

# Lessons of Victory

## Guard Against the Mistakes of 1971

By K SUBRAHMANYAM

11-10

THE 1971 war against Pakistan and liberation of Bangladesh admittedly constitute a great military victory. A new nation, was helped to emerge against the opposition of the US and China. India braved the disapproval of even 100 members of the UN General Assembly in continuing the war and bringing it to a victorious end at Dacca with the surrender of the 93,000 strong Pakistan Army. The two-nation theory got buried and the myth of one Pakistani being equal to a multiple number of Indians was exploded.

A victorious war has as many lessons to teach as a stalemate like that of 1965 and a debacle like 1962. *The Times of India* has put on Internet the official history of the 1971 war as it did earlier the 1965 war. The circumstances in which India won the victory of 1971 are unique and unlikely to be repeated. After the crisis broke out on March 25, 1971 the country had nine months to prepare, could top up its war material requirements with supplies from the Soviet Union and by the time the war broke out Pakistan was isolated in international public opinion though not in the eyes of the governments of China and the US. No doubt that isolation was partly due to the Indian government's astute diplomacy. Yet, the fact remains that India was caught unprepared on March 25, 1971 when the Pakistani Army unleashed its genocidal violence on the Bangladeshi population. The successful conclusion of war should not make us overlook the colossal intelligence assessment failure that preceded the Bangladesh adventure by the Pakistani Army.

Chapter XIX of the history titled *Review and Reflections* records, "the crackdown in East Bengal on 25th March 1971, came as a complete surprise to India. No plans existed to meet the situation developing in the East. Nor did any military danger loom there in the first few weeks after the crackdown." Chapter II of the history talks of a military build-up in the then East Pakistan from February 28 when the troops arrived by a Boeing aircraft flying all around the Indian Peninsula. It records that these troops should have moved out of their cantonments before February 13, 1971. The continuous build-up took place in the first three weeks of March.

Many observers in India had been predicting from early December 1970 when the elections gave a

majority of national assembly seats to Mujibur Rehman that Bhutto and the generals would not hand over power to him. Then came the IAC aircraft being hijacked to Lahore in January 1971 and being burnt down in the presence of Bhutto. It was quite obvious to discerning observers that Pakistan was moving towards a crisis. At that time, India was going through an election. In the first week of March, Indira Gandhi returned to power with a comfortable majority.

The question that needs to be asked is why the crisis in East Pakistan was not anticipated and some two or three divisions moved to the border. In fact, General Yahya Khan justified his troop build-up in February-March by alleging a totally false Indian troop movement. How was it that the massive military build-up via Sri Lanka, then ruled by Sirimavo Bandaranaike who was considered a great friend of India, did not lead to an intelligence assessment and warning to the government? Often the nature

### IN BRIEF

- A victorious war like the one in 1971 has as many lessons to teach as a debacle
- The history of 1971 reveals colossal intelligence assessment failure in the beginning
- A similar failure preceded the Kargil conflict

and full extent of intelligence assessment failure and absence of pro-active preparatory action are attributed to this country's preoccupation with the elections. Did our leaders assume that our adversaries would be considerate enough not to create a crisis because of our preoccupation with exercising our democratic rights?.

This history brings out that the extent of the refugee efflux consequent on Pakistan's ethnic cleansing policy was underestimated. I can recall how I was ticked off by South Block mandarins for predicting eight-ten million refugees in an article in early May. The account sums up its conclusions on the intelligence aspect. "Commanders at various levels have testified to the handicap imposed on them by incorrect or inadequate intelligence. Predictive analysis by an intelligence apparatus could have enabled the government to anticipate the momentous events of

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March/April 1971 and to be prepared for them. Pakistan's 7 infantry division was never reliably located and came to be called 'the ghost division' because it was reported from so many different localities. Its known existence and unknown location tied down all the Indian commanders from the Kashmir valley to Rajasthan, as each felt compelled to take into account the possibility of the 'ghost' division striking in his sector. Even the 1 armoured division of Pakistan was not reliably located till the second week of December 1971."

The history has gone to record a finding which came to be repeated in the Kargil Review Committee report. "Intelligence agencies naturally tend to play safe by forwarding to the user all reports received and the Indian agencies acted accordingly in 1971. This only confused the users. Passing on the information without careful evaluation was unfortunate. The multiplicity of intelligence agencies working in the field without any centralised control resulted in unhealthy rivalry and waste of effort." The Kargil report said, "The present structure and process in intelligence gathering and reporting lead to an overload of background and unconfirmed information and inadequately assessed intelligence which requires to be further pursued."

Since the 1971 war was a victory, there was no enquiry into the intelligence reporting and intelligence assessment failures. The Kargil war has been followed up and an intelligence task force has submitted its report to a group of four ministers who are entrusted with the task of revamping the national security framework. While that is an improvement over the 1971 situation, the country is yet to get over the basic malady in management of national security — the indifference of our political class and its inability to engage in long-range assessments and pro-active planning. That is evident in the failure to convene the National Security Council and the inability of our politicians to devote a little time at periodic intervals to listen to intelligence assessments and deliberate on the long-term implications of developments affecting our security. The failures of intelligence assessments and the insensitivity of the political leadership to them have cost this country dearly in the last five decades of our independence. That is the lesson of the 1971 victory.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

1 DEC 2002

# India's bid to buy T-90 tanks hits roadblock

Continued from Page 1  
 (planning and systems), Lieutenant-General S.S. Mehta. "No official wants to sign the contract for the T-90s without adequate financial safeguards in the event of things going wrong later," a senior defence official said.

Neither the ministry of defence nor the Army is willing to risk finalising the T-90 sale as the Russians cannot be held liable for reneging on any part of the deal or for delays in supplying the equipment, he added.

They are wary about concluding such "open-ended" agreements after the MoD lost around \$11 million in 1991 when it inexplicably waived financial and other guarantees for the purchase of 150 SUV 55 fire-control systems from the former Yugoslavia to locally upgrade T-55 tanks.

By the time the equipment was ready for delivery a year later, Yugoslavia was mired in civil war and slapped with an United Nations ban on all arms trading.

Overnight, the deal for the T-55 fire-control systems stood revoked, despite India having paid an advance \$11 million on an overall deal of \$52 million and all the monies lost as no guarantees had been enforced.

An inquiry into this dubious deal by the CBI, along with other military purchases since 1990 ordered by Mr Fernandes last year remains inconclusive.

"Russia continues to take India for granted as it is a tied customer for military goods and feels it can pressure Delhi into accepting all deals on its terms," an official said.

Moscow is even unwilling to modify sale contracts which date back to the time when military purchases between the two were on a rupee-rouble basis, arrogant in the belief that it has the clout to dictate terms even today.

Nearly 70 per cent of India's military hardware is of Soviet and Russian origin.

Meanwhile, defence officials said that by finalising the T-90 deal with Rosvooruzhennie, Russia's arms export agency, and not directly with the MBT manufacturers in the Belarus Republic, India would end up paying substantially more for the MBTs the Army is desperate to acquire to counter 320 T-80UDs Pakistan recently bought from the Ukraine.

They said Rosvooruzhennie would add its commission of at around 15 to 20 per cent to the T-90s' final cost, over and above what

MBT manufacturers Uralvagonavod State United Enterprises in Omsk would charge if deal went directly.

"In most cases, dealing with the prime contractor results in a better deal," said Mr Christopher Foss, one of the world's best-known tank experts and editor of Jane's Book of Armour and Artillery.

Such dealings (with the manufacturers) can sometimes be better value for money, he added. Rosvooruzhennie is one of several such one-stop facilitation agencies which came into being in Russia and the other Republics to peddle arms after the breakup of the Soviet Union in the early Nineties, all of which have been amalgamated recently. The official explanation for routing purchases through Rosvooruzhennie, however, is that it is the nodal agency for all defence deals with Moscow and that New Delhi has been dealing with it since its inception.

The purchase of 40 Su-30 multi-role fighters by the Indian Air Force in 1996 for \$1.8 billion from Irkutsk Aircraft Production Association, for instance, was also facilitated by Rosvooruzhennie.

This deal, however, is one of many being investigated by the CBI. "Being essentially

a commercial organisation, Rosvooruzhennie inflates the product price with the principal aim of squeezing all it can from its customers after ensuring the manufacturer a decent return," officers said. And this, officers said, is what Rosvooruzhennie is trying to do in the T-90 deal, having convinced its manufacturers that it had the "right connections" in South Block to ensure a "good price" for the MBTs.

Official sources said Rosvooruzhennie depended heavily on a well-known business family in London and a powerful arms dealer living in an exclusive South Delhi colony on the fringes of Lutyen's Delhi. Both had excellent contacts in the Indian establishment and were influential enough to push Russian military wares to India for a good price.

Meanwhile, officials admitted that the logjam in the T-90 deal could be settled only through political pressure on the MoD or the Army. The Army is keen to finalise the T-90 deal before the current financial year ends on March 31, 2001, to utilise its budgetary allocation and prevent large sums from reverting to the Central fund, like in 1999-2000.

## T-90 tank deal hits roadblock

By RAHUL BEDI

New Delhi, Nov. 30: India's purchase of 310 Russian T-90 main battle tanks has been jeopardised following Moscow's hesitation in providing financial guarantees in exchange for New Delhi advancing payments of around 55 per cent of the entire contract, worth around \$600 million (Rs 2,800 crores).

Defence minister George Fernandes told Parliament earlier this week that negotiations were continuing with Russia to finalise the T-90 purchase agreed upon during Russian President Vladimir Putin's recent India visit but declined to elaborate on the delay.

Official sources, however, said the MBT deal had hit a "serious roadblock" following Russian unwillingness to provide financial sureties for the advance payment they were insisting upon from India in addition to equipment performance and warranty guarantees. The price of each MBT has been finalised at around \$2.2 million following around 75 price negotiation committee meetings headed by the deputy chief of Army staff

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# Bullet burst in security sanctum

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Dec. 1: Gunshots jolted the security guards at the Prime Minister's house in the middle of the night. Across the road, less than 200 metres away from the rear gate of 7 Race Course Road, naval commandos had apparently fired in the dark at an alleged intruder inside the residence of navy chief Admiral Sushil Kumar.

The commandos fired at least 36 rounds, yet the intruder escaped. He left behind a commando gasping with a gunshot wound and a trail of unanswered questions.

Delhi police clammed up and refused to discuss the incident. The Indian Navy lost its voice and put out a five-line statement that said virtually nothing. All that the security establishments were willing to say was "mum's the word".

It was the most blatant breach of security in the capital's high-

est-risk zone. While 12 Rajaji Marg is home to the navy chief, his army counterpart stays two houses down the road, at Number 8. The resident of 1 Rajaji Marg is former Prime Minister V.P. Singh.

The silence was deafening. No one could say when the intruder had sneaked in or how he disappeared. In an effort to give him the identity of a potentially dangerous person, the police and the navy, in cryptic comments, disclosed that he had left behind some wires.

Some police sources said an explosive substance, like cordex, had been found. Officially, the police denied having recovered any

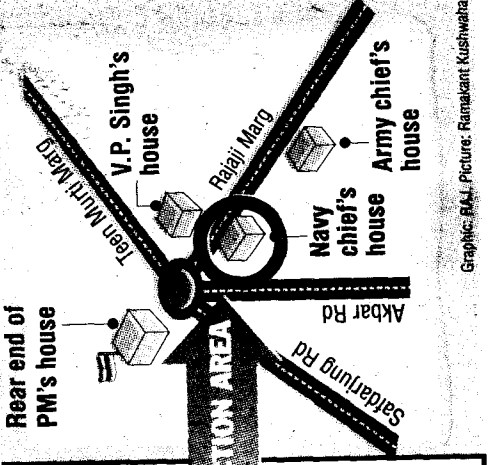
## THE OFFICIAL STORY

- Intruder found in the backyard of the navy chief's house after midnight
- Marine commando Satbir Singh challenges him



• Satbir fires back several rounds but all shots miss the target. Intruder escapes in the darkness. Police claim he left behind 'wires'

Rear gate of the navy chief's house



Graphic: P.A.L. Picture: Ramakant Kushwaha

rear gate and escaped.

This version raises several questions. First, why should the navy chief come under terrorist threat now? The response from the establishment is that Navy Day will be observed day after tomorrow and the function at 12 Rajaji Marg will be attended by the Prime Minister and the home

and defence ministers.

If so, security should have been beefed up inside Navy House. There was no response from the navy on this.

The second question is why did only one commando challenge the intruder? Both the police and the navy maintain that Satbir was

alone at the time and he received support from some of his mates only a few minutes later. By that time, the intruder had scaled either the 10-foot-high wall or the eight-foot-high gate. Why, then, were the other guards not present at the rear gate?

What is even more baffling is that all the 36 empty shells recovered from the premises were fired from Satbir's machine gun. The empty shell of what is being described as the lone bullet fired by the intruder has not been found.

Satbir is being treated at the army hospital and his condition is stable. The case has been transferred to the crime branch which unearthed the cricket scandal.

Personnel from the Prime Minister's Special Protection Group inspected the premises. Delhi has been put on high alert.

The wounded commando has given a sketchy statement and the police plan to question him in detail once he recovers. The navy has ordered a court of inquiry.

■ Another picture on Page 8

Singh, the intruder shot at him and escaped, leaving behind the wires which he may have brought for planting a bomb.

On being wounded, Satbir emptied the magazine of his weapon, firing almost 36 rounds. None of them hit the intruder who scaled the walls close to the

# Guard shot at in Navy chief's house

By Our Staff Reporter <sup>10/1</sup>

**NEW DELHI, DEC. 1.** A naval commando was shot at by an armed intruder at the official residence of the Navy Chief, Admiral Sushil Kumar, in the high-security Rajaji Marg area in the wee hours of Friday.

Commando Satvir Singh was on patrol duty inside the sprawling "Naval House" when he spotted a man in blue jacket walking around stealthily.

Singh shouted out and asked the man to stop and identify himself. The time was around 0050 hours. The intruder whipped out a revolver and fired at him. The first shot missed aim and the second hit him in the left thigh. He recovered and fired back at the fleeing figure who, however, escaped. Commander Singh is undergoing treatment in hospital.

The commotion awoke Admiral Sushil Kumar and his wife, Vinita, and the others. Minutes earlier, Commando Singh had asked his colleague, Commando Vinod Naik, also on patrol duty, to wake up the others slated for the next shift.

A metre-long wire and parts of a detonator fuse, "Cordex" kept in a polythene bag were found on the grass, a little away from where the firing took place. As many as

21 empty bullet shells were recovered later but the shell of the bullet which pierced Commando Singh's thigh could not be traced.

The Naval House is located less than one km from the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's residence. Other VIPs including the Army Chief and the former Prime Minister, Mr. V.P. Singh, also reside on the same street.

Commando Singh was rushed to the Navy Hospital and subsequently shifted to Army Base Hospital at Delhi Cantonment, where he is being treated under heavy security. His condition had stabilised by evening.

Soon after the incident, senior police officials rushed to the spot, accompanied by personnel from Delhi police's crime branch, the bomb disposal squad and the dog squad. Members from intelligence agencies also reached the house soon after.

Sources said police personnel were not allowed immediate entry into the Naval House. They had to wait for a few hours before finally being allowed in early in the morning. A case was lodged at the Tughlaq Road police station.

Senior police officers were tightlipped about the incident.

**Doubts remain: Page 13**

THE HINDU

2 DEC 2000

# Bid to break into Navy chief's home, guard hurt

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Dec. 1. — An alert guard foiled an attempt to break into the Chief of Naval Staff's house on Rajaji Marg early today. But the armed intruder escaped after injuring the commando on duty.

The incident occurred some distance away from the main building where Admiral Sushil Kumar and his wife were sleeping.

The Prime Minister, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, spoke to the Admiral later in the day and expressed his relief at his safety. The defence minister, Mr George Fernandes visited Navy House and expressed concern over the security lapse.

The crime branch of Delhi Police is conducting a probe into the security lapse. A massive manhunt is on to nab the intruder. The Navy has ordered a Court of Inquiry. Forensic experts are

at work and security has been stepped up in the area.

An electric wire and cordex (used with explosives) wrapped in a polythene bag was found in the garden. This suggests that the incident was not an attempted burglary.

Naval officers were reluctant to divulge details of the incident but police said the intruder entered the complex from the rear. He clipped the wire fence that separates the staff quarters from the main house.

The guard on duty, Satbir, heard some noise and called out "kaun hai" (who is there). The reply was a pistol shot that hit the commando in the thigh. Satbir too fired about 20 rounds from his automatic weapon.

By then about a dozen other security men had rushed to the spot — on hearing gunfire — but the intruder climbed over the boundary wall



The residence of the Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Sushil Kumar — the scene of a break-in attempt on Thursday night. — The Statesman (Another report on page 8)

and fled. The injured commando was shifted to the Army's Base Hospital taken to the Navy clinic and later where his condition is stable.

Satbir told police that a little before 1 a.m. he asked his colleague on duty, Vinod Naik, to wake up the two men who were to take over their duties. He was thus alone when he noticed the intruder and challenged him.

Police suspect that the intruder may be someone from the Navy with a personal grudge against Admiral Kumar. It could also have been a member of the Admiral's personal staff.

The method of entry suggests that the intruder was familiar with the plan of the Navy House — that there is less security behind the building. The intruder also seems to be aware of the time when one batch of guards take over from another.

But the possible involvement of terrorists — from Kashmir or Sri Lanka — has not yet been ruled out. More so because of the explosive material found.

## Navy chief admits to receiving threat mail

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: Navy chief Admiral Sushil Kumar has admitted that he has been receiving threats to his life for the last one year. The navy chief was reacting to the attempted intrusion into his residence by an unidentified armed man in the early hours of Friday.

Although he declined to identify the source of these threats, Admiral Kumar hinted that these could have come from terrorist organisations, keeping in view the navy's increased involvement in counter-insurgency (CI) operations, especially in Kashmir.

Describing it as "quite an incident", he ruled out the exchange of fire in which his guard was injured as "an inside job" or one resulting from an altercation between his guards. Replying to questions at a news conference, he said the threats could be a fallout to the Navy's contribution to CI operations in "various forms" and "various places".

Earlier, assistant chief of naval staff (operations)

Rear Admiral S. Bangara said the navy had been involved in Operation Tasha (anti-LTTE patrolling operations in the Palk Straits) while MARCOS (marine commandos) have been carrying out CI operations in the Kashmir Valley. In June, the MARCOS had killed the deputy chief of the pro-Pak Al Badr terrorist group in the Valley. Both the MARCOS, Lt Varun Singh and sailor V.S. Rawat, have since been awarded a Shaurya Chakra each.

Informed sources said Admiral Kumar had been regularly handing over the threatening letters to the IB (Intelligence Bureau) for analysis and investigation. The unspecified number of threatening letters, although specific in content, had been mostly anonymous. The admiral's security has since been augmented with more MARCOS.

Admiral Kumar, who is a boxing blue and an international class polo player, sought to play down the intrusion incident at a meeting held with senior police and intelligence officials on Friday.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

3 DEC 2000

# After ceasefire, govt. plans talks with militants

**The Times of India News Service**  
SRINAGAR: The government is reportedly planning to resume talks with militants in the first week of January 2001. A senior intelligence officer told *The Times of India* that the stage was set for the talks with local militants, with the tacit blessing of the Pakistan leadership.

The "supreme commander" of Hizbul Mujahideen, Syed Salahuddin, who is at present in Pakistan, is expected to arrive in Srinagar by the end of Ramzan.

The Hizbul ranks indicated on Saturday that the ceasefire offer has "neither been rejected nor accepted." The Hizbul leadership in Pakistan, the sources said, was actively considering to accept the ceasefire call. A Hizbul spokesman said the outfit was "weighing various options" before taking a final decision on the ceasefire.

Most of the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leaders, who are now gathered in New Delhi to give a final shape to their offer and acceptance by the end of the current month, said they were inclined to end the bloodshed in Kashmir.

APHC chairman Abdul Gani Bhat flew in amid speculations that an unofficial intermediary of the government would be exploring with the Hurriyat prospects of a political dialogue. He reportedly met defence minister George Fernandes in New Delhi to formulate the means for the resumption

of talks after the go-ahead by the Pakistan rulers.

J&K chief minister Farooq Abdullah, home ministry sources said, has been apprised of the proposal for talks put forward to the APHC. Meanwhile, the home minister and the defence minister have reacted cautiously to Pakistan's announcement on exercising restraint along the Line of Control (LoC) and indicated that talks

with the neighbour could begin only if it stopped firing from across the border and stopped sending terrorists into India.

Asked if he welcomed Pakistan's announcement,

Mr Fernandes said: "Who would not welcome a move of that nature," and added, "When they say restraint, what exactly do they mean?". Asked if there was a possibility of extending India's unilateral ceasefire beyond Ramzan, Mr Fernandes said, "It depends on what happens." However, Mr Fernandes pointed out, negotiations would be possible only if Pakistan stopped firing from across the border and folded up all its militant camps.

Meanwhile, militants indiscriminately fired on a passenger bus bound for Jammu near Qazigund on the national highway, 100 km from Srinagar on Sunday morning. Two girl passengers were injured in the shootout. Also, eight pedestrians were injured in Muslim Peer market in Sopore in north Kashmir when militants lobbed a grenade in the market on Sunday.

## STIRRINGS OF PEACE

- Hizbul weighing options; chief Syed Salahuddin to arrive in J&K after Ramzan
- APHC chairman flies into Delhi, sparks speculation
- No talks till Pak folds up militant training camps: Fernandes
- Hurriyat, Hizbul welcome Pak offer

THE TIMES OF INDIA

- 4 JAN 2000

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# Vajpayee willing to extend ceasefire if Pak ends hostilities

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 4 DECEMBER

PRIME MINISTER Atal Behari Vajpayee on Monday said Islamabad's offer of de-escalation of tension at the Line of Control (LoC) was not "substantive." He, however, said his government could extend the ceasefire beyond Ramzan if there were tangible signs of a reduction in infiltration and cessation of hostilities.

"Islamabad's response has been good, but not substantive," the Prime Minister told reporters here on Monday.

Sources in the government said this formulation will form the basis of India's formal response to the Pakistani ceasefire. This is expected to be announced by the external affairs

minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, in Parliament on Tuesday. The Centre is confident that this position will be appreciated by western capitals, which have welcomed the Vajpayee offer.

Government managers here said though the number of militant strikes in Jammu and Kashmir have reduced, the Centre was not in a position to call the developments as a "positive response from Islamabad." They made it clear that a dialogue with Pakistan was possible only after a marked improvement in

the ground situation.

For Pakistan, these conditions will be tough to meet. It will mean an admission that Pakistan was aiding infiltration of terrorists to India and its involvement in the violence in Jammu and Kashmir.

On their part, militants operating from Pakistan have ruled out stopping activities in the valley. "There is no point in asking Pakistan to stop the Mujahideen

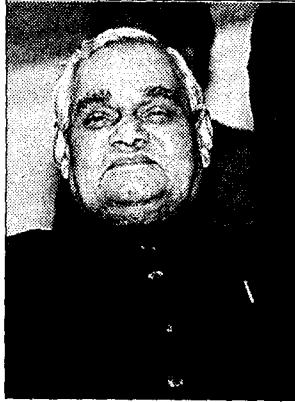
from crossing the border," Salim Hashmi, a spokesman for the rebel group, told reporters in Islamabad. "Kashmiris don't recognise the Line of Control. Nobody can stop us from going to Kashmir," he said.

Pakistan this time upgraded its offer with their foreign secretary Inamul Haq say-

ing that the two countries should hold separate talks with the Hurriyat during the month of Ramzan before working towards a tripartite dialogue afterwards.

The Pakistani official said his country would like to begin the negotiations later this month, when the Muslim holy month of Ramzan ends.

Pakistan also cautiously welcomed Mr Vajpayee's offer to extend a ceasefire in disputed Kashmir beyond one month, but called for a "purposeful dialogue" to settle the dispute.



Vajpayee: Same tune

*The Economic Times*

5 DEC 2000



Reforms in India's security hierarchy are mired in shallow controversy

# A question of intelligence

It is a blow to national security that just when far-reaching institutional and structural reforms are in the making, a needless controversy should come to the fore. The issue takes on an intriguing turn when one considers that individuals dragged into the controversy are people who have made a significant contribution to enhancing national security in all its complex dimensions and are poised towards eliminating many ills that continue to plague the nation's security management system.

The controversy relates to the post of principal secretary to the prime minister and the national security advisor being held by the same individual, contrary to the recommendations of the Kargil review panel. The media has speculated on a supposed clash of personal interests between the principal secretary to the prime minister, wanting to retain this all-powerful portfolio, and the convener of the national security advisory board, desirous of displacing him. An institutional, technical and administrative issue of vital importance to national security has thus been reduced by fertile minds to a soap opera of personalities and ambitions.

As a follow up of the Kargil review panel recommendations, the government had formed a group of ministers under the home minister to suggest remedial measures. The GOM, in turn, had constituted four task forces — covering intelligence, border management, internal security and management of defence — to make recommendations. Presently, the GOM is in the process of deliberating on the reports of these four task forces and it has been reported that their recommendations are expected to be put up to the cabinet by the end of this month. It appears more than a coincidence, therefore, that a controversy dragging important players should surface at this critical juncture.

So ill-informed and hollow is this attempted debate that no commentator, except the individuals themselves, has highlighted that what the Kargil review panel recommended and what the principal secretary to the prime minister said in a television interview implies the same. Namely, that institutionally the post of the NSA requires a full time appointee although in the interim period of transition, the existing arrangement is to the larger good. The logic underlying this is that the very exercise of bringing about institutional and structural changes in the higher security organization needs individuals that have an understanding of the convulsions of change and ones who hold positions from where such change can be pushed despite age-old systemic resis-

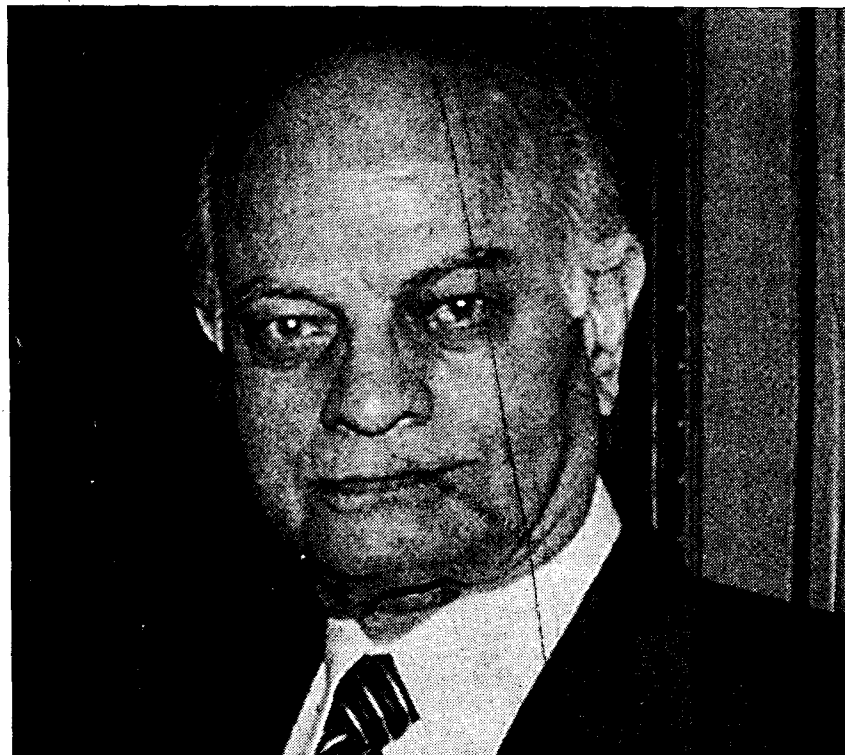
author is a retired air marshal  
in the Indian air force

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BRIJESH D. JAYAL

tance. Those, like this writer, who have long advocated restructuring, are convinced that if it is to succeed at all, this can only happen with a committed and determined prime minister's office. Other traditional administrative avenues in the past have patently been unsuccessful precisely because of what the

highlighted its adverse impact on the working of the JIC. It was argued that reorganization for enhancement of national security was being implemented by diluting the institution of the JIC and consequently its vital intelligence assessment role. It needed no soothsayer to predict that this would become our security



Kargil review panel terms as vested interests in the *status quo*. Why is it that India continues to retain archaic national security institutions when in all developed democracies, models responsive to modern security needs have been introduced decades ago?

Thereby hangs a tale. A tale of a nation striving to achieve greatness, but hampered by a mindset where individuals take precedence over institutions and where those attempting to usher in much needed change are drowned in shallow controversies. Much of this confusion could be avoided if the national ethos places institutions over individuals. But judging by this avoidable controversy, we still have a long way to go.

In this context, examples of two institutions, both of which are destined to have a profound impact on national security, need brief mention. When the long awaited formation of a national security council was announced and later formalized in early 1999, the joint intelligence committee staff was designated as the secretariat for the NSC and renamed as the NSC secretariat. At the time, national security observers not only criticized this arrangement, but also high-

█ An institutional issue of vital importance to national security is being reduced to a soap opera of personalities █

Achilles' heel. Kargil merely proved the point. Had, at the time, this monumental institutional weakness been given even a fraction of the exposure that the current controversy has generated, perhaps wiser counsels would have prevailed.

Debate on national security issues has two elements. One relates to institutions and the other to individuals holding key institutional posts. It is the irony of the national security scene that while the former evokes little interest possibly because of its technical import, the latter is newsworthy and will merit many columns and television discussions. Such priorities could pass off as amusing were it not for the serious repercussions they have on the nation's security, if not its very survival in its new nuclear avatar.

This brings us to the other vital institution in the security hierarchy. That of an integrated joint defence staff. The need for the creation of a combined defence staff secretariat headed by a chief of defence staff has, for long, been felt and indeed strongly debated. Every conceivable professional argument supports this concept, which is why all modern democracies follow this model in their higher security organization. Yet in India, the debate degenerates from institutional priorities to parochial individual service perceptions or indeed down to specific personalities.

Depending on which elevated governmental chair one sits on, the adverse logic can run from one extreme to the other. The bureaucracy cautions the political masters, albeit discreetly, that the CDS will become a super chief, too powerful to keep under check — a fear that the political leadership, ill-versed with the professional ethos, and the apolitical nature of our armed forces readily swallow. The army, by its very predominant size and perpetual involvement in anti-insurgency and other operations, advocates that the CDS can only be one who dons olive green uniform. The navy and air force, frightened by this onslaught, have, in the past, fiercely opposed the concept itself, fearing that once the concept is accepted the army argument will prevail.

In all this hype, the essence of the institution itself has been lost. It is the institution of the CDS secretariat, comprising of staff from all the three services, where joint planning and conceptualizing will be done from the lower staff level to the next upper rung and then to the top echelons. Our armed forces have acquitted themselves creditably in every joint operation. The institution of the CDS secretariat will exploit this same cooperative talent of the field within the combined secretariat.

One finds it hard to imagine that a joint defence staff secretariat consisting of multi-layered ranks and a mixture of olive green, white and blue uniforms will succumb to any parochial or personal prejudices based on the colour of either their uniform or indeed that of their superiors. It is this lack of willingness to understand and appreciate this vital facet of the institution of CDS, and confusing it with the appointment of the CDS, that has denied the nation the benefit of this inescapable institutional reorganization. We lost some five hundred military lives in Kargil for the concept to be resurrected once again.

If the futile controversy earlier mentioned were replaced by a healthy debate on the merits or demerits of the various institutional changes proposed by the Kargil review panel and currently under review by the GOM, then debates on national security would deservedly be elevated to a higher plane.

It's time for the national security apparatus set up two years ago to evolve a new work-ethic

# Security alert

By J.N. DIXIT

HT-10  
2/12

**T**HE ANNUAL Field Marshal Cariappa Memorial Lecture organised by the Army Headquarters this year was delivered by the Convenor of the National Security Advisory Board, K. Subrahmanyam. His lecture was a review of the national security apparatus set up by the BJP-led Government in 1998.

Subrahmanyam's critical evaluation has generated a public debate about the functioning of the institutional arrangements for national security. The media have tended to deduce his in-depth analysis as an imagined personal controversy between him and National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra.

Subrahmanyam's view is that the position of the National Security Advisor should be separated from that of the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister. Mishra holding both the posts, argues Subrahmanyam, is not functionally efficient. The debate generated from the Cariappa Memorial Lecture provides an opportunity to review the working of the National Security Council (NSC) and relates to institutional arrangements which were put in place by the Vajpayee Government in the second half of 1998.

These arrangements were made after the experiment of establishing an NSC by the V.P. Singh Government in 1990. The previous NSC consisted of an apex body (the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs and Defence) with an advisory body of concerned secretaries of the Government of India and service chiefs with a Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) of the Government functioning as its Secretariat. The Chairman of the JIC was designated as the Secretary of the NSC — a post held by M.K. Narayanan, former director of the Intelligence Bureau of India.

Those arrangements did not become fully operational because neither the V.P. Singh nor the Chandra Shekhar Government showed any interest in making the NSC an active instrument of the Government. The succeeding Government of Narasimha Rao tried to revive the institutional arrangements but the effort floundered on the rock of turf-battles between bureaucrats, the intelligence establishment and the headquarters of the armed forces. Neither the Deve Gowda nor the Gujral Government had sufficient cohesion to take structured and purposive decisions so as to make institutional arrangements for national security planning or even for strengthening institutions

that existed on paper from 1990.

It is in this context that the NDA manifesto in 1998 stated the clear intention of creating formal institutions for the management of national security. The committee or task force was set up under former Defence Minister K.C. Pant to make recommendations for this purpose. This committee submitted its recommendations by the summer of 1998. These recommendations were not accepted in entirety, but a three-tier national security apparatus was established by the Vajpayee Government in late 1998. This consisted of the NSC, was chaired by the Prime Minister, with the Defence Minister, Home Minister, Foreign Minister, Finance Minister and the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission as members.

A strategic policy group of 16 ex-officio members was to assist the NSC, which included the concerned secretaries of Government from the Home, External Affairs, Defence and Finance Ministries, the three Service Chiefs, the chiefs of the main intelligence organisations, and the chiefs of the atomic energy and space establishments. The JIC was converted as the secretariat of the NSC with its chief designated as secretary to the council.

A National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) of 28 members was constituted. This consisted of academicians, journalists and former Government servants. The NSAB also had former chiefs of the three armed forces.

The most important functionary at the operational level was the National Security Advisor through whom relevant information and policy options were filtered for final decisions by the Cabinet Committee. The Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Brajesh Mishra, was given the additional charge of this post — a situation which still continues.

The newly created NSC was to undertake a strategic review of India's immediate and long-term security concerns and make recommendations regarding India's nuclear and missile weaponisation programmes. What actually happened, however, was that the Prime Minister decided to

conduct nuclear tests in May 1998, and ordered missile tests of various categories, before any of the institutions constituting the national security apparatus met or deliberated on these issues.

The Cabinet members constituting the NSC, the members of the Strategic Policy Group and the NSAB got the information about these decisions only after they were implemented. Only the National Security Advisor was privy to these decisions.

The NSAB, however, was tasked to prepare two sets of recommendations. The first, to suggest a 'Nuclear Doctrine' for India, and second, to prepare a strategic review of national security covering all aspects of India's security concerns. Both these documents were prepared and have been submitted to the Government more than a year ago. The Government has yet to finalise the Nuclear Doctrine which is supposed to be done after the NSAB's document on the subject is discussed in Parliament. The strategic review has not yet been submitted to Parliament or debated in public.

As far as the Kargil conflict goes, the Prime Minister presided over a joint meeting of the NSC, the Strategic Policy Group and the NSAB. On June 7, 1999, there was a general discussion on Pakistan's motivations and the manner in which India should respond at this meeting. The Prime Minister directed that a sub-committee of the NSAB, consisting of about seven or eight out of its 28 members, should meet to consider the Kargil situation as it develops and advise the Government. This sub-committee met between June and September almost twice a week and some of its suggestions were transmuted into Government decisions.

A review committee on the Kargil conflict was established on parallel lines by the Government. This was an autonomous committee having no links with the NSAB or the Strategic Policy Group.

The authoritative and recommendatory report of this committee was referred to four task forces by the Government for further recommendations. These task forces — dealing with steps like border management, defence, internal security — did not

have anything to do with the existing national security institutional arrangements. Their recommendations are now under study by a Cabinet sub-committee.

There is confusion in terms of functioning as an institutional identity between the Cabinet Committee on National Security and the NSC at the Cabinet level. The ministerial membership of both the bodies is more or less the same.

Also, the Strategic Policy Group has seldom met to deal with critical situations as a formal institution. Nor has this group institutionally interacted with the Cabinet Committee on a regular basis. There is also no regular institutional consultations between the Strategic Policy Group and the NSAB.

The NSAB is not the nodal advisory group on national security as one would have thought after the Government entrusted this responsibility to various committees and task forces. Though there is some validity in separating the post of National Security Advisor and Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, at this stage, this dual role is necessary and advisable, given the administrative culture of the Government. The service chiefs and senior bureaucrats would not act through the National Security Advisor if a new post were created without formal and statutory authority being given to this post.

The post has to be held by somebody who has the trust and confidence of the Prime Minister and who has recognised authority in Government circles. Brajesh Mishra holding the post reflects political practicality and functional requirements. But there is a need to expand and recast the NSC secretariat. Its staff should consist of experts specialising in the multi-faceted dimensions of national security. This is not the case now.

Two years have gone by since the present initiative was taken to institutionalise national security management. It is still going through an experimental and evolutionary process.

Three points need attention. First, the political leadership has to create national consensus on national security objectives in the widest sense. Second, the constituent entities of the national security apparatus should be institutionally strengthened.

And finally, consultations between the different entities constituting the national security apparatus should be regular and subject to institutional stipulations.



Dual role: Brajesh Mishra

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

7 JAN 2000

# Navy's shootout story sinks

FROM OUR SPECIAL  
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Dec. 7: The navy's claim of a break-in and a subsequent shootout in Admiral Sushil Kumar's residence lay in tatters with the naval establishment today saying that the marine commando, who was allegedly shot at by the intruder, had tried to commit suicide.

The navy had earlier said that the commando, Satbir Singh, returned around three dozen rounds of fire at the intruder who shot him in his right thigh after being challenged on the night of December 1. The intruder, according to the navy, managed to escape.

Delhi police have a different story. A report, to be submitted to the home ministry shortly, says no one broke into 12 Rajaji Marg, the navy chief's official residence, and that the alleged shootout was the result of a row between two commandos. Satbir is believed to have shot himself in an effort to implicate a colleague.

Caught on the wrong foot after putting out the intruder theory, the navy today said that Satbir had claimed in his statement before the court of inquiry that he had tried to commit suicide as he was "suffering from severe depression" caused by family problems.

This leads to queries on who cooked up the story on the so-called intruder having left behind wires and cordex (material to trigger an explosion) in the navy chief's house.

Delhi police crime branch officers, who questioned Satbir twice, said the commando had an altercation with a colleague. An enraged Satbir shot himself in the thigh. In order to deflect the police's line of inquiry, the other guards fired 35 rounds to suggest that Satbir had tried to shoot the intruder.

THE TELEGRAPH

8 DEC 2000

National security is a systematic exercise, not just containment of crises

# Where the NSC has failed

V.R. RAGHAVAN

The national security council and its working has been in the news of late. The United Services Institute of India recently held a national security seminar to examine the way security has been managed since the NSC was created. The NSC and its functioning came in for trenchant criticism at the seminar. The NSC had been created with some fanfare in 1998 by the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government. Has it served the nation's security interests well?

The first thing to remember is that the NSC was an attempt by the government to duck the issue of keeping the promises made in its election manifesto. It was also an exercise in fudging the issue of security grandiosely mentioned in the National Democratic Alliance's agenda. The government had promised to establish an NSC which was to prepare a strategic defence review. Based on the review, the government was to determine whether India should become a nuclear weapons state.

In the event, the government did a Houdini and conducted the tests first. It then constituted a committee to make recommendations on the manner in which the NSC should be organized. The committee, headed by K.C. Pant and with Jaswant Singh as one of its members, made some sound recommendations. But the government could not find the courage to accept the recommendations. It therefore resurrected the NSC which had been created by the V.P. Singh ministry and had clearly failed to deliver.

How has the NSC performed? Performance and the quality of output from any organization depend on the organizational structure, decision processes and the people who run the organization. The NSC comprises three tiers at the cabinet, secretaries to the government and security experts levels. At the cabinet level it includes the cabinet committee for national security. Its members are the prime minister, and ministers of home, foreign affairs and finance. Other ministers are coopted, depending on the need for their expertise.

At the secretaries level, the strategic planning group includes the secretaries of all important ministries and their number goes up to double digits. As for the experts level, there is the national security advisory board. This also has a double digit size and its members are drawn from many disciplines. The link between the three levels is provided by the national security advisor. This important assignment has so far been handled by the principal secretary to the prime minister.

The processes used by the NSC are vague and amorphous. There is a vast security apparatus outside the NSC system consisting of the defence services, the intelligence agencies, the police and paramilitary. They function under their respective ministries and any coordination amongst them

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takes place more by accident than design and more for crisis management than on a regular basis. The cabinet or its subgroup, the CCNS, thus gets security inputs from different directions — from ministries, agencies and the NSC apparatus.

The multi-agency and multiple level inputs create a plethora of intelligence estimates, threat evaluations, and policy formulations on national security. There is no single window advice or policy recommendation available to the CCNS, or even to the prime minister. Thus they

port. It has left the country which has nuclear weapons without a nuclear doctrine. The NSAB is supposed to have written a strategic defence review. The government is either afraid to have it published or, worse, is unable to get its ministries to endorse the review. The convener of the NSAB has publicly criticized the functioning of the NSC and the role of the national security advisor. The government has neither issued a rejoinder nor asked questions on the propriety of the NSC being publicly critiqued by one of its key officials.



are bombarded by divergent and uncoordinated inputs.

There need be no surprise, therefore, that after every crisis there is confirmation that information was available on the event, which was either disregarded or overlooked. Kargil, Kandahar, the near debacle of the Sri Lanka army in Jaffna this year or the massacres in Jammu and Kashmir after the previous ceasefire are instances of the security apparatus being caught offguard. The creation of the NSC is not going to improve the state of affairs.

The NSC is therefore an overrated organization. Its impressive title — taken from the United States model — does little to instil confidence in the public mind. It does even less to convince India's adversaries to fear its security system. Critics have pointed out that the much vaunted NSAB is no more than a peripheral group. Its advice is not taken by the government as was evidenced in the case of the nuclear doctrine.

The NSAB wrote a nuclear doctrine at the behest of the CCNS. On its publication its limitations were highlighted in and outside the country. The government, instead of standing by its NSAB, has gone silent on the status of the re-

**Kargil and Kandahar are instances of the security apparatus being caught offguard**

There were doubts cast on the veracity of the data the nuclear scientists obtained from the thermonuclear test of 1998. These doubts were expressed in and outside India by highly regarded scientists. The NSC would have been the appropriate forum where such doubts could have been laid to rest. The government, by choosing to remain quiet, has added to nuclear uncertainties. It chose four task forces to examine the security issues raised by the Kargil inquiry. The NSAB would have been the better choice to undertake the tasks. These examples show that the NSAB is viewed by the government as a marginal set up.

The special protection group has not fared any better than the NSAB. Its meetings are attended more by junior officials than the secretaries themselves. The secretaries themselves can at best look at current issues and have neither

the time nor the inclination to go into long term security issues. Most secretaries are in any case generalists and their selection to the office has often been questioned on grounds of insufficient expertise. Their contribution as members of the SPG has been minimal by all accounts.

The CCNS is primarily key ministers struggling to keep up with the burden of running their departments. None of them have a security perspective other than what is given to them. In the absence of a secretariat for the NSC they are in no position to obtain a CCNS required security assessment. They are also swamped by the mass of multi-agency and multi-departmental inputs. Currently the secretarial support is being obtained for the NSAB through the joint intelligence committee. This arrangement does not do justice either to the role of the JIC or the needs of the NSC.

At the seminar organized by the United Services Institute in New Delhi the major criticism was about the lack of results obtained through the NSC. It was noted that the NSC does not meet regularly. It was felt that the CCNS has little time for the detailed examination of national security issues. The overload of the NSC apparatus, by the bottleneck at the prime minister's office where the national security advisor becomes the funnel through which all recommendations must pass, was also noted.

The response of the NSAB, the members of which were present in strength at the seminar, was interesting. The additional secretary in the NSC gave out the number of times the NSAB met in its first and second years. He also indicated how often the subcommittees of the NSAB met. He did not deem it fit to mention what the numerous meetings produced. As everyone knew, there was little of lasting significance which the NSAB or the NSC had produced. No one out of politeness told the gentleman that national security is more than the sum of meaningless meetings.

The most serious shortcoming of the NSC has been the lack of concern for security issues in the cabinet itself. There is general agreement amongst analysts that the cabinet and its CCNS do not have the discipline of regular structured national security briefings or meetings. These are held when convenient, depending on the availability of the CCNS members from their political preoccupations. It would not be an exaggeration to state that national security is considered as an intrusion in the more immediate and profitable activity of political management.

Until the cabinet (read the top political leadership) accords the time and priority to national security that is necessary, the NSC in its current or improved form is unlikely to be able to do worthwhile work. In other words, unless the political leadership adopts the discipline of managing national security as a major activity to be continued on a regular and systematic basis, national security will remain no more than a crisis management exercise.

# Long road after ceasefire

By V. R. Raghavan

*Those wanting talks (on Kashmir) must be prepared to indicate where they wish to reach through the negotiations route.*

110-12 14/12

INDIA'S DECLARATION of a ceasefire in Jammu & Kashmir has, not unexpectedly, generated a range of responses. On the military level, it has apparently brought some respite to the population of the State. It has provided a breather to the militant groups from the pressures of security forces chasing them. The major impact of the ceasefire is to be seen at the political level where each week brings forth new developments of considerable potential for peace and stability. If the potential being created for peace is to be fulfilled, an understanding of future possibilities is necessary. It is therefore all the more important that the ceasefire is seen as a means, and not an end in itself.

The Indian Government's ceasefire initiative had evoked a positive international reaction. That forced Pakistan to make a constructive response. After absorbing the unexpected surprise, Pakistan has come forward with a promise to demonstrate maximum restraint on the Line of Control. Its senior officials have followed up the promise of military restraint with a political clearance for the All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) to join negotiations with the Indian Government. These steps are indicative of the way Pakistan views its role in the final outcome of the Kashmir issue. It has indicated two things by these initiatives. It intends to use the APHC to speak for Pakistan's locus in future negotiations, until the latter itself joins such talks at some indeterminate stage. This is important for Pakistan since there few signs of a tripartite negotiations coming through soon. This also elevates the APHC to a special status in the negotiations hitherto not quite warranted by its political strength in Jammu & Kashmir. The APHC, from being unsure of how to handle the negotiations with New Delhi, has been anointed a major player on the table. On the other hand, the Hizbul Mujahidin which has played a major role in the militancy over the years, is apparently being sidelined. There is a message in it for other militant groups, about their allegiance to Pakistan's interests.

Second, the response from Pakistan indicates its unwillingness to stop armed militant activity. It has not asked the Hizbul Mujahideen or the Lashkar-e-Taiba and other groups to abide by the ceasefire.

Pakistan quite clearly views the trans-border terrorist activity as a meaningful instrument in influencing the peace process, or, to abort it if needed. The conditional response from Pakistan can be better understood if one heeds the views being expressed in the Pakistani media. India's ceasefire is described as an admission of the failure of its policy to "crush the uprising". The ceasefire and the offer of talks are seen as means to engage the Kashmiri leadership while keeping Pakistan out. Indian initiatives are also viewed to be designed to create differences between the mujahideen, Kashmiris and the Government of Pakistan. There are comparisons made between Pakistan's role in Kashmir, and its being reduced to the status of Mr. Yasser Arafat as the leader of a local authority!

It is obvious that the political fallout of New Delhi's ceasefire initiative has been meaningful. It has triggered a wide range of responses from major nations, from Pakistan, and the militant groups supported by it. Some militant groups have expressed unhappiness at Pakistan's decision to display maximum restraint on the LoC. The ceasefire and the possibility of negotiations are indicating the inherent contradictions in the agendas of those who have had to react to the ceasefire condition. Such contradictions are not being made any easier to resolve by the Indian offer to extend the ceasefire, if Pakistan ends trans-border terrorist activity. Above all, the jockeying for positions on the negotiating table has begun. It may well turn out to be an unseemly spectacle, with Pakistan trying to keep some of the horses in its stable from bolting, and preventing others straining at the reins from upsetting the applecart.

There are some other developments which can have an impact on the success or failure of the negotiations, as and when they start. The first is the possibility of change of opinion in Pakistan itself. General Pervez Musharraf had met Mirwaiz

Omar Farooq at the recently-held meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). He is reported to have indicated that the U.N. resolutions on Jammu & Kashmir, and particularly the one about a plebiscite, are no longer practicable. This report has not been denied by Islamabad. If this is indeed a reflection of thinking in Pakistan's ruling establishment, it is a pragmatic position of considerable importance. When juxtaposed against the Indian position of greater autonomy to Jammu & Kashmir in a future negotiated arrangement, the position offers real hope for constructive possibilities. It would also mean that Pakistan would need to do much more than to ensure the success of negotiations. It will need to offer matching constitutional rights to the portions of Kashmir under its occupation.

The second development of some significance is the formation of an Alliance for Restoration of Democracy in Pakistan. It brings together most non-religious parties of Pakistan, including the Pakistan Muslim League (Sharif) and the Pakistan People's Party. The Alliance has made known its demands. It rejects the military Government's devolution plan, and has sought a timeframe for holding general elections under a neutral caretaker government. The low credibility of the PML and the PPP notwithstanding, their coming together in the Nasrullah Khan-led Alliance is likely to generate a new political dynamic in Pakistan. The military Government's actions on Kashmir are more than likely to become the subject of political criticism.

General Musharraf's Government has lived out one of its three judicially sanctioned years of tenure. The General says he is determined to hold elections on time. There are also elections to be held in Jammu & Kashmir in 2001-2002. The conjunction of electoral compulsions offer interesting possibilities in structuring the negotiations, on which all eyes are focussed. The APHC has so far chosen not to participate in the electoral process. It

would have enough pressures to take a position on the subject even as negotiations are continued. If Pakistan can bring itself to ask the APHC to negotiate with New Delhi, it can also ask it prove its credibility in a fair and free elections to the State Sssembly. In fact the APHC's negotiating position would be strengthened by participating in elections, just as its credibility would be dented by keeping away from them. It would be interesting to watch Pakistan's and the APHC's response on this.

The negotiations will gain greater legitimacy by the Kashmiri people being truly represented in it. Who is to represent the Kashmiri people is a moot point. Who would represent the militant groups, the people of Ladakh, Jammu and other minorities at the negotiations? What position would the elected Assembly and the Government in Srinagar have in the negotiations? What issues are to be negotiated is another major issue which would need clarifying and some understanding before long. Are negotiations conditional upon New Delhi reducing the security forces? This cannot happen without a demonstrated capacity on Pakistan's part to order a cessation of hostilities from militant groups who have not accepted the ceasefire so far. Pakistan's capacity on this count remains suspect, as seen from the reactions to its offer of restraint on the LoC.

There is a long journey beyond the ceasefire. It is on an uncharted road and in uncertain company. The destination is also not clearly spelt out. That does not mean that talks and negotiations cannot start. It does, however, require that those wanting talks and negotiations be prepared to indicate, where they wish to reach through the negotiations route. It is better to know the destination and then work out the routes to it, instead of the other way around. The time to make such positions clear is imminent. Once negotiations start, it would be best to refrain from a public discussion of its every nuance. Talks and negotiations cannot be made a platform for posturing and scoring debating points. In the meanwhile, every move of the Governments in India and Pakistan will be examined closely to know if they, as weapons states, seek peace or conflict.

THE HINDU

14 DEC 2001

# Centre likely to extend Ramzan ceasefire

Jay Raina  
New Delhi, December 18

*good morning*

**T**HE ONGOING Ramzan ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir is likely to be extended by the Centre. While the timing and the duration of the extension are yet to be finalised, in all probability its announcement will coincide with the Id festival later this month.

Top Government sources said the announcement, to be made by the Prime Minister, would be another gesture by the Centre towards Kashmiris.

At a meeting convened by the Prime Minister here this morning, Mr Vajpayee's senior colleagues in the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) are understood to have backed the extension proposal. The informal discussions covered the whole gamut of the Kashmir peace initiative, including the positive response from the people in the Valley as also the international community.

Besides the heads of intelligence agencies, the meeting was attended by the Ministers of Home, Defence, External Affairs and Finance.

Sources said despite the desperate attempts by some anti-peace elements to vitiate the atmosphere, there was a perceptible change for the better in the ground situation. "There has been an appreciable fall in incidents of shelling and infiltration," a senior NDA functionary remarked.

Regarding the prospects of talks with the Hurriyat Conference, the sources said the Government had already spelt out its resolve

to enter into negotiations with all those who shun the gun. "There are no pre-set formulations except for entering into a dialogue with the people of the State who have been the worst-sufferers because of the decade-long violence," the sources said.

Going by the signals from this morning's meeting, it is apparent that the Centre is loath to rush into talks before creating a conducive atmosphere for such delicate negotiations.

The Government wants to evolve a broad consensus among major national parties and also among State-centric political groups before initiating formal talks with the Kashmiri leaders.

In other words, the Centre is averse to placing all the eggs in one basket.

As for the prospects of bilateral talks with Pakistan, the Government is keeping a close watch on the situation along the line of control (LoC) and the international border. It expects the decrease in military activities to be followed by a significant cessation of hostilities.

However, the sources asserted that India would not entertain any kind of trilateral talks on Kashmir.

Meanwhile, in yet another setback to Islamabad's design to push in foreign mercenaries into Jammu and Kashmir, JKLF chief Amanullah Khan on Monday said that the involvement of non-Kashmiri elements like the Lashkar-e-Toiba, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and the Jaish-e-Mohammad in the Valley was "very dangerous" for the Kashmiris as well as Pakistan, adds PTI from Islamabad.

## Majeed Dar arrives in Delhi

Arun Joshi  
Jammu, December 18

ABDUL MAJEED Dar, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen Chief Commander (Operations), has reached New Delhi in preparation for his proposed visit to Saudi Arabia.

He is to hold crucial talks in Saudi Arabia with Hizb supreme commander Syed Salaha-ud-Din over the peace process in Jammu and Kashmir.

Dar has been joined by his wife, who reached the national capital by a flight from Pakistan. However, what may delay their departure from Delhi is their receiving visas.

Majeed Dar, who enjoys the support of the Hizb cadres in Kashmir, has been maintaining a low profile ever since the militant outfit unilaterally withdrew its ceasefire barely a fortnight after it was announced on July 24.

Sources said that Ghulam Mohammad Bhat, who heads the Jamait-i-Islami unit in Kashmir, is to fly to Saudi Arabia to meet Jamait leaders from PoK.

19 DEC 2000

# LCA, Akash, Trishul facing slippages: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, DEC 18

THE country's prestigious Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) programme as well as the project to induct air defence missiles Akash and Trishul are facing more slippages triggering a threat of "technological obsolescence" in the combat capabilities of the air force, according to a report tabled in Parliament today.

The Defence Ministry has conveyed to the Parliamentary standing committee on Defence that the LCA could be operational only after 2012 and that there would be "considerable delay" in the planned induction timeframe of the Akash and Trishul missiles to

19/12  
which the committee has expressed its "unhappiness," as per the committee's ninth report tabled in the House on Monday.

Pulling up the Government for being "remiss" in strengthening the air force, the panel says it had been informed that technological obsolescence was not only affecting fighter aircraft, but also air defence radars and missiles.

"Almost Rs 3,000 crore have been invested in the LCA and the committee tend to agree with the assessment of the IAF that it may not be inducted before 2015 meaning it would have taken 32 years before the LCA would be inducted," the committee observed, while asking the Government to view the situation seriously and

conduct a performance audit of the project.

On induction of force multipliers like AWACS and Flight Refuelling Aircraft (FRA), the committee has been informed that these acquisitions were taking time as IAF was faced with a situation of no single vendor in the absence of US firms not bidding.

Major reductions in defence allocation during the last decade have thrown the modernisation of the air force out of gear and now the IAF top brass has placed before the Government the estimate or resources for the required modernisation plan, the ministry informed the committee.

The Ministry has also said that the Government had stepped up

momentum by speeding up induction of upgraded SU-30 fighters as well as their assembly in India and acquisition of more Mirage-2000-5 jet aircraft to offset the delay in LCA programme.

The government was also going ahead with mid-life upgradation of other IAF aircraft like the various versions of MiGS including MiG-29, MiG-27, MiG-23 and Mig 21 as well as deep penetration Jaguars, light transport Antonov aircraft and by purchasing more Mi-17 Helicopters, the committee was informed.

The committee has asked the Government to accord top priority to the modernisation drive of the air force and provide adequate resources to the force.

INDIAN EXPRESS

19 DEC 2000

'EXPLORATORY STEPS' FOR DIALOGUE PLANNED

# Vajpayee extends ceasefire in J&K till Republic Day

By Harish Khare

NEW DELHI, DEC. 20. The Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, today announced the Government's decision to extend the current ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir, beyond the Ramadhan, for a month, till the Republic Day, 2001. He announced his Government's decision to "initiate such exploratory steps as are considered necessary" for a "composite dialogue process" with Pakistan.

In a statement, made in the two Houses of Parliament, he noted that the Government would review the position after January 26 next year. However, before the statement was made, the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha had readily agreed to forgo its right to seek clarifications from the Government. In fact, the Congress chief whip, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, declared, "we want to give a clear message that we are all united on the need to bring peace to Kashmir." Mr. Vajpayee explained the considerations that went into extending the "no initiation of combat operations" period. Admitting "our continuing concerns" over certain aspects, he observed that "the constituency for peace (in the troubled State) has expanded significantly" since the November 19 ceasefire announcement. The Prime Minister noted, with satisfaction, that the citizens, political parties, and other organisations had welcomed the ceasefire, and that "a distinctly different and a more optimistic mood now prevails in that State."

According to Mr. Vajpayee, despite the fact that organisations such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen continue to play their terroristic games, there "has been a decline in incidents of terrorist violence in that State." He promised uncompromising fight against challenges from these and other organisations.

Without assigning Pakistan either blame or praise, the Prime Minister observed that "there has

been a recognisable decline, too, in attempts at cross-Line of Control and cross-International Border infiltration of terrorists." But, this, he noted, "must cease entirely".

Nonetheless, the Prime Minister indirectly acknowledged Pakistan's restraint by noting that "along the Line of Control, we have witnessed a marked improvement in incidents of exchange of fire. Relative peace has prevailed all along the Line of Control, ever since my announce-

ment of 19 November, barring some incidents in the early stages." Since the Rajya Sabha cheerfully waved away its privilege of seeking clarifications, no

**Not against ceasefire, says Farooq: Page 13**

elaborations were available of the nature of "exploratory steps" the Government considered necessary towards resuming dialogue with Pakistan. However, the Prime Minister did note that "the existence of a suitable environ-

ment for such a process is self-evidently necessary." Also, he added that the exploration would be part of the larger framework of the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration.

**Militants warned**

The Prime Minister's statement contains a warning to intractable militant groups. "Whereas we will continue to exercise maximum restraint in face of grave provocations, national interest will never be compromised," warned Mr. Vajpayee.

## Pak. orders 'partial pullout' on LoC

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 20. Within hours of India extending the ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan announced 'partial withdrawal' of its troops on the Line of Control (LoC) and urged India to reciprocate.

A brief military press statement characterised the decision as 'another bold initiative' and a follow-up to the policy of exercising maximum restraint along the Line of Actual Contact and Line of Control.

"The move back has already commenced and the troops have started moving to cantonments. However, necessary safeguards have been taken against any possible Indian misadventure across the LoC and to ensure protection of the local population.

"This action manifests Pakistan's earnest and genuine desire to de-escalate the situation in order to facilitate the process of meaningful dialogue on the issue. It is hoped that India would also reciprocate in a similar manner and de-induct part of its seven lakh-strong force deployed in Indian Occupied Kashmir".

Asked about the number of troops withdrawn, a spokesman of the military told *The Hindu* that it was "classified information. We cannot tell you the numbers". Earlier the announcement by the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, evoked a lukewarm-to-hostile response from the Pakistan Government and Pakistan-based militant organisations.

While the Foreign Office spokesman, Mr. Riaz Mohammad Khan, preferred to wait to look at the fine print of the announcement, the militant organisations said it would be a 'meaningless exercise' unless followed by concrete steps towards resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

Mr. Khan said it was too early for Islamabad to

react to the announcement and the decision needed to be carefully considered. "We have to see this statement because usually the Indian statements have all kinds of conditionalities", he said while refraining from making any comment. A day after the first ceasefire announcement by Mr. Vajpayee on November 19, Pakistan's reaction was that it was no more than a tactical short-term offer to impose a military solution to the Kashmir conflict.

However, over a week later Pakistan chose to respond positively by its declaration to observe "maximum restraint" on the LoC and invited the executive of the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) to Islamabad for discussions.

Indications are that sooner than later Pakistan would welcome the extension of the ceasefire and reciprocate the gesture. Unlike India, which originally intended to cease operations during the Ramazan period, Pakistan had not announced any timeframe for 'maximum restraint'.

**Hizb, Lashkar sceptical**

The Hizb-ul-Mujahideen deemed the extension a 'futile exercise' unless India was prepared to follow it up with concrete steps towards resolution of the Kashmir problem.

The Lashkar-e-Taiba saw little meaning in the extension and said that it was only meant to give relief to the 'weary and tired' personnel of the armed forces. The Lashkar spokesman, Mr. Yahya Mujaheed, said his organisation would continue its operations in Kashmir. The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front Chairman, Mr. Amanullah Khan, said his organisation was prepared to welcome the extension 'conditionally' and would expect India to initiate some 'practical steps' leading to resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

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# Lashkar raids Red Fort, guns down 3

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Dec. 22. — A suspected Kashmiri suicide squad tonight sneaked into the symbol of Indian authority, the Red Fort, and fired from automatic weapons at Army barracks, killing two army men and an unidentified civilian.

The Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiyaba has claimed responsibility for the attack that was obviously aimed at the current peace process. The outfit told new agencies it had taken over the Red Fort and intended blowing it up.

A police officer suggested it was possible the militants intended planting an explosive "but started firing when they thought they were cornered".

Soon after the attack, police and the Army began combing the area within a kilometre of the fort. The General-officer-Commanding, Delhi Area, Major-General Vinod Bhanot, was supervising the operations.

The militants seem to have escaped by scaling the wall at the back though the area had been surrounded by Army officers and jawans.

But there were suspicions that one of the militants was still in the fort. Police and people living in the neighbourhood said three shots were fired inside the fort even after the area had been sealed off.

"It is a big fort and even though we are searching for them, I am sure they must have escaped. There is an inter-state bus terminus and a railway station right next door," an officer said.

He suspected that the

militants must have been watching the area for a weakness for days before they struck.

"It was a well-planned attack," an Army officer said. "They cut the power connection and there was no electricity for an hour at the fort around the time of the attack.

"The armyman who died later had mumbled 'there was a sudden blackout and then there was firing from all sides,' the officer said.

The militants first went to the

the barracks. There was a shootout. A Rifles barber and an armyman were among those killed.

"There were two men and they fired from at least three places...they were running around as they fired... No one saw them, we have no description but they had automatic weapons — for there were rapid bursts of gunfire," said the joint commissioner of police, Northern Range, Mr Ajay Chaddha. Other officers later said there could have been more militants.

Police officers were not allowed to enter the fort for about an hour. "We were told that an Army operation was on," a senior officer said.

Hours after the incident, there were still different versions of how the militants entered the fort. Police said the attackers made it from the Chor Bazaar side behind the fort, but Army officers on the spot said they had come in from the "railway crossing side".

While the combing operations were on, a resident of the area, identifying himself as Santosh, said that around 9.30 p.m., he had spotted three men "wearing long coats atop the wall on the Dilli Dwar gate of the fort" — the rear gate.

"The wall is around 10 feet high and they were trying to jump but, I don't know if they were trying to get in or out."

At Red Fort tonight, some uniformed Army officers, who claimed they were from Military Intelligence, said they weren't ruling out the possibility that the firing was a result of a quarrel between two units of the Army.

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ration store in the barracks and shot dead a man. "People in the area either did not hear the shot or didn't realise it was a shot. There is too much confusion right now to be certain," the officer said. The suicide squad then apparently moved to the Rajputana Rifles barracks.

There was a regimental party of the Rajputana Rifles on another side of the fort, but the attackers didn't go there. Officers and soldiers who were at the party reportedly reacted to the firing and surrounded

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## Don't lower the guard, Govt. told

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, DEC. 23.** Political parties across the spectrum have condemned Friday's suicide attack on Army personnel at the Red Fort and have asked the Government to remain vigilant and not to lower its guard.

The main Opposition party, Congress, termed last night's incident an "extremely serious security lapse" and demanded that the Government make a comprehensive statement on the incident. The party also demanded that the Home Minister and the Defence Minister "institute an immediate enquiry and ensure that such serious lapses do not occur".

Raising questions about the security, in the light of the reported threats by the Lashkar-e-Taiba to strike in the capital, the party in a

statement wondered how armed militants could enter such a high-security area, kill three Army jawans and escape.

The BJP general secretary, Mr. Narendra Modi, described the attack as a desperate attempt on the part of the terrorists to remain in the news after being repeatedly thwarted by the Government. Mr. Modi said those wielding the gun and trying to spread communal hatred had been made to bite the dust by the Prime Minister's offer of the Ramzan ceasefire. "So, out of frustration, they have resorted to killing innocents."

The Government, he said, would neither waver from its path nor allow such elements to "get away with their crimes".

Condemning last night's incidents, the CPI

(M) politburo echoed the Congress' views. "That the militants could barge into such a sensitive area catching the security forces unawares reflects a serious security lapse," said a party release.

The party also cautioned the Government and the security forces against lowering their guard under the influence of extending the ceasefire in Kashmir. "The security and intelligence lapses during the Kargil war, for which the country paid heavily, must not be repeated."

The TDP, an ally of the BJP, asked the Government to take the incident seriously. "It is a serious security lapse especially in view of the coming Republic Day celebrations," said the party spokesperson, Mr. C. Ramachandraiah.

THE HINDU

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RED FORT ATTACK / 'ATTEMPT TO SET THE CLOCK BACK'

# The biggest challenge to ceasefire

By Anil Aneja

**NEW DELHI, DEC. 23.** In attacking the Red fort, the Lashkar-e-Taiba has posed the biggest challenge to the incipient peace process in Kashmir. By targeting the Red Fort — a proud symbol of independent India — the Lashkar is seeking to provoke reprisals, possibly in Kashmir, highly-placed sources here said. In case this happens, it will derail the ceasefire which was extended for a month three days ago. A resumption in fighting can inevitably set the clock back in Kashmir.

Aware that its appreciation of the existing threat has to be tempered with discretion, the Army has decided to respond in a calibrated manner.

The cantonment area in the capital, where a number of officials obtaining Z-category security either transit or reside permanently, has been placed under high alert.

Armed troops have been issued ammunition and are in a state of readiness. Similar orders have also been issued around sensitive defence installations.

Active patrolling in vehicles in these areas has begun. "Quick-reaction teams" have been activated. Comprising 10 vehicle-borne personnel, these teams can reach a trouble spot in no time. Extra precaution has also been taken to guard the armouries in the cantonment.

Outside the cantonment, security has been beefed up in a less visible manner. Steps have been taken to improve the communication between the personnel of the Army. New communication sets are being issued so that information about possible attacks can be speedily passed.



**The Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, briefing mediapersons after visiting the Red Fort on Saturday following Friday's suicide attack by Lashkar-e-Taiba militants. — Photo: Shanker Chakravarty**

Besides early warning, a careful study of the geographical zones surrounding high-value targets has been conducted. This has been necessary to identify the escape routes the militants might take and to take suitable counter-measures.

Soon after last night's attack, the Army intercepted a message conveyed by the

In attacking the Red fort, the LeT — which along with the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen was singled out in Parliament by the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, as being active in Kashmir — has in one stroke attempted to achieve several other related military and political objectives.

## Why the Red Fort?

Sources here pointed out that by targeting the Red Fort, which has traditionally been a seat of governance and power, the LeT has hoped to generate unease and a sense of vulnerability among the national political elite.

Second, the attack in the high-security zone is meant to demoralise the armed forces and undermine its fighting acumen. By attacking its bastion, the Lashkar has attempted to convey that major military establishments, including those located in cantonments, could be vulnerable.

Third, the Lashkar attack also contains a message for Pakistan. The Pakistani political establishment, sources say, has already acknowledged that its hold over the LeT and the HuM was waning.

In fact, the matter was raised by the Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, during a recent meeting of the Pakistani Corps Commanders.

Reports have also been received that the Pakistanis want Saudi Arabia to exercise considerable influence to restrain these groups.

The Lashkar attack is therefore seen here as an act of defiance vis-a-vis Islamabad as well as a move to rally its own cadres in Pakistan.



AK-SERIES RIFLE, AMMUNITION, DIARY RECOVERED

# Army, police to probe Red Fort attack

NEW DELHI, DEC. 23. A high-level joint Army and police inquiry will look into security lapses that led to militants storming the high security Red Fort complex last night killing two soldiers and a civilian security guard, an Army spokesperson said here today.

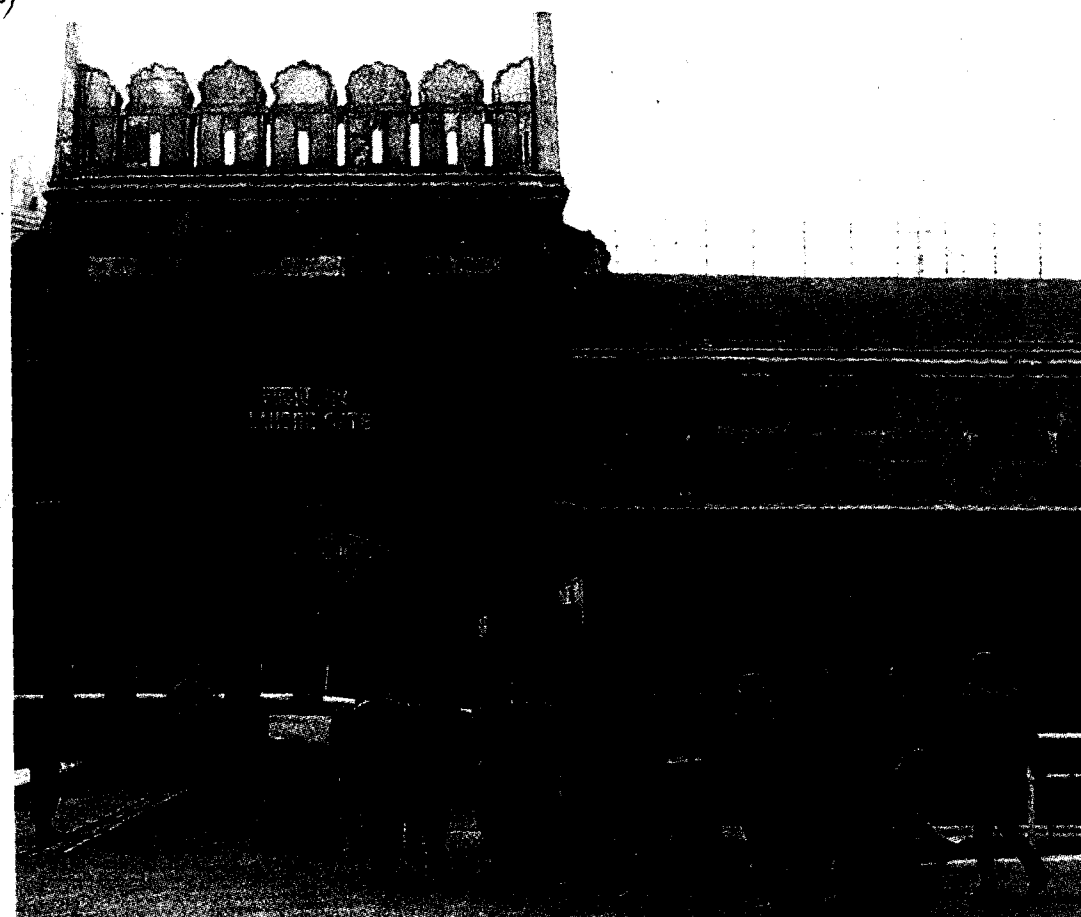
He said the Army will also hold a statutory court of inquiry headed by a senior Army officer into the armed raid on the battalion headquarters of 7 Rajputana Rifles. The probes were announced after the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, went round the fort complex this afternoon. Senior Army officers explained to him the details and sequence of events. Mr. Fernandes said two inquiries — one an internal Army inquiry and another jointly by Army and Delhi police — had been ordered into the incident. — PTI

## Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar reports:

Apprehensive of another strike by terrorists, the Delhi police today sounded a "red alert" in the capital and conducted searches in several guest houses all over the city. An AK-series assault rifle and a piece of paper containing some telephone numbers were recovered by police during combing operations in and around the fort. Police sources said the main areas targeted under the drive were Central and North Delhi.

The Joint Commissioner (Northern Range), Mr. Ajay Chaddha, said a meeting had been held with senior Army officers, and that the investigation was being done by the Delhi police alone. The case, he said, has now been handed over to the Operations Cell of the Delhi police, which would be assisted by the North Delhi police as also the Crime Branch. The officer said the Delhi police were informed of the shootout by the Army authorities at 9-23 p.m. "We were given specific information by an officer about the terrorists escaping from the Ring Road side following a shooting incident."

Police have recovered a total of 40 empty bullet shells and two empty magazines from the fort complex. They also found a loaded magazine with 28 live cartridges,



Army personnel patrolling the Red Fort area on Saturday morning following the high alert sounded after the Lashkar-e-Taiba's suicide attack. — Photo: M. Lakshman

es, which appeared to have accidentally fallen while the terrorists were on the move.

The AK-series weapon, Mr. Chaddha said, was recovered from across the Ring Road at Vijay Ghat — the Lal Bahadur Shastri memorial — after some employees at the place pointed to its presence. "It appeared to have been pushed in lengthwise near the boundary wall."

While a rope and a diary have apparently been found by the investigating agency, the officer said he would not like to comment on the other recoveries.

## PM unhappy

By Harish Khare

NEW DELHI, DEC. 23. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vaj-

payee, is believed to have taken a dim view of the Red Fort shootout late last night.

In particular, there is all-round disappointment that the militants were allowed to get away, despite the official claims that "the reaction team of 7 Rajputana Rifle" had engaged the intruders.

The Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, was summoned to a meeting at the Prime Minister's house this morning. Mr. Vajpayee wanted to hear for himself the details of how the incident took place at a site regarded as a seat of national honour.

The Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, and the National Security Adviser, Mr. Brajesh Mishra, were also present. The

militants' escape for the attack was deemed a "security lapse".

## Holiday plans unchanged

However, notwithstanding the dramatic nature of the incident, the security establishment has taken the whole affair rather calmly. No sense of panic was visible. In fact, except for the Defence Minister's briefing for the Prime Minister, even the Cabinet Committee on Security was not called. Nor is there any change in the Prime Minister's holiday plans to spend a week, beginning December 26, in Kerala.

Only the Union Home Secretary is understood to have presided over a review committee, which decided to put various sensitive installations on high alert. The Delhi Government has also been

asked to submit a report about the Delhi police's role in the incident.

## No word on LeT

For the record, there is no official acknowledgement that it was a Lashkar-e-Taiba team that was involved in the attack. However, it was left to Mr. Fernandes to point a finger at the outfit. Talking to reporters, after visiting the Red Fort this afternoon, the Defence Minister is reported to have observed that it would seem that Pakistan was not interested in the peace process.

"We have clearly indicated to Pakistan to rein in militant groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Harkat-ul-Ansar so that an atmosphere conducive for talks was created, and now it seems either Islamabad is not interested or it does not have control over these fundamentalist groups," Mr. Fernandes said.

Later in the evening, the Home Minister was less strident though he also sought to put the onus on Pakistan by suggesting that since Pakistan was controlling these groups, Islamabad could help the peace process by putting the brakes on such outfits. Mr. Advani chose to interpret the Red Fort attack as an attempt to sabotage the peace process.

Nonetheless, a sense of exasperation could be discerned among the concerned officials over the Army's caginess over the incidents and its unwillingness to share information with the Delhi police and other agencies.

This organisational reflex was evident, a few weeks ago, when there was presumed to have been a shootout at the Navy Chief's official residence.

## Lashkar identifies suicide squad

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, DEC. 23. The Pakistan-based militant organisation, Lashkar-e-Taiba, today officially claimed responsibility for the attack at the Red Fort in New Delhi late on Friday.

The Lashkar spokesman, Mr. Yahya Mujahideen, told *The Hindu* over phone from Lahore that two militants from Kashmir, Shabeer Ahmed and Syed Mohammad Ali, had carried out the attack.

"This is our first operation against an Indian military installation inside India. We would continue with such attacks till India decides to pull out its troops out of the Kashmir region."

In 10 minutes: Page 8

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## THE LCA STILL A DREAM?

THE DEFENCE MINISTRY will certainly go down in history for its announcement that the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), which took its place on the drawing-boards way back in late 1970s, is unlikely to become a reality and join the squadrons of the Indian Air Force before 2012. When this happens, the LCA would have set a record of an aircraft becoming a vintage product at the very moment of its birth. It would be difficult to find another instance of a project which, apart from the ridicule to which it has already been exposed as a crucial defence project, has languished so long because of wholly inexcusable neglect and on which a huge expenditure should have been incurred.

It is even more shocking that the Ministry has told the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence with seeming insensitivity that apart from the LCA becoming operational only after 2012, there would be considerable delay in the induction of the Akash and Trishul missiles. In view of the fact that the decision to go for the production of the LCA was taken to heighten the levels of aerial protection of the country with an aircraft incorporating state-of-the-art in fighter aircraft technology, the expectations were that the LCA would become airborne not later than 10 years, by the late 1980s or early 1990s. Instead, it still remains a dream, leaving the country with a sense of frustration.

The Defence Ministry and the IAF do not have to be told about the dangers of whittling down the prospects of this being achieved within a reasonable timeframe. While the country waits for such a prestigious project like the LCA holding out the promise of making India's aerial defences impregnable, delays would only make the aircraft wholly devoid of any value with the rest of the world, particularly an unfriendly neighbour like Pakistan stealing a march on the country by acquiring or produc-

ing far superior aircraft. Right at the beginning when the LCA project was launched, there was some anxiety about its becoming a reality well in time because of the unhappy history of HF-24 Marut, which should have been the country's first indigenously developed fighter aircraft. The HF-24 project would not have been a tragedy had the lessons it threw up about the importance of building a sound research and development base for production of hi-tech aircraft been fully grasped. Had those in charge of the LCA programme both in the Defence Ministry and the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. been fully aware of the enormity of the tasks assigned to them, the progress would have been much faster. There was enormous enthusiasm in the HAL when the project was cleared and assigned to it in the 1980s because it was regarded as the first step towards entrusting the HAL, which had for long been building only foreign-designed aircraft, with the designing and building of a wholly indigenous fighter plane. The LCA programme was assigned a crucial place in the Long-Term Re-equipment Plan of the IAF. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) set up the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) for going ahead with the project by bringing the R & D establishments and the design bureau of the HAL under one umbrella.

The gloom now felt over the tardy progress of the LCA is just another illustration of what often happens to many ambitious projects in India — of glittering visions fading away. But matters relating to the LCA should not be allowed to rest there and there should be a thorough enquiry into why the programme has run aground. The plane should become airborne much faster and the country should not be asked to wait for another decade for this to happen.

THE HINDU

25 DEC 2000

# Army, police still groping in the dark

By Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar

**NEW DELHI, DEC. 24.** The Delhi police and the Army have not been able to make a breakthrough in the Red Fort case and remain largely clueless about the identity and the whereabouts of the two militants who had stormed the historic monument on Friday night and gunned down three persons.

Though the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba has claimed responsibility for the attack and identified the persons involved as Shabeer Ahmed and Syed Mohammad Ali, police said they were not reading too much into this assertion. "It is a claim and we are looking into it as well," a senior officer said.

The special cell of the Delhi police, which had been handed over the investigations yesterday, is trying to establish if the two militants were still in the city. The police wing which had conducted raids at a number of guest houses in Central and North Delhi as also at neighbouring Noida, today concentrated on the recoveries made by it.

Apart from an AK-series assault

rifle which was found hidden in a longitudinal position beneath the fence of Vijay Ghat, the police have also recovered some papers, apparently left behind by the terrorists. Sources said these papers contain some telephone numbers which may help in the investigations.

Police have also more or less identified the entry and escape points of the terrorists. While police suspect that the militants had entered through the northern Salim Garh side of the fort, they are quite certain that the escape was made by jumping down the wall from the eastern Ring Road side. The recovery of a rope at a little distance from the exit point is also being investigated.

Across the Ring Road, police conducted searches at the Yamuna Pushta Jhuggi cluster. They suspect that the culprits may have entered the congested area after hiding the AK-series weapon at Vijay Ghat. "There is a possibility that the terrorists hid in the Pushra area and hid the weapon in order to prevent its detection. Probably, they had taken it later but it was spotted by some Vijay Ghat employees," said a senior

police officer. Suspecting that the terrorists might strike again to disrupt the Jammu and Kashmir peace process, they continued to maintain strong vigil near the Red Fort. The grounds behind the fort — from where the militants escaped — were today not open for the historic Sunday Bazar.

The Delhi police suspects that the terrorists and some of their

## Gaping in disbeliever: Page 13

associates may still be in the capital and might carry out bomb blasts.

The Army has also deployed its commandos at vantage points along the boundary of the fort.

## Alert at airports

PTI reports:  
All the 15 airports in the eastern

region, particularly the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International airport in Calcutta, have been alerted and all the agencies working in the airports asked to intensify "all-out vigilance", according to a spokesperson of the Bureau of the Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) at the Calcutta airport.

Following directives from the Union Home Ministry, a top-level meeting reviewed the existing security arrangements at Calcutta airport, the spokesperson said.

## Bomb-like device found in train

By Our Staff Reporter

**BANGALORE, DEC. 24.** The Bangalore-Hubli Kittur Rani Chennamma Express was stopped for one hour near the Malleswaram Railway Station here this evening after a bomb-like device was found

in a toilet of a coach.

The device, which was cylindrical in shape and had a wire connecting to a timer, was defused and the train left for Hubli after a thorough check by police.

The train had left the Bangalore City Railway Station at about 8.30 p.m. A passenger who went to the toilet found the device and he immediately pulled the chain to stop the train.

Senior police officers, including the Commissioner of Police, Mr. T. Madiyal, and the bomb squad and sniffer dogs rushed to the spot.

The device has been sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory. A team of police officers is investigating.

**THE HINDU** wishes  
its readers a  
**MERRY CHRISTMAS**

# Talks with Hizb, other outfits possible: Advani

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HT Correspondent & PTI  
New Delhi, December 24

THE PROSPECTS for a dialogue on Kashmir have brightened following Home Minister L K Advani's veiled invitation to Hizbul Mujahideen for composite peace talks. Mr Advani did not rule out a dialogue with Pakistan after an "assessment" of its behaviour during the extended ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir.

"That possibility is there," he said, when asked about the chances of the Centre starting a dialogue with militant groups in the state.

Mr Advani maintained that the resumption of the dialogue with Pakistan was contingent upon Islamabad stopping the support to cross-border terrorism in India. Asked whether this ruled out talks with Pakistan in the immediate future, he said, "We don't say that".

In Islamabad, Pakistan Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar indicated in an interview, that his country would not insist on its involvement in talks with India on the Kashmir issue right in the initial stage. He that the suggested Indian leader-



## Conditions conducive for Indo-Pak talks: RSS

THE RASHTRIYA Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) on Sunday declared that conditions were conducive for an Indo-Pak dialogue to resolve all contentious issues, including Kashmir. RSS spokesperson M.G. Vaidya indicated that the conversion of the Line of Control (LoC) into the international border could form basis for the dialogue between the two countries.

HTC, Jammu

ship first held talks with the Hurriyat.

"India should invite the Hurriyat leaders for a discussion that will be preparatory to the Pakistan-India dialogue", an English language magazine quoted him as saying.

Pakistan had earlier demanded trilateral talks with India and the Hurriyat leaders, an idea firmly rejected by India.

He termed as a "welcome half-step" the Indian government's announcement of the Ramzan ceasefire and said the "full step would be to abandon the use of force once and for all".

Sattar spoke about "a three-stage

framework" of talks. "First, stabilising the cease-fire at the LoC. Secondly, a preparatory process that involves the Hurriyat Conference in a process of dialogue with Pakistan and India. The third is a dialogue to find a solution to the Kashmir problem acceptable to the people of Kashmir".

However, in New Delhi, Advani asserted that Islamabad has been feeling the "pinch" of isolation. "If it earnestly desires peace, there should be evidence of it".

As for talks with Kashmiri groups, Mr Advani said, "I would like to emphasise that dialogue

with our people in J & K would naturally have to include all political parties.

Reinforcing his argument for a composite dialogue with Kashmiri groups, Mr Advani sought to caution the Hurriyat Conference, the multi-party conglomerate. "It must realise this (the nature of talks at various levels). They have been issuing statements as if they are the sole representatives of the people of the state".

However, the Centre may find it difficult to talk to Hurriyat along the side of the other mainline political formations in the state, on a common agenda. The strains in negotiations would be two-fold.

First, the contradictions within the Hurriyat may not facilitate a unified approach. Second, the hostile posturing between National Conference, Peoples' Democratic Party and the Left and the Hurriyat may become a hurdle.

13 killed in J&K: THIRTEEN PERSONS, including five counter-insurgents, three militants and a National Conference activist, were killed and four others wounded in separate militancy-related incidents since Saturday evening.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

25 DEC 2000



# Implications of the attack on Red Fort

C. Uday Bhaskar  
New Delhi, December 24

HF 11 25/12

**T**HE TERRORIST attack at the Red Fort in Delhi on Friday has led to a predictable outcry of anxiety and outrage, but this incident needs to be placed in context for its deeper implications on the current peace initiative in Kashmir and the larger bi-lateral relationship with Pakistan.

At the outset, the nature of the attack needs to be clarified, and the semantic over-kill corrected. This was a sneak attack by a determined terrorist group - the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) claimed responsibility within an hour of the attack - and it was carried out against a relatively soft and easily accessed target - the Red Fort.

While there is no denying that an army unit was involved and an investigation is under way to examine the security lapses, this was a classic case of urban terrorism. The terrorists chose a highly symbolic target that allows unfettered entry and exit to the public at large and were able to achieve their primary objective - wide

publicity and media attention to their deeds and an implicit challenge that they could strike at will in the heart of the Indian capital.

No country in the world can ensure complete and total protection against any form of extreme urban terrorism, and while this in no way exonerates security lapses, both the White House in Washington DC and the Kremlin in Moscow have in recent years been 'breached'.

But the rash of terrorist violence will only

## News Analysis

increase in the coming weeks as the peace process gathers momentum and the terrorist groups try to deflect the same.

While the Red Fort incident is deplorable, it can perhaps be used to test Pakistan's sincerity and credibility as a responsible state in the matter of terrorism. Ever since terrorism - particularly the jihadic variant - has caused global concern, Islamabad has claimed from every forum that it provides only moral support to the Kashmir cause and does not support terrorism

per se. If that is the stand, India would have every right to expect the Musharraf regime to first distance itself from the LeT and then condemn this attack.

Step two could be to urge Islamabad to deal with the leadership of the LeT appropriately and use armed force if need be. And finally India could also muster adequate international support against such patterns of terrorism and consider a military option targeted against the LeT, in consultation with Islamabad.

In that sense the Red Fort incident could serve to establish Pakistan's ability to deal with religious extremism which it has nurtured all these years.

This is not an attempt to hoist Islamabad on its own petard but to encourage both the Musharraf regime and Pakistani civil society to begin the process of reviewing an ill-advised Kashmir policy that has reared groups like the LeT that owe allegiance to their own fanaticism.

The onset of Eid is an appropriate moment for such introspection and the Red Fort attack can be used to mutual benefit.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

25 DEC 2000

SUICIDE-BOMBER DRIVES UP TO GATE

# 9 killed as militants trigger car-bomb near Army HQ

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, DEC. 25. In a devastating car-bomb explosion outside the highly-guarded 15 Corps headquarters here, at least nine persons, including five Army soldiers, were killed and 25 injured. A shopping complex also caught fire after the explosion and a number of shops were gutted.

Police sources said a Maruti car was left just outside the gate of the headquarters by militants and soon the bomb which was fitted in the car was triggered by them. The car was blown to pieces and the Armymen, who were part of the checking squad at the gate, bore the brunt of the blast. The troops panicked and opened fire.

A Defence spokesperson said seven Armymen were wounded and two civilians died. It was, however, not known whether the civilians died due to the blast or the Army firing.

(According to PTI, the suicide-bomber drove the car, bearing a Delhi registration number and stuffed with explosives, to the headquarters of the 15 Corps at about 2.20 p.m. and blew it up at Batwara in front of the main gate. Sources said the suicide-bomber, who tried to storm the headquarters, was stopped by military police personnel at the checkpoint near the main gate. But ignoring the signal, the bomber went ahead and blew up.)

The nearby shopping complex caught fire after the incident and a number of shops were gutted. A large number of people were present in the market in front of the 15 Corps headquarters shopping for Eid-ul-Fitr.

The entire area was sealed off by the Army and the movement of civilians curtailed. Senior police officials reached the spot and the remains of the damaged car were being examined. However,

mediapersons were not allowed into the area.

## Two outfits own up

Two militant outfits claimed responsibility for the blast. A spokesperson of the pro-Pakistan Jamait-ul-Mujahideen called newspaper offices here and said since the "security forces have not implemented the ceasefire and are continuing with crack-downs and search operations"

such an action was resorted to.

Later, the Jaish-e-Mohammad, too, owned up the attack. A spokesperson said it was a Jaish suicide-bomber, Abdullah Bai, of Birmingham, England, who drove the car and blasted it.

## Peace process will continue: Fernandes

The Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, said the car-bomb ex-

plosion was aimed at sabotaging the ongoing peace process in the State.

Mr. Fernandes, who was in Srinagar on a brief visit, however, said it would not have any effect on the ceasefire. But the militants responsible would not go scot-free. The Minister denied that there was any security lapse involved in today's blast.

On the recent attack at the Red Fort, he said if Pakistan stopped "cross-border terrorism" these incidents would not occur.

Though nothing was known about the exact purpose of Mr. Fernandes's 'Srinagar mission', he visited the Hindustan Machine Tools factory at Shalteng and interacted with the workers there. He also met a group of children sent by the Army on an all-India tour.

The Minister reviewed the latest situation with the officiating Corps Commander, Maj.-Gen. Basant Singh, at the airport. No State Minister or senior official was present at the airport either to receive the Defence Minister or to see him off.

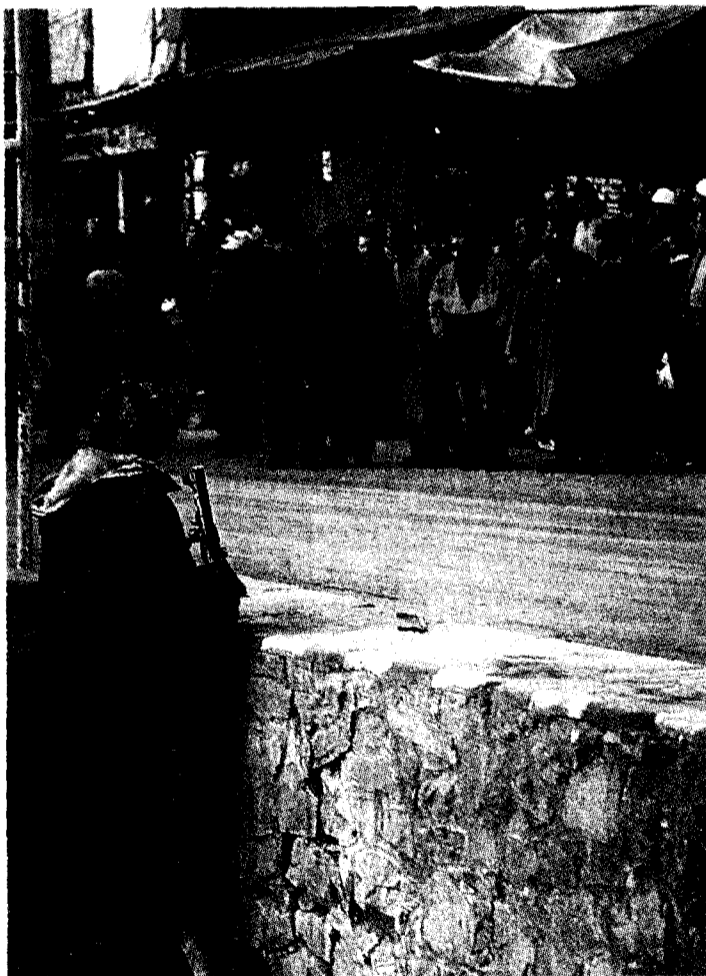
## Security lapse in Red Fort: PM

NEW DELHI, DEC. 25. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, today said there has been a security lapse in the Red Fort which was stormed by Kashmiri militants on Friday and measures were being taken to avoid recurrence of such events.

"There has been a security lapse at the Red Fort and measures are being taken so that it is not repeated," he told ANI.

Asked whether the incident would have any effect on the ongoing ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir, he was optimistic, saying "it won't". — PTI

CPI(M) plea, Sena view: Page 13



Locals gather near the site of the car-bomb attack in Srinagar on Monday. — AP

THE HINDU

2012

# Red Fort attack suspect gunned down

By Gaurav Vivek Bhatnagar

**NEW DELHI, DEC. 26.** A suspected Lashkar-e-Taiba militant involved in the Red Fort shootout last Friday was gunned down by commandos of the Delhi police Special Cell in a "fierce encounter" in South Delhi early this morning. The encounter took place hours after the Delhi police, working on specific inputs from Central intelligence agencies, arrested another Pakistani national and his Indian-born wife.

Working in tandem with the Intelligence Bureau and other security agencies, police had identified Ashfaq Ahmed as one of the persons involved in the Red Fort attack. With the help of some telephone numbers recovered from behind the Red Fort on Saturday, the police were able to trace him.

They caught up with him in the house of his in-laws at Ghazipur in East Delhi at about 1-30 a.m. on Tuesday. His wife, Rehmana, who allegedly had full knowledge of his activities, was also nabbed after a pistol, some cartridges and documents were recovered from their house.

## Sent by ISI

The acting Commissioner of Delhi Police, Mr. R.K. Sharma, said during interrogation Ashfaq revealed that he was involved in the Red Fort conspiracy. Admitting to be a LeT member, he said he had been sent to Delhi by the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI)



**A Delhi Police commando showing the bullet marks inside the house where one of the Lashkar-e-Taiba militants, Abu Samal (right), involved in the Red Fort shootout, was killed on Tuesday.** — Photo: Shanker Chakravartthy.

network of Pakistan in May this year to set up a base.

Having large amounts of money with him, Ashfaq had subsequently set up a computer centre, 'Knowledge Plus', at Gafoor Market in the Okhla area of South Delhi. While he had invested about Rs. 6 lakhs in setting up the centre, his bank account still had Rs. 5 lakhs in it and his wife's account was found to be having Rs. 2.8 lakhs, Mr. Sharma said.

Besides, Ashfaq was found to

have paid Rs. 50,000 as *nikahnama* (bride price) to his wife at the time of their marriage earlier this month.

Ashfaq, who was grilled by the police at night, reportedly revealed that he had planned a terrorist attack in consultation with his handlers in Pakistan. He was joined in Delhi by five terrorists whom he identified as Abu Samal, Abu Sudd, Abu Sakhar, Billal and Haider.

On December 3, Ashfaq said he

sound show which is held from 7-30 p.m. to 8-30 p.m.

## Entered through Lahore Gate

All the terrorists entered the Red Fort through Lahore Gate with assault rifles, magazines and hand-grenades hidden under their jackets. After the show, Abu Samal and Abu Sudd sneaked into the military area under the cover of darkness and carried out the strikes. Thereafter, they fled through the Fort's rear wall and escaped in autorickshaws.

Since Ashfaq said four of his accomplices had already left for Kashmir, but one was still holed up in the hideout at Batla House, police reached the spot at about 3-30 a.m. Samal was not there at that time, so police waited for him.

At about 5-20 a.m., when he was seen entering the house, police knocked on his door. When Ashfaq opened fire, they broke the door open, barged in, and gunned him down in one of the bedrooms.

In the encounter, which lasted about 20 minutes, nearly 65 shots were fired. One AK-56 rifle, 28 used cartridges, 30 live cartridges and two hand-grenades were recovered from the house.

Further, at Ashfaq's instance, police recovered one AK-56 rifle, four hand-grenades, two magazines and 32 cartridges from near the Red Fort.

**A trail of disbelief: Page 13**

## A SECURITY ALERT

WHAT HAPPENED AT the Red Fort last week and Monday's car bomb blast near the Army headquarters in Srinagar are only to be expected at this juncture. The first anniversary of the hijack of an Indian Airlines plane to Kandahar has gone by and the ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir has been extended for a month by the Prime Minister. The militants opposed to the ceasefire and the proposed dialogue with Kashmiri groups were bound to have their say at this juncture. True, the Red Fort may not be the fort it was under Shah Jehan. But it is still a symbol of India's power and continues to be the venue of the annual Independence Day address by the Prime Minister. Some of the army divisions are housed in the area and top officers, including those who have served recently in Kashmir, reside in the huge complex. It is also a bazaar and tourist spot, all rolled into one. What remains unclear still is whether the two militants, who sneaked into the Red Fort last Friday and killed three persons, including two soldiers, had a bigger agenda. Was their mission foiled by these intruders on their path? Perhaps they could have come with a bigger agenda to create panic in the national capital. But their brazen entry into the Red Fort and the gunning down of three persons were a clear signal to the Centre and meant a lapse in security as well as intelligence.

The Delhi police have claimed a breakthrough in this case, with an encounter reported at Jamianagar in South Delhi in the wee hours of Tuesday. One Pakistan national has been killed and another taken into custody, the authorities declaring both of them members of the Lashkar-e-Taiba. Following up on the weapons left behind by the militants at Vijay Ghat, the police raided a residence in Jamianagar, where these two militants were holed up. It is not certain yet whether they were the militants actually involved in the storming of the Red Fort or were only associates in the plot. Only a thorough-

going investigation can provide insights into this daring operation. One thing is clear. The security and intelligence agencies have not yet learnt their lessons. Despite the Kargil affair and the Subrahmanyam committee report, there is just no coordination among the various agencies. It is perhaps the worst in Delhi, where the defence services function independently, the Intelligence Bureau and the RAW have their own show and the Delhi police watch helplessly until they are called in to take up the investigation. They could not enter the Navy Chief's residence or the Red Fort, until the Navy and the Army took their time to conduct their own inquiry.

The car bomb explosion outside the highly-guarded 15 Corps headquarters in Srinagar comes barely eight months after an attack in the same area. Two Pakistan-based militant outfits have claimed responsibility for this explosion, but it is still not clear whether there was a suicide bomber in the car or whether it was blown up with a remote-controlled device. Whatever the impact or whoever caused it, the message is the same — a bid to defeat the ceasefire and abort the nascent peace process. If the Centre remains committed to pursuing peace, it must ignore these attempts and focus on strengthening both security and intelligence. Protecting monuments and symbols of India's power like the Red Fort must figure high on the Government's priority. It is equally important to shore up security in all defence installations and headquarters. There are bound to be more challenges to the peace initiative. The Republic Day is round the corner. It may not be possible to thwart every militant attempt, but it is about time that the revamp of the security and intelligence agencies was taken up seriously by the Centre. The Group of Ministers, reviewing the Subrahmanyam committee report, must decide quickly and get into the action mode.

THE HINDU

27 DEC 2000

# Lashkar man behind fort attack killed

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Dec. 26. — Delhi Police killed a Lashkar-e-Taiyaba militant early today and arrested another last night in Delhi, both suspected to be involved in the Red Fort attack.

Ashfaq Ahmed (28) and his wife were arrested from Ghazipur last evening. His accomplice Abu Shamal, who killed the army men in the Red Fort, was shot dead by the police in Okhla, South Delhi.

Four other militants, involved in the Red Fort shoot-out, have fled the Capital, but are believed to be in the country.

Four days after two Lashkar militants stormed the Red Fort and gunned down two army men and one civilian, the police claimed success with the arrest of Ashfaq Ahmed.

At a press conference this evening, the Special Commissioner of Police (administration), Mr RK Sharma, said Ahmed, a Pakis-tani and a Lashkar militant, had received enough funds to carry out his activities.

He married an Indian woman, Rehmana, a resident of Ghazipur, on 8 December.

Mr Sharma said Ahmed, who was running a computer training centre in Okhla, was an "experienced Lashkar militant sent by the ISI to Delhi in May 2000."

The police said Ahmed had arranged for the other five to

stay at different places in Okhla.

A raid was conducted at the Batla House, Okhla, where Abu Shamal was holed up. The terrorist, in his early twenties, was gunned down after he fired

## PMO security stepped up

NEW DELHI, Dec. 26. — Delhi Police has stepped up security at the Prime Minister's office after the Lashkar-e-Taiyaba's reported threat of targeting the PMO.

The Special Commissioner of Police (security & operations), Mr RS Gupta, said today: "It is not a recent threat and we have taken effective steps. We have increased vigil throughout the city and have people's security in mind as well." In December 1999, Hafiz Sayeed, a Lashkar militant, had said the "Islamic or green flag" would be unfurled in the Red Fort. — SNS

at policemen.

"When the police team knocked at the door, he fired from inside and the police party retaliated resulting in his death. One AK-56 rifle, 28 spent cartridges, 30 live cartridges and two hand grenades were seized" from the house. The militant's body was taken to AIIMS.

There were many bullet marks in the room where the

militant lived, and in the small gallery and the kitchen.

Inside the room, a full-sleeve khaki shirt similar to the one worn by paramilitary personnel, was found. A rucksack, some quilts and three suitcases were thrown around. There were some bloodstains on the floor and a wall.

"It was *sehri* (time for the pre-dawn meal during Ramzan) and I heard the gunshots. We kept our doors closed and tried to soothe our children who started weeping. We were all tense," said Dr GM Bhat who lives in a neighbouring house.

The militants kept a low profile and no resident admitted to knowing them.

The police have identified the other four militants, also Pakistanis, as Abu Sadd, Abu Sakhar, Bilal and Haider. Police in other states have been alerted about the four, Mr Sharma said.

After the police team arrested Ahmed he admitted to having masterminded the Red Fort attack, Mr Sharma said. The militants did a reconnaissance of the Red Fort area in advance.

On 22 December, the six militants entered the Red Fort on the pretext of seeing the Light and Sound Show between 7.30 and 8.30 pm. They had concealed weapons with loaded

■ See FORT: page 8

THE STATESMAN

27 DEC 2000

# 'Mastermind' held in Delhi

One associate shot dead in encounter, four still on the run



HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, December 26

THE DELHI Police today claimed to have made a significant breakthrough in the case relating to the shooting inside the Red Fort with the arrest of an alleged militant. An associate of the man arrested was killed in an encounter with the police in Okhla, South Delhi, early this morning.

The man arrested was identified as Ashfaq Ahmed. His associate, Abu Shamal, was shot dead when he reportedly challenged the police's special cell personnel. The police said both men were Lashkar-e-Tayyeba activists.

Three persons were killed when LeT militants went on a shooting spree inside the Red Fort last Friday.

Special Commissioner of Police RK Sharma told mediapersons this evening investigations, conducted in close co-ordination with central intelligence agencies, revealed that Ashfaq had slipped into the country through the Kashmir border and was living here under cover since May.

Ashfaq was detained for questioning late last night in Ghazipur in East Delhi. A Chinese made pistol, six live rounds and some incriminating documents were recovered from the house, the Special CP said.

Ashfaq had been primarily sent to Delhi to set-up a safe hideout for LeT militants to conduct subversive activities here. To adopt a local identity Ashfaq had set-up a computer institute, Knowledge Centre, in Ghafoor Market in Okhla," Mr Sharma said.

For this, officials said, Ashfaq had invested around Rs 6 lakh. He had reportedly has Rs 5 lakh in his bank account and Rs 2.5 lakh in his wife Rehana's. Ashfaq is said to have told the police that he carried out the "Red Fort operation" with his five others - Abu Shamal, Abu Sadd, Abu Sakhar, Billal and Haider.

Ashfaq reportedly told his interrogators that on Friday the group entered the Red Fort around 7.30 pm on the pretext of watching the sound and light show.

During the show there was a power failure and under the cover of darkness, Abu Shamal and Abu Sadd slipped into the Army area. The other four took up positions around the Red Fort. Both Abu Shamal and Abu Sadd carried out the shooting at three places inside the Red

## 'PMO our next target'

THE Lashkar-e-Tayyeba said that the Prime Minister's Office in New Delhi would be its next target. In a release issued by the outfit to some media offices in Srinagar, it said the "Mujahideen will storm Prime Minister Vajpayee's office in New Delhi". It did not specify the time for carrying out such an attack. Following the threat, security around the Prime Minister's office and residence and all other sensitive places in the Capital was beefed up. **Detailed report on page 9**

Fort. They escaped thereafter by scaling the eastern boundary wall. While on the run, the two militants dumped their weapons to avoid

suspicion," Mr Sharma said.

During the questioning, Ashfaq reportedly disclosed while four of his associates left Delhi after the shooting, he and Abu Shamal stayed back. Ashfaq led the police team, to the house in Batla Nagar area in Okhla.

On being challenged by the special cell, Abu Shamal, allegedly started firing indiscriminately. The police said the militant fired 28 rounds. The police also say they have recovered an AK 56 rifle, 30 live rounds and two grenades.

Mr Sharma told the media Ashfaq also led the special team to a marshy spot behind the Red Fort where an AK 56 rifle, four grenades, two live magazines and a knife were recovered.

Ashfaq and his wife Rehana have been remanded in police custody for 14 days.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

27 DEC 2000

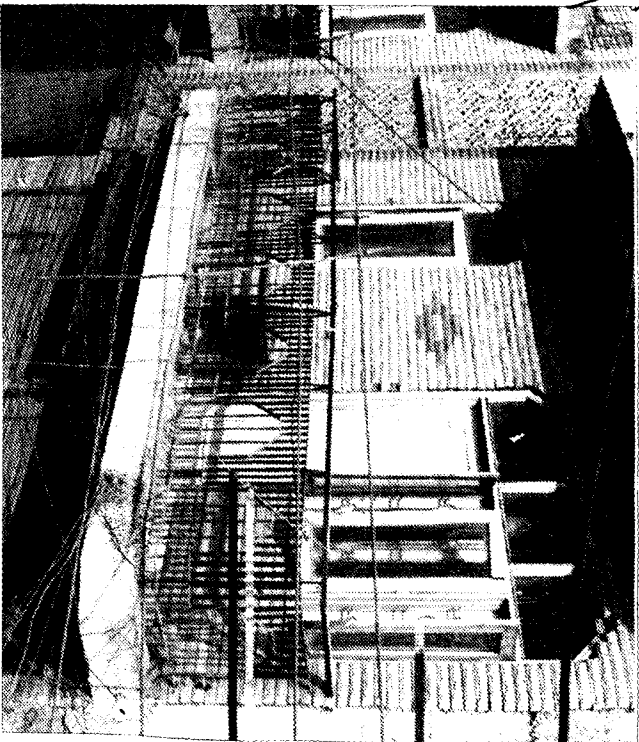
# Militants called up 'bosses' before fort raid

NEW DELHI, Dec. 26. — The ISI-backed Lashkar-e-Taibaba militants involved in the Red Fort attack on 22 December night, allegedly made about a dozen calls from the Capital to their 'bosses' based in Pakistan. All the calls were made from a mobile phone the militants had, a senior police officer of the Delhi police's special cell told **The Statesman**.

These revelations followed sustained police interrogation of the Lashkar militant, Ashfaq Ahmed, whom the police claim to have arrested last night.

The same mobile phone reported by was used by the militants to call up the Delhi office of an international news agency minutes after the Red Fort attack, claiming responsibility for it.

The militants also called up a Srinagar-based newspaper later that night for the same purpose, the police officer said. The other calls, to chalk out the modalities and to procure arms and ammunition for the attack, were made before the Red Fort shoot-out, the arrested militant reportedly



(Left) The house at Okhla, New Delhi, where Pakistani militant Abu Shamaal was killed by police on Tuesday. (Right) A crowd gathers in front of the house after the shoot-out. — PTI



told the police.

"The militant said all the calls were made to some static phones in Islamabad to 'senior' members of his outfit based there," the police officer said. The Lashkar chief, Zaki-ur-Rehman, is based in Pakistan. He keeps shifting bases

between Pakistan-Occupied-Kashmir and Islamabad, an intelligence officer said.

The Special Cell is taking the help of the intelligence agencies to verify the militant's claims. The Army is also involved in the interrogation. "We are still at the prelimi-

nary stage of interrogation, we expect to extract a lot more information from the militant," the police officer said.

The police also recovered an AK-56 assault rifle, four hand grenades, two magazines and 32 cartridges from the Red Fort today after the militant

told them where these were hidden.

Incidentally, when a police team had reached the ramparts of the Red Fort, some residents of the area "mistook" it for a police encounter there and called up some newspaper offices.

## QUESTIONS:

(Continued from page 1)

The ballistics report will show whether Abu had at all fired at police. The post-mortem will tell how many times he was shot, and in which parts of his body. It will ascertain if he had sustained any other injuries.

Police say they fired at him only after he did so. But they haven't said if he opened the door to fire at them.

One comes across a small gallery, about 8 feet long, immediately after entering the flat; on the left is the room which the man reportedly stayed in and on the extreme right is a kitchen. The entire flat is only about 25 feet long.

Local people heard gun shots for about 15 minutes and the bullet marks on the walls and ceilings in the flat suggest that the policemen chased Abu inside the flat for that long while he kept firing at them.

The efficacy of the "combing and search" operations conducted at the Red Fort after the Friday night shoot-out is also questionable. Another weapon, an AK-56 rifle, was found in the area today.

## False trail before the pounce

NEW DELHI, Dec. 26. — Delhi Police were following a false trail when they picked up two Kashmiris from Seelampur yesterday for questioning on the Red Fort shoot-out.

Special commissioner of police Mr RK Sharma told reporters today that the two, identified as Mushtaq and Ghani Bhatt, weren't involved. They were released late last night after being interrogated by a team comprising officers of the Special Branch of Delhi Police and the Intelligence Bureau at Seelampur police station.

The two were caught at noon after they boarded a bus from Seelampur. They told police that they were the sons of an apple grower from Kashmir and had come here to sell their produce in the Azadpur Subzi Mandi. They had gone to Seelampur to inquire about correspondence courses.

Police suspected them as they carried a map of Delhi on which they had highlighted the Red Fort, etc.

Only after their agent clarified matters, they were released. — SNS

9-DJW  
40-15  
28/12

# Lashkar plan to set up base in Delhi foiled

By Our Staff Reporter

**NEW DELHI, DEC. 27.** When the Special Cell of the Delhi police raided the LIG flat of Ashfaq Ahmed's in-laws at Gazipur in East Delhi early on Tuesday, they not only uncovered the Red Fort conspiracy of Lashkar-e-Taiba but also foiled an 'almost perfect plan' of the outfit to set up base in Delhi.

"Ashfaq Ahmed had been sent to Delhi by the Lashkar-e-Taiba to set up a base and he had already managed to do so. Over a period of time, it would have become really difficult to nab him as he had married an Indian girl and procured several documents to prove his Indian identity," an officer of the Special Cell said.

Police sources said Ashfaq had married Rehmana with the sole purpose of getting a fool-proof cover for his operations. He had seen a matrimonial advertisement placed by Rehmana in one of the newspapers and approached her.

"Since Rehmana's father is not alive, and she and her mother are dependent on her brother and a sister, Rehmana decided to marry

Ashfaq, who had claimed to be from Jammu. The marriage was solemnised in Muslim traditions and the only person to participate from Ashfaq's side was his friend, Rashid, in whose name the G-73 Muradi Road, Batla House flat, had been taken on rent by Ashfaq."

Sources said Rehmana, who is 32 years old, probably decided to marry Ashfaq, who is just 28, because of the money he promised to give her. "He deposited Rs. 2.8 lakhs in her bank account and also paid her Rs. 50,000 in the form of Nikahnama." The money was an investment for Ashfaq, who wanted to obtain an Indian "identity" quickly. "Over a period of time, he would have got children and a family and then he would have been able to travel to Pakistan freely."

To buttress the argument, sources said Ashfaq had already procured a driving licence from the Ghaziabad transport authority and a Delhi ration card.

Having already set up a computer centre in New Delhi, he now intended having his own

house. And as such he had already paid some advance for a flat at Indrapuram in Ghaziabad.

Ashfaq was unable to stay with Rehmana in the flat as other male members used to live there.

Rehmana, the police sources say, was entirely dependent on her brother and sister. Incidentally, her sister, Farzana, is a security officer at a five-star hotel and is a high profile person, who knows a number of senior politicians, including a Governor. She has separated from her husband, working in the Ministry of Health.

## Additional charge

**NEW DELHI, DEC. 27.** The Kerala Governor, Mr. Justice Sukhdev Singh Kang, will hold the additional charge of Andhra Pradesh Governor, a Rashtrapati Bhawan communique said today.

The President, Mr. K. R. Narayanan, appointed him to discharge the functions of the Andhra Pradesh Governor, Mr. C. Rangarajan, during his leave, in addition to his own duties, the communique said. — PTI

THE HINDU

28 DEC 2000



# Army may cut down troops in Kashmir

SRINJOY CHOWDHURY  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Dec. 30. — The Army may reduce some troops in J&K without cutting on its strength along the international border and the Line of Control or troops needed to fight militants.

The move comes after "indications" that Pakistan may withdraw some troops from the border. Pakistan has two brigades or about 6,000 soldiers as reserve. Several Pakistani soldiers had been sent back earlier.

About a few thousand reserve Indian soldiers could be sent back, officials said. Over a period of time, the number could be raised to 2,000.

The troops sent back could continue their normal training for conventional situations.

But an Army Liaison Cell spokesman said he wasn't aware of a plan to cut down on

troops in J&K.

At present, there are about 3,00,000 Indian soldiers in J&K and a large number of them are deployed along the border and the LoC. Of late, fewer troops are being sent as replacement.

cularly Lashkar-e-Taiyaba and Jaish-i-Mohammed are still very active in the Valley even if others like the Hizbul Mujahideen and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen seem to have quietened down.

No troops can be withdrawn from the LoC or Siachen Glacier.

The 8 Division, which moved to the Valley from the North-east several years ago, are now part of 14 Corps — they too cannot be moved out.

About a third of the Army's troops is posted in Jammu and Kashmir. A large number of troops are also deployed in the North-east.

It is feared that this could be a strain on the Army. As a result of the demand for troops, the Army had to send officers and men of the Armoured Corps, artillery and air-defence to fight in the Valley along with the infantry.

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There are about 10,000 troops in anti-militant forces — Victor, Delta, Kilo and Romeo. These troops cannot be reduced as some militant groups, parti-

THE STATESMAN

31 DEC 2000

## THE GSLV LAUNCH

DR. K. KASTURIRANGAN, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), while not ruling out the possibility of a moon mission, rightly pointed out that any decision would have to consider seriously not only the technical feasibility but also its utility from the science and technology angle. With the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) having already carried out a number of manned Apollo flights to the moon since 1969 including landings on its other side which could never be seen from the earth, there has to be some overriding consideration for justifying any attempt by India to organise such a mission nearly three decades later. Dr. Kasturirangan has, therefore, laid the stress on the proposed GSLV (Geostationary Satellite Launch Vehicle) project as well as the INSAT 3-C and other launches.

While almost the entire country has hailed the achievements of the ISRO scientists in taking India to space, one has also to take note of the cynicism over whether a developing country with scarce resources should incur such a huge expenditure on space projects. The answer should be that only programmes like the GSLV, which is exclusive to India, could give the Indian scientists direct access to knowledge which has so far remained unknown, and dependence upon borrowed information — courtesy the NASA — could never be as satisfying. It is very unlikely that any other project India has launched so far could compare with the magnificence of the GSLV programme aimed at placing a satellite in a geostationary orbit synchronous with the earth. When the GSLV gets off the ground, hopefully early next year, the supreme confidence it imparts to the scientists and engineers of the ISRO should be as much a major gain as the actual achievement itself. In fact, the skills which have gone into the pro-

gramme involving hundreds of jobs, big and small, prior to putting the GSLV into space are proof of how so much confidence has already been generated.

A familiar gibe at space scientists is about their gazing at the stars all the time and their indifference to so much that remains to be done on earth. Yet another manifestation of such cynicism is about the efforts going into space flights not being very different from reinventing the wheel. Such a view overlooks the fact of how all scientific discoveries seemingly confined to specific and even deceptively inconsequential areas turned out to be very basic for a further understanding of phenomena which might otherwise continue to baffle scientists. In the case of the GSLV project, Dr. Kasturirangan has made it quite clear that apart from the space vehicle remaining in a geostationary orbit, the purposes it serves will be down-to-earth right from the beginning. It could help the ISRO with its proposed land use mapping mission for getting data on the extent of the land available and its break-up into agricultural use and forestry. The satellites launched by the Intelsat may have already gathered all these data but there is no reason why India should depend upon them when its GSLV could beam so much and even more to meet its specific needs and the data so mobilised would be part of the country's space knowledge. Of still greater importance is the fact that the GSLV project, which is nearing completion, is the achievement of scientists and engineers who have chosen to remain in India and were not lured by the greener pastures abroad. Brain drain might have impoverished this country more than it could have but for these men and women, most of whom remain unknown to their people and perhaps cherish anonymity. //

THE HINDU

6 NOV 2000

# Govt. set to give forces more teeth with 'swadeshi' CDS

By Dinesh Kumar  
The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: The proposed appointment of the chief of defence staff (CDS) in the soon-to-be restructured defence ministry will be a two-year rotational post that will have both administrative and operational powers, a highly-placed defence ministry source told this newspaper on Monday.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, the source also said the task force headed by Arun Singh had not recommended that the CDS be upgraded to a five-star post. Nor was there any proposal for restructuring or integrating the present regional commands of the three services, it said.

The long-pending demand for restructuring the defence ministry was "definitely going to be fulfilled", the source said, adding that "this would end delays and ensure that the armed forces were associated with the decision-making process." However, the brick-by-brick architecture of the intended restructuring was still being worked out, the source said, adding that the defence secretary may be redesignated to an elevated post of "principal defence secretary".

The task force had categorically stated that the defence ministry must be restructured. Significantly, the bureaucracy, often accused of having a vested interest in maintaining the status quo, is being cir-

cumvented as decisions on restructuring (and all other issues) are being taken directly by the group of ministers (GoM).

The GoM is currently deliberating on the recommendations forwarded by the task force on intelligence, which includes setting up an integrated defence intelligence agency (DIA). The recommendations of the task force on defence management will be the last to be discussed and fi-

decision, so that their implementation can begin before the end of the current financial year.

Asserting that the CDS will be "substantial rather than symbolic", the source said that the current rotational post of the chairman, chiefs of staff committee, was only a "presiding post without authority". However, the CDS, which is "swadeshi", and not based on either the U.S. or UK model, would be a specific and centralised post with both administrative and operational authority that would have a greater role in coordination and decision-making. The three services, however, will continue to be headed by their respective chiefs.

The source also said that the defence ministry had decided to establish a tri-services joint command at Port Blair instead of the earlier proposal to set up a far eastern naval command. This, too, would be headed on a rotational basis. "Given the nature of the islands, poaching in the area and the strategic importance of the archipelago, it was considered a better option to establish a joint command," the source said.

This would involve upgrading surveillance, communication, monitoring, patrolling facilities and also force levels belonging to the army and air force. Currently, the navy and the coast guard dominate the Port Blair-based FORTAN (Fortress Andaman and Nicobar) which is headed by a vice-admiral.

## GUNNING FOR A CHANGE



- Chief of defence staff will be a two-year rotational post
- CDS will not be based on U.S. or UK model
- Group of ministers will finalise proposals by month-end
- Ministry plans tri-service joint command at Port Blair

nalised, the source said.

The GoM is expected to finalise its proposals on all four task forces by this month-end. The recommendations will then be forwarded to the Prime Minister and eventually put before the cabinet for a final

THE TIMES OF INDIA

7 NOV 2000

"GODS IDEA AFTER ALL."

## HEADLINE Mission controlled

THERE HAS been both good news and bad news for India's space effort this week. If there was some worry over the crippled satellite, INSAT-2B, it has been more than offset by the official announcement that the country's maiden Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) will be ready by next spring. The INSAT-2B is a satellite which has outlasted its designed lifespan and there is no need to hit the panic button at its reported loss of control, since the snag would only marginally affect its telecommunications, broadcasting and meteorological functions. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) troubleshooters will now probably find a solution by shifting the systems on board the damaged satellite to transponders elsewhere, such as those on the INSAT-3B. Space scientists routinely plan early in the design stage when, and how, satellites will end their lives, and the INSAT-2B is no exception. It was supposed to be in orbit for not more than seven years when it was lofted into space in July 1993, and therefore should not be a cause for concern if it were now to drift out of orbit and burn up in the upper reaches of the atmosphere.

One should, however, appreciate the success story of the INSAT system, which is one of the largest domestic communication satellite systems in the world. Since it was commissioned in the early Eighties, it has vastly improved telecommunications, radio networking, television broadcasting and disaster management services in the subcontinent. India's credentials as a country with poorly developed infrastructure facilities never had a chance of being burnished as long as it depended wholly on the US-built INSAT-1 series of satellites. In fact, the country could only muster less than a dozen transponders in the early stages when two of the first four INSAT spacecraft failed, leaving it eventually to the indigenously designed and built INSAT-2 series to keep ISRO's space effort moving.

ISRO's Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV) programme has certainly come a long way since its modest beginnings in 1963 when small sounding rockets were sent up from the Thumba rocket launching facility near Thiruvananthapuram. The country has had just four failures in its dozen-odd launches so far, which is above average performance when compared to countries like China and Japan. Indian space scientists can be proud of the fact that advanced *avatars* of the SLV (such as the Polar SLV) have been regularly rolling off the drawing boards, and it will certainly be champagne time when the GSLV roars off its launch pad sometime early next year.

THE HINDU ... AN TIMES

8 NOV 2000

# stops release of 51 Veerappan associates

District and Sessions Judge, Mysore granting bail to the accused is also set aside," held a three judge Bench comprising Mr Justice S P Bharucha, Mr Justice M B Shah and Mr Justice Y K Sabharwal.

"Further, the order of the Designated Court at Chennai dated 16 August 2000 is set aside. The orders of the Government of the State of Tamil Nadu passed on 14 August 2000 under the National Security Act in respect of Sathyamurthy and three others revoking the orders of their detention under the National Security Act are also set aside. The writ petitions are made absolute."

On the point of locus standi of the father of the victim (Abdul Karim) and public interest petitioners the court held that, "The locus standi of the present appellant has not been contested before this court. Had it not been for his appeal, a miscarriage of justice would have become a fait accompli."

On the proceedings regarding the accused facing trial the court has held, "The accused may have individual grounds for challenging the continued prosecution of the TADA charges against them or for bail. They shall be free to adopt proceedings in that regard, if so raised. Such proceedings shall be decided on

their merits and nothing that we have said in this judgment shall stand in the way."

Mr Justice S P Bharucha delivered a 44-page judgment on behalf of the Bench and Mr Justice Y K Sabharwal gave a separate but concurring judgment giving additional reasons for setting aside the order, dropping TADA charges.

The court has directed the advocate-on-record to withdraw all documents which were filed (in the sealed cover) in the court from the court master tomorrow but has asked for the affidavit of Mr Davaram filed by Mr B L. Wadhwa to remain in the registry.

The court maintained that

the decision of the Government of the State of Karnataka was that in view of its apprehension of the unrest that would follow if any harm were to come to Rajkumar, it was better to yield to Veerappan's demand and to withdraw the TADA charges against Veerappan and his associates, including the accused. The court held that even in this context the public prosecutor should have considered the implications before he decided to exercise his discretion in favour of such withdrawal.

On application of withdrawal under section 321 of CrPC the court held that the applications did not state why Special

Public Prosecutor apprehended a disturbance of the peace and normalcy of the border area. There was no basis in the application upon which the Designated Court could conclude that the Public Prosecutor had applied his mind to the relevant material and exercised discretion in good faith and that the withdrawal would not stifle or thwart the course of the law and cause manifest injustice.

"It is clear from the fact that the demands were conceded overnight and the Government of State of Karnataka did not ascertain the legal position that it was not for it but for the Court to decide

upon the release of persons facing criminal prosecutions," the bench stated

"The Public Prosecutor has to be straight, forthright and honest and has to admit the arrangements and inform the court that the real arrangement is to ultimately facilitate the release of these accused from judicial custody by not opposing the bail after the withdrawal of TADA charges," said Justice Y K Sabharwal. "No court of law can be a party to such a camouflage and deceit in judicial proceedings. The application were not made in good faith," he added.

■ Another report on page 8

THE STATESMAN

8 NOV 2000

## Insecure Council

Even as the debate over instituting a separate office for the national security adviser continues, the popular verdict has come in. In an opinion poll conducted by Indiatimes.com, an astonishing 84 per cent netizens cast their votes for an independent national security adviser. The poll will hopefully restore some balance to a topic that is of vital importance to the future of India's security management. Unfortunately, as so often happens with any debate in this country, this too has taken on the colours of a personality clash. The irony is that the man at the centre of the controversy, National Security Adviser and Principal Secretary Brajesh Mishra, has himself conceded the logic of the two posts having to be separate. In a TV interview he acknowledged that this had eventually to happen. To be sure — and this is the point Mr Mishra made — both posts require that the incumbents enjoy the confidence of the prime minister. Indeed, this would seem to be the primary reason why Mr Mishra holds both. Nor can it be denied that this arrangement has facilitated him to play a key role both in India's emergence as a nuclear weapon power and in securing its place in the changing international strategic paradigm. There is no dispute about any of this. However, the real issue relates to enabling the National Security Council to play the role assigned to it, which is to advise the government (the Cabinet Committee on National Security) on long-range security assessments and to prescribe broad strategies for different ministries. This requires the assistance of a professional staff.

Ministries preoccupied with day-to-day concerns are simply not equipped to carry out long-range assessments on the basis of which advice needs to be formulated after discussions among the members of the NSC, their supporting staff, the service chiefs, intelligence chiefs and heads of related organisations like atomic energy, space and other high technologies. The NSC has not been able to function on the above lines in the absence of a dedicated secretariat for the NSA. Mr Mishra has had to rely on his foreign service background, his long interest in the affairs of national security and his experience as head of the BJP's foreign affairs cell. Even so, in the long run, the NSA must have organisational backing; if its structure, competence and procedures are not institutionalised, the experiment of setting up the NSC could come to an end with the present NSA's tenure. Mr Mishra's success as NSA will be assessed not only by his undoubted achievements while in office but by whether he leaves behind an active NSC with established procedures and staff that will effectively support future NSAs. Mr Mishra's successors may not be in a position to bring to their office the background and experience the present incumbent possesses. What is under discussion is not the present NSA's role but the future of the NSC after him. Surely, the prime minister and his NSA cannot adopt the attitude "After me, the deluge". As matters stand, the NSC's secretariat is none other than the former joint intelligence committee. Neither in its present form nor with additional staff can it be expected to perform the role of the office of the NSA. Setting up an adequately and appropriately staffed secretariat for the NSA cannot be postponed any longer.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

14 NOV 2000

# India receives first batch of upgraded Mi-17 helicopters

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, NOV 15

THE Indian Air Force (IAF) has acquired the first batch of 40 upgraded Mi-17 helicopters from Russia. As part of the post-Kargil modernisation of the IAF, India had ordered the helicopters which can be used both for attack and transport roles in high-altitude areas.

The Mi-17 1-V has advanced avionics, a more powerful engine (for high altitudes) and design modifications for high speed operations, sources in IAF headquarters today said.

This is the first augmentation in the IAF helicopter fleet since Operation Vijay in Kargil. "Our task had doubled post-Kargil delivering



supplies to troops whose numbers went up almost three times since the operation. But our resources were static. This is the first induction in terms of resources and we were eagerly looking forward to it," an official said.

The IAF will have two squadrons of the helicopters in Kargil and Siachen sectors by the

end of 2001. The helicopters will give a decisive edge to the IAF once they are armed with 12 VikhrM (AT-16) medium range air to surface missiles with capabilities to destroy ground based threats.

"The strike power of the IAF in high-altitude operations will get a tremendous boost with the laser-guided weapons with a capability of destroying targets within a range of 10 kilometers," sources said.

The design modifications, include an enlarged side door for quick embarkation and capabilities of carrying up to four tonnes of load. Four helicopters have been delivered in the first batch and have been assigned to the Western Air Command.

INDIAN EXPRESS

15 NOV 2000

## More accused in Purulia case

NEW DELHI, NOV. 19. Almost five years after the sensational Purulia armsdrop incident, the CBI is likely to file a supplementary chargesheet in the case naming at least three more accused including a Hong Kong-based businessman alleged to be the financier for consignment of deadly weapons. *G. V. Nielsen*

Widening the scope of investigations, the agency claimed to have gathered evidence against the Hong Kong-based businessman and two Danish nationals who were alleged to have taken part in meetings where the arms purchase and the delivery process were finalised, CBI sources said.

The sources claimed that the Hong Kong-based businessman, who apparently provided money for the entire operation of airdropping arms in Purulia on December 17, 1995, was "most likely the most knowledgeable person" about the individuals and interests behind placing of the arms delivery orders.

He was also the "frontman" for a company which bought the an-26 aircraft that dropped the arms, they said, adding that the main accused, Niels Christian Nielsen alias Kim Davy, was given power of attorney to operate the aircraft for the company.

The businessman was also questioned by Interpol following a request by the CBI, though the agency awaited further evidence to establish conclusively his role in the armsdrop.

THE HINDU

20 NOV 2000



# Centre declares ceasefire in J&K for Ramzan

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

TOP SECRET

NEW DELHI, Nov. 19. — The Centre today extended another olive branch to militants in Jammu and Kashmir by announcing unilateral ceasefire during the Ramzan month.

The government believes some insurgent groups would reciprocate this by coming forward for talks.

The Prime Minister announced the decision at the NDA meeting. Yesterday, the Cabinet Committee on Security had concluded the need for a ceasefire to give peace a chance.

The government has instructed security forces not to initiate combat operations against militants during the Ramzan period, which starts towards the end of this month, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee said.

Mr George Fernandes said the government would weigh the situation and decide whether or not to extend the ceasefire. The decision had come after talking to various organisations, he said, but refused to name them. People in the valley were fed up

NEW DELHI, Nov. 19. — The ceasefire decision was kept under wraps till the NDA meeting. Even the special home secretary, Mr TR Kakkar, in charge of J&K affairs, was unaware of it. "I had absolutely no idea about the decision", he said. "*Aisa hona nahin chahiye lekin ho gaya* (This shouldn't have been, but then, it did)." — SNS

with violence, he added.

A PMO source said the ceasefire would demonstrate India's commitment to peace and raise its stature internationally.

This is the first time that the government has suo motu made such an offer since militancy erupted in the state 11 years ago. The earlier ceasefire was declared by the Hizbul Mujahideen, which later called it off.

The ceasefire decision came soon after today's meeting between Mr Farooq Abdullah and Mr Vajpayee. "During my visit to Srinagar on 3 August, I had

underscored the need to resolve all issues in the spirit of *insaniyat* (humanism). Mine was a sincere appeal for cooperation to bring end violence," Mr Vajpayee said. "We have continued our efforts to normalise the situation in the state and to hold talks with all those who are prepared for a dialogue."

The ceasefire move was welcomed by all political parties across the state except the RJD, which termed it a "virtual surrender" to ultras, adds PTI.

The J&K chief minister said the gesture would go a long way in promoting peace. "I hope militants will respond to the offer and end violence."

The CPI-M state unit called it a "bold initiative" that would help in creating an atmosphere for dialogue.

The former Union home minister, Mr Mufti Mohammed Syed, also welcomed the announcement.

The J&K People's Front president, Mr Fazil Haq Qureshi, who mediated the dialogue with the Hizbul, said it was a meaningful gesture.

INDIAN EXPRESS

20 NOV 2000

# DEFENCE INTELLIGENCE

## The Need For Modernisation

By GURMEET KANWAL

IT is a measure of the callousness with which national security is viewed in India that for almost one year after the successful eviction of Pakistan's regular army from the areas where it had intruded in Kargil, most writing in the print media has concentrated on deflecting blame from one intelligence agency to another rather than ensuring that an intelligence failure does not take place again. The need of the hour is to learn the correct lessons and build the capabilities necessary to cope with the security challenges confronting India.

All national intelligence organisations and those of the armed forces need to form a common front to ensure that there is cohesion and coordination.

The Kargil Review Committee has carried out an analysis of the ills plaguing the intelligence system. In the ongoing "proxy war" scenario, the line between conventional military operations and low intensity conflict (LIC) is blurred. In such a situation, accurate intelligence assessments provide vital inputs for policy-making, governance and military operations to counter terrorists of foreign powers and successfully police the nation's borders. Since the responsibility for the collection, collation, analysis, synthesis and dissemination of external intelligence is solely that of the Research and Analysis Wing, major users of this intelligence like the political decision-makers and the armed forces are dependent entirely on the inputs provided by RAW. Strategic intelligence relating to military deployment, movements, the location of operational and strategic reserves and military plans and intentions of India's adversaries is also provided by RAW.

### MISCONCEPTIONS

The Directorate General of Military Intelligence has only a marginal trans-border intelligence acquisition role. This is limited to the collection of field intelligence about the adversary's forward deployment and the state of his defensive fortifications. Most military intelligence personnel are engaged in counter-intelligence activities that seek to prevent Indian soldiers from falling prey to the machinations of unscrupulous and subversive elements and enemy intelligence agents and to ensure the security of documents and material. This is borne out by the relatively modest single-digit budget of the DGMI for 1999-2000. Only this year, post-Kargil, the DGMI's budget has been reportedly hiked to low double digits out of the present defence budget of approximately Rs 58,000 crores.

This compares most unfavourably with the military intelligence budgets of the United States and Israel, among others, as a percentage of their defence budgets. Human intelligence (humint) networks require immense patience, painstaking effort and substantial investment.

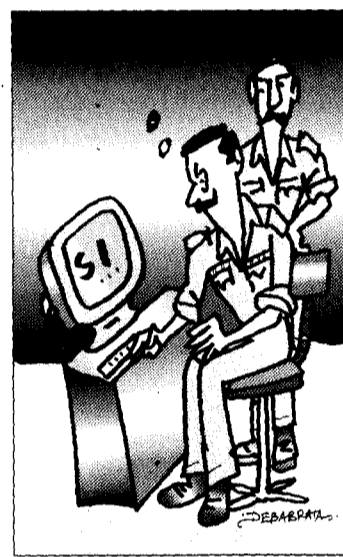
Another common misconception is that the defence attaches in India's embassies and high commissions abroad are an independent channel at the disposal of the DGMI and that it is their task to provide relevant intelligence inputs to their respective intelligence agencies. The post of defence attaches is largely a ceremonial one and they have neither the responsibility nor the staff necessary for intelligence gathering.

Nor are funds made available

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to them. If a defence attache engaged in espionage is apprehended by the police in the host country, it will be a major diplomatic and military embarrassment and lead to his immediate expulsion. The only area in which the defence attaches can contribute is in collecting information openly available in the public domain. Open source information is rapidly gaining in importance as a reliable source of intelligence due to the worldwide trend of greater transparency in military matters.

However, careful analysis is necessary to synthesise intelligence from such information as well as to sift



disinformation from it.

The only real capability with the DGMI regarding external intelligence is that of unobtrusive electronic eavesdropping through the Signals Intelligence branch. The SI people have provided invaluable information about the infiltration plans and routes, hideouts, arms caches, casualties and the morale of militants in J&K and the northeastern states throughout the last decade of externally-sponsored militancy and terrorist violence by listening to radio broadcasts. The foresight shown in planning the development of this independent capability has stood the army in good stead.

However, due to the rapid advances made in communications, security and the introduction of digital communications technology, SI equipment has the fastest obsolescence rate in defence equipment, and requires to be frequently upgraded and even replaced, with concomitant capital costs having to be incurred. For such requirements, the competent financial authorities must be empowered to approve the expenditure expeditiously.

### REQUIREMENTS

It is now time for action and there is a need to adopt a bipartisan approach to the strategically sensitive issue of intelligence gathering. As the Kargil Review Committee has pointed out, "The resources made available to the Defence Services are not commensurate with the responsibility assigned to them."

There are distinct advantages in having two lines of intelligence collection and reporting, with a rational division of functions, responsibilities and areas of specialisation... the Indian threat assessment is a single-track process dominated by RAW... The Indian intelligence structure is flawed since there is little back-up or redundancy to rectify failures and shortcomings in intelligence collection and reporting...

The desirability of setting up a National Security Agency at the apex level and the establishment of an integrated tri-service Defence Intelligence Agency need to be considered dispassionately. In this age of sophistication in camouflage

and concealment and with the advent of credible dummies, it is a universally acknowledged fact that military objects like tanks, guns, missile launchers, bunkers, tents and even cook houses in the field can be successfully identified only by specialist military intelligence operatives.

The Indian armed forces have no option but to invest heavily in such personnel. Intelligence is a function of command and needs to be recognised as such. It is only logical that the commander who is entrusted with the overall responsibility for military operations must be given the wherewithal to independently obtain the intelligence inputs necessary for the planning and conduct of those operations at the tactical and operational levels of conventional war and LIC. At the strategic level, intelligence acquisition must undoubtedly remain a joint national effort between the armed forces and RAW.

It is to be hoped that the task force on intelligence headed by Mr GC Saxena, one of the four task forces constituted by the Group of Ministers appointed by the Prime Minister to examine the recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee, has holistically evaluated the essential requirements of military intelligence.

If future Kargils are to be avoided, these requirements must include dedicated military satellites, airborne optical and electronic surveillance capabilities, unattended ground sensors to be placed in remote areas, and independent humint networks, all under an integrated tri-service DIA.

### RESPONSIVENESS

Setting up of a DIA will not only streamline military intelligence gathering and provide comprehensive intelligence assessments, it will also fit in with the proposed plans to integrate the Services Headquarters with the Ministry of Defence.

It has been reported that the task force has recommended the establishment of a National Intelligence Board. Members of the NIB would include the head of the DIA, and the chiefs of RAW, Intelligence Bureau, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence and a representative of the Central para-military and police forces.

The scale and sophistication of non-intrusive electronic intelligence gathering ability of the armed forces also needs to be upgraded to keep pace with the diverse voice and data communications capability of India's adversaries and the mercenary terrorist outfits spawned by them. The inputs from military intelligence and RAW as also those from the IB and the intelligence agencies of CPMFs and the state governments, must be collated, synthesised and analysed at the NSA to arrive at net intelligence assessments for long-term national security decision-making and contingency planning. Comprehensive intelligence assessments must then be disseminated to all concerned on secure, dedicated communications channels.

In the prevailing strategic uncertainty, new threats are emerging. Narco-terrorism, illegal migrations, undermining of the economy through fake currency and organised smuggling, cyber-warfare and mushrooming fundamentalist Islamist madrasas are some of them.

Only an advanced and responsive intelligence system can accurately identify these threats in advance to enable timely counter-action rather than knee-jerk reactions. As the old saying goes, forewarned is forearmed.

# Mi-8 wreckage recovered

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Nov. 20. — The IAF this afternoon succeeded in retrieving the wreckage of its Mi-8 helicopter that had gone down in the marshes of the Rann of Kutch on 12 November killing seven persons. It had been on a reconnaissance mission, and was carrying a team of BSF officers in addition to its aircrew.

A Mi-26 helicopter, one of the most capable heavy-lift choppers in the world, was used to extricate the wreckage from the marshes in a delicate and skillfully executed operation. By retrieving the wreckage without its breaking up, the IAF hopes to establish the cause of the mishap.

The Mi-8 had descended to about 50 metres above the water to take a close look at three boats, suspected to be of Pakistani origin, when it had suddenly crashed into the marshes. Since it had no prior mechanical problems, it is widely assumed that it was shot down by either a shoulder-fired missile or well directed small arms fire.

Since the mishap took place at a distance of over 15 km from the Pakistan border, the general opinion is that the attack had come from one of the boats, which makes an across the border attack theory appear unlikely.

The wreckage was transported to the Bhuj IAF station, where it will be thoroughly examined by experts of the Court of Inquiry that has been appointed to probe the mishap.

The plans for the wreckage retrieval and its execution had taken a week, as care had to be taken to avoid damaging the "evidence", and also to minimise the risk to the Mi-26, entrusted with the extraction.

THE STATESMAN

21 NOV 2000

# No backtracking, asserts PM

The Times of India News Service in Kashmir would be successful if the government went ahead with firmness and humility.

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee on Thursday declared in the Rajya Sabha that the unilateral ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir would not be withdrawn despite terrorist attacks and killings.

The PM's assertion came when the Shiv Sena, an NDA partner, referred to the killing of five truckers in J&K on Tuesday and sought the withdrawal of the truce offer.

The issue of the J&K killings was also raised by the Sena in the Lok Sabha during question hour despite speaker Balayogi's repeated pleas to Sena members that they could take up the issue during zero hour. Finally, the Sena members walked out of the Lok Sabha in protest.

The PM snubbed the Sena MPs and said, "I can understand the Sena's reasons for opposing the ceasefire, but it should restrain its reaction." An optimistic Mr Vajpayee said that the peace initiative

Admitting that the ceasefire decision was fraught with risk, the PM said that the government had thought it over and was fully prepared. He also reminded members that a ceasefire did not mean that the security forces would not be on full alert.

Earlier, external affairs minister Jaswant Singh also clarified that a ceasefire only meant that the government would not initiate any new armed action. "The government is still unrelenting on externally-aided terrorism. Pakistan is sending criminals from its jails across the border with offers of money and a reduction in their jail terms. Earlier, too, every movement towards peace was destroyed. The recent massacre is another such instance," Mr Jaswant Singh said.

The debate in the Rajya Sabha was triggered at the instance of the opposition after the Sena's Adik Shirodkar demanded the withdrawal of the ceasefire.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

2 11 NOV 2000

## TAKES TWO TO TANGO

29/11 The fire will not cease SFB

WHAT is this Ramzan ceasefire about? The Home Minister says militants are being offered leisure time because the security forces achieved some kind of supremacy in October. This sounds strange, because it doesn't fit into any kind of peace-making logic. The Hizbul supreme commander Salahuddin is right when he says they can go back to killing as soon as the Ramzan is over. Is this a gesture, aimed at public opinion abroad and in the Valley, a demonstration of India's good intentions, of its respect for all faiths, thereby putting the onus of any disturbances during the Islamic holy month on the militants? Possibly, but in that case the government is surely in possession of intelligence anticipating violence. If one likes the smell of conspiracy, one could say that the wedding at Islamabad, a grand reunion of Kashmiri separatists and *jihadi* groups, may have been used to hatch something of which the government has got whiff and, therefore, wants to make its moves first. Ramzan is a religious occasion, it can be exploited to project the situation in Kashmir as a communal confrontation. The foreign *jihadis* would be particularly interested, but curiously the ceasefire, this time, extends to them as well. In other words, there is no attempt any longer to differentiate between Kashmiri and non-Kashmiri outfits, as there was in the first peace initiative in August. One heard the Defence Minister saying the ceasefire would not apply to the Line of Control. Did the question ever arise? All this is speculation, but much of it is plausible, given that the last thing the militants are interested in is a stalemate. If there are voices favourable to this ceasefire, they are yet to be heard. So far, only Abdul Ghani Lone seems to see the government's point in the ceasefire. A genuine peace initiative would have to involve the leadership on the other side which, as Advani himself pointed out, cannot do anything on its own. Farooq Abdullah says bigger things will follow once the ceasefire is accepted, but why wasn't that made clear at the outset?

What about the Kashmiris? Are they going to be impressed? It would be fairly accurate to say that most of them must be sick and tired of the fighting by now, especially since the realisation has dawned that Kashmir cannot be prized out of the Indian Union by force of arms. They would have preferred a more concrete political proposal from the government which would have got these groups to the negotiating table so that at least the prospect of peace could be seen shimmering on the distant horizon. It is unlikely that they are interested in the Government's commitment to "*insaniyat*" (humanitarianism), since it takes two to play that particular game. The other side — as some of the Hurriyat leaders have made amply clear — is not willing to talk without Pakistan, the Government is not willing to talk until the fighting stops and that is where the matter stands, ceasefire or no ceasefire.

# Ceasefire will not be withdrawn: PM

9-241 9 AM  
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24/11  
**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**

NEW DELHI, Nov 23. — The Ramzan ceasefire offer to militants in J&K won't be withdrawn despite provocations like yesterday's killing of truck drivers on the Jammu-Srinagar Highway, the Prime Minister told the Rajya Sabha today.

A calculated risk had been taken, it would be seen through courageously, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee said.

Rejecting the Shiv Sena demand for withdrawal of ceasefire, Mr Vajpayee said such a move would be like falling prey to the machinations of those opposed to progress towards peace in the troubled state. Sena members raised a similar demand in the Lok Sabha and boycotted the proceedings there.

The Prime Minister said while he could understand the sentiments of the Shiv Sena, it should desist from endangering a major initiative. He was confident that the ceasefire would generate positive results.

Mr Vajpayee was responding to

a discussion that followed the Sena raising its demand during zero hour. The Sena was isolated; members from other parties welcomed the move but regretted that adequate precautionary measures had not been taken by security forces. Attacks on soft

losing popular support and that was confirmed by the varying responses to the offer from militant groups. Those potentially positive signs could not be ignored; it was important to try and spread the desire for a dialogue, he said.

The security forces had not lowered their guard, but fool-proof arrangements were very difficult to guarantee, Mr Vajpayee said. The truckers were killed at a lonely spot, the assailants had worn what would appear to have been Army uniforms to mislead the people.

**USA plea to Pak:** The USA has asked Pakistan and Kashmiri militant groups to respond positively to the ceasefire, saying the move is a harbinger of a sustained dialogue that could bring peace, adds PTI from Washington.

**Hurriyat offer:** The Hurriyat chairman, Mr Abdul Ghani Bhat, said his outfit was willing to hold talks with militant leaders provided the Centre allowed it to do so.

## LASHKAR MEN HELD

MUMBAI, Nov. 23. — Four Lashkar-e-Taiyaba militants were nabbed in a dawn raid in Thane today. The ultras' mission — codenamed "Bharat ka sitara bujhao" — was to kill Mr Bal Thackeray, and blow up the RSS headquarters at Nagpur and vital installations like Bombay High. — SNS

■ Details on page 8

targets ought to have been anticipated, they said.

The offer had been a "calculated step after prior preparation," Mr Vajpayee said. It was a move aimed at building upon the desire for normality expressed by most people of J&K.

There were signs of militancy

■ More reports on page 8

THE STATESMAN

24 NOV 2000

# Trace hijackers, FBI tells Pakistan

Mubashir Zaidi  
Islamabad, November 24

HF-20  
25/11  
**T**HE US Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) has asked Islamabad to help trace the five men who hijacked the Indian Airliner 814 last December.

The FBI claimed that the hijackers entered Pakistan after securing the release of three prisoners, including Maulana Masood Azhar on December 31, 1999, the weekly *Friday Times* reported in its latest edition.

Quoting sources in the military establishment, the weekly newspaper said that after helping India's Central Bureau of Investigations (CBI) in investigating the hijacking of IC 814, the FBI has finally regis-

tered a case in the matter.

"India and the US have already signed a broad agreement to collaborate in meeting the challenge from terrorist outfits," the paper said. However, the sources said that the military government has expressed its opinion to the FBI that it was Indian secret service RAW that staged the hijacking.

But the FBI seems convinced that the plane was actually hijacked by Kashmiri militants. "The Bureau had to register the case since one of the 167 passengers on board, Jeanne Moore, was a US national. Moore was the passenger who asked for a coffin when the hijackers were making a list of demands

to the Indian Government.

"After being released, the FBI interviewed her to establish the identity of the hijackers. She was also debriefed about the week-long happenings inside the plane when it was stationed at the Kandahar airport," the paper said.

The report disclosed that the FBI has approached Pakistan govern-

ment to help it in determining the identity of the hijackers.

FBI's Islamabad-based Legal Attaché's office has reportedly contacted Islamabad with the request.

The report said that while making a request for cooperation, the US Government has conveyed to Islamabad that the FBI has already

examined 11 crew members and 156 passengers of the hijacked plane, besides recording their statements. "Of them, 95 passengers have identified the hijacker, Ibrahim Attar, who boarded the plane under the name of A A Shiekh, 91 identified Bhola (Z A Mistri), 102 pinpointed Berger (S A Qazi), 120 Doctor (S A Sayeed) and 92 Shankar alias Shakir. Even the ticketing agents from whom the hijackers had allegedly bought the tickets have reportedly identified them," the paper claimed.

It said that the FBI investigations are convinced that the hijackers belonged to Kashmiri militant outfit Harkat-ul Mujahideen that has gained notoriety as the most ruthless and communal organisation active in Jammu and Kashmir.

## IA-814 Hijacking

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

25 NOV 2000

# Ramzan truce: Army guns fall silent

Arun Joshi  
Jammu, November 25

THE ARMY today announced suspension of operations against all militant outfits in the Valley but said the soldiers will retain the right to retaliate in self-defence. The suspension is to also cover search-and-cordon operations.

The army also said the ceasefire may be extended and continued indefinitely if everything "goes well".

The suspension of counter-insurgency operations came two days before the Prime Minister's unilateral Ramzan ceasefire goes into effect.

The GOC-in-C, Northern Command, Lt. Gen. H. M. Khanna said, "Offensive actions will be suspended against all the militant outfits across-the-board, irrespective of their stance, standing and political leanings."

"The Army will go in for cessation of all offensive operations and will exhibit restraint and resilience as well as not retaliate despite provocation."

But the General warned the militants that moving around with arms would be treated as a hostile act. "Our troops retain the right to retaliate in self-defence". Any action threatening the safety of troops and installations would also be answered appropriately, he

## WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

- Ceasefire to apply to all militant groups across-the-board irrespective of their stance, standing and political leanings.
- Army ordered to cease all offensive operations and to exhibit restraint and resilience.
- Cordon, search and seek & destroy operations to be suspended.
- Armymen asked not to retaliate despite provocation.
- Troops, however, retain the right to retaliate in self-defence.
- Pending to continue in the past and to maintain confidence among people.

## MOUNTING DEATH TOLL

(No. of killings since ceasefire announcement on Nov 23)

| Date   | Chickens | Militants | Security personnel | Total |
|--------|----------|-----------|--------------------|-------|
| Nov 20 | 4        | 1         | 0                  | 5     |
| 21     | 7        | 0         | 0                  | 7     |
| 22     | 5        | 0         | 0                  | 5     |
| 23     | 1        | 3         | 1                  | 5     |
| 24     | 15       | 7         | 2                  | 24    |
| 26     |          | 11        | 3                  | 40    |

added.

Troops along the border and LoC have been asked not to provide any excuse to Pakistan to escalate the situation.

The government's strategy is apparently based on the optimism reflected by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference that described the ceasefire as "a positive change in the thinking of the Indian leadership".

The people in the Valley are happy that there would be no cordon-and-search operations this time enabling them to offer extra prayers during the month of Ramzan without being harassed. They hope that things remain quiet from militants' side as well.

A peace march led by Javed Hussain Shah, MLC, on the streets of Srinagar was an indication of

the growing desperation for peace in Kashmir.

"People want peace. There is no doubt about it and we want the ceasefire to succeed beyond Ramzan", Javed told The Hindustan Times.

That rally of 200-odd people in Srinagar was followed by a massive rally yesterday in Sonawari where thousands said "yes" to ceasefire and "no" to guns.

However, in the Jammu area, local RSS and Shiv Sena units have come out strongly against the latest government move.

Jammu and Kashmir BJP chief Daya Krishan Kotwal reiterated his demand that the security forces be given free hand to deal with the militants.

"The forces should not be ordered to stay quiet when mili-

tants continue to kill and maim our people".

Meanwhile, troops were called out in all sensitive areas of Doda district even as other parts of Jammu witnessed demonstrations against spate in minority killings in the state.

Curfew was clamped on Kishtwar where widespread demonstrations had been planned to protest against the killing of five Hindu passengers in Pattai Mahal jungles last evening.

The security forces carried out a flag march in Kishtwar and Bhaderwah, two of the sensitive towns, to avert any communal trouble.

## Pak rider



PAKISTAN IS prepared to respond to India's offer of the Ramzan ceasefire if

"India improves upon the steps it has earlier taken." This was the impression that Hurriyat leader Abdul Gani Lone got, during his talk with Pak Chief Executive Gen. Musharraf in Islamabad on Saturday.

The meeting took place at the invitation of Gen. Musharraf.

UNI, Islamabad

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

26 NOV 2000



# NATIONAL SECURITY

## New Mindsets Must Precede New Structures

By KEITH FLORY

FOR over two decades now have there been constant calls for revamping the system of higher defence management, improving the quality of advice tendered to government on security related issues and a realisation that these extend far beyond the military domain. Some experiments have been attempted, there have been a plethora of committees examining the various strands of security, yet the results are yet to manifest themselves in positive light. When things go wrong there is a tendency to trace the cause to systemic failures.

Often lost in the somewhat vociferous discussions within what terms itself the "strategic community" is the importance of an upgrade in the quality and intellectual honesty among those manning various systems and agencies responsible for maintenance of national security. Accusing fingers are pointed aggressively, blame is apportioned, nobody cares to look within. Systems and structures are only as good as the people who operate them, nobody is prepared to admit shortcomings either individually or collectively.

### QUESTIONS

Even the recent debate over the efficiency of the National Security Council was in danger of getting side-tracked into a dispute over the principal secretary to the prime minister doubling as the national security adviser. Many saw it as a K Subrahmanyam vs Brajesh Mishra affair, and it remains to be seen whether the former's effort to dispel that notion will clear the air. The Council had yet to establish its credentials, it got sucked into murky waters.

The same could hold true of the reported moves to institute a chief of defence staff system. Already there are signs of the proposal getting bogged down in disputes between different wings of the armed forces, even though all three made common cause in demanding reduction of the role played by the bureaucrats in the ministry of defence. The Air Force has made it clear that it sees little merit in the CDS system and points out that the suggestion had been rejected several years ago by one of its most eminent leaders — the late Air Chief Marshal P C Lal.

Seemingly valid arguments can be advanced for or against any system, but listening to them generates a gut-feeling that for all the pontification about the criticality of integration, when it comes down to doing something concrete turf battles erupt. Would the CDS have authority over the chiefs of staff? Would that system lead to joint commands and if so from which service would the overall commander be

picked? Would those posts go to each Service by rotation? Those are some of the questions being asked.

Maybe the answers will be available when the Group of Ministers dealing with the review of the security apparatus makes public its recommendations. Unfortunately enough of a stink has already been raised and it will take a rare act of strong will by the political leadership to enforce the system it thinks best. To be sure the resistance will not come only from the section of the Services that feels it is not getting the best deal, Opposition parties will join the

battle — only to make conditions uncomfortable for the government. And that would have happened if the seating arrangements in parliament had been in the reverse order.

The forces do have a case when complaining that every proposal they submit to the ministry of defence is subjected to a process that begins with a lowly desk officer, and often that person is completely ignorant of military matters. There is also much validity to the argument that acquisition processes are so cumbersome that funds often "lapse" at the end of each fiscal. Even among bureaucrats there is a view that much of the work done by the ministry should be transferred to the Service Headquarters. If that were done, one of them quipped recently, he too might be able to leave office at 5 p.m. and head for the golf course.

### RELUCTANCE

The tongue-in-cheek to that observation is not to be missed. For all the complaining of the uniformed community that legitimate political control has degenerated into bureaucratic control it must be remembered that the bureaucracy does serve as a cushion. The forces seldom directly face the flak for any shortcomings. And as the same bureaucrat pointed out, the headaches military officers suffer when dealing with the Defence ministry would multiply if they had to go straight to his colleagues in the Finance ministry.

The forces would be all too happy if the bureaucratic element of their management were eliminated, but how effective would they be in managing their own affairs? Who would play mediator in the many inter-service disputes that arise? Take one example,

the Air Force's tirade against the navy having aircraft carriers. Or the Army wanting to expand its aviation corps? The lone attempt at an integrated command came unstuck when the Air Force broke loose from the command structure in the Andaman and Nicobar islands. True there would also be examples when the Army or Navy was culpable.

What really stands in the way of better management of defence affairs is the inability of the forces to abandon their individual turfs — an Army-run canteen store in Delhi Cantonment was recently closed to personnel of the other two services in the wake of the IAF police having allegedly misbehaved with the local GOC — and effect a deal of harmony in their functioning. They all swear that modern warfare is an integrated affair, but are most reluctant to integrate their own activities. Integration as a concept is limited to showing the door to the bureaucrats.

Until the forces teach themselves to get their act together and shun petty rivalries there can be no qualitative improvement in defence management.

### "EMPIRES"

A CDS system may be thrust upon them should the government opt in its favour and display enough muscle to shove it down their throats at the risk of an adverse backlash. Yet all that would be avoidable if the top brass of the forces were able to work out their own system of management that contributed to integrated planning and operational action. They have yet to display the will to do so, it could mean the destruction of the "empires" they built up over the years.

In the absence of integration within the forces it would be naive to believe that the process could be elevated to the level of an effective national security council that provides government with long term inputs. Much would hinge on the military input and while a CDS system might ensure "single point" input will it be a consensus opinion of the forces? Structures will prove inadequate unless mindsets change.

The events in Kargil last summer have necessitated attempts at reviewing security arrangements and the reports of four task forces are before the government. Their recommendations would certainly point to improvements in systems that have proved to be inadequate. Yet the real test will lie in the extent to which all those involved in the security effort — politicians, defence personnel, bureaucrats, intelligence agencies etc — are prepared to sacrifice their individual interests and come up with a comprehensive new road map. The present is a rare opportunity, not to be missed. Unless we await another bloody nose to set the "grey matter" in motion.



The author is Special Representative, The Statesman, New Delhi.

# J&K truce given a chance

9-  
Arun Joshi/PTI  
Jammu/New Delhi, November 27

SECURITY FORCES today suspended all combat operations in Jammu and Kashmir in line with the Ramzan cease-fire, hours ahead of commencement of the holy month. However, forces were on high alert to thwart any attempt by militant groups to carry out violent activities in the state, which remained peaceful.

The security forces suspended their operations since the wee hours today in line with the announcement made by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to observe a month-long cease-fire in the state, sources in New Delhi said.

To security forces in the Valley, the cease-fire is an exceptional

447-1  
28/11  
challenge amidst hopes of people who hope violence would be at its lowest during the holy month.

After the cease-fire was announced and the army outlined the specifics, all wings of the security forces were clear about their task. Lt Gen H M Khanna, General Officer Commanding in Chief of Northern Command said that while there would be no offensive operations during the month, it did not deny the soldiers their right to retaliate in self defence.

"No withdrawals will take place from any where," a senior officer of the northern command told *The Hindustan Times*. "There will be no vacuum".

It meant that there would be no change in the deployment of troops. "To us, the cease-fire is

more of non-initiation of combat operations and nothing else," the officer said. The Border Security Force and Central Reserve Police Force chiefs in Kashmir also echoed the officer's reaction.

The BSF and CRPF personnel work differently from that of the army because these forces man bunkers and guard countryside and go in for regular patrols.

These paramilitary forces patrol the heart of the towns and interact regularly with the people in their areas. Their task is more difficult because they have to deal with the situation much more delicately.

BSF Chief in Kashmir G S Gill is emphatic about the cease-fire and its implementation. Gill said, "Instructions would be obeyed in letter and spirit".

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

200

# Guns fall silent in J&K, prime peace

By Law Kumar Mishra *J. N. Beemish*  
The Times of India News Service

JAMMU: All combat operations against militants in Jammu and Kashmir were suspended from the early hours of Monday, but security forces remained on guard in case some militant groups tried to vitiate the atmosphere with attacks on soft targets. The Valley remained virtually incident-free.

In another development, the Pakistan Rangers have agreed not to fire on civilians on the Indian side of the border at the request of the Border Security Force. BSF inspector general V.N. Rai said on Monday that an understanding in this regard was reached during the four-day meeting between the Pakistan Rangers and the BSF in Lahore last week.

J&K chief minister Farooq Abdullah said the ceasefire would bring India and Pakistan closer and may even lead to a dialogue between the two countries. Security forces have asked the militants to notify the nearest army camp about their location, he said.

Contacts have also been established with various militant groups with the aim of persuading them to resume talks with the Centre. Abdul Majid Dar, who had announced the ceasefire on behalf of the Hizbul Mujahideen on the last occasion, is camping in Srinagar. The militant groups are said to be awaiting clarifications from the government and instructions from their own leaders.

J&K home minister Mushtaq Ahmed Lone said, "The militant groups in Kashmir and Pakistan have responded positively and they may come for talks soon." Highly-placed sources told *The Times of India* that leaders of the militant outfit, Hizbul



**HAWK AND THE DOVE: Union home minister L.K. Advani releases a dove after inaugurating a visitors' gallery at Wagah on the Indo-Pak border on Sunday. Punjab chief minister Prakash Singh Badal is on the right.**

Mujahideen, based in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, had held parleys with other hardcore groups on Monday and had tried to convince them of the need to respond favourably to the PM's ceasefire offer.

The CM told *The Times of India* here on Monday that a stage might soon come when he might visit Pakistan and the ceasefire

declared by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee could be extended beyond the holy Ramzan month. Mr Abdullah said, "The unilateral ceasefire will help end violence in the state and create an atmosphere conducive for Indo-Pakistan talks. The Centre will soon announce major steps to restore peace in the state.

"Mr Vajpayee has taken a bold

step by declaring the unilateral ceasefire. Nobody expected a unilateral ceasefire from him, but Mr Vajpayee has demonstrated that India always believes in peace and can go to any extent in its mission to restore peace," Mr Abdullah said, adding, "I am sure the militants will soon give up the gun and join the mainstream."

► See Edit: Mission Peace, Page 10

THE TIMES OF INDIA

28 NOV 2000

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2000

110-12

## SECURITY IN ITS ENTIRETY

29/9

WITH THE TASK forces expected to submit their reports by the weekend, the Group of Ministers (GoM) set up by the Centre will review national security in its entirety in the wake of the large scale intrusions by Pakistani troops and foreign mercenaries along the Line of Control in Kashmir. These four task forces were mandated to study the various recommendations of the Subrahmanyam Committee, which went into the causes of Kargil and identified some of the loopholes in security management. The task force on border management has already submitted its report and this may be a more clear-cut picture. While the international boundaries on the West are laid down to a point, the problems arise mainly on the Line of Control (LoC). In the north and the east, the Centre has decided to fence the borders with Bangladesh, where another kind of problem persists — refugees. Even if it could take another six to seven years, this is something that needs to be done with a bilateral commitment.

It is the reports of the other three task forces — internal security, management of defence and intelligence — which could identify many grey areas and weaknesses. Internal security becomes a huge canvas and will have to address highly sensitive issues including cross-border terrorism, infiltration of ISI agents, susceptibility of ex-servicemen to become conduits of information, left-wing extremism in some States and insurgency in the Northeast. Though each of them has to be dealt with separately, an overall strategy and co-ordination has to be evolved in consultation with the States. Defence management is something that is better left to the uniformed forces and the Ministry of Defence, but it is imperative for the Defence Minister to complete the restructuring of the Ministry that he promised to do last year. There has to be a qualitative improvement in the interaction and relationship between the armed forces and the bureaucrats running the Ministry.

Intelligence has emerged as the nucleus of

any security management system, but appears to be the main chink in the armour today. The Subrahmanyam Committee has called for a greater appreciation of the role of intelligence by all agencies. It is imperative for various agencies such as the Intelligence Bureau (IB), the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and the Directorate-General of Military Intelligence to share the information they have with one another and piece together the whole picture. Inter-agency interaction and coordination have been sadly lacking and they have grown up more as rivals, competing with one another instead of complementing one another. In the words of the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, "The present structure and processes in intelligence gathering and reporting lead to an overload of background and unconfirmed information and inadequately assessed intelligence. There is no institutionalised process for periodic interaction at levels below the JIC."

When the reports of the task forces come in, the GoM has to sift through their recommendations and draw up a blueprint for security management in the country. Having set up a National Security Council and appointed a National Security Adviser, it is incumbent upon the Government to make the best use of them. More than the council and its advisory body, its Secretariat has to become fully functional, bringing together experts and officers from all the forces. Its first priority must be to collect all the reports and intelligence from various agencies, analyse and interpret them and pass them on to the relevant arm of the Government to act on. They must also be able to collect, assess and utilise the intelligence reports from the States, share information with them and frustrate the plans of conspirators and saboteurs. The GoM has its task cut out. Instead of presenting just another report to gather dust, it must address the shortcomings identified by the Subrahmanyam Committee.

# Ceasefire may be called off midway

SHIVNATH JHA  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Nov. 29. — The possibility of calling off the Jammu and Kashmir ceasefire midway in the month of Ramzan can't be ruled out, if Intelligence reports are any indication.

Senior home ministry officials today said the IB and defence Intelligence operatives have reportedly forwarded reports to the home ministry, saying the government should reconsider the "Ramzan ceasefire" because it's likely to create a major problem for the armed forces in in Kashmir Valley.

The Intelligence reports have reportedly expressed serious concern over the growing threat to the armed forces during the ceasefire.

Outfits like Lashkar-e-Taiyaba, Al-Badr, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and Jaish-e-Mohammed have not only rejected Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee's ceasefire offer but also threatened to intensify militant activities during the period.

A senior PMO official said that "after the announcement of suspension of Army operations against the militants in J&K by the Prime Minister on 19 November, the entire exercise is being done by the home ministry. The PMO is not directly involved in day-to-day matters".

The GOC-in-C, Northern Command, Lt-Gen HM Khanna, complying with Mr Vajpayee's ceasefire announcement, had said: "Offensive actions will be suspended against all the militants outfits across the board, irrespective of their stance, standing and political leanings. The Army will go in

for cessation of all offensive operations and will exhibit restraint and resilience ... (and) not attack despite provocation."

The home ministry's special secretary, Mr TR Kakkar, also looking after J&K affairs, however, denied having any information on the ceasefire being withdrawn midway. "I don't have any knowledge," he said.

But then the ceasefire decision too was kept a secret till the NDA meeting on 19 November. And even Mr Kakkar was unaware of it till it became public. "It should not have happened that way, but it did," Mr Kakkar had said.

**Pakistan warned:** Mr Jaswant Singh today said India had resolved to defeat Pakistan's attempts to damage peace prospects in J&K. "The government is aware that Pakistan is continuing with its efforts to scuttle the peace process," the foreign minister said in the Lok Sabha during question hour.

**'No problems':** The Army will have no problems because of the ceasefire, the Army chief, General S Padmanabhan, said in Pune today, adds PTI. "The Army is not vulnerable to such decisions... it will not undertake any operations that would create problems for the people, but would surely reciprocate attacks of militant groups."

Speaking at the 99th passing out parade of National Defence Academy, he said the recent killing of three jawans in a mine blast should not be considered an outcome of the ceasefire. Militant groups carry out such attacks to hamper peace in the region and they would be dealt with a high hand.

STATESMAN

9 NOV 2001

# Defence officials for Masood wall against Taliban

SRINJOY CHOWDHURY  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Oct. 12. — The survival of Ahmed Shah Masood, Afghan rebel leader, and the continuation of his fight against the Taliban could help reduce pressure on the security forces fighting militants in Jammu and Kashmir.

The defence establishment rates Masood as a fierce fighter and an honest man who is "sticking around" in Afghanistan and fighting the Taliban. There is a belief that he should be "propped up".

"He has genuine principles and is not an adventurer who will make some money and disappear," a senior official said.

Senior officials believe that as long as Masood survives, the ISI, which is supplying equipment and advisors to the Taliban, will not pay much attention to Jammu and Kashmir.

But Masood's units were defeated in a few recent battles (with ISI's help) and the area under his influence has shrunk. Bad as the situation may be, things could be worse

for the Army if Masood falls and the ISI with Taliban decides to concentrate fully on Jammu and Kashmir.

Masood fought against the Soviets when they invaded Afghanistan in 1979 till they left in 1987, and then against

Pakistan-supported Taliban, being a supporter of the Rabbani government. There are reports that the Putin government, alarmed by Taliban's ideology, is thinking of keeping an

eye on pro-Masood forces. This was discussed when the Russian President visited India recently.

So far, the Pakistani strategic aims appear to have largely succeeded. The Taliban are largely in control in Afghanistan. The attacks from POK by militants have kept much of the Indian Army occupied either on the border to stop infiltration or in the Kashmir Valley fighting a difficult battle. This has led to steady losses of officers and men, which though not very serious, are causing concern.

More importantly, there was the Kargil invasion which was foiled at great cost.

## COPS KILLED

JAMMU, Oct. 12. — Three India Reserve Police cops, abducted by militants on Tuesday from the Draba area of Poonch, were shot by their captors yesterday. Their bodies were found in the Suran river. — PTI

# DEFENCE RESEARCH

## Indigenous Efforts Have Mostly Failed

**T**HERE is a flip side to the euphoria over the decks being cleared for acquiring a host of modern weapon systems, and that process is not limited to the arrangements fine-tuned during the Russian President's visit. Those acquisitions only confirm that none of the major indigenous development efforts figure in the operational profile of the armed forces in the immediate future. Almost every acquisition proposal has a link with a foreign endeavor.

By KEITH FLORY *5/10*

The Defence Research and Development Organisation laments that only those two projects come under critical scrutiny, its other achievements are ignored. Yet even the missile programme has not delivered, at least not the missiles that would fit into actual operations in the current environment.


The long-range Agni-I and

There are attitudinal problems too. It is an open secret that the Air Force never threw its full weight behind the LCA lest it wind up being saddled with a donkey, as some say the army will be when talking of the MBT. By and large, the relationship between the forces and the DRDO/Defence Production units is one of buyer-seller. The DRDO would complain that the forces demand "everything" in an Indian product,

The new Raymond Shop has everything  
A starting range of Raymond fabrics  
Or  
not quite Premium shirts and  
endeavor  
link with a  
The Raymon  
Lindsay Street,  
opens to

**snis**  
TM

Every purchase is a bonus



report from the concerned officials, she said. Media reports have suggested that the Integral Productions, in which Mr Mahajan's wife and son have major financial interests, owes Rs 6.5 crore to the Prasar Bharati.

Mrs Sushma Swaraj



Mrs Swaraj is here in connection with the BJP's ongoing "achievement week" being celebrated on completion of one year of the NDA government, and to join the BJP's state executive committee meeting beginning tomorrow.

COME HOME TO THE STRAS

**THE PROPOSITION**

9:30PM

**PROPOSITION**

## Cong demands Mahajan's resignation

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, October 20

THE CONGRESS has demanded the resignation of Union Information Technology Minister Pramod Mahajan and has sought an impartial probe into the alleged largesse bestowed by Prasar Bharati on his son's company.

Expressing concern over the allegations of misuse of power by Mahajan, AICC spokesperson Anand Sharma said it was shocking that the minister's son's programme Truck Dhina Dhin was telecast in brazen violation of the rules.

"The programme was commissioned when Mahajan was the Information and Broadcasting Minister and despite the fact that the company owed Rs 6.5 crore, it was not discontinued. Moreover, the revelation that this was felicitated by the Prasar Bharati CEO is even more shameful," Sharma said.

Termining it as a case of nepotism and misuse of power, Sharma said Mahajan's attitude was cavalier and had showed it consistently in his functioning as a Minister. "This was also underscored by the highly controversial Sankhya Vahini project. These present allegations are yet another addition to his report card, considering the persistent charges levelled against him in the past," he added.

Calling for an impartial probe into the matter, Sharma said Mahajan was treating the Union Government as his fief.

## Plan to post fresh IAS recruits to J&K

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, October 20

DEFENCE MINISTER George Fernandes today said that the Government was considering a proposal to post newly-appointed Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers in Jammu and Kashmir in a bid to revamp the administration in the strife-torn state.

Talking to mediapersons at Rashtrapati Bhawan after the gallantry awards presentation, Fernandes said: "We are thinking of posting just passed out batch of IAS to Jammu and Kashmir for a period of one or two years."

Fernandes, who along with Home Minister L.K. Advani is scheduled to address the Unified Command in Srinagar on Sunday, said the issue of posting of IAS officers would be given a "concrete" shape after discussions with Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah.

"Many of the IAS recruits undergoing training have volunteered to serve in J&K after passing out of the academy," the Minister claimed. Young officers were rightly suited for such postings since they could give their best and also "they did not have families".

Fernandes, who is scheduled to visit forward posts in Himachal Pradesh and Siachen, said the security forces had done a "commendable job" in the Valley in the

last three months by neutralising a Pakistan-backed terrorists. On reports of Chinese incursions in Arunachal Pradesh, he said while he was not aware of any such incident, he would verify the reports.

Among the nine Kargil heroes honoured by the President at the ceremony today, two were honoured posthumously. Major Prabhu Nath Prasad, Naik B.M. Singh (posthumously), Naik G.K. Rai, Subedar Nirmal Singh (posthumously), Subedar Tashi Chhepal, Lt. Col K.P.R. Hari, Captain S.B. Ghildiyal and Captain Deepankar Kapoor Singh were all awarded Vir Chakra.

Sepoy Imliakum of 2 Naga Battalion was awarded Mahavir Chakra. The nation's second highest wartime gallantry medal was bestowed on him for "exemplary courage, valour and determination" in fighting Pak intruders in Mushkoh Valley in July last.

Northern Army Commander Lt Gen Hari Mohan Khanna and Southern Army Commander Lt Gen N.C. Vij were among 33 senior officers to be presented Sarvottam Yudh Seva Medal and Uttam Yudh Seva Medal, respectively. While Lt.Gen. Khanna was at the helm of affairs as Northern Army Commander during the Kargil conflict, Lt. Gen. Vij was the Director General Military Operations.




THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

21 OCT 2000



# India reworks Russian missile to make it N-capable

**THE BRAMHOS MISSILE**



- Supersonic, virtually impossible to shoot down
- Can carry a conventional warhead (DRDO trying to make it N-capable)
- Range 300 km (being increased)

Can be launched from ships and aircraft. May be fitted to advanced frigates, and later to other warships, aircraft and submarines. Reflects Navy's efforts to influence war on land.

SRINJOY CHOWDHURY  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Oct. 21. — The *Bramhos*, a new supersonic missile, is virtually impossible to shoot down and can be launched from ships and aircraft and made to carry a nuclear warhead.

The Russians have provided the missile but the Defence Research and Development Organisation is "fine-tuning" it to enhance its range and warhead-carrying capacity. Till now,

only the short-range *Pritivi* and the intermediate-ranged *Agni* can carry nuclear warheads.

"It's in the final stages of development and could be handed over to the Navy very soon," a senior official said. It is understood that Russian scientists met DRDO officials over the past few months for consultation on this issue. Officials refused to say if it had an Indian name, claiming the project was still top secret.

Officially, the missile has a range of 300km and can carry a half-a-tonne warhead, and is

thus within the ambit of the international Missile Technology Control Regime. If DRDO does the reworking, it will not be a case of importing restricted technology and won't attract international pressure.

Few weapons can change warfare, but the *Bramhos*, even in its current form, is likely to strengthen the Navy. "It's a supersonic weapon and can't be shot down. It requires a lot of electronic counter measures to ensure protection against it," a senior official said. Once it is re-

jigged to carry a heavier missile, "it will be nuclear-capable".

Normally, a tactical nuclear warhead weighs more than half a tonne, a reason why the MTCR has pegged restrictions to that level. The Navy is likely to fit Project 17 warships — advanced frigates being built at Mumbai's Mazagon Docks — with the *Bramhos*. These frigates, as one former chief of naval staff once said, can "substantially influence war on land." Armed with *Bramhos*, which can be used for tactical or semi-strate-

gic purposes, it certainly can. Later, officials said, the missile could be fitted on other "platforms", meaning other warships and planes. After modifications, it could be put on submarines.

The acquisition of *Bramhos* is another instance of the Navy's attempt to be able to influence affairs on land. This requires reach, meaning aircraft and missiles. *Bramhos* is just one such missile. If the Navy can lease the TU-22ME or the Backfire bomber from Russia, the missile could be placed on aircraft.

22/10

5/1

THE STATESMAN

22 OCT 2000

# Downside of media sensationalism

It is only in the media that alarm bells are rung over the safety of the MiG-21, the Indian Air Force insists. Yet it is also clear that the Air Force is concerned that the media focus on the not-infrequent accidents involving that plane could impact on morale. So much so that a certain hype was attached to its being flown by the Chief of Air Staff during a recent visit to the Bareilly air base.

That Air Chief Marshal A.Y. Tygnis has never been given to publicity stunts has been established during his long and distinguished career. That he avails of every opportunity to fly, and the MiG-21 is the aeroplane on which he has logged almost half his 4,000 flying hours, is also well known. But was it necessary for his two sorties to be converted into "media events?"

It was indeed a rare opportunity for reporters to sit in on the pre-flight briefing, be educated on all the various factors that come into play during a supposedly normal sortie. It was also a glimpse into the professionalism of the IAF, for a comparatively junior officer told his chief what he would be required to do — in the same manner that just any other pilot would be told.

Since it had been about three months since Air Chief Marshal Tygnis last flew the MiG-21, he was required to revalidate his "currency". And that involved one sortie in the two-seater trainer version with Wing Commander Upkarjit Singh in the instructor's seat to clear the chief for a solo flight. Various checks were conducted.

Due clearance was accorded, but in the de-brief, the Wing Commander did point out a couple of areas of the chief's flying that showed some signs of rust and corrective measures were recommended. The senior-most man in the service noticed his head in acknowledgment. "I can remove him from command, but I could not remove him from

In personally flying the Mig-21 before a battery of television crew and media personnel, the Chief of Air Staff may have been sending out signals to his young pilots and the public at large. Was that really required of him? KEITH FLORY says it was a well-meaning effort



The MiG-21 (above) is an aircraft which Air Chief Marshal A.Y. Tygnis (right) has flown the most number of times in his long and distinguished career. — PTI.

the cockpit," the air chief quipped later.

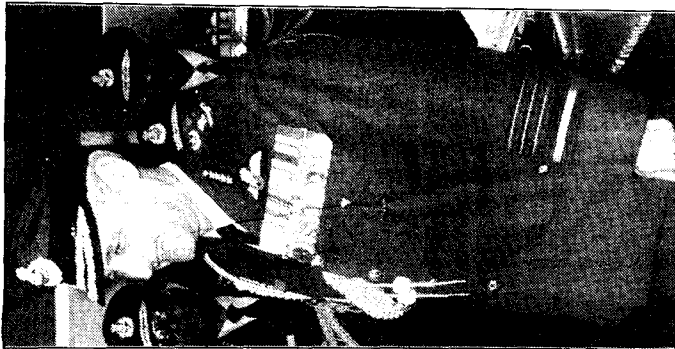
Then Air Chief Marshal Tygnis took off in a Bis-variant, and proved that though no longer a young man, he could fly what he maintains is a "demanding aircraft" with some finesse. He made a two-pass landing, admitted he had not got the first attempt perfect as he was watching out for birds coming home to roost as sunset approached.

While talking to reporters, the chief reiterated his recent comments that though the MiG-21 is not a "forgiving aircraft" and has few support systems to help a pilot correct his error, it is a safe plane. He appeared distressed that it had been dubbed

that really required of him? Or was it proof of his leading from the front? There could be different interpretations of what was clearly a well-meaning effort.

The man who has flown the MiG-21 more than any other pilot in the world, Air Commodore SS Tyagi (retd) concurred with the view that the media had overdone the sensationalism. "Our young pilots are being needlessly psyched out," he said.

Yet while at one level the chief's effort was appreciated by aviation experts, at another they wondered if he had done well to go out on a personal limb. "It will be so easy for critics to contend that the particular plane he flew must have



been thoroughly checked time and again" said one, another observed that things must be pretty serious for a chief to have himself tried to set them right.

What worried some former pilots was that the chief had, inadvertently to be sure and with the best of intentions, raised the stakes rather high. Any subsequent MiG-21 mishap, and given the fact that it is the plane that is flown the most that cannot be ruled out, would not merely erode his confidence-building measure, but also add fuel to a fire which he maintains is already exaggerated.

(The author is Special Representative, The Statesman, New Delhi).

# A Stillborn NSC

## No Culture of Strategic Thinking

By K SUBRAHMANYAM

11-10 30/10  
A National Security Council (NSC) was announced in 1998, though its formal constitution was approved in a government resolution only on April 16, 1999. The council has not so far met even once. This non-functioning of the council has raised questions on its utility. Since a National Security Council constituted by the VP Singh government also proved dysfunctional, there is a real danger of the concept of a National Security Council being repudiated in the public mind.

If that were to happen, not only would it be extremely unfortunate for Indian security, it would also demonstrate that in spite of its loudly-proclaimed commitment to national security, the National Democratic Alliance leadership does not have a correct understanding of the concepts of long-term national security management. Effective long-term management of national security is far more complex than conducting nuclear tests.

The NSC is a committee of five cabinet ministers (prime minister, ministers of external affairs, defence, home and finance) and the deputy chairman Planning Commission with the National Security Adviser (NSA) as the channel for servicing the NSC. The role of the council is to advise the government on integrated thinking and coordinated application of the political, military, diplomatic, scientific and technological resources of the state to protect and promote national security goals and objectives. National security in the context of the nation needs to be viewed not only in military terms but also in terms of internal security, economic security, technological strength and foreign policy, so the resolution declares.

There is a cabinet committee on national security (CCNS) which consists of five cabinet ministers who are also members of the NSC. This cabinet committee, as a decision-making body in respect of current issues, meets as often as necessary. The NSA attends it in his capacity as principal secretary to the prime minister. The only missing member of the NSC in the CCNS is the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission. In these circumstances, some people feel that there is no need to have two bodies. Either the NSC can be abolished or the CCNS be renamed the NSC, so runs the argument.

There does not appear to be a clear understanding of the two different and distinct roles of the CCNS and the NSC. The former is

like all other cabinet committees intended to approve decisions sought on current policy issues and programmes by different ministries. The cabinet committees are usually executive bodies focused on actions of current relevance. The NSC was very correctly cast in the role of a deliberative body which would advise the government on long-term issues, especially external security environment, high technology security threats and trends in world economy. It would also advise on economic security threats including in energy, foreign trade, food, finance and ecology, internal security, patterns of alienation emerging in the country, especially those with a social, communal or regional dimension.

To play this role, the NSC needed a full-time NSA. The prime minister has chosen to have one person as both his principal secretary and NSA. Though this is not the opti-

### IN BRIEF

- The NDA government does not really understand long-term national security management
- The CCNS and NSC have two different and distinct roles
- The PM's principal secretary doubling up as NSA needs a dedicated secretariat for national security
- The NSC needs long-term assessments on all its areas of responsibility and specialists to produce policy inputs

mum arrangement, if the prime minister wanted it that way it need not be questioned. Then appropriate organisational support and procedures should have been devised to enable the NSA with shared responsibilities for two full-time posts to function effectively. While he has staff as principal secretary, he has none dedicated wholly to support him in the role of NSA.

The old Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) staff has been redesignated as the NSC secretariat (NSCS) and it is expected to serve the NSC in its role as a long-term planner in addition to discharging its earlier function as the apex intelligence assessment agency. Its failures as apex assessment agency have already been highlighted. Further, if the NSC is to function effectively, it needs long-term assessments on all the areas of its respon-

sibility. The conversion of the JIC into the NSCS showed the basic weakness of our political class — inadequate appreciation of the role of assessed intelligence and its preference for an adhocist style of decision-making. In addition to its assessment responsibilities in the last year, the NSCS had to service an active National Security Advisory Board, the Kargil Review Committee and the four task forces set up on the basis of its recommendations. It is, therefore, understandable why the NSCS has proved stillborn since the NSCS is fully pre-occupied otherwise.

There is the usual attitude born of the culture of reactive decision-making in India that when a crisis occurs it will be brought to the attention of the NSC. We waited for threats to materialise in 1947-48, 1962, 1965, 1971 and 1999 before we reacted. The same culture led some of our leaders to ask what the immediate threat was that compelled the nuclear tests, as though a country can prepare to meet a nuclear threat after it occurs. This inability to make decisions proactively underlies our slow growth rate, our poor performance in poverty elimination, eradication of illiteracy and inadequacy in infrastructure development.

When information technology spreads, there will be new threats to our security and economy. With the major transformation of the international security paradigm which is yet to be understood fully by major sections of our political class and bureaucracy, there will be new problems affecting our security. The bureaucrats and politicians are content to deal with a large number of files concerning mostly less important issues which should normally be disposed of at lower levels. They have allowed themselves no time to think and are incapable of coming up with long-range assessments and policy formulations as inputs to the NSC.

Therefore, a dedicated secretariat, staffed by specialists in different disciplines, is absolutely essential to make the NSA perform the role expected of him. Otherwise, this NSC will go the way of V P Singh's one. The NDA government will prove that it is no different from its predecessors in its decision-making culture and commitment to long-term national security. Perhaps the prime minister should call a meeting of the NSC to introspect why it is not able to function. The problem today is who will tell the emperor that he is not wearing any clothes. No one in his own court, it would appear.

# MIRAGE:

(Continued from Page 1)

them will be dual-seaters points to them being configured to deliver advanced weaponry as well as to undertake long-range missions.

The aircraft will be the 'H' variant of the Mirage 2000, similar to those in the two squadrons which the IAF currently flies. At one stage, much serious thought had been given to getting the more recently-developed Mirage 2000-V (the dash-five in technical parlance). But the Air Force eventually settled for the 'H'. The logic behind the decision was that the 10 aircraft were being bought to make up for the four planes that have had to be written off since the Mirage 2000 was first inducted in 1986, and to cater to future losses through accidents or technical problems. A high degree of commonality would make for cost-effective management.

There would have been little point in going for just 10 "dash-fives"; it would involve changing training patterns, combat tactics, require a new maintenance regime and holding another large inventory of spares, the Chief of the Air Staff told reporters recently. Air Chief Marshal AY Tipnis also made it clear that 10 new planes would be built for the IAF in accordance with specifications laid down by it. He had ridiculed reports that India would be getting aircraft originally meant for another air force.

While the acquisition would be shown as a replenishment exercise and not the induction of a new platform, the IAF is clearly look-

ing ahead when ordering six of the dual-seater version. Of its present fleet of over 40 planes, only two or three are dual-seaters, essentially "type-trainers". But the six new planes will be "trainers-plus", to quote an Air Force officer.

On certain operational missions, the second pilot will serve as the "systems operator", in effect tasked with ensuring effective weapons delivery, leaving the other pilot free to concentrate on flying to the target zone. "I don't have to spell out what kind of weapons systems we are talking about" the officer said with a chuckle. The two-pilot system would also make for long-range missions. The work-load would be shared to reduce the fatigue factor. With the IAF confident that it would be acquiring air-to-air refuelling capability within a few years, its "reach" would be considerably enhanced.

It is significant that the 17 Jaguars now on order, as well as the 40 aircraft covered in the first phase of the SU-30 programme, are all dual-seaters.

The IAF acquired the Mirage 2000 in 1986, and they were first used in operations to "escort" the AN-32s that reached humanitarian relief to the people of Jaffna during the economic blockade of northern Sri Lanka. Subsequently they escorted the IL-76s that ferried troops to the Maldives during the attempted coup in the islands.

It was during the Kargil conflict last year that the Mirage 2000 showed its class, particularly its capacity to accurately deliver laser-designated bombs to minuscule targets.

## IAF to get 10 more Mirages

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Sept. 4. — The Cabinet has approved acquisition of 10 more Mirage 2000 multi-role combat aircraft for the IAF, the ministry of defence confirmed here today. The Rs 1,500-crore contract is expected to be sealed soon and delivery is expected to begin within 34 months of its being signed.

While the official position is that the 10 planes are being procured as replenishment for previous losses, that six of

■ See MIRAGE: page 6

THE STATESMAN

# Air chief rejects phasing out 'overaged' MiG-21s

Shillong, September 4

CHIEF OF Air Staff Anil Yashwant Tipnis on Monday ruled out the immediate and complete phasing out of MiG 21 aircraft saying their replacement would cost thousands of crores of rupees, which the country could not afford now.

The air chief marshal said, "despite the MiG fighter aircrafts having crashed many times recently, we cannot do away with such operational aircraft because no country in the world simply disposes of its old stock and purchases the latest advanced jet trainers suddenly...We try to get the maximum life out of the existing system".

At the Eastern Air Command headquarters based in upper Shillong, Tipnis told reporters that he hoped he would be able to announce some good news on the IAF Raising Day regarding the procurement of the British Hawk Advanced Jet Trainers (AJT). The

Russian Sukhoi 30s would also be inducted into the IAF soon.

The air chief refused to admit that the MiG crashes occurred because of "overage". The media is sensationalising the issue and projecting that these aircraft are flying coffins, he said.

"We are not demoralised by such sensational media coverage and the accidents because accidents are a part of aviation....We are always ready to face any situation; from rescuing people during natural calamities to guarding the troubled western front," he said.

The air chief reiterated that although the recent accidents were not as alarming as was reported, the IAF was not being complacent. He, however, admitted that last year was a 'bad year'.

He said modernisation was a continuous process and should go hand in hand with development of human resources in the Indian Air Force.

Tipnis said negotiations for the purchase of the airborne warning

and control systems (AWACS) and the development of the light combat aircraft (LCA) were at an advanced stage.

Talks on acquiring AWACS are going ahead but certain precautionary measures need to be taken and some contingencies covered before the final deal, he said.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) was working on the LCA and according to the Defence Minister, the first flight would be ready by the end of this year.

He dispelled rumours that the eastern sector was not equipped with technically developed Radar. "On the contrary this zone possesses some state-of-the-art Radar which even the western sector does not possess, he said. The Chief of Air Staff said in order to improve aircraft detection, an unmanned aerial observatory system was on the anvil. Earlier in the day, Tipnis inaugurated the Eastern Station Commanders' conference.

(Agencies)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

4 SEP 2000

Cabinet panel  
gives nod for  
purchase of 10  
Mirage fighters

5/9  
2000  
THE CABINET Committee on Security (CCS) has approved the purchase of 10 Mirage-2000H multi-role fighters for the Indian Air Force from France.

IAF sources said that the fighters would be purchased at the cost of Rs 1,500 crore from French Dassault Aviation company. It is learnt that the deal was approved by the CCS in its last meeting held in August. The aircraft will be delivered within 34 months of the deal being signed.

According to sources, the fighters are being purchased as "strike off wastage", which essentially means that the new jets will make up for the fighters that have been lost in operations. Mirage 2000H fighters were inducted into the IAF in 1986. The IAF has some 40 of these fighters, which performed admirably in the Kargil war.

It is understood that six out of the 10 new Mirage 2000 fighters will be twin seaters. This means that these aircraft can be used for training purposes as well as for system operations. The twin-seater fighters are ideal for long patrols and can be refueled in mid-air.

HTC, New Delhi

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 5 SEP 2000

## INDIA'S SPACE PROGRAMME

THE PLANS OF the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to launch a separate meteorological satellite (METSAT) are a reflection of the confidence it has built up for handling a hi-tech project of this kind. The proposed launching of the satellite at the end of next year on India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) should give the ISRO enough time to achieve perfection with such an assignment which should be the toughest it has taken up so far.

The need for building a separate METSAT seems to have risen from the extra burden thrown so far upon ISRO's Indian National Satellites (INSAT) which have been designed primarily to provide communication and broadcasting capability. If in addition to this, meteorological data inputs to the Very High Resolution Radiometers (VHRR) have also been fed into the orbiting INSAT vehicles, it has been possible because of the multiplicity of the capabilities already built into them. It is, however, not surprising that the ISRO has run into problems with the VHRR possibly because of INSAT vehicles having to carry out jobs which had not been anticipated earlier. The complexity of ensuring that the INSAT carries out assignments very much varying from each other in the demands they make could be seen from the generation of more and more heat by the increasing volume of radio transmissions. A requirement for the proper functioning of the VHRR is that their thermal sensors should not get heated and this calls for their being protected by a cooling system. The complexity of space engineering needed for imparting so much resilience to the capabilities of the INSAT has obviously left no choice for the ISRO but to have a METSAT exclusively designed to meet the needs of wholly error-free weather forecasting.

There has been global recognition of India having scrupulously avoided putting its satellites to military use. The payload of the PSLV rockets

has increased from just 40 kg in 1980 to as much as 1000 kg from 1994 onwards. The investment made on the launching of the ISRO space vehicles has been less than \$ 10 millions. The multi-disciplinary programme which the launching of the PSLVs as well as the Geo-Stationary Launch Vehicles (GSLVs), for which the groundwork has already been laid, spreads from the lifting of the same from a 15-foot-high 275-tonne launch vehicle from the Sriharikota launch pad to the making of liquid propulsion systems and the farming out of components for the high-thrust Vikas engines to manufacturers as far apart as Thiruvananthapuram and Mumbai. The progress which the ISRO has made not merely with the launching of its satellites incorporating state-of-the-art technology but also at a high level of cost efficiency could be seen from its having spent not more than \$ 20 millions for the launching of its 400-tonne IRS-ID PSLV while China had to spend twelve times more for its similar Long March 3B rocket three years ago. The earnings from ISRO's satellite launches from the commercial sales of broadcasting, weather and meteorological data were estimated at around \$ 100 millions annually. The investments on the huge infrastructure required for the launching of its space vehicles have also been very much less than that incurred in the other space-faring nations.

The ISRO is looking forward to stepping up the country's earnings from space launches by the sales of its satellite photographic data. Its Antrix Corporation had earlier signed a global marketing arrangement with the EOSAT Corporation of the U.S. for the sale of its satellite data. Further improvements in high resolution photography could step up ISRO's earnings by at least 30 per cent within this decade. Not the least remarkable but also a sad aspect of India's entry into space is that so much has been achieved so fast while as much as 40 per cent of its population lives below the poverty line.

THE HINDU

- 7 SEP 2000

# Army seeks a radar to locate weapons

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Sept. 9. — The weapon-locating radar may be a "defensive weapon", but its absence during the Kargil conflict cost the Army many lives. The Army has been trying to acquire one since the mid-Eighties, but hasn't succeeded yet.

During the Kargil conflict, many gun positions received hits, killing and injuring personnel and in many cases, the towed 155 mm Bofors guns were moved around as the Pakistani army could locate Indian gun positions. All this because the Army did not have a weapon-locating radar (WLR).

The WLR is less than effective in the mountains as it has to track the shell after it is fired and when the trajectory is "upward". In Kargil too, the mountains would have come in the way, and the radar would have failed to track the trajectory. But, the Army now denies this.

Top officials believe that even in the mountains it would have been possible to track down the general area with new software observing the shell's later flight path. With that information, working out where the enemy batteries would have been easy.

The Army recently overruled the Defence Research and Development Organisation's claim that the indigenous Rajendra radar can be modified to produce a WLR radar and called for the immediate procurement of a foreign device.

The WLRs currently available in the international market are the Hughes ANTPQ-36 and 37, a model produced by Erikssons, the Cobra, another model developed by the French, Germans and the British and a Ukrainian model. The Erikssons, however, have a shorter range of about 20 km, and the Cobra has just hit the market after ironing out most of its problems.

Some casualties could have been avoided if the radar offered by Hughes was purchased in the mid-Nineties. Top DRDO officials then felt that the Rajendra radar could be modified. Then came the post-Pokhran sanctions and all such purchases were blocked.

Despite working on a WLR from the mid-Eighties, the DRDO is still far from it. And now that the Cobra is out as is the Ukrainian WLR, the Army is pushing for just a few pieces of the radar. In fact, they could be used profitably during the shelling duels on the LoC, officials said.

THE STATESMAN

10 SEP 2000



# Brig Singh given show-cause notice

Kanwar Sandhu  
Chandigarh, September 17

THE ARMY Headquarters has, on August 22, served a show-cause notice on Brigadier Surinder Singh, former Commander of the Kargil Brigade, for dismissal from military service under the Army Act, it is learnt. The Brigadier has until September 22 to reply to it.

## An HT Exclusive

The show-cause notice served on directions of the Chief of Army Staff, General V P Malik, states that retention of the Brigadier in military service is undesirable. He has been served the termination notice for various acts of "omission and commission" since a trial by court martial was not expedient and practical, sources in the Adjutant General's branch said.

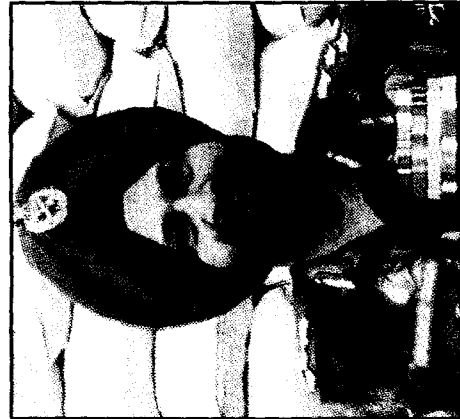
Brig Surinder Singh, who was relieved of the command of the 121 (Independent)

Infantry Brigade Group in June last year at the height of the Kargil war, is currently Deputy GOC of an Infantry Division. He has been asked to reply within 30 days to the notice issued last month, failing which action as deemed proper will be taken.

The timing of the notice, which comes on the eve of the retirement of Gen Malik as Army Chief, could trigger yet another controversy. Gen Malik is due to retire at the end of this month when Lt Gen S Padmanabhan takes over as Chief of Army Staff.

Brig Surinder Singh's Chandigarh-based lawyer, R S Randhawa, confirmed that some notice had been served on his client. "Details are awaited as the Brigadier has sought leave and will be reaching Chandigarh shortly," he said.

Official sources said the show-cause notice mentioned four counts on which Brig Surinder Singh had been blamed for



Brigadier Surinder Singh

the intrusions in the Kargil sector, which were discovered in May last year. Of these,

two were investigated by separate Army courts of inquiry, though the findings of these have not been made public.

These inquiries related to: (a) retaining and leaking classified and confidential documents to the Press and others and (b) vacating a particular mountain feature called 'Pajrang' in Kaksar in early March 1999 without prior sanction of the division headquarters and failure to take effective steps to keep the line of control under proper surveillance.

Another point mentioned in the show-cause notice reportedly pertains to the observations in the K Subrahmanyam Committee report, which held that the actions of the Brigadier on the ground within his own resources did not match his expressed concerns.

"Many of his statements reflected an attempt at ex-post-facto rationalisation," the Committee stated in its report.

The Army has also taken cognizance of

the report submitted by Lt Gen A R K Reddy (then Chief of Staff, Northern Command), who reportedly held that the Brigadier lacked professionalism as a commander.

He did not ensure effective patrolling and failed to perceive the seriousness of the situation on detection of the intrusion, sources said referring to the Lt Gen Reddy report. It is not known if any other officer has also been given show-cause notice on the basis of the Reddy report, which, an officer said, was very scathing in nature.

Brig Singh was removed from command at the height of the Kargil war. His immediate superior, Maj Gen V S Budhwar, who was GOC of the Leh-based Division, and with whom he had serious differences, has also been posted out since then.

The Srinagar Corps too has a new General Officer Commanding with Lt Gen Krishan Pal having moved to New Delhi recently on completion of his tenure.

# Defence deals likely during Putin visit

SRINJOY CHOWDRURY  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Sept. 21: The inter-governmental agreements for the purchase of the Russian aircraft carrier, the Admiral Gorshkov, 46 MiG-29K naval jets and four Tu-22 Backfire bombers are likely to be signed when the Russian president, Mr Vladimir Putin, visits India from 2 October.

Senior Naval officials held discussions with Russian delegations today to work out the final details before the signing of the agreements. The agreements, however, do not mean that the equipment will be purchased. It only means a desire to buy, officials said.

The purchases were held up as the Russians wanted a "package deal," meaning they wanted to sell the Backfire bomber only if the Indians bought the Gorshkov. The price negotiations will begin only after the inter-governmental agreements are signed.

The last offer made for the Gorshkov, a 40,000 ton aircraft carrier, anchored off Murmansk near the Arctic Circle was \$US 734 million for refitting and refurbishing. The carrier was officially offered free of cost by the Russians. One reason for the delay is the demand for several technical papers on the carrier by the Navy. Senior naval officials including the chief of personnel, Vice-Admiral Arun

Prakash, have inspected the carrier.

Along with the aircraft carrier would come 40 MiG-29K naval fighter aircraft and six trainers. The discussions about the Backfire Bomber are of comparatively recent vintage — the Gorshkov deal has been on the anvil for over five years. India wants to purchase the Tu-22 ME, the export model of the reconnaissance version of the long-range aircraft. The plane, it is learnt, can be refitted for strike capabilities though the Navy does not confirm that.

If the Backfire bomber is purchased, it is likely to ensure the Navy has a very long reach, essential in modern warfare.

Besides the naval purchases, part of a deal that could cost over \$1 billion, the army is expecting to buy 100-120 T-90 tanks and sign an agreement for the transfer of technology for another 200 or so. The Indian Air Force is likely to ask for speeding up of the delivery of the Sukhoi-30 and also, the platform for fitting the airborne early warning system. That could mean the Ilyushin-76 though any Boeing or Airbus plane could also do.

**Indo-Russian pact:** India and Russia will sign an agreement on the peaceful use of nuclear energy during Russian President Mr Vladimir Putin's visit to New Delhi beginning 2 October.

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# Paramilitary forces to come under unified command over next 5 yrs

Sudhi Ranjan Sen *HP-1*  
New Delhi, September 27 *2000*

THE COUNTRY'S four main paramilitary forces, the Border Security Force, the Central Reserve Police Force, the Indo-Tibetan Border Police and the Central Industrial Security Force are to be brought under a unified command over the next five years. Their operations, training and intelligence are to be shared to improve the country's internal security management.

The Cabinet Committee on Security earlier this month agreed—in principle—to the plan

for a unified command mooted by the Union Home ministry. The four forces are to retain their individuality but, under the proposed unified command, they are expected to function more homogenously in combating insurgency and border security. Simultaneously, there is to be upgradation of the weaponry the quartet of forces will have access to and training.

The process of integration and modernisation will also be accompanied by the introduction of a Global Imaging System (GIS). The GIS system would be used for co-ordinating counter-terrorism oper-

ations and keeping vigil in the border areas. The software for the GIS is being developed indigenously.

A total of 209 new battalions will also be raised for the four forces. Of them, 17 would be in place as early as the next 12 months. According to the policy paper, the cost of raising the new battalions would be about Rs 550 crore while the recurring cost would be about Rs 1,800 crore annually.

The Central Industrial Security Force is likely to be given a new role that could include counter-terrorism operations and law and order duties.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

28 SEP 2000

SECURITY FORCES GAIN UPPER HAND: ADVANI

# Report on national security by next month

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, SEPT. 27.** While asserting that security agencies and police forces had made silent progress in recent times in preserving the country's internal security, the Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, today asked the keepers of law to instil a sense of security in the common man.

He credited the security machinery with three recent achievements — of detecting and eliminating Pakistani ISI modules, unravelling an anti-India conspiracy of the Deendar Anjuman in attacking Christians and keeping up the fight against militancy in Jammu and Kashmir.

"In the past 10 days, security forces have killed an all-time high of 124 militants in Jammu and Kashmir. In the past 24 days, about 200 militants have been killed," he told reporters after inaugurating the 35th three-day conference of the Directors-General of Police, State Intelligence Chiefs and Chiefs of Central Paramilitary Forces at Vigyan Bhavan here.

Between July and September, 441 militants had been killed in Jammu and Kashmir. The figure for the corresponding period in 1998 and 1999 was much less.

In the post-Kargil period, security forces were "gradually and systematically" gaining an upper

hand. The achievements of the security agencies and police forces in unearthing the Pakistani design to destabilise the country and unravelling the Deendar Anjuman's conspiracy were results of smooth coordination between the Centre and State police forces.

Addressing the DGPs, IGs and senior officers, Mr. Advani said the Group of Ministers (GoM) would deliberate next month on the reports of the four Task Forces relating to the national security issues in their entirety and finalise its recommendations.

Three of the four Task Forces were expected to submit their reports by this weekend and the GoM would take up discussions in October. While the Task Force on Border Management had already submitted its report, others on internal security, management of defence and intelligence were likely to submit their reports soon.

Set up by the Prime Minister to review the national security system in general and consider the recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee in particular, the GoM, headed by Mr. Advani, had been asked to make recommendations on questions of national security in its entirety. Mr. Advani said the conference could also give suggestions to the GoM.

Stressing that security was one

of the key components of good governance, the Minister called upon the police officials to work conscientiously for restoring the common man's faith in the system.

Recalling Nobel laureate, Prof. Amartya Sen's priority areas of education and health, he said security could be added as the third key component.

Quoting a recent survey by a news magazine on international corruption perception, Mr. Advani regretted that India figured in the 69th place. "Politicians, bureaucrats and police officials have contributed a lot for India's 69th place," he said. Those at the helm of affairs should be above board, efficient, honest and of unquestionable integrity.

"The wrongdoers should be in awe of the police but the common man should have trust in the law-enforcing machinery," he said.

In his welcome address, the Director, Intelligence Bureau, Mr. Shyamal Dutta, said policing was going to be a tough task in the coming years because of organised crime, gun-running and population growth. He favoured the continuation of a debate on the need for federal law to deal with crimes such as drug trafficking, cyber crime, economic offences, militancy and fake currency.

# IAF punch enhanced to foil Kargil-type intrusions

By Atul Aneja

**LEH, SEPT.27.** By repositioning and rearming itself, a stiffened Indian Air Force (IAF) is playing a central role in preventing future Kargil-type intrusions in Ladakh.

The IAF is the key to India's "forward policy" in Ladakh. This revolves around forward deployments of troops along most of the Line of Control (LoC), the interim boundary which divides India and Pakistan. India has also occupied most of the dominating heights along the Salto ridge which flanks the 76-km-long Siachen glacier. The eastern Karakoram range defines the eastern wall of Siachen. India has geared itself to prevent Pakistani incursions along the key sectors of Dras-Mushkoh, Kaksar and Kargil by deploying more well-armed troops throughout the year there. Indian security planners, after the Kargil war, are also pulling all stops to prevent a Pakistani intrusion beyond Kargil across the Indus river in Ladakh.

As in the Kargil war, security analysts apprehend that Pakistan could launch a pincer strike in the area straddling the Shyok river valley in Ladakh. A brigade-strong Pakistani forces can attempt to breach the India-held Chorbata pass and then descend the Shyok river valley, a tributary of the Indus, towards Khalsar, not far from Leh. Another body of troops, not more than a battalion, can simultaneously try and breach the passes on the Southern Siachen



**The Air Force Mi-17 helicopters on a supply mission at the Siachen Glaciers.** — Photo: S. Subramaniam

glacier and then descend towards Khalsar to merge with the main assaulting shaft coming in from Chorbata side.

Indian occupation of Siachen is therefore necessary to keep one of the eastern doors to Kashmir via Ladakh shut. The vulnerable posts along the glacier where an intrusion is possible are the two passes — Bilafond La, and Gyongla on the southern side of the glacier. Indian troops, not surprisingly, are well positioned along the heights dominating these cavities in the glacier area. For instance, Indian forces occupy the posts Bana and Sonam which overlook the relatively flat ground which adjoins Bilafond La.

Unlike India, the Pakistani road network stretches very close to the glacier area, making it easier for it to keep its forces well supplied. For

instance, the Dhansam road junction which is connected to the rear-end of the Pakistani supply bases trifurcates close to the glacier. Troops and supplies can then be pumped along these arteries towards Gyongla and Bilafond La, increasing the pressure on the Southern glacier. Yet another offshoot of Dhansam terminates close to the Sia la pass on the northern edge of the glacier.

With Indian troops stretched along Siachen, the sole responsibility of keeping these forces fed, clothed and armed all round the year lies with the IAF. The Mi-17 helicopter squadron, Condors, is playing a leading role in this task. The Mi-17s which can carry a maximum load of four tonnes, pick supplies either from Leh or the forward air field of Thoise. The cargo

is then dropped either directly in close proximity of the troops, mainly along the Southern glacier, or at the Siachen base camp for stocking. With Siachen being fully air maintained, the flurry of take-offs and landings has made the Siachen base camp, one of the busiest helipads in the world.

## New generation copters

As the winter begins to descend in Ladakh, the IAF has already completed the task of stocking the army posts for the coming months. It is now gearing itself to face the challenge of the hostile winter ahead. Not surprisingly, the IAF's helicopter fleet is being upgraded with the induction of more powerful machines.

The Condors, in fact, will be the first IAF helicopter unit to induct the new generation Mi-17 V1 helicopters by December 1. Equipped with more powerful engines and better avionics, these machines will carry double the load of existing helicopters. Besides, the new Mi-17s are being equipped to fly in rough weather. Their capability to fire 80mm. rockets will also enhance their combat punch.

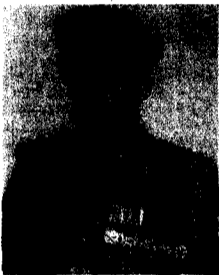
The IAF, in order to deter an aerial threat from Pakistan, has also steered its air defence capability in this area. Its frontline air defence flagship, the MiG -29 has now started operating from the Leh air base. The IAF's other key fighter jets, including the deep strike Jaguars, have also started training harder in the hostile mountainous terrain of Ladakh.

28 SEP 2000

# Lt. Gen. Padmanabhan, new Army Chief

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, AUG. 1. Lt. Gen. Sundararajan Padmanabhan will be the next Chief of the Army Staff replacing Gen. V.P Malik, who retires on September 30.



Belonging to the artillery regiment, Lt. Gen. Padmanabhan will be the first gunner to head the Army after Gen. S.F Rodriguez.

Known as a cerebral officer, Lt. Gen. Padmanabhan has sometimes been faulted for his boldness, naturally aggressive military instincts and a pro-active professional disposition. Though belonging to the artillery, Lt. Gen. Padmanabhan is widely experienced. He has been at the helm in countering insurgency in Kashmir. As the corps commander of the sensitive Srinagar-based 15 corps, he played a key role in the peaceful tackling of the Hazratbal crisis — takeover of the

shrine by the Kashmir militants. Later as the northern army commander, Lt. Gen. Padmanabhan has been lauded for his contribution in blunting the brunt of the Kashmir insurgency and paving the way for elections which made Dr. Farooq Abdullah the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir.

Lt. Gen. Padmanabhan has been a specialist in mountain warfare and psychological operations.

Lt. Gen. Padmanabhan has been well acquainted in the conduct of warfare in the desert and jungle terrain. Prior to his present appointment, he headed the southern command which specialises in making speedy armoured thrusts in the Gujarat- Rajasthan desert sectors.

Born on December 5, 1940, at Thiruvananthapuram, Lt. Gen. Padmanabhan decided to pursue a career in the armed forces in his early years. Not surprisingly, he finished school from the Dehra Dun-based Rashtriya Indian Military College. In 1956, he joined the National Defence Academy before being commissioned in the artillery on December 13, 1959.

THE HINDU

- 2 AUG 2000

## Padmanabhan next Army chief



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 1. — Lt. Gen. Sunderrajan Padmanabhan will be the next Army chief. He takes over when the present chief, Gen. Ved Prakash Malik, retires on 30 September.

The announcement was expected for a month after it was cleared, and has been widely appreciated by the Army. In fact, most Army men knew "General Paddy," who they regard as a professional, was becoming the next chief. Senior Army officials have been privately complaining about the delay in the announcement.

A fortnight ago, a senior official wondered why there was delay as the Prime Minister, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, had cleared it quite a long time ago. Yet another senior officer complained that the file was locked away in an almirah.

Apparently, the announcement had to wait for the Defence Minister, Mr George Fernandes' return from Sierra Leone and also, Kargil Divas, the first anniversary of the war in Kargil against Pakistani intruders. This would allow the present chief to preside over a victory celebration that his officers and men deserve credit for.

Lt Gen Padmanabhan, an artillery officer, is at present the Army Commander of the Southern Command. Earlier, he was the Northern Army Commander based in Udhampur, a hot spot. He has a distinguished career, having commanded 15 Corps in Srinagar during the worst period of insurgency.

As a brigadier (general staff), he handled the tense and sensitive Hazratbal episode.

Hizbul Mujahideen names negotiator

ST-7  
2/8

# Home ministry alarmed over attack on pilgrims

9. 8/2000

VINAY JHA  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 1. — This evening's attack on Amarnath pilgrims near Pahalgam that claimed 21 lives and the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba strike on an Army transit camp in Bandipora have alarmed home ministry officials as they mark an escalation in militancy in the state.

"The other militant groups are obviously under instructions to try and derail the peace process," a senior official said.

Officials said that despite suspension of operations against Hizbul Mujahideen, there could be no let-up in action against other groups. "The situation is different from the North-east where similar initiatives are under way," an official said.

Hizbul Mujahideen having named its negotiator in Srinagar, the Centre will now have to turn its attention to the more difficult task of working out a mechanism for a formal ceasefire and subsequent talks.

But the government is wary of efforts to involve Pakistan in the process. It is anxious to retain the upper hand by acting swiftly to convince Hizbul as well as the rest of the world of its sincerity, officials said.

The anxiety was reflected in reports from Srinagar which said senior home ministry officials had quickly established contact with Mr Fazal Haque Qureshi of the Jammu and Kashmir People's Political Front, named by Hizbul Mujahideen as their negotiator.

Top government officials are already grappling with the tricky issue of formulating some rules for the process to progress further. Hizbul offered a unilateral ceasefire on 24 July. The Centre responded four days later, asking it to come overground and get in touch with the Union home secretary. Security forces have since suspended operations against the outfit.

But one of the issues which needs immediate attention of the government as well as secu-

rity forces is that of identifying Hizbul's 1,200-strong cadre so that they can be kept out of the line of fire. "Even an inadvertent attack on one of them will vitiate the atmosphere which has been created over the past week," an official said.

Home ministry officials said suggestions to get around this problem included issue of identity cards and asking them to relocate out of militant-infested areas where security forces would continue to conduct their operations. Both are unlikely to be accepted by the outfit for fear of being targeted in case talks fail.

There is another suggestion that the militants turn in their weapons to create the right atmosphere. This could figure in preliminary talks expected to begin soon though officials are doubtful whether the Hizbul would agree. A recent statement on behalf of Hizbul has put officials in a quandary. It said the Centre had to ensure an end to military and paramilitary action in the state.

THE STATESMAN

2 AUG 2000



# Amarnath pilgrims among 32 massacred in J&K

Srinagar, August 1

**A**T LEAST 32 people, including 26 Amarnath pilgrims, were gunned down and several injured when suspected foreign mercenaries opened fire on them on the outskirts of Pahalgam, about 96 km from here, this evening.

Three militants were killed when security forces retaliated, sources said.

However, Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah said 21 people—11 Amarnath yatis and 10 security personnel—were killed in the attack which took place at a kiosk where pilgrims are served food at Bandara.

Sources said a group of eight militants, believed to be foreign mercenaries attacked a community kitchen (Langar) at Ardoo bridge where the pilgrims were having food around 7 pm.

Two militants of a suicide squad stormed the kitchen and fired indiscriminately, killing 21 on the spot, sources said.

The army, BSF and CRPF personnel on duty there hit back, killing three militants.

## PM condemns killings

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee condemned the militant attack on Amarnath pilgrims. He asked the State Government to take necessary steps to provide adequate security to the pilgrims and look after the treatment of the injured. Home Minister L K Advani joined Vajpayee in condemning the killings.

Agencies, New Delhi

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

In a separate strike, militants attacked a registration camp of Amarnath pilgrims in Jammu, throwing grenades and opening fire from automatic weapons. But no pilgrim was hurt in this attack. There were nearly 300 pilgrims in the

camp. This is for the first time that militants have struck in the heart of Jammu.

One militant was killed when policemen on duty at the camp returned fire. Police sources here said two of the attackers are still believed to hiding near the area.

Abdullah condemned the attacks in Pahalgam and Jammu. "It is an attempt to sabotage the peace process set in motion," he said.

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

Curfew has been imposed in Pahalgam and security forces were put on high alert in Jammu division following the attacks.

Meanwhile, Home Ministry sources in New Delhi described the killings as an attempt to sabotage the Government's peace initiatives in the State. They asserted that such cowardly acts would not deter the Government from finding a peaceful solution to the Kashmir problem.

Agencies

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 2 AUG 2000

# Lashkar behind massacres: Advani

BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

**New Delhi, Aug. 2:** Union home minister L. K. Advani on Wednesday said that the latest outburst of violence in Jammu and Kashmir is a determined bid by those upset at the prospects of peace to abort the initiative taken by the Hizbul Mujahideen last week and indicated Pakistan-backed terrorist group Lashkar-e-Tayyaba was suspected to be behind the massacres.

He also conceded that there had been security lapses.

"*Main swekaar karta hu hamari zimmedari* (I admit our responsibility to protect the Amranath pilgrims)," he said, after making a statement on the ghastly incidents in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr Advani was grilled both by the Opposition members and the ruling National

Democratic Alliance, including the Shiv Sena, Janata Dal (United), Trinamul Congress and the BJP MP, Mr Madan Lal Khurana.

Replying to an impromptu debate on the violence, he said that the government's apprehension of stepped up militant activity in the wake of the peace talks with Hizbul Mujahideen has "come true."

"*Hamko anumaaan tha* (We were aware about the militants reaction to the peace talks) ... but there was no specific information," he said when members asked about the intelligence reports about their moves.

The Vajpayee government is determined to continue the Amarnath Yatra with renewed security measures and to provide all necessary protection to the people.

Besides, it will persevere in its efforts to bring normalcy to Jammu and Kashmir by

engaging in a dialogue with peace-loving people, he said.

"No words will be too strong to condemn these outrageous incidents of violence which are no doubt part of the continuing proxy war being waged against us by a hostile neighbour," Mr Advani said in a statement in the Rajya Sabha.

He said: "Mr government feels that this latest outburst of violence is also a determined bid by those upset at the prospects of peace to abort the initiative taken by the Hizbul Mujahideen last week," he said.

He said the ceasefire declaration made by the Hizbul Mujahideen and the government's positive response to this offer, there have been reports that some of the other militant outfits with a large component of foreign mercenaries who were "unhappy" with the Hizbul Mujahideen may create problems

escalate violence.

"The security forces had been alerted of this and have been asked to be more vigilant. It is because of this vigilance they had foiled an attempt of the militants to attack the Amarnath pilgrims in a Jammu camp on the morning of August 1. In this clash one militant was killed and another injured," Mr Advani said.

He said Jammu and Kashmir government had initiated precautionary and relief measures. Special secretary (home) for Jammu & Kashmir P. R. Kakkar, Dr. Trinath Mishra, who recently took over as director-general of Central Reserve Police Force, and an inspector-general of CRPF rushed to the Valley.

They were accompanied by Jammu and Kashmir governor Girish Saxena, who was in New Delhi.

THE ASIAN AGE

- 3 AUG 2000

# Internal security's diminishing returns

By V. R. Raghavan

*The inherited colonial notions of internal security and its management in India would seem to have outlived their utility. The need is to view internal security not merely as a law and order issue but as a measure of the peoples' well-being.*

THE GOVERNMENT has initiated a series of meaningful steps to get a sense of purpose into managing the challenges of internal security. The Prime Minister met the Chief Ministers of northeastern States to urge them to share the burden of fighting militancy. The Northeast Chamber of Commerce and Industry interacted with the Finance Minister to seek assistance on industrial development. The Home Ministry has been active in organising meetings of Chief Secretaries and heads of police to review the state of internal security. The Home Minister had earlier in the year talked of making India a secure state, capable of withstanding threats to its internal stability. The President recently exhorted the Governors to guide their Governments on the problems which contribute to internal security. The Government has also appointed a taskforce, headed by a former Defence and Home Secretary, to examine the issues connected with internal security. The Ministry of External Affairs has been active in garnering international support against terrorism. The emphasis on internal security is a recognition of its mismanagement by successive Governments. In some ways it is indicative of a realisation that nuclear weapons capability and a large security apparatus do not in themselves diminish risks to security. It is a welcome departure from the traditional and knee jerk reaction in the past of blaming all internal security problems on foreign hands or lands. There is also hopefully a pragmatic awareness of the need for the Centre and the States to combine their efforts instead of blaming each other for internal security problems. On the other hand, despite the welcome desire to be active on the issue, there is no sign yet of a better understanding of the nature of internal security challenges.

The reality of India's internal security is stark and uncompromising. A third and occasionally more of the Army is employed on internal security duties. The entire paramilitary force of the CRPF is used up in it. In addition, the BSF, the ITBP, the CISF and even the RPF are regularly used to provide troops for internal security. India's central paramilitary forces have expanded four times and more in the last 20

law and order their preserve since it is in the State list. They do not countenance the Centre's supervisory role in this field. On the other hand, the history of the Centre's role in assessing law and order, which is a critical component in deciding to replace a State Government with Central rule, has not been without blemish. There is therefore considerable suspicion, and little if any coordination between States, and between States and the Centre on intelligence, operational plans or political action in internal security strategy. The Centre is left with little if any leverage in putting into effect either the correct strategy or the appropriate operational plans for tackling internal security. As a result, there is no relationship between the forces the Centre allocates and the results the States obtain by their use or misuse. An adverse internal security condition in the States inevitably affects the Centre in its internal and external security priorities. The Centre's ability and willingness to assist the States impacts on the latter's ability to govern. The federal interdependence of the Centre and the States in matters of internal security is often lost sight of in the avoidable political gamesmanship which is often practised.

The inherited colonial notions of internal security and its management in India would seem to have outlived their utility. The need is to view internal security not merely as a law and order issue but as a measure of the peoples' well-being. This requires a new outlook on governance. It involves empowerment instead of denial of power to the people, who perceive themselves to be deprived of their political and economic rights. As of now, even in the better governed States the Chief Ministers are unwilling to devolve financial powers to the local panchayats. Insufficient empowerment of people and misguided social and political policies are the cause of disenchantment with the state. It is the recipe for a turbulent internal security environment. Until that is understood, the Centre and the States will be able to do no more than invest more forces and money into a system, where the laws of diminishing returns are already operating.

*(The writer is Director, Delhi Policy Group, New Delhi.)*

financial aid on a scale which places their per capita income at levels far higher than of better governed States. The argument is often raised by States that poor development levels lead to low internal security margins. If development is a measure of the funds which the Centre has poured into the coffers of inefficient States, the conclusion becomes apparent. States do not generate revenues and Central grants do not reach the people despite the massive quantities involved. In some States, Central grants actually go into militant hands through extortions, ransom payments etc. What is therefore required is that Central funds should be project-specific and released in result-based instalments.

There is considerable confusion in the States and at the Centre on what constitutes internal security. A wide range of troubles are often termed internal security problems. Insurgency, insurrection, communal strife, sub-national demands for statehood, terrorist acts, ethnic violence, armed political dissent all get listed as either internal security or a law and order problem, depending on the local leadership's preference. Each requires a different emphasis in political and economic terms. This is often overlooked and the threshold at which a law and order problem becomes an internal security issue remains unclear. Everything is handled as a law and order problem and with an armed response by the state. The state also does little to address the fundamental problems after the armed response restores a semblance of order. The political, social and economic factors which contribute to internal security are rarely looked into.

A valid and essential provision in the Indian federal structure is of the Central and State lists of responsibilities. This has been made into a liability by the manner in which the otherwise sound principle is applied in practice. The States consider

years. That the Indian state is required to use such a large force, in an armed role against its own citizens, should be a sobering thought. That this has been a requirement for the entire independent history of the nation, should caution those who see no fault lines in India's political, social and economic governance.

The Indian state's response to internal security has been ambivalent and compromising. More often than not both the Centre and the States have been content to have a large military and paramilitary presence on urban streets and in the countryside. That such a permanent presence reflects poorly on the quality of governance seems not to have bothered the political leadership. The clamour from the States is always for ever more forces. There have been instances where the political leadership in a State has even disclaimed responsibility on grounds of inadequate availability of Central forces. The Centre on its part does not demand an audit of what the States do with the forces made available to them. Consequently, States hold on to Central forces for years on end and use them as mere constabulary. This neither improves local police efficiency nor encourages the States to improve governance.

The focus by the Indian state on armed response to internal security often brings more problems in its wake. It antagonises the people, strengthens the resolve of the disaffected, raises the costs of governance and sows the seeds of future conflict. Even more than its colonial and state-versus-people nature, the armed response completely ignores the political, social and economic causes of the upsurge. The Centre has over the years allotted handsome amounts of funds to the troubled States. Over the years these have led to abnormalities in the Centre-State funding patterns. The northeastern States and Jammu and Kashmir have cumulatively received

# Hizbul handshakes with Pak twist

## Three-way talks

### Or nothing

FROM SANKARSHAN THAKUR AND MUKHTAR AHMAD

Srinagar, Aug. 3: Even before formal talks opened between New Delhi and the militant Hizbul Mujahideen here this afternoon, they were pushed under the shadow of being dumped into irrelevance.

The Pakistani chapter of Hizbul — the remote control based in Islamabad — threatened to end the ceasefire if the government did not bring Islamabad on board and drop the condition linking the talks to the constitution by August 8. In Srinagar, the separatist All-Party Hurriyat Conference debunked the effort as inconsequential.

The Hizbul demand ran into an expected rejection in Srinagar itself as Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee wrapped up his condolence tour by ruling out Pakistan's participation in the talks. "The issues can be resolved bilaterally without any third party mediation if both sides are determined and sincere," he said after touring Pahalgam, where the chain of massacres started on Tuesday night.

He said it has been "proved beyond doubt" that Lashkar-e-Toiba militants were involved in the chain massacres and asked Pakistan to create "a congenial atmosphere" for talks instead of aiding the militants.

The Prime Minister renewed his offer for talks with all militant groups in Kashmir. Appreciating the Hizbul's ceasefire offer, Vajpayee said, "We would like all other groups to come out and speak in clear terms. If they do not express their views frankly today and with sincerity, it will be difficult to explore roads to peace in Kashmir."

But the insistence of both the Pakistan-based Hizbul and the

Hurriyat Conference on tripartite negotiations including Pakistan threatens to become the undoing of the current initiative.

"New Delhi and the Hizbul Mujahideen leaders talking to them are like passengers on a train to nowhere," said Hurriyat chairman Abdul Ghani Bhat, just as home secretary Kamal Pande and Hizbul negotiator Fazal Haque Qureshi were taking positions across the table at the high-security Nehru Guest House on the Chashmeshahi slopes.

"Nothing can be achieved unless the dialogue is unconditional and comprehensive, which means Pakistan is included and our right to self-determination is guaranteed," Bhat said.

"Until Pakistan, India and the Hurriyat together call a ceasefire, the fire shall not cease. You have seen the bloodshed after the so-called ceasefire by the Hizbul. The meaning should be clear to everyone," he added. He called the Centre-Hizbul talks a "broken step" that will "achieve nothing but greater trouble in Kashmir."

If nothing else, the bloodbath of the night of August 1 lends credence to the Hurriyat leader's summation. Even top officials of the state administration agree that the opening of talks with one militant group could barely qualify as a breakthrough.

"There are more forces bent on sabotaging peace than there are interested in it here," said a senior official who was on the sidelines of today's talks. "The guns could quickly make those agreeing to talk with the government irrelevant."

Some of that concern was reflected by Hizbul commanders themselves as they arrived for talks under heavy security. Protesting against being photographed by the media, one masked commander cried out: "Stop those cameras



Hizbul Mujahideen commander Riaz Rasool arrives for talks in Srinagar. (Reuters)

at once! Our lives are in danger. Do you want us to get killed?"

Their leader, the genial Qureshi, was more composed, though. Asked about the Hurriyat's virtual rejection of the talks, he said: "We will talk to them." On whether he feared for his life, the former government official had a smile to offer. "No I have no fear."

Qureshi had brought along four Hizbul commanders to the talks — deputy Hizbul chief Muj-

ahid Masood, Riaz Rasool, Farooq Riaz and Assad Yazdani. Also with him were two close political associates, Ghulam Mohammed Naykoo and Musaddiq Adil.

The government delegation was led by Pande, who was assisted by two special secretaries in his office — T.R. Kakkar and M.B. Kausshal, who has now been appointed head of the negotiating team. After talks that lasted a little more than an hour, the Hizbul

leaders too announced a negotiating committee headed by Khalid Saifullah, a former military chief of the organisation. The next date for talks has not been set yet but they will be held in Srinagar.

The Hizbul commanders, who must now be under threat from militants who remain opposed to talks, were bundled out hurriedly under security cover from the Nehru Guest House.

More reports on Page 6

## Govt sets sights on disarmament

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Aug. 3: When the Central team and the Hizbul Mujahideen representatives sit down for talks next time, the Vajpayee government will bargain for total disarmament of the rebel group's cadre in the Valley.

If they lay down weapons, the 1,500-strong Hizbul ranks in the Valley will be given two options: either stay in sanitised camps protected from other militant groups or go back to their families under a "safe-passages" programme.

The Central team — headed by M.B. Kausshal, special secretary in the home ministry in charge of internal security and police — will initially chalk out the ground rules to be followed by both the security forces and Hizbul. The officials are aware that the peace campaign will be a painstaking process and have prepared themselves for a "long haul".

Sources said the peace process can get under way only after the ground rules are framed. The rules will have to be drafted carefully to ensure that there is no scope for ambiguity and that both sides begin to trust each other. "The draft will be exhaustive, but the government will insist that the Hizbul cadre disarm themselves. It will take time and possibly be implemented on the ground before the three-month Hizbul ceasefire expires," an official said.

The government feels that the Hizbul will demand freedom for its cadre who are in prisons throughout Jammu and Kashmir. The Centre is prepared to consider this demand once it is

satisfied that the ground rules are being followed in "letter and spirit" by Hizbul.

But it is understood that Hizbul is not prepared to lay down weapons yet — at least not before the end of the ceasefire — presumably on the ground that its supporters may become the target of foreign mercenaries inimical to the peace process.

The matter had come up for discussion at two closely-guarded meetings between senior officers from the security forces and Hizbul leaders at Badamiyah cantonment yesterday. "A surrender policy with several incentives will be prepared. But that

### DELHI AGENDA

- Ground rules for security forces and Hizbul
- Areas to be covered
- Ceasefire monitoring group
- Surrender policy for Hizbul
- Fate of Hizbul cadre in jail
- Disarming of Hizbul
- Safe passage or sanitised camps for Hizbul
- Plan for Hizbul in POK
- Talks cannot be tripartite

will come later, depending upon the progress of the talks," an official said.

But the government is hopeful that the Hizbul may agree to either "relocate" its cadre in the Valley to a sanitised area or to safe passage.

The government thinks that once the ground rules are implemented and the negotiations begin, the foreign mercenaries could be isolated since they will then have to operate in the state without the support of Kashmiri or Indian...

# Govt. will not bow to terror tactics, PM tells LS amid Congress walkout

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee on Friday asserted that his government would not yield to terrorism and that the fight against it would go hand-in-hand with efforts to solve problems through dialogue.



A.B. Vajpayee

Making a statement in the Lok Sabha on the recent Kashmir massacre, Mr Vajpayee said, "I had made it clear at Srinagar that the dialogue with the Hizbul Mujahideen was a part of this effort. Other groups which have chosen the path of violence should also realise that the people of Jammu and Kashmir want peace."

The Prime Minister's statement comes at a time when several key countries, including the U.S., China and Japan, as well as the European Union have come out in support of New Delhi's decision to initiate a dialogue with the Hizbul Mujahideen and have condemned the perpetrators of the massacre and their backers.

However, the Prime Minister's statement in the Lok Sabha was somewhat eclipsed by a walkout by the Congress following the rejection of its demand for a judicial inquiry into the killings. Demanding a judicial inquiry, Congress president Sonia Gandhi, in one of her rare speeches, said it was necessary to expose the government's lapses, fix accountability and ensure that there was no further slackness.

Ms Gandhi's statement was preceded by ugly scenes as the treasury benches sought to block her, saying the Lok Sabha rules did not allow for clarifications after a statement. Countering this, agitated Congress members said what had happened in Kashmir was unprecedented.

Speaker G.M.C. Balayogi, though initially reluctant to allow Ms Gandhi to make her statement, later said she could do so as a spe-

cial case since she was the leader of the opposition.

However, the treasury benches opposed this, and persisted with their noisy protest. Parliamentary affairs minister Pramod Mahajan also joined in the exchange of words, saying, "Let us not break rules."

This fuelled tempers, with several Congress members crowding the aisles. Congress deputy leader Madhavrao Scindia could be heard exclaiming angrily, "Never before has such a massacre taken place. you are talking of rules when a hundred people have been killed."

Mr Vajpayee, who sat impassively throughout this angry exchange, intervened after 20 minutes to remark, "Traditions must be maintained. Although there is no rule in the Lok Sabha allowing for clarifications, we have no objection if the leader of the opposition wants to make a statement."

Later, responding to Ms Gandhi's demand, he said it was natural to ask such questions, but said it was also difficult to ensure fool-proof security in such situations. The state government had already instituted an inquiry, and if that was found inadequate, a judicial inquiry could be considered, he said.

The Prime Minister made the same statement in the Rajya Sabha. It was followed by a long series of speeches, but without the turmoil the other House witnessed.

Meanwhile, a foreign office spokesman said there was "very clear evidence" of the involvement of the Pakistan-backed Lashkar-e-Toiba in the massacres. He said every peace initiative had been responded to by terrorist acts sponsored from across the border. However, he made it clear that the peace process would continue.

Meanwhile, in a show of support for India's attempts to hold a dialogue with the Hizbul Mujahideen, the U.S. on Friday expressed hope that the talks would be fruitful.

► See Edit: Kashmir/Insaniyat, Page 10

**AFTERWORD**

- Govt. dismisses Congress demand for judicial probe
- EU, China and Japan condemn killings
- US hopeful of fruitful talks
- Rajya Sabha proceedings pass smoothly

Cadres will have to wait

# Security for Hizbul leaders

VINAY JHA  
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 4. — The top leadership of the Hizbul Mujahideen is being provided with security but its cadres may have to fend for themselves if they come under fire from other groups till ceasefire ground rules are finalised.

The Centre will press for disarming of Hizbul Mujahideen members when negotiations to formulate the ground rules begin, but officials here conceded that for the time being they were better off armed.

"As an initial step, the government has ensured a safe haven for top leaders like Abdul Majid Dar," an official said. The

rank and file cannot be provided with security until they agree to move to designated camps like those planned for NSCN members after the ceasefire in Nagaland, it is pointed out.

Though specific areas will be covered step by step in subsequent discussions, Hizbul is believed to be keen that the government withdraw the special powers vested with armed forces in J&K. Another key demand is withdrawal of cases pending against Hizbul members and their sympathisers.

Disarming and relocation to "sanitised" areas are likely to be contentious since Hizbul might feel exposed in the event of the talks failure.

Official sources said it was better they were still armed to

protect themselves against possible attacks from other militants opposed to the ceasefire.

The first priority for the government and security forces is that the ceasefire holds. They are anxious to avoid any incident that would jeopardise the talks process.

Their anxiety stems from the statement of the Hizbul Mujahideen spokesman in Islamabad yesterday that the ceasefire would end unless the Indian government agreed to

unconditional tripartite talks by 8 August.

"We are speaking to Abdul Majid Dar," the Union Home Secretary, Mr Kamal Pande, said in Srinagar yesterday when asked about the ultimatum.

Senior officials

do not rule out the possibility of the Hizbul Mujahideen being divided over ceasefire. There were indications that the leaders in Pakistan had wanted to delay the announcement of a ceasefire. Abdul Majid Dar and other commanders in Jammu and Kashmir apparently decided to act at the earliest since they had a better understanding of the ground situation.

It is likely that Hizbul leaders in Pakistan are under pressure to come out with threatening statements.

"They are not free to speak their minds as long as they are in Pakistan. Syed Salahudin and the rest might have been singing a different tune had they crossed over to India," an official said.

## NHRC NOTICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 4. — Acting on media reports that authorities ignored Intelligence warnings before the massacres in Jammu and Kashmir, the NHRC today issued notices to the Centre and the state government asking for their views in four weeks. — SNS

# DRDO official picked up outside Pakistani mission

Shishir Gupta  
New Delhi, August 6

THE SPECIAL Branch of the Delhi Police is questioning an official of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on the suspicion that he may be part of a Pakistani espionage ring.

The official was picked up outside the Pakistan High Commission under mysterious circumstances on Friday.

According to highly placed Government sources, the official, identified as Sunil, is employed with the DRDO in Ahmednagar, Maharashtra. Senior police officials are presently examining the DRDO official, from whose possession a computer floppy was reportedly recovered.

According to sources, intelligence agencies have had Sunil under surveillance for some time

and on Friday he was picked up while leaving the Pakistan High Commission. The sources said the floppy, which prima facie contained defence material, was being examined.

The questioning of the DRDO official comes after the Ruchi Singh spy case, where a freelance journalist living in Janakpuri was

## Spying Charge

arrested by the Special Branch of the Delhi Police under the Official Secrets Act, 1923.

It was alleged that she was part of a larger ISI-run espionage network through the Nepal route. Subsequently, a havaldar in the ordnance inventory of the Indian Army and a petty officer of the Indian Navy were also arrested.

Sunil is reportedly a middle-ranking employee of the DRDO but, according to sources, is not a defence scientist.

The Defence Ministry, however, seems to be tight-lipped over the incident as repeated efforts to contact Mr V.K. Aatre, Scientific Advisor to the Defence Minister and Secretary (DRDO), and Mr S. Ramakrishnan, Special Commissioner, Intelligence, failed.

Sources said the DRDO official belonged to a divided family. His wife is reportedly a Pakistani national and resides in Karachi.

The DRDO official, when questioned by the Delhi Police about his visit to the Pakistan High Commission, apparently claimed that he had gone there to renew his sister's passport.

It is learnt that Sunil's sister is also married in Karachi and is currently on a visit to India.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

1 AUG 2000

'SEE INTERNAL SECURITY FROM NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE'

# We will fight cross-border terrorism, says Vajpayee

By Harish Khare

NEW DELHI, AUG. 5. The Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, today reasserted that notwithstanding his Government's efforts to explore peace in Jammu and Kashmir, there would be no let-up in the fight against cross-border terrorism. "With the people on our side, we can — and we shall — defeat" the diabolical external forces seeking to disrupt our unity and integrity, he said.

Mr. Vajpayee was hopeful of the success of his Government's "initiative for a dialogue with anybody who is willing to sit across the table and eschew violence in Jammu and Kashmir". He cited

the experience of "talks with insurgents in Nagaland. The ceasefire holds in that State and we are hopeful of a resolution in the not-too-distant future."

The Prime Minister was inaugurating the Chief Ministers' Conference on Internal Security. Deemed to be the project of the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, the conference was intended to secure the States' consent for various federal ideas and initiatives in consonance with the expanded version of "internal security".

The problem of "internal security" stood redefined because Pakistan had "adopted cross-border

terrorism as an instrument of State policy to further its hostility towards India". Consequently, the Indian response too has to be reformulated. The Prime Minister rejected the suggestion — made

**CMs cold to Advani's proposals; Karunanidhi opposes terrorism Bill: Page 11**

by Pakistani functionaries from Gen. Pervez Musharraf down — that cross-border terrorism was a manifestation of *jehadi* struggle.

**Pushes Advani's ideas**

Mr. Vajpayee pitched in on be-

half of Mr. Advani, and impressed upon the Chief Ministers the need to see internal security "from a national perspective" and called them to appreciate that "the changed nature, magnitude and dimension of the threat to our internal security necessitates that both the Centre and the States pool their resources to formulate a national strategy and adopt effective tactics".

The Prime Minister commended to the Chief Ministers the two ideas Mr. Advani has been trying to push: "An effective inter-State intelligence mechanism", and the proposed Prevention of Terrorism Bill.

While there was predictable finger-pointing at Pakistan for its strategy of disrupting India's unity and integrity, the Prime Minister noted the areas of weakness within. He listed four areas: long stretches of the porous border that become friendly territory for terrorists, gun-runners and drug dealers; poorly trained and poorly armed police forces; insensitive civic administration that fails to address popular aspirations; and, a dilatory criminal justice system that fails to penalise criminals, petty and big, organised and disorganised.

Mr. Vajpayee cited Punjab where terrorism was defeated, and this example could be replicated in the rest of the country. However, he also conceded that the country needed to have "an imaginative political process"; only then would it be possible to end "alienation of the people from the mainstream and strengthen our democratic polity". Candid words from a Prime Minister.

- 6 AUG 2000



# Hizbul sticks to tripartite talks, wants India to act now

Islamabad

6 AUGUST

## MILITANT OUTFIT

Hizbul Mujahideen asked India on Sunday to get into tripartite talks to resolve the Kashmir issue, saying New Delhi should not waste the "golden opportunity" provided by its declaration of unilateral ceasefire.

"If India does not enter into tripartite talks and the situation gets further worsened, the entire responsibility will rest with New Delhi," chief of the group, Mr Syed Salahuddin, said in a statement here.

The Kashmir issue is basic-

ly tripartite and the parleys can neither make progress nor prove useful in the absence of either side, the Hizbul chief added.

Clarifying his stand on fixing August 8 as the deadline for the expiry of ceasefire in Kashmir, he said "the deadline is not the result of any misunderstanding. Rather it has been set keeping in view the traditional stubbornness and delaying tactics of India."

Meanwhile, another militant outfit Al-badar Mujahideen termed on Saturday Hizbul's negotiations with the Indian government as meaningless. Al-badar chief Mr Bakht Zamin Khan told a news conference in Karachi that

the talks were "meaningless because they were being held between one group and the Indian government which is not ready to accede to the demand of holding tripartite talks involving Pakistan."

Hizbul Mujahideen said it wanted to retain weapons for its safety and security but was determined to maintain the ceasefire.

This was conveyed by Hizbul commanders to Union home secretary Mr Kamal Pande during the first round of talks on Thursday, Mr Fazal Haq Qureshi, mediator between Hizbul Mujahideen and the government, told a local newspaper. — PTI



# Lashkar says 40 years a wait too long to keep cool

Islamabad

6 AUGUST

LASHKAR-e-TOIBA militant outfit, blamed for the recent string of massacres in Jammu and Kashmir, threatened on Sunday to intensify attacks on Indian troops.

"We waited for 40 long years, but talks and the UN resolutions failed to solve the Kashmir problem," Mr Hafiz Saeed, chief of Lashkar-e-Toiba militant group said. "After giving up every hope of a negotiated settlement, Kashmiris were left with no choice other than to take up arms against India." India has accused Lashkar-e-Toiba of trying to derail New Delhi's peace talks. But Mr Saeed, who said his group has never killed any civilians, rejected the allegations. — AP

# Vajpayee rises above statute

## No conditions, but no Pakistan

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Aug. 7: Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee today went half way to meet the demands of the Hizbul Mujahideen by declaring in Parliament that the government would not allow the Constitution to become a stumbling block to talks with the militant group.

The other half he did not concede was to accept Pakistan as the third party to the talks.

Vajpayee made it clear that there would be no conditions and, if certain issues outside the constitutional framework cropped up during the parley with the militant group, the government would go ahead with the exercise.

"We will talk within the constitutional framework. But in the course of the talks, if certain issues outside the Constitution arise as has been happening in the case of Nagaland, should we stall the parleys? No conditions have been laid down for the talks," Vajpayee said.

The Prime Minister was replying to clarifications sought on the statement he had made last week on the killings in Pahalgam and other parts of Jammu and Kashmir within a few hours.

"Whether talks are held within the Constitution or outside is not so important. What is important is that underground terrorist groups should be brought overground. Because, if such groups continue to function and thrive underground, not only will Jammu and Kashmir's problems remain unsolved but the country's as well," he said.

Vajpayee elaborated on the use of the word *insaaniyat* in his Srinagar news conference and ex-

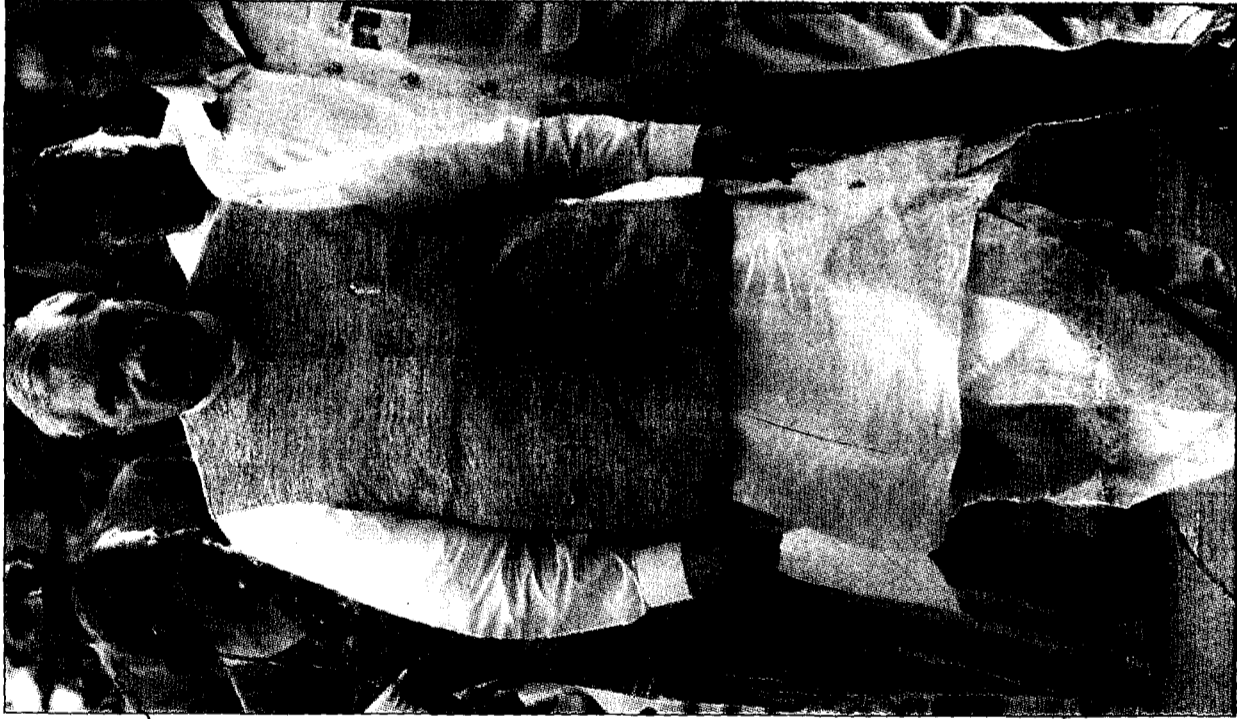
pressed surprise at the kind of response the word had evoked. "It seems as though people do not like the sound of the word *insaaniyat*. But terrorism can be met head on only by *insaaniyat*. So no one should be shocked or surprised by the use of the word. Yesterday, I was asked by a news agency what I meant by *insaaniyat*. Have things reached such a pass that I have to explain the meaning of a word like *insaaniyat*?" he asked.

It was not just the Congress which demanded an explanation for Vajpayee's choice of the word, but privately even the BJP's own MPs were wondering if the Prime Minister was willing to concede more to the militants than what was "reasonable" from the Sangh's viewpoint. Vajpayee had said in Srinagar that *insaaniyat* and not the Constitution should be the basis for talks.

In the Rajya Sabha today, Vajpayee was cautious not to toss aside the Constitution in the polemics over *insaaniyat*. He described the document as the "epitome of *insaaniyat*", but put the urgency to stop the killings and restore peace in Kashmir above everything else. "Jammu and Kashmir's *hariyali* (verdancy) should not be blotted with more blood. How much more blood can its soil absorb? A country of 100 crore should understand this."

Without sounding unduly optimistic, the Prime Minister admitted he did not know how the talks would end. "But I am ready for peace. If the other side does not reciprocate, then we will think of what to do next," he added.

Vajpayee also declared that the country's security was paramount. "We are committed to protecting our national interests and preserving our national unity. None shall doubt we have the



A.B. Vajpayee at his residence. (AFP)

means and the will to do so." He turned down the Congress' demand for a judicial probe into the Kashmir killings.

"A propaganda has been unleashed (by Pakistan) that the killings were done by the Indian security forces to denigrate the militant outfits and their *andoian*. There is also a demand

for a judicial probe by the same quarters. No one believes such cards but at the same time we have to be alert to an organised conspiracy of this kind," he said.

Despite Vajpayee's impassioned plea for a show of unity, the Congress raised a furor immediately after his statement. ■ More reports on Page 6

## Talks reduced to a joke: Hizbul

FROM SANKARSHAN THAKUR

Srinagar, Aug. 7: The Hizbul Mujahideen put talks with the government on hold today in protest against alleged ceasefire violations by security forces and Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee's blanket refusal to involve Pakistan. Negotiations may not have broken down yet but they have run into a blind alley.

Breaking his silence of several days, Hizbul commander-in-chief Abdul Majeed Dar said in an angry, no-nonsense statement today that Vajpayee's comment had "washed away our hopes and we shall have to seriously review our decision on talks because the government has gone back on its word within four days".

Dar said the government had reduced the peace initiative to a "joke" and authorised the Pakistan-based command council of the Hizbul to take a final decision on whether to continue with the talks. "We have had no contact with the government since the first round of talks and there is no contact at the moment. If the government of India continues to hesitate on our terms, we shall be forced to withdraw the ceasefire and the responsibility of the consequences shall lie with the government," Dar said.

Hizbul commanders who had participated in the inaugural round of talks here on August 3 continued to stay away from the negotiating table on the grounds that the government has violated the ceasefire and "gone back" on the terms for talks.

All eyes are now on the Hizbul bosses in Pakistan who have set tomorrow as the deadline for the expiry of the ceasefire if New Delhi does not agree

to unconditional tripartite talks. The Hizbul command council is meeting in Pakistan over today and tomorrow. In a statement from Muzaffarabad late last night, the Hizbul boss, Syed Salahuddin, made it clear that extending the deadline was not on his plans.

"The ceasefire will expire if the government of India does not agree to our terms by 5 pm on August 8. There is no misunderstanding on this because we know the obduracy and unreliability of the government of India," Salahuddin said.

Hizbul commanders here would be looking out for signals from Pakistan eagerly even as they sort out their own differences. Divisions have emerged within the Hizbul at various levels; the headline is believed to be putting pressure on the commanders to pull out of the talks in view of the Government of India's refusal to hold unconditional tripartite negotiations.

There are also indications that Hizbul cadre on the ground are resisting any bid to get them to surrender their weapons. Militant groups like the Al-Badar have, in fact, claimed that Hizbul cadre opposed to talks have begun shifting loyalties to groups that are still in the fight. Resistance to talks from the Hizbul cadre is being actively encouraged by the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and other militant groups.

APHC chairman Abdul Ghani Bhat said the organisation would initiate action against Fazal Haq Qureshi for inflating talks with the government without consulting the Hurriyat. "We have to see what form of disciplinary action we take," Bhat said.

# Hizbul ends truce,

# blames India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
ISLAMABAD, AUG. 8

**T**HE Hizbul Mujahideen on Tuesday withdrew its unilateral ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir this evening, accusing New Delhi of not responding positively to its call for tripartite talks involving Pakistan to settle the Kashmir issue and directed its field commanders to resume their operation in the state.

"We withdraw the unilateral ceasefire... We direct all the commanders and the Mujahideen in the field to break the ceasefire and go ahead along with target-oriented mission," Hizbul's supreme commander Syed Salahuddin said at a press conference here after the expiry of the outfit's 5.30 pm (IST) deadline to India to agree to the three-way dialogue.

"India has failed to respond categorically to our offer of peace and has dilly-dallied in giving peace a chance," the Pakistan-based Hizbul leader said.

"India intended to tie the affair in a bilateral dialogue, which is not acceptable," he said, adding "the Kashmir tangle can be solved only by a just negotiating process involving all three parties — Kashmiris, India and Pakistan," he said. He said had India agreed to a tripartite dialogue, the other organisations "involved in the armed struggle could have been convinced for a comprehensive peace."

There was no immediate response from the Hizbul commanders in the Kashmir valley who had initiated talks with a Central team to chalk-out modalities of the three-month unilateral ceasefire announced by Abdul Majid Dar,



**TIME'S UP: Commander of Hizbul Mujahideen Syed Salahuddin calls off the ceasefire at a press conference in Islamabad on Tuesday. He directed his commanders to resume fighting against Indian forces.—AFP**

who claimed to be the chief commander of the outfit, on July 24 in Srinagar.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, while agreeing to hold talks with the Hizbul leaders in the state, had categorically ruled out any involvement of Pakistan in the parleys till Islamabad stopped cross-border terrorism and created

conditions for peace.

"We put our entire credibility of 12 years at stake for our (desire) to facilitate a peaceful resolution to the lingering Kashmir dispute," said Salahuddin, who had endorsed Dar's ceasefire announcement a day later.

"This peace offensive has not been reciprocated by India who

## Cabinet Committee on Security meets

**NEW DELHI:** The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) today reviewed the situation in Kashmir and said the Government was prepared to face any eventuality. The meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, was of the view that the Government should be prepared to face any eventuality in the post-ceasefire situation, sources said.

"The Government is ready to face any situation. We have shown an exemplary amount of tolerance, patience and restraint," the sources added. Senior Government officials led by Home Secretary Kamal Pandey have held one round of talks with Hizbul Mujahideen commanders in Srinagar last week after the ceasefire came into force. The CCS meeting was also attended by Home Minister L K Advani, Defence Minister George Fernandes, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pramod Mahajan and Chief of Army Staff, Gen V P Malik.

have demonstrated their traditional intransigence," he said, adding India had failed to "respond to our ice-breaking move which could have become productive and meaningful if India had accepted unconditional tripartite talks."

Hizbul's ceasefire declaration had evoked strong criticism from other Pakistan-based militant groups operating in the state. A 14-member umbrella organisation of the militant outfits, United Jehad Council, suspended Hizbul from its membership and sacked Salahuddin from its chairmanship.

Pakistan yesterday insisted on tripartite talks, saying Islamabad was an internationally recognized party to the Kashmir issue. "There would be no escape for India from this position," Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman Riaz Mohamad Khan told reporters.

Pakistani religious groups had suspected the role of Pakistan and the US in the Hizbul decision. However, both the Hizbul and Pakistan denied the charges.

Pakistan insisted that it does not exercise any control over the groups. Salahuddin alleged that Vaj-

payee's statements have been contradictory. "In one breath he talked about dialogue on the basis of humanness and in the same breath he spoke about the negotiations within the framework of Indian Constitution," he said.

The Hizbul chief, however, said the outfit's "options are open and we can review and revise our decision once India breaks the barrier of rigidity. If it does, we can persuade other armed resistance movements to join hands with us for peaceful resolution of Kashmir dispute."

He warned that another war in the region was possible unless the Kashmir issue was resolved. "The next war over Kashmir could be nuclear," he said.

**SRINAGAR:** Meanwhile, the Hurriyat Conference executive committee will meet here tomorrow to discuss the situation arising out of the end of the ceasefire.

"We have nothing to say on the issue immediately. We are meeting tomorrow to discuss the issue and then react," a spokesman for the Hurriyat Conference said when contacted by PTI for reaction on Hizbul's decision.

# Hizbul withdraws ceasefire, blames it on Indian govt.

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan-based Hizbul Mujahideen militant group withdrew its unilateral ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday evening, accusing New Delhi of not responding positively to its call for tripartite talks involving Pakistan to settle the Kashmir issue and directed its field commanders to resume their operation in the state.

"We withdraw the unilateral cease-fire. We direct all the commanders and the Mujahideen in the field to break the ceasefire and go ahead with target-oriented missions," Hizbul's supreme commander Syed Salahudin said at a press conference here after the expiry of the outfit's 5.30 p.m. (IST) deadline to India to agree to a three-way dialogue. "India has failed to respond categorically to our offer of peace and has dilly-dallied in giving peace a chance," Mr Salahudin said. "India intended to tie the affair in a bilateral dialogue, which is not acceptable," he said, adding "the Kashmir tangle can be solved only by a just negotiating process involving all three parties—Kashmiris, India and Pakistan," he said.

There was no immediate response from the Hizbul commanders in the Kashmir valley who had initiated talks with a central team to chalk-out modalities of the three-month unilateral ceasefire announced by Abdul Majid Dar, who claimed to be the chief commander of the outfit, on July 24 in Srinagar.

In New Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Dr Farooq Abdullah on Tuesday categorically

blamed Pakistan for the killings of about 100 people at Pahalgam and other places in the state last week.

Mr Abdullah has asked the Hurriyat Conference to come out with a "constructive plan" for restoring peace in the state and not indulge in hampering the talks between the Centre and Hizbul by making irresponsible statements.

Reports from Srinagar said that two more Amarnath pilgrims died on Tuesday on way to the cave shrine, raising the number of deaths in the ongoing yatra to 22, an official spokesman said here.

In another development, the cabinet committee on security (CCS) on Tuesday reviewed the situation in the wake of the Hizbul calling off the ceasefire in J&K as the government is understood to be preparing to face any eventuality.

The meeting, chaired by Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee, was of the view that the government should be prepared to face any eventuality in the post ceasefire situation, sources said. "The government is ready to face any situation. We have shown an exemplary amount of tolerance, patience and restraint," the sources added.

Senior government officials led by home secretary Kamal Pande have held one round of talks with Hizbul commanders in Srinagar last week after the ceasefire came into force.

Meanwhile, the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday finally got over the government-opposition imbroglio on the issue of a judicial probe into the Kashmir killings with a civilised compromise, albeit capped by a token protest walkout.

## BACK TO SQUARE ONE

- Cabinet panel on security reviews situation
- Two more yatris die, toll 22
- Farooq blames Pakistan for massacres

'SALAHUDDIN'S VOICE, PAKISTAN'S WORDS'

# Security forces ready for any challenge: Advani

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, AUG. 9. In a message calculated to signal the Government's firmness of purpose in the post-Hizbul Mujahideen ceasefire scenario in Jammu and Kashmir, the Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, today asserted that the insurgent groups better watch out. Declaring that the security forces were ready to "face the challenge and threat of renewed militancy", he warned that "it is the militant outfits which should worry."

There was an unmistakable note of toughness in Mr. Advani's statement, made in both Houses of Parliament. (However, in the

Rajya Sabha, the Home Minister refrained from "clarifications", as per an agreement thrashed out with the Deputy Chairperson). The statement reflects an anxiety to assure the country that even though the Government had probably made many miscalculations in its approach to the Hizbul ceasefire offer, it was not going to get caught napping now. He added that while "India will not deviate from its chosen course of talks" with all those who want a dialogue, "we shall persist with our policy of firmness and flexibility". But the official assessment is that the Syed Salahuddin faction would want to stage a



bloody event just to prove it was alive and kicking.

## Hurriyat attacked

Mr. Advani was also harsh on the All-Party Hurriyat Conference leadership for its "negative role." He wondered how the Hurriyat leadership could label the Hizbul move as "hasty" while Jammu and Kashmir had been bleeding for over a decade. His own inference was that "the Hurriyat leadership was acting under pressure from Pakistan."

The Home Minister also elaborated the charge made yesterday in the Government's statement on Pakistan's culpability in sabotaging the peace process. "It is clear that the voice that made the

announcement may have been Salahuddin's, but the words came from the ruling establishment in Islamabad which is the arch patron for numerous militant groups engaged in state-sponsored cross-border terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of India," he added. For good measure, Mr. Advani predicted that Pakistan's "proxy war" would meet the same fate that befell its Kargil misadventure.

Mr. Advani also claimed that it was more than clear, at home and abroad, that while India was committed to peace in Kashmir it was Pakistan that was using terrorism as an instrument of diplomacy. "Not only the people of Kashmir but also people all over the world now clearly know who is for peace and who is for hostilities; whose is the voice of sanity and humanity and whose is a voice of subterfuge and sabotage," he said.

## PM reviews situation

While the Home Minister was spelling out the Government's thinking in the Rajya Sabha, the Prime Minister, along with senior ministers and officials, reviewed the situation. Among those who helped Mr. Vajpayee make sense of the new situation were the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, the Finance Minister, Mr. Yashwant Sinha, the Chief of the Army Staff, Gen. V. P. Malik, the Prime Minister's Principal Secretary, Mr. Brajesh Mishra, and the Union Home Secretary, Mr. Kamal Pande.

Perhaps the next crucial judgment the Indian officials have to make is as to whether there is a convergence or divergence between the Islamabad-based Syed Salahuddin and the Srinagar-based Mr. Abdul Majid Dar. Mr. Advani's statement rather subtly refers to this possibility: "The offer of ceasefire was made by Mr. Majid Dar, a leader of the Hizbul Mujahideen in Srinagar. It was withdrawn by Salahuddin."

## Hizbul Mujahideen denies split

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR AUG. 9. Putting all speculation of a possible split in Hizbul Mujahideen at rest, a spokesman of the organisation said that it supported the withdrawal of the ceasefire and ruled out the possibility of having contacts with the Government.

In a statement to the local news agency CNS this evening, the Hizb spokesman commander Masood condemned the statement of the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, in which he had stated that they were still in contact with them.

"It is aimed at misleading the people", he said adding that after the August 3 meeting with the Union Home Secretary there was no contact between Hizb and the GOI.

THE HINDU

10 AUG 2000

## THE MIG CRASH

HD-12 1078

THE TRAGIC DEATH of Flt. Lt. Shreya Shukla, Commander of the MiG-21 fighter plane which crashed at Palam airport on August 5 soon after a bird-hit raises a pair of very disturbing questions. They hinge upon matters relating to flight safety of the combat aircraft earlier acquired from Russia and subsequently taken up for manufacture in India on the one hand and the persisting bird menace in the country's airports on the other.

The aircraft which was felled after a bird ingestion happens to be a MiG 21. It could have been a Jaguar or a Mirage of the Indian Air Force or a passenger aircraft of the civilian airlines. Nevertheless, the fact that this is the seventh crash of a MiG aircraft since April this year makes it quite alarming and it calls for a closer examination. The fact that as many as 55 out of the 59 fighter planes which the IAF had lost during the last year are all MiGs is quite dismaying. It is much too large a number to be attributed to just the normal hazards which pilots of fighter aircraft have to reckon with. India's decision to sign an agreement with the erstwhile Soviet Union was taken in 1962, soon after the traumatic Chinese attack, for an initial purchase of MiGs which were later taken up for indigenous manufacture of the aircraft frames and engines by the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. at its Nasik and Sonabeda divisions in Maharashtra and Orissa. This turned out to be a prestigious project for the HAL and the MiG could even claim to be the flagship of the IAF. However, its crash record in recent years throws up questions on whether the ageing of the fleet and its technology, which may be fast becoming vintage, have been eroding in-built safety. With the HAL divisions no longer making the MiGs because of the non-flow of fresh orders from the IAF depending entirely upon the planes built to a technology which has stayed put during the last three decades, they could have become dinosaurs. Since this could be true of the other

planes of the IAF as well, the questions which should be considered seriously are those hinging on the fragility to which ageing combat aircraft become prone. No less important are matters relating to the safety of the pilots who are keeping the IAF in a state of combat readiness.

This is not the first time that birds — mostly vultures — have brought down aircraft either after take-off or before touch down when they were ingested into the engines. The record of airports in India in meeting the rigid requirements of environmental cleanliness has remained deplorable. Detailed studies carried out earlier had clearly drawn attention to why birds hover over air space to wreck planes soon after they are airborne or when they are making a descent with the deadly encounters taking place within an altitude of perhaps less than a hundred metres. These birds are usually on the prowl looking for decaying meat strewn on the ground and coming down in a swoop to pick it up. This should not have posed a threat to planes had the required attention been given to the regulations in force governing health and environmental hygiene. Trucks which transport meat from slaughter houses to marketing centres are required to have them adequately covered to ensure that they are not spilt on the roads. It is very well known that the rules which are in force to ensure this are breached with impunity by truck operators to foul the roads with pieces of meat. Such spillage on the city roads provokes a bird presence which endangers planes coming in to land or taking off from airports as the record of bird ingestions during the last two decades has clearly demonstrated. Unless the law-enforcing authorities take drastic action to ensure that road transportation of raw meat conforms to the rules relating to hygiene and safety, bird-hits would continue to menace planes.

THE HINDU

10 AUG 2000

# Army to retaliate if attacked by Hizb ultras: George

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, August 10

DEFENCE MINISTER George Fernandes today said Army troops operating in the Kashmir Valley will hit back if they were attacked by Hizbul Mujahideen militants following the withdrawal of ceasefire by the outfit.

"There has been no violation of the ceasefire by the Army. We will hit back if we are attacked," Mr Fernandes told reporters on the sidelines of a seminar and exhibition on "Military Communications: Role of Industry" jointly organised here by the Corps of Signals and Confederation of Indian Industry. Asked about the ground situa-

tion in the Valley following the Hizbul's latest move, he said, "The situation remains as it was. The Army is tasked with fighting insurgency on the borders and in the valley and it will continue to do so."

Earlier at the function, Mr Fernandes said the private sector would have to invest reasonably in research and development if they wanted to play a major role in restructuring the country's defence industry.

Regretting that research and development had not been the forte of the country's entrepreneurial class, Mr Fernandes called for a radical change in the work culture that had overtaken the country in recent times.

He said that while the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) had some outstanding achievements to its credit, "one has to admit that in most core areas we look for either collaboration or transfer of technology from foreign sources."

The Minister said: "I wish our private sector sets apart a reasonable part of their profits for investment in research and development if it really means to play a major role in restructuring India's defence industry."

Another key area where the country will have to act fast, the Defence Minister said, was to "inculcate in our workforce new work ethics."

Recalling his recent visit to some shipyards and defence production establishments in Russia, the Minister said, "a frigate which the Russians produce in two years or less takes about three times that to be produced at Calcutta's Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (Ltd)."

"The discipline and integrity which a jawan in the armed forces of our country brings to bear on his task should become a national norm. Without that commitment, our defence will always be in jeopardy," he said.

He regretted that the requisite synergy between defence units and the private sector could not be created despite his initiatives.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

11 AUG 2000

# Militants kill our photo

## We did it, claim Hizbul, Lashkar

HT Correspondent  
Srinagar, August 10

AT LEAST 12 persons, including *The Hindustan Times* photographer Pradeep Bhatia, were killed in a devastating car bomb explosion in the busy Residency Road here this afternoon. It is the first major incident of violence following the collapse of peace talks between the Centre and Hizb-ul-Mujahadeen on Tuesday evening.

Islamabad-based Hizb-ul-Mujahadeen has claimed responsibility for the blast. "Our fighters have carried out the attack", said Salim Hashmi, a spokesman for the group, in Islamabad, vowing to resume operations in the Valley.

However, some reporters received a call from Lashkar-e-Tayyeba spokesman saying that his group had executed the explosion.

The attack was a chilling reminder of the violence that continues to batter the Valley for the past over a decade.

Besides Pradeep Bhatia, a civilian, Bashir Ahmad, was also killed. The rest were policemen. They have been identified as sub-divisional police officer Kuldeep Sharma, ASI Moha-mmud Yaqoob, constables Devinder Singh, Farooq, Imtiaz, Jan Mohammad, Naseer Ahmad, Nissar Ahmad, Mohd. Ashraf and Bodh Raj.

Director General of Police Gurbachan Jagat said that this explosion exhibited the familiar strategy of the militants of first attracting attention of the policemen and photographers by minor blast and then causing another one to cause havoc.

At about 12.15 p.m., 31-year-old Pradeep had reached the spot along with other photographers to film a grenade explosion, when the car bomb exploded injuring him and several others. He was rushed to SMHS hospital where he succumbed.

Other critically injured have been rushed to Sher-e-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences and Army Hospital.

According to the staff of Ahdoos Hotel, where Pradeep was staying, he had left his



Pradeep Bhatia 1969-2000

breakfast and rushed out on hearing the explosion. "He took his camera bag and rushed out after locking his room no. 101", a member of the staff recalled.

Other journalists had rushed from the nearby Partap Park Press Colony, now named as Mushtaq Enclave, in memory of Mushtaq Ali, an ANI videographer who was killed in a blast on September 8, 1995.

It was around 12.15 p.m. today when a grenade exploded and prompted policemen, reporters and photographers to reach the spot a suspiciously parked

where they saw Ambassador car.

The policemen were examining the car when the blast took place throwing several policemen up in the air.

Eight policemen died on the spot and several others wounded. The limbs fell several yards away. Flying shrapnel pierced through the heart of Pradeep that proved fatal.

He was heard by some of the witnesses pleading with the security personnel "Mujhe bachao", (save me), before he was lifted by local journalists and shifted to SMHS Hospital.

Some of the critically injured journalists, including Irfan Ayub of Zee News, Fayaz Kabuli of Reuters, Bilal Bhat of ANI, were shifted to Soura. A few other journalists were injured in the stampede that followed after the blast.

**Hizbul threat:** The Hizbul has threatened to intensify its operations by targeting military installations all over India, which it accused of being "not sincere" in settling the Kashmir issue, a PTI report from Islamabad said.

Hizbul "supreme commander" Syed Salahuddin, who last Tuesday called off the cease-fire, said in an interview to a local news agency that "our struggle will not be restricted to the (Kashmir) Valley. We will target all military and defence installations throughout India".

- Remembering the best of Pradeep — Pg 9
- Civilians targeted on Pak advice — Pg 10
- Return to violence? — Pg 11

### Pak to blame: PM

PRIME MINISTER A. B. Vajpayee said the explosion in Srinagar was an act of terror planned and executed at the behest of Pakistan. "This is yet another example of Islamabad's sustained campaign of cross-border terrorism." He said, "We will continue our battle against terrorism till such time this evil is destroyed root and branch." **Detailed report on page 10**

### Democracy in Pak not a precondition for talks: PM

PRIME MINISTER Atal Behari Vajpayee today said that India was prepared to deal with any form of government in Pakistan and that restoration of democracy in that country was not a pre-condition for talks.

Intervening during question hour, Mr Vajpayee told members of the Rajya Sabha that it was a reasonable objection that a democratic government had been unseated in a military coup in Pakistan and India was not happy about it.

Mr Vajpayee's comments on the subject came after senior Congress member Pranab Mukherjee asked what would be the pre-condition for resumption of dialogue with Pakistan — restoration of democracy in Pakistan or restoration of peace.

Speaking earlier during question hour, in response to supplementaries, Minister of State for External Affairs Ajit Panja said that India was ready for a dialogue with Pakistan provided it was within the framework of the Simla Agreement and the Lahore peace process initiated by the Prime Minister. Mr Vajpayee's visit to Pakistan was evidence enough of India's willingness for a peace process. Mr Panja said.

Hinting at Pakistan's involvement in sabotaging the prospect of peace talks with the Hizbul Mujahideen, he said that though their local leader, Abdul Majid Dar in Srinagar, announced the ceasefire it was not called off by Dar, but by their supreme commander based in Pakistan.

Mr Panja also stated that the government was studying reports that the Pakistan Cabinet, presided over by Chief Executive Gen. Musharraf, had reiterated its commitment to the cause of Kashmir's liberation. **HTC, New Delhi**



# Defence projects slow: George

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W. S. Lewis

## STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Aug. 10. — Mr George Fernandes today criticised the Defence Research and Development Organisation and the country's defence production establishments for their "inefficiency" and stressed the need for export of military goods.

After praising the DRDO for some "outstanding achievements", the defence minister launched a thinly-veiled attack. "One has to admit that in most core areas we look for either collaboration or transfer of technology from foreign sources," he said at a function organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry.

Mr Fernandes hoped that the

private sector would play a role in research and development in restructuring India's defence industry. The role has, so far, been played by the DRDO.

While the DRDO has been successful with strategic missiles, there has been considerable delay and overspending in several projects including developing an indigenous warplane — Light Combat Aircraft — and the Arjun tank as well as tactical missiles like *Trishul* and *Aakash*.

Mr Fernandes was even more critical of the defence production establishments. "A frigate which Russians produce in two years or less takes about three times that to be produced at Garden Reach workshop," the minister said. The Navy has



Mr George Fernandes

long criticised the Garden Reach workshop for delay in projects.

The country's work force is in dire need of new work ethics and work culture, Mr Fernandes said. He regretted the lack of

interest in research and development among entrepreneurs.

On the delay in getting defence-industry partnership started, Mr Fernandes said the department of defence production and the CII have been working on some changes in the defence production sector. He quoted officials as saying that there are some problems because of slow procurement procedures.

"If this is where we are after about two years from when we decided to create the requisite synergy between the defence establishments and the private sector industry, I do not know how long it will take us to reach our goals," he said.

Also present at the function

was the Army chief, General VP Malik. He admitted that the Kargil war "revealed gaps in intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance".

Good surveillance requires well-equipped outposts, ground sensors, battlefield surveillance radars, drones, satellites, airborne warning and control systems, and good information technology, Gen Malik said. Some of these systems are absent in India and are being procured from elsewhere.

The Army chief spoke of the need for new communication systems and secrecy devices which, he said, would have to be developed indigenously.

The shortage of secrecy devices during Kargil war led to more casualties.

THE STATESMAN

11 AUG 2000

Salahuddin warns of bombing blitz

# Delhi finds lost Hizbul link

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FROM CHANDAN NANDY

**New Delhi, Aug. 11: Grasping at a straw amid the debris of the peace process, security agencies have re-established contact with Hizbul Mujahideen's India chief Abdul Majid Dar but the spectre of violence hung over Kashmir with the outfit's Pakistan-based commander threatening to launch its heaviest bombing in 10 years.**

"In a day or two, we will launch the biggest bombardment not seen in the last 10 years," Reuters quoted Hizb supreme commander Syed Salahuddin as saying in Pakistan's Urdu daily *Jung*.

Though the Hizb has claimed responsibility for yesterday's lethal car bomb blast in Srinagar, the government continues to believe that a section of its Kashmir-based commanders are sincere about the talks.

Following suggestions that the government had misread the fallout of even a temporary setback to the peace process, the security agencies are trying to build up a defence that Dar and some divisional commanders are willing to bypass their Islamabad-based leadership and resume negotiations.

"Security agencies are in touch with Dar and some of his lieutenants in certain areas of the Valley. They continue to remain firm in holding a dialogue and it is based on this conviction in the other side that the government is hopeful of a resumption of talks," an official said.

The Centre has been informed that Dar, who went underground after the ceasefire call-off, is "not in danger" though the rivalry between various *tanzeems* (terrorist

groups) in Jammu and Kashmir has intensified.

An official said that talks at a "subdued level" (read without any publicity) could restart after August 15 provided the situation on the ground improves.

Officials said they feared more blasts in Srinagar in the run-up to Independence Day. Their apprehension was reinforced by the Hizb leadership in Islamabad. "India will pay a heavy price for rejecting the ceasefire," Salahuddin said.

Salim Hashmi, a spokesman for the outfit, added that the Hizb "will make a series of attacks against military installations in Kashmir and in other parts of India".

Despite the Hizb's claims of having sparked the mayhem in Srinagar yesterday, reports from the state indicate that the Pakistan-based militant group

Lashkar-e-Toiba was responsible for the explosion in which 13 people died. Delhi believes the Hizb was forced to claim responsibility because its Islamabad-based top brass could have done little else.

By continuing to work on Dar, the government is trying to send out the signal that the talks can still be salvaged provided the cards are played cautiously and the issue is approached in a more "solid way". Already, the finger of accusation for the failed experiment is pointing towards the intelligence assessment wings in the Prime Minister's Office and the home ministry.

The PMO and national security adviser Brajesh Mishra decided to go ahead and start talks with the Hizbul over the head of a reluctant North Block though the intelligence assessment units were not yet ready with their analysis of the Hizb's various pulls and pressures.

Officials are now wondering whether the government made a tactical error in failing to "bring over" Salahuddin safely across the Line of Control before agreeing to Dar's ceasefire offer.

Officials now admit there were "hitches" and "glitches" in the attempt to make way for Salahuddin's entry into Indian territory.

It is another indication that the Centre failed to assess accurately the possible outcome of Salahuddin remaining in Pakistan. "The decision-makers should have been patient enough. It would have taken time but the wait would have been worth it. At least the Hizbul leadership would not have been under any pressure. It would have opened up possibilities of a successful and trouble-free dialogue for the future," an official said.

## Pervez punch

**Washington, Aug. 11: Efforts by the Clinton administration to restrain Pakistan and reduce violence in Kashmir appear to have reached a dead end.**

With Pakistan's chief executive, Pervez Musharraf, washing his hands of any responsibility in the latest events in Kashmir in a letter to President Bill Clinton, efforts by the White House to repeat the magic of July 1999 in bringing peace in Kargil have turned out to be a non-starter. Musharraf's letter was in reply to a communication from Clinton in which he pleaded for restraint and a resumption of the peace process.

■ See Page 6

THE TELEGRAPH

12 AUG 2000

# Red alert countrywide for Independence Day

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
and AGENCIES

SRINAGAR/NEW DELHI, Aug. 12. — The Centre has sounded a red alert throughout the country in anticipation of an escalated ISI-sponsored violence before and during the Independence Day celebrations.

As over a dozen militant outfits in Jammu and Kashmir have reportedly "got repeated instructions" from the ISI to go in for major offensives next week, security forces have also been put on maximum alert across the valley.

Several underground outfits in the North-east, including Ulfa, issued a joint call to boycott the Independence Day celebrations and observe a general strike on the day. The NSCN(I-M) and the Kuki National Front gave a separate boycott calls.

Security has been beefed up in Assam as two powerful bombs were exploded

on power towers of the State Electricity Board. The explosion rocked the entire Tihu area.

Sources in the Union home ministry said the red alert was sounded after Thursday's explosion at Srinagar, followed by yesterday's arrest of an ISI agent and recovery of RDX and time devices in Delhi. The 'most-wanted' Zahoor Ahmad Mir of Hizbul Mujahideen was apprehended in Kashmir today. Ammunition was also seized from him and his two associates.

Sources said Intelligence agencies recently unearthed an ISI plan to foment trouble in different parts of the country.

They said ISI had already smuggled huge amounts of explosives into India to carry out a series of explosions, particularly in the north and the north-east.

Today, four women, including

13/8  
two Hungarian tourists, were injured when militants exploded a grenade near the Hazratbal shrine on the outskirts of Srinagar. This occurred shortly after mid-day prayers. No outfit has owned responsibility.

Nine militants and an Army Captain were killed and nine security personnel injured in separate encounters. Five ultras, of the Harkat-ul-Jehadi Islami, and Capt Shekhar Ghosh were killed in a fierce gunbattle at the Ratti-Mitti area in Poonch yesterday.

A self-styled chief commander of Ansar-ul-Mujahideen, Babar Bader, was killed during search operations by security forces in Kupwara's Magam area. Three

ultras were killed in a shootout at Kounsar forest in Baramulla.

Four security personnel were injured when a bomb that they were trying to defuse went off at Lasana village yesterday. The spokesman said ultras ambushed a police

patrol in Anantnag, injuring three policemen and a civilian.

It is becoming increasingly evident that the next few days could be critical to drawing a map for the road ahead. For, the level of violence would determine whether there is at all any chance of trying to reopen the path to peace.

The run-up to Independence Day has over the last decade or so almost always witnessed a spurt in violence. The Hazratbal attack confirmed that the public outrage over the car blast had not deterred the militants. If anything, it could just be the curtain-raiser for more blood.

Radio intercepts point to orders being flashed from across the border to keep things on the boil. Apparently those directing the militancy are determined to ensure that what turned out to be an

## Blast in Ludhiana

CHANDIGARH, Aug. 12. — A powerful explosion ripped through Ludhiana Sessions Court complex late last night. No one was damaged because of the timing. This is the third blast in Punjab in two months. Police say the bomb was planted below a water-cooler. — SNS



An elderly Kashmiri enjoys a water pipe, while a soldier looks on during a cordon and search operation in Srinagar on Saturday. — AP/PTI

attack on media personnel does not force a detour by the militants from the path of violence.

Violence apart, there is another "sign" for which the security forces and the Intelligence will be on looking for over the next few days — the number of Pakistan flags in the valley on 14 August, when the country celebrates its independence

day. "The number of flags will serve as a barometer of the pressure on locals by the militants," a defence source said.

**Car blast toll:** The death toll of Thursday's blast rose to 13 today with another person dying in the hospital here. Station house officer Altaf Ahmed had suffered 70 per cent burns.

# 8 soldiers die in landmine blasts

BSF convoy hit on Jammu-Srinagar highway

HTC & Agencies  
Jammu/Srinagar, August 13

**S**TRIKING IN a big way two days after the car bomb blast in Srinagar, Hizbul Mujahideen militants today targeted a BSF convoy triggering two separate explosions killing eight BSF personnel and injuring 50 others, 15 of them critically, in Udhampur district, 9 kms from Jammu.

The convoy was going from Jammu to Srinagar carrying reinforcements on the eve of Independence Day. Two other explosions also rocked Nishat and Sangrama, but there were no reported casualties.

IGP (Jammu zone) R.V. Raju told reporters that militants ambushed the 15-vehicle convoy carrying BSF personnel at Tamatar curve on Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, setting off an improvised explosive device, possibly with the help of a remote control. The explosion at 8.30 am extensively damaged one of the vehicles of the convoy.

Militants struck again at 2.30 pm triggering another IED blast when the convoy was held up at a nearby place after the first explosion. The 294-km highway, the only road link that the Valley has with rest of the country and is guarded round the clock.

Earlier, as the convoy was climbing the hilly portion of the road at Tamatar Morh, several kg of RDX hidden on a roadside exploded throwing the BSF bus several feet high and shattering the window panes of other vehicles as the bus came crashing down. The bomb was apparently kept in the luggage hold of the bus. Traffic was suspended on the road and was cleared in the afternoon.

Three of the victims have been identified as Nanda Kunthal of Kerala, Ujrahin Linga of Orissa and constable Pandrajan of Maharashtra.

All the injured were admitted to Udhampur hospital where the condition of 15 personnel was described as critical and 19 were discharged after first aid

Director General of Police Gurbachan Jagat said that cordon and search operations have been launched to nab the militants responsible for acts of violence in the State.

Hizbul spokesman Salim Hashmi said in Islamabad that "until India accepts our demand (for inclusion of Pakistan in talks to resolve the Kashmir issue) we will intensify our attacks on Indian security forces and military installations."

Both Hizbul and Lashker-e-Toiba have warned of attacks on security forces and vital installations in the coming days.

Said the BSF spokesman on the attacks, "We are not at all surprised it was the Hizbul. They have stepped up their violent activities across Kashmir after withdrawing the ceasefire."

**Militants killed:** A defence ministry spokesman, meanwhile, said Indian soldiers overnight gunned down two cross-border secessionist fighters from Pakistan after they had sneaked into southern Kashmir and attacked an Indian military post.

Two of them were killed and some more wounded when Indian soldiers retaliated," he said, adding that the shootout occurred in the district of Poonch, located in the vicinity of the site of the twin blasts. The injured managed to escape to Pakistan, he said.

**'Dump Pak':** Indicating that militant outfits in J&K should not be swayed by Pakistan, Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee said his government was prepared for talks with them, but the

ultras have to take an independent decision.

He said violence in the Kashmir valley was because of division in the ranks of militants, but "we are hopeful that the sections who want peace would be able to convince other sections about holding talks." He told reporters that his Government was prepared for talks with them but the ultras have to take an independent decision on their own.

"We are ready for talks and we want to resolve the Kashmir issue. But the militants have to take a decision of their own," he said.

## Hizbul parrots tripartite rider

HIZBUL SUPREME commander Syed Salahuddin on Sunday said the outfit could again declare ceasefire if India accepts the participation of Pakistan in tripartite talks on Kashmir. "India should demonstrate flexibility in responding to the basic reality that discussions will only be for the ultimate resolution of the Kashmir problem," he said in an interview.

PTI, Islamabad

## 'Talks delayed, not derailed'

Hizbul negotiator Fazal Haq Qureshi told Doordarshan on Sunday that "the process of talks has been delayed not derailed". His statement lends hope that the stalled talks could yet be resumed, though no time frame was indicated.

PTI, New Delhi

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

14 AUG 2000

# Army, Fernandes contradict each other on LoC row

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, AUG 12

DEFENCE Minister George Fernandes and the Army headquarters are making contradictory statements over the occupation of Point 5353 in the Drass sector of Jammu and Kashmir. While Fernandes has said that the post is under Indian control, the army, in a statement, on Saturday said the post was never under Indian control either before or after Operation Vijay.

**Minister says Point 5353 is under Indian control, Army says the post was never under Indian control either before or after Operation Vijay**

Post 5353 in the Drass sector has been a point of contention with both India and Pakistan trying to wrest control of the peak even during the Kargil conflict. Since the peak is on the Line of Control, there was heavy jockeying for it even after the ceasefire between the Indian and Pakistani forces came into effect in July last year.

The army has that while peak 5353 was forever in Pakistani control, the Indian army had occupied

two other dominating features on the Line of Control. Fernandes yesterday had said that Pakistan was not in control of any post on the Indian side of the Line of Control and that every post was under the Indian Army's control. He said that every inch of land was in Indian control. "In accordance with the

Simla agreement, the Line of Control passes through Point 5353. This point was never under our occupation either before or after Operation Vijay," an army spokesman re-

iterated today. On the minister's statement, a Ministry of Defence (MoD) spokesman said that the peak was under the control of the Pakistani forces but the minister meant that the feature was under Indian control, when he said that every inch of land was in Indian control.

An army spokesman said that point 5070 and 5245, both on the LoC close to 5353, were in Indian control.

INDIAN EXPRESS

12 AUG 2000

# Captain killed in Rajouri, body brought home

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CALCUTTA, Aug. 13. — Captain Shekhar Ghosh (25), commissioned in Army Service Corps and attached to 2 Sikh, was killed in an encounter with Kashmiri militants in the Rajouri sector of Jammu and Kashmir early yesterday.

He killed seven militants before he died of bullet injuries, an Army press release said.

Capt Ghosh's body reached Calcutta airport this evening. His father, Lieutenant-Colonel (retd) Shankar Nath Ghosh, and some relatives were present at the airport from where the body was taken to the Ghoshes' Jaihindpalli home in Nonachandankur, Barrackpore.

The last rites will be performed at Gandhighat crematorium in Barrackpore tomorrow morning with full military honour.

Lt-Col Ghosh told **The Statesman** that he was proud of his son's sacrifice for the country.

Capt Ghosh had spoken to his father over the phone six days ago to inform his family that all was fine.

He was slated to come home on 21 September, his birthday. He came home last in April.

Capt Ghosh is survived by his parents and a sister.

A student of English, Capt Ghosh graduated from Ramlal Anand College under Delhi University. Later, he joined the NCC.

In September 1997, he passed out from Indian Military Academy and was commissioned in Army Service Corps. His first posting was at Rajouri.

The captain had won a silver medal at the National Shooting Championship in Kanpur and a gold medal in Delhi.

THE STATESMAN

# Capt Suri of 12 Bihar is lone Maha Vir Chakra winner

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, August 14

CAPTAIN GURJINDER Singh Suri, who repulsed a Pakistani attack on a border post in Gulmarg sector in Jammu and Kashmir, has been posthumously awarded the Maha Vir Chakra, nation's second highest award for gallantry this year.

Captain Suri of 12 Bihar battalion is among the 247 Armed Forces' personnel selected for President's gallantry awards and "mention in despatches" on the eve of the Independence Day.

Captain Suri has been honoured for defending the "Faulad" post, a forward defended locality, on November 9 last year in the face of a determined attack by Pakistani troops.

He displayed "raw courage and highest leadership



qualities" in repulsing the attack by 640 Mujahid battalion of the Pakistani Army in which 17 Pakistani soldiers were killed, two of them by Capt. Suri.

The officer who belonged to Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh, was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade.

A recoilless gun, a medium machine gun and two rocket launchers snatched from enemy troops.

Captain Suri is the lone recipient of the MVC among the 139 gallantry award winners and 108 "mention in despatches".

The awardees include three Vir Chakras, two Shaurya Chakras, two Kirti Chakras, one Yuddh Seva Medal, two bar to Sena Medals and 100 Sena Medals.

The Kirti Chakra awardees are Major Deepak Mehra of 5 Gorkha Rifles and late Captain Amit Semwal of 16 Dogras.

See also Page 9

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

15 AUG 2000

# Militants shift target, point guns at each other in Jammu

The Times of India News Service and Agencies

JAMMU: The rift between local militants and foreign mercenaries came to the fore on Monday when militants of the Hizbul Mujahideen, aided by villagers, gunned down a militant belonging to the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) and badly wounded another in Mehrot village in Poonch district.

This is the first time that acrimony, which has been simmering for the last four years between the two militant outfits, has spilled out into the open.

The villagers were being harassed by the foreign mercenaries of LeT and this was resented by the Hizb. Last month, LeT militants had shot dead Haji Mumtaz, a revered religious leader of Mehrot, accusing him of being an informer for security forces. On Saturday, on a similar charge, militants had beaten up Haji Lal Hussein in the village.

Incensed villagers, joined by Hizb militants, later attacked a nearby hideout of the LeT and in

an hour-long gun battle, killed one LeT militant and wounded another, while the rest fled.

Security forces later launched an operation to nab the rival militant groups.

Observers said that the clash was a "mini-run" of the difference in approach of foreign and local militants which had found its manifestation early this month when more than 100 people were massacred, reportedly by the LeT, a few hours after the Hizb had declared a cease-fire.

Observers said that though the Hizb withdrew the cease-fire under Pakistani pressure and both groups had claimed responsibility for the Srinagar Residency Road car bomb blast, which claimed 14 lives, it did not necessarily mean a unity of minds and perceptions.

Since 1996, when Pakistan redoubled its efforts to disrupt normal life in the Valley by pushing in foreign mercenaries to show that the Poonch and Rajouri districts were also involved in militancy, there have been several

reports of tension, even clashes, between foreign mercenaries and local militants.

The rivalry has stemmed from two factors—the mercenaries' propensity to treat local militants as second-rate activists fit only to act as coolies and guides and the local militants' resentment at the ill-treatment of villagers, including the rapes of women, by the mercenaries in remote pockets.

Meanwhile, according to a report from Srinagar, 18 people were injured when a powerful

grenade exploded at Bijbehara on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway on Wednesday.

The grenade, hurled by militants, was targeted at a security vehicle at Bijbehara town in Anantnag district, a security officer said.

The grenade missed its target and exploded on the busy road, wounding the pedestrians, he said, and added that one of the injured was in critical condition.

No militant outfit has claimed responsibility for the incident.

## PM shifts stand on talks with Pak

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: In an apparent shift in his stand as stated in parliament, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee has laid emphasis on the form of government in Pakistan and sought a political consensus before the Centre deals with the military dictatorship in Islamabad.

The responsibility of political parties to sink their ideological differences has increased since Pakistan is under a military dictatorship now, Mr Vajpayee has said in a special article in the latest issue of *Panchajanya*, the RSS mouthpiece.

Last week, in a reply to Congress leaders Gulam Nabi Azad and Pranab Mukherjee, Mr Vajpayee had said in the Rajya Sabha that his government would deal with any government in Pakistan, whether democratically elected or not.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

17 AUG 2000



HD-1  
18/8

# IAF officer held in church blasts case

By K. V. Subramanya

**BANGALORE, AUG. 17.** The investigation by the Corps of Detectives (CoD) into the series of explosions in churches has revealed that an Indian Air Force officer was part of the conspiracy and had also passed on sensitive information regarding defence establishments to Pakistan.

The Director-General of Police, Mr. C. Dinakar, and the Director-General of Police (CoD), Mr. V. V. Bhaskar, said Syed Hasan-ur-Zama (50), a Junior Warrant Officer with the IAF, posted at New Delhi, had been arrested from his Gurgaon, Haryana house on August 8 and remanded to police custody. A member of the Deendar Channabasaveshwara Siddique outfit, the native of Nuzvid in Andhra Pradesh's Krishna district, apart from leaking sensitive information on defence establishments also provided information on various vital installations to Pakistan.

Two of his brothers were involved in the defiling of the B.R. Ambedkar statue in Mumbai, Mr. Dinakar said. But he refused to divulge details of the information the accused had passed on to Pakistan saying the issue was "sensitive". Hasan-ur-Zama, in charge of stores in the IAF, was said to have passed on sensitive information to Islamabad since 1992.

Asked whether the accused would be court-martialled, Mr. Bhaskar said top IAF officers had been alerted about the matter. Senior IAF officers were also present at the press conference today where a video presentation on the explosions was made by the Inspector-General of Police (CoD),

Mr. K. Srikumar. Mr. Bhaskar said investigations were still on and the CoD was working in tandem with the Andhra Pradesh, Goa and Maharashtra police "as the ramifications of the case were beyond Karnataka".

Asked when the CoD would file chargesheets against the accused, he said, "according to the Criminal Procedure Code, the chargesheets have to be filed within 90 days of the date of arrest and we will do it." On the possibility of the ISI being involved, Mr. Dinakar said the Pakistan-based chief of the Deendar Channabasaveshwara Siddique, Syed Zia-ul-Hassan, the brain behind the blasts, ostensibly had no major source of income to fund the explosions. "Huge funds are required to plan and execute such explosions. No one will do it for a song. From where did the culprits get the money? You can draw your own inference," he said.

## Another Deendar activist held

By Our Staff Reporter

**HYDERABAD, AUG. 17.** Another Deendar Anjuman activist, Shaik Hashim Ali (24), was arrested by the CID sleuths from the Imliban bus stand here this morning.

The accused, a resident of Asifnagar, had allegedly planted a bomb in the Medak church on May 28. A motorcycle, some documents, gelatine sticks, electric detonators and other material were recovered from him. With this, the total number of arrests made in the bomb blasts case had risen to 27, according to a press release here.

THE HINDU

18 AUG 2000

# Talks still possible: Advani

We're for peace in J&K, but ready for any challenge, says PM

HT-1  
18/8  
J. D. N. Leung  
**HT Correspondent**  
New Delhi, August 17

**H**OME MINISTER L.K. Advani today stated the Government is still open to talks with all those in Kashmir who "give up the path of terror and violence".

Addressing the Parliamentary Consultative Committee for Home Affairs, the first since the failure of the Centre's recent peace initiative, he said the Government would continue its efforts to bring normalcy to the State through dialogue.

"But the security forces will remain in a state of high alert to face the challenges and threat of renewed militancy in the State," he said, responding to suggestions from the Opposition members of the panel.

Earlier in the day, Prime

Minister A.B. Vajpayee assured the BJP MPs that the Government was prepared to meet any eventuality in J&K following the calling off of the cease-fire and described the situation as changing from time to time.

Addressing the BJP Parliamentary Party, he said, "We are for peace but at the same time we are ready to face any challenge from militants."

The Home Minister said the people of J&K were extremely unhappy that Pakistan sabotaged the prospects for peace by causing the withdrawal of Hizbul Mujahideen's cease-fire.

The Opposition MPs at the Home Ministry's meeting were shown an audio-visual presentation of Pakistan's overt and covert efforts to cause large-scale destruction and panic using sophis-

ticated explosive devices and its attempt to extend the tentacles of Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) to the country's hinterland.

CPI(M) leader Somnath Chatterjee, AICC general secretary Ghulam Nabi Azad, MDMK chief Vaiko, IUML leader G.M. Banatwala demanded a ban on the Deendar Anjuman, the group, which has been held responsible for a series of 12 blasts in churches and temples in south India.

Mr Banatwala, Mr Mirza Abdul Rashid and Mr Azad said Deendar Anjuman had nothing to do with the Muslim community and its activities had to be exposed to correct any public misgivings about its links.

They congratulated the Ministry for thwarting the attempts of Pakistan-backed bodies to creating trouble and ensuring incident-free

I-Day celebrations throughout the country, an official release said.

Mr Advani informed the Opposition leaders that his ministry was getting full cooperation from the State Governments in tracking and containing the disruptive activities of militant groups, aided and supported by Pakistan.

The Nepalese PM had, on his recent visit to New Delhi, assured India of all help to prevent the Nepalese soil, being used by any foreign power against this country.

Blaming Pakistan for forcing the Hizbul to call off the cease-fire, Mr Vajpayee told the BJP MPs that the militants were divided and had begun fighting among themselves.

"It was at the behest of Pakistan that the militants had called off the cease-fire, which they had declared when they came forward for talks," he said.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

18 AUG 2000

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19/8

# Curfew in Rajouri as militants kill 6

By Shujaat Bukhari

**SRINAGAR, AUG. 18.** At least six persons who were members of a village defence committee (VDC) were gunned down and as many injured by unidentified militants in a Rajouri village late on Thursday evening. (According to UNI, militants of the Harkat-ul-Jehade-Islami were involved in the incident.) Apprehending trouble, the authorities have imposed indefinite curfew in Rajouri town.

Reports said a group of unidentified militants descended on village Kot Dara, around 10 km from Rajouri town, barged into a few houses, and fired indiscriminately at the inmates, killing six persons on the spot. The six injured, including three women, have been hospitalised.

The slain members are Vishwanath, Manohar Lal, Ashok Kumar, Ganesh Chand, Bishamber Dass and Purushottam Lal. (A report said one of the deceased was a woman.) All the deceased are stated to be members of VDCs set up by the Government to defend against militant attacks. All the VDCs have Hindu minority members in Rajouri, Poonch and Doda districts. Security forces have

rushed to the area and started combing operations. Tension gripped the entire area and tempers ran high among the minority Hindu community. Authorities immediately announced the imposition of curfew in Rajouri to prevent any communal flare-up.

Police, paramilitary forces and the Army were deployed to maintain peace. The DIG, Rajouri-Poonch, Mr. Ram Lubhaya, said curfew was imposed as a precautionary measure. The situation though tense is under control, he said.

In the last few weeks Rajouri has seen an increase in militant activities. Only a week ago curfew was imposed in the town following the killing of a civilian when the Army opened fire.

PTI reports:

The Assistant Commissioner, Rajouri, Mr. Abdul Quyoom Mir, was injured when a mob, protesting the killings, threw stones at his vehicle and burnt the car of the Deputy Commissioner, Mr. B.A. Runyal, when the officials reached the Jawahar Nagar locality where the bodies of the victims were brought for last rites.

19 AUG 2000

Kashmir disputed territory: Hizbul

# Govt ready for talks: Fernandes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, Aug. 19. — The government is ready for talks with Kashmiri militant groups without any pre-condition, Mr George Fernandes has said.

The defence minister said "technicalities" should not come in the way of talks. Denying differences in the government over talks, the defence minister described as "positive" the recent statements of Hizbul Mujahideen leaders on resumption of a dialogue.

"People like Hizbul Mujahideen (ultras) are Kashmiris... They are Indians... Our own citizens. We cannot hesitate to talk to them..." Mr Fernandes said in an interview to a television programme — *Darasaal* — to be telecast on Doordarshan news channel tomorrow night.

He, however, made it clear that as defence minister it was his duty to protect country's borders and fight terrorism.

Asked if there was any pre-condition for talks, Mr Fernandes said: "Where is the question of any conditions... When Pakistan says it wants to talk... We tell them (Pakistan) that they should stop such things (cross-border terrorism). But to our own people we are saying leave this, come sit and talk."

The defence minister said the Hizbul had been involved in terrorist activities over the past 10 to 12 years. "They (Hizb) have also come to the conclusion that this is not the way and they should talk... They only came with the proposal... We can only conclude that they themselves want a dialogue."

On fears that the Hizbul might be dangling the talks offer to buy time to regroup,

Mr Fernandes said "See there are those who are working at the behest of Pakistan. You cannot hope to wean them away in the near future... However, those who have come forward for talks to solve the problem... Let us not doubt their intentions..."

**Salahuddin's terms:** Syed Salahuddin, Hizbul supreme commander, today said his organisation could resume a ceasefire if India recognised Kashmir as a disputed territory and agreed to Pakistan's inclusion in talks, AFP adds from Muzaffarabad in PoK.

**Pak shelling:** An Army porter was killed and eight civilians were wounded as Pakistani troops continued shelling along the LoC in north Kashmir for the third day today.

**Killings:** Six people, including four militants, had been killed in the Kashmir valley since last evening. Security forces killed two militants at Haihama in Kupwara district last night and another two at Kaloosa Bandipora in Baramulla today.

**Suicide squads:** The Lashkar-e-Taiyaba is training suicide squads to target sensitive installations and important people in J&K, a surrendered Lashkar militant, Abu Jirat, said in Jammu today.

**Hurriyat chief:** The APHC chairman, Mr Abdul Gani Bhat, hoped that his "personal" proposal to form two Hurriyat groups for talks with New Delhi and Islamabad would be accepted by the two sides.

**Asma Jahangir:** Asma Jahangir of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights has urged Pakistan and India to investigate the recent violence in J&K.

THE STATESMAN

20 AUG 2000

# Kashmir mine explosion kills brigadier, colonel

FROM MUKHTAR AHMAD

Srinagar, Aug. 21: In a serious setback to counter-insurgency operations in Kashmir, a brigadier and his deputy were killed in a massive landmine blast at Zachaldara near Handwara in the northern border district of Kupwara late this afternoon.

Official sources here said 10 soldiers were wounded in the explosion. The sources said late this afternoon the sector commander of 7 Rashtriya Rifles, Brigadier Sher Gill, and his deputy, Col. Rajinder Chauhan, were out patrolling under heavy escort when their vehicle hit a landmine. Brigadier Gill and Col. Chauhan died on the spot while 10 others received serious injuries.

One of their security guards later succumbed to his injuries. Brigadier Gill had recently joined as the new sector commander of 7 Rashtriya Rifles in the sensitive border area of Handwara and Kupwara.

Senior district police and security force officers immediately rushed to the spot with reinforcements. The area was cordoned off

and a massive combing operation mounted to arrest those behind the blast. No one has yet owned responsibility.

This is the second time in the past 11 years of militancy in Kashmir that an army officer of the rank of a brigadier has been killed by militants. Sources here said the brigadier was inspecting his units in the area when the mine exploded.

In the second attack of the day on security forces, three army men were killed and 15 others wounded when militants fired rockets on a camp at Banihal on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway in the afternoon.

Police sources here said the rockets hit a barrack where soldiers were resting. Three soldiers died on the spot and 15 others were injured. The condition of three jawans was stated to be critical.

The renewed bloodshed was a cruel mockery of chief minister Farooq Abdullah's claim that the "ground has been prepared for restarting the derailed peace process in Kashmir".

"The recent statements of the

central government and the Hizbul Mujahideen on a peace initiative are positive signs," Farooq Abdullah said today.

"Going by experience, this time talks would be held secretly without the knowledge of many. There would be no media hype either," he said.

"Now the question is how soon the ball starts rolling," the chief minister added.

Asked about the Hizbul accusation of dividing the Valley on communal lines by planning to resettle Kashmiri Pandits, who have fled the state, in camps, Farooq Abdullah said: "Perhaps, it has not been understood in the right perspective. We are not dividing the Valley for return of migrants."

"What we propose to do is to create transit camps where the migrants will stay under security and get their damaged houses reconstructed and existing structures repaired to facilitate their return to their homes," he added.

The chief minister said such an arrangement was necessary since it was not possible to give security to individual houses.

THE TELEGRAPH

22 AUG 2000

# No judicial inquiry into massacre, govt. tells Congress

The Times of India News Service  
and Agencies

NEW DELHI: The National Democratic Alliance government on Tuesday rejected in the Lok Sabha the Congress demand for a judicial probe into the Amarnath massacre but said it would not be found wanting if the high-level committee inquiring into the incident pointed to lapses in the security set-up.

Responding to a marathon debate on a Congress-sponsored motion seeking an inquiry by a sitting high court judge, home minister L.K. Advani said such a probe at this stage would only create doubts in the minds of the people specially when Pakistan had launched a high-pitched propaganda accusing the Indian security forces and chief minister Farooq Abdullah of being responsible for the killings on the night of August 1.

Mr Advani said a three-member panel comprising Lt. Gen. J. Mukherjee of the Unified Command in Jammu and Kashmir, the principal home secretary of the state government and the Anantnag district magistrate were already probing possible security lapses and would submit its report within three months.

He said if the report of the panel revealed dereliction of duty or security lapses, the government would consider the issue of a judicial inquiry. Prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee has earlier too given such an assurance to the house, he said.

Refuting the opposition charge that the government had lowered its guard in J&K after the Hizbut Mujahideen announced the ceasefire, Mr Advani said 799 militants were killed in the state in July even after government responded to the offer to hold peace talks.

The number of militants killed in J&K last month was one of the highest in recent years, he said, adding, "It is baseless to say that we lowered our guard."

Asserting that the route of the Amarnath pilgrimage was nearly 100 km from the Line of Control, Mr Advani said the number of security personnel including from the army and paramilitary forces deployed along the route was much higher than previous

years.

**US officials meet APHC leaders:** Officials of the US Embassy on Tuesday met All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) chairman Abdul Ghani Bhat and former APHC chief Syed Ali Shah Geelani.

"The US officials just called on us to inquire about our welfare," claimed Bhat. Asked for the names and designations of the officials, he said he was unable to recall them. The political section of the US Embassy has been in touch with Hurriyat leaders ever since the organisation was created in the mid-1990s.

Bhat and Geelani had landed in the capital on Monday sparking off the possibility of second track peace talks with the government. Asked if the government had responded to APHC's latest proposal for talks, Bhat said, "How can anything happen so quickly."

**My fault, says Salahuddin:** Reports from Islamabad say the chief of the Pakistan-based extremist outfit Hizbul Mujahideen, Syed Salahuddin, has admitted his fault for not consulting other militant groups before announcing a ceasefire. He said there were particular reasons for the faux pas which he was not in a position to disclose.

He also said that only Pakistan was providing support to Kashmiri separatists. "No Muslim country sent us even 11 cartridges, 11 grenades or 11 ounces of explosive material over the last 11 years," Salahuddin said.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

23 AUG 2000

# Kashmiri ultras: The Bengal connection

Kinsuk Basu

Calcutta, August 25

9-08 New

CLOSE ON the heels of the arrest of a suspected Jamaat-ul-Mujaheed member from Basirhat, the BSF on Thursday nabbed Jahid Ahmed, a Hizbul Mujaheed activist, from an area near the India-Bangladesh border, confirming intelligence claims that the State is now a safe route for ISI agents and Kashmiri militants heading for Kashmir or Pakistan.

The border forces have recovered a digital diary from Jahid containing names and telephone numbers of some key ISI members in Pakistan including that of Major Sultan in Karachi. "The diary has also thrown up names and contact numbers of a section of Pakistan army's top brass based in

HP1 288

Islamabad. The names have a clear mention of their designation, which makes it easier for us to identify the person. In fact, some of them are of the rank of colonel and major. We have informed the Union Home ministry about this for necessary action," said K C Sharma, principal staff officer, BSF (South Bengal).

The border security personnel at Ghoadanga — a far-flung village along the Indo-Bangla border in North 24-Parganas — near Basirhat nabbed Jahid in the wee hours of Thursday after he was found to be moving around in the area suspiciously. On interrogation, he admitted that he was a member of the Hizbul group and on his way to Srinagar to meet their leader, Abdul Majid Dar. This meeting,

according to intelligence officials who are interrogating Jahid along with the CBI, was scheduled to take place on August 26. Dar, he claimed, had sent an SOS urging him to come down for "a strategic discussion on increasing youth base in India".

A resident of Rajorikadal in Srinagar, Jahid told BSF officials that he joined the Hizbul in 1990. Three years later, the high school student was sent to Islamabad for training in the use of sophisticated arms. It was during one such training session that Jahid sustained an injury in his right hand and was later shifted to the working group of the outfit as Nayeb Nazeem Daftar.

Further interrogations revealed

that Jahid flew down from Islamabad to Karachi on August 21. The next day he arrived in Dhaka and after meeting up with his contacts there headed for India. Jahid was carrying as huge amount of money with him and the BSF recovered Rs 47,000 from his possession. The rest, he said, was spent on his journey from Islamabad to Dhaka.

The arrest of Jahid and some other extremists from the bordering areas of North 24-Parganas have created a flutter among BSF and intelligence officials. While the madrassahs along the Siliguri Corridor have been known to be a breeding ground for anti-national activities, both these agencies are now keeping a watch on pockets inhabited by minorities along the India-Bangladesh border in North 24-Parganas.

## Hizbul Man Held

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

26 AUG 2000

# Many of those held have no clear ISI links: sleuth

## STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

**CALCUTTA Aug 27.** — The Special Branch and Intelligence Branch of the Calcutta and West Bengal Police respectively have arrested many suspected ISI agents, but have been able so far to establish the antecedents of only one of them.

As far as these two Intelligence wings are concerned, the security measures adopted in the wake of increased militant activities, have not paid much. None of those arrested — except Abu Nazer and his associate, Eklakh, both of whom had strong ISI links — had turned out to be an ISI agent, a senior Special Branch officer said.

One of his state IB counterparts said

the ISI agents had been using some border districts of West Bengal as well as the city as a "safe corridor" to carry out depredations in different parts of the country. Most of the men arrested so far have however have turned out to be involved in illegal but organised movement of people across the border. Some of them are indirectly connected to militancy — mostly contact men serving militant groups.

The official admitted that the ISI had a strong base in Nepal and their agents were using Siliguri as a "corridor" to reach Calcutta or go across to the North-East. The ISI, he admitted had a vast area of operation — stretching between Bihar and Bangladesh.

The 14 Afghans arrested recently

from Siliguri had revealed links with ISI activists. They had also given asylum to Abu Nazir Ahmed during his brief stay over there, it was learnt.

Ahmed reached Siliguri in September and was staying with one of these Afghans. In Calcutta, he put up in a hotel on Sudder Street and later in a guest house at Hazra. Ahmed was arrested in January last year by SB officers near a foreign consulate office on Chowringhee. Identified as a hard-core ISI agent, he was later handed over to Hyderabad Police because he was wanted in two RDX-blast cases in Hyderabad. Eklakh too was arrested around the same time. He was Nazir's contact man.

Among the less successful cases as the recent arrest of Jamil Akhtar from

his residence at Mafidul Islam Lane in Beniapurkur. Akhtar was believed initially to be an active member of a banned militant outfit of the Hizbul Mujahideen.

Investigations, however, revealed that Akhtar was a mere "contact man" here, and not directly involved with any militant group. "Nor did he act as an ISI agent. Also Akhtar did not receive any training at an ISI camp in Bangladesh or the Indo-Bhutan border", the SB officer said.

In his statement to SB and Subsidiary Intelligence Branch officers, Akhtar revealed that when he had gone to Mumbai two years ago, his brother-in-law introduced him to two of his "friends". Akhtar hadn't known who these "friends" were and

what they did. So, when some men came to him from Mumbai with their reference, seeking shelter or tickets to Bangladesh and Nepal, he saw no reason why he should refuse. That was how he became a "contact man".

Earlier, Belal, a human trafficker, was arrested from Swarupnagar in North 24 Parganas by the district police. He used to help ISI agents or militants cross the border in exchange for money. He reportedly helped one of those who hijacked of IC 814 enter Bangladesh via Bongaon.

Last Tuesday, the North 24 district police arrested from Taki one Golum Mahiuddin Bhat from Taki who allegedly belongs to a Kashmiri militant outfit. But the police are yet to establish whether this is true.

THE STATESMAN

2 A AUG 2 1970



*P. D. G. W. T. S. B.*  
**Report on  
national  
security**

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**

NEW DELHI, Aug. 29. — The task force on border management today presented a 499-page report on national security to the Group of Ministers (GoM).

The report was presented by Dr Madhav Godbole, former Union home secretary, who is heading the task force set up by the GoM.

The report has analysed key security aspects like border fencing, safeguarding sanctity of airspace, infiltration and smuggling, restructuring of border guarding paramilitary forces, and adoption of technology as a force multiplier, an official release said.

The report, which has come up with a summary of recommendations, has chapters on 'Land Borders', 'Maritime Borders and Island Territories', 'Illegal Immigration', 'Citizenship, Passport, Immigration and Refugee Law', 'Caring for Population in the Border Areas' and 'Challenging Tasks Ahead'.

The GoM headed by the Union home minister, Mr LK Advani, had been constituted by the Prime Minister in April to review the national security system in its entirety and in particular to consider the recommendations of the Kargil Review Committee and formulate specific proposals for implementation.

**THE STATESMAN**

30 AUG 2001

MONDAY, JULY 3, 2000

## THE CHALLENGE OF INTERNAL SECURITY

THE CONFERENCE OF Chief Secretaries, Home Secretaries and Directors-General of Police of all States, convened by the Home Ministry, to review the state of internal security, is a step in the right direction. It will be even better to do this at a meeting of Chief Ministers, scheduled for August 5. Equally significant is the announcement that this review could become an annual affair. Internal security has always been cause for concern. Instead of laying the blame squarely on 'anti-India' forces, the Home Ministry, the intelligence agencies and the police force in all the States must galvanise themselves into an action mode. As the meeting rightly noted, there are various aspects to internal security: cross-border terrorism; subversive activities of militant groups; naxal violence; communal, caste and ethnic tensions; attacks on Christians or places of worship and underworld activities especially in a city like Mumbai. Some of these problems have to be taken up at the national level so that key linkages are not lost. If the States deal with them locally, there will be the possibility of their treating the problems purely as a law and order issue.

The official-level meeting has prepared the agenda for the conclave of the Chief Ministers, who will bring political input into decision-making at the highest level. It is imperative to keep politics out of this exercise so that key decisions on coordination, cooperation, exchange of information and tracking down of inter-State operations can be taken. Especially in the context of the attacks on Christians and churches, mosques and temples, the police have seen a pattern in the operations. But the Andhra Pradesh police, for instance, are clueless about the culprits. It will be useful to investigate at the national level so that the modus operandi in all the States can be compared and lessons drawn. And if there is a similarity in the strikes or even the materials (explosives) used, it can provide vital links. At the officials' level, there seems to

be a general consensus on introducing an effective anti-terrorism law that is also fair in place of the TADA. The terrorism-affected States desperately want a new law, but human rights groups and social activists have opposed another draconian measure that can give a handle to the police to detain inconvenient suspects without a proper trial or charge. While there may be a case for new legal provisions to deal with terrorism by organised groups, more effective policing and efficient investigation can go a long way in containing the problem.

Apparently, the Home Ministry has not been able to convince all States about its proposal to go in for a federal law enforcement agency. This is bound to be taken up again with the Chief Ministers, some of whom are extremely sensitive to any Central intervention in law and order, which is a State subject. At a time when the CBI is being burdened with so many sensitive cases, the Chief Ministers and the Home Ministry must come up with a viable alternative particularly to deal with cyber crime. Without giving it any political colour or talking about dismissing a State Government for the breakdown of law and order, the Centre must devise instruments to assist affected States in restoring order. Bihar remains a standing example. It is a reflection on successive State Governments which have not been able to put an end to senseless massacres of innocents. Similarly, the Foreign Currency Regulation Act must be amended to check the inflow of fake notes which could undermine the economy. In the face of such grave threats to internal security, the Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, can also work out regional cooperation for better results in containing inter-State gangs and crimes. He must also be planning how and where to use Israeli expertise and experience in beefing up security, intelligence and counter-terrorism. The challenge is to harmonise security measures with civil liberties.

# Cong seeks White Paper on ISI activities

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, July 3

9. D.J.W. 117 12

THE CONGRESS today demanded a White Paper on ISI activities. The party was responding to Home Minister L. K. Advani's statement that a foreign hand was behind the recent spate of attacks on Christians.

Talking to reporters, party spokesperson Anand Sharma said if the situation was so serious then the 'white paper' should be tabled in the forthcoming Monsoon Session of Parliament.

Taking strong exception to the proposal for a dialogue between the VHP-Bajrang Dal and the Christian leaders, Mr Sharma said: "This lunatic fringe of the Sangh Parivar should not be allowed to masquerade as representatives of the Hindus.

"If at all a religious dialogue has to be held with the archbishops, then only the four shankaracharyas should act as the representa-

tives of the Hindus."

The party also launched an attack on the BJP-led Government for "supporting elements

## 'I am not for party chief'

SENIOR CONGRESS leader and CWC member Pranab Mukherjee said on Monday that he was not in the race for the party president's post, elections for which are scheduled later this year. Asked by reporters at Doddaballapura, near Bangalore, if he was contesting, Mukherjee said: "There is no question of my contesting. I am not interested." He said he did not subscribe to the view that under Sonia Gandhi's leadership the Congress had "declined".

PTI, Bangalore

which were threatening the unity and integrity of the country."

In view of the growing demands for autonomy, being raised in various states, party

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spokesperson Ajit Jogi expressed fears that the security and sovereignty of the country was not safe in the hands of the Vajpayee Government.

He said an example of this was the MDMK conference in Erode where the NDA partners spoke from the same platform but the contents of their speeches were different.

"While Home Minister L K Advani maintained that the subject of a separate Eelam would not be raised at the meeting, PMK leader S. Ramadoss supported the demand for an independent Eelam.

"These are disturbing trends and it appears that the only common thread which binds the 22 coalition partners is their lust for power," Mr Jogi claimed.

He said the Prime Minister's statement that the Kashmir autonomy issue will be considered has had a cascading effect with similar demands being raised by Punjab, Assam and the final manifestation of which was witnessed in the MDMK conference also.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 4 JUL 2000

# China talks the talk and walks the walk

embracing the American economic model even as they probably continue to despise some of the American cultural values.

**The Chinese leadership is embracing the US economic model even as it shuns other aspects of American culture, says Ruchir Sharma**

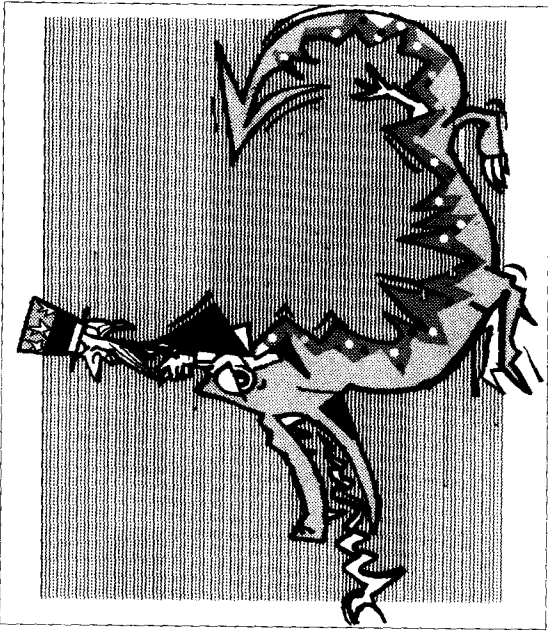
An old Chinese proverb goes: If heaven drops a date, just open your mouth. Well, the current top Chinese leadership seems to truly understand the importance of such a saying and is playing to form. Their latest round of economic reforms involves putting telecom companies up for sale, given the fact that telecom is one of the 'T's' in the hyped up TMT sector, drawing inspiration from the Nasdaq culture to restructure the stock market and then being wherever it takes to get the money flows. The result is that China hopes to lock in more than 50 billion dollars (Indian policymakers can read that again) in FDI and FII flows this year. Well, the China story is again capturing the imagination of the investing world.

There are many lessons to be learnt from what's happening in China. Probably the most important aspect is the current mindset of the top policymakers. Recently, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) sponsored a gathering of leading intellectuals in the country and also invited a few foreign guests. These guests were given an audience by Chinese President, Jiang Zemin, and the details of the meeting got front-page space in some of the international press because what the President had to say just left the visitors (Lee Kuan Yew included) awe-struck.

Jiang Zemin spoke about the virtues of a capital-markets-induced system of economic growth. He marvelled at the worldwide equity culture the Nasdaq had spawned and said he wanted to pro-

mote an entrepreneurial spirit in his country that makes a Silicon Valley. The Chinese President said his countrymen were inherently risk-takers and stock markets are all about taking and understanding the concept of risk, which in turn lies at the heart of wealth creation. In short, Jiang Zemin stated the intent to make the Chinese economic model look a lot like the American one! Till now, it was Zhu Rongji, the Chinese Premier, who was viewed as the leading champion of reforms in the country. But this discussion made it clear that the President himself was passionately committed to reforms and the signal this sends to the outside world is worth more than a few billion dollars.

China's moves of late reflect the mindset — one driven to modernise China by making the best use of the opportunities presented by the outside world. China recently completed the successful floatation of its leading state telecom company, China Unicom, managing to raise five billion dollars from the deal. It understands that it should first sell what is 'buyable' and this requires a mind sensitive to global market conditions — something our Indian policymakers lack. Telecom compa-



Zemin's above comments, that an effective stock market is vital to the economy in today's world. Accordingly, the government has been announcing a series of steps to improve the functioning of the stock market.

Admittedly, India is ahead on some of these fronts with much better corporate governance norms than China (that's saying something) and a more institutionalised market. But the important point here is the rate of change. China is coming out firing from all ends, already ahead on many fronts compared to India while behind on some. Basically, the top leadership is fully committed to reforms and comprehends the global operating environment extremely well and so results will follow.

Of course, when comparisons are made between India and China the standard response from the Indian side is that India is a democracy and it is a lot harder to get things done here. Maybe that is an important difference but what's key is to see the stark contrast in the mindsets of the top officials. Jiang Zemin and Zhu Rongji, the two top ranking officials, are the ones leading the reform campaign and openly

ies are in great demand as they lie at the heart of the technology boom and it should be obvious that such companies need to be put on the block first. Hot on the heels of the China Unicom success story, China is now planning other possible telecom floats.

Developing capital markets is the other focus of the broad reform effort. In this regard, the WTO accession has helped in providing the requisite push as the WTO involvement binds China to rule-based norms of globalisation. While China already has a serious stock market culture, the growth there has been more quantitative than qualitative in nature. China realises, as was also apparent from Jiang

reform campaign and openly

point but that's for another column.

When it comes making money (and by implication China rich) copying the most successful model is paramount for them. For much of the political and intellectual class in India it would be sacrilege to even acknowledge the fact that we are in the golden age of capitalism and a market-oriented system is all that works. Sure the government here continues to liberalise at the margin but it's more like reform by compulsion and stealth rather than passion and aggression. The most sad part is that the effort is not even opportunistic in nature (e.g., selling what's 'buyable'). Such an approach would make the whole task easier.

The telecom companies should be up for sale first because a) that's what governments across the world are doing given the demand for stocks in that sector; b) it is essential to improve the telecom infrastructure for domestic tech story to gain momentum (a good political argument) as India's tech boom has so far been only outward-oriented in nature; c) the market price for such assets would be a lot higher making the sales popular; and d) if not sold now these companies will be worth a lot less later. Instead, we'll talk about how China can do it because it doesn't face all the problems of democracy. What that has to do with any of the above arguments is not clear. And then, enough democracies around the world are privatising their way to prosperity. Brazil being a case in point but that's for another column.

point but that's for another column.

# Hepatitis-B vaccine is warranted only for high-risk infants and adults

By Rupa Chinnai

The Times of India News Service

MUMBAI: Some medical experts in Mumbai are blowing the whistle in relation to the ongoing mass vaccination campaign in Mumbai against Hepatitis-B. The campaign, they say, is ill-conceived, is creating a scare, and is not required for the general public as a whole. The current campaign is doing no good to anybody, they warn.

An example of the scare tactics used to push the Hepatitis-B vaccine is the pamphlet currently being circulated "in the public interest" by a leading pharmaceutical company. It says that the Hepatitis-B virus (HBV) can be transmitted by "shaking hands, playing, sharing a cold drink, getting a hair cut, travelling by bus, train, taxi or auto, using someone's pen or lending your pen, touching chairs, tables etc".

According to Philip Abraham, professor and head of the gastroenterology department, KEM Hospital, Mumbai, only one the factors on this list is correct. HBV can be transmitted while getting a hair cut through the use of an unsterile and infected razor. "The other activities mentioned in this list do not form a route of transmission at all. I do not know how they can make this claim," he says.

Abha Nagral, gastroenterologist at Mumbai's Kasturba Hospital, says that the vaccine is warranted for those at 'high risk' for HBV transmission. These are persons in need of

regular blood transfusions, medical professionals, health workers, pathology staff, intravenous drug users, patients undergoing dialysis, family members who live with chronically ill patients, and persons in contact with mentally or physically handicapped children.

The routes of HBV transmission, according to the Oxford Handbook of Clinical Medicine, are: blood products, secretion of body fluids and sexual intercourse. Indian studies document that HBV transmission commonly takes place through the use of unsterile instruments used while giving injections during shaving or hair cutting, or pricking of the ear or nose.

Suhas Pingle, president, Indian Medical Association, Mumbai west suburban branch, clarifies that casual contact with a contaminated instrument or an infected person's body fluid will not automatically lead to HBV transmission. However, a mild abrasion of the skin or wound facilitates transfer of the virus. But even if the virus does penetrate, a key factor in fighting the infection is a strong natural immune system. If the body is nurtured by a healthy lifestyle and right nutrition, it will find the energy to clear out the virus.

Studies show that 90 per cent of adults who had suffered from this infection subsequently tested negative and do not remain carriers of the virus, Dr Pingle says.

While India's HBV 'carrier rate' is widely quoted to be 4.7 per cent, the figure has been

challenged as being "highly exaggerated" by health researchers Anant Phadke of the Centre for Health and Allied Themes and Ashok Kale of the Akhil Bharatiya Grahaak Pan-chayat.

In a white paper they have recently presented to the Prime Minister, they have shown how the claim of the 4.7 per cent carrier rate has been wrongly interpreted. According to them, the carrier rate is a mere 1.42 per cent of the general population. They also say that the incidence of liver disease is not 2.5 per cent as claimed, but only three per cent.

All the medical experts that this correspondent spoke to are unanimous in stating that HBV vaccination is not warranted for adults in the general population or, for that matter, for children above five years of age. Neither is it cost-effective. Opposing mass vaccination campaigns in schools, they say older children are better at fighting the virus.

A consensus among these health experts has also emerged on the need to immunise 'high-risk adults', but they say that doctors themselves are often unlikely to vaccinate themselves.

Meanwhile, a major area of debate has centred on whether mass vaccination is warranted for all children under five years of age or whether it should be selectively applied to those at 'high risk' among them. The latter includes babies whose mothers have tested positive for HBV infection during pregnancy

and who should be vaccinated within 24 hours after birth.

While mother-to-fetus transmission has proved to be a serious problem in India, 'horizontal transmission' is another factor believed to be affecting infants. Here, the virus is transmitted through close contact with infected persons, sharing of contaminated equipment and greater susceptibility to cuts and bruises.

A study from the National Institute of Virology, Pune, reveals that children below five years of age are found to be at 'high risk' for HBV infection and the majority is likely to remain carriers of infection into adulthood, besides suffering from chronic liver diseases.

Supporting these findings, Dr Y.K. Amdekar, paediatrician at Jaslok Hospital and Grant Medical College, says that babies up to two years are especially vulnerable. Their undeveloped immune system makes them vulnerable to the infection.

In his white paper, Dr Kale advocates the 'selective immunisation of high-risk infants'. This 'selective' approach requires that all women should be tested for HBV infection at the time of their first pregnancy. If the mother is found positive, all her babies should receive the vaccine after birth. This approach, he says, will effectively reduce the future carrier pool. The policy is effectively followed in the UK, Japan and the Netherlands and has been found to be cost-effective, he says.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

4 JUL 2000

## Tamil Jagran

The MDMK's 'Eelam Awakening' conference at Erode is a significant milestone in the journey of Tamil Nadu's political parties towards a credible and acceptable platform on the separatist war being waged by Tamils in Sri Lanka. Although pro-Eelam postures were on abundant and unabashed display at the meet, in the end both the MDMK and the PMK extended unequivocal support to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's "correct stand" on the conflict in Sri Lanka. The key resolution at the MDMK conference is a whole-hearted endorsement of Mr Vajpayee's policy as one showing "sincere concern" for the suffering Tamils in the "on-going tragedy in Sri Lanka". MDMK cadres no doubt had photographs of LTTE supremo V Prabhakaran pinned to their shirt-fronts. They also hailed him as a "Tamil Hero". But surely, Vaiko was probably allowing his cadres to let out steam so that he could get away with supporting the Vajpayee line and reaffirming the unity of the National Democratic Alliance. It is likely that the DMK government too agreed to shut its eyes to such extremist expressions after initially saying 'no' to pro-Eelam rallies in the state. Like Vaiko — who said that India would not be responsible if Sri Lanka "got divided" because of the "genocidal policy" of President Chandrika Kumaratunga — Mr Ramadoss too defended the goal of Eelam. But neither the MDMK nor the PMK explicitly committed themselves to supporting Eelam, which is very different from pointing to it as an inevitability.

What these utterances underscore is that parties in Tamil Nadu, for all their passionate advocacy of the cause of Sri Lankan Tamils, are not prepared to rock the NDA alliance and jeopardise their own continuance in office. The compulsions of power at the Centre have served to blunt the appeal of parochial ambitions, at least in the short term. Being a part of the NDA, the southern parties cannot adopt an extremist line on the issue of Sri Lankan Tamils. Yet the situation in Tamil Nadu — where assembly elections are due next year — is such that they have little option but to pander to the strong sentiments in favour of Sri Lankan Tamils; neither can they ignore the hold the LTTE has come to acquire on some Tamil politicians. As a result, even Tamil parties and politicians not beholden in any way to the LTTE are constrained to play this game of one-upmanship. Given this context, the Tamil Awakening hype is par for the course. What is jarring is that Union Home Minister L K Advani was less than 'awakened' at the conference. His remark that "the government is concerned not only about the Tamils in Sri Lanka but also about people of Indian origin wherever their interests are in jeopardy" is indeed shocking. By now it should be common knowledge that the homeland seeking Tamils in Sri Lanka are Sri Lankans and not a part of the Indian diaspora; if anything, the Sinhallas are of Indian origin because all of them had in some ancient period gone from the soil of Bharat mata. A little more 'awakening' in the country outside Tamil Nadu may help to keep Tamil parties in step with us.

# Missile-firing submarine to be inducted into Navy today

Shishir Gupta  
New Delhi, July 18

9-08750 HRM 19/7

THE NAVY is all set to enter a new era with the commissioning of India's first missile-firing submarine, INS Sindhushastra, at St Petersburg in Russia on Wednesday. The submarine is fitted with the lethal Klub anti-ship missile having a range of nearly 300 km.

Highly placed Government sources said Admiral Sushil Kumar, Chief of Naval Staff, will be present during the commissioning of this modified Kilo-class submarine. Admiral Sushil Kumar, who was on an official trip to the United Kingdom, has flown to Russia in order to be present on this momentous occasion. The submarine has a displacement of around 1800 tonnes and is armed with the latest torpedoes, besides the potent Klub missile.

While INS Sindhushastra is fitted with the anti-ship version of the Klub missile, the three Kilo-class submarines that are currently undergoing a refit at the St Petersburg shipyard are expected to be armed with Klub missiles with a land attack capability. The three Kilo-class submarines were sent for overhaul and refitting in 1998. They are expected to join the Indian Navy's fleet by 2001.

It is understood that the refitted submarines will have the latest version of the sub-sonic Klub missile.

This land-attack missile will have the capability to hit targets in the range of nearly 500 km. The weapon, it is learnt, will virtually be a Cruise missile as it will home on to the target using the land coordinates, fed into its on-board computer.

With the entry of the Klub missile in the Navy's arsenal, the Indian submarines will now be more than a match for the Pakistani sub-surface vessels in terms of range, precision and attack capability. Pakistan has French Agosta submarines fitted with Exocet and US Harpoon anti-ship missiles. While the French Exocet has a range of around 40-60 km, the Harpoon can strike a target at a distance of nearly 100 km.

Defence analysts say the missile-firing Kilo-class submarines will also deter the Chinese, who are making an increasing number of forays into the Indian Ocean and beefing up its Navy. The Chinese have recently acquired two Sovoryemny class destroyers from Russia, which are fitted with super-sonic Moskit SSN-21 surface-to-surface missiles.

In fact, two Chinese warships have been sighted off the Andaman Islands coast this week, while on their way to East Africa.

The Indian Navy, on the other hand, is also beefing up its force levels with three state-of-the-art Khrivak class frigates being made in Russia. The work on the advanced technology frigates has also gathered speed.

## INS Sindhushastra

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

19 JUL 2000

# Rights rap for Tada clone

FROM R. VENKATARAMAN

New Delhi, July 12: The Centre has received a rap on its knuckles from the National Human Rights Commission which has rejected "outright" the draft Bill to replace Tada.

The new legislation — christened Prevention of Terrorism Act and dubbed "super Tada" — has come under fire for some of its tough features. For instance, anyone who interviews a suspected militant can be arrested. This implies that even a journalist can be put behind bars if he does not disclose the identity and other details of a suspected militant voluntarily to the police after an interview.

The rights panel, after considering its proposals to the law commission which has formulated the Bill, believes criminal laws are good enough to deal with ter-

rorism. "There is no need for the enactment of the POT Bill or any other similar legislation," the rights commission said.

In its proposal note to the law commission, the rights panel pointed out that in 1995, it had taken a similar view on Tada as "the draconian law had no place in a democracy".

The panel said it had a similar opinion on the law being proposed.

The commission said that the government, before enacting the proposal, should take into account its experience with Tada and ascertain whether the existing laws of the land are not enough to tackle terrorism.

According to the rights panel, the government should instead strengthen the law enforcement agencies and review the functioning of the criminal justice system.

The commission was flooded with "all sorts of complaints" on the misuse of Tada, which led to a nationwide debate on the pros and cons of the legislation. The government of P.V. Narasimha Rao was forced to scrap the law after the public outcry.

Though the Supreme Court did uphold Tada's constitutional validity, commission sources said the ruling did not mean that the legislation was not being abused while tackling state terrorism.

The commission said that it was finding it difficult to carry out its job as a human rights monitor because of legislation such as Tada and POT.

Unless these draconian laws are scrapped from the statute book, the panel said, "maintenance and prevention of infringements of human rights" will be an impossible task.

THE TELEGRAPH

21 JUL 2000



# WHAT VICTORY

## A Kargil Retrospective

By KEITH FLORY

GIVEN that India has traditionally underplayed the role of its armed forces in preserving the freedom won through non-violent means there would be much to commend in the decision to observe 26 July as "Kargil Vijay Diwas". The valour and sacrifice of the 424 armed forces personnel who died, the 1,363 seriously injured and the thousands of others who participated in that war must never be forgotten. Yet it would be only token homage that would be paid if in bowing their heads, those in authority simultaneously duck the questions that Kargil generates.

Without in any way belittling the gallantry and commitment of those who battled both enemy and terrain, there is a widespread feeling in military circles that both government and service headquarters have failed to address the key question: what caused the creation of conditions that cost the country so dearly.

Sure there has been a Kargil Review Committee (KRC), and an in-house exercise by the army too. Both have come up with the "systemic failure" theory. True also that several senior officers holding key positions in that sector have gradually been moved elsewhere — "after completing their regular tenures" is the official line. Is that sufficient? Nobody advocates a witch hunt, but is there a credible explanation for why regular patrolling was not conducted, why the strands of intelligence reports were not woven into a realistic appreciation of what was happening?

### INEXCUSABLE

The army was caught with its guard down, "taken by surprise" was the euphemism used by the authors of the KRC report. Yet is it not the army's task to be prepared for all eventualities? Perhaps even worse was its initial bid to underplay the intrusion, first talking of small groups of militants, then suggesting an influx of Afghan mercenaries, before admitting that the country had been invaded.

The first response had clearly been tardy, young officers were sent out with small squads to tackle the militants. That those squads did not return failed to set alarms bells ringing. It was almost ten days before the Army sought support from the air, which could not be provided immediately for a variety of reasons. Not the least of them being the army's inability to pinpoint the positions of its own men, let alone zero-in on the heights held by the intruders. All that is inexcusable.

Even the theory that the goodwill generated by the bus ride to Lahore caused the army to take things easy does not wash. For, when replying to a series of parliamentary questions prior to the intrusions the ministry of defence had said that there was nothing to suggest that the Lahore spirit had trickled down to the frontline. Unlike 1962 or the IPKF fiasco, the political leadership cannot be blamed for Kargil. The army has to take full responsibility,

*The author is Special Representative, The Statesman, New Delhi.*

yet even today it has not displayed the courage to concede that it blundered. This would have been the first, critical, step towards a remedy.

Rather than admit that things were not up to scratch, an emotional blitzkrieg was launched. Ceremonials were mounted in the full glare of publicity to receive the soldier's bodies, large crowds gathered at the funerals. Peasant stock has ever been the backbone of Indian soldiery, in pristine simplicity village folk vowed to send even more of their sons to the "fauj". That too was lapped up by the emotional onslaught, the situation contrasted with the impact bodybags have in Western societies. Every serious student of military history will confirm that such glorifica-



tion always follows reversals on the ground. Valid perhaps to preserve national morale, but a subtle admission of defeat.

Was Kargil a victory? Only in the sense that eventually the incursions were cleared. The defence community reacted sharply when President Clinton told Indian parliamentarians that his country had played a role in getting Pakistan to pull back its forces — a former army chief insisted that the withdrawal followed the breaking of the intruders' back. But there can be no contesting the fact that the fighting wound down only when Pakistan's Northern Light Infantry was ordered — regardless of the reason — to pull out. Even at that stage the supply line to the intruders was not totally severed.

### BITTER FEELING

All the drum beating and hype cannot camouflage the reality that a massive effort was required — and once again full honour to those who made it — to clear people from areas where they ought not to have had access in the first place. Exacting indeed were the missions undertaken by the air force, yet again it cannot be forgotten that it used the most lethal weaponry in its inventory to attack targets in Indian territory. Not an inch of land was "gained" in Operation Vijay, not even the consolation of having taken control of every commanding height along the Kargil front.

Yes, our young officers and jawans fought gallantly. Every manjack of them a hero in his own right. Was there any flash of brilliance in the planning of the operation to evict the intruders? If there was, few saw it. Sheer force of numbers, and the inspiration that our soldiers draw from the sacred spiritual bond of the paltan

carried the day. On the ground it was, as one expert described it, a "meat-grinder operation". The credit for what is termed a victory ends with the troops at the front, the discredit flows in the opposite direction, from army headquarters downward.

During the operations, journalists functioning in Kargil came back with stories of how young officers and jawans openly condemned their superiors, and there is reason to believe that a year down the road the feelings have not changed. The chain of command lost the moral fibre which gave it its strength. Alas, there is also reason to suspect that the higher echelons of command have yet to realise the gravity of the situation, or set about restoring the faith in leadership that lubricates a military machine.

The sins of Kargil may have found absolution through a determined bid to revamp the defence establishment, and if there is anything to be said for the KRC report it is that it did set out a road-map for reform. Following which a ministerial group, with specialist sub-groups have been constituted. Since their recommendations have not been formulated it is unfair to predict or comment on what they will come up with. Unfortunately there is no guarantee that effective implementation will follow. There is no dearth of reports, covering almost all aspects of defence affairs, gathering dust.

### RIVALRY

Even the few specific recommendations of the KRC regarding the urgent need for sophisticated equipment like weapons locating radars and unmanned aerial vehicles have not been translated into action thus far. And for the record, still hanging fire are long-standing demands for an advanced jet trainer, self-propelled artillery and the navy still flounders over whether or not it will get the "Gorshkov".

The recommendations of the ministerial group in regard to integrated higher defence management is anxiously awaited, though it must be pointed out that a decade ago the Arun Singh committee also dealt with the subject to no avail. How long can the nation afford to permit a bureaucracy-services tussle to persist, and what about stamping out inter-service rivalry? These issues are nothing new, nobody has set about resolving them. And earlier this year the forces publicly lamented that even budgetary provisions went a begging because of red tape.

Prior to Kargil leading defence analysts had cautioned that the security apparatus was cracking, the cumulative effect of successive governments paying only lip service to national security. The optimistic among them hoped that Kargil would serve as a wake-up call, the cynical scoffed that once political mileage — in either direction — ceased flow, Kargil would no longer be an issue. The realistic remained confused. Memorial Can? India Gate on the night 26 create a poignant scene which light up the day which the security s gropes?

# 238/9 <sup>18</sup> Russian crew in <sup>H9-1</sup> Purulia case freed <sub>9.0.0. N. S. S. S. S.</sub>

By Our Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI, JULY 22.** After nearly five years behind bars, the five crew members of Russian origin, sentenced to life for their involvement in the Purulia arms-drop case, will now fly home, free.

The President, Mr. K. R. Narayanan, has remitted with immediate effect the sentence and also waived the fine, if unpaid.

The five members — Alexander Klichine, Igor Moskvitine, Oleg Gaidach, Evgueni Antimenko and Igor Timmerman — were convicted on January 31 this year for offences related to dropping arms and ammunition in Purulia district of West Bengal. They had appealed against the sentence with the Calcutta High Court.

According to an official release, various organisations and Russian agencies had represented to the President seeking pardon. The Russian leadership also raised the issue. Mercy petitions were submitted on behalf of the pilots.

“On consideration of various aspects of the case, including the humanitarian dimensions of the problem and the time-tested bi-

lateral relations between India and the Russian Federation and in pursuance of the powers conferred under Article 72 of the Constitution, the President remitted the unexpired sentence of imprisonment of the five Russian nationals,” the release said.

The Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Igor Ivanov, spoke from Okinawa over telephone with the Minister of External Affairs, Mr. Jaswant Singh, and thanked the Government for the “humane gesture”.

The dropping of arms and ammunition in Purulia district on December 17, 1995, just before the general elections, had worried the security agencies.

Peter James Gifran Von Kalkstein Bleach, a British national, was arrested along with the five Latvians. Kim Davy, a key accused said to be the brain behind the operation, has managed to remain at large. The CBI sent teams to Sweden, Bulgaria, Hong Kong and U.K. to tie up the loose ends in the case. Seven of the 14 accused are still absconding.

**Putin hails decision: Page 11**

THE HINDU

23 JUL 2000

# celebrates, Kargil widow waits

July 18, 1999, 2 am

*Duty calls at Akhnoor. The battle for Kargil is at its decisive stage as the army launches Operation Rakshak III. Lance Naik Dilip Singh Lingwal of 03 Grenadiers is ordered by his commanding officer to wade through the freezing ice-layers and fetch the grenades and other ammunition kept on the other bank of the cruel river.*

*Lingwal had been fighting the enemy, braving nature's fury at 10,000 feet above sea level, -50° Celsius for over a month. He jumped into the river for his motherland, never to resurface again. The search for Lingwal continued for 72 hours, but his body was never found. Three days later he was declared dead.*

## One year later

As the nation readies to celebrate the Kargil victory on Wednesday, Lingwal's widow stills waits for justice.

After the promises were made, Shobha Lingwal was asked to prove to the government that her husband indeed died for the nation. Denied compensation, she sat on a fast-unto-death in Indore.

However, she called off the hunger strike when the administration promised she would get her dues.

After Kargil, chief minister Digvijay Singh had promised a compensation of Rs 10 lakh and a government job to the families of martyrs from Madhya Pradesh.

But the state government had been insisting that Shobha must produce original death certificates and proof issued by the army to verify whether Dilip Singh Lingwal died in action. Or else, she could not be paid her compensation of Rs 10 lakh.

"My husband has given his life so that his countrymen could sleep peacefully at night. We were only married for five years — my husband went to the battlefield and left me a widow with two infants," said Shobha.

"They failed to trace my husband's body. I did not complain. But when the authorities of the same soil for which my husband died insult me every time by asking for the original death certificate, I cannot bear the humiliation," she added, her eyes welling up.

Shobha has been offered a job at the Indore city corporation by Mayor Kailash Vijaywargiya. But that, too, is only word of mouth.

"They keep tormenting me by

saying they need to verify the documents given by the army authorities," Shobha alleged. "My husband was a soldier, not a fraud. He died for his country and, being his wife, I was not able to see his body. I wasn't even privileged enough to cry over my husband's dead body and people ask me for verification. Verification of what?"

On September 15, 1999, a death certificate was issued by commanding officer B.B. Patnaik confirming Lingwal's death. It said: "Certified that number 2681429W, rank Lance Naik, name Dilip Singh Lingwal, Unit 03 Grenadiers, has been swept away by flash floods and got drowned on July 18, 1999, while performing operational duty."

But that was not enough to satisfy the government. "The commanding officer had asked my husband to get the ammunition kept on the other bank of the river. The river was flooded and he was swept away. Now what does the government expect? Where will I get his body from to prove that he died for the country?" asked Shobha.

Army chief Gen. V.P. Malik had also issued a certificate on December 16, 1999, to recognise Lingwal's sacrifice.

But the Madhya Pradesh Sainik Kalyan Board and the state gov-

ernment were not convinced that Lingwal sacrificed his life for the country. The state government directed district administration officials to get the original death certificates and documents from Shobha for verification.

Yesterday afternoon, after she launched her indefinite hunger strike, district officials rushed to ask her to present the original documents at the collector's office.

Shobha herself did not go but office-bearers of a local NGO, Mahila Shakti Sangathan, produced the documents at collector Manoj Shrivastava's office on her behalf.

Additional district magistrate Manish Singh said the documents, along with the verification report, were sent to the state government last evening. Singh later informed the widow that she would be given the money and the job and that the formalities would be completed in a day or two.

While Shobha waged her lonely battle, her two toddlers tried to console their mother. "Don't cry, Ma. Brave children don't cry," said four-year-old Avinash as his brother Ajay, a year younger, climbed onto his mother's lap to wipe her tears away.

FROM SUCHANDANA GUPTA  
IN INDORE

# How Tiger Hill was retaken

Shishir Gupta  
New Delhi, July 24

**T**IGER HILL is the symbol of the Indian victory at Kargil. For the 50-day conflict virtually began with a clash between the brave 8 Sikh battalion and the Pakistan Army Special Services Group (SSG) soldiers on May 19 and the enemy's resistance melted with the recapture of Tiger Hill on July 4, last year.

In the intervening period of 47 days, Tiger Hill was the site of some of the hardest-fought battles in the annals of Indian Army's history. The Indian artillery used no less than 114 howitzers (a total of 210 guns were used in the entire conflict) and one multi-barrel rocket launcher to blast the Pakistani intruders, well entrenched at the top of the 5063-meter hill. Indian Air Force fighters used laser-guided bombs to destroy enemy's bunkers on this mountain. But it was soldiers of the 18 Grenadiers and 8 Sikh units, who fought every inch of this majestic hill in the Drass sector with their blood.

Recapture of Tiger Hill was a priority for the Indian Army as the Pakistani intruders, around 100 in number, were using the hilltop for directing accurate fire on the national highway. This restricted the movement of convoys on the Srinagar-Leh highway.

The battle of Tiger Hill began on May 19, when soldiers of the 8 Sikh came under heavy machinegun fire even as they tried to recapture the snow-clad mountain. The result shocked the Indian Army as one JCO was killed, seven, including one officer,

90 DANCE HI-14 25/7  
were wounded and 33 jawans were missing in action. The 8 Sikh soldiers, thereafter, made repeated attempts to dislodge the intruders, including sending a platoon from the Parion Ka Talab (a glaciated lake beyond the Tiger Hill), in order to block the enemy supply lines. Nothing succeeded.

The Indian Air Force entered the Kargil theatre on May 26 by launching rockets and free-fall 1000-pound bombs on the indomitable feature. But the enemy managed to survive and harassed the Army for another month.

It was on June 26 that the plan for recapture of the

Tiger Hill was put into action. The IAF's Mirage-2000 fighters pounded enemy bunkers on the Tiger Top using laser-guided bombs. The artillery's 41 Field Regiment using no less than 19 howitzers degraded the enemy's fighting potential. The d-day was 3.21 am on July 3-4.

The final assault was launched at 7.25 pm on July 3 with eight 155 mm Bofors and one multi-barrel rocket launcher blasting the enemy at Tiger Hill in a direct firing role. No less than 5321 rounds were fired at the massive in the next 10 hours. Milan

anti-tank missiles were also pressed into operation. Covered by the awesome firepower, 18 Grenadiers started climbing the Tiger Hill using the most difficult route - a sheer cliff along the east - around 9.00 pm.

Taking advantage of the enveloping cloud and snow, the Indian soldiers established a foothold on Tiger Top on July 4. The 8 Sikh jawans blasted their way and occupied "India Gate" and "Helmet" in the next two days. Tiger Hill had been recaptured.

## REMEMBERING



## KARGIL

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

# Hizbul chief endorses truce

## PM welcomes move, says Govt ready for talks

HT Correspondent & Agencies  
Islamabad/New Delhi, July 25

*HFI 26/7*

EVEN AS major militant outfits, including Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, Harkat-ul-Ansar, Al Badr and Al Umar, rejected the unilateral Hizbul Mujahideen ceasefire announcement, Syed Salahuddin, the supreme leader of the Hizbul Mujahideen, today endorsed the ceasefire offered by his main commander in Jammu and Kashmir.

"We own this offer, it is a tactical move," Salahuddin told reporters.

"We have thrown the ball in India's court. It must now respond positively," he said, referring to the truce announced by Hizbul commander Abdul Majid Dar in Srinagar yesterday.

"I want to make it clear that the ceasefire offer is conditional," Salahuddin said in Islamabad. The move was to contradict "propaganda" that Kashmiris did not want negotiations. "India should come forward now to negotiate with Pakistan, the All-Party Hurriyat Conference and the Kashmiri leadership," Salahuddin said.

"India should stop human rights violations, suspend

military operations, end atrocities in Kashmir and continue releasing prisoners," he said. "If India does not respond positively and violates our ceasefire conditions, you will see with your own eyes there will be massive, targeted attacks by the Mujahideen in Kashmir." Salahuddin said 17 Kashmiri militant factions grouped into the Muttahida Jihad Council (MJC) had "disagreed" with Dar's offer.

"They are free to react. They have their own thinking. It is our strategy," he said, adding that every commander of the Hizbul Mujahideen was bound by the decision, which had been endorsed by its central command. Militant groups based in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, at a four-hour meeting under the aegis of the MJC, condemned the Hizbul Mujahideen ceasefire offer. "The meeting discussed the ceasefire announcement and condemned it as a blow to the liberation struggle in Kashmir," council vice-chairman Mohammad Usman said in Muzaffarabad.

In New Delhi, the Hizbul offer was welcomed. Prime Minister A B Vajpayee said his government was ready to talk to anybody within the framework of the Constitution.

Related reports on Page 12

# Homage paid to Kargil war heroes

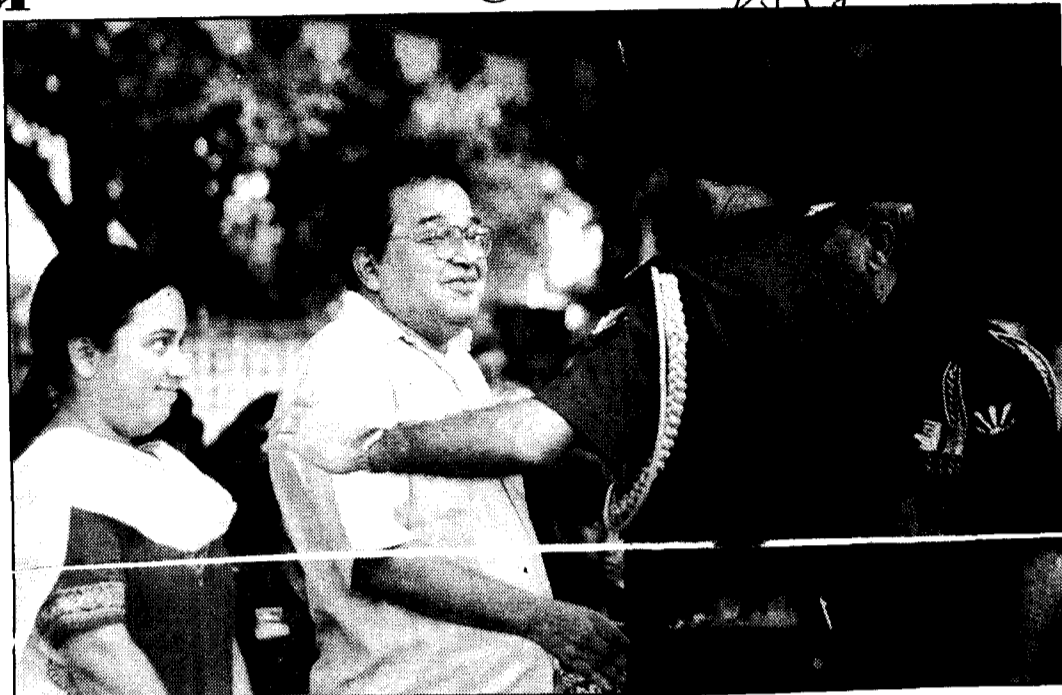
HT Correspondent  
Calcutta, July 26

**K**AMAL KANTI Bhattacharya sat forlornly this morning amid Army generals sporting golden epaulettes, peaked caps, smart uniforms, gleaming brass insignias and proud war medals. His son Kanad could have become a general someday, hadn't fate intervened in the Kargil conflict.

"I am proud of my son's supreme sacrifice," said the slain Captain Kanad Bhattacharya's father. Television camera crew wanted more bytes. "What more can I say...imagine yourselves in my position," he pleaded in a quivering voice, flanked by Eastern Command GOC-in-C Lt Gen. H R S Kalkat and Chief of Staff Lt Gen. S C Chopra.

R P Chandra Hasnara Begum, Sunil Ghosh—all relatives of heroes of Kargil—were lost in their own thoughts and overwhelmed by emotions as they sat under a brightly-colored shamiana, observing the military rituals to pay homage to slain soldiers on the first anniversary of the Kargil war, officially notified as 'Kargil Vijay Divas', today. They were studies in contrast: bundles of grief cringing away from media attention even while being showcased as resilience and courage personified and smartly-turned out senior officers of the three services revelling in military glory.

There was a lot of military pomp and ceremony on display this bright morning. A brass band played martial tunes before bugles sounded the 'last post' and jawans of Fort William's Garrison Battalion reversed arms during a two-minute silence in memory of the martyrs. An Indian Air Force helicopter flew past showering marigold and rose petals on the martyrs' memorial.



GOC-in-C Lt Gen. H R S Kalkat congratulates father of Kargil hero Kanad Bhattacharjee at a function in the city on Wednesday. Photo: Pabitra Das

Even Governor Viren J Shah was turned out for the occasion. Attired in a navy blue suit and a red-bordered, black side cap, he arrived in a motorcade escorted by six Army outriders. The Governor clicked his heels and turned out a smart salute after placing a wreath at the memorial. He led all officers in another two-minute salute.

The first to lay a wreath was Kamal Kanti Bhattacharya, followed by Maj. Gen. (Retd) K K Ganguly. Three Army, Navy and Air Force officers representing their respective services laid wreaths, followed by Lt Gen. Chopra and Lt Gen. Kalkat. Deputy Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee was next. But while all others saluted the martyr's memorial, he merely bowed his head.

The impressive ceremony just outside the entrance to Fort William was interspersed by commentaries in Hindi and English on how "the treacherous and untrustworthy" Pakistan dared to mount another attack on India. The commentators spoke of the glorious defence mounted by Indian soldiers, their heroic struggles in the face of odds and how another crushing blow was inflicted on Pakistan.

A War Museum inside the Fort premises was opened to the public today. The museum houses a 'Kargil Gallery' that displays memorabilia of the conflict, including uniforms of two captured officers of the Pakistan Army, documents recovered from Pakistani soldiers and Pakistani snow tents and huts.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

27 JUL 2000

# Kargil triggered rethink among militants: George

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, July 26

**D**EFENCE MINISTER George Fernandes today said that there were reports of some "rethinking" among major ethnic militant groups in Kashmir, a process that started after Pakistan's defeat in Kargil last year.

After inaugurating a defence exhibition on the Kargil Victory Day, Mr Fernandes said, "Major Kashmiri militant groups have started re-thinking their future and this is the direct fallout of Pakistan's defeat on Kargil heights last year."

The day began with President K.R. Narayanan, Vice President Krishan Kant, Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee and Mr Fernandes offering floral tributes to the Kargil martyrs on the occasion of the first anniversary of India's victory over Pakistan in the Kargil war.

Welcoming the ceasefire announced by dominant Kashmiri militant group Hizbul Mujahideen, Mr Fernandes said

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this should hopefully lead to a process of "dialogue and peace" in the Valley.

He said the Centre was studying the ceasefire and talks offer and would respond soon.

The Defence Minister reiterated

## Surveillance

A YEAR after the Kargil incursion, Army troops have set up high power imported surveillance system, increased and upgraded posts, road network and constructed mule tracks along the Line of Control in Kargil, said a senior Army official.

PTI, Jammu

that the rethinking among the militant groups was indicative of the disillusionment of Kashmiri people with Islamabad's policy of engineering disturbances with ulterior motives.

According to him, it was now an open secret that militancy in Jammu and Kashmir had the "financial and military backup of

Pakistan" and this has also contributed to the rethinking process by ethnic Kashmiri groups.

The defence exhibition, mirroring the country's armed capability in a splendid display of the wide array of ultra-modern warfare equipment, has been dedicated to the martyrs of Kargil.

After going round the exhibition showcasing in pictures and through video cassettes, the telling moments of the 50-day war, Mr Fernandes said the major lesson from Kargil was "never ever trust anybody and never ever slacken vigilance".

He said the country had to pay a heavy price in Kargil as aftermath of the Simla Accord some slackness had crept in due to an unwritten understanding with Pakistan to keep areas unmanned for certain periods.

The Defence Minister said the observance of the Kargil day was no celebrations.

"Though there is joy over victory over Pakistan. The day is being observed to remember the supreme sacrifices by valiant soldiers," he said.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

27 JUL 2000

# Good for diplomacy, bad for security

By V. Jayanth

**CHENNAI, JULY 26.** The pardoning and release of the five Latvia-born Russian pilots, sentenced in the Purulia armsdrop case, may have set a wrong precedent. Of course, it was part of bilateral diplomacy to please the new Russian President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, but it has certainly sent a wrong signal on the security front.

True, the five pilots have spent nearly five years under detention and claimed to be 'scapegoats' after the New Zealander who hired them, Kim Peter Davy, escaped. With an AN-26 aircraft, these pilots were nabbed by the Indian authorities at the Mumbai airport.

Defence analysts equate this episode with the release of three dreaded terrorists for the safety of the passengers aboard the Indian Airlines flight hijacked to Kandahar last year. In that case, it was the lives of Indian citizens for which the compromise was made and this time, the release of the Russian pilots was effected as a gesture or goodwill on the eve of Mr. Putin's proposed visit to India.

To start with, the Purulia armsdrop in 1995 was itself a serious lapse on many fronts. To let a foreign aircraft drop such lethal weapons — AK-47 rifles, anti-tank grenades, handgrenades, tins of detonator, besides some pistols and SLR ammunition were recovered from the scene — was unacceptable by any standards. The Russian-made aircraft flew at 1,500 feet to effect that drop. The weapons were stated to be from Burgas in Bulgaria.

A parliamentary committee on Government Assurances, which went into the case, rapped the Government in 1997 for its "total failure" in preventing such an armsdrop, when it was claimed that the Intelligence Bureau had got scent of a possible drop, perhaps in Bihar. The committee regretted that there was no coordination among the various agencies and even the DGCA was not warned about a possible airdrop of arms in Indian territory, that too

when a general election was round the corner. Similarly, the panel termed as "disgraceful" the escape of Kim Davy, the mastermind behind the armsdrop.

In February 2000, a City Civil Court in Calcutta sentenced a British national, Peter Bleach, and the five Latvians to life imprisonment and a fine on various charges.

The issue acquired some significance when the Latvians lodged a complaint of torture in prison and it became an issue in bilateral relations with Russia. The pilots could not return to Latvia after being sentenced on such a serious charge in a foreign country and therefore took Russian citizenship while in prison.

During the visit of Foreign Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, to Moscow in June this year, it was a sticking point. Moscow's argument was that the Indian agencies were harsh on the pilots after letting the brain behind the armsdrop

## NEWS ANALYSIS

escape. The Russian Orthodox church took it up with the Indian Prime Minister and then with Mr. Putin. The Russian leader responded promptly to the letter and described the punishment meted out to the pilots as "unexpectedly and disproportionately harsh". He warned even then that it could have a "negative impact on bilateral relations with India".

Since the judicial process was still under way, with the pilots going on appeal to the High Court, New Delhi first took the line that the Government could not intervene at this juncture. But in Moscow, Mr. Jaswant Singh, gave a clear hint that this problem would be resolved soon, recognising "the sensitivity of the issue".

A British newspaper even quoted a Russian diplomat as saying that Mr. Putin could even cancel his visit to India if the pilots were not released. This was later denied by Moscow, but the message was clear. The case had ac-

quired a serious dimension when one of the pilots suffered several heart attacks in prison and another contracted drug-resistant tuberculosis.

Taking into account all these developments and the importance India attached to its ties with Russia, the Government swung into action and recommended to the President to 'pardon' the pilots.

In view of various mercy petitions, the President, Mr. K.R. Narayanan, remitted the sentence with immediate effect and also waived the fine, if unpaid.

"On consideration of various aspects of the case, including the humanitarian dimensions of the problem and the time-tested bilateral relations between India and the Russian Federation, and in pursuance of the powers conferred under Article 72 of the Constitution, the President remitted the unexpired sentence of imprisonment of the five Russian nationals," it was officially stated after the pardon was granted.

Picking up the cue, Britain has already said it would seek the release of its national, Peter Bleach. The British Home Secretary, Mr. Jack Straw, is slated to visit India in September.

Unfortunately for India, seven of the 14 accused in the Purulia armsdrop case are still at large, including the prime accused, Kim Davy.

With the release of the Russian pilots, the curtains might have come down on a knotty bilateral issue. Mr. Putin, who has already thanked India for the "humane decision", would now surely keep his schedule to visit India and bilateral ties, which have always been promising, could enter a new phase.

But the whole episode has left many questions unanswered. While the main accused are still at large and the coordination among various Indian agencies leaves a lot to be desired, analysts are worried about what impact the release of the sentenced pilots will have on the security of the nation.

THE HINDU

27 JUL 2000



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## Hard lessons from Kargil

THE COMMEMORATION of the Kargil Victory Day was appropriate lest the nation forgets the sacrifice of more than 500 soldiers. A fitting tribute to the Kargil martyrs would be the establishment of a war memorial, both to pay tribute to all the unsung heroes in the past wars and to help impart a sense of military history to a nation obsessed with the present. It is remarkable that a country on which war was repeatedly thrust and that faces lurking dangers of new aggression does not have a war memorial. All it has is the Amar Jawan Jyoti at the British-built India Gate. India needs to get away from its colonial legacy and build a truly nationalistic spirit.

No tribute to the fallen martyrs can be complete without India absorbing the political and military lessons of Kargil. The military lessons are stark. When war happens, India does not have the institutional structures to quickly respond. Kargil showed the inordinate time it took for the decision making process to get its act together. Equally unmistakable is the absence of an integrated war-fighting machine. In today's world, the Army, Air Force and Navy have to closely coordinate their strategies and wage war in unison. Regrettably, India does not have an integrated peace-time military structure. Only when war is forced on India do the three services start improvising an integrated approach. A third lesson, underscored by the image of the ill-equipped infantryman, relates to the costs of keeping the military out of policy making. A fourth lesson centres on the Air Force's poor showing in the Kargil conflict. The Air Force entered the war late, and when it did, it bared its lack of competence by almost instantly losing two fighter-jets and a helicopter gunship. After that, its aircraft kept to a securely high altitude from where they could not engage in precision bombing or provide close air support to ground forces. It will be cruel of the country to expect its brave infantrymen to fight a future war in Kargil style — with World War I tactics and unreasonably high casualties. Modernisation and integration are a must.

The most obvious lesson, however, calls for political reflection: Why do India's adversaries repeatedly take it by surprise? Since the elected leadership is in charge of the system, it bears full responsibility. Kargil, like 1962, cannot be seen in isolation of the political leadership's role. Kargil's hard lessons demand introspection and correction, not mere anniversary grand gestures. Those lessons, overlooked by the Kargil Review Committee, cannot be wished away. Given India's unenviable track record in shying away from corrective steps after every war, the Vajpayee Government should show that its actions speak louder than its words.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

27 JUL 2000

# 'A year after Kargil, ultras rethink future'

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: On a day that the nation paid collective tribute to the 586 Indian soldiers who had laid down their lives in Kargil, defence minister George Fernandes asserted that it was Pakistan's defeat in the snowy peaks of Kashmir last year that was now prompting various militant groups to sue for peace.

Speaking to journalists at a weapons' exhibition at India Gate in the capital on Wednesday, Mr Fernandes said that militancy in Kashmir had always depended on the military and financial backing of Pakistan. But after the Kargil defeat, a process of disillusionment had set in. "Major militant groups have started rethinking their future," the defence minister asserted, citing the recent ceasefire declaration by the Hizbul Mujahideen as evidence.

Welcoming the Hizbul's declaration, Mr Fernandes said that it would help to get the process of dialogue and peace off the ground. He said the government was still studying the situation and would come up with a formal response soon.

Speaking to the press in Washington, however, national security adviser Brajesh Mishra sounded much more guarded. "We are just going to look at it (Hizbul's offer) to see what is happening," he was quoted as saying on Wednesday. "We will take our time looking at it."

But even as the Vajpayee government ponders its next move, it is clear that equations on the ground—both in the Valley and in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir—could change very fast. On Wednesday, the Pakistan-based United Jihad Council (UJC) removed Hizbul commander Syed Salahuddin from the chairmanship of the umbrella group and also suspended the Hizbul from membership in the council. The move was widely expected given the fierce opposition of other UJC members to the Hizbul ceasefire and to the fact that

Salahuddin had personally endorsed what other militant groups had angrily described as an 'Indian plot' to betray the cause of the Kashmiris.

Clearly feeling the heat, Salahuddin has been making contradictory

statements to the media. One Pak newspaper quoted him as saying that if India did not 'respond' to the ceasefire within two days, 'full operations' would be resumed. He has also been quoted as demanding that New Delhi hold talks not just with the representatives of Kashmiri militant groups, but also with Islamabad, a matter that is anathema to the Vajpayee government.

And, as the possibility of negotiations with the Hizbul seems remote, the much-vaunted dialogue process with the Hurriyat Conference too is floundering due to the government's explicitly stated pre-condition that the constitution not be flouted.

## THE KARGIL EFFECT

- Ultras disillusioned after Kargil
- Govt.-Hizbul deal unlikely
- US may pressure India to enter negotiations with Hizbul

THE TIMES OF INDIA

27 JUL 2000

FRIDAY, JULY 28, 2000

## A YEAR AFTER KARGIL

A GRATEFUL NATION paid homage to the Kargil martyrs on Wednesday, with the Centre observing the anniversary as 'Kargil Vijay Diwas'. The first anniversary after Kargil really presents an opportunity to review the developments on the northwestern borders of the country. Of course the Government and the Army can pride themselves that the armed forces are much more prepared and much better equipped today than they were when the incursions took place last year. But it is still not clear if the lessons from Kargil have sunk into the Government's psyche, more importantly of its intelligence agencies. Kargil has really woken up not only the armed forces, but the Government and all its agencies. For a generation which has not seen or felt what a war is, it was a new experience and the nation rose as one man to salute the Kargil heroes and contribute its share to help the families of those who made the supreme sacrifice or were maimed for life during the operations.

For its part, the Ministry of Defence responded to the Kargil developments by setting up the Subrahmanyam committee to not only conduct a post-mortem of systemic deficiencies, but also recommend steps to plug the gaps and weaknesses in the defence and security system. It was a welcome development that the Government chose to table the committee's report in Parliament. A Group of Ministers is still looking into the key elements of this report. The Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, has consistently taken the line that it was not 'intelligence failure' but basically a 'betrayal of trust' by Pakistan which resulted in the incursions. For that very reason, New Delhi refuses to resume the derailed dialogue with Pakistan till it stops sponsoring cross-border terrorism and takes concrete steps to restore the spirit of the Lahore process. Mr. Fernandes secured a substantial increase in the defence budget and is finalising

plans to modernise and upgrade the defence systems of all the three services. Even if it is a serious challenge, Kargil has led to the 'Siachenisation' of the 168 km stretch from Kaobalgali to Chorbat La with regular military posts in the snowy mountains.

But two major issues need to be addressed without delay. The first, as the Subrahmanyam committee noted, relates to a "greater appreciation of the role of intelligence". The various intelligence agencies such as the RAW, the IB and the Directorate-General of Military Intelligence must learn to share information and interpret every piece of intelligence for an effective assessment or evaluation of security and threat. The process of interaction must be institutionalised. Whether the National Security Council can play that role and is the Centre really making the best use of this mechanism remain to be seen. It should not be reduced to an ornamental body. Second, Mr. Fernandes promised to restructure the Ministry of Defence to improve coordination and reduce friction between the bureaucracy and the uniformed services.

Instead of merely celebrating 'Vijay Diwas', the Government will do well to learn the lessons from Kargil and ensure that it does not happen again on any border. Neither the Government nor the people can take the nation's security for granted. Without politicising Kargil, the ruling NDA and the Opposition parties must seriously discuss the Subrahmanyam committee report in Parliament and come up with solutions. Instead of remembering the martyrs for just the day, the Government and the community must endeavour to look after the families of all soldiers who laid down their lives for the country, or were maimed defending it. That is the confidence and assurance that the nation must give the soldiers.

# Delhi calls all Kashmir militant groups to talks

FROM CHANDAN NANDY

New Delhi, July 28: The Centre tonight officially responded to the Hizbul Mujahideen's ceasefire offer by inviting all militant groups operating in Jammu and Kashmir to the negotiating table.

After "welcoming" Hizbul leader A.M. Dar's "unconditional" dialogue offer, the Vajpayee government said it would "like to invite all militant groups and political leaders to come forward to restore peace and normality in the state".

The decision was taken at a meeting presided over by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and attended by home minister L.K. Advani, defence minister George Fernandes, home secretary Kamal Pande and army chief V.P. Malik.

"Recognising the need for restoration of peace in Jammu and Kashmir, the government would like the Hizbul Mujahideen leadership to come overground and establish contact with the home secretary to discuss the modalities necessary for initiating a dialogue and preparing the grounds for restoration of

peace," a statement said.

The meeting was preceded by an announcement in Srinagar that the army has suspended "offensive" operations against militants. "But we will take action and retaliate if attacked," Maj. Gen. Basant Singh, chief of staff, 15 Corps, said in Srinagar this evening.

Inherent in the stand is the government's willingness to pardon the crimes committed by the Hizbul Mujahideen and other terror outfits operating in the Valley and elsewhere in the state.

It also indicates that the Union home secretary would be the Centre's principal interlocutor to discuss any peace initiative with not only the Hizbul Mujahideen but all other militant outfits.

By accepting the Hizbul offer of July 24, the government has virtually appealed to all Kashmiri militants operating under the overall command of foreign terrorist outfits to dissociate themselves from organisations like the Lashkar-e-Toiba, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Al Badr and the Jaish-e-Mohammadi and join the peace process.

"The idea is to isolate the Pak-

istan-backed terrorist outfits which, bereft of local support, will not be in a position to operate in the state," a top official said.

The Vajpayee government also intends to garner maximum political mileage by announcing its peace policy for Jammu and Kashmir at a time when Parliament is in session.

The government would like to project itself as one which has come close to resolving the Kashmir question not by force alone but also by a pragmatic approach combining development-related activities and talks with militant groups — something which previous governments at the Centre had not been able to achieve.

Tonight's meeting also took stock of the situation that might arise in the state with the rejection of the Hizbul's offer by other foreign outfits and the United Jihad Council. Intelligence reports suggest that some mercenary organisations have planned "concerted" actions in August.

Another report says thousands have positioned themselves along the LoC in areas opposite the territory guarded by the army's 14 Corps.

THE TELEGRAPH

29 JUL 2000

# Army suspends operations against Hizbul Mujahideen

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, JULY 29. Following the offer of talks extended by the Government of India (GOI) to the militant and political organisations, the Army today announced suspension of its operations against the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), but said operations against other militant groups would continue.

Addressing a hurriedly convened news conference here, Lt. Gen. John Ranjan Mukherjee, General Officer Commanding (GOC) of 15 Corps and the security adviser to the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, said "last night, in a significant development, the Central Government has made a statement accepting the ceasefire offer and has asked the Hizbul Mujahideen representatives to come over ground for talks. In keeping with the directions, I have instructed all the field commanders of all security forces in Kashmir to suspend all operations against the Hizbul Mujahideen. However, our operations against other tanzeems will continue as hitherto fore".

According to him, the ceasefire offer was at the behest of people of Kashmir. The HM was compelled to accept the offer as it was the only tanzeem operating in J & K, said the GOC adding "therefore, the HM has a stake in peace". The people of Kashmir would come together to oppose those who are opposing their will. In fact during last three months, the results in operations had been spectacular in view of the information provided by the people, said Lt. Gen. Mukherjee.

On how the forces could differentiate between the militants of the HM and other outfits, Lt. Gen.



**Lt. Gen. J.R. Mukherjee announcing the ceasefire against the Hizbul Mujahideen at a news conference in Srinagar on Saturday.** — Photo: Nissar Ahmad

Mukherjee said "we maintain fairly accurate intelligence system, we have fair idea where these elements are". Referring to the killing of the HM commander in Beerwah, Moulvi Ferozuddin, on Friday, Lt. Gen. Mukherjee said, "it was an unfortunate incident as we had no intention to go against the HM after ceasefire. It was chance encounter which should have been avoided". However, the Corps Commander said "we have to get together and work out ground rules, once we work out ground rules such incidents could be avoided". As soon as the GOI started talks, the ground rules and modalities will be worked out, he said adding he would like to advise the HM cadres not to roam around till then.

Lt. Gen. Mukherjee said that "all cadres of the Hizbul Mujahideen including foreigners are included in my ceasefire decision". He said out of 1,500 militants present in the Valley, around 850 belonged to the HM and only 600 odd were affiliated with other out-

fits like the Lashkar-e-Taiba, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and Al-Badr who "I believe will also come forward to fulfill the aspirations of the people". The GOC made it clear that the army would go non-stop against the militants of other tanzeems.

However, if any of the militants of the HM violated the ceasefire he would be liable for action. But it only depends upon the modalities to be worked out.

He said troops had been put on maximum alert as Pakistan might try to push in more foreign militants. Lt. Gen. Mukherjee said 2,000 militants were waiting across the LoC to cross over. When asked how his soldiers felt about the ceasefire, he quipped "like all Kashmiris our boys are also pleased".

## APHC hails offer

Kashmir's separatist conglomerate, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), has expressed optimism over the Centre's offer to various militant and political groups saying that in case it moved in a positive direction, the Kashmir issue could be resolved for ever.

Reacting to the offer extended by Union Government on Friday evening, APHC chairman Prof Abdul Gani Butt said in view of the changing political scene in the sub-continent as also at the international level, the role of Hurriyat was becoming more effective.

AP reports:

An alliance of 14 militant groups based in Pakistan today asked the Hizbul to end its ceasefire in Kashmir and rejoin the armed insurgency.

THE HINDU

30 JUL 2000

# Hizbul threatens to call off ceasefire

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JULY 30. The Hizbul Mujahideen today threatened to review its decision on ceasefire in Kashmir if the Indian Government does not clarify the statement made by the National Security Advisor, Mr. Brajesh Mishra.

In a statement, the supreme commander of Hizbul Mujahideen, Syed Salahuddin, said his organisation was not prepared to accept any conditions for talks. "If the Indian Government does not agree to hold talks without any conditions, we would be left with no option but to call off the ceasefire declaration," he said.

The outfit urged the Indian Government to clarify its stand on the comments made by Mr. Mishra in an interview to a private televi-

sion channel. Mr. Mishra had said that talks with militants would be within the framework of the Constitution and ruled out involvement of Pakistan in the issue. "Surely any representative of India cannot act outside the Constitution," he had said.

The Hizbul Mujahideen spokesman, Mr. Kalim Siddiqui, told *The Hindu* that his organisation could not be expected to take any initiative till the Indian Government cleared the 'confusion' arising out of Mr. Mishra's statement.

The organisation would await a clarification from New Delhi before taking any step. On Saturday last, Hizbul leaders held consultations with other organisations engaged in the "Kashmir struggle" to formulate a strategy following India's offer for a dialogue.

In a related development, in an interview to

the BBC, Mr. Salahuddin said his organisation would resume fighting if India did not respond positively to its offer.

"Today we have put our 12-year-old performance at stake and we have taken this bold decision because India has been making propaganda that it is prepared to resolve the Kashmir issue. In order to wash out this propaganda, we have provided this historic opportunity.

If India makes use of this, it is its own interest and it is in the interest of the people of the subcontinent," he has said.

On the adverse reaction of other militant outfits and the Jamaat-e-Islami, Mr. Salahuddin expressed regrets for not taking them into confidence and attributed it lack of time and communication gap.

THE HINDU

21 JUL 2000

# Tada replacement Bill termed anti-people

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, March 10. — "Are you a terrorist?"

A critique of the proposed Criminal Law Amendment Bill which seeks to replace TADA questions the grounds for introduction of the legislation terming it anti-people and designed to curb all protest even of a political nature.

Under the proposed law, says a report brought out by the People's Union For Democratic Rights, a terrorist could be a journalist interviewing the leader of a banned organisation, a person protesting against an unpopular measure of the government, railway employees striking work, a lawyer defending cases of members of banned organisations, a news channel reporting on atrocities by the armed forces and even a person whose finger prints may be found on the site of a bomb blast, say in a bus.

The organisation, which will hold a day-long seminar on Saturday to discuss the Bill, points out that peasants agitating for land reforms or against the Dunkel draft, workers protesting against retrenchment, advocates, and artists, playwrights and academicians

have all been declared terrorists at one time or another under TADA, the report criticises the wide sweep of definition of terrorist activity and points out that the roots of terrorism are often socio-political.

Citing official figures of conviction under TADA, the report questions the efficacy of the new legislation as anything more than an inhuman preventive detention law. Nearly five years after the lapse of TADA, trials have yet to be completed in 4,958 TADA cases of which 1,384 are still under investigation.

## 'ADVOCATES, ACADEMICIANS TOO HAVE BEEN DECLARED TERRORISTS UNDER ACT'

Home Ministry figures of June 1994, less than a year before the lapse of TADA, revealed that of the 76,000 persons arrested under TADA, in 25 per cent of the instances, cases were dropped without the framing of charges, trial was completed in only 35 per cent of the cases brought to trial, 95 per cent of these trials ended in acquittal so that the rate of conviction of those arrested under TADA finally stood at a meagre 1 per cent.

In most of the cases which fit the

government description of terrorist acts, conviction was finally granted not under TADA but under ordinary law. This included the conviction of Sukhdev Singh (Sukha) and Harjinder Singh (Jinda) in the Vaidya assassination case and more recently the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case where the Supreme Court acquitted all the 26 accused of charges under TADA even while convicting four of them for murder.

Referring to the debate that has begun after the hijacking of the Indian Airlines aircraft which justifies the

grant bail only if it is satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for believing the accused is not guilty and the court is directed to consider a person guilty if he or she 'is merely believed' to have assisted in the commission of a crime, or if arms or explosives believed to have been used in the crime are found in his or her possession or if the accused refuses to give samples of blood, handwriting, etc.

Combined with the protection accorded to witnesses and the provision of trials in the absence of the accused or his or her pleader, the report says the law

will result in a situation where "after endless detention and confession by torture, there are special courts and unknown witnesses and even a trial without a defence" with the right to appeal severely limited.

While the CLA bill, when introduced in the Rajya Sabha in 1995 had sought to do away with some of the more pernicious clauses, these were brought back through an official order of the Union Home Ministry in 1999.

These included making confession

before the police inadmissible as evidence, allowing the right of appeal in the High Court and removing the clauses restricting the right to bail.

The same official order, the report says, deleted acts to alienate any section of the people or to adversely affect the harmony amongst different sections of the people from the definition of terrorist activity.

The failure to deal with terrorists the report says, is not attributed to the failure of the law enforcing machinery but to the weakness of law based on principles of liberal jurisprudence and notions of natural justice.

Taking on the arguments being advanced in favour of the Bill the report says that the attempt to justify the Bill by attacking a soft state is not a valid perception.

"A soft state is one that cannot implement its own laws or uphold the writ of its own Constitution". Saying a law like the CLA seeks to legislate such softness by sanctioning the abandonment of both law and the Constitution, the PUDR has demanded the complete and unconditional withdrawal of the proposed anti-terrorist law.