor, Mohd. Fazal, at a simple ceremony at the Raj Bhavan marking the change of guard for the 13th time in a decade.

Mr. Parrikar said the Governor had not asked him to prove his majority claiming that the latter was satisfied with the list of MLAs "I submitted in support of my strength in the 40-member House."

The BJP legislature party leader has claimed the support of 22 members in the Assembly, including 18 from his party, two from the Maharashtrawadi Go-

mantak Party (MGP) and two others. The Parrikar Ministry comprises 13 from the BJP and one from the MGP and accommodates all those who recently quit Congress and its splinter group to join the party.

Mr. Parrikar was invited to form the Government following Mr. Sardinha's resignation without facing a vote of confidence as directed by the Governor after his 11-month-old government was reduced to a minority last Saturday.

Mr. Sardinha's fate was sealed when in a development late last night, four Ministers from his Goan People's Congress Party (GPCP) — Mr. Alexio Sequeira, Mr. Francisco Desouza, Mr. Venkatesh Desai, Mr. Arecio Desouza — resigned and formed a new party. He quit this afternoon shortly before a special session of the Assembly was take up the trust vote.

Messrs Ravi Naik, Ramakant Khalap, Digambar Kamat, Sheikh Hassan Haroon, Prakash Velip, Pandurang Raut, Suresh Amon-



**Mr. Manohar Parrikar...  
new Chief Minister**

kar, Sanjay Bandekar, Prakash Phadte, Manohar Ajgaokar, Philip Neri Rodrigues, Jose Philip Desouza and Ramarao Desai were all sworn in Cabinet Ministers.

The Ministers took the oath of office either in Konkani, Hindi, Marathi or English. Barring Mr.

Parrikar, Mr. Ajgaokar, Mr. Rodrigues, Mr. Desouza and Mr. Dessai, the others have served as Ministers at one time or other.

The partywise strength at present is BJP (18), GPCP (7), Congress (6), Goa People's Congress Party (Venkatesh group) (4), Congress (Sheikh Hassan group) (1), MGP (2), Nationalist Congress Party and independent one each.

During the fast-paced developments, the Congress suffered a third split since the Assembly was formed. The first was when Mr. Sardinha toppled the Congress ministry and formed the government with the help of the BJP, eleven months back.

Another group of five Congress MLAs quit last August to form the Congress (Sheikh Hassan group), which itself split when four of them joined the BJP on Monday.

The process set in motion by Mr. Sardinha, however, boomeranged on him when the BJP withdrew support and felled his government with the help of eight former Congressmen. — PTI

THE HINDU

25 OCT 2000

2000

## BJP STAKES CLAIM TO FORM GOVT.

# Goa CM to seek trust vote tomorrow

**PANAJI, OCT. 22.** The Goa Chief Minister, Mr. Francisco Sardinha, will seek a vote of confidence in the State Assembly on October 24. Official sources said here that the Governor, Mr. Mohammad Fazal, had directed the Chief Minister to seek a vote of confidence at the special session of the State Assembly, scheduled to be convened at 2.30 p.m. on October 24.

Earlier, the BJP legislature party leader, Mr. Manohar Parrikar, had called on the Governor and withdrawn his party's support to the eleven-month-old coalition Government headed by Mr. Francisco Sardinha and also staked his claim to form the Government.

However, Mr. Sardinha refused to resign saying that his Government was in a majority and he would prove it on the floor of the House.

Mr. Sardinha, expressing confidence that his Government would tide over the present crisis, said the 11 MLAs of his Goa People's Congress were united and an appropriate strategy would be drawn up to deal with the situation.

On whether he would accept support from the Congress, Mr. Sardinha said he would not hesitate to do so. Asked who would be the Chief Minister in the event of a re-alignment with the Congress and this group securing the required strength to form a Government, he said, "who becomes Chief Minister is not important".

The Chief Minister accused the BJP of stabbing his

Government in the back when he was on a foreign tour. "We did not realise that their intention was not good when they extended support to us to form a Government in November last year."

Stating that he had handed over to the Governor a letter withdrawing his party's support to the Sardinha Government and the resignations of three of its Ministers, Mr. Parrikar said the BJP had requested him to take a decision before Deepavali.

The Governor was aware of the political situation and would take an appropriate decision at a proper time, he said.

Asked about the possible composition of his Cabinet, Mr. Parrikar said the Union Information Technology Minister, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, was expected to reach here tomorrow afternoon to oversee the formation of the new government and finalise its modalities. To another question, he said the BJP was always in favour of a "small Cabinet".

On Mr. Sardinha's performance in the last 11 months, the BJP leader said, "Mr. Sardinha is a gentleman, but he had to suffer because of other elements. He should have remained alert against such elements."

The State Congress spokesman, Mr. Jitendra Deprabhu, said the party was watching the situation closely. On whether the party would support Mr. Sardinha, he said, "first there has to be a request for support. Then we will discuss and take a stand."

— UNI

## Jethmalani surprised over documents

**NEW DELHI, OCT. 22.** The former Law Minister, Mr. Ram Jethmalani, today expressed surprise over the official documents authenticating the real age of the Chief Justice of India, Mr. Justice A.S. Anand being published in the media and wondered "why these documents did not surface when they were required most - at the time of enrolment of Justice Anand as an advocate in 1964 and the hearing of the PIL on this issue in the Madras High Court in 1991."

"It is the duty of a judge to see that truth prevails. Why did Justice Anand not assist the petitioner in the High Court in procuring the document about his age," he asked.

Asked to comment on the official documents showing the date of birth of Justice Anand as November 1, 1936, the former Law Minister said "the Chief Justice did not produce the documents at the proper time. Even if these documents are genuine, his conduct at that time was wrong."

Asked whether the President should take note of his book, *Big egos, small men*, to be published tomorrow, and order an investigation into the real age of the Chief Justice, Mr. Ram Jethmalani said "the President has power only with regard to a High Court Judge as far as ascertaining the age was concerned. In the present

case, only Parliament is empowered to provide for an authority under law to determine the age."

Mr. Jethmalani, replying to another question, said "I wish the Prime Minister to get back to his full vigour and then read the book and apply his mind." After reading the book, the perception of the public would change about every single person involved in his exit from the Union Cabinet, he claimed.

### 'Fiction at its worst': Sorabjee

**NEW DELHI, OCT. 22.** The Attorney-General, Mr. Soli Sorabjee, today dismissed as "fiction at its worst" the new book written by former Law Minister, Mr. Ram Jethmalani, attacking him and the Chief Justice of India, Mr. A.S. Anand.

Back from Mumbai after a knee surgery Mr. Sorabjee, when asked to comment on Mr. Jethmalani's book "Big egos, small men" to be released tomorrow, said "at present, I am concentrating on my recovery from my operation. From what I have been told the book appears to be fiction at its worst." The book describes him as one of the key conspirators in the sacking of Mr. Jethmalani in July last. — PTI

Although Mr. Jethmalani's book bracketed the Attorney General, Mr. Soli Sorabjee, and Justice Anand with the current Law Minister, Mr. Arun Jaitley, as the trio which had "conspired" to get him sacked, it does not contain any severe criticism against Mr. Jaitley.

Mr. Jethmalani criticised Mr. Jaitley for supporting the inclusion of Mr. Sorabjee's name in the Constitution Review Commission. "I candidly wrote to the Prime Minister that though Mr. Sorabjee is supported by Advani and even more by Jaitley, my own view is that a law officer of the Government should not be on this Commission." On the controversy over his exit from the Cabinet, the book says the Prime Minister was told by Mr. Sorabjee that Mr. Jethmalani's remarks had put the Executive on a collision course with the Judiciary.

"Maybe the Prime Minister consulted somebody else too. I believe on the evidence of *India Today* (magazine) that Arun Jaitley too was present and he too gave the same advice. I am not surprised. Ambition has made traitors of much better men," Mr. Jethmalani writes.

He then refers to his speech in the Rajya Sabha after his resignation where he concluded with a "mild admonition of Arun Jaitley." — PTI

# Another Goa Govt falls, this time thanks to BJP

RAJU NAYAK  
GOA, OCT 21

98-1 22/10  
The Bharatiya Janata Party pulled the rug from under the Goa People's Congress Party (GPCP) government of Francisco Sardinha, throwing Goa into another familiar political crisis. The move came at a time when Sardinha is on an official tour to Australia and Governor Mohammad Faizal is in Delhi.

In what can easily be summarised as another addition to the case law of the 10th schedule of the Constitution, popularly called the Anti-Defection Law, the BJP ordered all three of its ministers in the Francisco Sardinha government to resign to pull it down and then poached four

MLAs each from the Congress and the Shaikh Hassan faction of the Congress to be in position to form the next government. The BJP now has the support of 18 MLAs in the 40 member house. The BJP Legislature Party leader Manohar Parrikar also claimed the support of the two-

## CRISIS IN GOA

member Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party (MGP) and one Independent thus cobbling up the magic figure of 21 required to govern the State.

When Sardinha broke away with 11 MLAs from the Congress some months ago, the BJP with its ten MLAs propped him up. After today's floor-crossings, the

strength in the House is: GPCP 11, BJP 18, Congress 6, Shaikh Hassan Congress 1, MGP 2, NCP 1 and Ind 1.

CLP leader Ravi Naik, who led the revolt against the Congress party and pledged support to the BJP with three other prominent leaders, claimed the party in the State was being held to ransom by unit president Luizinho Faleiro.

Justifying his leap across the vast ideological barrier, Naik was more than a bit brazen: "My criticism of the BJP in election meetings was a game and being a sportsman I had just played the game."

All attention will now be rivetted on Governor Mohammad Faizal, specially in light of his earlier statement that would not allow an unstable coalition to stake

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

INDIAN EXPRESS

22 OCT 2000

A Palestinian youth being carried to an ambulance after he was shot by Israeli soldiers who were protecting the Jewish settlement of Kfar Darom in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday. Photo: AP

# SC clears Sardar Sarovar Project

## Prabhu seeks cover for new power units

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, October 18

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, October 18

THE six-year-old legal wrangle over the Rs 18,000 crore Sardar Sarovar Project ended today with the Supreme Court okaying further construction of the dam on the river Narmada as per the Narmada Tribunal Award.

The court, in a majority judgement, said the review committee could refer to the Prime Minister any differences over the implementation of the award, whose decision will be final.

By a 2-1 judgement, the three-member bench permitted construction of the dam up to 90 meters on the basis of the clearance by the project's relief and rehabilitation sub-group. But construction beyond this height may be undertaken only after clearance by the environment sub-group of the ministry of environment and forests. The judgement is a major setback for the Narmada Bachao Andolan which has been spear-headed a mass movement against the project.

The majority judgement was in the name of Chief Justice A S Anand, who concurred with Justice B N Kirpal. Dissenting judge S.P. Bharucha wanted the dam's construction halted till the environment ministry

clears the project on the basis of expert advice.

Senior counsel Shanti Bhushan, who represented the NBA, wanted an independent judicial authority review of the project, contending that its harsh impact on the environment were not fully assessed.

The Court observed: "Perhaps the setting up of a thermal plant may not displace as many families as a hydel project may, but the pollution caused by the thermal plant and the adverse affect on the neighbourhood could be far greater than the inconvenience caused in shifting and rehabilitating the oustees."

Judges Anand and Kirpal directed the Narmada Control Authority to moot within four weeks a plan for the completion of the dam and the rehabilitation of the people displaced. Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra, the states covered by the project, should abide by the plan and disputes could be represented to the review committee, the court said.

The grievances redressal authorities, the court said, was at the liberty to direct the three states to implement the rehabilitation programmes, and even approach the review committee if it was not forthcoming.

See also Page 11

IGNORING STRONG objections by the finance ministry, the power ministry will ask the Cabinet to consider a new scheme of counter-guarantees for private power generation and transmission projects.

The finance ministry, sources say, is unwilling to factor into next year's budget the liability that such guarantees entail.

Power minister Suresh Prabhu told the conference of economic editors here today that the Pipavov, the Hirma and the Ennore megapower projects being developed by foreign and Indian corporates are among those being considered for guarantees against State electricity boards defaulting on payments. The guarantees will be provided through the Power Trading Corporation which will buy the power generated by these projects.

The Centre had initially confined guarantees to the first eight fast-track projects. But the cover is sought to be extended, ostensibly, to boost generation by the private sector. The new scheme that is being given shape follows Prime Minister Vajpayee's commitment in Lisbon.

### Medha Patkar breaks down



MEDHA PATKAR broke down and wept openly at a Press conference called to give her reaction to the SC judgement. "Personally I feel that this movement should not die. We can die but not the movement," she said.

Details on Page 11

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

19 OCT 2000

# Shocking and disgraceful, says Arundhati

New Delhi, October 18

BOOKER PRIZE winning author Arundhati Roy, a passionate campaigner against the Sardar Sarovar Dam, said the Supreme Court judgement today giving the green signal for the project was "shocking and disgraceful".

"For the Court to give the go ahead for the project, when hundreds of families affected by it have not been rehabilitated or given alternative agricultural land

shows that the issue of basic human rights has been completely ignored," Ms Roy told UNI.

Praising the dissenting judgement of Justice S.P. Bharucha for striking the right note of caution, Ms Roy said the judge had observed that the environmental consequences of the project had not been examined at the time of clearance and work on the site should be stopped forthwith, pending an environmental assessment.

While the majority judgement

said that the Narmada Control Authority would draw up an action plan for further construction and relief and rehabilitation, the Authority's earlier guidelines had not been implemented till date by the states concerned, including Madhya Pradesh, she said.

"This shows that you can stand in front of the map of India and throw darts anywhere on it without bothering about the environmental or human costs or analysing its benefits for the people," she

added.

Expressing disappointment with the judgement, the acclaimed author said that it had shown up the indifference of the urban middle and upper class to the issues at the ground level.

Ms Roy said she was not in a position to say what the next course of action of the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) would be. She said she would continue to do whatever she could to mobilise public opinion on the issue. (UNI)

## Gujarat vows to complete project

Rathin Das  
Gandhinagar, October 18

THE SUPREME Court verdict allowing further construction of the multipurpose dam on river Narmada was predictably greeted with jubilation in Gujarat, the State which would be the greatest beneficiary by way of receiving water for irrigation and drinking.

For the ruling BJP, currently demoralised following a convincing defeat in last month's panchayat and civic polls, the apex court judgement couldn't have come at a more appropriate time as the State would have another round of elections to about 9,000 village panchayats and over 80 municipalities in the first week of December.

The verdict has also made irrelevant the statewide village bandh called today by Congress leader Sankersinh Vaghela in protest against the recently announced power tariff hike.

Soon after the State Cabinet was informed about the verdict by Narmada Development

Minister Jay Narain Vyas from Delhi, the weekly meeting welcomed it and vowed to complete the project at a fast pace.

The entire Council of Ministers thereafter walked down to the lawns of the State Secretariat where an impromptu gathering of Government employees and children from the nearby schools were waiting for celebrations to begin.

Making what could be termed as the dream announcement by any Chief Minister of Gujarat, Keshubhai Patel told the enthusiastic audience that the verdict is not only vindication of the stand of the Gujarat Government, but a resounding victory for the 4.5 crore people of the State ever parched for water.

Assessing the popular mood, the Chief Minister announced a holiday for rest of the post-lunch session. Soon afterwards, the Ministers joined the crowd in bursting crackers and greeting one another. Sweets were also distributed in the offices.

Minister for Health Ashok Bhatt announced

that Narmada Vijay Diwas would be celebrated all over Gujarat tomorrow with 'Maha Arati' in temples, distribution of sweets and burning of crackers.

Addressing newsmen at the weekly briefing later, Keshubhai Patel said that the work at the dam site can begin only after six or seven days as nearly four metres of water has to be released from the reservoir currently overflowing at 88 metres.

This would be done by opening the sluice gates at the bottom of the dam so that construction work could be started without any further delay, the Chief Minister added.

The Supreme Court verdict has also been welcomed by the people in general, and political parties and the Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industries (GCCCI). Leader of Opposition and former Chief Minister Amarsinh Chaudhary has said that the verdict would help realise the dream of Sardar Patel that the thirsty people of Gujarat would get relief from long spells of droughts.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

19 OCT 2000

## Minister demands probe into funds received by NBA

Rathin Das <sup>HG-20</sup>  
Gandhinagar, October 25 <sup>0/10</sup>

EXCITED OVER the Supreme Court verdict clearing further construction on the disputed dam on river Narmada, Gujarat's Narmada Development Minister Jay Narain Vyas has demanded an enquiry into the alleged foreign exchange violations by the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA) led by Ms Medha Patkar.

In a letter to Union Home Minister L.K.Advani, the Minister has pointed out certain violations of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) in the funds received by the anti-dam movement spearheaded by the NBA. He has asked the Union Home Minister to institute a CBI probe into the foreign funding of the NBA and the Income Tax exemptions claimed.

Refusing to disclose the names of the countries, which had been funding the anti-dam agitation, the Minister said that he has enclosed some incriminating documents along with the letter he has written to Mr Advani.

Though the foreign connections and funding of NBA were fairly well-known, this is probably the first time an inquiry is being demanded into the matter.

Meanwhile, the Gujarat Government has planned a gala celebration at the dam site on Oct 31, the birth anniversary of Sardar Patel, to mark the re-launch of the construction activity of the project. L. K. Advani would start the concrete work and unveil a statue of Sardar Patel. A rally also has been planned on that day. 'Narmada poojan' will be conducted in the villages at 12.39 in the afternoon, the auspicious time when the construction of the dam would resume.

## 'Human dimensions of dam overlooked'

Apratim Mukarji  
New Delhi, October 25

EMINENT ENERGY expert and environmentalist Dr R.K.Pachauri agrees with Narmada activist Arundhati Roy that the human dimensions of the Sardar Sarovar dam have not been treated by the Indian state with adequate seriousness.

He, however, believes that with the Supreme Court verdict going in favour of the construction of the dam, "the next best thing that Ms Roy, Ms Medha Patkar and others can do is to ensure that the resettlement of the Narmada oustees is done properly and effectively".

"Let us make the minimising of the human distress arising out of big development projects our mission," he says. Ensuring that the oustees do not end up in the slums of Mumbai would be a major step towards correcting the basic distortions that have come to mark the development process in India.

While the Sardar Sarovar dam project became a cause celebre in India, thanks to the Narmada Bachao Andolan, China embarked upon a far larger dam project, the Three Gorges Dams, on the Yangtze. Millions of people living in villages which will be submerged when the series of dams is built are being uprooted and resettled in well-executed rehabilitation projects. Compared to the Indian performance, China appears to have taken good care of its oustees from developed regions.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

26 OCT 2000

# Quit, if you can't handle Veerappan: SC

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, September 1

IN A major setback to the efforts to secure release of Kannada film superstar Rajkumar, the Supreme Court today indefinitely stayed the release of 30 associates of forest brigand Veerappan, while coming down heavily on the Karnataka government for agreeing to the bandit's "illegal and unreasonable" demands.

In context of the State Government's inability to bring the bandit to book, the Court asked: "What have you (the Govt) done for the past eight years to apprehend the man (Veerappan)? If you cannot do it, then quit and make way for somebody else who can."

A Bench of Justice S.P. Bharucha, Justice D.P. Mohapatra and Justice Y.K. Sabharwal observed: "We do not know why

the Government could not corner him for more than eight years."

Justice Bharucha said that after Veerappan kidnapped a popular

personality, the State was trying to impress upon the Court that the liberty of each individual was paramount. "At the moment we have grave doubts (about the Government's argument)... You did not take into account the welfare of the people for eight years," the Judge observed, adding, "We will not be a party to this decision (to release the accused). This is compounding negligence upon negligence."

When Solicitor General Harish

Salve, representing the State Government, suggested the possibility of an agitation if anything happened to the cine astor, the

## 'Not a setback'



KARNATAKA CM Krishna said that the SC decision was not a setback, but agreed that it would further delay the release of

Rajkumar. • Details on page 13

appeal before them, saying, "We are not persuaded that any of the accused-respondents (numbering 115, 30 of whom are in custody) should be released on bail, or otherwise, pending disposal of the

appeal."

The Court's directions followed an appeal by a retired police official Abdul Karim whose son, Shakeel Ahmed, a sub-inspector with the Special Task Force, was killed in 1992 by the Veerappan gang. The petitioner questioned the Aug 19 order of the Special Court allowing the release of the bandit's associates.

The SC also issued notices to the Centre and the Governments of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Andhra Pradesh on a petition filed by lawyer B.L. Wadhera on how authorities have been dealing with the crisis.

Responding to Attorney General Soli Sorabjee's submission that an act of balancing had to be performed to maintain peace in the State, the Bench said all that the authorities should do was to maintain peace.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE



# Karnataka yielding to illegal demands: S.C.

By T. Padmanabha Rao

**NEW DELHI, SEPT. 2.** The Supreme Court, in its oral observations during a hearing of the "Veerappan associates-release case" expressed concern at the inability of the Karnataka Government in apprehending the forest brigand for the past eight years.

"What have you (the State Government) done for the past 8 years to apprehend that man? We make it clear it is the responsibility of the State Government to maintain law and order. If you cannot do it, then quit and make way for somebody else who can," a Bench said.

(According to a PTI report, the court rapped the Karnataka Government for succumbing to such "illegal and unreasonable" demands of the brigand to secure the release of the Kannada actor, Mr. Rajkumar.)

The Bench, comprising Mr. Justice S. P. Bharucha, Mr. Justice D. P. Mohapatra and Mr. Justice Y. K. Sabharwal, made the observations while directing that its August 29 interim order — that none of the respondents-accused (Veerappan associates) be released on bail or otherwise pending further orders — operate pending disposal of the appeal from Mr. Abdul Karim, a retired police officer.

Earlier, the Bench granted special leave to the appellant, father of sub-inspector Shakeel Ahmad who along with Superintendent of

Police Harikrishna, was killed allegedly by Veerappan in 1992, to appeal against an August 19 order of the 'designated court', Mysore, according "consent" to the special public prosecutor to withdraw charges for offences punishable under Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (prevention) Act against certain accused (Veerappan associates). In all, 115 accused (including Veerappan)

were cited as respondents.

It is learnt that 51 accused who were ordered released on 'bail' by the Sessions Judge, Mysore, on August 28 are on the list of the 115 accused (in the SLP). The Mysore sessions judge's order of August 28 is also under challenge in a related petition.

Earlier, Mr. Harish N. Salve, Solicitor-General, appearing for Karnataka, submitted that the impugned decision of the Govern-

ment (to withdraw the 'TADA' cases) was taken not to secure the release of a cine star (Mr. Rajkumar — kidnapped along with three others by Veerappan over a month ago) — but in the larger interest of the linguistic communities, harmony and tranquillity in the State. At this, the Bench said, "it is the State's responsibility to maintain law and order. Do not bring the judiciary or judicial process into it."

## 'Govt. sensitive to orders'

By Our Special Correspondent

**BANGALORE, SEPT. 2.** The Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr. S.M. Krishna, has said the Government is sensitive to the Supreme Court's orders in the matter of the release of 51 ex-TADA detenus from the Mysore jail. He was reacting to the directions of the Court, which yesterday stayed indefinitely the release of the detenus following a petition filed by the father of Shakeel Ahmed, sub-inspector, who was shot dead by the forest brigand, Veerappan.

The Chief Minister said the orders of the court and the release of Mr. Rajkumar from captivity of the brigand were two different subjects. Irrespective of whatever happened on the kidnap front, it should be remembered that the rule of law prevailed in the country. The State Government could not keep away from the law of the land, he added.

Mr. Krishna pointed out that even the Attorney-General, Mr. Soli Sorabjee, had in his submission said the Karnataka Government had done a fine act of balancing the decision to ensure the release of the prisoners on bail. "He has succinctly placed the State's line of approach before the Supreme Court." On the Government's plea to the court that it had to take certain steps to prevent disturbances, Mr. Krishna said no Government would be complete if it could not anticipate things. Given the present situation, there was every possibility of law and order in the State facing a threat.

The Bench observed that "as the facts exist today, we will not give any relief" (on the question of release of the Veerappan associates), "as it amounts to compounding negligence upon negligence".

The Bench wondered whether it was open to the State Government to say if it could not withdraw cases involving a series of rare offences against certain accused, it might cause public unrest. The State should protect every citizen, the Bench added.

When the Bench observed that the affidavit (filed by the Karnataka Government in response to the SLP) was — "very coy and certain things are not said," the Solicitor-General requested the court that the State be permitted to file a better affidavit giving the reasons and background which prompted the Government to take the decision (to withdraw 'TADA' cases).

**Police ineffective: Page 11**

S.C. ORDER FALLOUT TO BE DISCUSSED

# Krishna calls emergency Cabinet meeting

410-1  
4/9  
By Our Special Correspondent

**BANGALORE, SEPT. 3.** The Karnataka Cabinet is holding an emergency meeting here on Monday morning to discuss the situation arising out of the Supreme Court order against the release of the associates of the forest brigand, Veerappan, detained under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act.

The Chief Minister, Mr. S.M. Krishna, has also convened a meeting of the floor leaders of various political parties for tomorrow afternoon. The Cabinet, which generally meets on Thursdays, is meeting on Monday in view of the developments regarding the Rajkumar abduction crisis.

The only ray of hope for the Government on the legal front now is to move the Chief Justice of India for an early hearing of the special leave petition filed by Mr. Abdul Karim, a retired police officer of Mysore, against the release of the TADA detenus. Mr. Karim's son, sub-inspector Shakeel Ahmed, was killed by Veerappan's gang in 1992.

The three-judge Supreme Court Bench, which continued the interim order of August 29 against the release of the detenus, has said that it was open to the State (Karnataka) to move the court with regard to the release (other than withdrawal of prosecution) of the women detenus.

## Opposition flak

Meanwhile, the attitude of the Opposition parties is hardening. The Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, Mr. Jagadish Shettar, has criticised the Government over the stand it took before the

Supreme Court in justification of the release of the detenus, namely the law and order problem in the State.

Though the Cabinet has remained united on the issue, some of the Congress(I) leaders are known to be sore with the way the crisis is being handled. One of them, the former Chief Minister, Mr. S. Bangarappa, MP, is said to have been pleading from the very beginning of the abduction for granting pardon to Veerappan in return for the release of Mr. Raj-

kumar and three others. Mr. Bangarappa is a close relative of Mr. Rajkumar.

PTI reports:

The high-powered committee, constituted by the Government to manage the Rajkumar hostage crisis, met here this evening and took stock of the situation. The meeting, chaired by the Chief Minister, was attended among others by the Home Minister. Mr. Mallikarjun Kharge, and the Director-General of Police, Mr. C. Dinakar.

The DGP today neither confirmed nor denied reports that he had advised the Government against dropping charges against suspected associates of Veerappan. "I don't want to comment on it," he said on reports that he had written a letter to Home Secretary, Mr. M.B. Prakash, expressing opposition in this regard. Mr. Dinakar reportedly conveyed that his conscience does not allow him to be party to the dropping of charges against the suspected associates of Veerappan.

## We are with you: Sonia

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, SEPT. 3.** The Congress (I) president, Ms. Sonia Gandhi, has sent Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad, one of the AICC (I) general secretaries, to Bangalore, to assure the Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr. S.M. Krishna, that he had the full support of the party's central leadership in handling the difficult situation arising out of the kidnapping of the Kannada icon, Mr. Rajkumar, by brigand Veerappan.

The decision to send Mr. Azad on a reassuring mission came after an informal meeting of the Congress (I) Working Committee on Friday night, in the wake of the Supreme Court's adverse comments on the Krishna Government's handling of the crisis.

The consensus at the meeting was that a very delicate situation had arisen

after the apex court's direction (staying the release of Veerappan "aides" as part of the proposed package for the release of Mr. Rajkumar). The members felt that it was all the more necessary that the Chief Minister should have a free hand to deal with the problem; moreover, the Chief Minister should know that he had the full backing of the party's central leadership.

Mr. Azad's mission was to tell the Chief Minister that he had the full confidence of the Working Committee. The message was reinforced this morning when senior party member, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, is reported to have telephonically spoken to Mr. Krishna; the bottomline being "we are with you". Other members have also spoken to the Chief Minister, offering him the benefit of their long ministerial experience at the Centre.

The informal session of the CWC was attended, among others, by Mr. Mukherjee, Dr. Manmohan Singh, Mr. R.K. Dhawan, Mr. Madhavrao Scindia, Mr. Oscar Fernandes and Ms. Ambika Soni. Except Mr. Dhawan, who thought Mr. Krishna had not proved equal to the Veerappan-induced crisis, most members were supportive of the Chief Minister and were appreciative of the difficult choices before him.

The "vote of confidence" by the CWC for the Chief Minister becomes important given that in the post-kidnapping days there has been virtually no communication between Mr. Krishna and the Ms. Sonia Gandhi. And, in the Congress (I) way of doing things, this absence of communication was being seized upon by the Chief Minister's detractors to start a whispering campaign.

## VEERAPPAN ISSUE: KARNATAKA GIVEN 10 DAYS TIME

# Complete pleadings before pressing for early hearing: S.C.

By T. Padmanabha Rao

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 4. The Supreme Court today directed Karnataka and the parties concerned to complete their pleadings and file additional documents, if any, in connection with the Veerappan associates' release case within 10 days.

A Bench also gave liberty to the parties to request the court for an early hearing after 10 days.

The Bench, comprising the Chief Justice, Dr. Justice A. S. Anand, Mr. Justice Santhosh N. Hegde and Mr. Justice K. G. Ba-

lakrishnan, made this order after Mr. Harish N. Salve, Solicitor-General requested an early hearing (of appeal and related writ petition) in view of the urgency of the matter (in the context of the safe release of the cine star, Mr. Rajkumar, and three others from the captivity of the forest brigand).

A three-member Bench on September 1, directed that its August 29 interim order — that none of the respondents-accused (Veerappan associates) be released on bail or otherwise pending further orders — operate pending the

disposal of the appeal from Mr. Abdul Karim, a retired police officer.

The Bench also allowed Mr. Karim, father of sub-inspector Shakeel Ahmad, who along with Superintendent of Police Hari-krishna, was killed allegedly by Veerappan in 1992, to appeal against an August 19 order of the designated court, Mysore, according "consent" to the special public prosecutor to withdraw charges for offences punishable under Sections 3, 4 and 5 of the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act — TADA —

against Veerappan's associates. In all, 115 accused (including Veerappan) were cited as respondents in Mr. Abdul Karim's special leave petition.

It is learnt that the 51 accused, who were ordered released on "bail" by the Sessions Judge, Mysore, on August 28 are among the 115 accused. His August 28 order is also under challenge in a related petition.

In its oral observations on September 1, the apex court expressed concern at the inability of the Karnataka Government to apprehend Veerappan for the past 8 years.

"What have you (State Government) done for the past 8 years to apprehend the forest brigand? We make it clear it is the responsibility of the State to maintain law and order. If you cannot do it, then quit and make way for somebody else who can," it said.

The Bench also issued notices to the Union of India, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu on two connected writ petitions filed by Mr. B. L. Wadhwa, an advocate and another person. These were directed to be tagged on to the main appeals (from Mr. Karim).

Appearing for the Karnataka Government on September 1, Mr. Salve submitted that the impugned decision of the State Government (to withdraw 'TADA' cases against Veerappan's associates) was taken not to secure the release of a popular cine star (Mr. Rajkumar — who was kidnapped along with three others by Veerappan over a month ago) — but in the larger interest of the linguistic communities, harmony, peace and tranquility in the State.

At this, the Bench said, "it is the State's responsibility to maintain law and order. Do not bring the judiciary or the judicial process into it."

## Karnataka to persist with talks

By Our Special Correspondent

BANGALORE, SEPT. 4. The Karnataka Government today decided to persist with the strategy of securing the release of the film star, Mr. Rajkumar, and three others through negotiations with the forest brigand Veerappan, and said the hostages' release was a matter of time. As the crisis entered the 35th day, the Cabinet, putting up a brave face, decided to give another chance to the strategy of conciliatory moves followed so far. At the same time, the Cabinet after an emergency meeting here decided to petition the Supreme Court (the Chief Justice of India) for the early disposal of the special leave petition filed by the retired police officer, Mr. Abdul Karim, praying against the release of the associates of Veerappan held under the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act.

After the meeting, the Minister for Information and Publicity, Prof. B. K. Chandrashekar, told reporters that the Centre was in full agreement with the strategy being followed by Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, and the Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, were being informed regularly about the moves being made by the State from the very first or second day of the abduction. The Minister said

the Cabinet was informed that the strategy of negotiations was adopted after consulting the senior officials. It was perhaps to correct the impression that decisions were being taken by a few without consulting the police top brass or other officials concerned.

The Cabinet did not go into the Supreme Court's order continuing the stay against the release of the detenus or the critical observations made by the apex court against the State Government. "It was felt that it was not necessary to go into it," Prof. Chandrashekar reiterated that the negotiations with Veerappan through the emissary-journalist, Mr. R. R. Gopal, had reached a crucial stage and that the Government expected news from Mr. Gopal in the next three or four days. "This time Mr. Gopal has said he would bring Mr. Rajkumar and the others with him. And there are indications to that effect."

Moreover, Veerappan had not made any fresh demands. He had only sought certain clarifications. Veerappan had been informed about the views of the Government and the turn of events. The Cabinet felt that there was no need to change the strategy at this crucial hour. To a question the minister said "there is no feeling of helplessness or hopelessness in the Cabinet" about the crisis.

THE HINDU

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# Karnataka Govt strategy approved by Opposition

HT Correspondent  
Bangalore, September 4

## Rajkumar abduction drama

OPPOSITION PARTIES in Karnataka today privately approved the Karnataka Government's initiatives to get Dr Rajkumar released while publicly expressing displeasure over its strategy to end the kidnap crisis.

At a two-hour all-party meeting here, the opposition BJP and Janata Dal questioned the State Government on its attempts to free Rajkumar from the custody of forest brigand Veerappan. Chief Minister S.M. Krishna explained the situation at length and said the government was keen on following the existing strategy of negotiations.

Briefing reporters on the meeting, Information Minister B.K. Chandrashekhara said the Opposition parties gave the "go-ahead" to the government in its attempts to free the Kannada superstar.

The Opposition parties asked that they be kept informed about the developments. To this, Mr Krishna said he would call them for discussions but that would be only at a short notice. The Opposition leaders said they would cooperate and be available for any consultation.

The Chief Minister gave a copy of the State's affidavit before the Supreme Court relating to the release of the TADA detainees. He also promised that he would give them the State's pleadings before the apex court on the issue.

Emerging from the meeting, BJP State president Jagdish Shettar

## SC rejects plea

REJECTING KARNATAKA Government's plea for expeditious hearing of a petition challenging release of 30 associates of Veerappan in exchange of hostage Kannada film icon Rajkumar, the Supreme Court on Monday asked parties to complete pleadings in the case in 10 days time and then move application for early hearing. A three-judge Bench headed told Solicitor General Harish Salve, who appeared for Karnataka Government, that he could not direct early hearing of the petition moved by the father of a sub-inspector, who was killed by Veerappan. PTI, New Delhi

and floor leader in the Assembly Shankaramurthy said they did not agree with the strategy adopted by the State Government. "But we have given Mr Krishna complete support in the interests of the hostages," he said. Whether the BJP suggested any alternative strategy, Mr Shankaramurthy declined to say anything.

Similarly, the floor leader of the Janata Dal PGR Sindhia and JD party chief Byre Gowda said they were unhappy with the delay in the release of the hostages and did not agree with the Krishna Government's strategy to secure their release.

Mr Sindhia said he had suggested an alternative strategy but that he would not make it public in the interests of Dr Rajkumar's safety. "We want Mr Krishna to adopt a carrot-and-stick policy. But, we find that the government is keen on only a carrot policy. Where is the stick?" he asked.

Earlier, at an emergency Cabinet meeting, Mr Krishna's ministerial colleagues unanimously approved his strategy to bail out Rajkumar and agreed to back him in the coming days. Mr Krishna called the meeting in the light of the Supreme Court's adverse comment against the State Government's handling of the situation.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

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# 57-8 Karnataka HC blocks another Veerappan demand

UNI & PTI

BANGALORE, Sept. 5. — The Rajkumar hostage crisis deepened today, with Karnataka High Court staying the proceedings of the Sadhashiv Committee, constituted by the National Human Rights Commission to inquire into the atrocities allegedly committed by the special task force during operations to nab Veerappan.

The commission was to resume its hearing on 11 September at Salem, in Tamil Nadu. Veerappan had demanded the Tamil Nadu and Karnataka governments announce over AIR the date from which the commission would resume its sitting.

Acting Chief Justice Mr Ashok Bhan and Mr Justice R Gururajan, directing issuance of notices to the state government and other respondents on a writ appeal by a senior police officer, passed an interim stay on further proceedings.

Meanwhile, Karnataka today said press reports suggesting that the Supreme Court had rejected the state government's plea for expeditious hearing of a petition challenging the release of Veerappan's 30 associates "do not represent the correct position and gives a wrong impression".

"The order does not state that the plea of the state government was declined. On the contrary, taking into account the urgency of the matter, a short period (10 days) was given for the parties to complete the pleadings," said state Advocate General Mr AN Jayaram. The plea for two weeks for the purpose, pleaded by the petitioners' counsel, was declined, he said.

Ordinarily, when leave is granted by Supreme Court, the hearing is based on the position in the list of pending cases and such a hearing was bound to take a few months or even one or two years, he said. "In these circumstances, the impression given that Karnataka's plea for an early hearing was rejected is not a correct understanding of the Supreme Court order."

**Strategy:** The Karnataka chief minister, Mr SM Krishna, today asserted that the state was against any change in its strategy on the Rajkumar abduction issue. He added that it would think of alternatives after hearing from journalist-emissary Mr RR Gopal, who is holding talks with Veerappan.

**TN move:** A report from Chennai says that the Tamil Nadu government is likely to file its counter-affidavit in the Supreme Court tomorrow.

It will defend its right to withdraw cases against five jailed Tamil extremists as demanded by Veerappan, official sources said today.

THE STATESMAN

# ✂ We cannot change course now: Krishna

**By Our Special Correspondent**

**BANGALORE, SEPT. 5.** The Karnataka Government has decided that there will be no change in its strategy to obtain the release of the veteran Kannada film actor, Mr. Rajkumar, who has spent 36 days in the captivity of the forest brigand, Veerappan, in the forests of Sathyamangalam.

The Government's crisis management team, headed by the Chief Minister, Mr. S.M. Krishna, discussed for over three hours the pros and cons of its strategy and decided that the present line of action was the best under the circumstances, and that it was imperative for the Government to patiently wait rather than resort to a hasty decision. The belief was that the strategy endorsed by the Karnataka and the Tamil Nadu Governments had worked, in the sense that negotiations were in progress and it was only a matter of time before the hostages were set free.

The two Governments were awaiting word from the joint emissary, Mr. R.R. Gopal, *Nakkeeran* Editor, who has been negotiating with Veerappan for the fifth day in the forests.

Mr. Krishna said there was no significant development during the day, and the Tamil Nadu Government had also not received any information from the emissary. "We are continuously in touch. We are also in constant touch with the Union Government right from day one of the kidnap. The services of other agencies would be utilised as and when the need arose. Right now, we have fully backed Mr. Gopal and will wait for him. We are awaiting a positive reply. We cannot change course midway."

He said the Government had taken a serious note of the suggestions offered by leaders of Opposition parties with whom the Government held a meeting on Monday. "The Government is

open to suggestions and we welcome them."

## T.N. plea today

**By Our Special Correspondent**

**CHENNAI, SEPT. 5.** Hoping for a quick end to the hostage crisis, the Tamil Nadu Government is set to file its counter-petition in the Supreme Court tomorrow, to the public interest litigation (PIL) preferred by two New Delhi-based lawyers opposing the release of five Tamil militants jailed in the State.

The release of the ultras is one of the demands made by the forest brigand Veerappan.

A high-level meeting, chaired by the Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, at the Secretariat here today, discussed the Government's "draft response" to the PIL, taking all aspects of the 38-day-old kidnap crisis into view.

Later, official sources said the counter-petition "will most prob-

ably be filed tomorrow". Indications are that the decision to withdraw the cases against the ultras was within the ambit of Section 321 of the Criminal

Procedure Code. Claiming that the Government was empowered to withdraw cases, subject to the satisfaction of the public prosecutor and the court concerned, the sources said Tamil Nadu "can adequately meet the points raised in the PIL". There were innumerable case laws in the past, attesting to the Governments' power of withdrawal of cases under this provision and some of which even pertained to former Central Ministers. While the legal process would take its own time adding to the uncertainty over the release of the Kannada actor, Mr. Rajkumar, and three others, the Government is banking on a "positive word" from the journalist-emissary, Mr. R. R. Gopal, by tonight.

**What angered the Judge: Page 15**

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