

RAIN-WATCHING

MONSOONS ARE WELCOME. Coming as it does after a scorching summer and serious worries over drought, the forecast made by the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) that the country is awaiting yet another 'normal' southwest monsoon is cause for some cheer. For, it is this spell, between June and September, which accounts for nearly 80 per cent of the country's rainfall. That optimism is in the air is evident from the initial responses to the IMD's forecast from the Union Agriculture Ministry as well as by marketmen. The upward revision of the foodgrain production target for the year 2001-02 by the former and the buying interest fuelled in the stock markets are indications, if at all any are required, of the continuing impact of monsoons on the national economy. There is no taking away the fact that the IMD has made considerable progress in the tricky task of predicting monsoons. However, given the known fallibility of statistical forecasting techniques, especially so in the highly complicated case of weather forecasting, there is also a case to temper the cheer and to look at what the IMD has said in a detached manner. Also to be reckoned with is the purpose behind making these forecasts, their limitations and implications for the country's planners and administrators. At best, the forecast should put to rest apprehensions of a monsoon failure. This, however, does not mean that rainfall will be aplenty or that the prospects of drought have receded.

Bearing in mind a few concepts that are a part of weather forecasting techniques would be appropriate. Essentially a broadbrush picture of what the months ahead would portend on the meteorological front, the forecasts provide aggregate expectations. Yet, crucial imponderables persist. The most important being the variations over space and time. Another factor is that the forecast is made for the country as a whole and not in disaggregated terms that can lend themselves to meaningful local predictions. Thus, while the long range forecast may hold true for

the country as a whole, there still remains a difficulty in anticipating its impact at regional or divisional levels. For instance, though the last year had indeed recorded a statistically 'normal' monsoon, as many as 71 districts received deficient rainfall for the second year running. For the coming year, the IMD has predicted a lower possibility of a repeat failure in these districts, but has not ruled out the possibility totally. In this regard, the attempts made since 1999 by the IMD to issue broad region-wise forecasts — for northwest India, the Peninsula and northeast India — is a welcome step in that it narrows, even if to a limited extent, this spatial factor.

It is at the larger level of planning and administrative preparedness that the techniques developed within the country over the past several decades in long-range forecasting require to be used judiciously. The long-standing surmise that the economy is a gamble of the monsoons should not be made a repeated rhetoric, given the advances made by India in forecasting. With the broad picture now available, preparedness should be the key factor which determines progress. Targeting annual foodgrain productions based on rain forecasts, as is being done, may be a good starting point and a continuation with the past. However, other factors such as possible changes in cropping pattern, which are determined by both economic and non-economic forces, should also be reckoned with. Given the fact that the IMD carries out the forecasts on a regular basis, it would also be in order to re-evaluate the overall situation when the mid-season forecast arrives in August, based on the performance of the monsoon during the next two months. Given the grim indications of the possibility of drought and water shortages, there should be no letup in the administrative machinery in its preparedness to steer through difficult situations that may manifest themselves in several pockets across the country.

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No scope for detours

BY SPECIFYING that India's sovereignty over Kashmir is non-negotiable, New Delhi has made it clear that the "high road to peace" with Pakistan will not involve any detours. The clarification was necessary because of the references to the UN resolutions that were made by Pakistani spokesmen. Although Islamabad's need for adopting such postures, even for the sake of bargaining, is understandable, they may tend to queer the pitch in the context of the highly complicated background of the Indo-Pakistani relationship. It might have been better, therefore, for Pakistan to avoid raising issues which can serve no useful purpose. Perhaps the most irrelevant of all of them is the question of a plebiscite, which is now considered impractical even by the rest of the world.

After all that has happened in the intervening half a century since the first Pakistani intrusion into Kashmir — the conflicts of 1965 and 1971, the break-up of Pakistan, the elections in Kashmir, the proxy war in the Valley since the end of the Eighties, the nuclearisation of the sub-continent — it is quite out of the question to revert to what was said in 1948-49. Evidently, few can now conceive of recreating the conditions prevailing then to hold a referendum after the withdrawal of Pakistani

forces from "Azad" Kashmir and of the Indian forces from the Valley. Clearly, it is a closed chapter which cannot be reopened and the sooner the Pakistanis realise this harsh reality the better.

Instead, it will serve a far more useful purpose if Shimla and Lahore are regarded as the milestones which point to the direction in which the two countries must travel. This, indeed, is the high road that has to be traversed so that the two countries can shed their past animosities. Thankfully, General Pervez Musharraf has spoken of coming to New Delhi with an "open mind". That is the first prerequisite of a successful first step, for no one must be under any illusion that many more will have to be taken if the dialogue is to bear fruit. A prime need at the moment is to build trust which is sorely lacking because of Islamabad's refusal to call upon the militants to forsake violence. Even then, India has shown its good intentions to revive the peace process, which was stymied by the Kargil intrusion for which General Musharraf was widely held responsible. As Mr Vajpayee had earlier said, India is prepared to go more than half the distance for the sake of peace. If the response from the other side is adequate, then there will be every reason to be hopeful.

UN AIDS paper to avoid naming special groups

REUTERS

UNITED NATIONS, JUNE 28

DELEGATES at a major UN Conference on AIDS intend to adopt a declaration on Wednesday that sets up specific targets for each country to combat the killer disease but refuses to name homosexuals, prostitutes or prisoners as particularly vulnerable groups.

After wrangling for weeks over whether to highlight the groups in a declaration, the full 189-member General Assembly is now scheduled to approve the document before its first three-day high-level session on AIDS ends.

Some 3,000 government offi-

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cials, activists and business leaders converged on the United Nations this week to back a global agenda for tackling AIDS and HIV, the virus that causes it, and to galvanize support for a new fund for treatment of 36 million people facing the disease's death sentence.

UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has urged the world to spend between \$7 billion and \$10 billion a year to respond to the pandemic compared to about \$2 billion currently spent in developing nations, half of it in Brazil, which has a successful nationwide drug treatment programme.

African presidents and prime ministers were heavily represented

and promised to lead anti-AIDS campaigns on the continent where 25 million are afflicted with the virus.

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But Egypt, Pakistan, Libya, Sudan, Iran and others fought for weeks against naming "men who have sex with men," intravenous drug users, prostitutes and prisoners among the groups particularly vulnerable to AIDS and in need of special attention. They argued the language offended religious and cultural sensitivities.

They succeeded in softening the language. In the final declaration countries are told to protect the health "of those identifiable groups which currently have

a high or increased rates of HIV infection."

"Homosexuality is one of the main causes of this disease. In fact, God sent the prophet lot with a clear message preventing such practices, and banning them," Libyan ambassador Abuzed Omar Dorda told the General Assembly.

Islamic nations also softened a section of the preamble of the declaration that urged countries to follow guidelines developed by UNAIDS, the coordinating UN body on the disease.

The guidelines had included mention of homosexuals and other vulnerable groups.

Putin on the defensive

By Achin Vanaik

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29/6

AT THE recent summit meeting in Ljubljana, Slovenia, Russia's President, Mr. Vladimir Putin, said he saw the U.S. as a partner and did not see NATO as a threat. Appropriate noises were made about the NMD issue. All it amounted to on both sides was a stall. The two countries are still playing poker but with the Russians playing from a weaker hand. To say nice things about NATO when it is bent on further expansion eastwards is Moscow's signal to Washington that this expansionary dynamic will still not provoke it to react negatively though no serious analyst in either capital is in any doubt that the central purpose of this expansion is precisely to contain Russia. On the one hand, the Russians are backtracking on NATO, on the other, they are exploring possibilities of a closer tie-up with China, e.g., the Shanghai-5 summit (which preceded the Slovenian one) where the diplomatic centerpiece was a collective declaration of opposition to the NMD.

On NATO, the backtracking is steady and obvious. The former Soviet President, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev, had extracted a verbal assurance of no NATO expansion whatsoever into Eastern Europe as the *quid pro quo* for Russian assent to German unification. He has ever since regretted not getting a formal treaty commitment to prevent the U.S.' subsequent betrayal of that pledge. The next Russian effort under Mr. Boris Yeltsin was to explore the possibility of joint Russian-U.S. participation in a European security arrangement either by Russia's joining NATO itself, thereby totally transforming its character, or some other arrangement transcending NATO. The U.S. determinedly trashed Russian hopes on this score giving Mr. Yeltsin only the face-saving comfort of "consultative status" for Russia as NATO went about the first stage of its expansion eastwards.

Now Mr. Putin simply seeks to hold the line at the Baltic republics of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, while NATO can calmly proceed to the next stage of its expansion by considering the incorporation of all other East European states from Bulgaria to Albania to Macedonia, leaving consideration of the Baltic republics for later. In Ljubljana, Mr. Putin was reduced to disguising the failure of earlier aspirations

through attempts at humour. In his international press conference he read out an 'old' document which advocated that Russia join NATO, treating it as a joke.

On the NMD, neither side gave away much but once again, it was Mr. Putin somewhat on the defensive. Both the U.S. President, Mr. George W. Bush, and Mr. Putin declared they wanted a continuing dialogue on the issue. But what could a dialogue mean except to bring into question the ABM Treaty? Dialogue does not mean assured modification or agreed repudiation but it does mean giving ground to the U.S. in making the Treaty debatable

and China with its obvious fallout on Europe) but because they would have much less of a leg to stand on if Russia itself exhibits willingness to 'accommodate'. In India, any such Russian 'accommodation' will be immediately seized upon as justification for why India must not isolate itself by opposing the NMD and indeed why it should endorse this project more enthusiastically. Within the Indian pro-bomb community there are differences on how to react. But these differences should not be taken as intransigent or enduring because behind them are shared assumptions, beliefs and values pertaining to the

the thrust of their criticism was not on the horror, stupidity or dangers of the U.S. going in for an NMD, but on the insufficiently astute 'diplomacy' shown by the Indian Government in its incautious and overly enthusiastic response to Mr. Bush's new policy direction. The nature of this criticism should occasion no surprise to nuclear opponents in India. For if the central preoccupation of nuclear disarmers everywhere is what dangers the NMD/TMD project represents and what damage its advent does to the prospect of moving towards global disarmament, that of India's pro-bomb 'security managers' is something else altogether — how does India benefit or not benefit from supporting or opposing the NMD? And in this calculation of 'benefit', the benefits of moving towards disarmament are precluded by the very nature of the nuclear mind-set.

Moscow and Washington are still playing poker, but with the Russians playing with a weaker hand.

and therefore opening it up for possible 'modification'.

Modification, if it comes about, is simply a face-saving term for the Russians because the only modification acceptable to the U.S. is one which destroys the fundamental purpose of the Treaty — which was to deny either country the right to erect missile defence systems capable of protecting their national territories.

There is no indication that Mr. Putin will go so far. That is why the summit was on this count a stall, an exercise in buying time. But there will come a point when Mr. Putin no longer has this luxury but must decide whether to hold fast on the ABM Treaty and alienate the U.S. or backtrack by accepting treaty modifications. The big difference with this kind of backtracking and that on NATO expansion is that the building of a successful NMD is not as certain as NATO expansion and to that extent the U.S. 'advantage' from going ahead with its Star Wars plans is much more problematic. However, if Russia even signals its willingness to consider modifications to the ABM Treaty, this will have serious international ramifications.

China will be gravely alarmed and adjust its nuclear preparations accordingly. European resistance to the NMD will wither not because the current opponents among the NATO allies stop seeing its negative longer-term consequences (exacerbating nuclear tensions between the U.S., Russia

relationship between nuclear weapons and matters pertaining to Indian security and foreign policy pursuit. It is these commonalities that make them, after all, part of the same pro-bomb community.

At the moment, a minority in this community pushes for a more enthusiastic endorsement of the NMD in the belief that by doing so India will seize the opportunity to dramatically improve its relationship with the U.S. and thus pursue much better its 'national interest'. At the other end is a minority who thought Pokhran-II would enhance India's 'strategic autonomy', including from the U.S., and are thus seriously disturbed by an unfolding foreign policy dynamic wherein this Indian Government seems ever more determined to pay whatever price required for becoming a U.S. ally. In between, is an essentially pragmatic majority, somewhat uncertain and uneasy about the wider ramifications of the NMD. This group would rather wait to see which way the larger and stronger geo-political winds blow before advocating that the Indian ship of state take this or that tack. If those winds seem to blow in the direction of Russian 'accommodation' then the large bulk of the pro-bomb community, including most of its currently more severe critics, will fall in line with the more enthusiastic endorsers of the NMD project.

One of the most striking things about the pro-bomb critics of the NMD was that

It is not just psychologists who point out that there is something almost pathological about the nuclear mind-set which imprisons its bearers in its convoluted logic. In the name of the virtues of deterrence, the U.S. and Russia accumulated (and continue to have) stock-levels of weapons which are truly insane — the ability to blow themselves and the world up not merely once but many times over. How many pro-nuclearists were prepared to point out that this was an insanity perpetrated by sane people precisely because of the degenerative logic imposed by the 'politics of nuclear security'?

Today, the U.S., the strongest and most secure country in the world, in the name of the deficiencies of deterrence, is committing yet another insanity — seeking to take the world to an even more absurd and dangerous level of nuclear development, deployment and arms racing. How many of our strategists are prepared to point out that this is indeed a pathological form of security thinking, to lay the finger of responsibility for this squarely on the U.S., to oppose it firmly and say, even as they support the 'politics of nuclear security', that enough is enough? But then their 'wisdom' demands that they have more important things to think about like how to promote India's effort at getting a permanent Security Council seat!

Defending democracy

HR 8
2/16

Integrating the armed forces with the defence ministry will not result in better defence management. Such a move will pave the way for a paramilitary State accountable to no one

THE CONTINUING debate over the creation of a defence supremo's post has been joined recently by a former chief of army staff of India. A number of arguments have been advanced by him in favour of the contemplated 'supremo'. All the points have been drummed up earlier by advocates in the premier defence 'think tank' established by the government — the Institute of Defence Studies & Analyses. The latest echo sounds starkly fateful: integrate or disintegrate.

Broadly, the main arguments are that the armed forces must be 'integrated' with the defence ministry. The present 'bureaucratic' process is 'time consuming and expensive'. Second, a defence supremo would work for 'joint doctrines, joint command and joint logistics'. It is argued that 'wars are no longer single-service affairs'. Third, the armed forces have 'bureaucratic control' over them, not 'political control'. Finally, India's 'think-tank' has similarly been advocating the case of a defence supremo for better 'higher defence management'.

The arguments advanced have no validity if one were to examine the cabinet system of working in a parliamentary democracy. The thinking betrays a lack of appreciation of how the process of decision-making works in a civil organisation — in contra-distinction to that of a military organisation.

What is somewhat disturbing is that the arguments find no support from the tenets of military strategy itself. That a military mind may be innocent of departmental decision-making processes, is understandable. But arguments that fly in the face of historical experience and established military strategy, must make one sit up and take notice.

The concept of 'integration' sounds attractive in theory, but in practice it is a negation of democratic working. A democracy, reduced to bare fundamentals, is essentially a system of checks and balances. No organisation or individual exercises unchallenged authority. All authority goes with accountability.

On this healthy principle, the armed forces report to the civilian authority. As a result, its proposals, ideas and demands are examined by an independent civilian authority. It is a desirable check so that any extravagant or overly ambitious demand can be blocked or, if necessary, curtailed and modified in the overall context of national security requirements.

It needs to be always borne in mind that the security of the State, particularly the implications for a nation's potential adversaries, is a very complex matter — there are other players besides a nation's armed forces.

The imputation about the bureaucratic process being 'time-consuming and expensive' is an invalid comparison between two distinct systems. A line of argument which attempts to compare incomparables is flawed. According to modern management, the decision-making process in military organisations has to be quick — compliance is largely unquestioned and mostly instant.

Assuming that a 'defence supremo' were to go in for a particular new equipment or a particular mod-

ification in existing systems, his subordinates would be duty-bound to obey without any detailed examination of his order. In a civil organisation, however, decision-making is collective. In the government, it involves a number of heads — say finance, law, state governments concerned — before the departmental secretary concurs. But the final decision-making power rests with the minister, not the secretary.

Even in the same ministry, the examination of issues is multi-layered. A civilian head relies on joint consultation and collective wisdom, not instant compliance. It is a moot question whether collective wisdom is, in the long run, more expensive or not. History of modern wars is replete with examples where instant obedience or unquestioning compliance later proved to be horribly expensive, both in terms of men and material for the military and the nation.

The distinction attempted to be drawn between political *vis-à-vis* bureaucratic control is artificial. There is only one control — civilian, as represented by the controlling ministry. The MoD is headed by the defence minister who is a professional politician. In exercising official jurisdiction, he is assisted by permanent civilians.

According to Harold Laski, the father of the cabinet system of governance, apart from the department he heads, a minister has no independent standing or jurisdiction. He is a minister once he heads a ministry, and works within the established norms and precedents given by the ministry.

The advocates of a defence supremo insist that he will report directly to the defence minister. The supremo would, in effect and substance, report to no one. This could be a thinly disguised blueprint for a paramilitary State where the armed forces are accountable to no one but themselves.

The argument that wars are no longer single-service affairs leaves one almost breathless. The recent history of conflicts worldwide proves otherwise. Indeed, the last fully three-dimensional war was World War II. In the last half-century, the Cuban missile crisis, the Falklands war, the Gulf War, the Nato conflict with Yugoslavia, the brief clash between China and the former Soviet Union and, the China-Vietnam border conflict were mostly one or two-dimensional.

It is in this context that the argument advanced about 'joint command, joint doctrines and joint logistics' sounds somewhat spurious. The argument assumes, *a priori*, that future conflicts would be three-dimensional. Our own experience of the 1962, 1965 and the Kargil conflicts dictates otherwise. Hence, a joint command or joint doctrine may or may not be desirable, depending on the political objective sought to be achieved through the option of war.

The expression 'higher defence management' advanced in favour of a defence supremo is meaningless in the content of military strategy. The truth is that a nation's armed forces are not a corporate entity having several layers of management. It is finally accountable to the civilian democracy.



AT ARM'S LENGTH: Army marchpast

New lines of concord

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ASHOK KAPUR

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Asia's geopolitical picture has changed rapidly and radically as a result of several significant developments. The changes have increased India's strategic importance to the United States. The re-positioning of Indo-US relations reflects the new realities which are irreversible in the foreseeable future.

Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party led to the emergence of democracy in Taiwan since 1996, and this development in the vicinity of the mainland fosters voices of pluralism within China and a belief in the importance of a league of democratic countries in the post-Cold War era.

Taiwanese democracy is a challenge to Beijing's authoritarianism. Also, Taiwan's increasing military capability is a sign that China can rain missiles into Taiwan but it cannot take it by force. China is thus a regional great power in the area: but it is not the natural leader in Asia.

China has special ties with Pakistan, Iran, Nepal, Myanmar and it appears to have a plan to create a wedge between southeast and south Asia through Myanmar, and to maintain access to the Arabian Sea through the Karakoram highway and a new port being built in Pakistan under Chinese auspices. China has different policies for its neighbours. It strengthens Pakistan militarily to contain India and seeks to do the same through its activities in Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and its missiles cover all major Indian cities. It has a policy for the development of naval bases for its use in Myanmar and in Pakistan, so its India-related policy has a naval dimension which eventually also affects southeast Asian countries and the US and its allies in Asia.

With the Koreans however, its policy is to facilitate inter-Korean dialogue. Its long term aim is to replace the US as the primary influence in the peninsula and as the security guarantor in the area. But here China is being hemmed in. South Korea and the US continue to emphasize the ongoing need for US military presence in the Korean peninsula, and the North Korean leadership implicitly accepts this idea. The US-North Korean dialogue is a step towards a strategic bargain that would be likely to extend American strategic and commercial influence into North Korea, across the Yalu. This will hem in China in the north. The historic China-Japan rivalry is resurfacing and Beijing must factor this into its calculations.

China is being hemmed in by alert neighbours militarily and diplomatically, its internal situation is deteriorating significantly and the difference between internal politics and external policies is losing meaning for the Chinese leaders. Its external behaviour

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has an impact on internal power struggles. By creating situations in China's areas of interest, outside forces can, as they say, "mess with the Chinese mind" and interfere with China's decision-making process and the inputs which go into the decision loop.

Entry into the World Trade Organization will produce more layoffs and to manage the negative impact Beijing is investing in its internal riot police, and it needs to pump billions of yuan into

op and deploy national missile defence and theatre missile defence. The international debate centres on the effect of the NMD on Russia and the anti-ballistic missile treaty rather than Japan and China and the outer space treaty. Also the discussion centres on the military requirements and technical problems in mounting a credible defence. There is a view that the NMD is no good technically and politically, and India should not accept it. This is wrong and short-sight-



agriculture banks to keep the peasants happy. Growth or corruption and criminal activity add to a picture of social and political decay. This means Beijing must find diversionary activity to mobilize nationalism and to manage growing costs in terms of internal power struggles and external relationships.

A medium to long term element is the fact that the US government assesses India and China as likely major players in the world economy, ahead of the Europeans by 2025 if present trends continue and India maintains a 6 per cent annual growth rate. Javed Burki, a former senior World Bank official, sees India's economy at 12 trillion dollars, 40 per cent greater than the US in 2025, with Japan and Germany falling behind.

India also has some political and social advantages over China. It favours pluralism in state and society and it has a legal system which protects property and contracts, the foundation of commerce. So the issue for India is not to be simply content with political democracy. It is to combine political democracy with the build-up of capitalism.

Another significant event concerns the Bush administration's plan to devel-

China strengthens Pakistan militarily to contain India, and seeks to do the same through its activities in Nepal, Myanmar and Bangladesh

ed. A broader political view shows that the focus on Russia requires attention to its prestige, and a negotiated termination of the ABM treaty is possible, which has been reinforced by the recent Bush-Putin meeting in Slovenia.

NMD is less of a military problem for Russia than it is for China because Russia can manage to maintain a capacity for both nuclear deterrence and missile defence. It wants to be taken seriously as an international partner of the US. It is not an equal but appearances count.

China's political concerns are different. The TMD stimulates Japanese militarization, encourages Taiwanese autonomy, and signals US determination to

be the preeminent space cop and a hegemon in Asia, which enjoys the consent of the US's Asian partners. Moreover, the TMD will degrade China's offensive missile capability even if the TMD is not 100 per cent effective. The costs of Chinese defence therefore, will go up and this will play further into the already intense internal power struggles and debates in Beijing.

Also, China calculates that even if it increases the size of its nuclear and missile arsenal against India, India can match the increases, so the argument that China can frighten India if it joins the US on this issue makes no sense. Presently and in the foreseeable future, China has no military advantage over India. It has a capacity to confuse and distract the thought processes of the Indian political class but it does not have an edge on the ground.

These developments clearly indicate that the re-positioning by India and the US *vis-à-vis* each other has a deep and broad Asian geopolitical and a modern military-technological framework. The re-positioning is not a passing flirtation, rather it is grounded in new realities. Geopolitics and not simply global economy is the new game in many Asian and Western capitals. The Indo-US re-alignment rests on a number of concrete factors which make India important for American interests and strategies.

Foremost, there is a triangular rivalry among the US, Russia and China in Eurasia. Although the US is presently the sole superpower because it alone can project power globally, it is aware that its hegemony is temporary. Experts like Zbigniew Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger acknowledge this.

Russia, China and India are regional great powers. There is a possibility that India is encouraged by Russia to join the coalition with China and Russia. The US would like to preempt this possibility. The new American ambassador is an expert in Russian and Chinese affairs and the choice of a strategist points to the importance of Eurasian geopolitics in Indo-US relations. The other alternative is the more likely.

Historically, India is a rival of China and the civilizational differences along with policy and prestige disagreements will stimulate the rivalry further. So India joins the US without declaring that the common ground is China in addition to the attraction of the marketplace and the twinning of two democracies. The Sino-Indian rivalry is reinforced by China's policy of special support for Pakistan as a threat to India because China itself cannot militarily upset India.

So as US-Pakistan relations cool over the growing influence of Taliban and Islamic forces in the region which Pakistan supports, and China is seen as a long term problem for the US, there would come to be a natural affinity between the US and India in the strategic and other spheres. The growing attraction of the Indian economy is an additional element.

The 'China factor' in ties with U.S.

By Amit Baruah

SYDNEY, JUNE 25. It came quite easily to Mr. Jaswant Singh. In response to a shot-in-the-dark question from an Australian reporter in Adelaide on Friday, the External Affairs Minister said India was not averse to the idea of considering American access to Indian military bases.

He said: "Military-to-military cooperation is one of the components of Indo-U.S. cooperation. Access to bases... you are moving too fast yet. Let these things evolve over time."

Some years ago, such a response would have been unthinkable. Today, it appears to be the natural order of things.

Very little is known about the dialogue Mr. Singh held after the May 1998 Pokhran nuclear tests with the then U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Strobe Talbott. The Government's engagement with the Bush administration, too, has been shrouded in secrecy.

Does the External Affairs Minister have the Parliament sanction to announce that New Delhi may allow American access to its military bases? Is it time, then, for India to officially withdraw from the Non-Alignment Movement (NAM)? If the end of the Cold War placed a big question mark on NAM, Mr. Singh's statement, surely, calls for India to exit the organisation?

While developing good relations with the United States is an unexceptionable goal, the hurry displayed in extending support to the Bush administration on anti-missile defence raises many questions about India's intentions. India and Australia are the only two countries in the Asia-Pacific region that have

factor' in ties with U.S.

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extended support even as New Delhi has tried to put 'new spin' on its original statement after criticism from several quarters.

Japan and South Korea, old-time allies of the United States, have not responded in the way India has. South Korea has made public its reservations on missile defence.

Mr. Singh's statement comes at a time when the senior-most U.S. military official, General Henry Shelton, is poised to visit India next month — a point mentioned by Mr. Singh himself at his Adelaide press conference.

In these days of spawning "strategic dialogue" and "engagement", what are the guiding principles of Indian foreign policy? After standing up to the Western world on the nuclear issue, does the BJP Government want to

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turn India into another Australia in terms of foreign policy positions?

And, despite all the denials that can be summed, many Indian officials this correspondent has spoken to in the last several months point to the China dimension in India's new positions.

Is India to be the new American bulwark against China? Is that to be our new, unspoken foreign policy? A policy about which Indians have been told very little, if at all. And, if you ask the question, you will be met with the routine denial. In addition, you will be told that India even has a security dialogue with China.

But the world is not blind to what is happening. The Asia-Pacific region is curious about India's new world-view and, increasingly, In-

dian leaders are being asked the 'big questions' about its intentions and role, specially in South-East Asia.

A commentary in the *China Daily* said today that the "rapid development" of Indo-U.S. relations would give the U.S. more "diplomatic and strategic" angles to play in the region.

"Among the benefits, it (the U.S.) can foster an anti-China stronghold south-west of China, reduce Russia's traditional influence in this region and increase United States' influence on Iran and Central Asia. The U.S. can also link its troops deployed in the Middle East with its forces in the Indian Ocean region to fortify its control of marine transportation lifeline (sic) and oil bases," it said.

"The improvement of U.S.-India relations will increase both the United States' strengths in conflicts between big powers and India's diplomatic might. India's economic and military expansion will fuel its ambition to dominate South Asia. Under such circumstances, the India-Pakistan dispute could be further aggravated. Moreover, India's frequent provocation under the excuse that China is allegedly a threat to its security could destabilise the region," the commentary added.

Whatever be the truth in the opinion expressed above, it is clear that India cannot afford to be 'used' in the strategic games being played out between the United States and China.

India's national security is too important to be subject to the power play of the moment. Any concerns about China must be rooted in our own security context, not that of Washington.

HD-12

A tightrope walk for Tamil scribes

By Nirupama Subramanian *NS*

COLOMBO, JUNE 25. Accused, on the one hand, of being agents of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and, on the other, of being puppets of the Government, Sri Lanka's Tamil journalists, whether living here or abroad, have to constantly walk a tightrope between the two sides to the island's conflict. But increasingly, many are refusing to be cowed down.

A London-based Tamil journalist, Mr. P. Seevagan, was to begin a hunger-strike today to protest against what he described as the LTTE's "rowdyism" against his publication in Switzerland.

He told *The Hindubey* phone from London that earlier this month, LTTE members in a Swiss town had gone around threatening Tamil news agents selling the publication, a monthly called *Vanmurasu*, and asked them to take it off the shelves, without giving reasons.

He could not name the town, but said he had immediately written to the LTTE representative in London, Mr. Anton Balasingham, the LTTE's Paris office and its headquarters in northern Sri Lanka.

"There has been no response. I have also written to (the LTTE leader) Mr. Prabhaka-

ran," said Mr. Seevagan, who is the editor of the journal. "If I don't get a response from him by June 25, I will go on a hunger-strike. It is high time the LTTE started controlling this sort of rowdyism by its cadres," he said.

The irony is that Mr. Seevagan fled Sri Lanka fearing for his life last June in the aftermath of the military debacle at Elephant Pass when state television named him and three others as LTTE sympathisers.

Meanwhile, here in Sri Lanka, an association of Tamil journalists has criticised the manner in which the state media and a privately-owned Sinhalese language newspaper have recently picked on another Tamil journalist, calling him an "LTTE spy."

The description first appeared on a little known website which, besides naming the journalist, Mr. D. Sivaram, also included a UNP parliamentarian, Dr. Jayalath Jayewardene, in the same category.

"Mr. Sivaram informs us that as a result of these articles and news stories which carry his full name and pen name plus his photograph, he is unable to move about freely for fear of being identified on the basis of the serious accusations made against him ...

He says that he and his family now face the possibility of retaliation by extremist elements and assassins," the Sri Lanka Tamil

Media Association (SLTMA) said in a letter to the President, Mrs. Chandrika Kumaratunga. Last year, Mr. Nimalrajan Mylvaganam, a Tamil journalist based in the Jaffna peninsula, was shot dead by unidentified men.

The incident showed that the fears of the Tamil media in Sri Lanka are not imaginary, especially if the journalists happen to be based in the conflict areas.

The *Uthayan*, a popular Tamil language daily published from Jaffna, is under constant pressure from all sides to the ethnic conflict, journalists working for the newspaper said.

Earlier this year, the Government arrested a Tamil journalist under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and released him after three months as it was unable to bring charges against him. It was the same story with two other Tamil journalists arrested in 1998.

"We condemn this dangerous trend of baselessly and grossly levelling dangerous accusations against Tamil journalists, clearly calculated to silence them by terrorising them and their families with the accusation that they are pawns of the LTTE," the SLTMA said.

This was being done with the full knowledge of the reactions that such accusations could provoke from Sinhala extremist organisations, the association added.

11/10 **The Beaten Track** 11/10

There is a dark joke doing the rounds in Pakistan. That general Musharraf should take the Samjhauta Express to Delhi rather than board a flight and risk the fate of Zia. To this we may have to add one of our own: That he should stay put in Islamabad rather than risk setting foot on a train headed for India. Unconscionable remark? Gallows humour? Perhaps. But isn't Indian railways already something of a black comedy, with its history of accidents, neglect and succession of ministers, all of whom have treated it as a huge, happy votebank? True, the latest accident at Kadulundi near Kozhikode is a tragedy beyond words. But it is a worse travesty that with all our spectacular progress in science and technology, we should continue to run trains on bridges built during the Raj era. According to reports, it was known that the bridge that gave way in Kadulundi was well past its lifetime; in fact, it was scheduled to be replaced. So why was the bridge in use? Simple. Like so many other things that are perennially wrong with the railways, bridges too are in a permanent state of collapse in many parts of the country. Needless to say, if all these bridges go into disuse, we wouldn't be able to run a good many of our trains. Out of a total of 1,19,724 bridges on the railway network, nearly half were built in the 19th century. Indeed, in 1999, the railway safety review committee had identified at least 262 bridges that were "distressed" — that is they required urgent rehabilitation.

But this is neither the beginning nor the end of the bridges story. In 1989, a bridge rehabilitation committee was formed especially to go into accidents resulting from bridge collapses. The bridge steering committee that followed began with great flourish, drafting the services of structural engineers from the IITs and so on, before winding up as usual. Undoubtedly, there will soon be another committee on bridges, just as there have been so many to look into the larger question of railway safety. It is well recognised by now that for a complete overhaul of its safety works, the railways would need to spend in the region of Rs 15,000 crore. While this is admittedly a tall order, the distressing fact is that expenditure on safety-related works has been showing a decline. The Union finance ministry's case is that the railways should quit relying on budgetary support from the Centre. However, before the last railway budget, Mamata Banerjee firmly rejected the argument that she could internally generate the money. Even in her budget speech, she reserved the longest lament to the declining capital support from the general exchequer. Of course, this precarious financial condition did not deter her from presenting a populist budget that only added immeasurably to the burden on her ministry. She ignored the economic advisory council's warning that fares would have to be hiked. Instead, she introduced several new trains, many of them predictably headed in the easterly direction. Ms Banerjee has since left in a huff, yielding place to Nitish Kumar. There may be another resignation drama. Or Mr Kumar may decide not go through with the farce. But does it matter who comes and who goes, when it is destination disaster for the Indian railways?

Missile no security: China

BEIJING, JUNE 21. A day after Taiwan test fired Patriot anti-missile weaponry, Beijing today warned Taipei that purchasing advanced weapons from the U.S. alone would not ensure security for the tiny island.

"As a small island, Taiwan does not have the geographical depth that is essential for military manoeuvres. This strategic disadvantage cannot be remedied by advanced weapons," the official *China Daily* said on Taiwan's testing of the U.S.-made Patriot anti-missile yesterday.

It said "it is clear that a war, if broke out, cannot be won simply by deploying some advanced weapons. It involves multiple factors."

The paper, reflecting Beijing's view, stressed that the Taiwan authorities should know clearly that "advanced weaponry would only push Taiwan further away from the rightful road of peaceful reunification with the Chinese mainland."

Commenting on the test-firing, the Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman, Ms. Zhang Qiyue, said China opposed sales of advanced weapons to Taiwan by any country.

Taiwan test-fired three Patriot missiles, which the cash-rich island bought from the U.S., for the first time yesterday at a military base of the island's Pingdong region, reports from Taipei said.

The Patriot tests are occurring at the same time China is conducting massive war games exercise off its southeast coast.

But Taiwan says the timing is coincidental and it is not trying to provoke Beijing. The test firing will continue today, tomorrow and on June 26. — PTI

Peace vote destined to shrink further

587 228
tide the onslaught of violence can still be constructed, that an interim agreement or two can replace the high hopes of a final settlement, that the most brutal general in Israel's blood-filled history, Ariel Sharon, now Prime Minister, can be dissuaded from the use of his iron fists, and that Yasser Arafat, the ruthless, egomaniacal Palestinian President can forever ride the tiger of the Arab street and somehow placate it while signing on for half of what he rejected for understandable reasons a year ago.

The deal almost negotiated at Taba in Egypt after the first few months of the Intifada was in many ways remarkable: a Palestinian state to control 95 per cent of the West Bank and Gaza; Israeli settlers to be concentrated on about 5 per cent of the land which Israel would annex with Palestine being compensated with Israeli land in the Negev desert; the Arab neighbourhoods of Jerusalem, including those in the Old City to be absorbed by Palestine; the Haram al-Sharif mosque to be under Palestinian sovereignty and the Wailing Wall under Israeli; and Palestinian refugees to be either compensated with money, settled in Palestine or, on a case by case basis, in Israel.

If it was remarkable - in comparison with what had gone before - it was also insufficient.

Mr Arafat decided not to sign and indeed decided to stand back from giving any

show of support to former Prime Minister Ehud Barak, though it was obvious that the outcome could only be Mr Sharon's electoral victory. One can make a dozen plausible arguments why this was a profound strategic mistake.

If Mr Arafat had shaken hands on a deal he might have risked his life from an assassination attempt but, presuming he has long ago discounted this ever present threat, he could have built on the deal to secure all improvements in the following months, not least black-mailing both the Americans and the Europeans for development funds by threatening to turn tail.

On Mr Barak's part, having come so far - and he went further than President Bill Clinton thought he should go at Camp David - he could have gone the extra mile and raised the ceiling from 20 per cent to 25 per cent for the percentage of the population of Israel that could be Arab, (an extra 250,000 people), thus taking a great part of the sting out of Mr Arafat's push on the resettlement of refugees.

The final compromises didn't happen and even if they had it might not have turned the tide. Mr Barak could still have been defeated

by an electorate that thought he had gone too far - though it would have been a close race rather than the landslide that consumed him.

Mr Arafat, finding himself hung out to dry after having said yes and then having to deal with Mr Sharon who said no, would have been more than a laughing joke throughout the Arab world. The truth was the compromises came too late.

For all Mr Barak's magnanimity in the final year, he had wasted precious time early on in his term attempting to settle with Syria first and taking an inordinate amount of time to with-

draw from the Lebanon. All this suggests that in better circumstances a deal of this kind could be pulled off.

The questions are what happens in the meantime?

It is difficult to believe that Mr Sharon's policies can lead anywhere useful.

Continuing to build settlements on Arab land is provocative beyond belief. Always a counterproductive ploy, nothing does more to inflame Arab opinion.

To believe that Mr Arafat or any other leader can temper the violence of his people in this situation is nothing less than self-righteous make-believe, perhaps the worst of all political sins.

Its only outcome is likely to

be the continuing quiet exodus of Israel's younger, highly educated people, particularly those in the important new technology businesses (which today contributes over 25 per cent of Israel's GNP) to calmer pastures. Even today, 30,000 Israelis live in San Francisco's South Bay alone.

The young Jews of today who do not feel the fear of their fathers about living in the European or American diaspora do not want to bring up their families inside a barbed wire fence.

Yet it is the educated in Israel who have always produced the backbone of the peace vote (along with Israeli Arabs who make up an enormous 40 per cent of it). Diminished in size already, the peace vote is destined to shrink further. And in the face of further conflict and hostility from the Arab world, Mr Sharon's intransigence will grow.

It is Mr Sharon who argued in the 1980s that the Palestinians should be relocated inside Jordan.

This and similar arguments are likely to become more popular and more acceptable (inside Israel) in the future.

From the day of the Balfour Declaration, the Arab-Palestinian dispute has long looked irresolvable. After the high hopes of the Oslo accord, it looks more problematic than ever.

Both sides are now destined to travel through the long dark night of the soul.

Frankly, as a family man, be I a Palestinian or an Israeli, I would try to get out.



FRIDAY, JUNE 22, 2001

PLAYING PAKISTAN'S MAN OF DESTINY

A PRECISE TIMING by Gen. Pervez Musharraf to anoint himself as Pakistan's President has attracted worldwide attention. He argues that the call of supreme national interest can no longer remain unheeded. But the most bandied theory is that he may have wanted the outward legitimacy of a constitutional civilian office so as to be able to play the equal at a prospective summit with the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, in Agra next month. However, Pakistan's historical experiments with military rule and civilian-democratic governments reveal that Gen. Musharraf requires no aura of a perceived civilian position to deal with India. New Delhi had only recently taken into account the larger calculus of power in Pakistan before inviting him for talks in his status as that country's Chief Executive — a position which he will continue to hold besides being the supreme functional commander of the armed forces. Now, Gen. Musharraf has not shown himself to be very different from Pakistan's previous military dictators in seeking the symbolism and substance of an absolute monopoly of power. Given the feeble criticism within Pakistan about his lack of governing legitimacy to engage New Delhi in discussions over fundamental disputes, he appears to have calculated that his impending visit to India could be seen by others as the definitive context for his assertion of an absolute hold over his country. In a political sense peculiar to the dynamics of India-Pakistan equations at different levels, he should have known, though, that his core status in Islamabad was already acknowledged by New Delhi through its recent invitation to him for talks.

Yet, if the international community feels outraged over Gen. Musharraf's perceived attempt to equate himself with the Pakistani state, he has erred in his calculations. He may not have bargained for the indignant reaction from the United States. Washington's acute sense of disappointment and concern over Gen. Musharraf's latest act of self-empowerment flows from the belief that he is taking yet another turn away

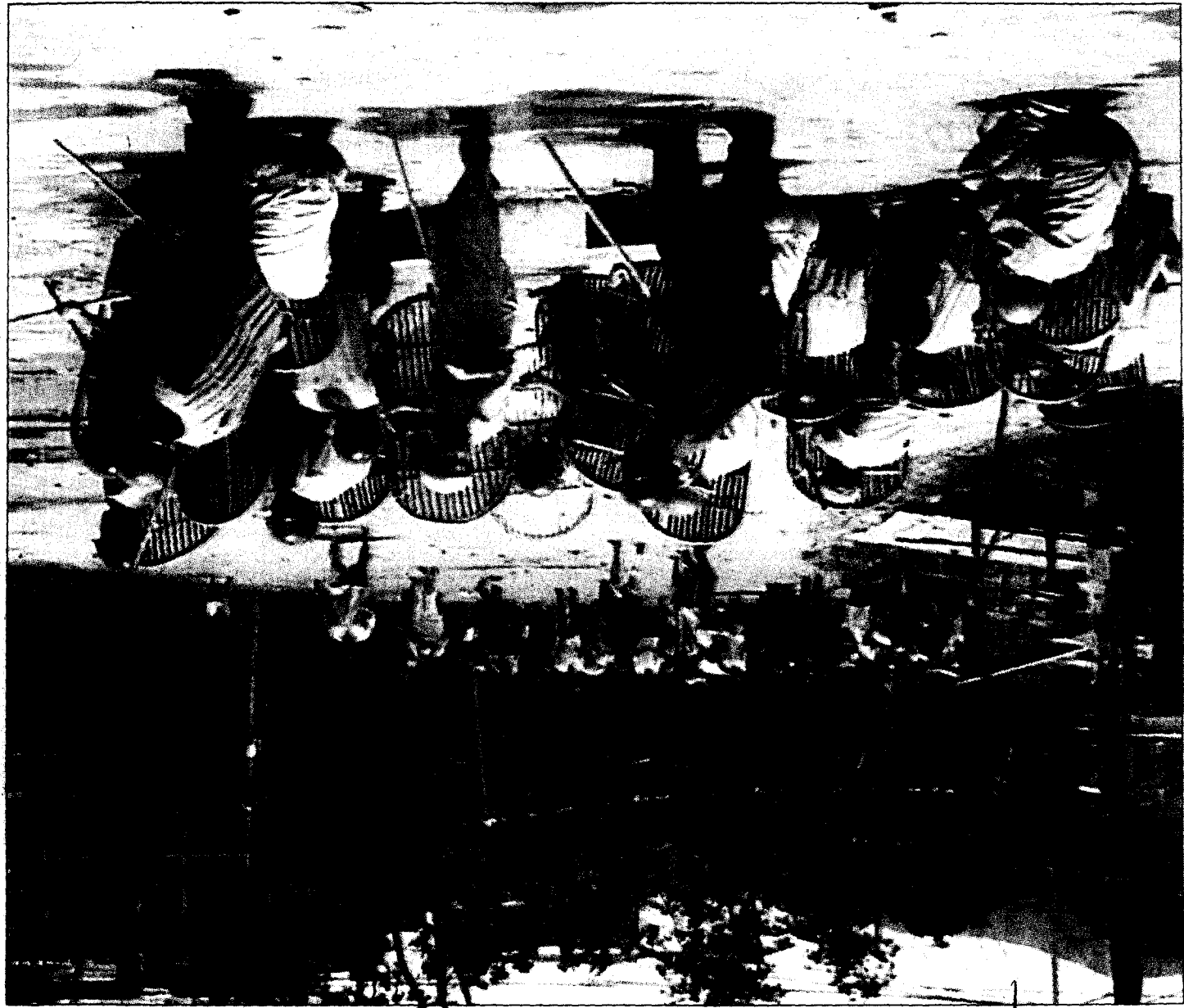
from the path to genuine democracy. Moreover, Gen. Musharraf has run the risk of undermining the expanding foundations of his evolving foreign policy. In some obvious diplomatic mismanagement, Pakistan has not taken the U.S. into confidence about Gen. Musharraf's anti-democracy action. Significantly, his Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, could have easily done so during the meetings he held with top American interlocutors in Washington prior to the event that unfolded in Islamabad. Given the state of India-Pakistan ties, it is a different matter whether or not Mr. Vajpayee was duly informed by Gen. Musharraf about his own imminent plan of becoming President and dissolving defunct Assemblies when he received a call from the Indian leader. Gen. Musharraf has spoilt his diplomatic copy-book in some manner at a critical moment in his quest for an international rating as a man of peace.

100-12 27/6

The implications of Gen. Musharraf's latest action for Pakistan's political evolution can be profound. The exit of a moderate President — Mr. Rafiq Tarar, whom Gen. Musharraf has now replaced — may not be lamented at this time when the military ruler is actually sending out signals about his intention to distance politics from religion (especially, religious extremism). But a message of realpolitik is that Gen. Musharraf wants to remain in power beyond the promised transition to a new democratic set-up. His transparent aim is to transform his present rule by decrees into a future rule of law on his own terms. He feels emboldened by the fact that former civilian leaders like Ms. Benazir Bhutto and Mr. Nawaz Sharif, both lacking credibility, remain unable to rally a genuine pro-democracy movement at this stage. The need of the hour is some creative thinking by Pakistan's pro-democracy campaigners. Arguably, a factor favouring a democratic alternative to the latest imperious presidency is the somewhat cyclical history of Pakistan accepting military rule and civilian 'democracy'.

THE HINDU

SCENES OF DEATH AND DESTRUCTION: A GROUP OF STREETERS HELP AN INJURED ONLOOKER DURING MONDAY'S POLICE FIRING. (RIGHT) POLICE TAKE COVER BEHIND THEIR SHIELDS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM STONE-THROWING MORS ON MONDAY IN FRONT OF THE STATE SECRETARIAT IN NIPAL. AP PHOTOS



9/26/68

PHOTOGRAPH BY AP

Summit sneak preview for US

FROM K.P. NAYAR

Washington, June 18: Wondering what the Vajpayee-Musharraf summit next month is all about? Ask the Americans!

Although the Bush administration is crying hoarse that it has nothing at all to do with the planned Indo-Pak summit, key foreign policy architects in New Delhi and Islamabad have begun a process of briefing Washington on what will happen when Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee meets Pervez Musharraf in less than four weeks.

Pakistan's foreign minister Abdul Sattar is already here meeting his counterpart, Colin Powell, and national security adviser Condoleezza Rice. Inevitably, much of his discussions here will centre around the upcoming summit, which, like Vajpayee's bus journey to Lahore, is attracting global attention.

The Pakistanis are leaving no stone unturned in their effort to get President George W. Bush to walk into one of Sattar's meetings here. That, to say the least, will salvage the reputation of Maleeha Lodhi, Islamabad's high-profile envoy here, who had boasted that the election of a Republican to the White House will restore US-Pakistan ties to its glory in the Cold War days. There is no indication yet, whether the president will oblige her by meeting Sattar.

Understandably, the Pakistanis were deeply upset when Bush walked into Rice's meeting with external affairs minister Jaswant

Singh in April and escorted him to a 40-minute meeting in the White House Oval Office.

Shortly after Sattar finishes his meetings here, India's national security adviser Brajesh Mishra will be in Washington for meetings similar to those which the former is going through this week.

By the time Mishra reaches Washington, only a fortnight will be left for the Indo-Pak meeting. A considerable part of his discussions here will, naturally, focus on the New Delhi summit.

The Bush administration is also keenly awaiting the visit here at the end of this month by Sonia Gandhi, leader of the Opposition. Washington realises that in the past, India has often used the absence of a national consensus on foreign policy to dodge difficult decisions which are of interest to the US. Her views will, therefore, be carefully listened to by officials here to assess the likely course of consensus politics in India on issues like the National Missile Defence (NMD). K. Natwar Singh, the Congress ideologue on foreign affairs, has been seen here as an acerbic critic of the NMD.

Because he will accompany Sonia on her visit, the administration here expects to have talks with him as well on the future course of Indo-US ties. Having said that, US officials are carefully steering clear of any overt involvement in South Asia's fragile diplomatic initiatives. They are keen to see that nothing that they say or do affects the current Indo-Pak peace initiative.

BIG STEEL

India May Be Hit By US Protectionism

By ADITI ROY GHATAK

WHEN the big pig grunts angrily the little ones squeak. For, even in this WTO regulated world of free and fair trade, some pigs are more equal. Piglings in this Orwellian world, such as India, reeling under the latest Section 201 assault of the Bush administration around steel trade with the USA have barely whimpered in protest and even bigger entities such as China have been extremely measured in their reaction.

Two dominant trends expose themselves: the command trade that USA enjoys in what is a travesty of supposed market force-led trade that the world is witnessing and the meek acquiescence of the rest of the world. Hope, however, comes from genuine free-trade promoters in the USA.

The current global row that cast a shadow over the discussions of trade ministers attending the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum and the ongoing arguments at the European Union dialogues came close on the heels of the US presidential announcement of having initiated safeguard action and asked the US International Trade Commission to investigate injury to the local steel industry under Sec 201 of the Trade Act, 1974.

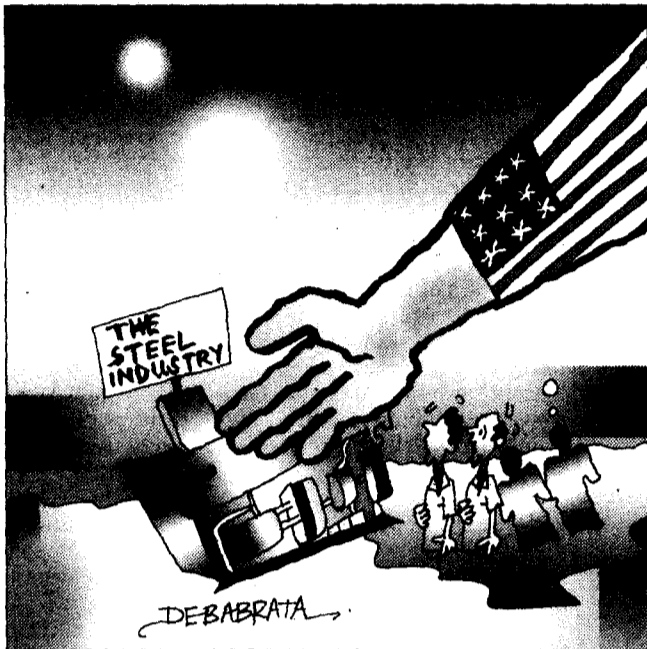
CROSS SUBSIDY

As per the WTO norms, any country can initiate safeguard action against imports as long as there is a threat of potential injury. In case ITC finds threat of potential injury, Sec 201 restricting imports of specific or all steel products could be imposed.

The steel industry is by its very nature a political being in India because of its enormous employment potential and in the USA for its sheer money muscle. A review of the sheer manipulative power of the American "Big Steel" by the American Institute for International Steel explains the \$100 billion subsidy that Big Steel has appropriated for itself over the past three decades. This mammoth sum is, in turn, the price that the ordinary American has paid for the inability of successive American administrations to stand up to the lobbying might of corporations such as US Steel, Bethlehem Steel, LTV Steel, Inland Steel (now Ispat Inland Steel), Wheeling-Pittsburg, Geneva Steel, Weirton Steel, Gulf States Steel and AK Steel. Under a patriotic campaign urging Americans to stand up for their steel, these majors have "thoroughly fooled the American public into allowing its taking of their wealth and its stifling of free market competition".

What is of concern to India — which is not among the major exporters of finished steel to the USA — is that the big steel-makers of USA appear to have influenced opinion that in Indian steel exporters are being subsidised in a manner that is detrimental to the USA. The subsidies calculated for various steel-makers by the US Department of Commerce ranges from 34.27 per cent for Jindal

Iron and Steel to 8.08 per cent for Tata Iron and Steel Company. The Steel Authority of India is allegedly being given a subsidy of 17.95 per cent, Essar Steel Limited of 9.08 per cent, Ispat Industries limited of 32.05 per cent and others an average of 15.72 per cent. Indian steel makers dispute these findings but the



government has not made any effective protest.

For starters there has been no official conceding of the fact that Indian steel pays a cost for the basic infrastructure — railway freight, for instance, that cross subsidises passenger fares with freight traffic, where again goods such as steel cross subsidise other 'more essential' commodities. The burden imposed on steel makers by the administered price regime in India to placate various political constituencies assumes an entirely different economic import when these are not offset against benefits that the industry gets when international agencies are militating against Indian steel exports on the subsidy issue.

The railways are not the only case in point. Whether it is communications, ports or power, steel producers — considered to have the capacity to pay — pay for infrastructural inefficiencies; the cost of the massive turnaround time in Indian ports for which users pay in terms of increased port and charges is another glaring burden. The cross subsidisation of loss of power through transmission and distribution channels which is borne by industry is yet another case in what could be a long list.

THREE COUNTS

The US investigation is on the three counts of injury, dumping and subsidy margins. The former is primarily on the injury caused to the local (US) industry due to imports. The Department of Commerce and International Trade Commission assess profitability affecting conditions and assess the injury or the threat of injury to the local industry from imports. The dumping margin relates to the origin of supply, determined on the basis of the difference between the ex-factory price for domestic vis-à-vis exports to US destinations for similar products. The subsidy investigation focuses on various export incentives given by the Government.

As per WTO norms, any incentive given to any specific exports is "actionable subsidy" and, therefore, countervailable. Items such as SDF loan, DEPB, pre and post shipment export credit, EPCG and such others fall under this category. While countries such as Japan or China channelise their subsi-

dies to select on the basis of their strategic importance, India does it towards specific exports and thus falls under the 'actionable' trap. In India's case, the preliminary determination for both dumping and subsidy by the Department of Commerce and International Trade Commission was restricted to two "mandatory respondents" in India, Essar and Ispat who contributed to more than 60 per cent of exports to US during the investigation period.

Mr George Bush announced that "The US steel industry has been affected by a 50-year legacy of foreign government intervention in the market and direct financial support of their steel industries. The result has been significant excess capacity, inefficient production and a glut of steel on world markets. My decision to pursue this initiative comes after extensive consultations by Members of the Cabinet with our industry, our steelworkers, and interested Members of Congress. We have discussed the challenges facing the US steel manufacturers, and we understand that we have a critical stake in a healthy US steel industry". The American Institute for International Steel has been shouting from the rooftops and from all available fora that American Big Steel is in a mess because they are inefficient.

HIGH COSTS

The solution is not protectionism but technology and that Big Steel's orchestrated steel crisis was a mere prologue for yet another round of government promoted protectionism. This time India, which exported 2.5 million tones of steel last year of which 40 per cent went to the USA, will be at the receiving end.

Undoubtedly, the President's response has been prompted by the convincing case put up by the steel majors that 18 US steel companies have filed for bankruptcy-court protection and five are on the verge of closure if not closed with 20,000 jobs on the line, with a more sinister situation looming on the horizon.

The problem as the anti-Big Steel campaign in the USA explains is that decades of largesse by the government have been guzzled by these steel makers but not used to modernise, which is what foreign producers — Indian included in recent times — have done to make themselves competitive. Today, they are attacked simply because they are "foreign" though all this is well disguised under the WTO mechanism.

"If Big Steel is allowed to succeed in its crusade to undermine a rules-based multilateral trading system, the future costs to America and the world will be far larger. It is time to put Big Steel's public relations campaign under a microscope and tabulate what it has cost average Americans". Cost conscious Americans believe so because bearing the brunt of the protection will be the US automobile and engineering companies who are making a noise. Is India, whose trade balance is dependent on how much it exports, prepared to raise a credible argument?

The author is a freelance writer.

THE STATESMAN

FOREIGN POLICY CHOOSING BETWEEN THE US AND RUSSIA

The Oval office and the Kremlin

India hopes the US and Russia will reach an understanding on the missile defence shield as well as other international issues, so that it need not even have to attempt any artificial, post-Cold War choices, says Jyoti Malhotra

WATCHING the Russian-made Sukhoi-MKI (the 'T' stands for India) fighter jet falling deliberately out of the sky like a wayward leaf in autumn, at an airfield on the outskirts of Moscow last week, External Affairs-Defence minister Jaswant Singh remarked, "It behaves like a well-trained horse."

The remark brought on the applause at the lunch later thrown for the Indian visitor, and probably became the perfect excuse for repeated and lengthy toasts of vodka between morsels of food. At first, Singh stood up in deference to his hosts, each time a toast was called. Then, as the grain-water continued to flow, he remained seated. Later, he simply left, having to catch up on his many other high-level meetings in the Russian capital.

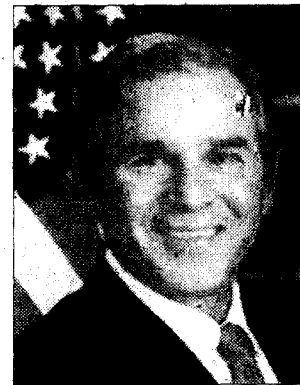
The contrast between Singh's earlier wonderment — at the Sukhoi's impressive manoeuvres — and his latterly impatience at lunch, perfectly encapsulates India's current relationship with Russia. New Delhi knows, and Tuesday's joint state-of-the-art, supersonic Cruise missile test in Orissa is proof, that despite a considerably weakened Russia at the end of a decade after the Cold War, Moscow is indispensable on the defence front. But the pertinent question remains, how does this belief square with New Delhi's recent and very overt honeymoon with Washington?

Principal Secretary and National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra is going to the US, on the invitation of his counterpart



The Pj-10 missile jointly developed by India and Russia. File photo

Condoleezza Rice, at the end of June. Jaswant Singh was there in early April, to a right royal reception at the Pentagon, the State Department and even the White House. It is said that George W. Bush, the 53rd President of the US, while chatting with Singh in the Oval Office, got up from his chair, took him by the elbow, and said, "Let us walk into the Rose Garden, Jaswant, and smell the spring air." They stepped out, together, into a vision of cherry-blossoms that would have been the envy of a Japanese haiku poet.



The next year or so, analysts say, will be crucial. As world powers decide new alignments, India will also have to make up its mind



Now, Russia's Vladimir Putin, even with the historical weight of the Kremlin by

his side, cannot expect to match the sheer power exuded by the White House. For a start, he is said to speak little English. Even if he managed to get by with some American, the brute reality is that the elites of both India and Russia would give their eyeteeth for a one-way ticket to the US. Since the said condition is far more pronounced in India, it might be time to do away with the enduring hypocrisy that makes us overly critical of America.

The point is, far more Indians have probably heard of a town called St. Petersburg in the state of Florida, than the much older city of the Tsars, the Bolshevik Revolu-

tion and the World War II blockade that hugs the bank of the Neva. Crudely stated, New Delhi gave its heart away a long, long time ago to America, but it needed an ideologically right-wing party like the BJP to acknowledge the depth of India's collective need of the US. From economic investment to school admissions to jobs — and now, to a meeting of minds on the ballistic missile system — the US and none other is the dominant foreign power in India.

Certainly, the romance of history cannot compare with contemporary strength. But what price national interest? Reports in the wake of Jaswant Singh's trip to Moscow indicate that Russia has promised to help create a "second-strike nuclear capability" for India. Analysts say that even if the Bush administration lifts economic sanctions against New Delhi, imposed after the nuclear tests, it is highly unlikely to allow the free flow of sensitive technology to Indian scientific establishments.

On the other hand, what the Americans can offer in terms of economic investment, jobs or trade, cannot even begin to compare with any other nation in the world. Analysts point out that India "has no option" but to build a relationship with the only superpower. Unlike Europe, which can afford to be critical of Washington's disenchantment with the Kyoto Protocol or even its much-vaunted missile shield, India, the analysts add, is too much of a bit player for its disagreements to re-

ally matter.

Which is why New Delhi will watch the Slovenian summit between Bush and Putin on June 16 with keen interest. Though Moscow has made known its displeasure about the abrogation of the 1972 anti-ballistic missile treaty, it could settle for a much larger engagement with the US. Bluntly put, Russia seems to be ready to negotiate a deal with the US that would include, a far greater role in world affairs (such as in the Middle East), much more economic aid and investment within Russia than has happened so far, as well as a substantially enhanced stake in dealing with issues such as drugs-trafficking, organised crime, etc.

"It is in India's interest if Russia cuts a deal with the US," analysts said in Delhi, pointing out that if that did not happen, it would push Russia and China into each other's arms. Significantly, a team of officials from the MEA is leaving for "strategic stability" talks in Moscow three days after Putin speaks to Bush in Ljubljana, Slovenia.

Interestingly enough, Jaswant Singh's visit to Moscow and the promise of enormously enhanced defence cooperation between the two sides — including, the production of a fifth-generation aircraft, joint research projects with defence and civilian spin offs such as the 'Brahmos' project, direct sourcing of spares from manufacturers as well as package deal purchases for the Army, Navy and Air Force — seems to have only increased the internal tension in New Delhi's foreign policy.

The next year or so, analysts say, will be crucial. As world powers decide new alignments, India will also have to make up its own mind. The easy part would be to return to a you-against-me Cold War mindset, the challenge to develop multiple relationships with all key players. In the great churning that ensues, ideological predilections in favour of one country or another — the US or Russia — could well be washed away in a typhoon of pragmatism. The Rose Garden and the Kremlin could be New Delhi's new desire.

Air of morbid festivity in Indiana town as McVeigh's execution draws near

11-12
11/6

By Chidanand Rajghatta

The Times of India News Service

TERRE HAUTE (Indiana): If anything describes the paradox morbid festivity, it's the atmosphere in this little mid-western town. This is where Timothy McVeigh, a homegrown all-American terrorist the United States unexpectedly threw up in 1996, will be put to death by lethal injection on Monday morning.

While much of this country is quite unambiguous in its feeling of distaste, even hatred, for the man, Terre Haute is confused. The non-descript university town is not sure if it should go ahead and enjoy the tourist bonanza the McVeigh execution is bringing or whether it should be embarrassed by the possibility of being condemned forever as the place where Timothy McVeigh was put to death.

As a result, the memento business, a staple of any American event big or small, is muted. On the city's main street, a few shops offer T-shirts with the rather feeble slogan 'Hangin Time', and 'Die, Die, Die'. Another one saying 'Hoosier Hospitality' (Hoosier is the nickname for Indiana State) was apparently withdrawn for being in bad taste.

The hotels are full, the restaurants are teeming, parking lots and slots are overflowing, but the locals

are sparse with words. Not the best thing to happen here, a parking attendant mutters before going off to attend to another arrival. At the Indianapolis airport, rental cars were zipping out like they were headed for the Indy 500 races held just an hour from here. Invariably, they were being hired by journalists, a 1000-strong hack pack having gathered here to report on an execution that very few will actually witness.

The drill is pretty clear. Some time at the crack of dawn on Monday (evening in India),

Timothy McVeigh will be led out of his 8X10 cell in the federal penitentiary where he has been lodged and either driven in a darkened van or walked between a posse of guards to a one-story execution building. At 8 am, after a last meal (that should not cost more than \$20 according to prison rules), a mild sedative will be offered to him to calm his nerves. Then he will be asked for his last wishes before he is strapped to a gurney.

Two needles, one on each arm, will be stuck into him, and the lines leading from them will go to four

different chemical solutions. The first will be a saline solution that will have no effect on him. The second will contain sodium thiopental, a barbiturate. Typically, doctors use it in normal surgery as an anesthetic in doses of 100-150 milligrams to put patients to sleep. But on a signal from the warden, the execution team will give the condemned prisoner a full five grams — a fatal dose.

McVeigh would have gone to sleep within the first 30 seconds and will not even know he has died. Just in case he survives this, the team will flush the line again with saline solution and connect it to a bottle that contains a second drug, pancurium bromide or Pavulon. This is a muscle relaxant that paralyzes the diaphragm and stops his breathing.

To make it triply sure, the line will be flushed again and then connected to a bottle of potassium chloride solution that will interrupt any electrical signals in the body and stop the heart, in the unlikely event it is still beating.

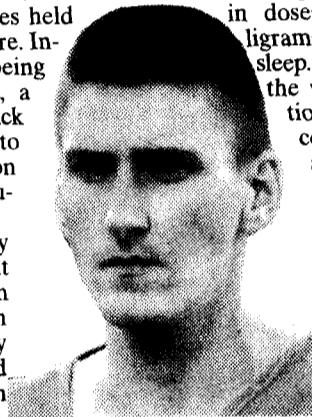
The whole process will take just a

few minutes. It will be witnessed firsthand by some 30 people, ten relatives of McVeigh's Oklahoma bombing victims, a media pool of ten reporters from top-line wire services, television networks, and one local newspaper, five witnesses of McVeigh's choice and a few government officials. Some 300 other relatives of victims will watch it on closed circuit TV in Oklahoma City.

McVeigh has chosen his two defence attorneys and three writers and reporters, including the novelist Gore Vidal. But last heard Vidal was not going to be here because of other commitments.

With his execution, the McVeigh story will go into the annals of history's mysteries and criminal folklore despite reams of reportage on the reasons why he bombed a federal building in Oklahoma city on an April morning in 1996, killing 169 people including 17 children.

Psychologists and sociologists will forever analyse the disaffection that crept into the decorated Gulf War soldier, his failure to land a good job after leaving the army, his anger against the federal government, his failed relationships. Most of all they will wonder about the mind of a man who till the very end refused to express any remorse for his action and called the death of children in the bombing a collateral damage.



A 1995 file photo of McVeigh

THE TIMES OF INDIA

11-12

Jethmalani takes up Hinduja's ^{As a} cause, moves PM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 8

THE Bofors case has taken an ironic turn with a leading player in the high-pitched campaign on the kickback scam, former law minister Ram Jethmalani, taking up cudgels on behalf of one of the accused, the Hinduja brothers.

Three days before the Supreme Court permitted the Hinduja brothers to go abroad last month, Jethmalani wrote to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee requesting him to "instruct" his law officers not to oppose their plea to leave the country.

The letter dated May 9, 2001, says, "As a lawyer I have studied the case. I can safely tell you that there is no case against them. All that the evidence discloses is that one of the brothers i.e. Prakash has received monies in nine

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

THE ASIANK AGE
THE ASIANK AGE

Separate police cell for CMC

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, June 7. - The mayor today said the chief minister had assured him that the government would set up a separate police cell for the Calcutta Municipal Corporation.

Mr Subrata Mukherjee today met Mr Buddhadev Bhattacharya at the Writers' Buildings and discussed many issues with him.

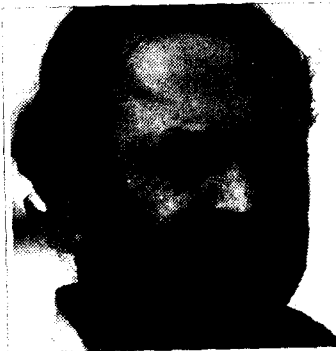
An officer from the rank of deputy commissioner or assistant commissioner will head the special cell, which will operate in all the civic body drives. Mr Mukherjee said it was difficult for the CMC to conduct such operations as the demolition of illegal constructions, hawker eviction, etc, without the help of the police force.

The state government also passed the waiver of taxes and penalties related to property today.

The mayor said some "fundamental changes" should be



Mr Buddhadev Bhattacharya



Mr Subrata Mukherjee

made in the "system", still rooted in the British system of governance.

He said the CMC needed more power and there was no reason why the government should have a direct control over the CMC's functioning.

Mr Mukherjee added that the government had not yet formally given the nod to the project in which the CMC would release bonds worth Rs 100 crores in the market.

The chief minister reportedly

told the mayor that there will be a committee formed by representatives of the government and the CMC for the disposal of biomedical wastes from hospitals.

The mayor also told the chief minister that the CMC's 19-acre land on the EM Bypass, where a crafts village was to be constructed, was no longer essential. he said since crafts villages like Swabhumi were already there, the proposed one would better be called off.

THE STATESMAN

Jury tells Philip Morris to cough up \$3bn in damages

Deena Beasley

LOS ANGELES 7 JUNE

A SMOKER with incurable lung and brain cancer was awarded a record \$3 billion in damages by a jury here on Wednesday which ruled that Philip Morris did not properly warn him of the risks of smoking.

The award was the largest individual punitive damage award ever against a cigarette maker and set off alarm bells in an industry facing similar suits. Philip Morris Cos Inc vowed to try to get the award thrown out and failing that appeal the decision. It called the massive award "outrageous" and said the plaintiff, Richard Boeken, had ignored health warnings by smoking two packs of Marlboro cigarettes a day for more than 40 years.

A Los Angeles Superior Court jury found against the tobacco giant fraud, negligence and making a defective product.

The jury awarded \$3 billion in punitive damages and \$5.5 million in compensatory damages to Boeken, a securities and oil broker



Richard Boeken with son:
Unsecured bond — AFP

whose lung cancer has spread to his brain. Last year, Philip Morris, which also markets a range of snack foods and Miller beer, earned almost \$11 billion from tobacco sales alone.

Jurors, who voted 10-2 for the record damages, said they had no sympathy for Philip Morris'

arguments. "There were too many things they kept trying to cover up, instead of being honest about their product," said Denise Key, a juror who said she had smoked for 15 years.

"This man's life is over — \$3 billion doesn't even begin to cover what he's already lost." "If you're addicted, you have no free choice," said Ann Anderson, another juror.

"Obviously we're very disappointed with the verdict," Maury Leiter, a lawyer for Philip Morris at the trial told reporters.

"We recognise that Philip Morris is an unpopular company that makes a dangerous product. But we don't believe the evidence supports the verdict in this case," the lawyer said.

Stock in Philip Morris dropped in after-hours trade in reaction to the award, falling to \$48.25 from a regular-session close of \$50 on the New York Stock Exchange. — Reuters

■ 'Just and proper': Page 4
■ Holy Smoke! Big Trouble For Big Tobacco: Page 5

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Maoist rebels under watch

By K. Srinivas Reddy

HYDERABAD, JUNE 7. India could maintain an officially "disinterested stand" on the ongoing Nepal turmoil following the regicide but its intelligence agencies are worried over the turn of events which could provide a fillip to the Maoist insurgency in the Himalayan kingdom.

A further strengthened left-wing extremist movement in a neighbour which has a porous border with India is bound to have a lasting impact on the Indian States already besieged with the ultra-left naxalite activity. The consternation is further accentuated for the police in at least four States namely Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh.

This particular cause of concern for the police in these States is that the CPI(M) People's War Group (PWG) which is waging a Protracted Armed Struggle (PAS) has a good rapport with the Maoist rebels of Nepal. The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and the PWG have been drawing inspiration from each other's movements.

If the CPN(M) could draw inspiration from the guerrilla zones established by the PWG in Dandakaranya and Andhra Pradesh, the Indian Maoists are enthralled over the rapid strides made by the their "Nepal comrades" in five years. If it took more than two decades for the PWG to form guerrilla zones and establish a centralised military command for its PGA, the CPN(M) did a similar

feat in five years. The Nepal Maoists also boast of a firm control over 45 districts out of 75.

The major source of consternation for the Indian States afflicted with Maoist insurgency is the "demonstrated inability" of the Koirala administration in initiating firm steps to check the growth of CPN(M) influence among masses. The Nepal police administration had to watch helplessly as the Maoist guerrillas mounted surprise attacks on police outposts in mid-Western Rukum district and north-Central Dolakha district and later in Daleskh district. In all, more than 60 policemen have been butchered and arms snatched.

It was not as if Kathmandu did not react to the situation. Realising that the police forces are ill-equipped and poorly trained in counter-insurgency operations, the Nepali Government sent two top ranking police officers to Andhra Pradesh some six months ago to study the anti-extremist operations. Though there is a vast difference in the terrain in areas controlled by the Maoists rebels in Nepal and the terrain in which the PWG wages its protracted armed struggle, the officers were stated to have made an attempt to learn the anti-extremist techniques in field operations.

The two Nepali officers spent considerable amount of time interacting with the officers of the Special Intelligence Branch (SIB) and Grey Hounds, an elite commando force raised solely for carrying out counter-insurgency operations in Andhra Pradesh.

The fact that the Andhra Pradesh police alone managed to check the spread of PWG influence compared to other affected States, is stated to have made the Nepal officers to call on their counterparts in Hyderabad.

The police top brass in Andhra Pradesh is more particularly worried over the prospect of Maoists taking advantage of the ongoing turmoil in the Himalayan Kingdom, since the PWG and the CPN(M) had already initiated the process of establishing a 'red corridor' from Nepal to Dandakaranya (forest areas falling in Chhatisgarh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh). The proposed red corridor would traverse through Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh and culminate in the thick forest tracts of Andhra Pradesh.

What with the PWG already effecting major organisational changes and establishing a centralised military command in the name for the recently-launched People's Guerrilla Army, the police top brass is keenly watching the developments in Nepal. "The administrative vacuum due to the unrest and the ill-trained police force provide a very conducive atmosphere for the CPN(M) in Nepal," the Andhra Pradesh police chief, Mr. H.J. Dora, commented in an informal chat.

The ongoing left wing movement in Nepal for "destroying the monarchist parliamentary system and for establishing a new democratic republic" has caused concern internationally.

Needed, will to tackle a global scourge

40-15
9/16
By Peter Piot

Exactly twenty years ago, the first official report of the disease now known as AIDS was made in a nine-paragraph report of the U.S. Center for Disease Control. Five persons were affected. No one reading those nine paragraphs could know that they were looking at what would become the most devastating epidemic in human history. It was inconceivable that HIV would spread so rapidly that within the first 20 years of the epidemic it would infect 58 million people, killing 22 million of them. But from nearly the outset, the warning signs were there.

I will never forget the day in 1983 when I revisited Kinshasa's large Mama Yemo Hospital, a place I had come to know during the Ebola outbreak in 1976. When I saw the large numbers of emaciated young men and women, I instantly realised that the world would face a major new epidemic — one driven by sex. Even so, none of us involved in those early days of AIDS could have imagined the scale of the epidemic that has unfolded.

It is a tale of globalisation; of the rapid global spread of a mainly sexually transmitted virus, of global inequities in health, and of the need for a truly global response and solution. And it is a tale that is still in its opening chapters. HIV is characterised by a relatively long gap between infection and major illness, and its natural dynamic is to show up first among those at heightened risk, while at the same time it gradually moves across the whole of the sexually active population. So one of the hardest lessons is that, for all the destruction the epidemic has already caused, we are still at the early stages of the epidemic.

But that does not mean that we have no choice but succumb to an inevitably growing toll of the disease. The opposite is true. The course the epidemic takes over the next 20 years will be a consequence of the choice the world makes now. The brief history of AIDS is one of evolving understandings and shifting paradigms — from a medical curiosity to a complex health issue with major development, political and human security dimensions.

Less than a month ago, a meeting of 30 of

the leading scientific and policy thinkers on AIDS from around the world was convened by UNAIDS, the International AIDS Society and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to advise the U.N. and the international scientific community on the next steps of an effective, achievable global response to AIDS. Perhaps for the first time, this meeting aired a truly global set of perspectives based on a realistic appraisal of the billions of dollars needed for the fight against AIDS and in a context where treatment gains experienced in rich countries through anti-retroviral therapy can be contemplated across the world. For years, the price of drugs seemed to be an impossible barrier. But today, preferential prices for developing countries for AIDS drugs has been widely accepted within both the pharmaceutical industry and by policy makers. In this new context, consensus is growing around a new paradigm.

Five of the meeting's conclusions stand out. First, investment now will prevent tens of millions of new infections and extend the lives of

PERSPECTIVE

millions already living with HIV. Second, whatever the stage of the epidemic, special recognition of the needs of young people maximises the effectiveness and impact of prevention. Third, prevention, medical treatment and social support are all critical components of effective responses. Their effectiveness is immeasurably increased when they are used together.

Fourth, while the degree to which poor countries are able to extend access to anti-retroviral therapy varies, in every case a beginning can be made. But these treatments have to be used carefully if they are to have lasting benefits, given that even under the best-resourced and most closely monitored conditions, the virus develops resistance to these drugs. And fifth, political commitment and planning exists in many countries around the world to build on existing programmes to greatly scale up prevention and treatment. What they lack are the resources.

The benchmark cost of providing a preven-

tion and care response to the epidemic in low and middle-income countries is between \$7 and \$10 billion. There is a big gap between this figure and current AIDS spending from private, national and international sources in these countries of under \$2 billion. Filling this gap will undoubtedly need a greater level of commitment from national budgets. That is one reason why liberating funds through debt relief is a valuable part of HIV responses. Private sector involvement at the workplace and community responses to HIV is another source of support.

But as well as building up these channels of support, meeting the resources gap will need a new global fund, attracting genuinely new money, from both wealthy countries and from private donors. To this end, an international AIDS and health fund, as called for by the U.N. Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, is rapidly taking shape. These resources must provide for a wide spectrum of efforts, from supporting prevention programmes to increasing access to care and building the healthcare infrastructure that is sorely lacking in much of the world.

For the first time in the history of this epidemic, we have the opportunity to turn the tide on a truly large scale — the scale that matches the extent of the epidemic. The stars are moving into the right configurations; we know what works, there is a strategy, there is political commitment, and resources are coming. There are still some stars missing — the ones with the vaccine and an effective microbicide that kills HIV on contact, as well as the one with the all-out effort to eradicate the stigma associated with AIDS.

Later this month, the United Nations General Assembly will hold a three-day Special Session on HIV/AIDS. That session will mark the extent to which the world is prepared to demonstrate the resolve and the vision necessary to turn back the epidemic. We know what we need to do to slow new infections, and provide care for those who are ill. The only question, on this 20th anniversary of that first report of the disease called AIDS, is whether we have the will to do it.

(The writer is Executive Director, UNAIDS)

THE HINDU

Backlash against affirmative action

By Neera Chandhoke

Like all liberals, those opposing affirmative action in the U.S. are impervious to the fact that some people, systematically disprivileged in society, cannot avail of equality of opportunity.

MARTIN LUTHER King Jr.'s 1963 Letter from Birmingham Jail, now part of the folklore of the movement for racial equality in the U.S., proved prescient. I have, wrote King, almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negroes greatest stumbling block in the stride towards freedom is not the White Citizens Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is devoted to order than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says, I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I can't agree with your methods of direct action; who paternalistically feels that he can set the timetable for another man's freedom.

The letter practically foretold the white liberal backlash against the victories of the civil rights movement. In the 1960s this movement had wrung reluctant concessions from a white dominated society through sustained mass mobilisation and struggle. The movement itself was about freedom from officially sanctioned systems of inequality, which had been constructed in the aftermath of slavery. The intention was nothing less than to secure full citizenship rights to the African-Americans. The struggle won one of its most notable victories when the 1964 Rights Act banned discrimination in schools, employment, and public accommodation. This was followed in 1965 by the Voting Rights Act, giving to the African-Americans political rights. Fairly quickly, however, the movement realised that formal equality was not enough, and that tangible measures in the shape of affirmative action programmes were required for substantive equality.

Echoing this precise sentiment, President Lyndon Johnson in a much cited commencement address at Howard University in June 1965, stated that what was needed was not only freedom but opportunity, not equality, as a right but equality as a fact and as a result. You do not wipe away the scars of centuries by saying: Now you are free to go where you want, do as your desire, choose the leaders you please and still justly believe that you have been completely fair.

The demand that American society

should institutionalise compensation for historical wrongs bred expected consequences. Within two months, Johnson's speech was followed by racial riots in Los Angeles and elsewhere. But the federal administration continued to dismantle discriminatory structures, even as it tried to improve the material lot of racial minority groups in the U.S. The earlier decision of the Supreme Court in Brown v Board of Education in 1954, which dismantled segregation in schools, and the creation of Black majority districts for Congressional elections, represented serious attempts to reverse discrimination against the Black community. However, very soon it was precisely the politics of affirmative action that was to become controversial among the White liberals. And in the aftermath of the civil rights period American society was to witness the rapid retreat of the liberals from commitment to racial equality.

There was no greater indication of this retreat than the decision of the Regents of the University of California in 1995 to end both affirmative action, as well as the principle of racial and gender preferences in admissions. For 17 years, the University of California system had led the nation in employing affirmative action to give preferential treatment to African-Americans in admissions. One of the unintended consequences of the policy was that the campuses richly represent the diversity of American society. All this was to end on July 20, 1995, even as a deeply divided Regents board approved SP-1, or the ban on affirmative action.

For in November 1996, Californian voters following the lead set by the UC system had approved Proposition 209, which banned affirmative action in matters of hiring, contracting, and education by the State. The University of California system was to subsequently witness a huge drop in the admission of minorities after the ban went into effect in 1998. Various campuses tried to skirt the ban by reaching out to high schools of every denomination and

encouraging their students to apply for admission into the campuses. All statistics, however, show that the numbers of Blacks and Latino students remain low in the two most prestigious campuses, U.C. Berkeley and UCLA, as well as in U.C. medical and law schools.

Incidentally, this is at a time when the census 2000 statistics show that the Latinos now form 32 per cent of California's population, a figure that is roughly equal to the African-Americans. This would mean the African-Americans and the Latinos form a majority of the Californian population. Troubled by the general perception that minorities are not welcome in the two prestigious campuses, the UC Regents in a meeting on May 16, 2001, revoked the 1995 ban. But this is purely symbolic in the light of the adoption of Proposition 209 in California. It is also not an adequate replacement for affirmative action programmes, which met racial discrimination head on.

In the meanwhile, the backlash from affirmative action has climaxed in an U.S. Supreme Court ruling. In the last week of April this year, the Court by a majority of one (5-4) has rolled back much of the victory of the civil liberty movement. States, schools, and colleges, ruled the Court, can no longer be sued for policies that have an adverse and discriminatory effect on minorities — the Blacks, the Latinos and other groups. The ruling itself comes as a response to a case wherein Spanish speaking residents had sued Alabama for adopting an English-only policy for driving tests. Alabama had provisions for taking the test in more than a dozen languages, this was, however, changed to an English-only policy in 1990. The Court has struck off major portions of the important Civil Rights Act of 1964, even as it bases its judgment on a technical distinction between intention-regarding policies and outcome-regarding policies. Civil rights laws do not apply to any legislation that results in racial discrimination ruled the Court. They only ap-

ply to legislation that intends deliberate discrimination. Whereas agencies that receive federal funding can be sued for intentional discrimination against racial groups, they cannot be so sued if their policies have an adverse effect on minorities. The courts, stated Judge Antonian Scalia, were wrong for 35 years in permitting lawsuits meant to enforce civil rights guarantees. Numerous lawsuits challenging the Scholastic Aptitude Test or the SAT as discriminatory against the minorities, who are by this measure increasingly disqualified from admissions into the elite University of California system, are pending against the University of California. These lawsuits have now been rendered null and void.

The ruling represents a major victory for the liberals who have been arguing that technically the provisions of the Civil Liberties Act should be upheld only in cases of deliberate discrimination. Conservatives expectedly welcome the ruling as the first step towards challenging all federal laws that forbid States from discriminating against minorities. Radicals on the other hand fear that the ruling will have an effect on two related issues. One that Title IX of the Civil Rights Act, which safeguards against gender-based discrimination in university admissions will be challenged next, and thus affect women applicants. Second, it may equally affect the environmental justice movement, which has sued States for locating rubbish dumps in Black or Latino neighbourhoods.

The current backlash against affirmative action policies, political commentators suggest, mirrors the phase of the Reconstruction, when racism and reaction followed advances in racial equality. The problem is that the contemporary backlash is not spearheaded by racists, but by liberals who fight their battle against affirmative action by insisting on the sanctity of terms such as merit and equality of opportunity. And like all liberals, they are completely impervious to the fact that some people, who are systematically disprivileged in society, cannot avail of equality of opportunity. The minorities in American society may well have to seek recourse to political means outside the frame of electoral politics once again, to realise justice.

ARMY EXERCISES

Need To Include Nuclear Backdrop

By JK DUTTA

THE recently conducted large-scale army wargame in Rajasthan, Exercise Poorna Vijay, lacked a nuclear backdrop and became a virtual replication of the earlier Exercise Brasstacks. Quoting the GOC 1st Corps whose troops were being exercised, *The Statesman* reported, "We are discounting such a (nuclear strike) possibility ... Pakistan would probably not use nuclear weapons to halt an offensive unless the threshold level i.e., the possible destruction of the Pakistani army was likely ..." Such military sang froid was reported by the GOC over television too.

A mindset of this nature harks back to the Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai days when we considered it highly improbable that China would even attack India. Events proved otherwise. Exercise Poorna Vijay's setting in relation to operational realities warrants a discussion. Actually, the Indian Army's Southern Command is responsible for operations in the Rajasthan sector. The setting needs to be expanded.

SCENARIO

As a preamble to the fourth Indo-Pak war, let us assume that our relations with China being on a good wicket, at least three infantry divisions — two from the Eastern Command and one from the Central Command — can be pulled out and pumped into the Southern Command to bolster the latter's force level. The Indian navy, now augmented with an amphibious command, will pose a beach-landing threat to Pakistan in the vicinity of Karachi. The IAF of course will pull out all the stops for ensuring air supremacy.

As the balloon goes up, Southern Command concentrates in the area of Bikaner and on D-Day launches an offensive across the international border into Pakistan. The Command makes a three-pronged thrust, its main task being the capture of the key Pakistani town of Bahawalpur on the river Sutlej, some 120 km away. Two subsidiary thrusts, one each towards Khanpur and Sukkur are also activated, these having the flexibility of being converted into

Bahawalpur after catering for the other sectors and realises that it is a matter of time before this town falls. GHQ also comprehends that should this happen, not only will it be a humiliation for Pakistan but Southern Command would be in a position to pose a direct

for Exercise Poorna Vijay.

There are other characteristics of a nuclear battlefield which the Indian army has to imbibe. It is not known whether our 1st Corps actually implemented them during the wargame. Some of these are being highlighted. Alternate headquarters are imperative at brigade and division levels so that in case the regular HQ of these fighting formations get "nuked", the alternate HQ can continue the battle without a break. Our assault echelons must necessarily be "armour heavy"; 1st Corps holds only one armoured division. Mechanised com-



DE BARRA

Will take Veeranam issue to court: Jayalalitha

By Our Staff Reporter

CHENNAI, JUNE 1. The AIADMK Government will take the "old Veeranam project scandal" to court, the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Ms. Jayalalitha, told the State Assembly today.

Replying to the week-long debate on the Governor's address, she said the DMK regime in the last five years did not want to pursue the New Veeranam project, mooted by the previous AIADMK Government, as it was afraid of the corruption aspect of the old scheme referred to the Sarkaria Commission.

The Law Minister, Mr. C. Pon-naiyan, said an affidavit had been filed before the Sarkaria Commis-

sion pointing out that it was because of "payment of bribes" to the former Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, that the project contractor, Sathyanarayana, committed suicide.

When the former Electricity Minister, Mr. Arcot N. Veerasamy, said the DMK was prepared for a full-fledged discussion, Ms. Jayalalitha said, "I am not interested in wasting the Assembly's time. The proper forum is the court, for which we are going to take necessary action."

Mooted in the 1960s, a project to draw water from the Veeranam tank, located in Cuddalore district about 225 km south of Chennai, was taken in 1968 to supply 40 million gallons a day (MGD) to

the city. During execution, pipes developed leaks and the project was suspended in the mid-1970s. The scheme was sought to be revived in 1993 with World Bank aid. When the DMK came back to power three years later, it scrapped the component of water supply to Chennai.

Criticising the DMK for dropping the New Veeranam project for political reasons, the Chief Minister said, "Just because I made Herculean efforts to get all the necessary approvals from the Central Government and World Bank, the scheme was shelved. Had the DMK taken the spadework done by our previous regime to its logical conclusion, Chennai will not be suffering from the pre-

sent spell of water scarcity."

The Leader of the Opposition, Mr. K. Anbazhagan, and his deputy, Mr. Veerasamy, denied the Chief Minister's charge.

They said the officials had advised the previous Government that water in the tank would not be available throughout the year.

Situated at the tailend of the Cauvery basin, it might experience difficulties in getting sustained supply as the Cauvery dispute had remained unresolved. The tank ayacutdars had opposed the scheme fearing they would not get their due. Besides, villagers in the stretch between Veeranam and Chennai wanted water to be supplied to them too.

Vajpayee has oscillated on Pakistan policy in a manner no Indian Prime Minister has done

Monkey diplomacy

BY BRAHMA CHELLANEY

HP-8
29/5

WITH ITS continuing 'war of a thousand cuts' against India, Pakistan poses the single biggest challenge to Indian foreign policy. Yet Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee has changed course on Pakistan so often in the past three years that the policy appears numb from the repeated shocks it has suffered. An unending policy dance, with its nifty, monkey-like somersaults, has left the Indian public dazed.

Not many expected that India would stick to its commitment not to open dialogue with the Pakistani military junta until it halted its support to terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. But no one expected that New Delhi would jettison its commitment so abruptly and dramatically as to stun Indians and outsiders alike.

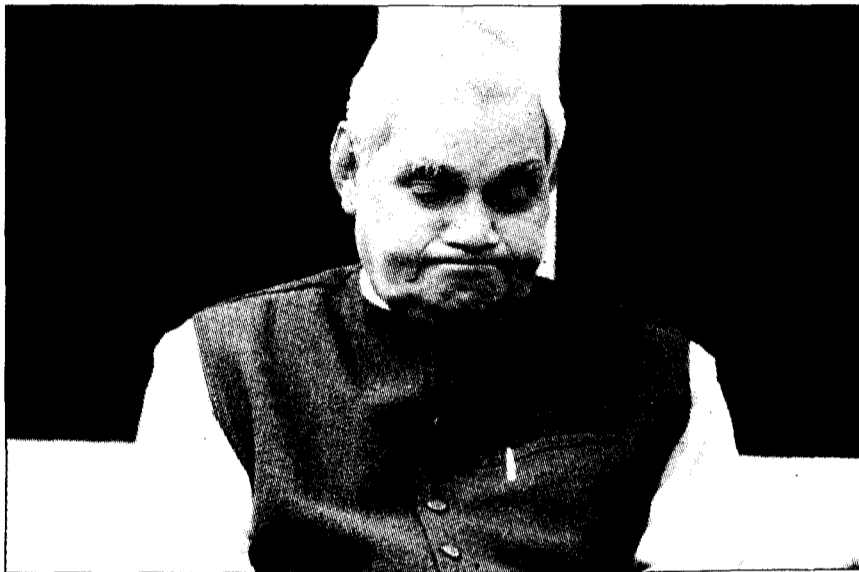
Until last Wednesday morning, India's policy was that it won't even play cricket with Pakistan. By that evening, the policy had changed so totally that India was ready to lay out the red carpet to welcome the Pakistani dictator for talks without precondition. After asserting for decades that J&K is an internal matter in which Pakistan has no part, India's invitation solely names that "outstanding" issue without mentioning its core concern over terrorism. Not even a cursory attempt has been made to explain the rationale behind the 180-degree turnabout.

Consistency may not be a virtue in politics but it is an essential element in foreign policy. Abrupt twists and turns are detrimental to the credibility of foreign policy. A nation that shows that its policy commitments mean nothing can never secure international respect or be taken seriously at its word. In fact, a record of frequent policy U-turns is an invitation to external pressure as it tells outsiders that the nation is weak-willed and amenable to change in any area.

Vajpayee's background is testament to his dedication to national security. But on Pakistan he has displayed a singular lack of consistency. Vajpayee has oscillated on Pakistan in a manner no Indian Prime Minister has done. Given that he has a good national security team in L.K. Advani, Jaswant Singh and Brajesh Mishra, it is a surprise that Vajpayee lacks a clear strategy to deal with a country that defines its identity through congenital hatred towards India and whose present military ruler publicly extols *jihad* as a State instrument.

Vajpayee's Pakistan policy has been haunted by the 'monkey man' long before rumours about the existence of such a creature spread alarm in the capital. How else can one explain the repeated policy flips? Try rationalising the following somersaults:

First came the Indian statements after the Shakti tests about the new geopolitical realities, including in relation to



EVEN SMART TACTICS CAN BACKFIRE: Prime Minister Vajpayee

Kashmir. Then followed a 180-degree turn in policy with Vajpayee being smitten by the peace itch and getting himself invited to Pakistan. Contrary to the wise words of French statesman Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand to avoid "too much zeal" in diplomacy, Vajpayee's fervour overflowed as he surprised Nawaz Sharif with a hug at Wagah and recorded at Minar-e-Pakistan that "a stable, secure and prosperous Pakistan is in India's interest".

This was followed by Kargil, with Vajpayee crying that he got taken for a ride by the foe to whom he went riding a bus with fanfare. Vajpayee pledged no talks and cut off all links with Pakistan, including through sports and SAARC. He also declared "zero tolerance" against Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

Before long, however, his government changed tack, holding secret talks with the pro-Pakistan Hurriyat and Hizbul Mujahideen and encouraging an ill-famed Indian corporate house to open informal lines of communication with Islamabad. A botched ceasefire with the Hizb did not deter Vajpayee from surprising the nation by declaring a unilateral Ramadan ceasefire against all Pakistan-sponsored terrorist outfits.

For six months, the government kept telling the nation the ceasefire was working well, although official casualty figures told a different story. Even the army chief was pressed into service to win political and public support for ceasefire extension. Then one fine day the pendulum again swung to the other end: the ceasefire was called off, the K.C. Pant initiative was effectively sidelined, and Vajpayee had invited the mastermind of Kargil to walk the "high road with us".

The nation has been left gaping, not knowing when the next shock may come. Instead of countering Islamabad's monkey tricks, the government continues to monkey with India's Pakistan policy. In the absence of a near-term or long-term strategy to tackle Pakistan, New Delhi has taken to periodically pulling the monkey out of the hat.

Clearly, the latest turnabout has been driven by narrow tactical considerations than by a larger strategy, although the move is as clever as a cartload of monkeys. In inviting General Pervez Musharraf for direct talks while simultaneously ending the ceasefire, India has sought to present itself both as tough against terrorism and conciliatory towards Pakistan. Its invitation not only calls Musharraf's bluff, but also puts him in a difficult situation with the Islamists within and outside his junta who oppose dialogue. Further, India shows itself internationally as a reasonable, responsible power.

A smart tactical move, this dual initiative is bereft of a larger vision. India can handle Pakistan only through a calibrated, carrot-and-stick approach that rewards good behaviour and imposes penalties for errant or belligerent behaviour. It is the reluctance to inflict costs that allows Pakistan to continue to bleed India. But now, by inviting Musharraf, India has taken to rewarding unrepentant, unchanged bad behaviour. Vajpayee ignored even US President George W. Bush's advice that Pakistan should create an atmosphere conducive for dialogue.

Vajpayee has done exceptionally well in raising India's international profile. His team has dexterously handled the

tasks of significantly expanding Indo-US cooperation and maintaining close strategic ties with Moscow. It has, however, not done well with immediate neighbours, as exemplified by its poor handling of the cold-blooded murders of 16 BSF soldiers and its reluctance to employ counterespionage assets to bust ISI operations out of Bangladesh and Nepal. The Sino-Pak-Burma nexus has grown stronger as India's China policy continues to seek engagement without results.

The lack of a clear strategy against Pakistan is costing India dearly. In the period that Vajpayee has been in office, India has already faced one Pakistani invasion, one Pakistan-engineered hijacking (with the terrorists still harboured by Musharraf) and greater ISI activity in the North-east. Under Vajpayee, Pakistan-backed terrorism has metamorphosed from a hit-and-run campaign to direct assaults on security camps and daredevil raids like on the Red Fort.

From seeking Pakistan's international isolation as a terrorist State to now inviting Musharraf for talks, Vajpayee has come a full circle. Farcically, he wants to restart the Lahore process with the General for whom the Lahore Declaration is an abomination. His invitation not only emulates the Lahore Declaration by singling out J&K by name, it restates his Minar-e-Pakistan notation even at the risk of getting the Indians' monkey up. If a financially ailing Pakistan can destabilise India and prop up the Taliban, a "stable, secure and prosperous Pakistan" could certainly unravel India.

If Vajpayee is not to repeat post-Lahore history again, he has to prepare for the summit meeting with Musharraf with realistic, hardheaded calculations. Musharraf has little political room for manoeuvre. Forced to constantly look behind his shoulders at the other generals in his junta, his hold on power remains tenuous. Vajpayee, too, has little room for making any major concession as he heads a damaged government and has little to show in combating terrorism.

India has gambled injudiciously. It will not be able to credibly return to its earlier position of seeking to isolate Pakistan even if the summit meeting yields no progress or externally-sponsored terrorism escalates. In fact, by agreeing to host the General struggling to shake off his quasi-pariah status, India has begun the process of international legitimisation of the military regime in Islamabad.

The "smart" tactic in inviting Musharraf could backfire if India does not play its cards well. Tactics without strategy are always perilous. India's swinging policy pendulum and self-injurious fixation on Pakistan is a reminder of the line from the Walter Kelly strip cartoon, 'Pogo': "We have met the enemy, and he is us".

SHORING UP STATE FINANCES

THE TIME HAS come to take politics out of State finances. As the new Tamil Nadu Government, headed by Ms. Jayalalitha, sets out to present its White Paper on the State's finances, it will do well to go about the task in a measured and apolitical manner, bearing in mind the larger and long-term interests of the State. Given the fact that the consolidated financial position of State Governments in the country has witnessed a marked deterioration during the past few years, there is a necessity to take a re-look at the State's fiscal position and evaluate the viability of developmental schemes proposed. The White Paper planned by the State Government should move beyond normal rhetoric and set out in clear terms the condition of the finances of Tamil Nadu against the backdrop of the larger changes that have taken place both within the State as well as in Union-State fiscal relations. The long-term financial implications of the several development schemes that have been taken up by the earlier Government as well as those proposed by the new one should also be evaluated and made public. The White Paper should also make known that Tamil Nadu's fiscal anguish is but a manifestation of the larger malaise of a marked deterioration of the consolidated positions of the finances of several State Governments.

The State's new leadership would have to grapple with some fiscal facts. One is the national economy's movement since 1996, marked by a consistent shift towards economic reforms and the consequent linkage between the reforms and resource allocations. The rising wage bill of the State Government, which has become the single biggest expenditure, especially after the implementation of the Fifth Pay Commission, is yet another. Weak political will and the reduced ability for additional resource mobilisation by States and the impact of the Tenth Finance Commission's devolution methodology are also factors that have

to be reckoned with. It is in expenditures to be made towards development projects that the hard reality will surface as a result of a lack of funds. While it is acknowledged that State finances have been on the downslide, the larger challenge before the new Government is to ensure that Tamil Nadu's State Domestic Product, which registered a growth rate of 7.04 per cent in 1999-2000, does not slip. Preparing the State for hard decisions that may be required on the economic front, and finding a solution to the paradoxical situation of an increase in overall economic performance contrasted with a deterioration in State finances should be accorded high priority by the new Government.

Given the hard economic decisions that cannot be put away for long in the overall interest of the health of State finances, the White Paper should also be taken as an opportunity for the Government to explain the standing of the State enterprises. There have been several recommendations on the need to restructure these enterprises which involve difficult decisions. Examples include the changes required in the power and the transport sectors. The previous Government had initiated the move towards attuning the State to reforms by commissioning international teams to suggest measures for economic reform. Ensuring continuity in that vital direction is crucial, given the race between States to gain the maximum benefits in a changed economic environment. As one of the first public statements of the new Government, the White Paper should resist the temptation of playing to the political gallery and present a comprehensive picture on the working of the State's finances. In addition to the White Paper, it would also be in the interest of informed debate if the Government comes out with a comprehensive State-level report, detailing the working of the various sectors of the State's economy.

THE HINDU

The one bright spot in a doomed campaign?

HO-16

By Hasan Suroor

2A/5

LONDON, MAY 23. If behind every successful man, there is a woman, the same can be said about some unsuccessful men — or men trying hard to be successful.

The Tory leader, Mr. William Hague, for instance. His wife Ffion, a glamorous business professional, is described in party circles as his "secret weapon" in an election campaign going nowhere. Unlike Ms. Cherie Blair, the Prime Minister's wife, who joins her husband's campaign only at the weekends, Ms. Ffion Hague has shelved a high-profile job in order to be with her husband right through the struggle even if it means just posing for the cameras, or flashing her Colgate smile at voters.

Three weeks into the campaign and she has spoken only once — when she famously said: "I certainly do" at being asked if she thought her husband could win the elections for his party. The husband laid down the law, the very first day. "I'll answer that," he told reporters sharply when they asked her if she was enjoying the campaign. She got the message, and mum's the word since then. The Tory spin is that they don't want the anti-Tory press to "twist" her words in order to embarrass her husband. They might have as well added that she is there to simply provide the glamour — to balance the non-presence of Mr. Hague.

The Tories' very own *The Sunday Telegraph* thought that she, rather than her husband, was



of the campaign and wondered what it must be like listening "attentively to the same campaign speech for the hundredth time..." And, did it "hurt" being stuck with a man "as much pilloried as William Hague"? Although the newspaper was confident that the lady wasn't going to do anything silly, there was a touch of anxiety in the way it speculated what she must be going through as she plays the mute fiddle day after day. "When these four gruelling weeks of vote-garnering are over, will Ffion high off her high heels... and say: Now William,

why don't you dump this squabbling bunch of losers and ingrates, come into the city and make some proper money?"

The buzz is that quite often people have been turning up at Mr. Hague's meetings, not so much to hear him as to see and shake hands with the "Mrs". T.V. footage of people rushing to greet her even as the husband is struggling to catch their attention confirms who should have been calling the shots, but is under orders not to. Her popularity is said to be rising in direct proportion to the progressive decline in her husband's ratings.

The more Mr. Hague tries to reduce her to a prop, the more attention she attracts with even the Left-wing press not quite able to resist the discreet charm of a very bourgeois woman; and there has been much comment about the "casual elegance" with which she carries herself, even as a "pretty puppet", as a woman voter put it. A Tory fashion columnist contrasted her "understated good taste" with the "horrors of the style guru makeover that Cherie Blair was forced to endure." There have been other comparisons with Ms. Blair — mostly unfair to the Prime Minister's wife. But for all her demure appearance, Ms. Hague, 33, is no pushover and those who have followed her career still remember the clout she wielded as a civil servant. In her current job — apparently as well paid as Ms. Blair's — she is known as a tough nut.

THE HINDU

24 MAY 2001

Nation in disarray

By Rajindar Sachar

140-12 21/5

BERTRAND RUSSELL wrote in the 1950s that the sum of human misery has never in the past been as great as during the last two decades. It may no longer be true of the western world for which he primarily wrote then. But this assessment unfortunately applies to our country today. How else to assess the horrendous situation where nearly one third of children under 16 are forced into labour, 135 million people are denied access to primary health care, 226 million are without safe drinking water, 640 million lack basic sanitation and 50 per cent of the world's illiterates live in India.

The results of the recent Assembly elections dealt a blow to the Sangh Parivar and its opportunistic allies. But that advantage was dissipated by Ms. Jayalalitha assuming the chief ministership of Tamil Nadu. As it is, the tie-up with her by the Congress(I) and the Left parties in spite of her conviction on corruption charges had spread disgust among the people towards the political system. Is panic then unreasonable if one feels that the situation is akin to a slow flame burning under a giant powder keg of discontent ready to explode any time. A situation like this was the prelude to the French Revolution when people standing in the streets read aloud Rousseau's "Social Contract" emphasising the public good. Where do we stand measured by that yardstick?

The much-publicised claim that India has achieved food sufficiency conceals a terrible reality. Even Planning Commission statistics accept that 268 million people in our country do not have enough to eat and half the women in the age group of 15-19 and three-fourths of the children are anaemic. And yet governments stubbornly refuse to start a food-for-work programme which will also give employment to millions. But such is the hold of bureaucratic oligarchy that this idea is not even being debated in spite of mass deprivation in Orissa, Gujarat and Rajasthan.

The richest 25 per cent of Indians con-

sume 43 per cent of all production. Some 90 per cent of Indians, according to the World Development Report 1998, spend \$ 2 a day, a figure it considers below the poverty line. What prevents a violent uprising in such a heart-rending situation is a constant mystery to me. I can only pray and hope for the development of a strong ideological political tool which could fashion this discontent into a peaceful, purposeful movement for social change in the country.

One of the essential functions of a state is to impartially use its coercive power against criminality in society. But it is here that it has totally failed — and that

cess to armaments. With privatisation and the incursion of the U.S. armament industry, it would be a veritable opening for the underworld and the international mafia and thus pose a threat to the country's security and integrity.

The unpardonable manner in which we treat one third of the country's population, namely Dalits/Tribals, has the potential for a blow-up. Over 80 per cent of the Dalits are rural-based and half of them are agricultural labourers notwithstanding the so-called land reforms. Only 25 per cent are cultivators — the figure has come down from 38 per cent in 1961. In education (1993), only 16 per cent en-

Unless our political leaders heed the warning signals, the powder keg of public discontent could blow up any time.

goes for governments of all political parties. The admitted politician-criminal nexus which has encouraged criminals to share and dominate political power has created a situation where the average citizen has no assurance for his personal safety and honour against the mafia. It is now openly admitted that for recruitment to the lower constabulary, bribes up to a couple of lakhs of rupees per post have to be paid to political masters. Obviously, an average person cannot afford that amount. So the mafia has stepped in with funding, which ensures that their criminality is never investigated and their moles sit in police stations.

The Central Government yielding to globalisation under the tutelage of the United States is a matter of deep concern. New Delhi's open support to America's National Missile Defence (NMD) has found us few friends. Permitting multinationals' entry even in defence production is a shameful surrender and a dangerous step. Even when defence production is exclusively in government hands, criminals and other anti-socials have easy ac-

rolled at the primary level as against 60 per cent enrolment among non-Scheduled Castes. But more than the physical and economic deprivation is the total social alienation and the insults that are heaped on Dalits. It is still common to find separate wells for them in rural areas. Even after the earthquake in Gujarat, the Patels refused to allow the tents for Dalits to be pitched next to theirs. This was a challenge to our Constitution which had abolished untouchability. In my view, the inaction of the Gujarat Government against such practices should have resulted in its dismissal. I was shocked on my visit to Tamil Nadu to be told by a Dalit Christian priest that so much is the social ostracism that the Dalit Christians are not allowed to be buried in the same graveyard as non-Dalit Christians. Rammanohar Lohia had warned that "the system of castes is a terrifying force of stability and against change, a force that stabilises all current meanness, dishonour and lie." He had wanted Dalits to be pushed into positions of power. He was clear that it was futile to talk of revolutionary politics

unaccompanied by social change and further that "only that political party has a future in the country which would make itself the spearhead of this social revolution and herald a new dawn."

And yet none of the political parties is willing to take up this issue as a priority. But then how can you expect this when Mr. Ajit Singh, the western Uttar Pradesh Jat leader, when taunted for cozying up to the BJP justified it by unabashedly saying that "policies and principles are of no consequence in today's alliance politics. Caste combinations and mutual interest matter the most". Can political cynicism fall any lower?

The Union Government has taken a decision to host the Afro-Asian Games at a cost of hundreds of crores of rupees even when the country is facing drought and starvation deaths. The insensitivity of the Government and politicians who use their position to indulge in self-advancement is disgusting. Compare this with the friendly chiding to Tagore who asked Gandhiji why he did not enjoy the beautiful picture of birds singing early in the morning. Gandhiji reminded Tagore that he had seen birds who for want of food had no strength left and that he had found it impossible to soothe the suffering with a song from Kabir. The Afro-Asian Games will not put a morsel in a hungry mouth. It will only feed the petty vanity of the politicians; but let them remember the grim warning uttered by Gandhiji that "to people famishing and idle the only acceptable face in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages".

Looking around, I find an eerie similarity to the period of the French Revolution which made Rousseau say "when a prince no longer administers the state according to laws then the state is dissolved, the social pact is broken" and political life has been destroyed". Unless our political leaders heed the warning in time the powder keg could blow up any time.

(The writer is former Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court.)

CULTURAL DILEMMA

To give or not to give

A FRENCH court said it is okay if an employee of a fast-food chain uses his or her lunch allowance to help the needy and the distressed and cannot be dismissed on that count. It seems that the manager of a McDonald franchise in the southern French town of Albi did exactly that with a certain Mr Millet, focussing, perhaps erroneously, on the fact of providing five cheeseburgers to a beggar, rather than on the economic modalities of the action. Mr Millet caused no loss to his employer. Why do we think this is significant? Because McDonald is American and those who work for it automatically, and perhaps unconsciously, imbibe American attitudes towards work culture and profit. Millet must have felt himself uncomfortably close to the condition of his beneficiary not to feel a sense of solidarity with her plight. Unemployment is said to be down in France, but the social situation continues to be precarious.

One remembers, in this context, the famous restaurants du coeur started by the late, lamented French comic artist, Coluche, which invited contributions to set up canteens for the homeless and the poor every winter. And in which other country does one keep the underground running round the clock during particularly harsh winters, so that the homeless have somewhere warm to retire for the night? Underlying all this, of course, is barely concealed French resentment against the penetration not only of American goods, but also American values and lifestyle, of which McDonald is one of the most visible expressions. The French think hamburgers are not "serious" food (which is maybe why Mr Millet's employer thought they were susceptible to be given away for free and, therefore, merited drastic action to restore the seriousness of McDonald's business purpose) and Americans think livelihood is less serious than turnover and profit. Big cultural conflict there. Maybe they should all come to the neighbourhood and see mosques being demolished, Buddha statues being blown up; they will know what cultural conflict is all about.

THE STATESMAN

21 MAY 2011

Upper caste Indian male more European, says study

By Chidanand Rajghatta

WASHINGTON: The upper caste Indian male population is genetically closer to Europeans than the lower castes, which are more "Asian," according to a potentially controversial new study being published in the forthcoming issue of the journal *Human Genome*.

The authors of the study say their findings support historical data indicating that West Eurasians migrating into India during the last 10,000 years were mostly male. An analysis of the genetic material also shows that the "ancestors of Indian men and women came from different parts of the world," says Michael Bamstad of the University of Utah, who led the research group.

The researchers say this difference in gender and genetic makeup may also hold the key to the ori-

gin of the caste system. The migrating or invading male population left descendants in the higher than lower castes and may have even devised the caste system, Bamstad said in an interview with this correspondent on Thursday.

Bamstad's study showed that each caste's mitochondrial DNA, which is derived from the mother only, has a greater similarity to Asians than to Europeans, but the upper castes show less similarity than do the lower castes.

Conversely, Y-chromosome data, derived from the father only, show each caste more similar to Europeans, with the upper castes being most similar, probably because more Eurasian males migrated to India than did Eurasian females.

Such a finding could also imply that the women of the sub-continent are more Indian than are men.

To "increase the power of the

study," Bamstad and his associates also examined 40 additional genes that are inherited from the father and the mother. All of these data strongly supported the conclusion that upper castes have a higher genetic similarity to Europeans than do lower castes, the study says.

"These are potentially controversial results," Bamstad said. "But we are able to demonstrate unequivocally that the upper castes are more similar to Europeans than lower castes, and that women are more mobile — mostly upwardly — in the caste system."

The study in fact says the genetic distance is closest between Europeans and Brahmins (0.10), followed by Kshatriyas (0.12) and Vaishyas (0.16).

"Assuming that contemporary Europeans reflect West Eurasian affinities, these data indicate that the amount of West Eurasian ad-

mixture with Indian population may have been proportionate to caste rank," the study says.

Bamstad's collaborators in the study include researchers from the Andhra University, University of Madras and the Anthropological Survey of India. The group has done work in this area before. In a previously published paper in *Nature* magazine, Bamstad's team said each Indian caste had developed a distinctive genetic profile, particularly among men, and more so when there was little intermarriage. But the women's genes suggested greater social mobility.

The discovery suggests that women on occasion marry men from higher castes, producing children that have their husbands' social rank, the researchers said, claiming the "stratification of the Hindu caste system is driven by women."

Candid Dixit stuns J&K seminar

Vijay Dutt
London, May 20

FORMER FOREIGN Secretary JN Dixit earned some points at a UN seminar in Oxford with his candid and rather radical approach to the peace efforts pursued by the Government in Jammu and Kashmir.

His approach stunned Pakistani and Kashmiri speakers demanding plebiscite like Pakistani Deputy High Commissioner Attiya Mahmood and Azmat A Khan, who represented Yasin Malik at the conference.

The Pakistani team, in fact, could not repeat their allegations that the ceasefire had no credibility because the Hurriyat delegation was stopped from going to Islamabad.

Dixit said: "One wonders why the Government of India did not allow the Hurriyat delegation to go to Pakistan. In substance, the Hurriyat delegation going to Pakistan could not have made any difference. The worst scenario could have been their making policy statements after their discussions in Pakistan advocating independence of Kashmir or

integration of the State with Pakistan. In any case, they have been meeting the Pakistani High Commissioner in New Delhi."

However, Dixit acknowledged, "Our reservations about letting them go to Pakistan has to some extent eroded the credibility of the ceasefire initiative."

The seminar at Rhodes House chaired by Victoria Schofield was attended by many academics and students of the university. Other speakers included Gautam Sen of London School of Economics and Majeed Tramboo of the JLF.

Dixit stressed: "India genuinely believes that a solution has to be achieved through political negotiations with the people of Jammu and Kashmir and it accepts the need for a discussion with Pakistan to resolve the problem."

He pointed out that all this was apparent from the initiatives taken by Atal Bihari Vajpayee as a follow-up of his moves since last November (when the ceasefire was declared). "India wishes to continue the dialogue despite the terrorist violence perpetrated by secessionists supported by Pakistan."

Dixit's presentation was

acknowledged as the "most balanced and constructive" compared to that of the likes of Mahmood. The Pakistani team read out its usual line advocating full implementation of the UN Resolution of 1948 and the need for a plebiscite. Azmat Khan and Tramboo demanded independence for their "people", with Tramboo saying "return Kashmir to Kashmiris".

There was, however, a noticeable departure from the usual repetition of alleged human rights violations by Indian security forces except for a passing reference by Mahmood. Even Schofield did not make it an issue in her opening remarks, which set the tone for discussions.

Dixit reminded that India was continuing its attempts for a peaceful solution despite the increased terrorist activities after the ceasefire declaration. But it has not been reciprocated by the secessionist groups.

Dixit touched on the fears of the West that the region poses the risk of a nuclear flare-up and the consequent pressure on India to enter into a dialogue for some solution.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

21 MAY 2001

19/5 Spaghetti Western G-11-10

As in our own SAARC, so too in the European Community, economic 'togetherness' can often create problems of bruised national pride and sore sensibilities. The late poet, Roger Woddis, put it succinctly when he said: "Gloria, gloria, Europhoria/ Common faith and common goal/ Meat and milk and wine and butter/ Make a smashing casserole!/ Let the end of all our striving/ Be the peace that love promotes/ With our hands in perfect friendship/ Firmly round each other's throats". Some years ago, the British isles rose up in arms against their European brethren for what they regarded as their unpalatable hysteria against that most stolid of Anglican exports — the British beef. The tabloids as much as the quality papers spewed reams upon reams of unsavoury jingoism on the big brother in Brussels maligning a quintessential British institution. The intensity of the anti-European emotions ran so high that it was difficult to identify with that hoary myth of the British being a nation of stiff upper lips. And now comes news of the denunciation of the German press by Italy's agriculture minister, Alfonso Scanio, because it describes Italian pasta and strawberries as "health hazards". Scanio has taken what he calls "the anti-Italian conspiracy" very seriously, and urged the Italian foreign ministry to make an official complaint to its counterparts in Berlin. In the normal course, one would have thought pasta and strawberries are above politics, and that there is no need to make a 'spaghetti western' out of them. Respected German newspapers like *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* had quoted Vienna's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the news that much of the durum wheat which Italy uses to make pasta (flour-dough in cooked or processed form) is "treated with radioactivity". That was also true for other exported items like Italian strawberries. Italians are hyper-sensitive when their national pride and major exchange-earning cuisine such as pizzas and pastas are criticised. The tabloids say the Germans have caught the English "food and mouth disease". It is recalled how Queen Elizabeth II caused a stir recently when Buckingham Palace urged Italian chefs to discard use of garlic in royal banquets during a state visit. Italians keep silent when Frankfurters, Hamburgers and Berliners are patronised in McDonald's the world over. When the Germans say "*Das ist verboten*" for Italian fruits and pasta, it is "manipulated information and an absurd attack", the Italians say about this Bach vs Verdi controversy.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

19 MAY 2011

FORGOTTEN TIBET

1975 Part of new US China policy 5/10

THERE is, to begin with, the historical argument over Tibet's status vis-a-vis China, to the extent that the notion of national sovereignty has not been present as strongly in Tibetan history when measured against Western standards. So, even though it is clear that Tibet is not China, the Chinese claim over Tibet is rooted in the history of the two nations, wherefore the difficulty of formulating a demand for Tibetan independence from the point of view of Tibetan Buddhism. All previous notions about the Dalai Lama's popularity in Tibet need revision, even though he himself retains enormous prestige in the world community. If we consider that Tibet in 1959 was a thoroughly backward country without the means to defend itself, it is possible that some Tibetans may be satisfied if not happy that they are no longer a nation of goatherds and lamas. The refugee population in India is made up almost exclusively of these two categories, which is what weakens the position of those who are calling for a Free Tibet.

The Dalai Lama's principal mission seems to be to keep the Tibet issue alive rather than achieve any concrete progress in terms of his own demand for Tibetan autonomy, on the lines of the one country, two systems principle prevalent in Hong Kong. Tibet's problem is that it does not represent any crucial strategic or economic interests. American interest in Tibet is rather complex: on the one hand, there is the moral dimension, the business of defending liberal democratic values, on the other, the sudden awareness that China's spectacular economic success, its political and cultural homogeneity and its natural pride in its own nationhood may soon translate into a security threat of global proportions, therefore the need to contain Chinese ambitions. There is a draft legislation called the Tibet Policy Act is to be tabled in Congress soon with a view to securing human rights in that country and guaranteeing independent Tibetans' participation in international forums such as the United Nations. It would be sad, however, if Tibet is used only as a pawn in Sino-US relations. Sinicisation — a Chinese majority, a Chinese-run administration — is a real issue and so is the Tibetan aspiration towards recognition as a separate entity.

RSS wants to discipline cadre

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 17. - Unhappy with its pracharaks associated with the BJP, the RSS has taken upon itself the task of disciplining them. Though the RSS method is soft as they want to appeal to the heart of these pracharaks in the name of "Hindutva and nationalism", the message is very clear - the organisation is unhappy with some of them for developing vested interests and bringing a bad name to the RSS.

The RSS, which believes in simplicity and transparency, has been failing to devise a method to contain the un-pracharak like activities of its representatives, who are supposed to be the eyes and ears of the organisation besides setting an example of simple living and high thinking. Contrary to the RSS scheme of things, some pracharaks have started acquiring high-profile lifestyles and are secluded instead of interacting with common party workers. Some of them even keep two cell phones - one for party purposes and another for personal use. Some of them prefer to live in air-conditioned rooms with luxury beds.

At one point of time the RSS contemplated loaning these full time workers on a fixed term basis as for example for three years to prevent them from developing vested interests. Since they play a crucial role as the party's organisation in-charges up to the state levels, they acquire immense power over a period of time.

The two-day camp at Jhinhouli of about 31 pracharaks is aimed at taking them to task for the complaints the RSS has received from the rank and file. Among the 26 pracharaks who attended the meeting on Wednesday included the former BJP president, Mr Kushabhau Thakre, vice-president, Mr Pyarelal Khandelwal and the general secretary, Mr Narendra Modi. The RSS leaders, Mr HV Sheshadri and Mr Madan Das Devi, represented the organisation. Today they were joined by six senior leaders, including the party president, Mr Jana Krishnamurthy, who is a full time worker though not a pracharak. The Union home minister, Mr LK Advani, delivered the key note address stressing the need to keep the organisation healthy. The RSS camp is seen in BJP circles as the beginning of the party's attempt to overhaul its organisation that had rusted since 1996 as it started compromising on principles on the pretext of electoral compulsions. The BJP has to face assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh where the results could decide the fate of the NDA as well. The party which controls Uttar Pradesh is supposed to control the Centre as well.

THE STATESMAN

Atal for CMs' meet on truce

FROM OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, May 17: The Centre may soon convene a meeting of the chief ministers of Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh to discuss the issue of extending the ceasefire with the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah) in the so-called "other Naga" areas of the three states.

The outfit has been insisting on extending the ceasefire, currently in force in Nagaland, to Naga-inhabited areas of other northeastern states.

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee today chaired a high-level meeting which included Union home minister L.K. Advani,

principal secretary Brajesh Mishra, home secretary Kamal Pande, Centre's negotiator to discuss peace with the NSCN(I-M), K. Padmanabhaiah, and senior intelligence officials to review the situation in Nagaland.

The Prime Minister is also understood to have discussed the latest ceasefire with the NSCN's Khaplang faction and its fallout on the ongoing truce with the NSCN(I-M). The latter had recently threatened to pull out of the ceasefire for the Vajpayee administration's "indecision" on extending the truce to "other Naga areas". The ceasefire with the NSCN(I-M) expires on July 31.

Padmanabhaiah had clarified last week that the chief ministers

of these states "have an open mind" on the issue of the ceasefire extension in their territories. The Centre was trying to persuade them to extend the scope and operation of the ceasefire so that a "meaningful political dialogue" could begin with the largest insurgent outfit in the Northeast, he said.

Sources indicated that the government would now have to devise a new strategy to "convince" the new Congress regime of Tarun Gogoi in Assam.

"A new government has come to power and the meeting, partly, went into how the Tarun Gogoi government will react to the proposal of extending the ceasefire to Assam and the other two states," a

senior official said, adding that the Prime Minister was expected to meet the three chief ministers soon to evolve a consensus on the issue.

Bomb attack: Suspected United Bengali Liberation Front militants today exploded a powerful device on a jeep near Bhola Giri Ashram, two km from Agartala.

Nearly 12 passengers, mostly tribals, were injured in the incident. Inspector-general of police (law and order) K. Salim Ali said the jeep carrying tribal passengers was heading for Simna area in Sadar (north) from the Radhanagar bus stand.

Four of the injured were released after first aid while eight are in hospital.

THE TELEGRAPH

18 MAY 2001

7-10 18 / **Boot for Big Brother** /

President George W Bush's outrage is understandable: On the same day he launched a scathing attack on Sudan for its religious intolerance and disregard for human rights, the US was thrown out of the Human Rights Commission and Sudan elected to it. Sudan has no particular claim to the seat but not many countries are feeling too sorry for the US. Many are, in fact, basking in the delicious irony of the world's sole indispensable power, the self-styled champion of human rights worldwide, being given the sort of unceremonious boot which is normally reserved for habitual 'sinners' like Togo or Nigeria. The US has, in the past, used the commission's censure of countries like Cuba, Iran and China as a stick to beat them with in international forums. Yet, there has been growing disquiet among its allies in the EU and its major trading partners like China over its own less than savoury record. Example: Its interventions in Iraq, Grenada, Kosovo and Somalia and its desire to play mediator in conflict situations like Kashmir, Tibet and West Asia with little regard for the internal compulsions of the actors concerned. Above all, its pursuit of dubious defence systems aimed at dominating outer space has worried its allies. The US has put China's back up with a harsh tirade of criticism of the People's Republic's human rights violations even as it engages it in business. The US is perfectly justified in much of its criticism, but no one is in a mood any more to take its hectoring arrogance.

Mr Bush, in particular, does not have a liberal image and has so far been unable to engage with other world leaders in the easy manner which his predecessor did. Had either Mr Bush or his policy wonks been on the ball, they would have seen the growing erosion of respect for the US in world forums. To add insult to injury, the US has resisted firmly any attempt to bring it under an international criminal court. Mr Bush's pulling out of the Kyoto protocol has angered powerful green lobbies across the world and he has also irked the less developed countries by clamping down on cheaper retroviral drugs to treat HIV/AIDS. Mr Bush must realise that the US does not need to adopt an in-your-face attitude to prove its might. It would be to the benefit of the US and other nations if Mr Bush were actively to work at changing the US' cowboy image. A responsible way of limiting the damage would be for the US to pay up its dues to the UN and work through diplomatic channels to try and get back into the Human Rights Commission in the next round of elections. So far, powerful senators in the US have hinted that the UN repayment plan worked out on favourable terms to the US will be affected adversely. This will do nothing to help the US cause. Mr Bush is legendary for his lack of grasp of the nuances of foreign policy. But his advisors are veterans in the field and should have no difficulty in understanding the message sent out by the world community in the Human Rights Commission vote.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

18 MAY 2001

NHRC steps in to check sexual harassment

By Our Special Correspondent

1875
NEW DELHI, MAY 17. The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has taken up the issue of sexual harassment at the workplace to effectively prevent it. It has started the process of consultation with Government departments, private institutions and agencies as well as NGOs for setting up a mechanism for redress of such complaints from women besides suggesting steps.

This follows a complaint received by the NHRC about the suicide of a lawyer on June 15 last in Andhra Pradesh because of sexual harassment by some persons, including her seniors. It observed that it would take up the larger issue of harassment at workplace.

The NHRC also received complaints from NGOs that the guidelines prescribed by the Supreme Court were not being followed by many departments, PSUs, and private and public institutions. The NGOs alleged that most organisations were yet to set up complaints committees as envisaged by the apex court.

In a bid to ensure the creation of a mechanism, the NHRC convened a high-level meeting earlier this month, which discussed harassment in the legal profession. The meeting was attended by NHRC members and senior officials, the Attorney-General, Mr. Soli Sorabjee, the Chairman of the Bar Council, Mr. D.V. Suba Rao, and senior advocate, Mr. R.K. Jain. It was decided to set up a committee, comprising representatives of prominent NGOs and members of the legal fraternity, in consultation with Mr. Sorabjee and Mr. Rao to look into cases of harassment.

The committee will make suitable recommendations for penalisation/punishment within a given timeframe. It would also suggest changes in the Advocates Act and Bar Council Rules for the consideration of the NHRC.

The NHRC has also taken up the issue with the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and universities and educational institutions. The UGC and the CBSE have been asked to instruct all institutions to make periodical reviews of action taken on the setting up of the complaints mechanism. The institutions would also be required to submit action-taken reports.

To ensure safety and security of women using public transport, it has been suggested that a helpline be initiated first in Delhi, to be later replicated all over the country.

The NHRC has decided to issue a directive to the press and electronic media whereby women were not depicted in a vulgar manner or treated as a commodity as this "creates a contemptuous picture of women in general".

THE HINDU

What's democracy got to do with it? 92-8-1995

The unexpurgated Mahathir

IN this age of soundbites, it is refreshing to meet a world statesman who is willing to engage you in a conversation with breathtaking candour. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee must have had a flavour of Dr Mahathir Mohamad's sharp mind during his Malaysia visit.

In my experience as an interviewer, Mahathir ranks with Shimon Peres (Israel), Tariq Aziz (Iraq), Romano Prodi (EU) and Nelson Mandela (on a lucid day) as statesman who can discuss ideas without fearing that what they say before a TV camera might be cited as evidence against them.

"You will be signing these agreements with India, including the one on railways, but cannot get into a partnership mode?" I ask.

Mahathir Mohamad sets aside all pointless politeness. Candour is his hallmark. "I think there is too much politics in a democratic society. (Mind you this is just when assembly election results in India are about to be announced). Simply because you can change governments, everybody wants to change governments. There is therefore no continuity: you have to start so many things all over again. In Malaysia we have changed governments, but policies remain the same because of the consensus stated in our party at the time when we became independent, so we are predictable," Mahathir continues.

Also, he believes it is unfair to expect a government to deliver without a reasonable, guaranteed period of administration.

Just as the American president has a four-year fixed term, I ask.

In Mahathir Mohamad's framework, four years is an insufficient term. A leader, who has to be carefully selected, must have at least 10 years before his policies begin to show the first signs of bearing fruits.

The basic thrust of Mahathir's argument is that there is no development theology outsiders can impose on a country — its evolution depends on local conditions, resources and the quality of leadership, educated, cosmopolitan, but having the strength not to be swayed by foreign philosophies, development models, however well-packaged. Windows have to be kept open for all manners of influences, but the basic structure has to be your own.

I decide to provoke him. "But we rather enjoy our democracy, changing three governments in as many years."



SAEED NAQVI

Says Mahathir: 'You and China are two great powers. If you co-operate, the region and the world benefit. If you quarrel, you destroy yourselves and all around you'

Mahathir laughs: "If you take pride in that democracy and no development, and not making progress, that is all right by me. Only the people will say, look, their country is being destroyed and smashed and that is democracy."

Are you suggesting that China is a better model?

"Yes, China is a good model. It entails an authoritarian form of government but it has opened its economic system and things are moving much faster." If they had liberal democracy, there would be no time for development. They would be fighting each other.

Mahathir was averse to naming Indonesia and the Philippines who have taken their bow before the World Bank

and in front of the altar of liberal democracy. "They have democracy but their people are unemployed, and their people are suffering. That is the price of democracy. But I do not think that is good for Malaysia."

How can he stand so obstinately against liberal democracy? Surely, democracy must have played a role in western prosperity — 'United States, Europe?'

When they first became rich — they were not so liberal. Now that they are powerful, they can afford to. But other countries are not so powerful. They cannot afford liberalism. It is going to

destroy the fibre of their society — that in sum is his argument.

These are uncompromising words coming from one of the world's most strong-willed leaders, one who bucked the system in 1997 when the East Asian economic crisis gripped the region. Mahathir Mohamad was the only one who came out on top.

Democracy and freedom, I suggest, are conducive to a hundred flowers blooming — music, painting, cinema, architecture, science and technology — all good things flourish in a democratic framework.

Pat came Mahathir's reply. Three things flourished before liberal democracy was even known. What he is saying is that Michael Angelo and

Shakespeare were not creatures of liberal democracy. As for architecture, you have to see the Petronas Towers in Kuala Lumpur, world's tallest building, and a magnificent work of engineering and architectural design. These grew out of Mahathir's vision. Further, Putrajaya, the futuristic new administrative capital where Mahathir received Vajpayee is itself an imposing architectural achievement, both in scale and sweep. The high tech nature of this enterprise has to be seen to be believed. The prime minister himself cannot open doors without a smart card.

He accepts globalisation but on his terms. In the next few decades, he says, the world will be globalised. But contrary to what the West wants we shall have globalisation with regulation.

"There is no reason why globalisation must be accompanied by total deregulation and there should be a totally borderless world. They wish to confine the borderlessness to money. I believe we have to have a borderless world for capital and a borderless world for people. People in poor countries must have the option to migrate to the rich." Is the West ready for that globalisation?

Where will India be in the next 25 years? "You will be busy with your politics, while China will have developed. You are two great powers in Asia. If you co-operate, you, the region and the world benefit. If you quarrel, you destroy yourselves and all around you."

What does he think of the NMD?

"This arms merchant goes to one country and says — buy this, it will protect you. Otherwise, I will sell it to your enemy. So you buy it. He comes with another blueprint — an antidote to the weapon you have bought. "Unless you buy, I shall sell it to your enemy ... this goes on and on."

INDIAN EXP...

30 MAY 2001

Southern Cross ^{11-10 1975}

For TV channels covering elections, checking out the usual suspects is a must. Not surprisingly, they zeroed in on Congressman Arjun Singh for his comment on his party's showing in the recent round of polls. Did he think it was Sonia Gandhi's victory? "But, of course. There's no doubt that the credit goes to Soniaji", said the party veteran. What message did the results hold out? Pat came the answer: "It is a vote for secularism against the forces of communalism." It's just as well Mr Arjun Singh didn't go campaigning down south. Had he done so, he might have discovered some uncomfortable truths. In Tamil Nadu, where the voters gave a landslide victory to J Jayalalitha, the Congress is a forgotten force while the BJP is a non-issue, except in small pockets. Consequently, there is little of the communal versus secular debate that so dominates electoral politics in the north. As for Sonia Gandhi, it is significant that the lady came as close as Pondicherry but didn't drive the extra hour into Chennai. If the Congress won six seats, it is surely because the party rode piggyback on the immense success of Jayalalitha. To be fair, the Congress-led United Democratic Front did sail home in neighbouring Kerala. However, that's no thanks either to the party's policies or to its leadership. It is an established pattern by now that the Keralite will, as surely as she has her meal of rice and fish, throw out the incumbent government.

Even in volatile West Bengal, Sonia Gandhi and secularism do not inflame passions. If anyone does, it is the irrepressible Mamata Banerjee, who, for all her histrionics, couldn't dislodge the Marxists. For the Congress, the ultimate misfortune is, of course, factionalism: Barely had the Kerala results come in when a clash of sorts started between strongman Karunakaran and his long-time rival A K Antony. Not that the BJP can take comfort from all this. If anything the BJP's is a far worse fate. After these elections, it stands reinforced as a northern party with hardly any base in the east or south. It also has fewer states under its control than the Congress. Indeed, whatever its other failings, the Congress has done remarkably well in forming state governments: In as many as 10 states, it is in office either on its own or with an ally. More worryingly for the BJP, there is a discernible setback in the initial great strides it appeared to be making outside of the Hindi belt. Today, the BJP seems a mere shadow of the all-new force it had started out as in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, not to mention the hardwork it put into Kerala. The party has taken a knocking in its bastion Uttar Pradesh too. The BJP finished fourth in the recently held by-election to the Shahjahanpur Lok Sabha seat. These elections also prove that the BJP is crucially dependent on its allies. In Tamil Nadu, it went down with the DMK. All alone in Bengal, it sank without a trace. Which are bad portents for a party determined to get a majority of its own so as to be able to implement its agenda. The NDA may yet survive, but only on account of the curious logic of political arithmetic.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

17 MAY 2001

Indian muscle for Brown USA's might

Washington, May 16 (Reuters): People of Indian descent have driven the huge growth of the Asian-American population in the past decade, leaping 106 per cent from 1990 to become the third largest Asian minority in the US.

"Snapshot" demographic figures released by the 2000 US census on Tuesday showed that Vietnamese made up the second fastest growing group, up 82.7 per cent from 10 years before.

But the relative numbers of people who chose Vietnamese in the "race" category still lagged behind other Asian countries at fifth

place with 1.12 million, preceded by Chinese with 2.43 million, Filipino with 1.85 million, Asian Indian with 1.68 million, and "Other Asian" at 1.29 million. Korean came in at 1.1 million.

The "snapshot" contained no analysis, just a single page of numbers. State figures are expected to trickle out over the next weeks and a more detailed breakdown of the demographics of the Asian-American community in particular is due around June.

Full reports are not expected until 2002 or 2003.

"Basically now you're looking

at counts... this is good for communities to know where they're growing and where they're moving to," said John Reed, the Asian analyst at the Census Bureau's racial statistics branch.

"But this is the first pass. This is what you call the sketch and then we paint in the colours with the socio-economic characteristics so you have a real portrait," he said.

At 48.3 per cent growth over the decade to 10.2 million people, the Asian-American community is considered the fastest growing minority in the US. Although the

Hispanic community has grown 57.9 per cent it is not considered a race.

Japanese-Americans were the only Asian group whose numbers declined, by six per cent to just 796,700.

In January, a study by the Center for Immigration Studies analysing Census Bureau data showed immigrants now make up 10.4 per cent of the US population, the highest percentage in 70 years.

The largest sources of that immigration were Mexico, followed by greater China, the Philippines and India.

The India Abroad Center for Political Awareness (IACPA) said a key factor in the changed numbers for Indians could be the huge numbers who have come to the US along with their families on special H-1B visas for skilled workers.

Around 40 per cent of the H-1B visas issued every year traditionally go to Indians and another 10 per cent to Chinese.

The number of H-1B visas issued to people from India jumped from 2,697 in 1990 to 15,228 in 1995 to 55,047 in 2000, IACPA said, quoting state department figures.

It said Immigration and Natu-

ralisation Service figures show that between 30,000 and 45,000 immigrants from India won permanent residence every year between 1990 and 2000.

Prem Shunmugavelu at IACPA, which aims to encourage civic participation and political awareness in the Indian-American community, said the census was a "call to arms".

"The realisation that we need to take an active role in the political process is one we must make as a community, soon," said Shunmugavelu, a political associate at IACPA.

THE TELEGRAPH

11 MAY 01

US Cut and Thrust (11-10)

US Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan loves to spring surprises. Not this time though. Global markets expected the Fed to cut interest rates by half a percentage point on Tuesday, and Mr Greenspan duly obliged. This makes it the fifth such cut in five months, and a sixth is widely expected in June. Some readers may wonder why the Fed didn't just slash 3 percentage points in January itself. The answer is that finding the ideal interest rate is a bit like warming up water for your bath — you want it to be comfortably hot, but not scalding. So, you tend to keep on dipping your finger, and incrementally adding hot or cold water till you get it just right. That's exactly what Mr Greenspan is doing. And he's clearly not done with the temperature-testing. The picture is also being confused by some very contradictory signals. Corporates are busy cutting investment and expenditure, liquidating inventory and laying off people — the US unemployment rate has risen to 4.5 per cent. Yet, incredibly, consumer spending is still rising. Perhaps one reason could be the different ways in which declining interest rates affect consumers and corporates. According to some estimates, US households will save \$50 billion in debt repayment this year as a result of reduced rates, which may well encourage them to go right back and spend some of these windfall gains. On the other hand, companies tend to overindulge themselves and build up excess capacity during good times, then starve and work off the excesses when the going gets tough. Lower interest rates will not result in increased credit offtake till the excess capacity is worked off.

Clearly, consumers will not keep on spending at the same level if they lose their jobs. But if they can keep their jobs, and sustain their current consumption binge, they may just be able to not only slow down the slowdown but actually reverse it. Mr Greenspan's strategy then becomes obvious: he has to try to get corporates to — as some commentators have put it — lay off the lay-offs. That will buy him time till reinforcements arrive in the form of a massive dose of tax cuts, which will hopefully get the US economy roaring at full steam again. And corporates may not want to shed too many jobs if they feel a turnaround is imminent. So Mr Greenspan will keep doing everything he can to convince corporates that good times are just around the corner, and if that means he has to keep cutting rates till Christmas, then that's precisely what he will do. Of course, every time he cuts rates, all eyes in India will turn upon the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Last Saturday, the RBI cut the cash reserve ratio to an all-time low of 7.5 per cent, which will increase liquidity in the system. However, it did not reduce the Bank Rate, the benchmark which it uses to directly signal to commercial banks what they should do with their interest rates. Given finance minister Yashwant Sinha's outspoken preference for a low interest regime, it will be interesting to see how long the RBI will hold on before proceeding with the next Bank Rate cut.

THE BANK OF INDIA

Travelling invisible from Bangladesh

Indrajit Hazra
Mankachar (Assam), May 16

A DIRT road suddenly turns from the centre of Mankachar village in Dhubri district. Take this path and you'll end up in Bangladesh. Well, not quite. What actually separates the neighbouring country from the rather ominous looking gate that serves as a checkpoint is a stretch of no man's land. After last month's border skirmish, however, you'll be lucky if you come this far.

Ninety-year-old Koshupati Sheikh saw me from his house

near the checkpoint and thought I was a 'passport-holder' who had been turned back. "My house used to be where the no man's land is now. There were 300-odd other households. We were all told to clear out in 1991 when they started building the road. I bought a piece of land and now live here," he says pointing to a tidy-looking hut.

As for illegal migrants from Bangladesh, Koshupati hasn't spotted any from his vantage point.

By the time I was seen by the sentry on duty, the alarm had gone off. Border Security

Force jawans from the adjoining camp came rushing out, most of them in kachchas and vests. "Get out," was the general message.

The only man wearing trousers stated that trans-border travel had stopped since April 18 and there was no "order from above" about when things would resume to normal.

At the nearby registration office, I deciphered what 'normal' meant. On an average, about 30-40 people crossed the border each month from this particular Border Security Force post in Mankachar. The

last entry shows six Bangladeshis coming into India on April 16 — Lal Mamud from Sherpur being the final name on the list. The last Indian to go 'that side' was Mohammed Yusuf Ali from Kamrup in Assam on April 11, who returned home the very same day.

Rajballabh Das of the Passport Office explains, "Bangladeshis with valid passports are registered here. If they overstay in India, we notify the police." I ask him whether there are many cases of 'overstaying'. "There have been some cases. As for what action is

taken, that's not our business," he replies.

About a week into his new posting in Mankachar, Border Security Force Company Commander A K Rai insists that there is no illegal migration in the area.

"Since April 18, we have had no travel from or to Bangladesh. This whole area is fenced. There may be cases of illegal cross-border infiltration on the Meghalaya border, but not here."

Wahidul Rahman, a school teacher in Mankachar agrees. "For some of them near the border, our markets are

closer than the ones in Bangladesh. But as for staying back, we wouldn't allow them. We won't allow someone from Meghalaya coming over here and staying, so forget about Bangladeshis. It's just political-ly motivated rumours from Guwahati."

An official in the Mankachar police station, however, thinks otherwise.

"It's a racket which has the backing of local politicians. Even some of the Border Security Force personnel are in it. There are many parts of the border fencing which are regularly cut, through which

people slip in right under the noses of the border police. You point out one of them slipping through to the Border Security Force and they'll say that can't see any one."

While the debate rages on about the issue of illegal migrants and laws like the Illegal Migrant (Determination by Tribunal) Act, 16-year-old Mohammad Azaria Haq wants to know whether he can migrate to Kolkata or Delhi. "I won't need a passport, will I?" he asks me, before going on to express his devotion to Rani Mukherjee.

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THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

17 MAY 2001

on WTO

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the Indian side expressed the hope that it would have a greater interaction with the ASEAN through Malaysia.

Malaysia is the country coordinator for India till 2003. "India did express the desire to have an India-ASEAN summit. They have such an understanding with three countries so they were in a flux".

Asia has favoured a close relationship of India with the ASEAN, which would help the developing countries. India has assured Malaysia that it was willing to consider the question of lowering of import duties on palm oil. The Indian Prime Minister said that there were severe domestic constraints but both the countries could jointly look for solutions of mutual satisfaction.

The Indian Government has decided to give \$50 million credit line for projects that involve imports and industrial goods from India. In addition, an agreement regarding double taxation avoidance was also signed.

er: PM

Recording racial origins on a census form is seldom entirely innocent

British is multiracial

SUNANDA K. DATTA-RAY

7-10
12/5
Last week's British census reminded me of a Chinese Singaporean wondering whether the best way of handling minorities was isolation or integration. It also warned that, as the Indian and German experiences have demonstrated in different ways, there might be an unhappy political fallout of prying too closely into and highlighting sectarian definitions in a nation that has not yet come to terms with multiculturalism, notwithstanding Robin Cook's ridiculous claim that chicken *tikka masala* is the national dish.

As a loyal son of the Yellow Emperor, my Singaporean colleague had in mind Mother China's problems in suppressing Xinjiang and Tibet. But we know that the ethnic question has a much wider resonance than even troubled Kashmir, and that globalization has only intensified the tribalism that lurks in all of us, accentuating the importance of whatever clan or sub-clan we might belong to. Yugoslavia's break-up most dramatically illustrates a contemporary determination to discard the ideal of political nationalism in order to reorganize society along minimalist sectarian lines. Britain's gentle regional devolution is a symptom of the same trend.

The 2001 census seems to stress differences rather than similarities, and invite new migrants to stake their own political demands. We know in India the destructive power of separate electorates; we know that paring the community cheese too thin can Mandalize society, and that governments can cynically exploit demographic data. This might seem a far cry from contemporary Britain, but inviting people to state the ways in which they are different can place a premium (or discount) on difference. The Indian equivalent would be to underline language, religion, caste and sub-caste in census forms, oblivious of the explosion of loyalties and demands that this can trigger off.

The world is not so much a village as a collection of villages that are beginning to rediscover (or create) their grassroots identity. One of Singapore's more "intellectual" ministers, George Yeo, even developed the thesis that small is not only beautiful, as Schumacher used to say, but also pragmatic. Even a huge country like China, he argued, had to split itself into little pockets — the economic export zones — for purposes of growth.

Of course, Yeo might have had a different theory about the most desirable size if Singapore had been bigger. But two trends are beyond self-serving personal formulations. First, the urge to give political expression to small and cohesive entities. And second, the affirmation of narrow identities based on race, religion or language. Britain is zigzagging between these two complementary trends on the one hand and the government's formal commitment to a multiracial ideal — witness last year's Race Relations (Amendment) Act outlawing ethnic discrimination by public bodies — on the other.

The devolution of power to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, with New



In all imaginable colours

Labour promising now to place even England under a series of elected regional assemblies, genuflects at the small-is-beautiful ideal. This conflicts with the pledge to treat "British" as an inclusive national label that embraces people of all colours, cultures and cuisines which demands that the entire populace of the British Isles should be treated as a single nation.

Britain's first census in 1801 asked only five simple questions regarding gender, occupation and living conditions; ethnicity was raised for the first time in 1991. There were 41 questions this time, with a heavy emphasis on race. The questionnaire was refined not only to wring confessions of how people see themselves but also to force them into the straitjacket of official thinking with questions that prompt their own answers.

Thus, if you are white, the offered choice of being British or Irish rejects the pretensions of people like the Sikh settler in the United States who famously applied to the courts that being of Aryan descent he should be counted as white. If you are Asian or black you can describe yourself as "Asian British" or "Black British" (not "Asian English" or "Black English") with

several kinds of Asian or black to choose from.

Asians can be Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi or of any other Asian background; blacks can be Caribbean, African or of any other black background. The Mixed category allows for white and black Caribbean, white and black African, white and Asian, and people of any other mixed background. It is almost as detailed, though far more accurate, than in Singapore where every form lumps Sri Lankan, Pakistani and Bangladeshi with Gujarati or Tamil under the Indian category and classifies Sikhs separately. I was forced protestingly to put down my "race" as "Indian" because the Chinese had not heard of Indo-Aryan.

The complaint here is that by restricting the white choice to British, Irish or any other white background, the Office of National Statistics, which is responsible for the census, argues that the Scots and Welsh cannot be British since they are separate races. The privilege of being British is more explicitly denied to the Chinese. No matter how anglicized a Chinese might be, no matter how many generations his family might have lived in

Britain, the ONS has ruled that there is no such thing as "Chinese British".

Historically, the Chinese are even greater wanderers than Indians, ranking almost with Jews. An old Chinese saying has it that they will go wherever there is land and water. They have been assimilated in the United States. In London, they have moved from the once derelict East End to a bustling Soho which now caters to every imaginable kind of taste in Chinese cuisine. They have also taken over central portions of North Country and Midlands towns that previously boasted only one or two Chinese restaurants, and converted them into brightly painted Chinatowns with ornamental gateways as in San Francisco.

Some Chinese are bound to resent the refusal to describe them as Chinese British as iniquitous a piece of discrimination as concession ports and unequal treaties. Already, blacks complain that New Labour is far more indulgent to Asians because of their financial clout. The Chinese can cite the same reason.

The political right's objection to the census form is that it confirms that the English are being marginalized in their homeland. It is pointed out, for instance, that while Scottish MPs can air their views on a purely English phenomenon like fox hunting, English MPs do not enjoy a similar say in Scottish affairs. Tackled on the absence of England and English as options for respondents, an official spokesman claimed that "when the form was tested the English appeared happier to describe themselves as British". If so, both the English and the ONS had second thoughts for the latter subsequently advised people to write England/English and Wales/Welsh wherever appropriate under the Others category.

All this may sound like irrelevant hair-splitting. But the ONS believes that detailed information "will help to uncover racial inequality and take action to tackle it". It might. It could also enable dangerous negative action. It has not escaped attention that though Jews figure as a religious category, they are conspicuous by their absence from the ethnic section which handles all other minorities in precise terms. The inescapable conclusion is that the authors have not forgotten what the enumeration of Jews led to in Hitler's Germany.

Some fear that this census, too, could fuel unpleasant action. It may be pertinent in this context to note that the home office is accused of issuing two orders, the second on April 23, authorizing the immigration service to discriminate against certain nationalities. The second order says that Kurd, Roma (Gypsy), Albanian, Tamil, Pontic Greek, Somali and Afghan immigrants and asylum seekers should be subject "to a more rigorous examination than other persons in the same circumstances". There may be sound reason for these instructions but they do reveal that governments everywhere find ethnic knowledge a useful tool for arbitrary action with not always pleasant consequences.

Big powers, petty minds

By F. J. Khergamvala

NOT SINCE the 1996 missile firings across the Taiwan Straits has China attracted so much media attention, except for a brief period during the handover of Hong Kong. Fundamentally this is because all things came together and the profile of each issue drew nourishment from the other, leading to that one mistake that ought to have been avoided at all costs. A high visibility. After all, if there was one thing that stood out through the brouhaha, it was that neither side had made any threatening military moves. Forces were where they were. But, in the east, when visibility, profile and rhetoric turn even ordinary territorial infringement into an issue of "face," heels dig in.

Both major powers have revealed a great capacity for an ego demonstration, but possess petty minds. The atmosphere was such that they ought to have gone out of the way to contain the Government and media rhetoric over the airborne collision between a Chinese F-8 fighter and the U.S. Navy EP3 spy plane. It was obvious that both petty minds would extract domestic mileage from it.

On one side stood a democratic but not really an elected Government of the far right on foreign policy trying to craft a foreign policy that satisfies a far right bed-rock constituency. What better opportunity for the Bush Administration to claim itself in the moral and legal right in a showdown with the "strategic competitor" on the far left. Ideologically and morally, Beijing's bosses played into Mr. George W. Bush's hands.

China's leaders on the other hand, even more unelected, illegitimate and far left, trying to assert the ability of the Communist Party to rule effectively. A very high profile conflict with the U.S. far right that brings together the Taiwan issue, the spying of the U.S. and its mirror recall of the Belgrade Embassy bombing of 1999, could not but possibly do good

for a handful of old people retiring next year from official leadership positions and seeking another niche as formally appointed or accepted elders still in power.

Ideologically and morally, Mr. Bush played into Beijing's hands. Even the U.S. media, never failing to take its dictation from the White House line, believed the Government talk, that the U.S. plane that illegally entered Chinese air space it was never authorised to enter was still sovereign U.S. territory that China could not

detained a few U.S. citizens of Chinese origin for questioning.

Perhaps the most ridiculous of all was the position by some great American newspapers of our times and some not-so-great columnists working for those papers but refusing to travel out of one city. They emphasised that Beijing should be denied the Olympic Games for 2008. Why, the rest of the world now asks, should the seizure of an American crew of a spy plane on Chinese territory, entitle the U.S. to lobby for depriving

The U.S. and China ought to have gone out of the way to contain the rhetoric over the spyplane collision. But petty minds prevailed to extract domestic mileage.

enter. This was a great windfall for the Chinese propaganda machinery which rightly drew amusement by asking "since when did an intruding spy-plane become sovereign territory? Both, U.S. and Chinese planes cannot be sovereign on the same land."

The U.S. hastily back-tracked and switched all talk to the morally sellable and politically good argument over the return of the crew. By holding the crew and letting the U.S. media make heroes out of them, China played into U.S. hands and the Bush administration portrayed the action as one typical of repressive regimes.

That this Hainan incident was just one in an accumulation of events helped both large egos. The annual arms sale to Taiwan was just about to be negotiated, so that entered the picture. The U.S. had resumed its earlier co-sponsoring of an anti-China resolution at the annual session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and so gave the Chinese leadership more ammunition to fire at the Bush Administration. China had

China of the Olympics. Would the U.S. lobby the U.N. to deprive China of the Olympics because of Aksai Chin, Tibet, the Spratlys etc? Most certainly not. It is not even committing itself on Japan's side in the Senkaku Islands dispute. These editorials and columns nourished that global sentiment against the Ugly American, who feels a nation's weight in international affairs must always be correlated to the way it treats the average American.

Quite in contrast, on the other side, there was a well-contained game played out. Much against China's ranting, Taiwan's former President, Mr. Lee Teng-hui, made a quick "medical" trip to Japan, where he observed the restrictions. But, the head of China's National Peoples Congress, Mr. Li Peng, announced he would not visit Japan as scheduled in May. Mr. Li Peng did not directly link his decision to the Lee visit.

It is more likely that he put off the visit to bolster his position among his conservative constituents. This Tiananmen-cul-

pable official now leaves no opening for an attack from patriots.

The important contrast is that Japan hardly reacted to Mr. Li Peng's decision. "Well, perhaps another time," best sums up the Japanese spokesman's expression of hope that the visit will be rearranged. As far as Japan was concerned, right or wrong, it did not let another country decide who gets an entry visa.

Back to the Taiwan question. Mr. Bush had made the anticipated decision on arms supplies to Taiwan. More important was his decision that there would be no annual review of a Taiwan sales request. This is the right decision as year after year it raised the issue's profile and brought the two big powers head to head. At the same time, Mr. Bush has kept China's nerves on edge. The U.S. ignored implied Chinese consideration of sales of missile technology to Pakistan, which Mr. Jiang Zemin once called China's Israel.

China has most definitely raised its missile forces across the Taiwan Straits to a point well beyond merely coercing Taiwan into negotiations. It could now be described as a capability to enforce a trade embargo, as in 1996, without actually controlling the waterway. The 1979 Taiwan Relations Act explicitly authorises the U.S. to act to prevent an embargo, which is like an act of war.

By slightly changing the expression of commitment to the defence of Taiwan, the U.S. has warned Beijing that in the run-up to or beyond the power struggle in Beijing, if anyone has ideas about using force on Taiwan, forget it. Most important, Mr. Bush has sent an assurance to America's allies that when a commitment is made, that commitment is more sacred than the letter which defines it. Otherwise, the U.S. respects the "one-China" policy and it will not encourage Taiwan's politicians to move towards independence.

Bushwhacked by the NMD

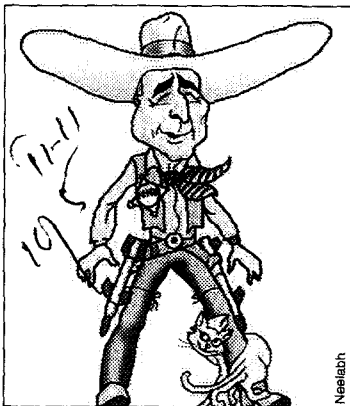
By JUG SURAIYA

NEW DELHI: Goldurn it, what's an all-American Republican President to do when he's all gunned up with nowhere to go? Especially now that the economics of the country is on the downslide, after being on the upslide for two whole terms when that other honcho was riding herd in the White House. 'Course, everyone knows that like a rolling moss that gathers stone, the economics started going wrong when Bill was in the saddle, so why blame Dubya, who was only whirling the reapwind? But try telling that to the guys who interview you on TV and keep tripping you up on your own feet even when you're sitting down.

No siree. If Dubya's gonna leave his footprint on the hourglass of history, by gum he's gotta do something that'll make folks sit up and give notice, and pronto. So what's Dubya to do, particularly when his role model is that good ol' cowboy, Ron Reagan, another rough ridin', straight shootin' Republican?

Well, if Ron could have his 'Star Wars', by golly why couldn't Dubya have his NMD? Hey Ron, try *that* 20-gallon hat on for size! Besides and below which, apart from being mucho macho, wouldn't a li'l Nuclear Missile Defending be good for the economics too? If you went and scrapped that wimpy Anti Ballistic Missile Treaty and that killjoy Mutual Assured Destruction and went ahead and nuked up to the

nines so's you could look any rogue state in the eye and blast the sumbitch to hell and back before it knew what hit it, well, you'd need to spend a lot of dinero to put all those extra megatons on the table, wouldn't ya? An' everyone knew the more bucks you spent on your bangs, the bigger and better the economics grew.



Heck, all you hadda do was ask that one-man military-industrial complex, Charlton 'Moses' Heston of the National Rifleman's Association, which guaranteed the constitutional right of every man jack American the right to bear arms. You tell 'em, Charlieboy! Look at Dubya's own stompin' ground, Texas, the biggest, ballsiest Lone Star state of all. You think the economics of Texas was based on oil, beef? Think again, pardner. An' be ready to slap leather and draw your shootin' iron when you do. Just kiddin'.

Seriously though, if guns weren't so big in Texas, how would a little unknown guy like Lee Oswald have ever made it into the history books? Wasn't that the ultimatum of the American Dream—from Log Cabin to White House cortege? Hey, that was one helluva shot you pulled off, Ossie!

What's that you're askin'? What's the international community going to say about NMD? What's India going to say about it? What's India, Dubya's cat, got to do with NMD anyway? Here pussy, pussy, pussy..!

Not *that* India, but the other one? Shucks, Dubya'd plumb forgotten there was another critter by the same name. Don't that beat all. Hey Condoleeza, you an' Dick Armitage take care of it, willya? Promise 'em some extra HIB visas, or a visit to the Oval Office, or sumthin'. We can always cancel later.

What's that you say? Did Dubya know that Freud said that guns were a penis substitute? Which would make the NMD truly a global screw-up? Watch your mouth, buster. Don't you be using dirty words like 'substitute' in front of Dubya, whatever it means. An' who's this Freud anyway? Sounds like a faggot liberal draft dodger who never went to 'Nam.

Which reminds Dubya. Where's that darn six-shooter of his? What's that you say? Dubya's sitting on it? Gee thanks, mister. Dubya could of done hisself a nasty injury there and blown his brains out.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

10 MAY 2001

Sudip sneers at talk of return to NDA

HT Correspondent
Kolkata, May 8

915
SCOFFING AT the speculations that the Trinamool would return to the NDA fold after the elections. Sudip Bandyopadhyay today said, "We have made our stand clear to the Prime Minister. We are not political prostitutes and won't break the alliance."

Bandyopadhyay said, "The people have lost faith in the CPI(M). The party is afraid of the awesome response Mamata Banerjee has generated and this has brought the Alimuddin Street into a tizzy." The Trinamool-Congress alliance would notch up between 180 and 200 seats, a buoyant Bandyopadhyay said.

On Ajit Panja's last minute desertion, he said, "Ajitbabu is a non-issue. Though he is the party's State unit chairman, his rebellion would hardly make any impact. Hinting that Panja would face turbulent times after the polls, he said the party would not let people become Union Ministers so easily."

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

9 MAY 2001

N-war games: India pulps Pak after taking initial hits

By Chidanand Rajghatta

The Times of India News Service

WASHINGTON: At the height of the Cold War and nuclear madness of the 1970s, a popular poster detailed "What to do in case of a Nuclear Attack." After advising people to tie up as many loose ends as possible, it urged them to... (8) Run out into an open field... (9) Put your head between your legs... and (10) Kiss your ass goodbye!

While Indian forces are now working out under the broiling desert for ways to save ones buttootie in case of a nuclear attack, America's army of strategic experts sitting in the cool confines of think tanks and military establishments have for long been indulging in such nuclear war-gaming. Ever since the back-to-war nuclear tests of May 1998, American experts have been drawing up possible scenarios that may lead to the use of nuclear weapons, and in this exercise they have often invited Indian and Pakistani pundits to sit in the hot seat to get a sense of decision-making.

In a typical war-game played out at the US Naval War College in early 1999, a transport aircraft carrying India's ministers of interior and defence as well as the army chief of staff explodes as it nears the airport near Srinagar, Kashmir, on August 1, 2003. Eyewitnesses reported that a missile struck the aircraft as it approached the airport. Two days later, India launches Operation Resolute Sword against Kashmiri militants and their support facilities in Kashmir and Pakistan.

Indian leaders insist they were compelled to act, and note that the assassination of Indian ministers had occurred on the heels of increased cross-border artillery exchanges and a series of terrorist attacks inside India. The Indian government publicly declares that Operation Resolute Sword is limited in both scope and objective and issues an ultimatum demanding the immediate delivery of terrorist leaders being sheltered in Pakistan, the dismantling of known terrorist headquarters and training facilities, and the removal of all Pakistani military forces from Kashmir.

Move Two of the scenario unfolds even as the international community is engaged in talks and crisis

management amid conventional offensives and counteroffensives between the two countries. Outraged by India's unrepentant celebrations over the success of Operation Resolute Sword, the Pakistani high command seizes the opportunity to surprise and punish Indian forces involved by launching Operation Resolute Shield in the region east and south of Lahore. During a two-day battle, Pakistani forces manage to push about 50 kms into Indian territory.

An Indian counteroffensive with redeployed forces manages to repulse the Pakistani thrust. Pakistani forces in the north are defeated and Indian forces move quickly across the Thar Desert toward the Indus River. Fearing that India is about to sever the country into two, cutting off Islamabad's economic lifeblood to the south, the Pakistan orders missile strikes, including four nuclear-tipped weapons. Three 20-kiloton tactical nuclear weapons are aimed at halting invading Indian forces on the border and the fourth used against the supporting rail hub in Jodhpur. The attacks succeed in stalling the Indian advance.

Pakistan regrets the catastrophe but points out that it has used only tactical nuclear weapons against strictly military targets, avoiding deliberately targeting population centres. But it threatens to use nuclear weapons against Indian cities if India did not cease its military actions. India meanwhile has relocated its leadership to alternate command centres. Amid frantic negotiations among world powers and the UN to stop India from retaliating, New Delhi lists conditions for not responding. These include complete demilitarisation of Pakistan and destruction of its nuclear capability, imposition of wide-ranging, comprehensive sanctions against Pakistan until this was accomplished; and compensation and rebuilding of areas in India that were devastated by the nuclear attack.

But even as negotiations are going on, India launches twelve nuclear weapons against Pakistan's nuclear and command infrastructure, including facilities around Islamabad. Since many of Pakistan's nuclear-related facilities are close to populated areas, Indian nuclear

attacks cause millions of deaths. Pakistan is almost decimated. The emphasis in these games is not so much on who won or lost or survived, but on the decision-making process and the ways to prevent the crisis before it slides into nuclear mayhem. Some of the war games examine the role of individual countries and the international community during the crisis.

Some go as far as looking at conflicts within governments. For instance, in another war game played at Harvard, a Texas Schoolgirls Choir is visiting India in 2003 and singing before the Taj Mahal when a terrorist bomb goes off, killing many. The ISI agent who has set of the bomb surrenders to the authorities, unable to bear the burden of his crime. The FBI, which by now has established a fine working relationship with Indian law-enforcement agencies, wants to question him in India. But the CIA opposes this, afraid that a full-scale disclosure of ISI activities will further exacerbate the situation. There is a turf war between FBI and CIA over cooperating with India.

More recently, war games have also looked at the changing fortunes of the two countries on the economic front and how it would impel the two countries to act.

A recent war game conducted by the Foreign Policy Institute considered two possible scenarios leading to a conflict. A Rising Tiger, India is growing at 9-10 per cent and Pakistan is in a mess. Some 300 Indian soldiers are killed in a Beirut-bomb type of attack. India then goes in for a hot pursuit policy leading to a nuclear response. In a Hungry Tiger scenario, India is not doing all that well and pursues an aggressive, bullying policy with its neighbours to overcome domestic discontent.

Participants in the war games including Americans, Indians, Pakistanis, Britons, and Australians among others say it helps them live through crisis situations that ordinary reading or imagining would not. Some participants play roles they may be familiar with. For instance, a leading South Asia specialist who has done extensive work on the Pakistani Army, played a Pakistani general in a recent war game.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

- 8 MAY 2001

LOCAL AREA POLITICS

5/16 7/10 Not development

THE CAG report on the utilisation of local area development funds amounting to Rs 2 crores per annum per MP for the year ending March 2000 was tabled in Parliament during the session dominated by the tehelka exposure, so it went unnoticed. But MLAs are once again going to their constituencies to make their routine promises and the issues — unbuilt roads and bridges, lack of sanitation, drinking water, health facilities — are the same. So this is a good time to take a look at that report. The first fact to be noted is that the MPLAD shares a common feature with Central funds provided to the states — underutilisation. According to the CAG report, out of the Rs 5017 crores released since 1993, only Rs 3,221 crores have been spent. In Kolkata, five MPs, including Mamata Banerjee and Ashok Mitra, spent less than Rs 50 lakhs, which means they forfeited their allocation for the following year. MPs complain that local politics stopped them from doing their best, which sounds plausible. Thus, Tapan Sikdar was apparently thwarted by two Left-controlled municipalities from having work orders signed by the District Magistrate, executed: Mamata made a similar complaint against former municipal commissioner Asim Burman for not issuing utilisation certificates.

But then there are also complaints that State Governments routinely make against the Centre and vice versa. There is political disputation at every level. Why should MPs expect problems to disappear miraculously when it comes to looking after the development of their constituencies which is an integral part of representing the people? Besides, MPLADs gave them an opportunity to do some worthwhile work for their constituents as against crowding the well of the Lok Sabha for instance. The only conclusion is that there is a good measure of neglect in this whole business, MPs are too busy looking after power equations in Delhi and at home to bother about development which, in any case, is hardly the decisive factor in competitive politics. The same power equations determine the expenditure incurred on the MPLAD account. The CAG report mentions a sum of Rs 1 crore spent on a boundary wall to the DM's residence, library and computer room, on building police stadiums, on government houses and on beautification of official residences out of funds earmarked for the creation of durable assets. One MP even asked if he could build a temple! The supervision of these funds vests with the Centre and their utilisation depends on collaboration with the district administration and local elected bodies. Perhaps the better option is to set up an effective mechanism to unite the MP with his MLAs, the heads of various local bodies and administrative tiers, so that areas of expenditure can be identified and accountability to the MP established more effectively.

THE STATESMAN

27 MAY 2001

The Bandh Wagon

The Maharashtra bandh called last Wednesday by an unusual coalition of political parties and trade unions, spanning the spectrum from saffron to red, was a near-total "success" — so much so that the elated leaders now propose to organise similar bandhs all across the nation. Ostensibly called to "combat the onslaught of globalisation, privatisation and liberalisation", the bandh's success is claimed to reflect the "people's" unhappiness and anger at the government's economic policies. It would be pertinent to ask which people the organisers are talking about. Can they presume to speak on behalf of those which could not get around on their business because of the *rasta roko* and *rail roko* enforced by hoodlums; the ones deprived of their daily needs because shops had downed their shutters fearing violence; and the poor daily wagers deprived of their livelihood because of enforced idleness? As long ago as 1997 the Kerala High Court had given a path-breaking judgment that calling a bandh and the enforcement of it by coercion, intimidation and violence would constitute an illegal and unconstitutional act, a ruling that was upheld by the Supreme Court. However, the continued defiance of it by political parties and associated trade unions led last year to the Kerala court asking the Election Commission to deregister political parties resorting to such acts. This order was stayed by the apex court; but it would be in the fitness of things now for public-spirited citizens' groups to approach the Supreme Court to clarify the original judgment and to direct the state governments to carry out their obligation to uphold law and order and ban the calling of bandhs.

It is really the proposed liberalisation of labour laws that the trade unions are up in arms against. Actually their overall purpose is to introduce much needed flexibility in the labour market and thus, promote increased employment. At present no industry can resort to lay-off, retrenchment or closure without prior approval of government, something which is never given; this has led to industries being chary of employing labour, preferring rather to resort to capital-intensive technologies and/or buying from small-scale enterprises. Under the liberalised law, units employing up to 1,000 workers can now adopt flexible labour practices; at the same time, the compensation for retrenched workers is being increased from 15 to 45 days salary for each completed year of service. This, as also the liberalisation of the law relating to contract labour which is designed to promote outsourcing of industrial activities, will be greatly to the advantage of industries as well as labour. The new laws will facilitate closure of sick units, restructuring of industries on more efficient lines, and fuel greater employment and growth. If the first-generation economic reforms from the early nineties raised India's growth rate to 6-7 per cent (and reduced the incidence of poverty by an estimated 10 percentage points), the labour reforms have the potential to raise it further to 9 per cent or higher. The trade unions are naturally apprehensive about losing their constituency of organised labour. The saving grace perhaps is that both mainstream national parties, the BJP and Congress, were not among the organisers of the Maharashtra bandh. They should not unite in the national interest to see the reforms through.

Not quite a terrorist

IF INDIA is a trifle disappointed with the continuing US reluctance to describe Pakistan as a terrorist State, it is partly because at one time the 'failed' State of Pakistan had come close to being branded as such. Since then, the perception in this part of the world has been that it is only a question of time before the dreaded designation is openly conferred. The expectation may have been all the greater because of the growing American acknowledgement of the involvement of terrorists operating from Pakistan in Kashmir. Indeed, the admission in the latest US report on global terrorism that the focal point of such activities has shifted from West Asia to the Pakistan-Afghanistan region seemingly paves the way for categorising Pakistan as a terrorist State.

There are several reasons, however, for the American hesitation to take any step in that direction. One is the old friendship between the two countries from the Cold War days, which places Pakistan on a different footing from, say, countries like Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Sudan and North Korea which the US unhesitatingly designates as terrorist. Washington presumably still feels that it can persuade Pakistan to turn away from its current self-destructive path, especially because there are elements in that country which are

uneasy about the growing influence of fundamentalism there. Islamabad also keeps such hopes alive in Washington both by complying with some of the US demands on checking terrorism and by raising the scare of the extremists gaining the upper hand if the present 'moderate' regime is destabilised.

Though unsatisfactory from the Indian point of view, New Delhi can still focus on the positive side of the American attitude which is now less purblind towards Islamabad's transgressions than when the US ignored even the Sino-Pak nuclear collaboration during the Cold War. Although Pakistan, along with Lebanon, may not be 'a stone's throw away' from being declared as terrorist, as has been suggested, there is little doubt that the attention of the international community is now focused on the Pakistan-Afghanistan region. While Kabul is facing sanctions, Islamabad, already reviled because of the military rule, must be aware that its pretences of being a normal country are wearing thin. As long as it harbours murderous outfits like Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Tayyeba, Jaish-e-Mohammed and others, there is every chance of the balance suddenly tilting against it.

The offence-defence balance

Time to rethink security policies in the light of the US move

INDIA must hope that President George W. Bush's inclination towards consultation with allies and friends on the new US security plans is genuine and will continue. Considering the fundamental changes he wants to bring about in strategic architecture, it is wise to proceed cautiously. During his speech at a defence institution in Washington he made clear his determination to go ahead with a missile defence system and to amend or abandon the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. The surprising feature was how far he was prepared to go to win his case in the international arena by persuasion and diplomacy, and to bring Russia aboard. Pre-speech phone calls were made to Moscow, Tokyo and European capitals and these are being followed by meetings between leaders and briefings by US officials in other capitals. Bush spoke of working with the Russians and perhaps working on a joint defence programme.

Not everyone will be bowled over as New Delhi so obviously was by this charm offensive. But other capitals will welcome the chance to express their concerns about the destabilising effects of missile defence systems, the risks of a new global arms race and of the unravelling of other arms control regimes once the ABM treaty is scuttled. So far so good. But it is not obvious whether seeking others' views goes along with a willingness to make adjustments or whether Bush's mind is made up and these are attempts merely to soften up world opinion. Besides signalling that he wants to play like a true internationalist, Bush is linking missile defence with unilateral cuts in the US nuclear arsenal.

The Russians who have already been urging deeper cuts and cannot afford to maintain a large stockpile are now left to act on their own and make their own cuts. If the two are as good as their word, there should be a substantial reduction in nuclear weapons on both sides without protracted negotiations. That would be a positive development if it actually comes about.

The Bush policy team seems to have in mind a system of offensive weapons and defensive weapons. It represents a shift from the nuclear balance of terror that has underpinned Washington's vision of international security for decades. But Washington's nuclear policy is undergoing a review and until more details of the new policy emerge it is far too premature to pass judgement on the new strategy. In any case, even after cuts, there will be 2,000 to 2,500 nukes each in the US and Russia, enough for mutual assured destruction and to blow up the world several times over. Second, despite its subdued reaction, Russia does feel uneasy about US plans for a missile defence. It may feel the need not to cut back but develop new weapons to counter US moves. Third, China almost certainly will feel threatened and driven to enhancing its relatively modest arsenal severalfold to ensure its effectiveness. India cannot be pleased at either prospect. The US may be bent on missile defence, limited or otherwise, and its allies will eventually go along with it. India needs to think about the technology, about ways of making it universally available when proven, and how the international system can be stabilised during the changes that will inevitably take place.

INDIAN EXPRESS

5 MAY 2001

Dumped Kutch targets Delhi

FROM BASANT RAWAT

Anjar, May 1: People in these parts of quake-hit Gujarat feel betrayed. "We trusted the state government and it cheated us. Now there is no point talking to this government."

They are bracing for a series of agitations against the government's rehabilitation package that did not meet their expectations. "One option we are exploring is to restart the 'long march' from Ahmedabad to Delhi," said Shyam Sunder, who had spearheaded a padayatra earlier this month, which was terminated after a written assurance from the government.

Quake victims are now awaiting Group-2001's call for an agitation. This time Group-2001, an Anjar-based organisation, will not protest alone. People from other towns will join hands as well.

"The organisation is co-ordinating with the Bhuj Rehabilitation Committee to work out a collective strategy," Sunder said.

Ratnakar Dholakia, convener of Bhuj Rehabilitation Committee, who is constantly in "touch" with Group-2001, said: "We have decided to support Group-2001. If

it restarts its long march from where it was cut short, we will also join it."

The committee has faxed a message to the state government, saying "the package is not acceptable" to them. Group-2001 has also written to the Prime Minister and home minister about their "horrible" living conditions.

Expressing displeasure over the "least attractive package", Group-2001 plans to write to President K.R. Narayanan to apprise him of the people's "feelings". Members of the group "will write a letter to the President with their blood, conveying their hurt feelings", Sunder said. "We will also write to the human rights commission about the kind of injustice being done and the step-motherly treatment meted out to quake victims," he added.

To embarrass chief minister Keshubhai Patel, Group-2001 also plans to write to non-resident Gujaratis, mostly those settled in the US who raised money for the rehabilitation of quake victims. "We will inform them about the package and request them not to give money to the government, which we do not trust," Sunder said.

A succession of shortsighted leaders have wasted the gains from the dismemberment of Pakistan

Too hard for a soft State

BY BRAHMA CHELLANEY

INDIA TOTTERS from one crisis to the next, and from one fiasco to the next. The latest debacle over the torture-killing of 16 border troops by their Bangladeshi captors marks a new low. The question vexing the average Indian is that if the country cannot handle Bangladesh, how can it possibly manage the joint threat mounted by China and Pakistan.

Sadly, those in power have understood neither the popular mood nor the demands of statecraft. Contrary to Jaswant Singh's suggestion, the options for India were not black-and-white: to bomb Bangladesh or do what it did — turn the other cheek. One extremity cannot be justified by pointing to another extremity.

The reasons for popular despair are self-evident. Authorities woke up only after official comments and grisly photographs from Bangladesh appeared in the Indian press. Even then, India's first reaction was to issue a clean chit to Sheikh Hasina's government, even as her loyalists, the home minister and BDR chief, were acclaiming the action. New Delhi insisted it is a case of a rogue general-led "local adventurism" (later raised to "criminal adventurism").

Few could have missed the parallels with Kargil and Kandahar. New Delhi was quick to absolve Nawaz Sharif and blame General Musharraf for Kargil, and to clear the Taliban and blame Pakistan for the hijacking even as the Taliban was supplying fresh arms to the hijackers. Just the way the mutilation-killing of six Indian troops by Pakistanis in Kargil and the hijackers' fatal slitting of the throat of one passenger were forgotten, New Delhi has already put behind itself the cold-blooded murders of BSF men in Bangladesh captivity.

India has damaged its interests not so much from failing to hit back at Bangladesh as from failing to dissuade its 'friendly' neighbour (particularly its military establishment) from making a confrontational move to taunt and humiliate it. It is the failure of dissuasion that carries serious long-term costs, as it conveys to one and all (including to Nepal and Bhutan) that it is possible to challenge Indian interests and get away with it.

In dissuasion strategy, a credible threat to use force can help deter aggressive conduct effectively without the need to employ force. The failed dissuasion is clear evidence that India's punitive power is not seen as credible or backed by requisite political will. The Indian republic is widely perceived as flabby, corrupt and craven. The just-launched large-scale military manoeuvres on the western front, code-named *Poorna Vijay*, can do little to change such perceptions.

The newest debacle, shortly after the 30th anniversary of the blood-soaked proclamation of Bangladesh, raises a deeper issue — the manner India has frittered away the gains from its dismem-



SECURING THE NATION: Indira Gandhi during the 1971 war against Pakistan

berment of Pakistan. It is a poor reflection on India's diplomacy and defence strategy that the momentous outcome of the 1971 war is today looking like strategic deadweight.

India's military triumph was extraordinary. Considering India's prolonged subjugation by foreign rulers from the advent of Mahmud Ghauri in the 12th century to the departure of the British in 1947, the 1971 victory was the first decisive, native Indian-led triumph in a major war in eight centuries.

Bangladesh was conceived in mayhem and bloodletting, with General Tikka Khan's forces adopting scorched-earth tactics, Bengalis and Biharis killing each other, and Muslims of different ethnic hues targeting Hindus. Bangladesh, however, would not have been born had India not intervened. Even as the genocide was going on, India held off its intervention for nine months so that the Himalayan mountain passes along the Indo-Tibetan border were snow-blocked.

Declassified documents published in William Burr's *The Kissinger Transcripts* affirm Mrs Gandhi's wisdom in waiting until winter as the Nixon administration had been egging on China to militarily intervene on Pakistan's side. During the war, Washington dispatched the nuclear-capable *USS Enterprise* to the Bay of Bengal to intimidate India and hold back the Soviet Union in case the Chinese decided to bail out Pakistan. But it was not until the war ended that Nixon realised, according to his own memoirs, that China did not have the capability to do a 1962 on India.

India's strategic reasons for intervention were compelling, and the victory was fashioned astutely by Indira Gandhi. Despite the two blunders she committed (Emergency and Operation Bluestar), she was the only leader India has pro-

duced with a vision as well as guts on national security. India's misfortune has been that all the men who have served as its Prime Minister have been wobbly on national security.

In fact, a succession of shortsighted leaders have turned Pakistan's dismemberment into a strategic inconsequentiality, raising a number of questions. What did India achieve by cutting Pakistan into two? Does India feel more secure today? Did dismemberment make Pakistan politically, economically and militarily more compact?

Pakistan's dismemberment was never an end in itself, but a means to tame and contain that country. Indira Gandhi certainly did not conceive of 1971 as a stand-alone operation. Given Pakistan's congenital hatred towards India and its untamed belligerence, the dismemberment had to be part of a larger plan to keep in check or tear down the rest of Pakistan.

No sooner Mrs Gandhi realised that she had been duped by Z.A. Bhutto at Simla than she launched the Baluch operation in late 1972. In her second term in office, she expanded her efforts to haemorrhage Pakistan. Mrs Gandhi's successors, in contrast, were not strategic thinkers and, by neglecting the purpose of 1971, allowed Pakistan to recoup from the dismemberment and consolidate itself.

As a result, the Pakistan problem has come back to haunt India with a vengeance. The Pakistan-sponsored destabilisation of India has flowed from the politics of revenge. Ironically, it is that very humiliation that Islamabad seeks to avenge that created a more compact Pakistan with the strategic space to pursue destabilisation games against India.

Had East Pakistan not become Bangladesh, Pakistan would have

remained highly vulnerable to Indian military pressure, with the east wing an enduring drain on Pakistan's defence and economy. With those vulnerabilities, Pakistan would have had little strategic room to methodically wage the kind of unconventional warfare it has done against India. No other country in modern history has systematically worked to undermine its neighbour's security through subversion and clandestine war for so long without the victim State imposing any retaliatory costs.

With the world's eighth largest army, Pakistan is now a stronger military entity than it was in 1971 despite its serious political and economic problems at home. The consolidation of defence assets from two widely-separated wings into one geographically compact entity has helped Pakistan to considerably narrow the military gap with India.

Further, India lowered its guard along the long, porous border with Bangladesh in the belief that it had secured a new friend. This triggered a heavy flow of illegal refugees whose continued influx has seriously weakened Indian security.

India intervened in 1971 because 10 million refugees had taken shelter on its soil. But since Bangladesh's birth, as many as 15 million new refugees have reportedly entered India without it being able to stop the influx. These migrants have swamped parts of India, sparking social and political problems at the local level. Such demographic changes are one of the elements destabilising India.

Had East and West Pakistan remained together, the deep-rooted dissimilarities, disagreements and antipathies between the two wings would have kept them in perpetual opposition and conflict. Soft India's long-term interests would have been better served had the conflict between West and East Pakistan been allowed to fester indefinitely. This discord would have kept Pakistan preoccupied in internal war, leaving it little room for waging a proxy or limited war against India. By now, it could have become a failed State.

By liberating East Pakistan from the clutches of West Pakistan, India facilitated the resurgence of the very feelings among the Muslims of Bangladesh that contributed to the subcontinent's partition in 1947. The idea to carve out Pakistan from India was born not in what remains of Pakistan today, but in what is now Bangladesh and in Uttar Pradesh. East Bengal was the birthplace of the Muslim League and the catalyst in the partition of India.

It is thus no surprise that Bangladesh has been breeding anti-India elements. While the schism between West and East Pakistan was linguistic and quasi-racial, the gulf between India and Bangladesh is rooted in history and religion. Such a gulf demands strategic handling. The lesson from Indira's lost legacy is that a foe's dismemberment is not for a pusillanimous State.

The Advani-Geelani duet

By Harish Khare

Thanks to Mr. Advani, the Geelani line (that Kashmir is witnessing a civilisational clash between Islam and non-Islamic forces) gets reinforced and legitimised with every passing day.

WE ARE periodically invited to believe that Mr. Lal Krishna Advani is the only true *desh-bakht* in the Vajpayee Government, which is otherwise teeming with weaklings who have no sense of national pride or honour of mother India. Whenever the Government ends up making a mess of things on the internal or the external security front, Mr. Advani's acolytes and apologists inevitably offer a half-hearted explanation how the man who would be Sardar Patel II was keen to play Rambo but that his counsel of stern response was discounted by ministerial colleagues. As Mr. Advani's admirers tell the story, he has been waging a frustrating battle against the closet soft-state "wallahs" within the administration.

This incredible story has been dished out time and again in the last three years. First Mr. Advani wanted to issue a White Paper on the ISI that would have galvanised the entire country against the "enemy", but the Foreign Office was unwilling to allow him even this harmless bureaucratic indulgence. Then, at the time of the Khandahar crisis, the Home minister himself instigated a view that he was all in favour of wielding the knuckle-duster against the hijackers. The script was again enacted after the Prime Minister initiated his ceasefire diplomacy in Jammu and Kashmir. And, now, once again, after the flare-up on the India-Bangladesh border, Mr. Advani's spin-doctors would have us believe that he was all for teaching Bangladesh a lesson or two, but, alas, was expectedly overruled by the foreign policy buffs.

It is of course a different matter that as Union Home Minister Mr. Advani has done precious little to exorcise the internal security instruments of their corrupt and corrupting habits; even the Border Security Force, very much a creature of the Home Ministry, has not been purged of its venal culture. It is also a different matter that at no point has his *deshbhakti* nagged Mr. Advani enough to walk out of the Government. If pressed on this point he will probably reply that his departure would cause irreparable damage to the

Vajpayee Government and as a true *desh-bakht* he was not prepared to provide aid and comfort to the BJP's opponents. Clever enough. Also convenient enough.

Since it is the hallmark of a true *desh-bakht* that he never gives up working for the glory of mother India, Mr. Advani's dogged persistence has yielded him a kind of veto power in the matter of whether or not Syed Ali Shah Geelani be allowed to travel to Pakistan, as part of a Hurriyat Conference delegation. Mr. Advani has been adamant that the Jamat-e-

Islami leader be not permitted to go to Pakistan, because he would use his sojourn on Pakis-

tani soil to besmirch India's reputation. So unyielding has Mr. Advani been in the matter of Mr. Geelani's travel that he has not bothered about whether he was virtually sabotaging his own Government's strategic initiative in Kashmir.

What is more, Mr. Advani's drum-beaters saw to it that his stand was widely known. May be it earned Mr. Advani a few brownie points with the Nagpur brass. In any case, the divergence in the perceptions and approaches between Mr. Advani and the rest of the Vajpayee Government is the subject matter of animated discussion in and outside Srinagar. But the only inference the APHC leaders and the rest of the Kashmiri public could draw from Mr. Advani's obduracy was that somehow the Government of India was afraid of one man but was sufficiently confident of a Yaseen Malik or an Abdul Gani Lone or a Mirwaiz Farooq behaving like New Delhi's obedient boys. If the Union Home Minister was so apprehensive what an individual Kashmiri leader would say or do in Pakistan, how could the "resistance" crowd take seriously New Delhi's peace initiative?

But Mr. Advani's adamancy suited Syed Geelani rather well. In one stroke, Mr. Advani stigmatised the rest of the Hurriyat leadership as *bikkau maal* (compromised lot). The presumed hostility of Mr. Advani has given Syed Geelani the halo of an uncompromised Kashmiri patriot.

Not long ago it looked like Mr. Geelani had been marginalised within and outside the Jamat, but Mr. Advani's contrariness has brought him back to the centre stage — much to the delight of the Pakistani establishment. All said and done, Mr.

STATERCRAFT

Advani is too much of a *desh-bakht*; otherwise he could be suspected of deliberately

building up Syed Geelani as the Kashmiri leader, the only man who has willfully injected an element of religious antagonism in the Kashmir conflict.

It requires no great perspicacity to remember that the strategic requirement in Jammu and Kashmir for sometime now has been to undermine the intellectual and political appeal of Syed Geelani's argument that what Kashmir was witnessing was a civilisational clash between Islam and non-Islamic forces. In this clash every jihadi had a right to throw a hand grenade at the security forces. Syed Geelani's new song was so much music to Pakistani ears that Islamabad and Riyadh pooled their resources to secure a seat for him on the Mecca-based Rabta Alam-e-Islami. Syed Geelani should have reason enough to thank Mr. Advani; after all, it was the Home Minister's obduracy that confirmed Syed Geelani's *raison d'etre*. Unwittingly, Mr. Advani has elevated the Jamat leader as the fulcrum around whom the anti-India forces could coalesce and consolidate.

Is this *juggalbandi* born out of outdated habits of a partisan mind or can a

larger design be discerned behind Mr. Advani's unhelpful attitude? Students of political conflicts know that the hardliners and extremists tend to support tactics and solutions that end up invoking and then reinforcing hardline stances on the other side of the divide; the moderates turn out to be the losers. This was the pattern well-established in Punjab, when the Khalistanis inevitably upped the ante, forcing the moderates to fall in line or risk being branded as collaborators of the "Hindu sarkar" in Delhi.

It would be a tragedy as well as an insult to the Indian state's capacity to deal with conflicts if Punjab was allowed to be repeated in Jammu and Kashmir, especially at a time when the Vajpayee establishment is making an attempt to melt the frozen turbulence in the troubled state. Unfortunately, Syed Geelani's it-is-a-religious-conflict song finds an echo in Hindutva's backyard. It is no secret that a section of the Sangh Parivar is not averse to the trifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir along religious lines. A multi-religious secular Kashmir was the very anti-thesis of the "Hindu Rashtra" plank. And, it is only incidental that this option of a religion-based redrawing of the boundaries has long been advocated by the old-fashioned "imperialists". And, needless to add, a religion-based "settlement" of the Kashmir problem would be the ultimate ideological vindication of Pakistan.

Now this Advani-Geelani "entente" has practically pushed the moderates in Srinagar and New Delhi on the backfoot. Pakistan can be excused for wanting to ensure that India's peace initiative got grounded on the question of the Hurriyat's visit to Islamabad. Thanks to Mr. Advani, the Geelani line gets reinforced and legitimised with every passing day. It should be obvious to every sensible Indian that the next battle for India's secular soul will be fought in Kashmir where the Islamic fundamentalists will be only too happy to receive whatever help the Hindutva crowd can provide. Before this mischief gets under way, the Advani-Geelani *juggalbandi* must be broken up.

THE HINDU

10/10/2001

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ABUSE OF POWER-II

Perverse Use Of Retired Officers

By BP SAHA

SANJAY Gandhi's insolence and interference in administration, indeed, marred all fairness and decency. Cabinet Ministers used to placate him to gain favours indirectly from Mrs Gandhi and to avoid his haughty reaction. Often they used to sacrifice their dignity and self respect. Minister VC Sukla, a co-accused with Sanjay in *Kissa Kurshi Kaa* case, humoured Sanjay. Many senior Congress leaders hung around him. The day judgment in the the *Kissa Kurshi Kaa* case was pronounced convicting Sanjay and VC Sukla, Congress leader Vasant Sathe, with 40-50 followers entered the court room, shouted slogan and let loose pandemonium. The entire episode was deliberately engineered to prove his loyalty to Sanjay and to draw Mrs Gandhi's attention. Sanjay was surrounded by the late Arjun Das, Lalit Makhan, Akbar Ahmed (Dummy) and Jagdish Tytler. During prolonged trial in the *Kissa Kurshi Kaa* case in Tees Hazari Court, Sanjay's followers frequently resorted to slogan shouting and unruly demonstrations outside the court premises. Sanjay's henchmen used to bully innocent persons and recklessly interfere in official matters.

STERILISATION

In Sanjay's sterilisation drive in Delhi many leaders including Ms Ruksana Sultana overzealously enforced the programme just to bag Sanjay's patronage. For committing excesses in the family planning drive the CBI registered a case against her and others.

Rumour that the late Dharendra Brahmachari had free access to Indira Gandhi was enough for unscrupulous persons to secure his help to obtain favours from the government. Many business groups and public servants tried to utilise his services spending hefty amounts. Broadly, he worked as a conduit of several ministers and contact man for many firms. For his yoga ashram opposite to Gol Dak Khana New Delhi, he fraudulently collected substantial financial aid from the government and cunningly siphoned off a major portion. He claimed to have received a gift of an aircraft valued at Rs 5 crores from a US firm. The CBI registered two cases against him, searched his residence at Friends Colony and ashram at Mantalai (Jammu) and was chargesheeted in the first fraud case.

Bureaucrats in the PMO often

fail to remain level-headed. Some of them are overbearing, give an impression that being in the seat of power they decide everything. As matters have to pass through the PMO they treat others casually or indifferently. Even senior ministers are not given due attention or weightage. Undeniably, common people can hardly approach the PMO. Secondly, as

are weakened. Evidently, the officers lose the initiative to discharge duties efficiently. Even many ministers are upset since they find that the PMO is a hurdle in securing approvals, sanctions in urgent and important matters and initiating disciplinary proceedings against senior officers.

A minister's proposal to get a joint secretary transferred went unheeded. In fact, the clever officer sensing action secretly approached the PMO and appealed, pricking the sentiments of the service fraternity. Dispassionately, an aura of dissent has been looming large in many ministries because of high-handedness unleashed by the supremo and his comrades in the PMO.

Ironically, the people's representatives joining the ministry often come under the clutch of the bureaucracy. Being new and inexperienced they are guided by the secretary, office staff and soon succumb to evil spirit of blandishment. Extraordinary importance and pompous attention turn their heads and drag them away from unassuming and simple living.

WEALTH

As the communication gap between the minister and the people widens, they are forced to depend more and more on the bureaucracy and cunning personal staff. Secondly, since the best years in a political career are short, they try to amass wealth. Today, since politics is the synonym for corruption and vice versa, no party or government is lily-white. In the present scenario and political system, parties or government may come and go but the present system is likely to be unchanged. Therefore, it is high time that a new system is introduced or the existing system is galvanised for curbing money and muscle power and weeding out corrupt and tainted public servants.

Retired officers hardly care for accountability or public criticism and hence they recklessly and blatantly side with political bosses to perpetuate corrupt practices. Therefore, the government is inducting retired public servants in key assignments because they are already a spent force.

In sum, corruption has to be eradicated from public life at any cost. In such an endeavour, the government must possess the will, organise a pragmatic cleansing drive and frustrate the devious forces.



they operate from an isolated cell, their misdeeds hardly come to the notice of the press or public. However, the IAS lobby enjoys a distinct advantage as they can easily communicate with the service-mates dominating the PMO and highlight their points.

Importantly, once it is realised that a favourable order from the PM or the PMO cannot be obtained by short-circuiting the influential officials, the crafty build links and cultivate them by fair means or foul. Soon, an understanding develops on the basis of a quid pro quo. At the fag-end of his career, Brajesh Mishra is behind the decision making in many crucial matters. When NK Singh was inducted into the PMO, he had learnt the art of satisfying the master. Indeed, their indispensability is a clear signal for others to get their so called blessings in fulfilling their designs. Enjoying confidence and trust they often show arrogance and ignore even VIPs and colleagues. The Prime Minister has sacrificed his defence minister but is strangely soft with Mishra.

RESENTMENT

Incidentally, if one carefully lends one's ears to conversations in the corridors of the general secretariat, Shastri Bhavan, Udyog Bhawan and Krishi Bhawan, one will be surprised to learn the resentment brewing in the ministries against the PMO. Departmental secretaries feel that their recommendations are often circumscribed or rejected according to the whims of the PMO and thereby, they are ridiculed and their power and authority

THE STA

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(Contd.)

Same foes, shifting stands

By K. K. Katyal

NEW DELHI, APRIL 30. A visibly angry Dr. Manmohan Singh bluntly tells the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, that his words in the concluding speech of the budget session contained a threat (of action against the Opposition) and, as such, are unacceptable. Mr. Vajpayee disclaims there was any threat, says he made only a general point — about moral standards. Dr. Singh disagrees sharply, sticks to his object. The Prime Minister says unwarranted meanings were read into his reference. The unsavoury exchange ends the way it began — abruptly.

That was at the Prime Minister's house on Sunday evening after the Maharashtra Governor, Dr. P. C. Alexander's book, *India in the New Millennium*, was released by Mr. Vajpayee. The function, held in the newly-constructed air-conditioned hall, was impeccable, what with a thought-provoking address by the author, good humour oozing out of the jolly performance of the Chief Election Commissioner, Dr. M. S. Gill (he was given the first copy) and, of course, the Prime Minister's remarks. The tea, after the main function, was an informal, agreeable, pleasant affair, with a small group of guests mingling, discussing the issues of the day. The most topical issue — the war of words between the Prime Minister and the Congress — could not have been left out. The exchange between the Prime Minister and Dr. Singh provided a glimpse into what India may be like in the initial phase of the new decade.

As Mr. Vajpayee explained before and after his brush with Dr. Singh, his reference to moral consideration was not directed against any particular person or a particular case or cases. He did not accept that it contained any significant allusion — "no such thing. Only a general point". He had issued a clarificatory statement, added the Prime Minister (reference to the one issued earlier on Sunday).

Avoidable episode

The third and final round of the Government-Congress confrontation, of which the Sunday evening episode was an offshoot, was avoidable. The Prime Minister could have done without the reference of the type he made in his concluding speech of the last day of the session. He wears two caps — one, of the Prime Minister as the head of the majority

grouping and, two, of the leader of the House and this was an occasion when he needed to give expression to sentiments on behalf of all the sections, to project an image of consensus. By temperament, he was suited for that role. Quite an irony that the Leader of the Opposition, Ms. Sonia Gandhi, peeved and stung by the Prime Ministerial remarks, found herself complaining to the Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, known for his hardline approach towards Mr. Vajpayee, associated with moderation.

No narration, howsoever competent and skilful, could do justice to what actually happened on the last day of the Parliament session. The body language of neither the Prime Minister nor of Ms. Gandhi could be conveyed in words. The gestures and gesticulation, the style and emphasis said a lot Sonia ore. "Those asking for my resignation on moral grounds should be aware that there are a lot of issues on which moral considerations will not work one way" — these words of the Prime Minister sounded ominous because of the manner of delivery. Some translated the Hindu word used by him as "cases" instead of "issues". This was interpreted by some to be a reference to the charges levelled against Ms. Gandhi by the Janata Party leader, Dr. Subramanian Swamy.

Advantage Opposition

The budget session had three distinct rounds. The first one, revolving round the Tehelka episode, showed the leading figures of the ruling side in a highly disagreeable light. The Government was stunned, dazed. The advantage was with the Opposition — the Congress and others.

Round two was marked by shiftiness in the Congress stand — from the demand of the Prime Minister's resignation to the call for a JPC. As a result, it failed to keep up the momentum. The Government, on the other hand, gathered its wits and was able to shift the focus away from Tehelka and all that it meant. In the third round, the Government side squandered the advantage, gained earlier — because of the Prime Minister's remarks.

The confrontation between the Government and the Congress looks like becoming a continuing feature. Any hope of a respite is not realistic — it could only get sharper.

Residents of Bangladeshi enclaves in India wait for poll day to get card of identity

Where a vote is a ticket to dignity

Kunal Chandra Roy is not an Indian citizen. But he will vote again for Bengal. He doesn't give a damn who he's voting for. He'll just obey those men and punch on the symbol they will ask him to memorise. How does it matter who comes to power, who wins, who loses, as long as he gets a ration card.

All he wants is a little human respect.

Kunal is among those Bangladeshis who fell off their country's map and into Indian territory. At the time the border was being drawn, little Bangladeshi enclaves sprang up on Indian territory, small, insulated bubbles trapping a few for life. There are 97 of them now. Some 130 Indian enclaves were also formed in Bangladesh.

Marooned in a small island of Bangladeshi land in a large ocean that is Indian territory, Kunal wants to be absorbed into the mainstream. And he knows the local panchayat leaders hold the ticket to freedom.

During election time, these leaders sell these tickets for some bogus votes. It's a quid pro quo deal — come, vote for our man, no matter that your name is not on the list, and we'll give you something in return, something like a ration card. "Though we are technically Bangladeshi subjects, our hearts belong to India," says Promod Chandra Roy. He was born here, after Independence, after the 1947 Radcliffe Award helped create these pockets of isolation on either side of the border.

But there are some, like 36-year-old Santosh Roy who has managed to break out of his capsule and enter Indian territory with full honours. Like Kunal and Promod, he, too, will vote, but his will not



His father's bogus vote could ensure that he gets a ration card — his passport to a school in India. Picture by Raju Bhattacharya

be a bogus one. His name features on the voters' list. How did that happen? "Oh, I built a house in Indian territory." He's proud of his house. He's proud to be Indian. He also boasts of his connection. "I have been voting for the Left Front..." It's obvious the party has taken care of this more prosperous comrade.

Others, however, are not quite as lucky. Trapped in their tiny enclaves — some like Baro Balapokhari in Cooch Behar's Kuchlibari are as small as 2.4 sq. km — these people cannot even enrol their children in Indian schools. That is why Kunal and Promod will vote for anybody, anything to get that ration card.

"We want the Indian and the Bangladeshi governments to sort out the enclave issue," he says. But he knows that his is a small enclave. There won't be any historic Teen Bigha corridor to link him to the mainland, though Baro Balapokhari is only 700 metres from the Bangladesh border.

The year 1996 changed the lives of many people in two of the biggest enclaves — Angara Pota and Dahagram. P.V. Narasimha Rao, then Prime Minister, entered into an historic agreement with Sheikh Hasina and the corridor, approximately three bighas long, was thrown open to the people of these enclaves, linking them to Rangpur district in Bangladesh.

For some, mainland, freedom — freedom that's limited to only eight hours a day when the corridor is open, but freedom nonetheless. For others like Kunal and Promod, nothing. Maybe the polls will make all the difference for them. Thank god for democracy.

PROBIR PRAMANIK

THE TELEGRAM

10/11/2011

S. Korean unions begin strike, markets dive

Bill Tarrant / Seoul

27 MAY

HARDLINE SOUTH Korean unions began a two-day strike on Wednesday to protest against soaring unemployment and the prospect of mass layoffs as the stock market took another dive.

Lee Kap-yong, head of the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), which is spearheading the strikes, said 125 unions across the nation and 120,000 members are joining the strike. The KCTU has a total membership of more than 550,000.

Lee said however the KCTU would continue talks with the government even during the strikes.

On Tuesday, prosecutors urged employers to lock out workers if the action went on too long.

In an unusual public statement, the Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office said the strikes were "clearly illegal".

KCTU leaders said they negotiated with the government overnight on Tuesday, but a union spokesman said on Wednesday the talks failed to produce satisfactory results.

The confederation said the strikes would last for two days but could be extended if the government uses force.

The KCTU said it is striking to demand a stop to mass layoffs, an increase in unemployment benefits, more reform of big conglomerates and a renegotiation of the International Monetary Fund's \$58.35 billion bailout package.

Workers were scheduled to hold a mass rally and a march through central Seoul later in the day.



Workers at Hyundai Motors rally in the south-eastern city of Ulsan on Tuesday after endorsing a 3-day strike proposal starting from Wednesday. The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions braces for a nationwide strike to fight rising lay-offs

Meanwhile, the Korea Stock Exchange was hit by another wave of selling. Shares on the composite index fell 2.33 per cent, or 7.27 points at the lunch break as investors became unhinged over the prospect of labour unrest.

"The news sparked a wave of foreign selling," said Kim Joghnan, a market analyst at the Korea Stock

Exchange. "Domestic institutional investors also went on a selling spree and individuals jumped on the bandwagon."

The market has dropped more than 11 per cent over the past two days and closed on Tuesday at an 11-year low.

The slumping yen and fears of another financial crisis emerging

in Korea have combined with worries about labour unrest to send the stock market into a tailspin, brokers said.

The South Korean won closed the morning session at 1,403 to the dollar against Tuesday's close of 1,393. But dealers said the market was flush with dollars as exporters cash in their holdings.

The won's downside would be limited to 1,410, they said.

A government-backed think-tank, the Korea Institute of Finance, on Tuesday forecast the economy would contract by 3.1 percent this year, compared to an IMF forecast of negative one percent in the gross domestic product.

— Reuters

Politics in Policy

Diplomacy in Times of Trouble

By K SHANKAR BAJPAI

11-10 2/9
OUR foreign minister's Washington visit is well-timed to strengthen awareness of India's concerns among Bush II's team while it is still thinking out policies. It comes also when those playing political games need reminding that putting their ambitions above those concerns imperils both.

Meagre and acerbic for decades, Indo-US relations have finally begun to be invested with content and civility, but are still far from figuring significantly in a Washington which looks at us essentially in terms of our relevance to its wider strategic and economic interests. Possibilities and problems have emerged in both contexts, but by and large policies regarding us and our region are shaped by two American priorities; non-proliferation and maintaining equilibrium of both power and antagonism. Add America's over-riding concern, the constant enhancement of its way of life, which requires advancing its business interests, and the issues we need to handle become self-evident.

Basking in the sunshine of Clinton's last years, we forget what a hard time we had in his first four, and how much harder it could have become after Pokhran II. We were incalculably well served by what has been so rare in our conduct of affairs that we hardly recognise it, a mature and able diplomacy, most especially the Jaswant-Talbot talks. It is ill-informed to say we went 'soft' on America, or that no agreements emerged from so many rounds. Policy-makers in both governments and their representatives in the field, sensibly seeking sensible ways out, not only steered past some extremely dangerous obstacles, but enabled the leadership to work in forward-looking ways.

As the only power today capable of influencing the course of events wherever it chooses, America will project its values and protect its interests, through multilateral institutions and processes as far as possible but unilaterally if necessary. Apart from the policy-makers' choices of what is possible or necessary, and where, the key determinant is what the American people will think of those choices. For India, one issue that does weigh with that public and one which they hardly think about, needs handling; non-proliferation and the India-Pakistan tangle associated with Kashmir.

Our right to 'go nuclear' — which incidentally, we accept as Pakistan's also — derives from our security needs but has long been intertwined with general principle arguments

about unfair non-proliferation regimes. Debating points that suit our armchair thinking cut no ice with others. America's fixed and steady policy, supported by the vast majority of the world, is to work against proliferation regardless of unfairness. It is equally our compulsion to ensure our security regardless of any non-proliferation constraints, but the ideal of our being formally and wholly one of the privileged nuclear powers is still a dream.

Regardless of America's own CTBT reservations, strengthening the international non-proliferation regime remains a prime endeavour, while it must remain ours to strengthen our security in the face of this general policy. A new complication is Washington's clear determination to develop a missile defence system; whatever country opposing it may say, the Europeans — including Russia — will work out deals, while China's inevitable counter build-up will increase our problems.

IN BRIEF

- Both India and the US have adopted a forward-looking bilateral approach
- China's counter to America's missile defence system will increase India's problems
- In today's vitiated political atmosphere, there can be no consensus on policy

Such complex issues can only be dealt with by the coordination of several policies and mechanisms. One single challenge requires and demonstrates the range of efforts to be integrated: Pakistan's determination to wrest Kashmir. This has to be met on two fronts; easing, if not dispelling, the J&K peoples' dissatisfaction, and containing, if not ending, Pakistan's machinations. We must improve our military capability, in efficiency no less than strength; work for greater economic growth which can benefit the Kashmiris as also add to outside interest in our stability, initiate purposeful dialogues to work out states' rights in general if not specifically for J&K and reduce corruption and other political and administrative reforms.

So dangerous an assault on our nationhood ought long since to have led to a national consensus. The saddest — and most disgraceful — aspect of our debasement of political life is the irresponsible refusal of all groups to work towards such consensus. Government supporters

blame the opposition for obstructive negativism, opponents blame government for arrogant secretiveness, the really childish scabbling for imagined political gains in blaming others multiplies the harm done by the historic Indian deficiency in communication. With the political atmosphere now more vitiated than ever, to attempt sensible policies even without consensus becomes a nightmare.

While Pakistan crystallises all that has to be coordinated, the Indo-US relationship is both relevant and important in itself. Neither wishful thinking that Washington will pull our chestnuts out of Pakistan's fire nor the suspicions still strong among anti-Americans are meaningful. The realistic view must be that Washington will not want instability to erupt in conflict, nor want Pakistan weak. Here too we have hard work ahead to gain time for what was being attempted within Kashmir and to gain understanding for our perfectly justified position that Lahore and Kargil cannot be reconciled.

Nothing could have buttressed our position in America more than real business. The endless contortions by which we insist on denying ourselves the economic progress that is within our capability also deprive us of that key instrument of international interaction — the consolidation of the economic underpinnings of relations that help countries deal even with severe differences constructively. Everyone is tiring of waiting for that eternally promised and eternally delayed dawn when we will become business-like. Nevertheless, the potential for injecting more positive content into Indo-US relations has not only survived Pokhran but is attracting more serious attention than before.

Politicians who think they can gain power by attacking their opponents betray only their unfitness to lead. Since elections are not won or lost on foreign policy issues, one might expect even the most immature to lapse into statesmanship on this, but those bent on unproductive tactics cannot rise even that high.

Much is feasible through greater effort to mobilise public opinion. What we must realise far more fully than we seem to is that the challenge from Pakistan, whatever its own internal problems and weaknesses, is unrelenting and far-reaching, and whether it is to cope with it directly or to build up our wider international position, notably in America, the government must overcome the political mess and seek direct public support.

Get it right: entire Muslim world hasn't ganged up on us

Reality check from Tehran

IN the Reagan era, bookshops on liberal campuses in the US used to sell a map of the world as it was supposedly viewed by their intellectually challenged president. It was really quite simple. A few swathes of pastels told you who were friends or foes. South Asia was, quite predictably, dismissed as Injuns. The only complexity was the Islamic world, because it had to be painted in two distinct hues: our Muslims, their Muslims. "Our" Muslims obviously were the Saudis, Kuwaitis and the other pro-Western Gulf states. "Their" Muslims were Iran and Iraq.

Very funny, isn't it? But how would it work if we were to ask an Indian schoolchild to paint a similarly simplistic map of the world? Which colour will he paint the Islamic world in? Friendly or hostile? And if he does call it hostile, will he make any distinction between "their" Muslims and "ours", friends, foes or neutrals?

Why just schoolchildren, ask any adult Indian that question and the answer would underline a most dangerous national consensus, that somehow all Muslim nations the world over are hostile to India. That the OIC is one tightly knit body leading this pan-Islamic charge against India and that it is this combined might of a hundred crore Muslims the world over that we are up against. Also, that because Pakistan officially treats us as its enemy and swears by the ummah, somehow every other Muslim in the world inevitably thinks so.

As Vajpayee's visit to Iran reaffirmed this week, nothing could be farther from truth. Listen, first, to what the Iranians said. Not only did they go out of their way to make subtle yet critical references to Pakistan, they even distanced themselves firmly from the Taliban-type fundamentalism. President Khatami, in fact, made an entirely unsolicited reference to growing "terrorism, violence, rebellion and narcotics trafficking" in Afghanistan and added that he was "deeply regretful that such crimes are committed in the name of Islam". He condemned the destruction at Bamiyan a little bit later, but the most significant nuance is that he regretted the use of Islam, not merely in connection with the destruction of the Buddha statues but in the overall context of Talibanisation. The Pakistanis, certainly, won't have liked it. But the lesson for us is that all Muslim countries and, by implication, all Muslims around the world do not think alike. Their respective world-views are governed by their own national interests, ideologies and historical and cultural linkages.

Throughout the history of mankind, religious monotheism has never implied

monolithic politics. Christian states have fought more wars against fellow Christian states than with others. The same is even truer for Islam. The notion of the cast-iron unity of the Islamic world is a reality only in the minds of the lunatics in Nagpur and others of the tribe. It is a hopeless myth and its perpetuation in our national mindset is extremely dangerous.

You do not have to be a scholar to see how divided the Islamic world is. First of all, Islamic societies of the east (Indonesia, Malaysia) think very differently from the rest. The African Is-

nis is Talibanised Afghanistan. This is where the popular Pakistani fantasy of defence-in-depth or what is derided, even by their own liberal intellectuals, as the PIA Pakistan-Iran-Afghanistan alliance, today stands.

Vajpayee is conscious of this and mark, therefore, the manner in which he has kept his message out of the religious, Islamic world paradigm, latching instead on to Khatami's call (to the western world) for a dialogue among civilisations. It would have been dangerous to hark on the Persian-Indian links th-

to safeguard its Muslims.

THE real danger in dividing up the world in blocks is that it closes your mind to any creative new solutions or approaches. If the Islamic world is united as the ummah, and hates you, what is the point of going out to engage with its constituents? Funnily, it is the one area of our worldview where public opinion is years behind even the policy making establishment. In the socialist past we had a problem. We thought the louder we shouted in support of the Palestinian cause, the more the Islamic bloc would love us. We failed to see that even then so many Arab countries, including, and notably, Jordan, were cutting deals with the West and burying the hatchet with Israel — in the Palestinians' back. In any case, our allegedly formidable leverage on the Palestinian cause was a mere delusion in our own minds and nobody took us seriously. It is only since Rao that we began moving away from this, shook hands with Israel and attempted to relate to some Islamic states as if they were nations in their own individual right with their own respective vested interests and insecurities. The distance we have travelled vis-a-vis Iran today is a reward for that.

Forget Reagan for a moment and see how the US, and the West, have sorted out the pan-Islamic threat. They have won over the GCC states with relentless engagement and by using democracy as an unstated blackmail with the ruling royals. Play ball with us or, who knows, when somebody would unleash democracy movements in your sheikhdoms, is the message. Iran and Iraq, on the other hand, are being openly attacked with "democracy" and told to democratise, or else. Democratisation, ironically, is the weapon with which they hope to attack these more egalitarian dictatorships. For Egypt, there is a different formula altogether. Mubarak is a stooge and a dictator who is fully underwritten by Uncle Sam for his support to the cause of an Arab-Israeli rapprochement. What threats does that leave in the Muslim world for the West and its interests, including Israel? A declining Saddam, a weakening Iran and a minor thug called Osama bin Laden.

Would they have been able to come so far if they too, like so many of us, had viewed and feared the Islamic world as a monolith that feels, thinks and acts as one? And, if this was so, would Khatami then have stood beside Vajpayee, condemning the Taliban for misusing Islam to justify their fundamentalist terror, drug-running and violence?

NATIONAL INTEREST



SHEKHAR GUPTA

Khatami condemned Bamiyan but, more significantly, regretted the use of Islam, not merely for tearing down statues, but also for terrorism. The lesson for us in this is that all Muslim countries do not think alike

lamic countries, particularly the Francophone ones, have their own peculiar concerns, so much so that some of them have taken the lead in establishing flourishing relations even with Israel. Finally, the Middle East is so violently divided, any thought of it standing by any faraway "Islamic" cause unitedly is utterly ludicrous. The more practical GCC nations are driven by their commercial interests. The Saudis are fighting for ideological supremacy in the world of the faithful with

at precede Islam. While dealing with Iran you cannot sidestep Islam. But the civilisational framework is a clever one. It would not only fox the Pakistanis but also help us look at a leading Islamic nation in historical terms, as a distinct, old nation-state rather than merely a fortress of fundamentalist Shia Islam.

Once you move beyond the religious straitjacket you look at the convergence or clash of interests in more realistic terms. That has been our emerging

Religious monotheism never implied monolithic politics. The notion of the cast-iron unity of the Islamic world is a reality only in the minds of the lunatics in Nagpur and others of the tribe. It's a dangerous myth

Iran. Both Iraq and Iran, militarily the strongest Islamic states, are still officially at war and, in some way or the other, have been so for 13 centuries now. Where does this leave Pakistan's fantasies of a pan-Islamic encirclement of India and our masochistic notion of the ummah targeting us as the common enemy? In fact, if you look closely at the Islamic world, the only country — such as it is — that may be fully in sync with the Pakista-

equation with Iran for the past six years or so, ever since Narasimha Rao and his then special envoy, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, sought Iran out as an ally at the UN Human Rights Convention in Geneva. It was also no surprise that with his nation still nursing the wounds of Babri, Rao got Rafsanjani to visit India and declare at Lucknow's Imambara that he had full faith in India's secularism and the ability of its constitutional system

EXTERNAL affairs minister Jaswant Singh's three-day visit to the USA, scheduled to start on 5 April at the invitation of US secretary of state Colin Powell, assumes significance in that it will to an extent help dispel the impression gaining ground that New Delhi is doing little to engage and cultivate the new Republican dispensation in Washington.

The first high-level meeting between the two countries after the Bush administration took charge will be held in Washington on 6 April. The ministry of external affairs said the talks would cover a broad spectrum. "The canvas for discussions is much wider and the agenda encompasses a whole range of bilateral relations," an MEA spokesman said. Mr Singh is also likely to meet defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld and other senior members of the Bush team.

Several recent developments may make it easier for Mr Singh to articulate India's views and make the new Bush administration appreciate these on the issues that may come up for discussion. Among the most significant of these is UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan's recent statement in Islamabad — a firm endorsement of India's stand on Kashmir — that only the Lahore Declaration and not the UN resolution on Kashmir could pave the way for a lasting solution.

Mr Annan has explained, in the process, the distinction between those UN resolutions which are binding on their passage — as those on East Timor and Iraq — and those which are recommendatory and hence dependent on the agreement of the parties concerned.

Mr Annan's statement, which Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee later termed "very significant" and indicative of the changed attitude of the international community, together with India's continuing peace gestures in the form of ceasefire initiatives and Pakistan's ceaseless abettment of violence, cross-border terrorism and hostile propaganda against India, should help Mr Singh articulate the view that India has held that for resumption of talks with Pakistan, it is that country that has to create the atmosphere congenial for talks. The onus lies squarely with Pakistan.

India thrice extended the Ramzan ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir, the third being effective till May. Prior to the decision of extending the ceasefire for the third time, an all-party meeting supported the truce. This was preceded by a 35-minute briefing by the Intelligence Bureau chief with slides, pictures and graphs about the situation before the ceasefire and after. About 215 militants were killed in Kashmir Valley during the ceasefire against 250 civilian casualties, he reported.

Many security experts in India now argue that the thrice-extended truce has failed to elicit a positive response from the key players in the Valley, namely, the Lashkar-e-Taiyaba, Hizbul Mujahideen and the Jaish-e-Mohammad, which outrightly rejected it. The

Mission acceleration

Jaswant Singh's visit to Washington is crucial for driving home Pentagon think-tank Andrew Marshall's point that India will develop its inherent strength in the coming years, while the threat for the USA in Asia will be from China's hegemonistic ambitions as it increases cooperation with Pakistan, says ANINDYA RAI VERMAN

violence graph has gone up, they say.

Then, Pakistan's Chief Executive, General Pervez Musharraf, told a US congressional delegation that Pakistan was against converting the LoC into an international border as it wanted India to "concede" more territory to resolve the Kashmir dispute!

What will probably help Mr Singh drive home the New Delhi's stand on resumption of talks with Pakistan is the fact that Britain, one of the USA's staunchest allies in Europe, has recently decided to move towards proscribing a number of extremist groups, the baleful impact of many of which is all too well known in India. The decision has been welcomed here and has, not surprisingly, been met with aggressive posturing by the groups which have insisted that they will pursue their murderous course, no matter what!

There are also reports that the Taliban has a secret understanding with Pakistani volunteers to fuel a *jihad* in India. Also, the recent talks between the US state department and the Taliban foreign ministry ended in a deadlock, with Washington maintaining that the Kabul regime failed to give specific proposals on ending terrorism in the region.

The issue of lifting sanctions imposed on India after the Pokhran tests in May 1998 would not have been vexed in recent times but for the critical views of Mr Rumsfeld on Russia supplying fuel to India's Tarapur



Paramilitary personnel run for cover after a suicide squad of the Lashkar-e-Taiyaba stormed their camp in Srinagar last Monday. Four security force men and a militant were killed. Inset: Jagdish Kumar, Senior Superintendent of the Punjab Police in Taran Tarn, holds up a fake currency note. Fake currency worth Rs 70,000 along with a kilogram of highly explosive material were thrown over the barbed wire on the India-Pakistan border into Indian territory by alleged Pakistani militants on 25 March. — AP/PTI

nuclear reactors. He also criticised the "rogue states" such as North Korea, Pakistan and Iran which are receiving the supply. India's name was in the list. When the USA broke its commitment on supplying fuel to Tarapur and demanded safeguards pertaining not only to that plant but also all of India's nuclear facilities, it made an adverse impact on Indo-US relations.

Till only recently, the initial US rigidity apparent on the issue of lifting sanctions against India were showing signs of easing. On 15 February, Republican Senator Sam Brownback, who heads the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's sub-committee on Near-East and South Asia, wanted the Bush administration to take bold initiatives to give bilateral relations a more meaningful thrust.

Mr Brownback said the USA ought to recognise India's security concerns even while

continuing its dialogue on nuclear restraint. "There are a myriad ways in which to do this," he said, urging the new administration to take the first step by lifting all the remaining sanctions against India.

In December, British High Commissioner Rob Young had said Washington was considering a waiver on the arms embargo on India, especially, for seeking American spare parts for the Indian Navy's Sea King helicopters. Signals emanating so far from the present Bush dispensation on the sanctions issue are confusing. They be-

tray a feeling that Washington is willing to pursue a carrot-and-stick policy with regard to India.

Within a gap of five days, US Ambassador to India Richard Celeste and Mr Powell issued statements which may be misconstrued as being mutually contradictory.

While addressing a gathering at the SN Bose Institute of Scientists in Kolkata on 13 January, Mr Celeste said the post-Pokhran sanctions imposed by the USA on India "were a mistake" — "an emotional decision... a reaction to being aggrieved, spurned and deceived by our Indian friends".

On 18 January, Mr Powell told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in Washington that he was not in a position to give an immediate commitment on lifting sanctions against New Delhi, but he and his colleagues in the state department would "review all of

these sanctions... to see whether this is time to move forward and remove the remaining sanctions that are in place.

"We have to do what we can to constrain their (India's) nuclear programme but at the same time, help them with economic development so that they can handle the increased population."

About the recent critical views of Mr Rumsfeld on Russia supplying India fuel for nuclear reactors, New Delhi has clarified it received all supplies from Russia under the International Atomic Energy Agency regime. An Indian foreign ministry spokesman said India had "consistently and impeccably" observed IAEA safeguards and Tarapur's latest import from Russia is "similarly covered under the IAEA guidelines and the IAEA has been informed about it."

However, coming as the views of Mr Rumsfeld do at a time when the new administration has just taken over, the situation has become that much trickier and will require careful handling.

In a related context, attention might be drawn to the recent noises emanating from Pakistan to the effect that Islamabad is considering signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which has more to do with the near-insolvency situation that Pakistan faces today and the easing of the situation Pakistan expects with regard to the sanctions similarly imposed on it.

If the issue comes up for discussion during Mr Singh's US visit, India would do well to point out Pakistan's compulsions for wanting to sign the CTBT now, and also that the previous Clinton administration's condition that India should sign the CTBT for the USA to relent on the sanctions issue had lost its validity after the US Senate refused to ratify the treaty.

Last, but by no means the least, Andrew W Marshall, who heads the Pentagon think-tank, said in February during an American military strategy review: "India will develop its inherent strength in the coming years, while the threat for the USA in Asia will be from China's hegemonistic ambitions."

This is perhaps amply evident, with China bent on strengthening itself militarily as evident in its latest increased, defence financial allocations and the firm ties of cooperation between Beijing and Islamabad, despite Washington's disapproval.

Mr Marshall had indicated that the USA would have to move closer to India by 2025, since it would be a major military and economic power and a pillar of stability and peace in Asia.

For the present, of course, India will have some reason for satisfaction if Mr Singh's visit helps maintain and accelerate the "momentum" that has been evident in bilateral relations between the two countries till the recent past.

(The author is on the staff of The Statesman, Kolkata.)

Atal sounds Tehelka rally retreat

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi, April 5: The tape-arred Vajpayee government will review its decision to hold Tehelka rallies in a meeting tentatively scheduled for Sunday.

The official explanation is that "Tehelka is no more an issue" — as put by BJP spokesman V.K. Malhotra — but National Democratic Alliance (NDA) sources attributed it to "non-cooperation" by allies and the "less than enthusiastic" public response to the meetings.

Sunday's Mumbai rally, which was to be addressed by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, has been called off after Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray said it was "politically expedient not to touch controversial issues". If at all he was forced to share the dais with Vajpayee, Thackeray said, he should be allowed to "speak his mind out".

BJP sources said Maharashtra leaders developed cold feet after Thackeray's warning. They feared he could embarrass Vajpayee by again raking up the demand for the removal of his key aides, Brajesh Mishra and N.K. Singh.

The NDA is already red in the face after the Janata Dal (United) boycotted Vajpayee's Bangalore rally today. Yesterday, ally Telugu Desam shunned the Hyderabad meeting addressed by home minister L.K. Advani and former defence minister George Fernandes.

"Our state leaders were unhappy with the BJP for not taking them into confidence when plan-

ning the rally. At the Centre, there is a coordination mechanism between the BJP and other NDA constituents but in the states, there is none. Moreover, our Karnataka leaders cannot forget how the late J.H. Patel (former chief minister) was treated by the BJP," Dal(U) spokesman Mohan Prakash said.

But the most important reason for the Dal(U) boycott is senior leader Ramakrishna Hegde's reluctance to share the dais with Fernandes. Hegde had called for Fernandes' resignation immediately after the Tehelka exposé.

NDA constituents have been questioning the wisdom of carrying out such a long-drawn countrywide exercise "just to protect one individual (Fernandes) who is after all a member of one of the many constituents". Many are irked by the larger-than-life role the Samata Party leader chalked out for himself as convener of the coalition.

Chandrababu Naidu was the first to announce that the Desam would not participate in the rallies as it was supporting the government only from outside.

Though Biju Janata Dal leader and Orissa chief minister Naveen Patnaik initially prevailed on Vajpayee to address a rally in Bhubaneswar, he was later advised by his strategists not to go public on a corruption issue and give the Congress a talking point, NDA sources said.

Patnaik has reportedly told BJP leaders that he is no longer interested in the Bhubaneswar show.

If the allies' indifference is



Prime Minister AB Vajpayee at the World Sanskrit Conference in New Delhi. (PTI) ■ See Page 7

one aspect of the problem, there is also a view within the BJP that the government should not go "out of its way" to take the Tehelka controversy to the people.

"The Tehelka revelations may have caused major tremors in cities and larger towns but in mofussil areas and villages, our feedback is that no one has heard about the tapes. So what is the sense in introducing them to this controversy and appear as if we are defensive about the whole

thing and make Tehelka a household name? Ignorance is bliss in such matters," said BJP sources.

There is also a perception within the BJP that it might be "improper" for Vajpayee to publicly shield Fernandes as the judicial commission has already started its probe into the controversy.

The NDA is likely to go ahead with the rallies scheduled till mid-April. However, the April 15 meeting slated for Lucknow has been converted into a kisan rally on a

suggestion from the BJP's Uttar Pradesh unit.

The BJP spokesman said the other rallies would focus on Congress president Sonia Gandhi's alleged corruption and the CBI case against her private secretary, Vincent George. "Tehelka is no more an issue. So our rallies will be on what the Congress position is, what offensive to launch against Vincent George and Sonia Gandhi," Malhotra said.

■ See Pages 6, 8

Salute to Singh in scam spinoff

FROM K.P. NAYAR

Washington, April 5: It is the mother of ironies and the most unexpected of coincidences. Tehelka.com has catapulted Indo-US relations and achieved what was considered impossible only weeks ago in New Delhi's dealings with the new Republican administration in Washington.

Thanks to the dotcom exposé, the minister for external affairs and defence, Jaswant Singh, will receive an unexpected military guard of honour when he arrives at the Pentagon tomorrow at the start of his official visit to Washington. What is more, Singh's appointment as defence minister last month, following the defence purchase allegations, has made possible what Indian officials have been working on for years — a visit by an Indian defence minister to the US.

In the 54 years since Independence, only one Indian defence minister — K.C. Pant — has visited the US. Despite the much-touted upswing in Indo-American ties during the Clinton era, such a visit, crucial to the strategic ties that the two sides are attempting, eluded the bonhomie between New Delhi and Washington.

Tomorrow, however, Singh will have 30 minutes of talks with defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld, the most important of the triumvirate of Bush foreign policy players whom the Indian minister will be meeting during his 45-hour visit. The others in the triumvirate are secretary of state Colin Powell and national security adviser Condoleezza Rice.

Anxious to underplay the fortuitous role that Tehelka has played in the latest turn of events in Indo-US official exchanges, Indian officials maintain that Singh's

meeting with Rumsfeld was fixed even before he replaced George Fernandes as defence minister — and that the Pentagon would have given the visiting Indian minister a guard of honour anyway, even if he was only the minister for external affairs. But there are few takers here for these claims.

Although only 30 minutes have been allotted as of now for the Singh-Rumsfeld talks tomorrow, it is expected to be the most important of the Indian minister's meetings here.

America's defence secretary, along with vice-president Dick Cheney, the 'prime minister' of the Bush presidency, has influence over the Republican administration's external relations that is overwhelming compared to that of Powell or Rice. Rumsfeld has been outspoken in his criticism of New Delhi's cosy strategic tie-ups with Moscow, pulling up Russia

for supplies to Indian nuclear power plants and clubbing India with "rogue states" like North Korea and Iran, which are beneficiaries of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Brajesh Mishra, principal secretary to the Prime Minister, has already had a meeting with Rumsfeld during a multilateral conference in Germany. But the two men did not go beyond generalities in their brief interaction, it is learnt. Despite the negative signals from Rumsfeld on non-proliferation, Singh is meeting him with high hopes, even expectations of a breakthrough in Indo-US strategic relations.

This is obvious from the composition of the defence team accompanying Singh. Admiral Madanjeet Singh, who will meet Pentagon officials tomorrow, is director-general of the Defence Planning Staff.

THE TELEGRAPH

6 APR 2001

8/4 All Talk in Amman (11-10)

What began as street violence is now a near war in West Asia. Israeli helicopter gunships routinely pound Palestinian positions — some Israeli ministers have openly advocated bombing Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's home — and face suicide bomb attacks in return. Why then did the Arab summit meeting in Amman evoke so little enthusiasm or hope from the warring sides? The answer is that the Palestinians have come to expect so little from these meetings and Israel considers them no more than a minor irritant. This proves once and for all that the much-vaunted Arab unity is a myth — in reality each country is doing its own thing. So the Amman summit held no surprises. The main issues of discussion were the Palestinians' plight and the issue of more financial support for them and the continuing sanctions against Iraq. As always, the Palestinians were shortchanged with the 22 delegations unable to agree on assistance. In the end, all that was promised was to release funds already sanctioned. That out of the way, they turned to Iraq. After breathing fire and brimstone at the high-handedness of the US, all the meet came up with was a hesitant call for relief for Iraq. The US signalled its indifference to the meet of so many powerful Arab countries, many of them its allies, by vetoing a Security Council resolution calling for UN observers to protect civilians. In the past, the Arabs at least put up a show of solidarity, insisting that they would not come to separate deals with Israel as long as the question of Palestine was not resolved. That fell by the wayside soon enough with both Egypt and Jordan having signed treaties with Israel with only Syria holding out.

Perhaps the one unexpected development at the summit was the stand taken by Syria's new president Bashar Assad. The western educated doctor is widely perceived as being the opposite of his xenophobic and dictatorial father Hafez Assad. Yet, the younger Assad minced no words in his opposition to the 'each man for himself' approach of most Arab countries. Branding the new Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon a 'butcher', he swore emotionally that he would never desert the Palestinians. But how much of this he actually means will be put to the test when the now frozen Syria-Israel peace track thaws. Towards the end of his life, Hafez Assad, whose relations with Yasser Arafat were chilly at best, had signalled his willingness to come to some sort of accommodation with the Israelis on the contentious Golan Heights. The new president, of course, must be seen to be tough on Israel, Syria's perceived enemy no. 1 but he too knows that eventually he will have no option but to come to a settlement and get on with the process of repairing his country's shattered economy. This despite a sizeable Palestinian population in the desert kingdom. Of course, there was the predictable call for an Arab economic summit with its implication of an economic boycott of Israel. Tel Aviv, however, is not shaking in its shoes. The Arabs have been talking of boycotts and common markets for as long as anyone can remember, but in the end the penchant for rhetoric has always scored over substance.

THE ASIAN AGE

6 APRIL 2001

Help, foreign

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Former US President Bill Clinton donned the mantle of a messiah to appear before the quake hit people of Gujarat. He did not eat for a few hours, he was so moved by the extent of devastation and the visible suffering of the people. But what should make the governments in Delhi and Gujarat sit up and take cringing notice is the fact that the people of proud India turned to the former president of the US for help. They implored him to bring relief, to ensure that they were rehabilitated and given adequate relief. Victims of government apathy and callousness, the people are still living out in the cold with no relief in sight. Days have turned into weeks and weeks are turning into months but the millions of dollars that have supposedly poured in for relief and rehabilitation are not being seen on the ground. Events have overtaken this terrible tragedy which disappeared from the front pages to the back pages, and out of the newspapers altogether until the Clinton visit when the media suddenly rediscovered its conscience and focused once again on the plight of those whose voice is not loud enough to be heard. For the media the earthquake is yesterday's story. For the government it is another statement on the file as the snail-slow wheels of the administration are virtually grinding to a halt. There can be no excuse for the fact that relief is still not available to large sections of the people. The reconstruction of the cities is barely visible, with the Gujarat government still to even cope with the fact that some villages have completely disappeared from the map. After the first flush of reaction everybody appears to have gone underground with the victims being left alone to face the tragedy. The government of India has disappeared. A former president of the US, if media reports are to be believed, is in sudden charge. The administration actually cleaned up some of the debris to present a better facade to the visitor. He has now promised help, with the invisible Indian government quite happy to accept the dole. The state administration is only unhappy that he could not uncover a plaque in memory of the schoolchildren who died in the tragedy because the owner of the property did not want to lend his land for the purpose. It is almost as if a benefactor has dropped out of the Heavens to do what the government here has proved incapable of. Incompetence, corruption, callousness are the factors that have combined to ensure that relief and rehabilitation remain just concepts in the file and the people are literally forced to beg foreign dignitaries for succour. Is this what governments here elected for? To present the face of destitution to attract more money? Gujarat is a blot on the nation's conscience, and while the people of India did rally around to collect cash and kind for the quake victims the government of the day decided to abdicate all responsibility. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and his Cabinet must now give an account of the money received for the affected state, the money spent along with exact details of the relief and rehabilitation work, if any. The fear is that statistics will again be manipulated to give an incorrect picture with the result that the poor people who are still recovering from the trauma of having lost their near relatives and their homes, will continue to suffer. When corruption and apathy eats into the vitals of governance, there can be no respite for the common man.

THE ASIAN AGE

6 APR 2001

Despite appearances, India is probably less market-oriented than China a

Two versions of openness

Perhaps the most critical feature of fast growing economies has been the rapid growth of manufacturing exports. The rapid growth of manufacturing exports has been supported by trade policies that have allowed manufacturing exporters to operate at (nearly) world prices, both for inputs of capital and intermediate goods, and for the sale of exports on world markets. East Asian economies, for example, avoided the kinds of trade policies that undermine the capacity of manufacturing exporters to obtain necessary inputs at world prices, or that penalize exporters through heavy taxation of exports (effective taxation of exports can arise through tariffs and quotas on inputs, inconvertibility of the currency, state monopolization of exports on unfavourable terms for exporters, or explicit taxation of exports).

The exact form of the trading regime has differed across countries, but the following elements have been common features in most of the fast growing economies: first, convertibility of the currency for current account transactions; second, zero or low tariffs (and the absence of licensing) for capital goods and intermediate inputs and modest tariffs for most consumer goods; third, implicit or explicit subsidization of exports; and fourth, other institutions supportive of manufacturing exports (for example, export processing zones, state guarantees on export credits). The east Asian economies, for instance, have been quite open to trade both for imports and exports, especially in comparison with other developing countries. Industrial policies, where they exist, have supported manufacturers not mainly through the protection of the home market, but through the implicit and explicit subsidization of export activities.

Openness and the orientation to manufacturing exports have made several contributions to growth. First, it has helped to ensure the efficient allocation of resources, through specialization, comparative advantage and dynamic learning by doing. Second, openness has promoted domestic competition by limiting the market power of domestic firms, and by providing a rigorous international yardstick of performance. Third, openness has promoted the rapid accumulation of capital through foreign borrowing and foreign direct investment, which is then serviced by the rapid expansion of exports. Fourth, openness has promoted the rapid improvement of technology through the importation of foreign technologies.

India's average tariff rate of 27 per cent vastly exceeds the average tariff

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rates of the other economies. India also displays continuing high barriers to FDI in contrast to most of the fast-growing Asian economies. It is true that not all of east Asia relied heavily on FDI to achieve rapid growth: Japan and Korea are the two main exceptions. But most of the region, especially in southeast Asia, has relied heavily on FDI, and the east Asian countries tend to have much simpler rules for FDI approvals than are now in place in India.

Common features, such as currency convertibility, moderate tariffs and strong private sector orientation, rather than specific industrial policies, are behind the widespread successes in the fast growing economies. While high-performing economies have differed widely in the scope and ambition of industrial policy, it is true that a few institutions of industrial policy have been widely applied and deserve a sympathetic look. Most important, virtually all of the east Asian countries have utilized EPZs or other special economic zones to help attract foreign investment and to initiate the process of manufacturing export-led growth.

These zones have not aimed to pick "winners" in the classic sense of industrial policy. Rather, they have attempted to carve out a geographical zone in which export-businesses can conduct profitable export-oriented activities, exempt from costly regulations, tax laws, and labour standards that apply more generally within the country. More generally, the relatively successful industrial policies have had a few common characteristics. First, they have aimed to promote exports, rather than to protect the domestic market; second, they have provided subsidies on the basis of successful performance (for example, the growth of exports) rather than to cover losses; and third, they have been temporary rather than permanent subsidies (for example, a five-year tax holiday for new export firms).

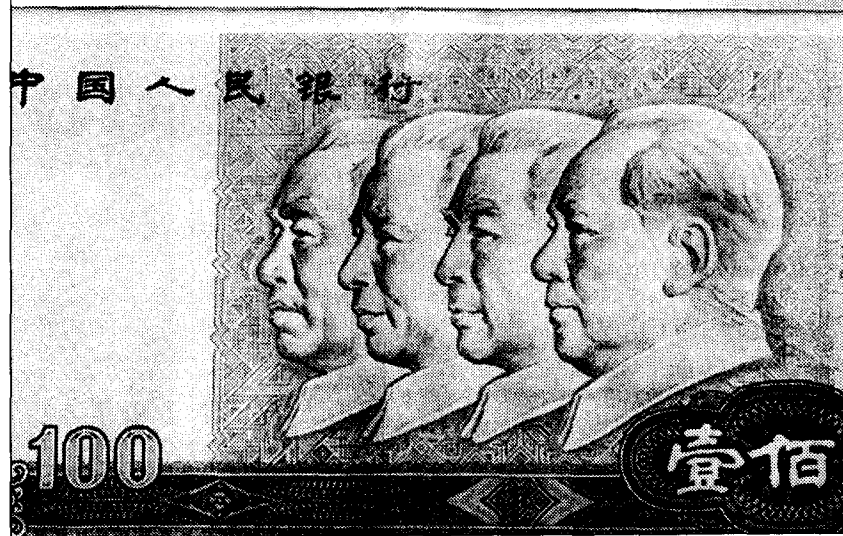
Since China is enormously relevant to India, as the world's only other billion-plus population country, we must have a special look at the Chinese experience for possible lessons for India. Our interpretation of China's recent growth experience is as follows. While China has indeed protected its large state-owned industrial sector, the source of dynamic growth in China lies in the non-state sector, which has operated much closer to market forces. Indeed, outside the state-enterprise sector, the Chinese economy has much in common with the other east Asian economies, especially when these other economies were at an earlier stage of development. While the non-state Chinese economy operates without many of the legal underpinnings of a more advanced market economy, it is at least subject to the strong market forces, international trade and low taxation

NIRUPAM BAJPAI

which are the hallmarks of the fast growing market economies of east Asia. Despite appearances, India is probably less market-oriented than China at this point, despite the fact that China's state sector is somewhat larger than India's.

The key to understanding China's economic success lies in understanding the scope, and limitations, of the social-

and peasant farming resumed on the basis of household plots of land (leased from the state) and markets for agricultural output. This return to household plots and agricultural markets led to greatly improved incentives on the farms and to a one-time boost in productivity between 1978 and 1985. After 1985, however, agricultural productivity returned to a lower long-term trend



The source of China's dynamism is its non-state sector, largely operating under free-market rules, rather than its state sector

growth rate. Second, rural industry was greatly liberalized after 1978, especially in the form of township and village enterprises, which are a mix of collective and privately owned enterprises in the rural areas.

These TVEs operate outside the state plan, and largely without funds from state banks. Therefore, they are subject to quite rigorous market competition and hard budget constraints. Third, urban export-oriented enterprises were encouraged by the designation of a growing number of SEZs, coastal open cities and economic and technological

development zones, all designed to encourage manufacturing exports. These special areas received various kinds of favourable tax and regulatory treatment, such as tax holidays, and duty-free access to imported inputs and capital goods needed for export production. Thus, the SEZs and other special areas were akin to the EPZs that had been used in other parts of Asia as part of their initial export-led growth.

A major aspect of China's dynamism is the low rate of taxation of non-state enterprises. As already noted, many non-state enterprises are exempt from taxation as the result of special tax privileges associated with SEZs. Moreover, Chinese government spending is a remarkably low 14 per cent of GDP (compared with 33 per cent in India), so that China can maintain very low tax rates on an average throughout the economy. In China, for example, an individual taxpayer earning \$ 4,000 pays a 10 per cent marginal tax rate, compared to a 30 per cent marginal tax rate on the same income in India.

China's labour markets are also highly flexible in the non-state sector. While workers in the state sector are accorded generous job guarantees in both China and India, workers in the non-state sector do not receive guaranteed employment. One result has been the rapid growth of employment in China, since firms can hire workers without fear of being stuck with unwanted labour in the future due to restrictions on dismissals. Formal sector employment has increased dramatically, from 95 million in 1978 (9.7 per cent of the economically active population) to 148.5 million in 1994 (19.2 per cent of the economically active population). India, by contrast, has experienced a mere increase from 22.9 million in 1978 (just 6.8 per cent of the economically active population) to 27.4 million in 1994 (a mere 5.4 per cent of the economically active population).

Considerable evidence confirms that it is China's non-state sector, largely operating under free-market rules, rather than China's state sector, which has been the source of China's dynamism. First, the state-owned sector has continued to make large losses, despite more than 10 years of active experimentation with alternative incentive schemes for management and workers. Second, the productivity growth in the state-owned sector has lagged far behind the productivity growth of the non-state sector, and according to some calculations, total factor productivity growth of the state sector has been close to zero. Third, the non-state sector accounts for the explosive rise of Chinese manufacturing exports. The share of TVE exports in total exports has grown from 16.4 per cent in 1980 to around 44.4 per cent in 1993. Fourth, overall GDP growth has been much faster in regions with a high proportion of employment in non-state enterprises, and in the special economic zones.

108 MINUTES OF HISTORY

BY KARL EMERICK HANUSKA

Moscow: It was 108 minutes on April 12, 1961 that made the difference to Yuri Gagarin and the world...

That trip transformed a former farm boy into one of the greatest icons of the 20th century and stunned the West with the realisation that for all its backwardness, the lumbering Soviet giant was capable of feats it could only dream of.

"There aren't many achievements that can compare to what Gagarin did," said Pavel Popovich, one of the original team of six Soviet cosmonauts and a friend of Gagarin's.

"No matter how much man ever manages to do in space, none of it will have the same resonance as when Yuri flew...but after putting the first man up there we know there are few barriers that can't be overcome," he told Reuters in an interview.

Things are somewhat tougher 40 years on as Russian space chiefs struggle with the financial crises and conflicting priorities that have slowed progress and claimed victims such as the Mir space station, ditched in March because of a lack of funds.

To the nation's rocketeers Gagarin's success is a proud symbol of the past, when they left US scientists scrambling in their wake.

It is also a beacon of hope for the future.

Part of Gagarin's allure is that like so many of the century's great icons he died before his time, in a mysterious plane crash at the age of 34, just seven years after his historic trip.

So forever he remains the youthful, vibrant figure who won the hearts of millions as he travelled the globe in what was the most successful propaganda effort the Soviet Union ever managed.

Popovich, now 70 but still with a boisterous charm that hints of the charisma the original cosmonauts had, said when he first met Gagarin it was clear he was



SPACE HERO: Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, the first man in space, talks to admirers in Moscow in this 1962 file photo. It was 108 minutes on April 12, 1961, that made the difference to Gagarin and the world. (Reuters)

deft for greatness. "Yuri stood out from the rest of us. He was simple, gregarious, happy and full of life and curiosity...He was a genuinely nice guy," said Popovich, the fourth man to fly in space for the Soviet Union.

approval of Soviet planners when they had to decide who would ride his way into history aboard the first manned spaceship, the Vostok 1. His humble roots saw him narrowly edge out Gherman Titov, whose intellectual family and penchant for spouting poetry seemed to make him too bourgeois for a Soviet hero.

ment of the choice, he grudgingly agreed with it. "Yuri was loveable, but no one could love me," Titov said in an interview shortly before his death last year. The 40th anniversary of Gagarin's flight comes at a key time for the nation, just as the original event did.

collapse, undisputed heroes are in short supply, as is the pride that Gagarin inspired. So officials have set about trying to recreate some of that mood by remembering Gagarin with ceremonies and exhibits and feting those few who remain of the original cosmonaut corps.

FLASHBACK



APRIL 12, 1961: First manned spaceflight, one orbit of the earth. 11 April 1961 was a 'reserve' day in the launch plan, but it was not needed. All the chief designers and military space chiefs were at the cosmodrome. Gagarin spent that day in meetings with the prominent personalities. Here he is seen with Korolev before flight.



6:07 AM, APRIL 12: Chief designer Korolev seen here talking to Gagarin soon after lift-off. The communications system with Vostok was based on VHF communications (143.625 MHz) but also on short-wave communications using strong transmitters belonging to the USSR Ministry of Communications.



8:17 AM, APRIL 12: Gagarin talks to mission control after Vostok 8K72K rocket put him into 200 km orbit. During his flight, Gagarin made numerous earth observations and confirmed that the earth was indeed round and not flat. "The flight is continuing well. I can see the earth. The visibility is good. I almost see everything. I'm over America. I transmitted the telegraph signal 'ON,'" he said.



6:07 AM, APRIL 12: Gagarin ejected after reentry and descended under his own parachute, as was planned. Landed Southwest of Engels Smelevka, Saratov.

The Russian accomplishment was a great one. It was apparently very successful. I am, naturally, disappointed that we did not make the first flight to open this new era. The important goals of Project Mercury, however, remain the same - ours is peaceful exploration of space. These first flights, will go a long way in determining the direction of future endeavours. I hope the Russians have the same objectives and that we can proceed with mutual dissemination of information so that these goals can be gained rapidly, safely, and on a scientific basis.

John Glenn on Gagarin's flight

1957: Soviets launch Laika the dog into space

London, Nov. 3, 1957: The Soviet Union announced on Sunday it had launched a second space satellite - this one carrying a dog. Radio signals indicated that the animal was living, the Russians said.

A satellite six times as heavy as the one sent up October 4 now is circling the earth every hour and forty-two minutes at a height of 937 miles, Moscow said. This means that the speed is nearly 18,000 miles an hour for the 1,110-pound satellite.

The dog was reported hermetically sealed in a container equipped with an air-conditioning system. Moscow Radio said data received from the second satellite indicated the functioning of scientific instruments and control of the living

activities of the animal are taking place normally. The new satellite carries transmitting equipment and apparatus for measuring cosmic rays, temperature and pressure. It also carries equipment for reporting the condition of the dog.

It first passed over the Soviet capital at 11:20 pm on Saturday night and then completed its first trip around the earth over Moscow at 1:05 am on Sunday, the Soviet Union reported. The announcement said the second satellite was "dedicated to the fortieth anniversary of the great October Revolution," which the Communist world will celebrate in Moscow beginning next Thursday.

The new earth satellite is completing its orbit in about seven minutes more than the original

HISTORY FILES



Sputnik 2 passenger Laika. Sputnik, still circling the earth. Moscow said the second sphere was sending out two radio signals. One, like the "beep" signal trans-

mitted by the first satellite, is on a frequency of 20,005 megacycles. The other signal, at 40,002 megacycles, is a continuous note. In Tokyo the Japan Broadcasting Corporation announced that radio signals from the second satellite were being heard. The corporation picked up the signals twenty-three minutes after Moscow's announcement. The "beep" was at intervals of three-tenths of a second.

A three-stage rocket shoved the original satellite into its orbit. The first Moscow announcement of the second sphere did not explain how it had been sent up.

Although the announcement of the satellite's passing over Moscow indicated an interval of one hour and of forty-five minutes, Moscow Radio said the orbit would be one

purges had yet to heal. Handsome, quick-witted and just sufficiently self-deprecating, Gagarin was the perfect figure to bring the Communist nation together and turn people toward the future they were meant to be building.

On trips abroad where musicians, politicians and movie stars jostled one other just to shake his hand, he smashed the Western stereotype of the crude, backwards Soviets.

In a moment captured in one famous photograph, actress Gina Lollobrigida pushed through a crowded room to plant a kiss on Gagarin's cheek, fulfilling a personal ambition.

"There's never been another hero like him and there never will be," insisted Dasha, a 13-year-old girl, during a visit to a Moscow museum where many relics of Gagarin's flight are kept.

"We don't really have any kind of heroes today, but Yuri Gagarin was one that we can always remember."

Yet despite his legendary status, Gagarin proved to be not quite the perfect hero.

Soviet officials frequently complained about drinking binges and tales of his alleged adultery had to be quietly hushed up, including an incident where he was caught by his wife with another woman and injured himself leaping from a hotel balcony.

But those problems have done little to tarnish Gagarin's image. Yuri Biryukov, an engineer who helped build the capsule that Gagarin rode, said he had never lost his wonder of Gagarin and the men who took the world's first great leaps into space.

"For all of us these men were like superheroes, larger than life. We knew then that Gagarin was making history. Perhaps then we even understood better than Gagarin the significance of what he was going to do," Biryukov said.

"We've never forgotten that we were the country that opened the way into space," he said. "We've never forgotten that Yuri Gagarin was the man who showed we could do it."

(Reuters)

RACE TO SPACE



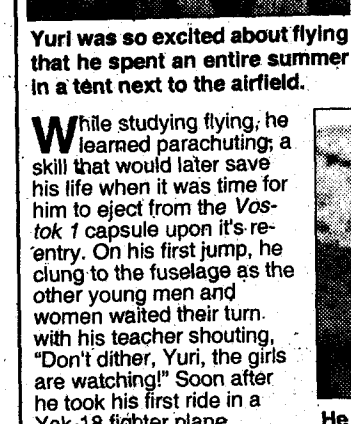
He was born on March 9, 1934 in Klushino, a small village 100 miles west of Moscow. His father was a cabinetmaker, carpenter, bricklayer, and farmer, and his mother was a milkmaid. Together they worked on a kolkhoz or collective farm. By Soviet social standards, his heritage was impeccable. He was the third of four children. During World War II, the Nazis threw his family out of their home and took away two of his sisters.



When he was a teenager, he witnessed a Russian Yak fighter plane make a forced landing in a field near his home. It was just returning from battle, its wings bullet-ridden. When the pilots emerged covered in medals, he was so impressed: "We understood immediately the price that had to be paid for military decorations. We boys all wanted to be brave and handsome pilots. We experienced strange feelings such as we had never known before." He completed six grades of secondary school where he studied mathematics, his favorite subject. Right: Gagarin at 10



After a year and a half at the trade school, he joined a four-year technical school in Saratov. In his fourth year at school he was offered the chance to join a flying club. And so began the realisation of his dream to become a pilot. He took his first solo flight in 1955. He was frequently praised for his ability to handle a plane and his skill in making a smooth landing. "He'll make a wonderful pilot," his instructor and mentor Dmitry Pavlovich Martyanov said.



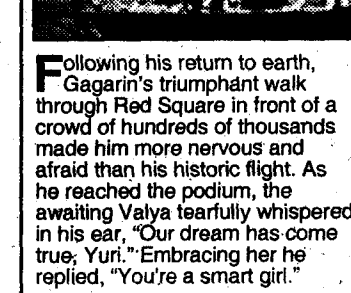
While studying flying, he learned parachuting, a skill that would later save his life when it was time for him to eject from the Vostok 1 capsule upon its re-entry. On his first jump, he clung to the fuselage as the other young men and women waited their turn, with his teacher shouting, "Don't dither, Yuri, the girls are watching!" Soon after he took his first ride in a Yak-18 fighter plane.



He took his first solo flight in 1955. At the advice of Martyanov he joined the Soviet Air Force and went to Orenburg Aviation School where he learned to fly MiGs. "That first flight filled me with pride and gave meaning to my whole life." While at Orenburg attending a dance held at the school, he met the lovely and shy Valentina Ivanovna Goryacheva.



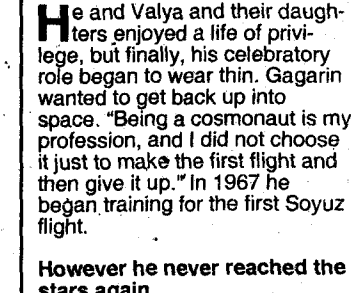
Chief Designer Korolev, the head of the Soviet space program and the man who had chosen the first cosmonaut, was especially fond of Gagarin. "During the days of preparation for the launch, when everyone had more than his share of concerns, apprehensions, and anxieties, he alone seemed to keep calm. More than that, he was full of good spirits and beamed like the sun." What pleased us so much about Gagarin was that in 108 minutes he was able to see a great deal and grasp science with conclusions.



Following his return to earth, Gagarin's triumphant walk through Red Square in front of a crowd of hundreds of thousands made him more nervous and afraid than his historic flight. As he reached the podium, the awaiting Valya tearfully whispered in his ear, "Our dream has come true, Yuri." Embracing her he replied, "You're a smart girl."



He embarked on a world tour with Valya as an ambassador of good will. And everywhere they travelled, Gagarin was decorated with the highest honours. He became a deputy of the Supreme Soviet, always continuing to help and advise his fellow cosmonauts, and was appointed Commander of the Cosmonauts Detachment. Left: On a goodwill trip, Gagarin met another nation's hero Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.



He and Valya and their daughters enjoyed a life of privilege, but finally, his celebratory role began to wear thin. Gagarin wanted to get back up into space. "Being a cosmonaut is my profession, and I did not choose it just to make the first flight and then give it up." In 1967 he began training for the first Soyuz flight. However he never reached the stars again.



On March 27, 1968, at age 34, Gagarin was killed when the jet he was test piloting crashed. His death was mourned by the world, as his ashes were buried in the Kremlin Wall. In honour of his great contributions to space exploration, a crater on the moon was named after him. In July of 1971, Apollo 15 astronauts visited the moon and left behind a plaque in memory of the 14 men who had died leading mankind into space. Yuri Alexeyevich Gagarin had made his mark on history. Source: Russian Archives

IT'S A DOGS LIFE UP THERE... IN SPACE

The world's second artificial space satellite was Sputnik 2, sent to space by the Russians from the Soviet Union's Baikonur Cosmodrome on November 3, 1957. On board was a live mongrel dog named Laika (Barker in Russian) on a life-support system. Laika was the first animal to go into orbit. She captured the hearts of people around the world as the batteries that operated her life-support system ran down and the capsule air ran out. Life slipped away from Laika a few days into her journey. Later, Sputnik 2 fell into the atmosphere and burned on April 14, 1958.

At least thirteen other Russian dogs were launched toward orbit between November 1957 and March 1961. At the end of the Sputnik series of satellites, the Russians prepared to send men to orbit by sending dogs first. Russia, cooperating with the US and European nations, has flown a number of biosatellites in orbit, testing different kinds of plants and animals in weightlessness. The biological test flights have carried white Czechoslovakian rats, rhesus monkeys, squirrel monkeys, newts, fruit flies, fish and others.



How the junta protects Mr Heroin in Myanmar

John Sweeney
Pyongyang, April 8

IT WAS like the opening scene of the Hollywood film *Traffic*: jeeps with smoked glass windshields, laden with heavily armed soldiers, zoomed through the Myanmar's rain forest, protecting a very important person.

The dignitary was not the military junta's anti-drugs star but someone much more powerful—Myanmar's godfather of heroin, Lo Hsing Han.

An investigation by *The Guardian* and BBC Radio 5 Live today reveals the multi-million-pound empire of Lo, the protection he receives from the Myanmar junta which proclaims it is cracking down on heroin—and his money-laundering operation in Singapore.

Lo and his American-educated son, Steven Law, also known as Hran Myint Naing, come and go freely between the island State and Myanmar, running their Asia World combine—an upmarket front for one of the world's biggest heroin rackets.

And business is about to get even bet-

ter. The decision that opium-farming in Afghanistan is 'un-Islamic' has led to a cut in opium growing from 200,000 acres in the two key provinces to just 25. That means 'China White' heroin from Burma will move into the gap made by the drop in supply of 'Afghan Brown'.

The bad news is that 'China White' is much more likely to be injected than 'chased' (smoked), worsening the public health risk of Aids and hepatitis.

The Burmese regime, a pariah in the West, trumpets a tough anti-drugs policy. The reality behind the pretence is far uglier.

Lo's protectors, the Burmese generals who run the State Peace and Development Council (popularly known by its former title, SLoRC), play very rough with anyone who gets in the way of Heroin Inc.

When Saw Lu, a prince of the Wa people opposed to the heroin trade, informed the US Drug Enforcement Administration about the drug trafficking activities of a regional army intelligence chief, Major Than Aye, word got back to the junta.

steel gate.

Lo's infamous brand of 'China White' heroin is industrially produced in the Mong Hom-Mong Ya valley on the Chinese border, opposite Mangshi. His operational headquarters is the Salween Village near Nampawng, south of the town of Lashio, a base for farmers, chemists and gunmen, serviced by local prostitutes and burlesque dancers from Ukraine.

Lo has made so many millions from heroin that he built and runs Rangoon's main port. Two years ago Australian police seized a ship carrying almost half a tonne of heroin originating in Burma—a huge find, enough to give every man, woman and child in Australia a hit of heroin. The street price of heroin in Sydney did not change by a cent.

The plainest evidence of the closeness between SLoRC and Lo's heroin empire emerged at the 1995 wedding of his son, Steven Law, to Singaporean businesswoman Cecilia Ng.

Guest of honour was Hotels and Tourism Minister Lt-Gen Kyaw Ba, accompanied by three other SLoRC gen-

erals and four Cabinet Ministers.

Law is the managing director of Asia World Company Limited. Started in 1992, it reports its 'authorised capital' to be about \$40 million.

It has put an estimated \$200m into construction projects around Yangon. Asia World is running a joint venture with SLoRC, building and running the main new port in Yangon, which handles 90 per cent of Burma's exports.

Law is not such an honoured guest in the United States. He has been declined a visa, due to 'suspicion of involvement in narcotics trafficking', according to a State Department official.

The Asia World racket also runs a supermarket chain, Burma's biggest bus company—good cover to ship the product—and a plastic bag factory. To make plastic bags, Lo imports large quantities of acetic anhydride. The other use of acetic anhydride is the manufacture of heroin.

The millions from Lo's heroin racket are laundered in Singapore from a plush suite of offices on the tenth floor of Shenton House, an office block on

Shenton Way, in the heart of Singapore's business district.

The Singapore company registry lists two companies run by Law, neither of which is called Asia World. But the giveaway is a large display sign in the Shenton House front office, depicting a globe with the letters A and W.

Law was not there when we visited; staff said he was out of the country.

In the past 10 years Singapore has executed at least 100 drug traffickers for possession of small amounts of heroin, according to Amnesty International. But the island state lets off at least one Mr Big, scot-free.

In the heroin addict ward in Bangkok's biggest hospital, one of the victims of the Burmese heroin barons lay on a bed, his skin stretched like paper over his bones, a hideous fungal infection creeping over his face, suggesting to the doctor that he was suffering from Aids.

You can see heroin addicts like him in every major city in the world. Different faces, same dead eyes.

The Guardian

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

19 APR 2001

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CIA releases declassified Nazi files

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, April 28. - Adolf Hitler was a "border case between genius and insanity," the Nazi leader's doctor told a US informant near the end of World War II, predicting he could become "the craziest criminal the world ever knew," a CIA document shows.

The document is among 10,000 pages of CIA files declassified yesterday in an effort to shed more light on Nazi war criminals and how Western governments later used them as Intelligence sources.

The comments reportedly made by German surgeon Ferdinand Sauerbruch were written in a 7 December 1944 memo from an employee named Ron Carroll of the Office of Strategic Services, the forerunner of the US Central Intelligence Agency.

Carroll noted at the outset of the memo that there was a question about the informant's credibility. But he went on to report that an informant named Hans Bie told him he had talked to Sauerbruch at a party in January 1937 and that Sauerbruch discussed Hitler.

"Sauerbruch... stated that from close observation of Hitler for many years, he had formed the opinion that the Nazi leader was a border case between genius and insanity and that... the decision would take place in the near future whether Hitler's mind would swing toward the latter," Carroll's memo said.

"Sauerbruch then said that should the latter occur, Hitler would become "the craziest criminal the world ever saw," the memo said.

It went on to say that when Bie and Sauerbruch met again in April 1937, the doctor stated that "in his opinion, the swing toward insanity had taken place and that the first symptom was the dismissal of moderate members of Hitler's government."

The file on Hitler was released with those of 19 other Nazi-era figures including Gestapo Chief Heinrich Mueller and Dr Josef Mengele.

In a press conference yesterday at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, officials and historians who reviewed the documents said the papers also revealed that UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim was not used as an Intelligence source by the US government.

The files were released by the Nazi War Crimes and Japanese Imperial Government Records Interagency Working group, which was established in January 1999 to coordinate a large-scale effort by US federal agencies to find, declassify and release US records relating to Germany's Nazi regime.

So far, US government agencies have declassified more than 3 million pages, and they are now available for research in the National Archives National Archives and Records Administrations.

The effort was recently been expanded to looking into records relating to the Japanese and Far East.

Right to Develop

Direct Action, not Legal Diktat

By ANDRE BETEILLE

11-10 3079
THE prospects — and the failures — of development have haunted public-spirited Indians since the time of independence. At that time, everyone or almost everyone believed that development was both a desirable and an attainable objective. Since then it has turned out to be a rather more elusive phenomenon. At first the insufficiency of material resources and the difficulty of mobilising them appeared as the main constraints. Thereafter, the very concept of development as it was used at first began to be challenged as vague, ill-defined and self-contradictory. Soul-searching about what development means or ought to mean has by no means come to an end.

The year 1977, which marked the end of the Emergency and the installation of the first non-Congress government in Delhi, was a watershed not only in India's political life but also in its intellectual life. A new government wanted a break with the past, and there were intellectuals who came forward with the promise of a new approach. The late '70s and early '80s brought to the fore the concept of alternatives: development alternatives and even alternatives to development. An element of national pride was involved in the slogan of alternatives to the extent that it set itself against the slavish imitation of western models. In fact, development economists had known all along that Indian problems had many unique features and not much would be achieved by blindly following either the American or the Russian path.

Long before the talk of development alternatives or alternatives to development gained currency, it was realised within the Planning Commission itself that development was not simply a matter of increasing the gross national product. Distribution was as important as growth, and the question was how to balance the requirements of the two when they were in conflict. Nobody either within or outside the Planning Commission had suggested that growth should be pursued at any cost, no matter how adversely it affected distribution. But it was also agreed that the size of the cake had to increase for a reasonable distribution of it to be possible. It would be disingenuous to pretend that the concern for equity or even equality appeared on the horizon only after 1977.

It is one thing to say that the demands of growth should be harmonised with those of distribution or that the social costs of economic growth should be minimised, and quite another to design policies that will achieve those ends. Again, it is one thing to fashion attractive policies and quite another to ensure their implementation. Indians have never been at a loss to fashion attractive policies; it is the will to implement them that has been lacking.

The talk about alternatives discredited the idea of development for a while, but it could not destroy it. Development is bound to remain a major preoccupation in a country in which there is so much destitution, hunger, illiteracy and ill-health, and such extremes of wealth and poverty. But there has been a change in the discourse on development. Whereas in the 1950s and 1960s development was

the less developed countries. The NGOs, often with strong international support, are also inclined towards rights as against policies on the ground that whereas policies are the creatures of governments, rights empower the people.

The UN has recently taken the initiative to promote a rights-based approach to development. It has called for a worldwide recognition of the right to development and for that right to be treated as a human right. Some have welcomed this as a fresh approach to development. But it is not very clear as to what this might imply apart from a declaration of intent. Will the creation of new rights be accompanied by the creation and redistribution of material resources? Will the UN secure the resources to make the new rights effective?

In a constitutional democracy rights are a serious matter. They cannot be created simply in order to give expression to good intentions. The creation of rights that remain unenforced and are perhaps unenforceable damages the fabric of democracy. If we adopt the right to development as a human right, who will be the bearers of that right: individuals, classes, communities or nations? How will the right be enforced? Where there is a right there must be a court in which redress can be sought when the right has been violated. What is the kind of court in which one can seek redress when the right to development has been violated? Perhaps all that one will be able to do in the event of default will be to appeal to the conscience of the world. But in that case will it have been worthwhile to have wilfully set at nought the very wise distinction made in the Indian Constitution between matters of right and matters of policy?

If policies are the main responsibility of the executive, rights are the main responsibility of the judiciary. Our courts are already overburdened with litigation, including public interest litigation. The creation of new rights will increase the burden on the courts and it will encourage judges with an activist bent of mind to adopt an increasingly interventionist stance. Nothing can be more ominous for our fragile democracy than for the judiciary to seek to appropriate the functions of the executive on the ground that it is corrupt, inefficient and uncaring.

IN BRIEF

- The failure of policy has led to a loss of faith in the executive
- UN wants the right to development to be a human right
- The creation of new rights could encourage judicial interventionism

discussed mainly in the language of policy, today it is being increasingly discussed in the language of rights.

Several factors have contributed to the shift from the language of policy to the language of rights in the current discussion on development. The persistent failures of policy have led to a loss of faith in the executive government, first in the political executive and soon after in the administrative executive. Policy is the main responsibility of the executive, and where there is a loss of faith in the executive there is bound to be a loss of faith in policy. This may be seen with regard to elementary education. The Constitution decided it should be a matter of policy; now through an amendment to it, elementary education is being made into a right.

There has been a change in the climate of international opinion. The United Nations and other international agencies have become spokesmen for human rights, particularly in what used to be called

Dhaka sanctioned Bangla Rifles' 1st Padua operation

BY SEEMA MUSTAFA

New Delhi, April 27: The Bangladesh Rifles operation at Padua was sanctioned "probably at some level" by the home ministry in Dhaka, while the "retaliatory" action at Boraibari was cleared at the BDR level, according to highly-placed diplomatic sources in New Delhi.

The sources sought to differentiate between the "Gandhian" operation at Padua and the violence in the Boraibari region, saying the first was organised to pressure the Border Security Force to dismantle a road (foot-path) which had been constructed in clear violation of the rules governing the border.

The Bangladesh Rifles, which has not been very supportive about the decision by India and Bangladesh to refer the long-pending border issues to two joint working groups, had been agitating for the dismantling of a concrete road built by the BSF since July.

The issue was raised at the last meeting with the BSF in Delhi in March by the Bangladesh Rifles chief, Maj. Gen. Fazlur Rehman.

■ Turn to Page 2

PAGE 2

- Sonia, Mamata will address rallies together
- BJP chief ready to talk to Sonia Gandhi

Bush advised to change US Kashmir line

BY ASHISH KUMAR SEN

San Francisco, April 27: In sharp contrast to the Clinton administration's policy not to mediate in the Kashmir issue unless both India and Pakistan ask for it, an influential former deputy assistant secretary of state for South Asian affairs has noted that both countries are unlikely to settle their differences without outside help.

"The challenge for American diplomacy will be to find ways of assisting this process without triggering India's still strong allergy to outside involvement. The time to start this is soon: the process will be long and time is not working in favour of peace," Ms Teresita C. Schaffer has said in a report put together after a recent visit to both countries.

A director of the South Asia programme at the Washington, D.C.-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Ms Schaffer visited India and Pakistan between February 25 and March 14.

In an interview with *The Asian Age*, Ms Schaffer spoke briefly

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report on limited mobility accepted

takings and PGs for fulfilling the balance of roll out obligation by the end of next year," observes the report.

It has also advised that telecom revenue districts should be divided into three categories — rural, semi-urban and urban. Each of these categories should be equally covered for each phase of the prescribed roll out. For instance, in the first phase, WLL companies have been asked to cover 15 per cent of the revenue districts in two years. The GoT-IT wants each of the three categories to be covered in equal proportions.

The recommendations have left basic as well as cellular lobbies despondent. In the short term, the gainer will be the state-owned Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL). It is the only telecom company with a national long distance network and will, therefore, get to retain 95 per cent of the amount accruing from long distance phone calls.

The proposal will mean good business for companies only after they have set up a nation-wide telecom network and have established a presence in most parts of the country. Since experts reckon that the such networks may be commissioned after a year or two, BSNL will enjoy a rare moment of relief from competition till then. The lowering of the retention percentage could spell bad times for small phone companies who were planning on regional presence.

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Since the basic concern of GoT-IT was to accelerate provision of telecom services at affordable rates, especially in rural areas, it felt necessary that its advice would be fair and equitable to all service providers and also be in the interest of the subscribers.

The GoT-IT upheld the TRAI's contention that there is a major difference between the nature of mobility offered by cellular and WLL routes. It, therefore, did not reopen this issue but concentrated on the more difficult one of ensuring a level-playing field between cellular and basic phone companies. The task was made tougher because of divergence of opinion between basic and cellular phone companies on how it could be achieved.

The WLL-based limited mobility issue was referred to the GoT-IT at a meeting presided over by the Prime Minister on April 6 with directions to complete the job by the month-end.

The TRAI had recommended in January this year that basic phone companies should be allowed to offer WLL with mobility within a telecom revenue district. It had simultaneously mooted that cellular companies should be allowed to offer basic phone services. The matter was also before the Telecom Dispute Settlement and Appellate Tribunal which preferred to wait for the Government's decision before passing any order.

trading volumes, built up substantial positions and used a network of FII's and OCBs, institutions and MFs to create an impression of broad-based institutional interest in some scrips.

Myanmarese rebels held for 3 yrs

The imminent threat of their deportation to Burma has led to a flurry of activity. Human rights lawyer Nandita Haksar, who has just returned from Port Blair, says she now has sworn affidavits from each detainee alleging that while they had actually been promised safe passage in Landfall Islands by the Military Intelligence (MI), six of their top leaders were killed in cold blood.

Haksar, who is the lawyer on record for these Burmese, says she will soon file a writ petition in court annexing the affidavits. She asserts that despite all the intimidation she has faced (at the hands of the local CID), she is determined to expose the guilty.

She claims to have evidence to expose the links of NUPA and MI. "If things carry on like this, the detention of these men can last forever," she asserts.

CBI officials in New Delhi admit they are nowhere near filing a chargesheet but insist they will also not file a closure report since there was more to Operation Leech than meets the eye. These officials admit that the main handicap has been getting evidence and witnesses from the Ministry of Defence (MoD) without which their investigation would remain incomplete.

They say many reminders have been sent to the MoD but hardly any sensitive document has been submitted or a single important witness produced.

The Army spokesman, contacted by The Indian Express, said since the case was being handled by the CBI, they had no comments to make.

Court papers show the CBI has repeatedly asked for adjournments and often admitted before the Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) that no help was coming from the MoD. At one hearing held on May 2000, the CBI's Deputy Superintendent admitted that "the CBI has kept pressing with Interpol of Yangon and Bangkok but as the required information/documents/witnesses are yet to come, hence the delay in the investigations."

Laloo sacks Ranjan, RJD may split

RJD parliamentary party with three of its seven Lok Sabha MPs and six of the 10 Rajya Sabha members absenting from the National Executive meeting, though some MLAs loyal to Ranjan participated.

The Lok Sabha members, who did not attend today's meeting are: Nagmani, Sukhdeo Paswan and Anwarul Haq. Rajya Sabha members absent are: Ranjan Prasad Yadav, Kumkum Rai, Bhante Dhamma Biriyo, Saroj Dubey, Mahendra Prasad and Prem Kumar Gupta. Both the sides are, however, claiming support of Prasad and Gupta.

Laloo's selective punitive action, observers feel, was aimed at pre-

Weavers' woes in A.P.

By K. Srinivasulu

SD-12
SUICIDES IN Andhra Pradesh are a routine affair! That has been the standard refrain in the official response to the news of suicides of around 40 powerloom weavers in Sircilla town in Karimnagar district, and of around 20 handloom weavers in the coastal Andhra and Telangana regions during the last few months. These are only the latest in the spate of suicides in the Andhra Pradesh. During the last decade, the State has established a record of sorts for suicides among different communities. Recollect the suicides and starvation deaths among the weavers in the late 1980s and the early 1990s and of more than 300 farmers in Telengana in 1998, and a critical picture of the state of the livelihood patterns and community entitlements of the people dependent on artisan and agricultural sectors emerges.

What is striking about the official responses to the handloom crisis is the predictability. Three aspects could be deciphered in this. First, the problem is perceived and projected as a localised one. Second, these communities are said to be lacking in skills and their products in quality. Third, to make them competitive the solution is said to lie in technology upgradation and training. The above perception not only fails to understand the context, intensity and expanse of the crisis in the handloom and powerloom sectors but because of the misdiagnosis of the problem, parades spurious solutions which could only push them deeper into crises. The tendency to compare the present suicides with those of the early 1990s in fact conceals the seriousness of the present crisis. A proper appreciation of this is necessary to come out with genuine solutions and evolve appropriate policy interventions.

Crucial to the understanding of the crisis in the handloom sector, which employs 12.5 million weavers, the second largest workforce in the country after agricultural labour, is awareness of the policy shift in the textile sector since the mid-1980s. The 1985 textile policy for the first time, moving away from employment protection and providing cloth to

rural and urban poor hitherto identified as policy objectives by the Governments in independent India, emphasised productivity, efficiency and competition — among the three sectors of handlooms, powerlooms and mills that comprise the textile industry — as goals worth pursuing. This policy shift paved the way for major changes in the textile scenario. One of the important aspects of this was the removal of restrictions on the powerloom sector. As a result, a massive proliferation and upgradation of the powerloom sector could be witnessed in the following years.

The genuine solution to the weavers' problems lies in assured supply of yarn and dyes at reasonable prices, accessibility to institutional finance and proper marketing facilities.

Though the 1985 policy provided protection to handlooms in the form of reservation of 22 items and hank yarn obligation by the spinning mills to supply 50 per cent of the yarn produced by them to this sector, these safeguards were grossly violated in practice. The story of the reservation act illustrates the official apathy towards the weaving community. Challenged by the powerloom and mill lobbies this act remained *sub judice* for eight long years till the Supreme Court upheld it as constitutionally valid in its historic judgment in 1993. Instead of creating the necessary mechanism for its implementation, the Central Government constituted a review committee to go into this question all over again. On the basis of its recommendation the number of items was reduced by half. During this period whatever damage could be done to handlooms was done by the powerlooms and mills not only by producing the varieties reserved for the handloom sector but also duplicating the designs that define the identity of this sector.

The second factor critical to the understanding of the present crisis are the economic reforms initiated in 1991. As a result of trade liberalisation, there was a

quantum jump in the exports of cotton and yarn in the early 1990s. This led to a steep rise in the hank yarn prices in the local market without corresponding increase in the product prices. So, in a number of handloom centres, with the master-weavers reluctant to take the risk, production was suspended. Thus thrown out of employment and into serious indebtedness, malnutrition and disease, around 200 weavers either died of starvation or resorted to suicides.

The powerloom crisis being witnessed in the northern Telengana districts in the

form of increasing number of suicides also has to be understood against the above background. The powerloom sector, following the 1985 policy, has experienced significant changes. The most important change being the technological upgradation facilitated by the liberalisation of technology import. The powerloom sector in northern Telengana, which has prospered since the 1970s by installing looms purchased from centres in western India, is put to disadvantage on account of this development. The weavers producing coarse varieties on these ordinary looms face stiff competition from the semi-automatic and jet looms.

Like the handlooms, even the powerlooms face the problem of sudden and unpredictable fluctuations in yarn prices. Added to this is the increase in the power tariffs in the State following the power sector reforms. With the cost of production increasing unmanageably on account of the hike in yarn and dye prices and power tariffs and without corresponding increase in the product prices (unable to face competition from the cheap products from Tamil Nadu, where the powerloom sector enjoys competitive advantage) the powerloom master-weav-

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ers, 80 per cent of whom are small owners with four to six looms, are inclined to stop production. What further compounds their plight is the irregular power supply. The sense of hopelessness and desperation among the weavers can be gauged from the fact that as many as 1,000 looms were sold as scrap during the last couple of months.

The 2000 textile policy formulated on the basis of the recommendations of the Satyam committee proposed far-reaching changes in the industry. The most significant aspect of this is the phasing out of even the limited protection available to the handlooms. What is further recommended is that the bulk of weavers both in handloom and powerloom sectors identified as the least skilled lot producing coarse fabric be shifted in a 'least painful' manner to the semi-automatic powerlooms by providing them with the necessary training!

But the crucial question is how many weavers can be accommodated in the semi-automatic and jet powerloom sector. It is pertinent to recollect the observation of the 1974 Shivaraman Committee report on the inter-sectoral changes in the textile industry. Estimating that the installation of one powerloom displaces 12 handloom weavers, the report firmly argued that the growth of powerlooms had been quite disastrous for handlooms. The rate of displacement at the present technological level would be much higher. The Satyam Committee recommendations, if implemented fully, will only deepen the crisis not only in the handloom but also in the powerloom sector with serious social consequences.

It is time the powers that be realised that the genuine solution to the weavers' problem lies in the assured supply of yarn and dyes at reasonable prices, accessibility to institutional finance, so that they can escape the private debt trap, and proper marketing facilities, rather than disastrous schemes such as loom modernisation.

(The writer is Professor, Department of Political Science, Osmania University, Hyderabad).

DIPLOMACY PEACE SEEMS THE BEST INVESTMENT FOR NORWAY

Power for peace

Norway is investing as much in a truce in the Kashmir Valley as in a hydro-electric project, says SONIA TRIKHA

IT'S odd but true. India is making a habit of being in the middle of a crisis whenever a foreign dignitary comes calling. This time it was Norway's Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg that everyone nearly missed in the clamour that followed the death of BSF soldiers along the Indo-Bangladesh border.

But it is hard to miss a Memorandum of Understanding that could result in a \$1 billion hydro-electric project generating 600 mw of power in terror-beleaguered Jammu and Kashmir. This is in addition to a \$1.2 billion, 1600 MW project pending approvals in Gujarat.

Also, no one should ignore a nation that is behind only Saudi Arabia in export of oil and which imports more than half its food needs. Norway is small and far, but it has the finest reserves and expertise in management of natural resources—petroleum, hydropower, fish, water, forests and minerals.

But there's nothing to beat its strength in hydro-power—after all Norway services 99.16 per cent of its own power needs through this source. More than expertise Norway's hoping to help the Indian government's ceasefire-led peace moves by bringing investor confidence into the Valley.

The Norwegian project in Sawalkote in Jammu and Kashmir, at this stage, may only be a confidence-building measure in the Valley, but the Norwegians are willing to go the extra mile to make it a reality. Last year, there were reports of Norway sponsoring a seminar on peace solutions in Kashmir in Delhi at which representatives from Pakistan to the Hurriyat to other local interest groups were invited.

More recently, there have been consultations with the Hurriyat as well as the Central Government to

Professional peaceniks

NORWAY is the country that has given its name to the most famous peace accord in recent times—the Oslo Accord. It is another matter that the Middle-East peace process is now in tatters, but the Norwegians helped facilitate its birth. Now they are carrying their social polity of peace to the war-torn Sri Lanka. The peacemaker in the island nation is Norwegian special envoy Eric Solheim. He is due for a visit to Colombo soon again. He was there in March and on his way out informed the Indian government of the progress of the peace process. The Norwegian success in Sri Lanka can be gauged from the fact that LTTE leader V. Prabhakaran met Solheim in November last year. The Norwegian ambassador recently visited LTTE-held areas. All hopes for a settlement between the Sri Lankan Government and LTTE are being pinned on Norway's intervention. That country, meanwhile, learnt the hard way that India will stall all progress unless it is recognised as a principal player in the resolution of the conflict. So now Stoltenberg was in New Delhi to brief Vajpayee and External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh on the peace in progress talks with Sri Lanka. He said in his talks in New Delhi that Oslo realises that any final settlement would need the support of India to be workable. But peace is not a guarantee, according to Stoltenberg, it is only a hope. He said it may get done in days or it may take years. It has been a bloody conflict that may get resolved or it may not but at least "we would have had the satisfaction of having tried".

ensure the project does not go the way of the Dulhasti debacle, or even the Uri power project in Kashmir which saw the abduction of two Swedish engineers in 1991 by the Muslim Janbaz Force.

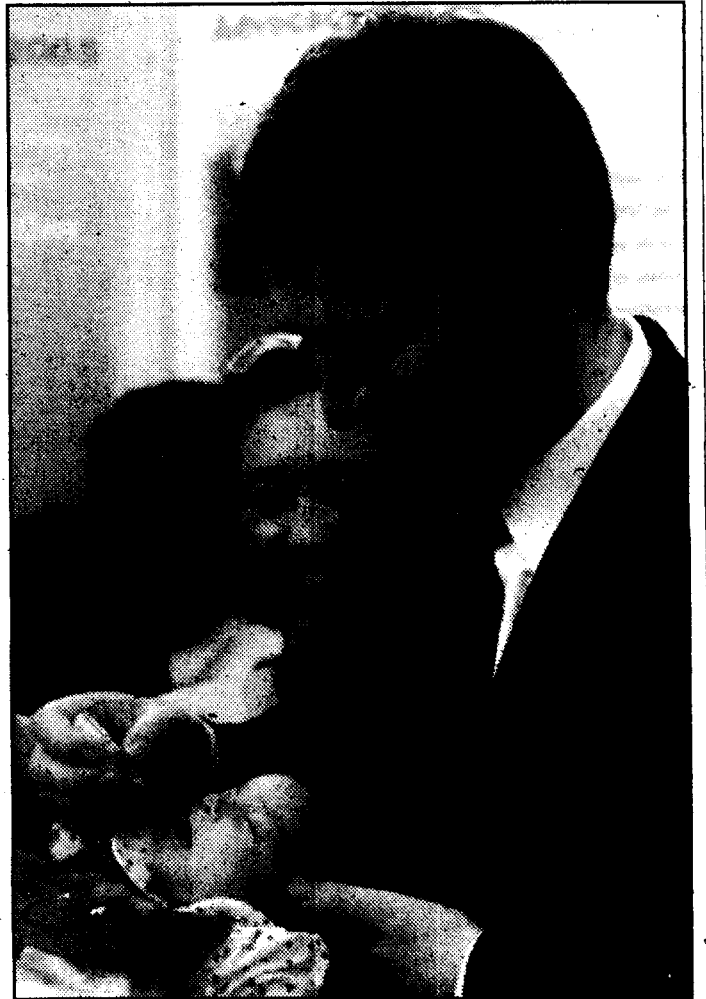
Delays in the Dulhasti project located in Kishtwar were compounded by the abduction of a French engineer in 1991. The average costs there have over-shot the original approvals by around 80 per cent, and are as high as 124 months for the 390 MW Dulhasti power project in J&K.

The project, originally planned to be completed by November 1990 at a cost of Rs 183 crore is now expected to be complete only by 2001 at a cost of Rs 3,559 crore—at current completion cost it will afford the user Rs 11 per unit of electricity.

The seriousness of the

Sawalkote project for Stoltenberg can be judged because he made the MoU between J&K Power Development Corporation and a Norwegian consortium—Statkraft Anlegg And GE Energy of Norway—possible despite criticism from lobbies like Ali Kahn's Kashmir Council for Scandinavia. But clearly, promise of power will have to move hand in hand with peace efforts in the Valley.

Stoltenberg also brushed aside criticism and supported India's candidature for the United Nations Security Council. In his words, it is inconceivable that a country as large as India should not be part of the United Nations Security Council. As part of the current rotating permanent members, Norway's word has considerable influence in the UN. Though it has chosen to stay outside the EU in its two referenda



Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg, Norway's face of social polity. Reuters

held in 1972 and 1994, the Norwegian counsel is heard in Europe and outside as a member of NATO.

Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, who also discussed the International Convention on Terrorism with the Norwegian delegation, thanked Stoltenberg for his support. Within the UN, India and Norway also have ties of cooperation in peacekeeping; Norway has participated in 24 operations to India's 35.

As the US market hits the ceiling, the earlier frowned-upon European markets are likely to be the new IT destination. Stoltenberg is keen to carry forward an existing Indian IT export bill of \$10 million to NASSCOM projected figures of \$100 million in 2004 and reach \$250 million in 2008.

Those optimistic figures should also go some in helping the trade be-

tween the two nations which currently stands at a paltry \$176 million. Norway would like to see some of the imbalance corrected too—India's exports are \$109 million to its imports worth \$67 million. Norway would be happy to see India lift the 44% import tax on salmon levied a year ago, raised from 16.5%.

The Stoltenberg IT plan will allow Indians access to Oslo without the hassle of travelling to the tip of the Arctic. Stoltenberg said in Bangalore, "You can sit in Bangalore, and develop work for Norwegian companies in Norway. We are going to do more work in India, particularly Bangalore." While Indians are welcome in his country, his idea is to outsource work from here. "We believe, it should eliminate the problems of distance," he said. A case of so far, yet so near.

INDIAN EXPRESS

26 APR 2001

WHO BUILT THE H-BOMB?

BY WILLIAM J. BROAD

After suffering a heart attack in 1979, Edward Teller sat down with a friend and a tape recorder and offered his views on the secret history of the hydrogen bomb.

"So that first design," Teller said, "was made by Dick Garwin." He repeated the credit, ensuring there would be no misunderstanding.

Teller, now 93, was not ceding the laurels for devising the bomb — a glory he claims for himself. But he was rewriting how the rough idea became the world's most feared weapon. His tribute, made more than two decades ago but just now coming to light, adds a surprising twist to a dispute that has roiled historians and scientists for decades: who should get credit for designing the H-bomb?

The oral testament was meant to disparage Dr Stanislaw M. Ulam, Teller's rival, now dead, and boost Dr Richard L. Garwin, a young scientist at the time of the invention who later clashed with Teller and now says he would wipe the bomb from the earth if he could.

The *New York Times* obtained a transcript of the recording recently from the friend with whom Teller shared his memories. Some historians of science praise Teller's tribute to Garwin as candid; others fault it as disingenuous.

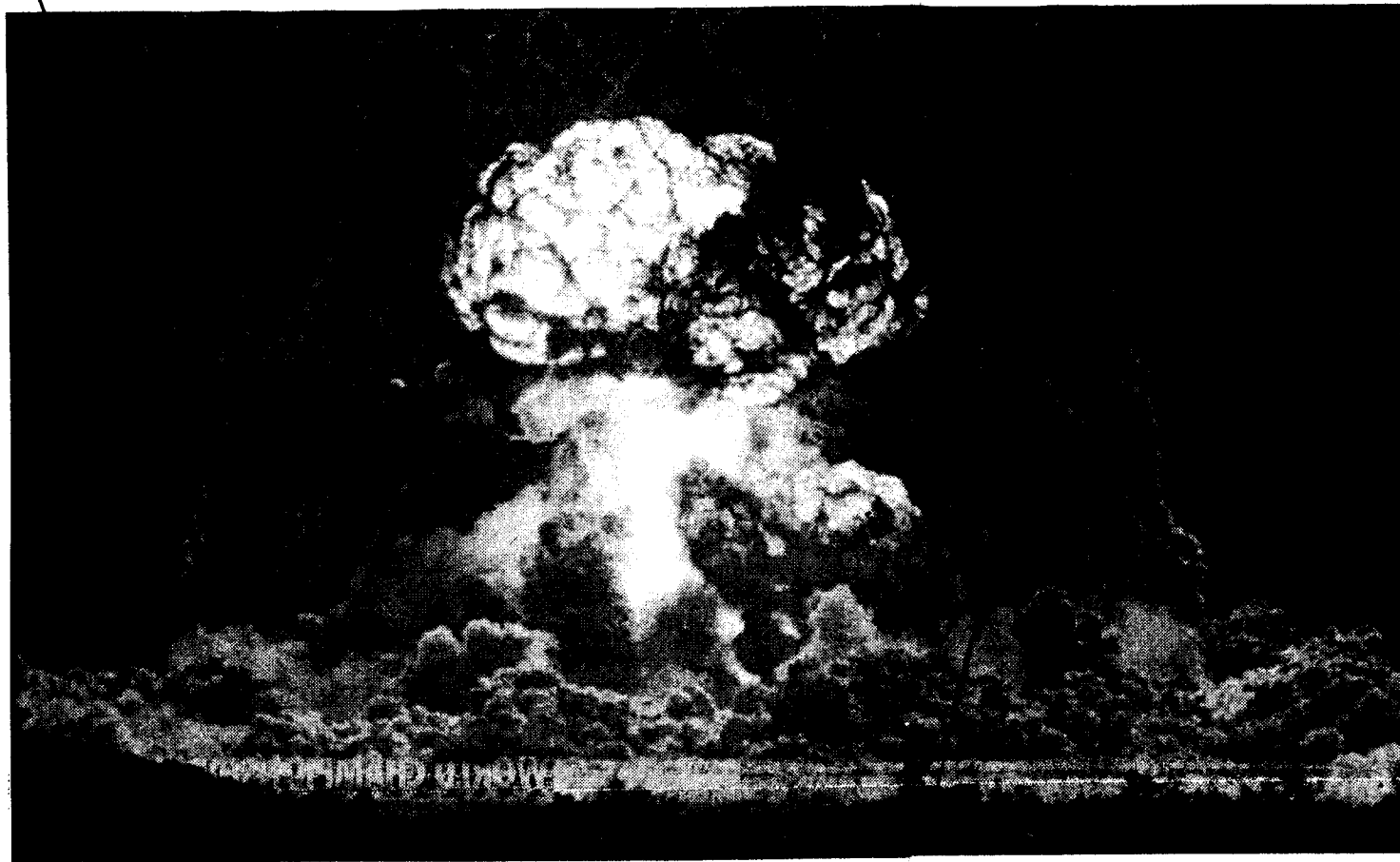
In any event, the recognition of Garwin is surprising because he is not usually seen as having a major role in designing the hydrogen bomb. In fact, he eventually became an outspoken advocate of arms control, battling often with Teller. The tribute also poses the riddle of how Garwin's work, done in the early 1950s, could have gone unacknowledged for so long.

"It's fascinating," said Dr Ray E. Kidder, an H-bomb pioneer at the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California, which Teller helped found and once directed.

"There's always been this controversy over who had the idea of the H-bomb and who did what. This spells it out. It's extremely credible, and I dare say accurate."

Dr Priscilla McMillan, a historian at Harvard who is working on a book about the early H-bomb disputes, agreed, saying the tribute sounded right. She added that Teller might have done it to "square things with God" after his 1979 heart attack.

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It's fascinating. There's always been this controversy over who had the idea of the H-bomb and who did what. This spells it out. It's extremely credible, and I dare say accurate.'



UP AND AWAY: A charged mushroom cloud rises up into the atmosphere seconds after an underground nuclear blast on a remote Pacific island.

One of the most controversial figures of the nuclear era, Teller played central roles in inventing the atomic and hydrogen bombs, and in destroying the career of Dr J. Robert Oppenheimer, who in World War II had run the laboratory in the mountains of New Mexico that gave birth to the atomic bomb. Afterward, though, Oppenheimer questioned the morality of devising an even more powerful weapon, and amid the anti-Communist paranoia of the McCarthy era, the government stripped him of his security clearance. The schism among scientists over his fate lasts to this day.

In the process, Teller became a hero to conservatives but was disparaged by liberals as the role model for Dr Strangelove, the fictive mad scientist of Stanley

Kubrick's 1964 film who was fixated on mass destruction.

Garwin, during the design effort a half-century ago, was a 23-year-old faculty member at the University of Chicago who was working during the summer break of 1951 at the New Mexico weapons laboratory, known as Los Alamos. Over the decades, he rose to prominence, often advising the government on secret matters of intelligence and weapons.

In an interview, Garwin said Teller was correct to include him among the bomb's designers, likening himself to its midwife.

"It was the kind of thing I do well," he said of joining theory, experiment and engineering to make complex new devices.

But he added, "If I could wave a wand" to make the hydrogen bomb

and the nuclear age go away, "I would do that."

Now 73, Garwin is an experimental physicist who for decades worked at the International Business Machines Corp. and is now a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. He backs such arms control measures as the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to outlaw all nuclear explosions.

A theoretical physicist, Teller is a senior fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford and director emeritus of the Livermore weapons laboratory.

He was an ardent advocate of the Reagan administration's Star Wars antimissile plan and, more recently, has promoted the idea of manipulating the earth's atmosphere to counteract global warming. If

Teller's version of events is right, he and Garwin were the main forces behind one of the most ominous inventions of all time, a bomb that harnessed the fusion power of the sun.

Teller had championed the goal since the early 1940s, before the atomic bomb actually flashed to life. His basic idea was to use the high heat of an exploding atomic bomb to ignite hydrogen fuel, fusing its atoms together and releasing even larger bursts of nuclear energy.

But no one working at Los Alamos could figure out how to do that. The credit dispute has its roots in a conversation Teller had in early 1951 with Ulam, then a mathematician at Los Alamos.

Afterward, a new plan emerged. The breakthrough idea, known as

radiation implosion, was to build a large cylindrical casing that would hold the atomic bomb and hydrogen fuel at opposite ends. The flash of the exploding bomb would hit the case, causing it to glow and flood the interior of the casing with radiation pressure sufficient to compress and ignite the hydrogen fuel.

No one knew whether the idea would work. And studies of it were slowed by ill will between Teller and Ulam, as well as debates at the weapons laboratory over whether building a hydrogen bomb was ethical and smart, given its potentially unlimited power. Garwin arrived at Los Alamos in May 1951 from the University of Chicago, where he had been a star in the laboratory of Enrico Fermi, the Nobel laureate and arguably the day's top physicist. Garwin had been at Los Alamos the previous summer and, intrigued by the work, had come back for another atomic sabbatical.

In the interview, Garwin recalled that Teller had told him of the new idea and asked him to design an experiment to prove it would work — something the Los Alamos regulars failed to do.

"They were burnt out" from too many rush efforts to design and test nuclear arms, Garwin recalled. "So I did it." By July 1951, after talking at the weapons laboratory with physicists and engineers, he had sketched a preliminary design. Of its features, Garwin said, "There is still very little I am allowed to say."

He continued working on the design until he went back to Chicago that fall. Then, as momentum built at Los Alamos for the H-bomb, many experts joined the design effort, which was finished in early 1952.

The prototype bomb stood two stories high. In November 1952, it vapourised the Pacific island of Elugelab, a mile in diameter. Its power was equal to 10.4 million tons of high explosive, or about 700 times the power of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

Unlike its atomic predecessors, the hydrogen bomb theoretically had no destructive limits. Its fuel was cheap, and its force could be made as large as desired.

Scientists talked of doomsday weapons big enough to blow the earth's atmosphere into space, or to raise ocean waves that crushed whole nations.

(*New York Times News Service*)

HIZB BLOWS HOT AND COLD; WE WON'T LISTEN TO DICTATES: LONE

Ceasefire a mockery: Salahuddin

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, NOV. 24 After insisting two days ago that the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen had not rejected outright the ceasefire offer, its chief, Syed Salahuddin, today characterised the Prime Minister, Mr. A.



B. Vajpayee's announcement as "a mockery" and promised attacks on Indian security forces during Ramzan.

At a press conference in Karachi, Mr. Salahuddin denied any differences among militant groups over the announcement and referred to the resolution, adopted by the United Jehadi Council, an umbrella organisa-

tion of all militant groups based in Pakistan and operating in Kashmir, rejecting the offer.

"This ceasefire offer is just a deception. It is a mockery", news agencies quoted him. He said no ceasefire would be meaningful unless India also cut down its troops in Kashmir to the pre-1989 level, "ended all operations against civilians" and released militants from prison.

"Through this ceasefire India is buying time to track down militant hideouts and strengthen its intelligence network. What we need is a ceasefire, which is meaningful. The Kashmir conflict will ultimately be resolved according to the wishes and the will of the people of Kashmir", he said.

Meanwhile, even as the Pakistan-based militant outfits have been fuming against the Indian Government, senior All-Party Hurriyat Conference leader, Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone, who is camping here, has sent out clear signals that while Kashmiris appreciated the support from across the border, they would not like to take "dictation" from them.

Speaking at functions organised by several organisations in and around Islamabad in the last two days, Mr. Lone has made it clear that Kashmiris expected the

militant organisations to listen to them and not the other way round.

Farooq hopeful

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, NOV. 24. While defending the Centre's ceasefire offer in Jammu and Kashmir, the Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, today said that militants were bent on "provoking the security forces" by killing innocent people in the State.

Still, he was hopeful that the

ceasefire offer would evoke "some positive response" from the militant organisations.

"But our vigil on the border is not going to relax. The security forces will go after the militants. They want to provoke us to tell the world that we are not sincere in implementing the ceasefire," Dr. Abdullah told reporters after meeting the Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, here.

Referring to the recent killings and attacks at Banihal, Kishtwar and Surankote, Dr. Abdullah said the security forces would get the

militants responsible. "When we have declared a ceasefire, we are not pursuing a pro-active policy but this does not mean that if they attack us, we will be sitting with folded hands," he said.

On possibility of talks with the militant groups, he said: "We will talk to our people. We have received certain signals, and these are positive signs. You wait and see." The Chief Minister said that he had been fully briefed by the Prime Minister before the ceasefire declaration was made.

Terms for talks remain: Page 13

Lashkar abducts, kills 5 Hindus

JAMMU, NOV. 24. Striking in a big way in the run-up to the Centre's Ramazan ceasefire, militants of Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba today shot dead five of the six Hindus they abducted in Doda district in Jammu and Kashmir.

Police told PTI that the six Hindus, including a State Food and Supplies Department employee, were abducted from Tali Mohalla area of Kishtwar town by 10 Lashkar militants this evening.

Some of the victims were pulled out of a bus and the others were waiting at the bus stop. The six Hindus were separated from the Muslim passengers and were taken to a forest on the mountains, 3 km away where five of them were shot dead. One of them escaped, the Additional Superintendent of Doda district, Mr. S.D. Singh, said. The militants

escaped leaving the bodies in a pool of blood.

Security forces have launched an operation to track down the militants. This is the second attack in three days on minorities in the State. On Wednesday, militants wearing Army uniform shot five truck drivers, four of them Sikhs, on the Srinagar-Jammu highway.

Today's killings triggered tension in a locality of Kishtwar town where demonstrators raised slogans denouncing Pakistan and militants.

Militants lobbed a grenade inside the headquarters of Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party led by Mr. Shabbir Ahmad Shah in Srinagar this afternoon but there was no casualty, a report said.

A HINDU-MUSLIM TRIALOGUE

TALKING TURKEY

Permanent colonisation of the Palestinians, even if it were possible in a post-colonial era, is not an option for a nation founded and justified on the basis of its Jewishness

S. NIHAL SINGH

Teen brigade: Israel's peace constituency is growing

The Palestinian tragedy has taken on a deeper hue because it is based on Mr Ariel Sharon's illusion that the harder he strikes at Palestinians, the sooner they will cry uncle. The Israeli prime minister is precipitating his domestic constituency, rather than addressing the real problem. His predecessor Ehud Barak discovered that though he went far by his lights in seeking a solution, it was not far enough and Israelis sought the hardliner to gain the elusive goal of security.

Seven years of talks between Palestinians and Israelis under the umbrella of the Oslo accords have resulted in a curious quilt of ostensibly autonomous Palestinian areas and other territories under Israeli or alleged joint control. By entering and destroying Palestinian structures in supposedly autonomous areas, Mr Sharon was thumbing his nose at Oslo, demonstrating to the world how fragile and unjust the basis of the original accords is.

In a flash, the world saw the Israeli-Palestinian problem for what it is: a colonial occupation of Palestinian land. We have moved a long way from the early days of a Palestinian refusal to accept the nation state of Israel, and a succession of wars won by



VOICE OF ISRAELI YOUTH: At a rally in the US

The truth is that Israeli society is deeply split between the hardliners and doves, between the orthodox and the secularists, between the young and the old

Israel against Arabs strengthened Tel Aviv, with the 1967 war serving as a benchmark. The Oslo agreements were premised on the bargain of Arab acceptance of Israel on the basis of land for peace.

In this instance, the devil not merely lay in the details but in the great gap between the two sides on how much land to give for peace and on the emotive questions of restoring the captured East Jerusalem with its holy sites to the Palestinians and the return to Israel of millions of refugees. With Syria, the problem is relatively simple, the return of occupied Golan Heights, except for a strip of land Israel claims for security and the water rights it desires.

For the first time, Mr Barak attempted to grapple with the crux of the problem with the Palestinians, even privately conceding partial Palestinian sovereignty over East Jerusalem; the return of the refugees proved almost impossible to resolve. But his time, as also US President Bill Clinton's, was fast running out and as a tortured Israeli nation sought to wrestle with the question of war and peace, a growing majority felt that it was getting the worst of the bargain: continuing insecurity against, as Israelis saw it, radical concessions.

While more Palestinians and some Israelis continue to be killed and yet more Palestinian homes are destroyed, Israelis are essentially fighting a battle

among themselves. Having tried Barak the peacemaker, they are now letting hardliner Sharon crack the whip. It is all part of an internal debate at the cost of more innocent lives, more Palestinian anger, with the new Bush administration having publicly intervened only once to rebuke Israel for rubbishing Oslo. The less interventionist approach of President George W. Bush sits well with Israeli hardliners and might even have the benefit of giving Israelis time to clarify their differences.

The truth is that Israeli society is deeply split between the hardliners and doves, between the orthodox and the secularists, between the young and the old. Israel's safety net is the United States, its mentor and protector, and it is only when the US administration realises that its larger interests are being harmed that it can bring itself to criticising Israel publicly. The present American status as the sole surviving superpower ensures that such rebukes are few and far between.

It stands to reason that the Sharon swing of the pendulum cannot last. He is representative of his country only in its frustrations with a peace process that seemed to bring more insecurity. As Israel's new headline policy provokes more Palestinian violence, as it must, a majority of Israelis will realise that the Sharon way of doing things is no answer to their problems. The disastrous Israeli invasion of Lebanon in the Eighties and retention of a southern occupation zone until recently were the handiwork of Sharon, the then defence minister.

Mr Barak, with help from former president Clinton, may have served his country better than his people realise because he articulated the essence of a formula that can show the way to peace. Palestinians must be granted sovereignty over their holy sites in East Jerusalem. The right of return to Israel must be conceded in principle although in practice it can only be of a symbolic nature. Third, Palestinians must have a viable state and settlements on occupied land must go, with clusters around Jerusalem allowed to remain as long as the Palestinian state is compensated with Israeli land.

How long it will take the nation state of Israel to reconcile itself to a realistic formulation for securing peace remains to be seen. It is, above all, an Israeli problem for two other reasons. Israel is an ideological state in an era in which pragmatism, rather than ideology, is the rule. Second, permanent colonisation of the Palestinian people, even if it were possible in a post-colonial era, is not an option for a nation founded and justified on the basis of its Jewishness.

As long as the present dispensation continues, Palestinians cannot but rebel at the inequity of a system under which they are boxed in at Israeli will, unable to go to work or even to visit one another in demarcated Palestinian areas. Collective punishment is the rule, rather than the exception. And many Palestinians return to rubble where their homes stood because they were allegedly built without Israeli permits or were described by Israelis as sources of hostile fire.

War is never a pretty picture, but when a colonised people are humiliated and made to suffer fresh privations each day, the ruling colonial power is building an immense amount of hatred against itself. Before parts of Gaza Strip were handed over to the Palestinian Authority, I took a ride in an Israeli military jeep with Israeli soldiers barely in their teens. I asked one of them whether he liked what he was doing. He turned to a senior officer for his approval before answering, "No, I hate it".

The teenage soldier is Israel's peace constituency, and it is growing.

The need for a Hindu-Muslim dialogue in India cannot ignore the third group comprising the individual humanist or the secularist. While the humanist must recognise the legitimate presence of the Hindu, the two cannot ignore the Muslim. Madhuri Santanam Sondhi outlines philosopher Basanta K. Mallik's theory of conflict resolution.

BY MADHURI SANTANAM SONDHII

that, until the advent of the British, the earlier non-Hindu religious immigrants had ultimately come to terms with the Hindu social organisation. They professed their own faiths, even proselytised, but did not interfere with the social organisation of the host country and instead adapted to it. Christians, Jews, Parsees and Muslims entered as communities into the group society of India, paradigmatically at the village level. On this societal basis, the words Hindu and Indian have been used interchangeably. When we speak of pre-existing harmonious relations between Hindus and non-Hindus, we refer to this common life. The peculiar social organisation of the Hindus permitted this kind of absorption, as it has demonstrated again with the Tibetans in this century. This co-existence is not based on levelling out of differences or on the melting-pot approach, but on mutual acceptance and dealings within a social framework in which there are agreements and shared needs. Disagreements of course do not disappear, but association is maintained as far as possible by stressing convergent interests, and by a preference for consensus politics. Community-based religions are revelationist and hence take a more serious view of differences. Historically, the level of bloodshed in the clashes of community religions amongst themselves is of an intensity not paralleled by the intra-Indic competition in the subcontinent. But India did witness an equivalent clash between community and group religions which appears to have been reactivated in this century. It is however at a nascent stage and still within the pale of management.

The latest manifestations are doubtless connected with the international resurgence of Islam and the reactive national assertiveness of Hinduism. But at a deeper level, Mallik prelates the reactivation of the Hindu-Muslim conflict to the penetration of the third social organisation into the social body of India. The humanist scheme is radically opposed to both the group and the community, as it is grounded in the individual as the seat of all value. Once the Europeans began to introduce these values into Indian social life via land reform (private as opposed to communal ownership), educa-

tion, law *et al*, the groundwork for disturbance was laid. The secularists of free India, of whichever ideological stripe, are only implementing with progressive efficiency this earlier attack on the Indian social scheme, as the Chinese westernisers have done with more ruthlessness on their own group scheme. The attack has been efficient in its destructive capabilities but woefully inadequate in its substitution of an imported humanism. One cannot exchange one civilisation for another as easily as one may a suit of clothes. Before changing the system, one must respect it, as Gandhi had done in his social reform programme. But the post-1947 modernisers in their haste were ready to throw the baby out with the bath water. They did not succeed in eliminating or transforming the old order but only in disorganising and deforming it. What we witness today is a visceral response to this sweeping attack, an eruption after a long and unnatural suppression. Inevitably there are difficulties in articulating this recovery.

Hindus in modern India have been taught to believe that secularism as modernity is progressive and that religionists constitute archaic and feudal elements. They have been on the defensive and taken resort to devious means and a secular rhetoric to protect their way of life. As Mallik has shown, modernity is the current face of humanist individualism (it had a classical past in the Mediterranean). And the history of individualism has been a seesaw of victory and defeat. The self-defin-

ition of modernity as representing the future is a belief and its individual unit of value which underlies the assumptions of its cultural and social formations as is rationally inexplicable as the group and community of other schemes. Modernity is expansionist, intolerant of other systems, masking its own inadequacies under a dazzle of technological achievements, of which there is now a belated but growing self-critique.

In India the humanists, or secularists they are commonly referred to, draw their strength mainly through not solely, from westernised Hindu ranks. They have focused on Muslim sensitivities and struggled to break the resistance of the majority community, although paradoxically, resistance to westernisation or modernisation by the Muslim community is probably greater.

Ayodhya has brought to the fore secular opinion aimed at dereligionising the dispute: suggestions are made for converting the mosque into a hospital or national monument, or for restoring the status quo which appears to favour Muslim sentiment. But it would be folly for the Muslims to rely overmuch on the anti-religious secularists who cannot anymore exclusively dictate the national agenda. The Hindus are no longer apologetic about themselves in the face of the modernist critique. Therefore the three groups should together tackle the common problem, as it is in their common interest to strengthen the legitimacy of the Indian political system. All conflicts have a common

background, something shared, which allows both for the conflict and its containment. In the present case it is likely to be the parent social organisation in which both religions have prospered. (The achievements of Indian Islam for instance stand favourable in comparison with any in West Asia.) This pluralistic society pre-existed the Indian state with its democratic institutional arrangements. Before the penetration of British humanism into Indian society, the inhabitants of the subcontinent shared in the social order, albeit unequally, not only through the hierarchies of the caste system, but through the imposition of inequities by the ruling religious minority over the rest (e.g. the *jizya* tax). In mitigating the effects of inequality and injustice, care should be taken to preserve the framework for common participation. Democratic numericalism, for instance, introduced the cleavage of majority or minority which has in several respects distorted the pre-existing pluralistic quality of life.

Some commentators opine that Hindus and Muslims have nothing in common to act as the starting point for dialogue. But that is to overlook the common social background which is so taken for granted that it does not enter the common discourse. Like the British Constitution this is not a written contract, but equally, it has been effective and fairly resilient. In contemporary times, with a written humanist Constitution, disliked in parts by both communities (one has reservations about the issue area of personal law and the other appears to be in a revisionist mood on several constitutional issues), it is important to enumerate these other agreements, so that their tangible presence and operations are recognised, perhaps institutionalised through mechanisms for dialogue and discussion for coping with recurrent conflicts.

Mallik's analysis implicitly contains within itself the intellectual requirements for dialogue, suggestions for alternative ways of dealing with deeply opposed value-systems and their attempts to expand at one another's expense. The most important of these assumptions is that although value-systems may be opposed to one another, they are in fact alternative ways of viewing the world,

and as alternatives they are equally good or important, though none may claim perfection. In dialogue situations therefore, if the dialogue is to be honest and without reservations, it is important to trust all participants as contributing an essential and unique system of values all equally supported by their relation to one another. In a relative world, there is no place for self sufficiency. Hence also the need to refrain from trying to convert others to one's own point of view, for persuasion and conversion are also methods of expansion and of domination. In other words, transparency and sincerity are prerequisites of dialogue, and call for great courage and humility. No one is asked to accept the substance of another's viewpoint, but to accept the other's right to differ, while presenting, explaining and clarifying the issues involved.

Equality therefore emerges as the strict requirement for honest dialogue — the equality of individuals qua individuals, and of all social and cultural groups. And as mentioned at the outset, in India this would imply three main groups — the Hindus, the Muslims and the humanist/secularists. The last named are numerically the smallest but the most salient — they have defined the meaning of nationality and value for the past four decades. Having adopted constitutional humanism as the national goal and the basis for government, it cannot be abandoned light-heartedly. But the humanist must recognise the legitimate presence of the Hindu and vice versa: at present both are out to delegitimise one another through differing definitions of secularism. And both must recognise the Muslim group and vice versa. There have been failings on all sides. All have threatened one another. A dialogue of equals could remove much of this threat of domination, and perhaps even lead on to the Mallikian ethic of abstention, whereby each one agrees not to press his demands to the point of unacceptable conflict — i.e. to the point of questioning the other's identity and prescriptive right to exist. Such an ongoing dialogue process can be conducted within a framework which emphasises the liberal and humane aspect of all traditions.

Extracted from HINDU-MUSLIM DIALOGUE by MADHURI SANTANAM SONDHII, a Pr. K. Santanam Swarak Samiti publication, pages 16

Shoegasm: Why heels are better than sex

NOTES FROM LONDON NABANITA SIRCAR

who wake up before 7:20 am live shorter lives than late risers. There is an explanation to all this. Animals that hibernate in winters live longer. The longest-living animals, including crocodiles, spend a great deal of their time idling in the sun. The choice is yours. But don't forget that another study shows that jogging, walking and cycling exercises the brain as well as the body, boosting memory and preventing mental decline. It's all about more brains or more years of life.

It's better to see the obvious does not mean dumbing down because scientists have finally discovered that we are smarter now than ever before and it is thanks to watching television and surfing the net and chatting to friends. Average scores in this country have risen by 27 points. It is said that a more stimulating environment coupled with genetic inheritance interact in a virtuous circle to make people smarter. Cars and video recorders may be making us use our brains but where will it end? There is a limit. The answer is that we could be getting smarter for 200 more years!

Smart or not but laziness is the secret to long life. There is no point in rising before sunrise and going for a jog, or trying to work off stress with a game of squash or going off to build your muscles in a gym and taking cold showers. If you thought such exercises would benefit you then forget the notion. Such activities are all significantly shortening lives, draining the finite energy that is

given to mammals. The argument is no top sportsman has lived to a very advanced age. The good news for lazy-bones is that the three keys for a long life are to play less sport, to reduce stress and eat less food. Which teenager wouldn't embrace that principle? Believe it or not but we are now told that lifestyle mistakes begin in the morning. Those

There is bad news for women. They are more prone to drunkenness and alcoholism and are not capable of holding their drinks. It has nothing to do with social taboos but a gastric enzyme ADH, which breaks down alcohol so that it can be absorbed into the bloodstream. We women have a very small amount of it (ADH) in our stomachs. But women have a good chance of matching men drink for drink if they stick to beer, because they are biologically more tolerant to beer than wines or spirits. And of course women have stronger kidneys!

Here's a new one. Sex and shoes are inextricably linked. Teenagers become sex-aware and shoe-aware at



'All I want is a tomb somewhere...'

From the Pakistan Newspapers

No photo, no passport

Islamabad: The federal government on Tuesday said passports to women applicants will be issued only when they produce identity cards with their photos affixed on them. It has come to the notice of the government that women applicants approach regional passport offices to obtain passports having their national identity cards without photos. The regional passport offices are not in a position to entertain such lady applicants. The government, therefore, advised all women applicants to first obtain the card having photographs in their own interest and then approach regional passport offices.

An economy smuggled

Peshawar: Governor Lt. Gen. (Retd) Syed Ifthikhar Hussain Shah has said that smuggling has become a cancer hindering the development of North West Frontier Province. The governor said that smuggling has put the economy of the province in shambles and that industrialisation has come to a standstill. He warned that the smugglers should find a new source of livelihood. He advised the tribals to contemplate how to uproot smuggling and other social evils, as otherwise, the government would have no other option but to come down hard on the smugglers and hit the wrongdoers irrespective of their influence and clout.

PARISTAN OBSERVER

Strategies for development — II

By Nirupam Bajpai

10-12
29/9

INDIA HAS achieved some success in export led-growth, but much less than many other Asian countries, notably China. China's exports grew from around \$20 billion a year in 1980 to around \$200 billion in 2000; India's exports, by contrast, grew from around \$17 billion in 1980 to only around \$35 billion in 2000. Considerable evidence confirms that it is China's non-state sector, largely operating under free-market rules, rather than the state sector, which has been the source of its dynamism. One key institutional support for rapid growth in China has been the decentralisation of economic policy making. The power of the central bureaucracy in Beijing has been substantially weakened in favour of provincial and local governments. In particular, the coastal provinces have been relatively free to pursue market-oriented policies in support of export-led growth. The provinces have a significant control over Government expenditure and taxation; infrastructure projects; and even the policies regarding foreign direct investment. Indeed, the provinces have been competing to attract FDI and to upgrade the infrastructure. The Chinese scenario contrasts markedly with the continued strength of the Union Government in setting the overall economic agenda for India, including most major decisions over infrastructure expenditure and foreign investment.

Substantial impetus can be imparted to the growth process should the Central Government decentralise economic policy making and allow the States to make crucial decisions. Brazil, China, and Russia are examples where regional governments have taken the lead in pushing reforms and prompting further actions by the Central Government. In Brazil, it is Sao Paulo and Minas Gerais which are the reform leaders at the regional level; in China, it is the coastal provinces, and the provinces farthest from Beijing, in the lead; in Russia, reform leaders in Nizhny Novgorod and in the Russian Far East have been major spurs to reforms at the central level.

Greater decentralisation of decision making in India is likely to lead to greater competition among the States and there-

fore to higher efficiency and productivity in these regions. In India, key fiscal, infrastructure, and regulatory decisions on economic management remain at the Central Government level. Essentially what this centralised system of governance implies is that the States have very little jurisdiction in, or control over, policy and regulatory decisions that would make the States more attractive to prospective investors. A gradual process of decentralisation has begun in India because regional political parties have been

Policy-making at the sub-national level is essential for State Governments to be able to follow development strategies suitable to their socio-economic, cultural, and geographic characteristics.

lending support in the formation and running of the Government at the Centre. This is a healthy development. Coalition governments at the Centre made up of regional parties representing different States can exercise a great deal of influence in policy-making at the Centre.

While it is true that the record of coalition governments so far as stability at the Centre is concerned is poor, it is also important to recognise that coalition politics is rather new to the country, and with the passage of time is likely to mature. Regional parties in the Central Government can play a critical role and negotiate for greater decision-making authority to be transferred to the State-level. Policy-making at the sub-national level is essential for State Governments to be able to follow development strategies suitable to their socio-economic, cultural, and geographic characteristics.

Decentralisation of decision-making from the State to the local levels is equally important. Madhya Pradesh is probably the best example in this regard. Panchayats in the State have taken up primary education and primary health as their focus areas. The State Government has empowered the panchayats to set up new schools in response to community demand, appoint teachers and locate land for schools. The panchayats can also dismiss teachers who do not perform.

Education committees comprising janpad panchayat and district panchayat members oversee all matters of school education such as location of new schools, transfer of teachers within the district and staffing of district institutes of education training. The gram panchayats also manage all schools set up through the Education Guarantee Scheme.

In the sphere of primary health, the panchayats in Madhya Pradesh recruit volunteers to become rural health practitioners and are also responsible for dis-

to be at the State-level, there is little hope of any improvement.

In some villages of Uttar Pradesh there were privately-run primary schools. These schools typically had a 4-5 room school building, 5-7 teachers, school uniforms, decent desks and benches for the students, and most importantly regularly run school schedules — all of this for a monthly fee of Rs. 40 per student.

A comprehensive programme of disinvestment can help raise substantial resources for achieving yet another goal announced by the Prime Minister in his speech on August 15, 2000 — universal primary education in the country by 2010. The following scheme can be used: after careful analysis and background work, the Government could announce a major programme of disinvestment and call a meeting of all Lok Sabha members and inform them of this scheme wherein each MP will be given an equal share of the disinvestment proceeds, only for establishing, in their constituencies, more schools or for training teachers or upgrading facilities and so on depending on the specific needs of each constituency.

ease surveillance and for reporting epidemics. The health committees comprising members of the gram, janpad, and district panchayats supervise all aspects of primary health management. District panchayats are empowered to appoint doctors in vacant positions. The State has successfully trained a new cadre of community health workers for more than 50,000 villages.

The role that panchayats in Madhya Pradesh are playing may provide a strategy for all other States with respect to primary education and health. This is critical in view of the fact that the bureaucrats stationed in the State capitals manage the prevailing system in most States. Both the primary schools and the primary health care centres (PHCs), especially in the rural areas, are in very bad shape and in desperate need of reform. Some of the villages that this writer visited in Uttar Pradesh presented a very grim picture vis-a-vis State-run schools and PHCs. Rarely were the teachers present in the schools and doctors in the PHCs. Infrastructure is notoriously bad. The PHCs did not have a telephone, transport, or even the basic minimum medical equipment. Some PHCs had no work since patients never came there, but did have 10-12 full-time employees, including a position for a computer person. As long as monitoring of primary schools and PHCs continues

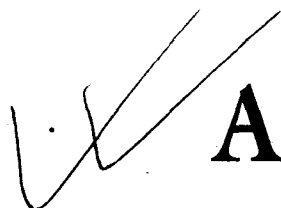
Of course, this will require strict monitoring, preferably by the Prime Minister's Office to ensure that funds are being used for the purpose they are meant for. Such a scheme is likely to help bring together MPs across party lines. Securing acceptability for such an idea at the level of MPs will help in dealing with the opposition to disinvestment plans from trade unions and others traditionally opposed to it. Should such a scheme work, it will not only help the Government withdraw relatively easily from the loss-making public sector, from running textile mills to steel plants, from managing hotels to operating airlines, but will also help divert the much-needed resources for primary education. Significantly higher levels of public investment coupled with the implementation of the Madhya Pradesh model of running primary schools is likely to go a long way in meeting the Prime Minister's goal of universal primary education by 2010.

Concluded)

THE HINDU

24 APR 2001

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Anil calls it ridiculous

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

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this has to be explained to the people. Our party decided to quit the NDA government in the aftermath of the Tehelka controversy and subsequently forged an alliance with the Congress. But neither the Trinamul manifesto nor the common minimum programme makes any attempt to explain to the electorate why the previous election pledge had to be changed," Mr Panja said.

The Trinamul chairman also regretted that the decision taken by Miss Banerjee to sever all links with the NDA has put him "not only in an awkward position by also created a situation where the

people are liable to form a wrong impression about his political integrity."

"We collectively decided on 14-15 March that we will quit the NDA government, but extend support to it from outside. We also decided even to abstain from voting in the event of any motion on the Tehelka tapes. I am not a party to the decision taken later to completely delink the party from the NDA," Mr Panja asserted.

He claimed that an evidence of the truth of his statement in this connection is the fact that Trinamul MPs are taking their seats on the Treasury Bench of the Lok Sabha.

KOLKATA, April 22. — Mr Anil Biswas today described the Congress-Trinamul combine's common minimum programme as a "ridiculous programme" that would take the state backward.

"What the Left Front government has already achieved, the combine proposes to do in the next few years. The CMP is nothing but an attempt to cover up the serious differences between the two parties and cheat the people," he said.

Scoffing at combine's idea of floating Save Bengal Front, the CPI-M state secretary said: "Does anybody know its address? The Left Front has an address. But where will the people go to find out the SBF?"

Mr Biswas challenged the Congress-Trinamul's "boast" about attracting investments.

The Left Front government, he said, could secure investment proposals to the tune of Rs 54,587 crore from 1991 to 2000, while during the last year alone there were investments worth Rs 2,202 crore.

There is not a word in the CMP on how to turn the sick units into profit-making ones. "The LF has clearly spelt out in its manifesto its strategy in this regard," he said.

The CMP promises to provide jobs to workers of the unorganised sector. But Mr Biswas asked: "What will they do? It's the LF government which has introduced provident fund for the unemployed. It has benefited 30,000 workers."

STATESMAN

Naidu for Israel lesson on Naxalite war

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

HYDERABAD, April 1. — Mr N Chandrababu Naidu will press for adoption of the Israeli model to counter Naxalism at Tuesday's meeting of chief ministers of affected states.

The Andhra Pradesh chief minister wants the latest technology to be used in anti-Naxalite operations. The will power and technological superiority that Israel acquired to battle extremism, Mr Naidu will argue, should replace the present lackadaisical attitude we have toward Naxalism.

Mr Naidu will ask both the Centre and his counterparts from other states to view Naxalism as the country's most serious internal threat. More than twice the number killed in the Kargil war have been killed in anti-Naxal operations in the states where Naxalites are active, he will say.

The 4 April meeting has been convened by the Union home minister, Mr LK Advani, and will be attended by the chief

ministers of Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Bihar besides Mr Naidu. The meeting was convened after the Andhra minister, A Madhav Reddy, was killed in landmine blast triggered by the People's War Group.

The five heads that Mr Naidu has identified in his anti-Naxalite thrust are (i) improved coordination between the states, (ii) logistic and technical support, (iii) financial support, (iv) research and development and (v) human resource development. He will ask all states to clamp a ban on the PWG and Andhra Pradesh did in 1992.

Improved coordination between the states should involve a common, time-bound approach for development of areas, roads and communication facilities over and above the present exchange of intelligence on Naxalite activity. Mr Naidu feels. For

instance, if a road is re-laid in a particular state, its continuation in the neighbouring state also needed to be improved simultaneously.

Mr Naidu will ask the Centre to extend logistic and technical support — including providing the latest weaponry and modern surveillance equipment — to the states.

To the states, he will suggest the need to raise specially-trained forces to combat Naxalites. Given Andhra Pradesh's elite force — the Greyhounds — Mr Naidu will offer his help to other states to set up similar forces.

Significantly, Mr Naidu will ask the Centre to ensure that the defence labs focus on developing technology needed to tackle the PWG's main operative system — landmines. Mr Naidu finds this aspect critical — "the PWG has achieved perfection in using landmines".

The Union industries min-

istry will also be asked to evolve a fresh policy on explosives. Mr Naidu will seek the incorporation of "delay in detonation" of explosive material and permission for only those explosives that have a limited shelf life like slurry.

From Mr Advani, the chief minister will seek an assurance of reimbursement of 50 per cent of costs incurred by states to deal with extremism. Reimbursement, he will say, must be more specific than mere translation into deployment of paramilitary forces by the Centre.

Interestingly, Mr Naidu, perusing the material of the first joint command set up in 1992, found that the same issues were discussed in the 1998 meeting. "Mr Naidu is convinced that enough has been spoken on the issue. He will insist that it is high time to act — not just to contain the extremist movement but to

crush it," said a top official. **PWG camp:** In a bid to strengthen its support base in the Orissa districts bordering Andhra Pradesh, the People's War Group will organise a meeting in Gajapati district of the former state, adds SNS from Berhampur.

Sources said that the proposed meeting would be held this month, but the exact date and the venue has not been decided.

The Naxalites are gradually making inroads in the hilly districts of Gajapati, Rayagada and Malkangiri. They had given a poll boycott call in some pockets of these districts during the last Assembly and Lok Sabha elections.

The call had had a response in some areas.

The ultras are also organising tribal farmers and agriculture labourers in the inaccessible tribal-dominated pockets. They are encouraging the tribals to fight for their land rights and against the exploitation of landlords.

PWG TO MEET ON ORISSA-ANDHRA BORDER TO EXPAND BASE

Ruling elites' commitment to development

110-12
231 3
By Gilbert Etienne

THE LATEST fad and fashion in North-South debates is "good governance" preached by the rich countries to the poor ones. This kind of sermonising would be more appropriate if it started with a bit of self-criticism. How deeply are politicians of the West or Japan committed to the crucial socio-political and economic issues faced by their own countries? It is a common saying that many politicians are above all concerned with being elected or re-elected. Added to these attitudes come, at present, in many countries statesmen of rather low calibre.

Corruption, wasteful expenditures, delays in decision-making are no less striking even if less widespread than in a number of developing countries. Yet Europe and the United States do reasonably well, because they have reached a high level of development. In a way, they can afford a certain amount of losses and mediocre governance.

Developing countries face — though at varying degrees — much tougher challenges like fast population growth, limited human and material resources... That is why development leading to the eradication of poverty should go along with a thorough commitment of the elites at all levels.

Looking at Asia we find a great diversity of behaviours. South Korea was, by 1961, in a very poor shape following the 1950-53 war and the low performance of President Syngman Rhee. The new President, Park Chung-hee, showed a most thorough commitment to development. He relied on two economic secretariats which used to inform him regularly, often every day, of the progress of the industrial projects. Officials, business people created a close network which led South Korea to its well known progress. China under Deng Xiaoping and his successors also shows a strong commitment to development. Mr. Zhu Rongji, the present Prime Minister, is not just sitting in his office or playing politics. He goes to Xinjiang to see for himself how to improve cotton. He enters customs houses and fires smuggling officials or he makes sure to check malpractices when visiting the Three Gorges project (big dam on the Yangtze).

Between 1958 and 1965, after a poor

growth in his country, General, later on President, Ayub Khan followed with much energy the development of Pakistan, surrounded by able economists and civil servants, which contributed, under a mild authoritarian regime, to the short-lived "Pakistani miracle", as it was called at that time.

Does that mean that authoritarian regimes are the only way to enforce such a commitment? By no means, because there are much more failures than successes. How many military juntas or civilian dictators in Latin America, in Africa or

turbulence, resulting from the violent rivalries between the two Begums, Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina. The game is simple. When one is in the Opposition she creates hartals and other disturbances to topple her rival, and vice-versa: from 1991 to 1996, under Begum Zia's rule, 273 days of strikes; from 1996 to the end of 1999, 50 to 100 days under Sheikh Hasina's rule. According to rough estimates, each day may cost around \$100 million of economic losses.

Do these examples mean that democracy is hopeless or at least cannot deliver

Commitment can be there under any political system. One needs a leader with a vision plus a practical mind, supported by some competent civil servants and/or politicians.

in West Asia have failed to boost economic and social progress? And the record of communist regimes like Cuba or, worse, North Korea is not striking!

What happens in democratic regimes? Returning from a visit to China, the Union Minister, Mr. Murasoli Maran, made some penetrating observations. "My visit has been an eye-opener. The enormous interest evinced by the various functionaries in matters like GDP, foreign investments and exports is an exciting example we can emulate," a newspaper quoted him as saying. A harsher comment appeared in the same paper on the previous Lok Sabha session: "MPs from both sides sabotaged the very function for which they are elected," so that key Bills to boost development were not passed and "the P.M. did not show any urgency to settle issues."

Looking at India's neighbours, the situation is worse, partly because democracy came only in 1988 in Pakistan and in 1991 in Bangladesh. How much time have Mr. Nawaz Sharif and Ms. Benazir Bhutto spent on development issues? Continuous intrigues and doubtful manoeuvres, rising corruption, Sunni-Shia clashes, jihadist movements have led to a slowing down of economic and social progress.

Bangladesh offers a peculiar case of

the goods in a relatively efficient manner? Here again the answer is no. One of the great successes of India has been the Green Revolution, which has freed the country from famines and from dependency on American wheat. How could India wipe out in a few years the deficit of 10 million tonnes of food grain reached in 1966? At the top under the former Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, and later on Indira Gandhi the political will; at the implementation level C. Subramaniam, a superb Minister of Agriculture, surrounded by outstanding senior officers like B. Sivaraman, D. P. Singh and others, all helped in a remarkable manner by Ford and Rockefeller Foundations. Such people at work was a wonderful sight, concentration on the decisive factors, efficiency, integrity...and no nonsense!

Let us take a smaller but no less significant case. Surat in the early 1990s had fallen into an abject state of filth, neglect with even the return of the plague. At one point Mr. S. R. Rao, IAS, is appointed municipal commissioner. He starts pushing his babus, making his officers work harder, getting out of his office, disturbing politicians' patronage... By sheer will, talent and implementation of the law, Mr. Rao had things done.

Last example, AIDS, which is creating

havoc in Africa south of the Sahara and is becoming increasingly dangerous in Asia. Drugs are still very expensive and painful but a lot can be done, at least for prevention. Most AIDS cases come from heterosexual relations, particularly prostitution. The remedies are simple: large scale dissemination of information, focus on prostitutes, ample supply of condoms, as done with success by a number of NGOs in India. However, in that country efforts remain piecemeal and I wonder whether any big leader has ever tried massive action. The situation is worse in Africa and particularly dramatic in South Africa where, out of 43 million inhabitants now, 4 to 6 million are expected to die by 2010. Yet, one does not see a thorough mobilisation to prevent future casualties.

Three countries (see W.H.O. Health, a Key to Prosperity, Geneva, 2000), Thailand, Senegal and Uganda — the first two under democratic rule — have reduced considerably the infection rates of HIV. There has been a deep commitment by the Governments, other elites, including business people, religious authorities, which led to large-scale information campaigns and widespread use of condoms.

Already in 1986, Rahul Singh was writing in *The Times of India*, "it is almost as if the main decision-makers are living in a rarified world of their own, far removed from the realities of Indian life." Does one see often a Minister in urban slums or in a poor village, and if so without pomp and tamasha? The same is true in most countries. The old device of caliph Harun al Rashid walking under disguise in Baghdad to find out his people's feelings looks out of fashion nowadays in poor and rich countries!

To sum up, since ages, all over the world, commitment can be there under any political system. One needs a leader with a vision or at least a broad purpose, plus a practical mind, supported by some talented and competent civil servants and/or politicians. In India, Akbar Badshah illustrates such a role, surrounded by his famous omrahs and mansabdars called "the columns of the Empire".

(The writer is Professor Emeritus, Institute of International Studies and Development Studies, Geneva.)

EU peace mission to Koreans is seen as a rebuke to Bush

BY BRIAN KNOWLTON
International Herald Tribune

Washington, March 28: When European Union leaders agreed on Saturday to send mediators to help keep alive the intra-Korean peace talks, their surprise foray into a traditional US sphere of influence struck many observers as an unspoken rebuke to the Bush administration for having retreated from those talks, to the consternation of its South Korean allies. "This was not the administration's finest hour," said Ivo Daalder, a former director of European

affairs on the US National Security Council.

President George W. Bush cast a chill on the talks, putting off US involvement before further study, even as President Kim Dae Jung of South Korea, an architect of the reconciliation effort and a US friend, was in Washington for discussions. "When you have a country that poses a threat that's willing to talk about giving up that threat, you have to engage," Mr. Daalder said.

"I think European leaders from Tony Blair on down are just scratching their heads, asking,

'Why wouldn't they want to do this?'"

Nonetheless, the European effort has unsettled some in Washington. Will it complement or complicate US efforts in the Koreas? Are the Europeans "grandstanding" as one source close to the administration

THE WORLD IN DEPTH

put it, in an area where they have little leverage but face few risks? Will European worries of a more unilateralist US administration lead to substantially greater EU foreign policy involvement?

"There are real differences of

principle on how to conduct global affairs between US and the EU," said John Hulsman, a fellow in European affairs at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative research group that has gained a high profile under the Bush administration. "This doesn't have

to be a bad thing, but it is something that the US administration should be watching very, very closely."

Europeans, while grumbling about Mr. Bush's mass expulsion of Russian diplomats, his reversal on restricting carbon-dioxide

emissions and his controversial missile defense plan, say that the EU has kept the United States informed of its Korean plans, and that the two sides have cooperated. "This is a question of both, and not either/or," said Ian Eliasson, Sweden's ambassador to the United States and a diplomat long involved with both Koreas.

"We have kept America fully abreast." Sweden has had an embassy in Pyongyang for 27 years, has helped represent Western interests there for years and currently holds the rotating presidency of the EU.

"The United States plays a crucial role in this situation," Mr. Eliasson said.

But the Europeans have serious concerns about the tone of the Bush administration. And each side, said Philip Gordon, Director of the US-France Center at the Brookings Institution, is trying to make it clear that the other cannot dictate to it.

"This administration's philosophy seems to be that if you're just tough, the allies and even your adversaries will roll over," Mr. Gordon said over the phone from Paris.

THE ASIAN ASSOCIATION

29 MAR 2001

refugees

y, eat

survive

US officials

to check

poppy harvest

Islamabad, April 20: The United States is sending two officers with a UN drug team to Afghanistan next week to confirm reports the ruling Taliban have drastically curtailed opium production, the US ambassador to Pakistan said on Friday.

The UN trip will be the second by American officials to Afghanistan this month, ending a ban by Washington for security reasons that had been in force since a US missile strike at alleged terrorist bases there in 1998.

US embassy officials said two officers would arrive from the US on Monday to enter Afghanistan on Wednesday with the UN team. "It is led by the UNDCP, the UN Drug Control Programme in Afghanistan in 2000. (Reuter)

A crime against democracy

By Pran Chopra

Disruption of Parliament proceedings is wilful defiance of the whole system by which a billion people have chosen to govern themselves.

10-12 27 3

THE IDES of March have struck India's Parliament twice in two years. Last year too, it was about this time that events erupted which made one comment in this column, under the title "Twilight of Parliament", that unless things improved the correct heading the next time round could well be the "Night of Parliament". This year the shadow has been growing darker with every passing day since March 14, and light is nowhere in sight at the time of this writing. What we are seeing instead is the biggest crime against democracy since Indira Gandhi imposed the Emergency in 1975. Until now it was possible to hope that so long as Parliament functioned well, the disorderly few would learn better behaviour from the example set them by those more dedicated to parliamentary ways. But they are setting an example in wilful defiance of the whole system by which a billion people have chosen to govern themselves.

As was argued in this space a year ago, it is not only the function of Parliament but the reason for its existence to provide a forum where the concerns of the people may be considered from all points of view and decisions taken in accordance with rules accepted by Parliament and endorsed by the people. A Government which fails to respect the decisions can be then be voted out, by Parliament in the first instance, and should that forum fail, then by the people themselves.

This is the lifeline of the whole system. Snap it, and the entire system will collapse, and that will hurt no one more than it will hurt the very people who need the system most. For them this is the only place where they can plead their case, lacking as they do the many other levers which others can use to bend Governments to their wishes. If this sounds like a premature prophecy of doom, we should look back on the days when behaviour which more befits the hoodlum began to undermine the dignity of a Legislature or two. The guilty were few in those days, and so the rest were able to shake heads

tolerantly on what they saw only as untrained exuberance on the part of newly elected members who had yet to digest the unfamiliar sense of power which the vote had given them. But today the guilty are many, in all parts of the House, and they are drawn from all sections of society. So the contagion spreads. What those in one legislature do today they are able to do because others in other legislatures had done it yesterday.

In the circumstances of some years ago, the Opposition could be forgiven some of its excesses for the reason that in election after election it polled more votes and remained a helpless minority because of the vagaries of our first-past-the-post voting system. But even then, enraged behaviour was not the wisest response they could have made. A much better one was demonstrated some decades ago, when just a couple of members of the Lok Sabha, including Feroze Gandhi, father-in-law of Ms. Sonia Gandhi (as she needs to remember while her party charges into the well of the House) brought down the Finance Minister of the mighty Government of Jawaharlal Nehru. They were able to do so because they concentrated on the quality of their evidence and arguments, remained strictly within the rules, and caused not a ripple in the dignity of the House.

That was democracy at work, and since then democracy has given all parties yet another reason for respecting its rules. It has shown in election after election that no party need fear becoming an exasperated minority, because it can become a bigger force by making judicious alliances. If BJP can do so, despite being isolated on all sides at one time, so can the Congress(I) if it gives up, first, its current commitment to mayhem and, next, its claim to exclusive power. There is neither need

nor justification now for parties to flout the rules of parliamentary democracy. Yet they continue to do so, and thus make themselves and their leaders contemptible in the public eye. One doubts whether there has ever been a time when public esteem for Legislatures and legislators, and for politics and politicians, has sunk as low as it has today, with obvious consequences for the future of democracy. They may have come closer than they realise to dragging India also into the graveyard where many countries have buried the democracy they had once boasted of. That is a sad footnote to add so soon to the recent celebrations of India's democracy — the "50 years" and the millennium celebrations, and the soul searching session of the Lok Sabha at which members pledged themselves to better behaviour.

There is a short term remedy for the passing distempers which afflict Parliament from time to time. The presiding officers have always had, and have sometimes used, the power to order that an offending statement or remark will not go on the record, or will be struck off. This power of course is rendered meaningless when television cameras broadcast the remarks before the presiding officer can rule on them. But this can be prevented with two small technical interventions. A simple one is that the presiding officer should have a master button with which he can switch off the cameras when members descend into bedlam. A more elaborate one would insert a few seconds' delay between the recording and transmission of a picture, and the offending one can be eliminated as "off the record" if the presiding officer so decides. Either device would disarm the incentive which a member probably has today for showing his voters back home that whether he

has the brain power to serve them or not, he still tries his best with his lung power, and even with his muscle power by throwing missiles at "the enemies of the people".

But even to mention such odious devices is only to show how far we have sunk. Parliament, or any other legislature, can rest on nothing if it cannot, first, on the respect in which the people may hold it, and then on the belief of its members that they have been elected to serve the people through the Legislature and cannot do so if at every denial of their demand the first thing they do is to disrupt the house. If public respect for Parliament is diminishing by the day it is because its members, including some upon whom it has conferred the title of Parliamentarian of the Year, now believe that public causes are best served by public display of high visibility disorder. What can give higher visibility to disorder than fisticuffs in the country's highest forum, while a nationwide television programme carries pictures of their "service" to all corners of the country?

Not only the special breed of politicians like Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav, but even those who came into politics in better times like Mr. Pranab Mukherji (now joined from time to time by a senior advocate, Mr. Kapil Sibal, who can of course plead lack of experience if he wishes to) have no compunction in declaring from the steps of the House or on its floor that unless their demands are met they will not allow Parliament to do any work. This has happened before as well, and once this caprice had laid siege to Parliament for even longer than it has this time (so far). But the demand has never been so blatantly unparliamentary than the present demand that the Government must resign before Parliament can be given the chance to debate the merits of the demand. It would be absurd to bar a debate in the very House which has to decide whether the Government should quit or stay.

THE HINDU

VAJPAYEE:

(Continued from page 1)

government's stand in regard to the tehelka expose on defence deals. Over 70,000 people attended.

The Congress cannot forget that they have been ruling the country. But the lust for power is still there in them, whether it is their jealousy or stupidity, they cannot bear to see us in power," said Mr Vajpayee.

Coming down heavily on Mrs Sonia Gandhi for calling him a "traitor", the Prime Minister said it was sad that she had an inclination to use such a language.

"Soniaji aur Congressi, samajhte hain ki sarkar chalaane ki tameez sirf unme hain. Itni baar satta mein rahane ke bavjood unhe satta ki bhook hai (Mrs Sonia Gandhi and the Congress feel that they only can run the government. Despite having been in the government for so many times, their urge for power has not been fulfilled," Mr Vajpayee said.

Referring to the recent incident in Kanpur, he pointed out that some outside forces were becoming active to destabilise the country for which the people need to be alert.

The NDA leaders defended the role of Mr George Fernandes as a defence minister and lambasted the Congress and the Congress chief for their move to destabilise the nation to meet their political ambitions.

The Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, Mr Farooq Abdullah, said the Tehelka controversy had been raised at a time when the country was going through a serious situation at the border with Pakistan, which is trying to divide Jammu and Kashmir. Also referring about the violence in Kanpur, Mr Abdullah said "it was an effort to create an communal division in country."

He said there could be no solution to the Kashmir problem without Mr Vajpayee. Saying the way the Prime Minister had handled the Pakistan issue was commendable, he expressed hope that issues like the Ayodhya temple and Babari mosque would be solved to the satisfaction of the two communities.

He defended the former defence minister, Mr George Fernandes, pointing out that Mr Fernandes visited Siachen 18 times during his tenure, where many of the defence personnel did not dare to go.

Mr Fernandes said the Tehelka tapes had created a picture that every one in the army and defence ministry was corrupt. Out of 100 hours, Tehelka showed only 4 hours. "Even the Supreme Court did not deem it fit to put a sitting judge for a probe," Mr Fernandes said.

The former defence minister said his belief was that 95 per cent of the tapes not shown contained matter where officials were spurning the people who posed as arms dealers.

Making a scathing attack on Mrs Sonia Gandhi, Mr Fernandes held her responsible for bringing down the morale of the forces and weakening the country. "This in itself show who the real 'traitor' is", he said.

THE STATESMAN

The cannibal a shipwreck away

The man who lived to tell the tale of a shipwreck said he survived for 24 days on salt water and watched others feed on those dying everyday. The bodies of about 40 of the illegal immigrants from the Dominican Republic remain missing. BEN MACINTYRE reports

TWO men have been washed up alive on a coral reef off Haiti, bringing with them a grim story of shipwreck, survival and cannibalism. A boatload of illegal immigrants from the Dominican Republic stayed alive for more than three weeks as they drifted at sea by devouring their fellow passengers, according to one of the survivors, Carlos Pinales (19).

"Every night someone died and in the morning the others would cut them up and eat them," Mr Pinales, whose fiancée was among those who died on board, said.

Mr Pinales claimed that he had survived only by drinking seawater, although a doctor said it would have been impossible for him to survive for so long without resorting to cannibalism.

The horrific journey began on

24 February, when Mr Pinales and about 60 others from the Dominican Republic crowded on to a rickety boat, *Les Canotes*, in an illegal attempt to get to neighbouring Puerto Rico.

The passengers each paid \$240 to the boat's two captains, who vanished while the boat was still docked at the port of Romana, leaving the would-be immigrants to attempt to cross the treacherous Mona Passage alone.

On the second day at sea, within sight of Puerto Rico, the engine failed and the vessel began drifting west, ending up hundreds of miles out at sea. Without food or water, people started to die of dehydration and exposure after just a few days. At first, the bodies were thrown overboard, but eventually the voyagers began to eat them.

Mr Pinales described scenes recalling the wreck of the French frigate *La Meduse* off Mauretania in 1816, when sailors on a makeshift raft devoured the drowned, an episode depicted (and sanitised) in Theodore Gericault's *The Raft of The Medusa*.

Of the 150 people originally on board that famous raft, just nine survived.

The survivor of *Les Canotes* said that fights broke out among the increasingly desperate and famished passengers, but it was not clear whether anyone was killed.

Last Thursday, after 24 days at sea, the boat finally struck a coral reef off the island of L'île-a-Vache, three miles south of Haiti, and sank, leaving Mr Pinales and two other men to struggle to shore. Sixteen bodies washed ashore at L'île-a-Vache; 13 had to be buried in a common grave because they were too decomposed.

The bodies of about 40 others of the passengers remain missing. Mr Pinales said he and the other two men were the only passengers still alive when the boat sank on the reef. The third man died from dehydration and a head injury in a Haitian hospital the next day.

The other survivor, who has yet to regain full consciousness, has been tentatively identified as Felix Antonio Marcelino Borges.

Dr Urania Suarez, who examined Mr Pinales in the hospital at Barahona, said his claim to have lived for 24 days on salt water was not credible. "The only way he could have survived was to eat them," she said.

The man believed to be Mr Borges has not been well enough to describe what hap-



Carlos Pinales, one of the two survivors of a shipwreck, gets food at the Regional Hospital in Barahona, Dominican Republic on Tuesday. — AP/PTI

23 MAR 2001

HD-12

Spying for democracy

By Rajeev Dhavan

An entrapment of the Tehelka kind cannot be dismissed as illegal or illegitimate journalism. What is objectionable are the Government's efforts to victimise Tehelka with multiple investigations.

THELKA DESERVES to enter our dictionary as a new word to denote a species of investigative spying for democracy. It adds a new — at times, worrying — flavour to investigative journalism. To do a 'tehelka' is not just to interrogate or eavesdrop but to obtain the 'truth' by electronic entrapment. Whether this form of journalism is ethical cannot elude controversy. But, these questions of journalistic ethics cannot eclipse the importance of the Tehelka revelations. Read with the Vohra Committee Report (1995), Tehelka portrays a crisis in Indian governance which knows no parallel. Read the two revelations together. The 'Vohra' report tells us that all the Indian governance — especially at local and regional levels — is being run by hoodlums and gangsters as private fiefdoms. Tehelka extends this rottenness to not just the Union Cabinet but 'defence' and the Army. Indian governance is up for hire and purchase. Today, democratic decisions in India — indeed, the Government itself — can be bought, sold and terrorised. What, then, is the difference, between India and any other banana republic run as a puppet regime at the bidding of muscle, money and corruption? The issue is not corruption or whether this is the tip of the iceberg. We are now dealing with the question of whether India is destined to join those nations which are rapidly moving to a state of affairs of having no credible or viable system of public governance at all.

When the 'Tehelka' crisis broke, journalists were more interested in whether the erring public officials and politicians would be convicted and sent to jail rather than their conduct and its effect on governance. Crime reporting overtook the more important issues of the day. The primary concern has to be to examine the political and social conduct of our politicians not whether some clever lawyer can get them acquitted. It is precisely this distinction between criminality and public conduct that was lost sight of in the Hawala crisis. In the Hawala case, by all accounts, money was taken. Something had happened. That a conviction could not take place because of the inadmissibility of the Jain diaries moved the crisis away from

the conduct to the crime. This is even more forcefully true of Tehelka. Quite apart from the question of criminality and admissibility of evidence, there is more than credible information that interviews did take place. Conspiracies were entered into. Corrupt defence deals were made. Money did change hands. An entire system of corruption in the Army and defence has been revealed. Apart from criminality, such conduct can never be excused. It is not just about a few rupees, but governance itself.

First, what is the relationship of political parties and Government. Two of the prime interviewees who allegedly accepted money were Mr. Bangaru Laxman and Ms. Jaya Jaitly. We know that parties influence Government. But, can political parties actually take over and corrupt governmental processes? Both in the Hawala case as well as the Tehelka crisis, there is an ungainly justification that the monies were not for personal benefit but for the political party. This argument is farcically incredulous. Could Mr. Harshad Mehta have claimed that he did what he did for his company? Can a business house claim that it stole, corrupted and misled to keep one lakh workers and shareholders alive? No Indian claims to live for himself — only for others; family, caste, charity and, now, political party. Such a justification has to be excised from our political rhetoric. Everything — as Solzhenitzyn's little novel reminds us — is supposed to be 'for the good of the cause'. The logic of this is to give Mr. Laxman and Ms. Jaitly a party political medal for agreeing to corrupt the nation for the benefit of the party.

Second, what is to be done in such situations? Five standard responses have been put in motion. (i) A resignation offered by the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, was inelegantly accepted on a

'sack-the-minister-save-the-government' basis. (ii) A Commission of Inquiry was ordered which the Congress(I) wishes to resist for political reasons even though it chose a Joint Committee of Parliament to probe Bofors. This initiative has been undermined further because the Chief Justice of India cannot spare a sitting judge for investigating the biggest crisis in governance in India since Independence. With respect, if Lord Denning could examine the Profumo crisis in England, Lord Scarman could be called upon to examine Red Lion Square, Brixton and the Ulster crisis, Chief Justice Warren the Kennedy assassination and Justices Verma and Wadhwa aspects of the Rajiv Gandhi and the Staines killings, a similar probe was called for by a sitting judge.

(iii) Suspensions and administrative actions have been commenced in the Army and civil service. (iv) The Prime Minister has angrily personalised the issue by declaring that he is a *deshbhakt* (patriot) to declare the overall innocence of the Government. (v) The Opposition has been invited to an arithmetical challenge of a no-confidence motion in the knowledge that as long as the ruling coalition holds together, the Government cannot be defeated in the Lok Sabha. The question is: should the Government be forced to resign? The crisis is certainly big enough for this to happen. But, without defections from the NDA, this Government will not fall. Or, are we looking at a fresh general election? This needs to be carefully considered. The Congress(I)'s call is both shrill and opportunistic, and, can hardly be treated as one of 'Gandhian' proportions. Yet, a corrupt Government which has allowed Defence to be bartered away cannot be permitted the right to self-protection by conspiratorial parliamentary majorities. A broad consensus needs to be developed by

both the Opposition and the people on elections or an alternative government. Clumsiness and short-sightedness will prove costly to both the opposition parties and the nation.

Third, the validity and legality of the tapes. Tape recordings are admissible in evidence after due precaution has been taken to ensure authenticity, accuracy and non-tampering. The 'tapes' should be sealed; and, Tehelka should authoritatively declare the manner and process of their procurement. More serious is the question whether a crime has been committed. If I put my hand in your pocket, can I be convicted of a conspiracy or attempt to do the impossible if the pocket is found to be empty? This question has vexed criminal law. Yet, the better view is that this could constitute an attempt. In any event, the issue at this stage is not about the ultimate conviction, but whether — on these facts — a CBI investigation can be started. The short answer to that question is that a CBI investigation is valid and proper. The future will depend on what comes out of this investigation.

The fourth issue relates to the ethics of this form of investigative journalism. To begin with, after Auto Shankar's case (1994), Justice Jeewan Reddy in the Supreme Court has clearly underlined that those who occupy public office have to accept a different and higher standard of scrutiny about revelations about themselves. No doubt, general electronic snooping is an invasion of privacy and generally impermissible. Normally, journalists should reveal the nature of interrogation. But, an entrapment of the Tehelka kind cannot be dismissed as illegal or illegitimate journalism. What is objectionable are the Government's efforts to victimise Tehelka with multiple investigations. The Union Law Minister, Mr. Arun Jaitley's statement that Tehelka victimisation was not ordered by the Government but simply took place is too clever by half.

What we are left with is the single biggest crisis in Indian governance since 1950. The response to this crisis cannot be fudged by politicians. This Government cannot be trusted with the defence and governance of the country.

THE HINDU

2 1 1995

Our intelligence agencies insist that the Karmapa is a Chinese agent. This is ludicrous

Slouching tigers, hidden dragon

BY MANVENDRA SINGH

THE JOB of the intelligence agencies is to provide reliable information for the executive around which it will build its policies. Some in the intelligence agencies can, on account of their learning and expertise, make available well thought out and coherent analyses of events, people and courses of action.

It is not the job of the intelligence agencies to make policy, let alone try and influence it through clandestine techniques. This, unfortunately, is what some in the intelligence fraternity are trying to do vis-à-vis the Karmapa. Puerile, pitiable and patchy thinking is going into a game of deliberate leaks into the public domain. The aim of all this is to label the Karmapa as a Chinese agent, and play an influential role in the mother of all contests — the control over Rumtek monastery in Sikkim.

The intelligence officials are going about it in such a sloppy manner that they are unlikely to succeed in influencing policies. But they certainly succeed in harming India's relations with the Tibetan people. So much for Indian hospitality and kinship with the harassed Buddhists.

The campaign to malign the Karmapa is reflective of two very disturbing trends. India's ability (or inability) and willingness (or unwillingness) to provide shelter to the dispossessed and the discriminated comes across very clearly in this episode. And so does a very strange approach to relations with China.

Because of the Tibet question in this case, the two aspects are interconnected. And both make for a disturbing analysis. The insinuations against the Karmapa are fairly simple: he is a Chinese agent, and his continued presence in sensitive areas could be detrimental to India's security. Frozen in the coldest quarters of the 20th century, the intelligence officials have not been able to see how much the world has changed — and more importantly, how much India has changed.

The fixation with the Karmapa is on the astounding account of his escape from Chinese territory. Intelligence officials would have the country believe that the



TOUGH KARMA FOR THE LAMA: The Karmapa, Thinley Dorji in New Delhi

very fact that he made good his escape suggests he is an agent. They are convinced that it was no escape, but that the Chinese facilitated his break-out. The motive was to plant a senior enough religious leader into the Tibetan diaspora in India, so that after the Dalai Lama he takes over the community and dances to the Chinese tune.

The Dalai Lama had himself accepted the validity of the Karmapa's selection. Of that there can be no two views. And if the senior-most Tibetan spiritual institution has acknowledged the Karmapa, then does it behove India's intelligence agencies to be more loyal than the king? For argument's sake, even if the Karmapa is taken to be a Chinese agent, brainwashed by his communist masters, how does it help Beijing to have him in India?

Common sense would dictate that in the information age, the recognised Karmapa would make for very good news stories with a Lhasa or Beijing dateline. Hundreds of the Richard Gere type who visit China to see for themselves the sad state of Tibetan Buddhism would then be very impressed when given an opportunity to

sit before the Karmapa. Under no circumstances does Karmapa in India suit the Chinese, even those with a long-term vision of this.

This is where the brainwashed argument comes to play. To what degree can a person be brainwashed at the age of 16? To put it better, how long can that brainwashing last when a 16-year-old moves into a completely different environment? Especially since he has not made a single sound that could convey a sense of loyalty towards Beijing in the last one year that he has been residing in India. This lesson is clearly lost at India's intelligence agencies.

This is not the first instance of India playing hooky with those that have come to it for shelter. And this is also not going to be the last if things are allowed to prevail as they are. On this matter, it must be said that India's intelligence officers are not very different from their counterparts all over the world. Officials in India quite clearly seem to be at sea when it comes to demonstrating the nation's civilisational traits of shelter and hospitality. And more

so when it concerns those parts of the neighbourhood that are culturally attached with India.

Ever since the first independent Indian government inexplicably closed down its diplomatic mission in Lhasa, the country has practised a China policy that at best can be termed as schizoid. India is the only country in the world that regularly trains and equips a force to subvert the Chinese State. This has been done for almost 40 years. At the same time, Indians also hesitate to speak out about Chinese atrocities and activities. Those that do are publicly hounded.

The simultaneous attempts to prick Beijing, while bending over backwards to please it, has been a policy that was certain to be met with scorn. And that is precisely how China has treated India. The Indian trait of going ballistic over the word and forgetting the deed got the country nowhere near an equitable dialogue with Beijing. Time and again, China demonstrated its contempt for a spineless India, one that could not actualise its national security interests.

In the past, China did to Tibetan Buddhism precisely what the Taliban is doing today in Bamiyan. So as not to hurt Beijing, New Delhi kept mum. And all the while China did everything it could to tie India down within the region. It took five nuclear devices and their reverberations in the rest of the continent to make Beijing sit up and change tack.

It is this India where the Karmapa arrived. India has finally given him refugee status, as it must. And it must also let him practise his religion inside or outside India. The intelligence agencies should let him be. It is not for them to decide who is right for the seat at Rumtek — only Tibetans will determine that.

Ultimately, if national security was the sole concern of the intelligence agencies, they would make an immeasurable contribution to India by exposing the moles from within the system. Counter-intelligence in today's world is as important as intelligence.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

22 MAR 2001

We have seen the dirt, now it's time to clean up

Don't fast forward the tape

THERE is an anecdote about the last days of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. About a week before his death in 1950, he called in his daughter Mani-Behn Patel, gave her an envelope containing Rs 30,000 and asked her to send it to the treasurer of the Congress Party, S.K. Patil. The money had been given to him for some party work which he could not do. He asked her to get a receipt for the money. Contrast this with what Tehelka exposed.

I had the dubious privilege of viewing the Tehelka tapes on March 13. Dubious because in my 36 years of government service, I have never come across such a stark depiction of corruption affecting a vital aspect of our process of governance, the management of defence purchases. The two investigative journalists pretending to be representatives of a spurious arms supplying firm 'West End International' met 27 interlocutors, amongst whom were seven serving army officers, out of whom three were Major Generals, two Brigadiers, and two Lt. Colonels. They also dealt with two retired Major Generals and two Lt. Colonels and a Major who were active as middlemen in defence purchase operations, apart from senior political leaders and bureaucrats. The visuals and conversations in the documentary film lead one to the following conclusions:

Taking commissions or bribes is a widespread and normal practice in the conduct of defence purchases. The video clearly showed people accepting money from these spurious businessmen. Serving officers had no inhibitions in revealing confidential information to the potential suppliers and assuring them that rules can be bent in their favour if sufficient financial incentive was forthcoming. There were also indications that quality control stipulations can be overlooked in return for such financial incentives (leaving apart the setting aside of procedures). The middlemen, particularly the political types and businessmen, claimed with-

out any trace of reticence that senior politicians and even civil servants like Principal Secretary Brajesh Mishra and Defence Secretary Yogesh Narain were parties to this corruption. These persons also claimed that Vajpayee's foster son-in-law Ranjan Bhattacharya is also involved in such practices. The retired and serving military officers asserted that they could influence Lt. General Dhillon, Master General of Ordnance and Lt. General Shankar Prasad, Director General Infantry, to favour West End in return for monetary incentives.

The so-called trustee of the RSS, Raj Kumar Gupta, claimed that he could

End International' representative, without batting an eye-lid. He asks for additional money to be paid in dollars while his Private Secretary Satyamurthy confirms that Laxman has three or four foreign bank accounts. One had come across speculative reports about such corruption. This is the first time that visual and voice documentary depiction of such corruption has been made public.



J. N. DIXIT

Whether the film is admissible as evidence in courts is a technical question but the visuals and voices are clear. Such a film should be very difficult to produce by doctoring or artificial methods.

Those directly involved should be made to face the consequences of their greed regardless of whether they are civilians, military officers or politicians

even influence the PM. Serving military officers were contemptuously abusive of Defence Minister George Fernandes, claiming that he is a direct party to these corrupt practices. The Director General, Ordnance and Supplies, Major General Manjiv Singh Ahluwalia, repeatedly told the journalists that their company must have 'very deep pockets', stating that talking in terms of thousands of rupees is not enough, it has to be in lakhs and crores.

The nexus between serving and retired army officers, between them, private middlemen, civil servants and politicians has been clearly brought out in the film. Quantitative requirements, stipulations regarding quality and procedures are all subject to violations on the basis of an established network of corruption. It was nauseating comedy to see Bangaru Laxman accepting currency notes of one lakh "only for your New Year party" as stated by 'West

Defence Minister George Fernandes and chairman of Samata Party Jaya Jaitley have resigned. The concerned army officers and the junior civil servants have been suspended from service. Action against other persons who figured in the Tehelka documentary seems to be underway. But the basic fact is the Vajpayee government's credibility has been decidedly dented. There is a question-mark against its stability.

Such corruption is not unique to India, but there are restrictive arrangements to control such phenomenon in other countries. We must learn from them. Some suggestions come to mind.

While the details and technical specifications of the items to be purchased by our defence forces should remain confidential, there is no reason why the general procedure governing such purchases within India and particularly from abroad, should not be made transparent and given

general publicity. The initial indent and calling for tenders should be the responsibility of a single agency in each branch of the armed forces with the technical and financial side being overseen by designated and publicised officers in the defence ministry. Third and the most important, the middlemen and agents who are engaged in this business should be asked to formally register themselves with the defence ministry, giving full details of their experience, functional background and financial credibility. This information should be in the public domain. This should prevent the phenomenon of subterranean clandestine influence.

Leaving aside the political uncertainties about the stability of the government, an immense operational fallout of the Tehelka expose is likely to be a delay in decisions about the acquisition of a number of important weapon systems urgently needed by our armed forces. The items involved are Smerch artillery systems, SU-30 MKI jets, ammunition for AK-47 assault rifles, self-loading rifles, Sea Harrier naval jets, T-90 main battle tanks and the remaining purchases of the Barak anti-missile system.

Given the expose and allegations flying around, officials would be apprehensive and inhibited about taking decisions on the purchase of these items. One hopes Jaswant Singh as defence minister would take anticipatory remedial steps in this matter. The government has announced its decision to appoint a Supreme Court Judge to inquire into the allegations inherent in the Tehelka documentary, stipulating that the findings should be submitted within four months. One hopes that the inquiry would not dissipate into ambiguous and general conclusions. Those directly involved should be made to face the consequences of their greed regardless of whether they are civilians, military officers or politicians. Otherwise, the future will be bleak in terms of our national security.

INDIAN EXPRESS

INDIAN EXPRESS

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Must we weaken all our institutions?

By Harish Khare

Our collective tragedy in recent times has been a proclivity to undermine institutions to settle scores with this or that political rival.

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THE PARTISANS, inside and outside the National Democratic Alliance, have unsheathed their rusted swords. The leading opposition, Ms. Sonia Gandhi's Congress(I), understandably wants to send the Vajpayee Government packing; other professional oppositionwallahs have revived the Third Front to occupy the high ground of moral indignation; from within the BJP, Mr. L. K. Advani's acolytes are gleefully looking forward to a crippled Prime Minister; and, even the senile RSS bosses are self-righteously commenting on the quality of officers manning the Prime Minister's Office.

Such political animosity and over-reach are inevitable by-products of the tehelka.com revelations. It is a matter of satisfaction that the saffronised columnists and editors are squirming now that the self-appointed high priests of the national security church have been shown to be on the take. May be the public discourse would now stand exorcised of the BJP-inspired but nonetheless a bogus presumption that crookedness was confined only to one side of the political divide. Now that the playing field has been levelled by the Tehelka crew, it becomes all the more imperative to ensure that this outbreak of moral deficiency is not allowed to drain the efficacy and legitimacy of the Indian state.

However, our collective tragedy in recent times has been a proclivity to undermine institutions to settle scores with this or that political rival. But it would be a greater disaster if partisan voices — for or against the Vajpayee Government — succeed in using the current convulsions to weaken our governing institutions, especially the authority of the Prime Minister. Only those unmindful of the external and internal challenges being faced the Indian state would want to encourage an assault on the authority of the office of Prime Minister; only those ignorant of the centrality of this office in the institutional power structure can favour the dilution of its efficacy.

It requires no great imagination to demonise the "PMO", but it needs to be understood that in our constitutional scheme of things, the Prime Minister is cast in the

role of the chief political executive in the country; and, as such a Prime Minister's effectiveness depends on the extent to which his office can exercise the initiative over power, policy, patronage and personnel. The principles of accountability only require that this power be not abused; but the law of systemic efficiency demands that the office of Prime Minister should have a hegemonic role only if it has to synergise the administrative resources with the political compulsions and the policy preferences. Over the years, there has been a steady erosion in the Prime Minister's institutional authority; this process has to be reversed. Neither a weak Prime Minister nor a weaker PMO is *ipso facto* a guarantee of probity or efficiency.

Unfortunately, the response from the ruling quarters to the Tehelka revelations only demonstrates how difficult it is to insulate institutions from wayward individuals. For example, till this date the unrepentant Jaya Jaitly-George Fernandes duo refuses to concede that it is wrong and unethical if defence deals get discussed in the Defence Minister's drawing room by those who have no business discussing weapon systems. Or, take Mr. Advani's unseemly challenge to the Opposition to bring a no-confidence motion, little realising that the governance in this country cannot be a matter of majority and minority. And, the BJP is now on the verge of letting Mr. Fernandes' political waywardness push it into a defence of crookedness.

The morally shabby response to the Tehelka revelations is part of a three-year-old cultivated habit of preferring individuals over established organisational norms and procedures. The NDA crowd betrayed this preference early enough in 1998 in the matter of throwing the book at Mr. U. N. Biswas of the CBI for wanting to commandeer the Army into effecting the arrest of Mr. Laloo Prasad Yadav. As Union Home

Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, gave in to the BJP-Samata bosses's demand that Mr. Biswas be not penalised for a gross over-reach. The tin-man, who wanted to be an iron-man, bought the spurious argument that only one individual in a central investigative agency, that too under central control, would be able to inflict retribution on Mr. Yadav. Now Mr. Advani has become the prisoner of that decision; Mr. Biswas has to be retained in the job even after his retirement. As Prime Minister, Mr. Vajpayee is guilty of going along with this assault on bureaucratic norms and traditions.

STATECRAFT Beginning with this administrative folly, the Advani-Fernandes mob sent out signals that officers, in mufti and uniform, could strike gold if they were mindful of the NDA bosses' petty political requirements. The inevitable denouement was the Bhagwat Affair, and the Indian Navy ended up getting a chief who elevated a sordid "burglary" in the outhouse of his residence into a pattern of threats from the enemy with a capital "E". It is this monkeying around with the bureaucracy and the defence forces and their institutional norms and habits that has emboldened a Bangaru Laxman to entertain "defence contractors" and for a Samata "Madam" to blasphemously invoke "national interest" in accepting a "donation" for her "political party". Again, Mr. Vajpayee the Prime Minister acquiesced in these creeping aberrations.

But the NDA's hour of chicanery was when it gave marching order to a CBI Director for daring to investigate the links of a powerful industrial house with a known criminal. That incident announced to every corporate corner-cutter that the incumbent regime simply did not take a morally exacting view of businessmen's crookedness. At the policy level, in the name of economic reforms, doubtful entrepreneurs, desi and foreigner, were given

all the breaks; at the behavioural level, the R.K. Jains and the R. K. Guptas, in the Tehelka tapes, naturally felt at home in this officially blessed crooked world; and, at the cultural level, the standards were set by the much serenaded Amar-Akbar-Antony trinity which spawned a corrosive world, a milieu in which Mr. Ranjan Bhattacharya cheerfully sought companionship. And, again, the Prime Minister's equanimity remained undisturbed.

The onus is now on Mr. Vajpayee to retrieve the threatened authority and prestige of his office. Far too long he has given in to the comforting and confusing vagaries of coalition politics rather than tap the powers of his office. So much so now that as a Cabinet Minister Ms. Mamata Banerjee could usurp the prime ministerial prerogative and demand that the Defence Minister be sacked. Mr. Vajpayee watches ambivalently as Mr. Fernandes instigates two of his MPs, that too those with a dozen criminal cases against them, to demand that the Prime Minister should get rid of "corrupt" officers in his office.

Rather than allowing the Jaya-George duo to ensnare him in unseemly street fights, the task before Mr. Vajpayee is to find ways of acknowledging that sensibilities have been offended. He can do this only by spurning the petty tacticians; cleverness of small minds should not be confused with wisdom and statesmanship. The country cannot respect a Prime Minister who is seen as a prisoner of partisans at the expense of expectations of probity. Rajiv Gandhi discovered this bitter lesson as did Mr. Narasimha Rao; parliamentary majorities did not help. And, a man who is not respected at home cannot be respected by the international community or by jihadis out to test the staying power of the Indian state.

A few months before he became Prime Minister, delivering the Deshraj Memorial Lecture, Mr. Vajpayee had noted that "the biggest challenge that we who have preached and practised probity in public life face is to restore faith in the political class and rejuvenate the democratic process". It is now enjoined on him to convince the country that he presides over a regime that is not partial to crooks and criminals.

Battle of the mouse

China's internet warfare capabilities put India at risk, writes Ravi Visvesvaraya S. Prasad

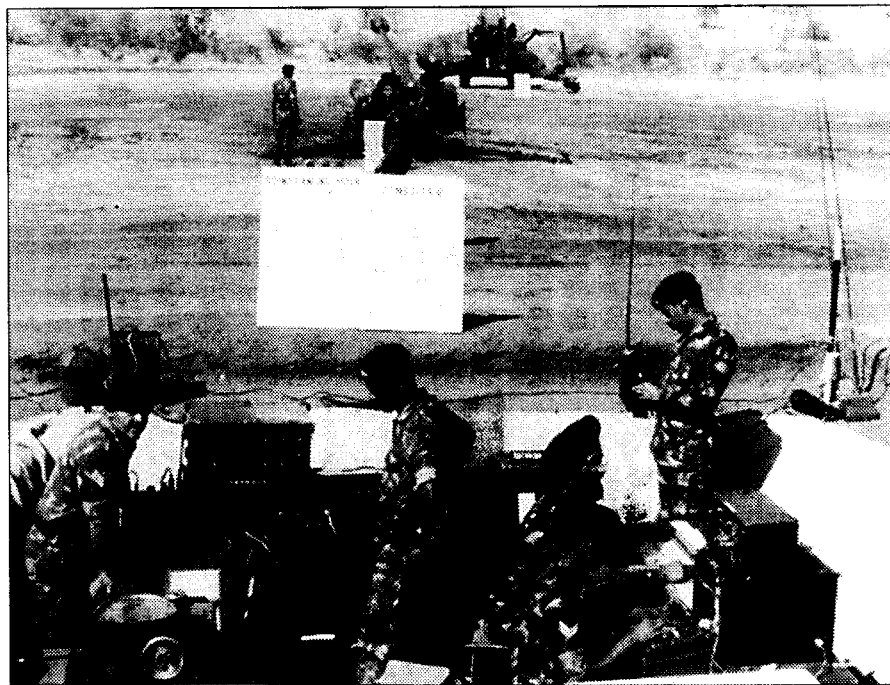
It is gratifying that our defence forces have realized the important role that information and communications technologies will play in battles of the future and begun initiatives to train officers in electronic warfare, command, control, communications and computers intelligence. As General S. Padmanabhan is a former director general of military intelligence, the integration of information warfare technologies into our geopolitical, military and intelligence strategies should get a boost.

For the last three decades, senior officers have been sent to the Indian Institutes of Technology for masters programmes in engineering and computer science. It is only now that the Military Intelligence Training School and Depot in Pune has formulated a course specifically on information warfare. In addition to C4I, techniques for obtaining information from enemy computers and communications networks, as well as counter-intelligence would be taught to officers. These functions have traditionally been performed by civilian intelligence agencies such as the Research and Analysis Wing and Aviation Research Center. However, Kargil clearly indicated the lack of cooperation between various civilian and military defence agencies.

Following the Pokhran blasts, India's information infrastructure has been repeatedly attacked by Pakistan-based and sponsored hackers' organizations, some of whom have links with pan-Islamic militant organizations. But a senior Indian intelligence official claims: "Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence does not have the expertise to wage a sustained cyber-battle against India. All it is capable of is funding and supporting cracker groups."

While India should not underestimate the havoc that can be wrought by ideologically committed groups like Pakistan Hackerz Club, G-Force Pakistan and Harkat-ul-mOs, who are among the world's best, it is China's expertise in C4I which should worry India. According to one expert in the United States, the country which made the most thorough analysis of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's operations in the Balkans and the Persian Gulf is China.

Three senior generals of China's Peoples Liberation Army wrote an influential treatise on bringing internet warfare into China's military system. They quickly convinced China's political leaders that it could achieve hegemony in Asia only by integrating information warfare into its geopolitical strategies. China then estab-



Net practice

lished a special task force on information warfare composed of senior politicians, military officers and academics. To counter US influence in Asia, this task force prepared a dissertation in which it advocated an "electronic" Pearl Harbour to cripple US armed forces in Asia.

Detailed procedures were formulated for the PLA to "develop an all-conquering offensive technology to launch attacks and countermeasures on the net, including information-paralysing software, information-blocking software, and information-deception software; software for network scanning, breaking codes, stealing data; and taking anti-follow-up measures".

Experts at Pentagon's long-range planning unit and the US foreign policy council believe that China's C4I and internet warfare capabilities are now almost as good as Nato's. Another expert, Michael Wilson, stated: "PLA has successfully developed robust C4I networks for battle space coordination; long range, reliable and secure data and voice communications; surveillance and reconnaissance assets; and global positioning data for manned and unmanned weapons system navigation...China has deployed an advanced mobile communications satellite

that utilizes laser gyro guidance control systems, remote measurement and tele-metric technologies, and GPS technologies which enable real-time tracking of mobile targets on the battlefield." Although China developed the capabilities to counter US influence in Asia, experts hold that it is India which is most at risk.

PLA conducted several field exercises recently. Five hundred soldiers simulated cyberattacks on Taiwan, India, Japan and South Korea in an "Informaticized people's warfare network simulation exercise" conducted in the Hubei province. Ten functions were rehearsed in another exercise in Xian: planting information mines; conducting information reconnaissance; changing network data; releasing information bombs; dumping information garbage; disseminating propaganda; applying information deception; releasing clone information; organizing information defence; and establishing network spy stations. In Datong, 40 PLA specialists are reportedly preparing methods of seizing control of communications networks of Taiwan, India, Japan and South Korea.

In October, the Chinese chief of staff, General Fu Quanyou, presided over an exercise which simulated electronic con-

frontation with countries south and west of Gobi desert. This focussed on electronic and counter reconnaissance, electronic interference and counter-interference.

On the training front, PLA has a headstart over India's MITSD, having enlisted support from universities. PLA established the Communications Command Academy in Hubei in collaboration with Hubei's engineering universities. The Navy Engineering College, also in Wuhan, is collaborating on secret internet warfare and C4I projects with Communications Command Academy. PLA also established the Information Engineering University, in Henan. It did this by taking over and combining Henan's civilian Institute of Information Engineering, Electronic Technology College, and Survey and Mapping College. This will specialize in remote image information engineering, satellite-navigation and positioning engineering, and map data banks of the regions from India to Indo-China.

PLA also established the Science and Engineering University by combining the civilian Institute of Communications Engineering, the Institute of the Engineering Corps, the Air Force's Meteorology Institute, and the Research Institute of General Staff Headquarters. Over 400 civilian professors from universities all over China are to teach PLA officers electronic engineering, information engineering, network engineering, and command automation engineering. Around 60 experts of Chinese origin settled in the West were persuaded to return and work in the Institute of Computer and Command Automation. A fourth PLA institute is the National Defense Science and Technology University in Changsha where the "Yin He" series of supercomputers have been developed. Three hundred colonels are currently undergoing training here.

As a saving grace for India is that China's combat troops are facing difficulties in absorbing and operationalizing internet warfare and C4I technologies. Wilson recounted: "The reaction of officers to the automated operations room was one of trepidation, as all labels, displays, manuals and charts were in English. All operations-room personnel had to undergo intensive English-language training in order to operate and maintain the command systems. They found it very difficult to break away from their past modes of command and thinking as these required situational awareness far beyond their experience."

THE TELEGRAPH

20 MAR 2001

India and Pakistan show a glaring difference in their attitudes to the UN

Disunited nations

MANVENDRA SINGH

Relying solely on New Delhi newspapers it would have been difficult to tell that the United Nations secretary general, Kofi Annan, was about to make a visit to the Indian sub-continent. There has barely been a mention of his visit that began last week with its first halt in Pakistan. It is, in fact, the Pakistani papers that have taken the lead in touting the visit. There have been expectant page-one stories, and even more hopeful editorial comments. Each has outdone the other in heralding his visit as a harbinger of peace, as though he were the messenger who can also deliver to Pakistan all that it wants.

This dissimilarity between two neighbouring countries — once joined by a common sense of belonging and now by an enduring conflictual relationship — is really a reflection of how India and Pakistan have grown apart. It is not merely a question of how differently the various institutions of state function in the two countries; but it is also one of how fundamentally differently they have come to see the world, their associations with and the role that these international organizations play in the cause of global peace. There are also the limitations in responsibilities and aspirations that stare them in their faces. Now that India has outgrown its phase of equating everything that has to do with globalization as an evil hegemony, this leaves only the UN. The different approaches of the not-so-friendly neighbours to the UN provide a glaring juxtaposition.

For reasons of psychology and history (the varied inheritance of 1947), the Kashmir question and the UN provide the best example of this unbridgeable divergence. Unbridgeable, because Pakistan's position is cemented in the immense talent displayed by Mohammed Zafarullah Khan, its envoy to the UN, when the conflict began more than fifty years ago. In his intervention he cleverly broadened the scope of the discussion, as well as the subsequent approach to the situation created by Pakistan's invasion of Jammu and Kashmir.

Khan linked the Kashmir situation with the sectarian riots in the state of East Punjab, and forced the UN to see the situation from a wholly irrelevant perspective. Therefore, the 20th January, 1948 resolution asked the UN commission for India and Pakistan to investigate the facts of "the situation in the Jammu and Kashmir State set out...in the Pakistan Government's letter dated 15 January, 1948."

This was something that India did not prevent and, since then, has alone tried undoing the damage caused to its judicious standpoint by the ineptness then displayed. Pakistan has not produced, after this, any of that brilliance in debate or in conflict; India has



done very much better by way of righting the wrongs of 1947-49, in word and in deed. That is how the two countries have grown apart.

Soon after his arrival at the Chaklala airbase, Kofi Annan was asked by the Pakistani media if the UN would implement its resolutions on Kashmir as had been done in the case of East Timor. This is now the standard line adopted by the Pakistani state and its commentators, independent or otherwise. Apart from showing a complete absence of a knowledge of history, it also reflects a complete lack of understanding of how the UN functions.

The secretary general's reply was technically appropriate and accurate: "When it comes to implementation of the resolutions we have to be clear. The UN has two types of resolutions: enforcement resolutions under chapter seven and other resolutions, which require cooperation of all parties to get implemented. East Timor is a chapter seven resolution. The resolutions you refer to do not come under chapter seven in the same sense. And these resolutions are not self-enforcing. The cooperation

resolutions. But then who is to bell the cat when subsequent events have altered the whole nature of the dispute. The two countries have been to war many times since then, and have only been able to exchange a few square kilometres through negotiations. The status of the Kashmir situation remains pretty much the same given that the two countries are treaty bound to resolve it among them.

That was precisely the thrust of the Shimla Accord of 1972 in which India and Pakistan "resolved to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations or by any other peaceful means mutually agreed upon between them". All forms of law determine that there is an evolution of positions and those that follow quite obviously supersede those arrived at earlier. The Shimla Accord clearly superseded the UN resolutions of 1948 and thereafter. Even accepting the perverse Pakistani logic that the accord was signed by a country cut in half by a military defeat, the same cannot be said for 1999 and the agreement arrived at Lahore. A prime minister who enjoyed a two-thirds parliamentary majority in Islamabad reiterated Pakistan's belief in the Shimla Accord. That he was simultaneously making yet another attempt at taking Indian territory is really beside the point.

Once again the glaring differences between the two countries become obvious. The Pakistani propensity to constantly seek the intervention of each and every state and organization, even those who are otherwise bound by international law, has not paid dividends for obvious reasons. And this is how it shall remain until it dawns upon a sufficient number of Pakistanis that there is really no legal basis for any other country or even the UN interceding on behalf of any of the parties. But only those bound by the rule of law can understand such parameters.

The secretary general would have done well to remind those present at the Chaklala airbase of the words of the president of the UN security council: "Negotiations between India and Pakistan might be complicated by any outside intervention." This was said in 1964, when nobody could have visualized a Shimla type of accord. At the end of the day what it takes to live in a peaceful neighbourhood is to first share a sense of belonging with the neighbours. It is from such an identification that a desire for peace will flow, and in that sense Pakistan is, once again, not alone in facing this dilemma.

Israel, the other state created on the basis of religious identity, is confronted with the same problem. Identifying where they belong will greatly help these two exclusivist states. And that cannot be done by an external organization, country or even a benefactor.

Pakistan's media has been touting Kofi Annan as the harbinger of peace who can deliver to Pakistan all that it wants

of the two parties is the route I recommend."

The secretary general did well to remind Pakistan of the reality of the UN resolutions. Particularly since their implementation is dependent upon Pakistan first vacating its aggression in territory that had been legally ceded to India when confronting a large-scale invasion from across an internationally recognized boundary. Everything else was to follow subsequent to that vacation.

But that was not to happen, and never can, since Pakistan has altered the demographic landscape of portions of the state that fall in the areas under its control. That too has been in violation of UN

Democracy the only way

DON'T laugh, but this is another "make or break week" for the Northern Ireland peace process. Two more knights errant have jetted into Belfast to try to pull the Armalite from the Blarney Stone. Goodly Martti Ahtisaari and goodly Cyril Ramaphosa follow goodly George Mitchell, goodly John de Chastelain, goodly Bill Clinton and other goodly knights without number from distant shores.

Merlin, now in the plausible guise of Peter Mandelson, takes them to the stone and cries "Pull!" Nothing ever happens. This nonsense has been going on for a quarter of a century. The Armalite is stuck fast. Why do they do it?

The latest episode defies satire. There is already an international, neutral, independent "weapons decommissioning" inspection commission in Northern Ireland. It is headed by the Canadian general, John de Chastelain, and has been around for time without mind. The General is part of the furniture of the peace process. Has he been drinking away his neglect in a Belfast pub? Yet the new Ahtisaari-Ramaphosa commission supposedly reports to the old de Chastelain one. Nobody can remember to whom the latter reports. Was it a Prime Minister, or a President, or God? This must be a joke, a helpline for out-of-work diplomats, a jig danced to a mad Irish fiddle.

Yet we must beware of Cynic's Fallacy, that all progress is equally void. So far the sceptics of the Good Friday agreement have been right. It was a crude device to trick the Ulster Unionists into doing what they (and previous British governments) had sworn they would never do: share local power with the Provisional IRA. The cry had always been "no power-

The Good Friday agreement constitution must, one day, be undercut by proper local democracy. But the theory of political flow now requires it to be tried again. The Assembly and Executive is, however wrongly, the only democratic game in Northern Ireland, writes SIMON JENKINS. Devolution is chronically needed after a quarter century of centralism

sharing until the men of violence lay down their guns". I heard it from the lips of every Northern Ireland secretary from Lord Whitelaw to Sir Patrick Mayhew. There were no ifs or buts.

The Good Friday agreement abandoned this position in a whirl of spin. It was a collage of photo-opportunities, sound-bites, back-slapping and the mutual exchange of Nobel Peace Prizes. The IRA was allowed a gigantic lie for the sake of an Anglo-American "triumph". It was not going to disarm, but it was going to get its men out of jail, the pledge of every mafia leadership to those it recruits. Tony Blair's unconditional release into IRA service of Ireland's most murderous criminals was astonishing. Not only did it mark out mass murder as susceptible to amnesty (in contrast, say, to smoking pot), it also undermined Unionist support for the agreement. Support was further jeopardised by the decision to rename the Royal Ulster Constabulary and remove symbols of British presence, such as Union Flags, from the Province. The Unionists were told to stop moaning and sit down with the men who had killed their families and

friends. The Good Friday agreement was a classic of that old colonial ploy, the "Unequal Treaty".

The Unionists finally refused to play. They and not the British government forced the February and then the May ultimatums on IRA decommissioning. It was they who tried to hold the IRA to normal practice in a democracy, that you do not share power with those who have guns under the table. Unionists are the majority in the Province and, however tenuously, still have the right of veto on its constitution. The IRA had to disarm if it wished to share power. This was not a matter of prejudice to Unionist leader David Trimble. It was a fact of Unionist politics.

Should the Unionists now agree to go along with the latest fudge? At their 800-strong council meeting on Saturday (today) they will be asked by the government to accept the IRA's "breakthrough" offer to show Ahtisaari-Ramaphosa its guns. No weapons are to be decommissioned, handed over or given up. That "seismic and solemn" pledge, given to Mr Blair two years ago, has been decommissioned. Another couple of diplomatic tourists are to be allowed to visit Belfast.

They will apparently be taken "blind" to a garage somewhere in southern Ireland to see some guns, count them and then be told to scarp, with no police or press in attendance. This is the bizarre deal Mr Blair and Mr Mandelson have bought from Gerry Adams and are using to discomfit Mr Trimble.

Let us poke the anthill from another side. Defenders of the Good Friday agreement claim politics is about flow rather than stasis. Direct rule has gushered a political culture of warlords, drug-runners, bank robbers and mafiosi, as is normal in modern colonial communities. Therefore, goes the theory, the best hope of restoring local democracy is to reverse the flow. Unionists must accept that the IRA will never cease to exist.

Instead, its leaders must be marginalised. There is no purchase in glamorising the men of violence. Better to isolate them by normalising the communities from which they draw strength. Co-opt their representatives into the house of democracy. In a nutshell, ignore the violence rather than give it the veto on progress.

I have sympathy with this argument. Guns are present in any community whose politics has atrophied and whose leaders, excluded from democratic responsibility, have resorted to thuggery. Northern Ireland's killings, bombings and punishment beatings are not an extraneous cancer to be cut out before reform is permitted. They are symptoms of a total systems failure of democracy. The critical path is therefore to get local politics re-established. Get local democracy up and running.

If that means the Unionists eating crow, so be it. The prize is worth it, and they still have a veto on Irish unity.

Activating such an argument

has been hard. The government has conceded to the IRA at every turn and thus put Unionist moderates always on the defensive. Yet I do regard the IRA's new offer as mildly novel. While Senator George Mitchell and General de Chastelain could be treated with contempt by the IRA, the same is less true of Ahtisaari-Ramaphosa. These men are not in town to join the now ludicrous Hillsborough jaw-jaw. They are here somehow to count guns. This is an image concession by the IRA, symbolised by the time it has taken Mr Adams to win it. If the IRA snubs Ahtisaari-Ramaphosa, great will be the snub and safe to say great the frustration of the Sinn Fein leadership. It has put much store by this new fudge.

If I were a Unionist, I would buy this fudge. I would use this as the moment to uncouple "weapons decommissioning" from progress with local democracy. Now is a moment when the IRA can be edged into a corner. I would take the cur-

rent generation of Sinn Fein at its word, not because its word is more than warm spit, but because it suits me to get the democratic process going again.

The Stormont power-sharing experiment may not work. It was never going to work. It has failed three times for the same, predictable, reason. It exaggerates rather than diminishes political polarity in the Province, and needs the constant nannying of a British secretary of state to operate at all. Some regional assemblies can draw the sting of separatism, but separatism is not Ulster's problem. Its problem is civil war.

Worse, Stormont has impeded proper local democracy, that is the devolution of subsidiary responsibility to voters and councillors in Ulster's cities, counties and towns. This devolution is the basis of democratic maturity throughout Europe. It empowers communities to decide about their local services. More important in Ulster, it breeds and trains new generations of politicians.

It is the bedrock of democratic activity. The city councils of Belfast and Derry have displayed a "power-sharing" more realistic than anything seen under the arclights of Stormont.

The Good Friday agreement constitution must, one day, be undercut by proper local democracy. But the theory of political flow now requires it to be tried again. The Assembly and Executive is, however wrongly, the only democratic game in town. Devolution is chronically needed after a quarter century of centralism. And it might bring to the fore a new generation of participants in this deadly parade. If there is one thing for which British observers must yearn, it is the disappearance of the Paisleys, the Robinsons, the Taylors, the Mallons, the Humes, the Adamases, the McGuinnesses. Let us have new faces. These ageing men have failed their Province. They crave one last strut. Give it them. Then let them be gone.

— The Times, London.

THE STATESMAN

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Confucian Wisdom

Sleeping Tiger, Crouching Dragon

By ASHIS RAY

MAO Zedong's mammoth portrait continues to adorn the main entrance of the Forbidden City (home of Chinese emperors from the first quarter of the 15th century, adjacent to which the hierarchy of the Communist Party of China are now lodged); the great helmsman also looks down over Tiananmen Square, where his mausoleum is located. In sharp contrast, there is no public deification of Deng Xiaoping. This is in deference to his wishes. But in the hearts and minds of his countrymen, the latter probably enjoys greater respect and reverence for the reforms and consequent progress and prosperity he set into motion in 1979 than any other Chinese leader.

The first impression of Beijing is of a gleaming, state-of-the-art airport. The next is of a three-lane freeway leading to the city, comparable with most first world countries. Further on, one either slips into one of an array of arterial fly-overs or a broad, tree-lined boulevard, enveloped by a highrise magnificence à la the Hong Kong harbour.

Admittedly, all this is a showpiece, with Beijing (or for that matter, Shanghai) not exactly synonymous with all parts of China. Indeed, Chongqing, China's most populace metropolis, is in a state of distinct disrepair. Yet, the myth of a great leap forward under Mao, has been given a semblance of reality since Deng. Beijing, once a city of cyclists, has been converted into a megapolis of a myriad small and medium sized foreign cars, assembled in China.

Profit-making is no longer a dirty word in China; it is, in fact, the mantra of so-called socialist market reforms. Indeed, capitalist tolls on highways guarantee recovery of investment.

In short, a system which follows a one-party hegemony, but operates a commercially savvy command economy. It is absolute rule by the Communist Party of China (CPC), but hardly a dictatorship of the proletariat. Indeed, the less privileged are sometimes the target of arbitrary behaviour by the police, as Beijing engages in a cleanliness drive in the city's bid for the 2008 summer Olympiad.

But, notwithstanding its membership of the big league, China now appears to be a bit envious of India. As a Chinese government servant put it: India has become one of the world leaders in the technology of the 21st century.

After their second highest functionary, Li Peng's visit to India's silicon valley, Chinese authorities announced an extensive programme of computerisation from school to workplace. They have also embarked on a widespread teaching of English. Their contention is that knowledge of English has given Indians an edge in IT.

For anyone in China untutored in Mandarin, the *China Daily* provides a clue to the Chinese government's thinking. A government publication, it is a package of intriguing news selection, propaganda and official comment. Even if you ignore or amuse yourself with the first two elements, you may be unwise to ignore the third.

Recently, it carried an edit page commentary headlined *India seeks allies from East and West*, which some analysts perceived as, perhaps, being reflective of the current line of thinking in the Great Hall of the People. The piece came close on the heels of the first-ever security

assistance to develop its economy. On the other hand, it seeks warmer relations with neighbouring countries as well as other developing nations so as to create a secure outer environment for its economic development and play a more active role in regional and world affairs.

Perhaps most substantively, it pronounced: Since both sides seek peace, the prospects of warmer relations between India and Pakistan are good. China is, patently, a close and influential ally of and a major arms and weapons technology supplier to Pakistan. If it is inclined to persuade Pakistan to abandon its obsession over Kashmir and confident of the outcome of such efforts or has already received signals of a softening on the part of Islamabad, it may be worth getting to the bottom of the prediction.

The commentator was, of course, of the opinion the US wants to use India as a deterrent to China. Informed circles also disclosed that Beijing is unhappy about India testing an intermediate range missile no sooner than Li Peng left Indian soil and New Delhi granting asylum to Ugyen Trinley Dorji, the 17th Gyalwa Karmapa. But he ended on a positive note.

India-China ties have had a healthy momentum in recent years, he recorded. These have witnessed signs of further improvement even after the tension caused by India's 1998 nuclear tests, he stressed. And Li Peng's visit further consolidated that warm trend, he summed up.

Should India take all this seriously? Has Beijing adopted a Confucian approach or is this another game of Chinese checkers? For long, observers have felt China is lukewarm towards genuinely building bridges with India; that there is too much at stake in its strategic liaison with Pakistan. Also, that an India kept on tenterhooks actually suits Beijing fine.

But the dragon may be pondering its future. An unfriendly Republican administration in the US in a virtually unipolar world is a matter of unease for China. Privately, a section of Chinese even conjure up visions of a Moscow-Beijing-New Delhi axis as a counter-plot. It will be an unprecedented experience for South Block to be wooed by both East and West, if this ever happens.

(The author is a director of Raymedia Limited, London, and a former broadcaster and senior editor with BBC and CNN.)

IN BRIEF

- Beijing seems to feel that the US wants to use India as a deterrent against it
- On the face of it, relations are fairly positive between India and China
- But, it is still not clear where India stands vis-a-vis Pakistan in China's strategy

dialogue between the two countries in New Delhi, which was tangible by itself, as it probably mirrored a common concern about narco-religious extremism emanating from the Afghan-Pakistan region, potentially as worrying to Xingjiang as Srinagar. The article charitably announced: India has attracted much of the world's attention in recent years. To justify this, it cited president Bill Clinton's trip to India and prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's reciprocation of this last year.

Delving deeper, it continued: With the development of its national strength, India is endeavouring to transform itself step by step from a regional power to a world power. Was this in appreciation or anxiety? But persevering with the assumption, it elaborated: To realise that goal, India has adopted a double-headed foreign policy turning both to the East and the West.

It further deduced: On one hand, India tries to utilise western

THE TIMES OF INDIA

LESSON FOR JOGI

Supreme Court restores sanity

BLATANT mischief over the Balco privatisation by the Congress government in Chhattisgarh has been quashed by the Supreme Court (coram. Kripal, Khare, JJ.), which has ordered state authorities to do their job — that is, provide law and order and not ally with agitators — and has taken all current and future Balco cases out of the purview of lower courts. The second decision is particularly welcome since it will avoid wastage of judicial time in a situation prone to it. From now on, parties seeking to question any aspect of the privatization deal will have to satisfy the apex court that they have a case beyond that dictated by ideological chest thumping. In fact, the impact of the court's decision goes beyond the current context. By intervening quickly their Lordships disposed of the Centre's interim application in the evening of the day, Wednesday, it was filed; the bench sat at the residence of His Lordship Mr Justice Kripal — to restore order in a controversy which many have begun to see as a test of the executive's resolve over privatisation, the court has sent a firm message to future obstructionists. There will be many of the latter in the months to come, as the NDA government, rightly, seeks to step up the trimming and selling of the public sector. The Supreme Court's intervention will act as a check. The significance of that, in a naturally lawless and intemperate polity like India's, cannot be overestimated.

Ajit Jogi, the Congress chief minister of Chhattisgarh, should learn this lesson fast and well. He has disgraced himself and the constitutional responsibilities he is sworn to uphold by virtually orchestrating the suspension of essential services and security to Balco's Korba plant. However much he or his party opposed the Balco privatisation, engendering a law and order crisis simply because the company operations are located in his state, would have cost him his job in a more civilised country. In India, Jogi finds company with such masters of lawlessness as the ruling Marxists in Bengal, the ruling Yadavs of Bihar, the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, and that is not all. To make matters worse, Jogi's party chief, Sonia Gandhi, is not exactly a strict disciplinarian, assuming that she agrees that her party chief minister cannot indulge in subverting law and order.

The government, especially the disinvestment minister, Arun Shourie, has reasons to feel vindicated. There is still the matter, raised by Jogi, of the land leased for Balco. Jogi's argument, on the basis of which the Chhattisgarh government has issued a notice to the Centre, is that the land leased while Balco was a PSU cannot be handed over to its privatised *avtaar*. It would not be proper to comment on this argument since the Supreme Court has already taken cognizance of it. But it does seem that the Centre was caught somewhat unprepared on this issue. Knowing, as it should, that any privatization is going to excite the Opposition, the Centre should have been better prepared. Mr Shourie, who gave a spirited and well-crafted performance during the Balco fracas, must note that point as he tries to rid India of its socialist baggage.

THE STATESMAN

16 MAR 2001

SC revokes order on Balco

OUR LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, March 12. - The Chhattisgarh government today assured Supreme Court that it was prepared to pay Rs 552 crore to buy 51 per cent of the Centre's shares (sold to Sterlite for Rs 551.5 crore) during the resumed hearing of the case relating to Balco disinvestment.

The Chhattisgarh chief minister, Mr Ajit Jogi, said in Raipur his government didn't give any undertaking before the Supreme Court on the Balco issue. He added that his stand had been vindicated.

"Our stand has been vindicated by the Supreme Court order passed today," Mr Jogi said after his return from New Delhi.

The Supreme Court today revoked its 7 March order directing the Chhattisgarh government to protect the Balco plant, its workers and

■ See BALCO: page 8

THE HINDU

13 MAR 2001

India invited to join IT grouping

By Harichandan A.A.

BANGALORE, MARCH 12. The Singapore Minister for Communications and Information Technology, Mr. Yeo Cheow Tong, today reiterated his country's commitment to a "pan-Asia IT grouping" that would compete with Europe and the U.S. Global competitiveness could be achieved by the complementary collaborations of the members of such a grouping.

He was delivering the key-note address at the opening session of the Asia Society's Annual Corporate Conference, here. (Later, speaking to presspersons, Mr. Yeo expressed the hope that India would be part of such an IT belt. However, he added that no formal talks were being held.)

Mr. Yeo said Asia was going through a "huge business transformation" driven by the "rapid growth of markets, rising education and skill levels, and the awareness that countries should open up their markets and plug into the global economy."

There were several indicators of the transformation in Asia and the use of the internet in some countries was catching up with those in Europe and the U.S., Mr. Yeo said. According to the research firm, NetValue, Korea was

found to be the largest user of the internet — 60 per cent of stock trading was done on the Net.

According to the International Telecommunication Union, by 2010, 50 per cent of mobile phone users would be from the Asia-Pacific region, Mr. Yeo said.

Framework for Asia

While the indicators gave the direction in which Asia was headed, much had to be done to "create an environment of opportunities that would attract talent from afar and retain indigenous talent," Mr. Yeo said. Companies striving to compete globally would gravitate towards locations which had the required economic infrastructure, an adequate pool of well-trained workforce, a stable and conducive investment environment and a sound system of public governance.

He said that some initiatives were being made to integrate the Asian IT community. South Korea was holding discussions with Japan and China on ways to coordinate and standardise developments in IT, mobile telephony and internet. A memorandum of cooperation existed between India and Singapore, on Infocomm collaboration, he added.

A shared Asian cyber market would be attractive to infocomm companies, Mr. Yeo said. Initially, countries that were already "infocomm enabled" could jointly develop "soft infrastructure" including the building of a common secure public key infrastructure. If a mechanism could be created to enable companies across Asia to tap resources, the entire region would benefit.

India's strength

India's software strength today was a payoff from a generation of investment in education. Singapore would require about 10,000 new entrants into the infocomm industry, annually. Exchange programmes had been initiated between institutes of higher learning in Singapore and those in other countries. One such programme was between the National Technological University in Singapore and the Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai, for post-graduates. A visa-free movement of IT talent within the region had also been mooted by Singapore, Mr. Yeo added.

He said such initiatives must converge to give Asia an image of a credible "thought leader" in the infocomm sector.

THE HINDU

13 MAR 2001

THE DANGERS OF FUNDAMENTALISM

THE VANDALISM AND the destruction of the Buddha statues now being carried out by the Taliban militia in Afghanistan has been condemned, among many others, by the VHP and other arms of the Sangh Parivar. The members of the Hindutva brigade have apparently found in the Taliban's latest act an opportunity to justify their own brand of "patriotism" based on religious denomination rather than on the secular and pluralist traditions in which nationalism evolved in India. But then, one does not have to be a genius to see that in substance the VHP's world view is hardly any different from that of the Taliban. The Sangh Parivar as well as the fundamentalists of various other hues (the Taliban in this context) base their tactics and strategies on nothing but a sense of medieval revanchism. Take for instance the campaign by the Sangh Parivar outfits in the past couple of decades; whether it be the manner in which these outfits (and this includes the BJP as a political party) whipped up passions across the country leading to the demolition of the Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992, or the communal violence witnessed in many towns in the course of the campaign, one cannot ignore the fact that these outfits thrived on inciting passions among the ordinary people.

It is in this context that one finds the concern expressed by the VHP and other Sangh Parivar outfits over the Taliban militia's much publicised act of destroying idols in the Bamiyan valley as well as in the Kabul museum unconvincing. Apart from sharing the revanchist view of history and the intolerance to any form of liberal and pluralist vision with the Taliban, the VHP is as committed to the idea of a theocratic state as is the Taliban. That the VHP and

several other Sangh Parivar outfits are the ones that have been carrying out the prescriptions laid out by the RSS on nationhood (the idea of one-nation-one-culture) is a fact that the leaders of these organisations will find difficult to deny. And how different is this from the barbarous deeds of the Taliban and the ideological moorings of this fundamentalist brigade? And if the VHP and others belonging to its creed have been critical of the Taliban at this stage, one cannot but see this as arising out of the Hindutva brigade's own political calculations; to criticise the Taliban at this stage serves the Hindutva brigade's purpose of conjuring up images of an impending threat to the Hindu faith rather than any concern for the fundamental spirit of pluralism that seeks to preserve images of the past.

In this sense, the VHP's concerns do not arise out of any perception among its leaders that views the Bamiyan Buddha statues and the relics in the Kabul museum as reminders of the rich and effervescent expressions of the Gandhara style of art. For anyone with such a perspective could not have organised crowds to demolish a 16th Century monument and gone about describing such an act as an expression of "national sentiment". The deeds by the Taliban have reflected the same kind of revanchism that has marked the VHP's actions in India. In this context, there is no way one can resist describing the VHP's concerns as calculated attempts to further whip up passions against the Muslims and conjure up images of the kind its stormtroopers have been doing all these years. And the Taliban's outrageous actions have been picked up to further these fundamentalist ends rather than protect pluralist values.

THE HINDU

13 MAR 2001

AD-13
12/3

India, Mauritius to benefit from U.S. law on Africa

By Neena Vyas

PORT LOUIS (Mauritius), MARCH, 11. The possibility of joint ventures between India and Mauritius to take advantage of the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act passed by the United States was one of the major issues discussed by the President, Mr. K. R. Narayanan, during his official talks with the Mauritian Prime Minister, Sir Anerood Jugnauth.

The Act would allow a number of African countries, including Mauritius, to export goods to the United States on a quota-free, duty-free basis. The condition, of course, is that the goods would have to be manufactured in Africa. Besides offering a development opportunity to Africa, surely, the American interest also lies in creating better opportunities for American business in Africa. India could also take advantage of this, and Mauritius could be ideal as a launching pad in Africa, as the India-Mauritius bilateral relations are excellent.

Already, Mafatlal Mills, has plans to set up a factory here and Sir Anerood has indicated that Mauritius would welcome more investment from India, Mr. K. V. Rajan, Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs indicated when briefing reporters today.

It seems that earlier Australia had adopted a similar legislation to enable Fiji to increase its exports to it, but at that time, although the Mahendra Chaudhary Government in Fiji had indicated to India that it could take advantage and set up manufacturing units in that country, India was unable to use the opportunity. Instead China did.

Some detailed discussions on the Diego Garcia issue have also taken place during the President's 45-minute meeting with the Prime Minister of Mauritius yesterday. The Mauritian view is that the

Cold War is over and there is now little justification for Britain to continue to maintain its hold over the Chagos Archipelago where the Diego Garcia American base is located. Yesterday, in his state banquet speech, Mr. Narayanan had indicated India's support for any effort by Mauritius to get its rightful territory back. To begin with, India would be willing to help Mauritius prepare its legal case. Mauritius may then think of taking the matter to the International Court of Justice.

On the political front, there is some talk here too about a constitutional review to allow more powers to the President. But as in India, here too the ruling party is in no position to muster up the two-thirds majority required to amend the Constitution. The issue apparently came up when the Speaker of the National Assembly of Mauritius, Mr. Prem Ramnah, called on Mr. Narayanan. Mr. Ramnah, who will lead a parliamentary delegation, to India shortly, was seeking from Mr. Narayanan the status of the constitutional review in India.

Mauritius also plans to host the first meeting of world parliamentarians of Indian origin in Mauritius soon. India has welcomed this move, especially in the light of earlier developments in Fiji and the ouster of the Chaudhary Government. Both countries felt that an active forum of parliamentarians of Indian origin would be useful.

The leader of the Opposition, Mr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam, also called on Mr. Narayanan. In the evening Mr. Narayanan, and the First Lady, Mrs. Usha Narayanan, were the chief guests at a garden party hosted by the Mauritian President, Mr. Cassam Uteem. Tomorrow he will be the guest of honour at the Independence Day celebrations here before he leaves for home.

THE HINDU

11 MAR 2001

Growth of poor nations can sustain rich economies: PM

12/3 By A. Jayaram 10-1

BANGALORE, MARCH 11. The Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, today told the rich countries, which were faced with recession, to realise that they could not sustain the buoyancy of their economies without the rapid all-round growth of the poor and populous countries.

He said this while inaugurating the three-day conference on "Asia's Technology Future: Transforming Business" being attended by leaders of business and industry from the U.S. and Asian countries, including India.

The rich countries' problems were due to the fact that while technology was continually increasing, the productivity of their business sector and their own economies were growing too slowly to absorb new additions in technology-driven productivity. "This is resulting in the frequent cycles of recession, lay-offs and unemployment. This indeed is a paradox."

The rich countries were witnessing a technology-induced crisis of abundance. The developing countries could absorb the abundance by rapidly expanding their physical and social infrastructure and thereby improving the living standards of their people. Cooperation, more than competition, was necessary for technological progress.

Often developing countries such as India were subjected to technology denial in a bid to thwart their progress in critical areas. Businesses had been barred from selling certain products to India. "Of course, such unfair means had only encouraged our scientists and engineers to inten-



The Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, talking to the Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr. S.M. Krishna at the Asia Society's Conference in Bangalore on Sunday. Mr. Peter Kann, Chairman and CEO, Dow Jones & Co. is at right. — Photo: T.L. Prabhakar

sify indigenous efforts and succeed against all odds." One such example was the success of the Bangalore-based Indian Space Research Organisation.

Mr. Frank G. Wisner, Vice-Chairman of the American International Group and former U.S. Ambassador to India, said that Mr. Vajpayee and his coalition Government were placing India on a strong political foundation and taking economic reforms further. The Union Budget showed that the country was embarking on second generation reforms.

Mr. Nicholas Platt, President of the Asia Society, said India was at the cutting edge of Asia's technological future.

U.S. still hostile, says Krishna

By Our Staff Reporter

BANGALORE, MARCH 11. In an unusual speech, the Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr. S.M. Krishna, on Sun-

day said the United States was still hostile to India and it did not want India to progress.

Mr. Krishna was releasing a book by Dr. Karan Singh, titled *As I See It*, here.

Pointing out that there were many in the audience who had felt the undercurrent of hostility when they studied in the U.S., he said, "They (the U.S.) do not want a mighty country such as India to progress and that is why they are scared of India."

In the next few years, India would emerge as a country which exported several commodities such as foodgrains and fruits. That was why the U.S. was afraid of India, he said.

Urging the country to be cautious, the Chief Minister said, "Many international traps are being set and many naive countries walk into it." But with experts such as Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, Mr. Sharad Joshi and Dr. Raja Ramanna, India would not walk into such traps.

THE HINDU

12 MAR 20

President Wahid warns against more ethnic hatred



Protesters turn over a burning truck during a violent protest in Palangkaraya in Borneo island on Friday.

Bangkalan, March 10

BELEAGUERED INDONESIAN President Abdurrahman Wahid travelled to the tiny island of Madura on Saturday, warning victims of last month's bloody rampage in Borneo against ethnic hatred.

"It's not proper if we say that the Dayaks hate the Madurese," Wahid told a gathering of around 800 Madurese refugees and government officials in the city of Bangkalan.

Wahid, who travelled to the island off east Java by ferry, said the government would do everything possible to relocate those who fled the rampage and did not wish to return to Borneo. "For

those Madurese who are not willing to go back to Sampit, we will discuss their relocation," he said, referring to the town worst hit by the violence.

Almost 500 Madurese were killed—many beheaded and 50,000 fled in the violence, which erupted late last month when Wahid was on an overseas tour. Wahid's visit to the arid island on Saturday followed a brief tour of strife-torn Borneo on Thursday, which lapsed into chaos moments after he left.

At least four people were killed in the Central Kalimantan capital of Palangkaraya when police fired into a crowd of Dayak protesters demanding the expulsion of all immigrants from Madura.

Police also opened fire on Dayaks as they tried to break into the compound of the provincial chief's home on Friday but no casualties were reported.

A government official Palangkaraya told Reuters early on Saturday calm had been restored there but police were on standby in case of a fresh outburst of violence. "The situation is under control...the police are on standby," government officer Soewito said.

Some of the refugees in Bangkalan, on the western tip of Madura, around 675 km east of Jakarta, made an impassioned plea to Wahid for help to return to their ravaged homes.

Reuters

Japan PM, LDP leaders discuss resignation issue

Tokyo, March 10

JAPANESE POLITICIANS held a series of closed meetings across Tokyo on Saturday as part of a power struggle, which aimed to decide the future of embattled Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori by the end of the day.

Mori, reduced to a political ghost by a string of scandals and gaffes, was to meet powerbrokers of his dominant Liberal Democratic Party in the evening when the kingpins who govern Japan may lay out a timetable for his resignation, media said.

Mori was grim-faced when he entered his official residence. Public broadcaster NHK said he told reporters he had no intention of telling party elders later that he was ready to resign.

Whatever the timing and whoever replaces Mori, there was little sign that the elderly LDP powerbrokers were seeking a successor with the clout, qualifications and policies to make a mark on Japan's politics or rescue its floundering economy.

Mori, with a single-digit public support rating, has become a serious liability for the LDP and its coalition partners, who do not want to fight an Upper House election in July under the leadership of one of Japan's least popular politicians.

To allow him a graceful exit, Mori's departure could be postponed until April, giving him time to travel to Washington on March 19 to meet President George W. Bush and then to hold a summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin on March 25. Domestic media said Mori might tell senior LDP politicians at their late night meeting that he intended to resign in April, after enactment of key budget-related legislation.

The meeting would thrash out what Mori would say at an LDP

convention on Tuesday, when he was likely to agree to refer to his "responsibility" for a string of gaffes and scandals—an often-used code implying readiness to resign.

An April 5 departure date was favoured because it would enable Mori to complete a full year in office, newspapers said. Mori might try to save face by announcing that he would bring forward an election for LDP president to around April—a move that would prolong the agony of a public that has made clear it is tired of this Prime Minister.

The LDP chief is assured the prime ministership by virtue of the ruling camp's majority in the lower house of Parliament. Many ruling coalition lawmakers want Mori to quit well before the Upper House election to bolster their chances at the polls.

A loss in the Upper House election would not immediately oust the ruling bloc, but would spell legislative deadlock and could prompt an early election for the powerful lower chamber.

A disastrous defeat for the coalition would also probably mean that the Prime Minister of the day would have to resign, a factor that is giving potential successors pause.

The political dithering could hardly come at a worse time for the economy, now showing signs of slipping into recession with no easy cure in sight given rock-bottom interest rates and a huge public debt that makes further fiscal stimulus difficult.

Late on Friday, coalition policy-makers unveiled a package of measures they hope will cheer investors in Japan's stock market, where prices are languishing near 15-year lows. An internal LDP power struggle has been raging over who should replace Mori as party president.

Reuters

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

MAR 2001

HO-14

Contempt law and human rights

By K. G. Kannabiran

It was the Madras Bar Association, way back in 1960 or so, that challenged the efforts of C. Subramaniam, at that time a Minister in the Madras Government, to fast forward the career of Alagiriswamy. He was asked to resign his position as chief judge, city civil court and was appointed Government Pleader immediately thereafter. This was to clear the ground for his judgeship. This effort of C. Subramaniam was fiercely contested in the High Court by way of a writ petition. This petition was dismissed as not maintainable, but not without a strong criticism of the devices adopted by the Minister and his Government to push their candidate. The rest is history.

The question of the true age of S. Ramachandra Iyer surfaced as a major issue in 1960 after he became Chief Justice of the Court. It was then believed that he had a fair chance of being called to the Supreme Court. The declaration of his age was found to be not true when his younger brother sent out invitations for celebrating the completion of his 60th year. He was known to be a competent judge, but competence and ability are not synonyms for ethical or moral conduct. Nor the presence of ability and competence assure also the presence of ethical conduct in the discharge of duties. It became the unenviable task of the then Chief Justice of India, P. B. Gajendragadkar, to ease him out of the position without much damage to the Institution. Really age has nothing to do with a person functioning as a judge. Nor has it anything to do with the administration of justice. But once an age of entry and exit is fixed misrepresentation of age becomes unethical and continuation on such representation does affect the administration of justice, not because he is past the age but because he misrepresented to extend his tenure.

By the time we arrive into the era of Mr. V. Ramaswamy, again from the Madras High Court. The misdemeanors of this judge while in office led to his impeachment. And we realised that the arteries of all the in-

stitutions have hardened and the periodical exercises in elections may at best recycle the decadent and the criminal in different permutations and combinations. The judiciary does not suffer from such exercises in renewal periodically. When the issue of integrity of judges became an issue of partisan debate in the impeachment proceedings the possibility of restructuring and reforming the judiciary receded into the distant horizon.

The history of these institutions has always been one of degeneration mainly because these are perceived as one of position and authority. With perquisites and other more than comforting facilities these positions offer the promise of a sybaritic life comparable only to decadent Rome. Pomp to overawe people and power to subjugate criticism is all that is required to run these institutions. The Courts structured as they are provide the pomp and the contempt jurisdiction, a facet of the divine right theory of the Stuart Monarch, in its unadulterated arbitrariness continued in its pristine state to regulate the matters governing the institution.

But then how does one discipline this institution, and how does one correct the unbecoming conduct of an individual judge was the problem worrying many and Mr. Sundaram an advocate practising in Chennai voiced it. The theory of inherent power (quite entrenched, I should say) cannot defeat the people's interest in the administration of justice. If we continue the myth about the court's inherent power it does really put a premium on unbecoming conduct going unchecked. As it is, a contempt proceeding very closely resembles one of those Catholic or the Calvinist inquisitions and the opportunity given to the contemnor is to apologise and not vindicate. There have been judges who make incorrect declarations regarding their age. There have been judges who anticipating that they are likely "to be called" to the Bench take steps to alter their age by the simple device of a civil suit for correcting his age. Very often nobody takes notice of such harmless misdemean-

ors, as incorrect declaration of age, as these do not disturb the even tenor of aggradation of the lawyers. Normally, whatever the provocation, for very professional reasons he would like a judge to be always in good humour.

After the advent of public interest litigation and the emergence of judicial activism the discourse in the court found the judges taking very moralistic positions and postures leading very often to undeserved strictures against the government and its officers and their own officers of courts, viz., the advocates. With corruption all around judicial activism created a make believe of an institution staffed by persons of impeccable rectitude. It is in fact not the judges' fault. Only a judge of a very high moral rectitude may maintain this moralistic tenor. There have been such legends, but no longer. Such a judge does not need security and con-

OPINION

tempt power. Rectitude in life style and in the discharge of the obligations attached to the position they hold appears to be a mandatory requirement. No explanation is acceptable for the absence of rectitude. There are certain other lessons from Sundaram. Two earlier cases referred to in the judgment are against persons who made similar accusations against judges. These cases were in the year 1996. Does it not indicate that this signals the necessity for sincere collective reappraisal working of courts and an introspection of the life style of the judge and his/her work as a judge? Accusation of false age is not the issue. Sundaram raises quite a few questions and one of these is applicability of Article 14. Sundaram sets down in his affidavit that the material furnished by Ram Jethmalani in his book "Big Ego Small Men" disputes the age declaration. In which case should not the Court proceed against Ram Jethmalani for contempt? He released the book in a press conference and reiterated the charge regarding the declaration of age. Could courts while exercising suo motu

powers make such invidious discrimination? Does not such exercise of powers violative of Article 14. Or can the court claim total immunity from the application of Fundamental Rights Chapter? The Court did refer to what was published in *The Hindu* dated 3-11-2000 but would not take on Mr. Jethmalani for Contempt. For the discerning public the inferences are obvious. Sundaram also raises the question of redefining contempt power as also the issue of human rights in context of contempt jurisdiction.

In contempt proceedings there are two contending claims on the societal interests in the administration of justice. Sundaram or any other person becomes a contemnor whenever he raises the issue of administration of justice. This may be with reference to the conduct of an individual judge or with reference to the manner in which a proceeding was conducted. The court also claims that in the interests of administration of justice it is using contempt powers but in reality very often it is used as a shield to defend itself. In this competing claims between the citizen and courts the citizen always loses. The derisive discourse in the proceeding leaves one with the feeling that the institution is staffed with persons who are breastfed in authoritarian tradition and therefore do not want to read down the powers of contempt to bring it in tune with fundamental rights, values incorporated into the Constitution and in accordance with human rights as they evolved from the declaration onwards.

This arbitrary nature of power of contempt has been worrying the British also. It was felt that the offence of contempt for scandalising the court is too broad in its sweep and therefore very uncertain. Can this uncertainty be justified under the European Covenant on Human Rights even if the trial complies with the procedure prescribed by law? Does the procedure prescribed satisfy the test laid down in Maneka Gandhi's case in this country? The Canadian Court felt that the Contempt law is highly disproportionate to any legitimate purpose it might serve. The Phillimore Committee in its report on

Contempt of Court considered abolition of the offence of scandalising court, but ultimately settled for narrowly defining the offence.

The committee felt that the contempt law should not be invoked against people who criticise judges or publish vituperative statements unless they create risk of serious prejudice to some particular, identifiable proceedings. David Feldman is of the view that the implementation of the suggestion would bring contempt law back in line with the Convention's requirements. It would ensure that criminal sanctions could be imposed only where they would be proportionate to the legitimate objective of maintaining the authority of the judiciary. The Committee recommended that there should be a new statutory offence of publishing material which imputes improper or corrupt behaviour to judges.

They suggested a defence by the contemnor if the allegation is both true and for public benefit. Such a defence would be needed if the interference with freedom of expression were to be proportionate to a legitimate aim in a democratic society, as required under Article 10(2) of the European Human Rights Convention, which provides for restraint on the freedom of expression. It is subject to penalties as are prescribed by law and as are necessary in a democratic society and for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary. It is in the context of this clause that suggestions were made that scandalising courts as an offence should be abolished, or should be read down so as to eliminate arbitrariness and make the procedure fair and the definition certain. If it is realised that administration of justice is an abiding concern of the people and courts are their institutions and instrument for bringing about an improvement in the quality and content of their lives, it may not lead to silencing of criticism. But then it is so comforting to live with myths and mystification...

(The writer is National President of the People's Union of Civil Liberties.)

The lineage of control

Much huffing and puffing on both sides, and, at the time of writing, it is yet to be known whether New Delhi will finally allow the leaders of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference — the full complement — to visit Pakistan. There is in any event a long road ahead. Why beat about the bush? The problem in Kashmir is not on account of Pakistan and its intransigence.

The problem lies in the impossible corner we, the Indians, have played ourselves into. The original sin lies with the Congress, and, one is sad to say, with Jawaharlal Nehru. Sheikh Abdullah was awfully mishandled in the Fifties; those who advised Nehru that Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad could be a suitable person to wean away the Kashmiris from their regard for the Sheikh were nincompoops, or worse, of the first order.

Indira Gandhi tried to correct the blunder committed earlier; she too was soon misguided by the likes of the bumptious Arun Gandhi and the infamous Jagmohan, the latter in particular already equipped with the frame of mind of the Bharatiya Janata Party. The bait of being reinstated as chief minister won back Farooq Abdullah, but by then the populace of the valley had been irretrievably alienated.

From the mid-Eighties Kashmir has been as good as a terrain occupied by the Indian army; the charade of periodical elections has fooled nobody in international circles. The cost to the nation is not just in the crores and crores of rupees expended to guard the ramparts across the line of control; by now it is more than obvious that it is a porous line, and infiltrators from across the border will keep sneaking in notwithstanding the continuous strengthening of our army, air force and security personnel and of *matériel* supporting them. It could hardly be otherwise, given the willingness, or, rather, eagerness, of the almost entire Kashmiri population to do an evil turn to India.

Much the greater damage has, however, been rendered to India's reputation as a nation believing in truth and fairness. We have an extremely bad case to plead on Kashmir and we have pleaded it equally badly. Our refusal to abide by the half-a-century old commitment to the United Nations for a plebiscite in the valley has exposed the extent of our hypocrisy. To dissemble that we did not in fact agree to hold the plebiscite makes the Indian case even worse. We have let several chances to arrive at a *denouement* with Pakistan go by.

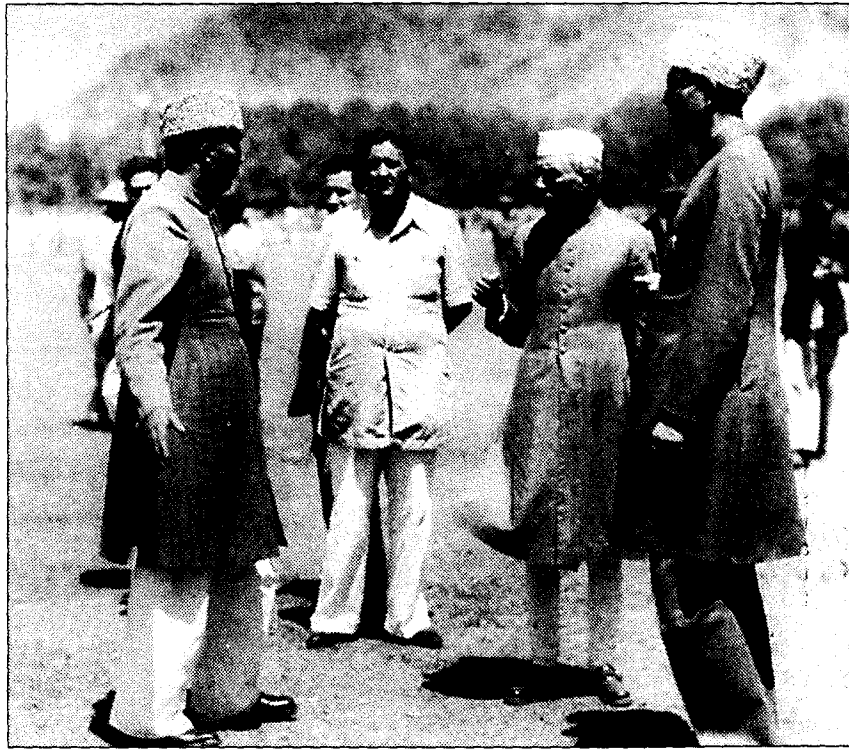
In 1972, when Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was literally begging at our doors, we could have forced him to agree to a permanent solution on the Kashmir issue by sealing a formal arrangement along the LoC; unfortunately, the ambition of our leaders had by then risen sky-high.

CUTTING CORNERS

ASHOK MITRA

We could have, between then and the next 10 years, foisted an agreement on still-wobbly Pakistan whereby the state of Jammu and Kashmir could have been turned into a loose confederation with Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh as separate entities enjoying the prerogative of extensive local self-government. But meanwhile our policymakers had committed themselves too far to the domestic electorate: Kashmir was an integral and inalienable part of India, and no force could snatch it away from us.

But Kashmir has been a lost cause for the last 15 years or thereabouts. They are prisoners of circumstances they have themselves created. They are consequently unable to recognize the stream of advantages that could have accrued in case they had agreed to throw in the towel at the right time. A settlement in Kashmir would have straightway released two to three per cent of our gross domestic product which is currently being deployed towards defence and security measures in



The Congress was the first to play the jingo card; the BJP with its ideological moorings and emotional inclines could hardly be blamed if it exploited it to the hilt. Now there is not one political party in the country which dares to do a reverse turn on Kashmir and yet aspire to come to power either at the Centre or in any one state.

Even the left has learnt its lesson and would be doubly chary of abiding by its principles in the matter of Kashmir; self-determination is for the birds. A handful of individuals, who do not mind being ostracized, keep the pot of Kashmiri self-will boiling, but they are by and large considered as madcaps who need not be taken seriously. And there are enough patriots around who suspect them to be part of Pakistan's fifth column: the ISI to the right of you, the ISI to the left of you, the ISI in front of you.

Our politicians and mandarins will perhaps not admit the fact even to them-

┌ The original sin lies with the Congress and, one is sad to say, with Jawaharlal Nehru ┐

and around the valley. Such a settlement would also have made it possible for us to go slow, or even totally discard, our efforts at augmenting our nuclear capability; thereby we would have regained some of the international goodwill we have lost over the years.

Once the government of India were able to convince the world that its hands are clean in relation to the valley's affairs and, at the same time, gained back, at least partially, the trust of the valley's population, it would have been strategically placed to enjoy vicariously the embarrassment resulting from the friction

between the Kashmiris who wanted full independence and those who wanted to merge with Pakistan. Then, once the Kashmir impasse had terminated, that would immediately have led to a refurbishing of India's secular identity: many of the fissures that impeded the progress of the economy and the stability of the polity would have been automatically removed. Finally, the enhanced respect India could command in the changed situation from the international community would have gone a long way to the re-establishment of her position as natural leader of the developing world.

One has to be realistic. Till as long as the BJP and its cohorts are in control of the system, it would be impossible to conceive of any radical change in the situation: the Hindu fundamentalists would like to ride back into prehistoric darkness on the back of the Kashmir demon. Let there be therefore no mincing of words, to remove the BJP from political power should be the primary objective of those who want the healthy development of Indian society. That is going to be without question an enormously difficult task.

Besides, that would only be the beginning. For the Congress too is also pledged, for the present, to ditto the BJP line on Kashmir. If another election to the Lok Sabha is round the corner — such is the impression created by some of the signals emitted from the prime minister's house — and the Congress wises up to the reality that it has practically zero chance of recapturing power without both overt and covert assistance from the left and democratic forces, a new possibility could open up. The left could then compel the Congress to follow its own agenda. But, then, it must have the courage of its own conviction.

The going is bound to be rough. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh-Vishwa Hindu Parishad combine has tasted blood, and it would not easily let its prey be snatched from its mouth; it would resist, resist and resist again. The reassuring factor though is the obtuseness of the *Hindutva* psyche, itself its own worst enemy. Even if an empirical basis existed for the allegation, was it sagacious to state it openly that the Pakistani hand had instigated the Kathmandu disturbances?

The enemy of my enemy is my friend; in their present mood, the Nepalese youth would only be encouraged by New Delhi's explicitly stated accusation to greet Pakistan with comradely fervour. And these young people, more likely than not, are going to be the principal determinants of Nepal's foreign and domestic policies in the immediate period. The Indian electorate would, sooner or later — hopefully sooner than later — realize the consequences of letting the BJP continue in power; no question its agenda is ruinous for the nation.

'Road map' on talks with Pak

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, JAN. 16. Pakistan's emphasis on talks without a firm commitment to rein in key insurgent groups is coming in the way of its stalled dialogue with India.

While Pakistan insists that talks on resolving the Kashmir issue should begin straightaway, India wants Islamabad to rein in the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and stop cross-border terrorism. In case New Delhi and Islamabad reconcile these differences, the peace process can well and truly begin.

Aware of the possibilities, the Indian establishment is considering several "road maps" to usher in a substantive dialogue with Pakistan. One of these, combining implementation of a key set of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and hard negotiations, is being seriously debated. Highly-placed sources in a section of the security establishment, however, warn that this framework for a possible dialogue can be altered at any time, depending on the developments along the Line of Control, the internal security situation and the ex-

tent to which Pakistan exerts itself to rein in militant groups.

India may time a visible peace initiative to February, the month when the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, undertook the famous Lahore initiative. Sources said New Delhi was likely to link any forward movement on the Indo-Pakistan track to the Lahore process essayed by the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee.

The formal revival of the peace process could begin with Foreign Secretary-level talks. The Foreign Secretaries, when they meet, are likely to initially confine themselves to the modalities for the revival of the "composite dialogue", framework for which was initiated in June 1997 and involved discussions on seven sets of subjects including Jammu and Kashmir. The Tulbul navigation project, Siachen, Sir Creek, economic and commercial cooperation, terrorism and drug trafficking and promotion of friendly exchanges in various fields are the other issues.

The two sides, at the initial stage itself, may propose increasing the frequency of the Delhi-

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ould tie up in software'

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y which had invented the
, 'the first ever computer' and
, Talking to presspersons later,
it was an important visit from
at neighbour. About the per-
threat to the Indian software
ry from China, Mr. Narayana
y said there was room for all to

Amulya Charan, Director-Finance and
Mr. Danny Sim, General Manger-Mar-
keting.

Naidu signs 3 MoUs with Dubai Govt.

Li Peng and his wife, Ms. Zhu
esented a porcelain vase with a
e dragon motif and a lacquer
plate to the Infosys Chairman
aff.

Li Peng earlier visited the In-
onal Technology Park Ltd
promoted by a Singapore-led
tium, and the Bangalore office
Chinese IT company, Huawei
ologies. He also visited the of-
fata Consultancy Services.

Li Peng spent some time at the
here he was welcomed by Mr.

DUBAI, JAN. 16. Andhra Pradesh has
signed three Memoranda of Under-
standing (MoU) with the Dubai Gov-
ernment for cooperation and
investment in the field of information
technology, technical training and
tourism.

The Andhra Pradesh Technical De-
velopment Department signed an
MoU with Dubai Internet City (DIC)
on technical collaboration and another
with Dubai Customs to impart
training in information technology
during the visit of the Andhra Pradesh
Chief Minister, Mr. Chandrababu Nai-
du. — PTI

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india

2000 HIGHLIGHTS

- Bill Clinton visits India in March, 22 years after the last US Presidential visit; New warmth in Indo-US relations. PM Vajpayee reciprocates with a visit to US in September
- Cricket in crisis as match fixing clouds leading players. Hansie Cronje confesses following Delhi Police FIR. CBI report indicts four players; BCCI bans Azhar and Ajay Sharma for life, Jadeja and Prabhakar get five year ban
- India sweeps the beauty world by winning all three major pageants. Lara Dutta crowned Miss Universe, Priyanka Chopra becomes Miss World and Diya Mirza is Miss Asia Pacific.
- Ayodhya imbroglio paralyses Parliament in December as opposition demands resignation of ministers named in Babri demolition case. PM's statements regarding mandir create furore. Opposition censure motion defeated in Lok Sabha and the govt. is censured in Rajya Sabha
- Karmapa Lama surfaces in Dharamshala after escaping from Tibet, Jan 5
- INLD-BJP win Haryana polls; Chautala is back as CM, March 2
- Uttaranchal becomes India's 27th state; Nityanand Swami is CM, Nov 8
- Three killed as militants attack high-security Army camp in Red Fort, Dec 22
- Violence grips Delhi over closure of polluting industrial units, Nov 20
- Rajnath Singh replaces R.P. Gupta as UP CM, Oct 28
- Elections result in hung assembly in Bihar; Nitish heads minority govt for eight days; Quits before confidence vote; Rabri sworn in CM, March 11
- 55 killed in Alliance Boeing crash in Patna, July 17
- India's 28th state Jharkhand is born; Babulal Marandi is CM, Nov 15
- Jyoti Basu, India's longest serving CM, steps down after 24 years; Buddhadeb Bhattacharya is the new West Bengal CM, Nov 6
- Chhattisgarh becomes India's 26th state; Ajit Jogi is CM, Nov 1
- BJD-BJP sweep Orissa polls; Naveen Patnaik is CM, March 5
- Jayalalitha gets 3-year rigorous imprisonment in Tansi case by trial court, Oct 9; Appeal pending in HC
- India's population crosses one billion mark, May 11
- Severe drought in Gujarat and Rajasthan, Apr-May
- Union Power Minister P.R. Kumaramangalam dies in Delhi following brief illness, Aug 23
- Malleswari's bronze is India's only medal at Sydney Olympics, Sept 19
- Narasimha Rao and Buta Singh convicted in JMM case, Sept 22; Appeal pending
- KBC is the most watched TV programme. Clones fail to make impact
- Russian President Vladimir Putin visits India, Oct 2
- Insurance opened to private sector, Oct 23
- Sonia Gandhi elected Congress president trouncing challenger Jitendra Prasad, Nov 15
- Mumbai gangster Chota Rajan escapes from Bangkok hospital, Nov 23
- Bill introduced to dilute govt stake in Public Sector Banks, Dec 13
- 18 day strike paralyses Postal Services in Dec
- Viswanathan Anand wins World Chess Championship in Teheran, Dec 24
- Hrithik Roshan's alleged comments trigger violent protests in Nepal, Dec 26

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