

Hizbul 'commander' Tantray killed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SRINAGAR, JULY 25

SELF-STYLED deputy chief commander of Hizbul Mujahideen Abdul Hamid Tantray alias 'Commander Masood' was killed in a Tuesday night operation by Special Operations Group (SOG) in Pulwama district of South Kashmir, official sources said.

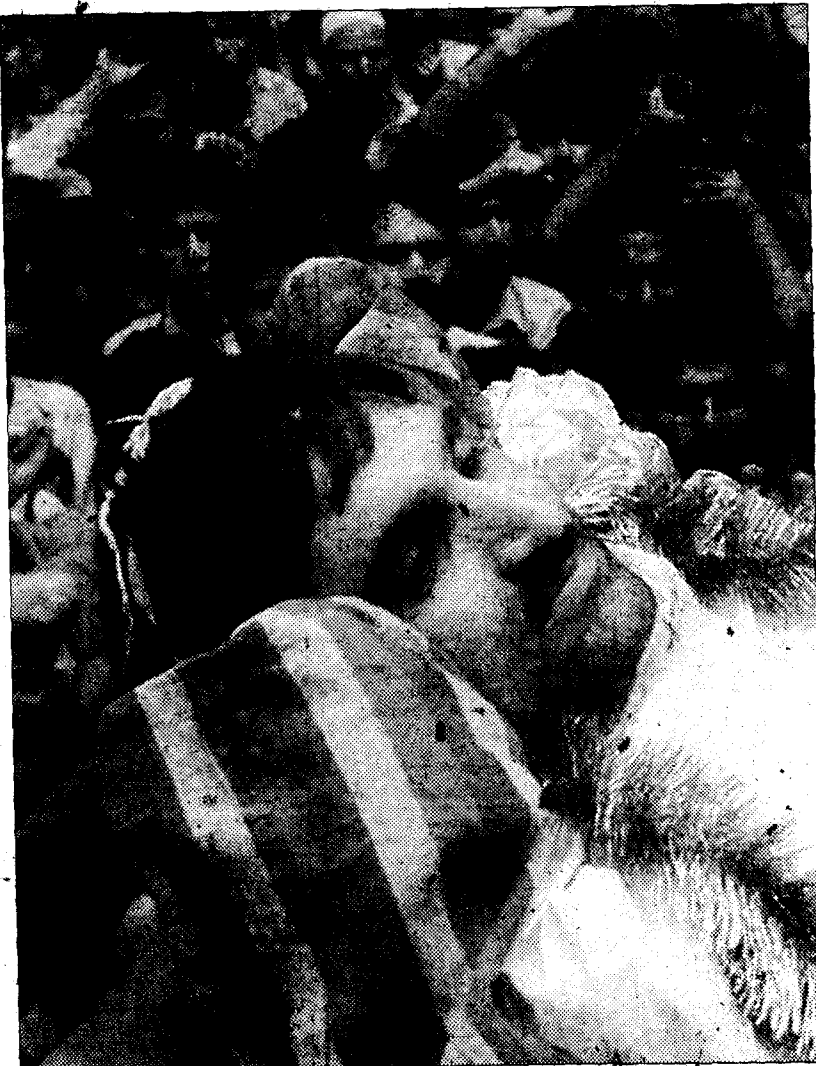
Masood, the chief spokesperson of the outfit, was killed in retaliatory fire after ultras attacked the SOG search party of the local police at Pohu, sources said and termed it as a "major blow" to the outfit.

Masood came into lime light when a team of his outfit negotiated with the Union Government after Hizbul Mujahideen announced a unilateral ceasefire in the state on July 24, last year.

Meanwhile, chief commander of Hizbul Mujahideen Abdul Majid Dar accused the Special Operation Group (SOG) of police of killing his deputy in a "fake encounter."

In a statement here, he alleged Masood was arrested from a hideout at Pampore in Pulwama at 8.30 am on Tuesday and later killed in a "cowardly act last night."

Meanwhile, the Jammu and Kashmir government has sanctioned an amount of Rs one lakh each in favour of the next of kins of persons killed by militants at Cheerji and Chatroo villages of Kishtwar tehsil in Doda district, official sources said on Wednesday. In another development, 250 posts of Special Police Officers (SPOs) for Kishtwar tehsil were sanctioned by the state government in view of rising militancy in the region.



Villagers carry the body of Abdul Hamid Tantray during the funeral procession in Kashmir on Wednesday - Reuters

Now, the third decade in Kashmir

By Harish Khare

19-12
25/7

NOW THAT the principled prejudices have been so firmly and so unequivocally re-stated at Agra, it is time for India to start preparing itself for the third decade of the Kashmir problem. To be sure for a little while the political partisans will point fingers at one another, but then, sooner than later, reality must reassert itself. Because the coming decade will test the resilience and the resourcefulness of the Indian state, and how the 'problem' gets sorted out would depend on how we use our political and administrative instruments of reconciliation and order.

Unfortunately, because we live in an age of instant images and even faster judgments, we have no appreciation for history. This approach is most evident in the current discourse on Kashmir. But this fashionable ignorance is not very helpful in understanding Kashmir which happens to be our oldest festering historical wound. The present is invariably rooted deeply in the past; Kashmir is no exception.

It would suffice to note that Kashmir 'problem' that manifested itself in late 1989 had its beginning in the decade of the 1980s. This decade was defined by the total political dominance by the Congress of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty. Beginning with Indira Gandhi's return in last week of 1979 till Rajiv Gandhi's ouster in November 1989, New Delhi had an unapologetically viceregal approach towards Kashmir. Not that in the earlier era New Delhi was any less high-handed in dealing with Kashmir, the Kashmiris and their aspirations and frustrations; but, the 1980s bred a peculiar arrogance in the new emperors who ruled in New Delhi.

The Nehru-Gandhi family's political dominance in the 1980s proved particularly debilitating because it blunted the sharper edges of the Indian state's instruments. Indira Gandhi's quasi-communal campaign in the 1983 election, the arbitrary dismissal of the Farooq Abdullah Government in 1984, the disastrous Farooq-Rajiv Accord of 1986, the needless rigging of the 1987 elections, the petulant Congress response and advice to Dr. Abdullah to resign in 1990, etc., are all familiar milestones on the road to political mismanagement. Each of these mistakes can be traced to the aberrations and absurdities of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty;

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what was worse, this 'family' approach in New Delhi ended up only countenancing another 'family' and its parasitic claims in Srinagar.

This story of how the Abdullah dynasty allowed democratic dissatisfaction to degenerate into alienation and to acquire secessionist dimensions is familiar and need not be told; but it is important to keep it in mind as the defining prologue to the decade of insurgency in the 1990s. This decade simply tested the Indian state's capacity to defuse massive upsurges as well as to beat back organised

attacks on its sovereignty. In his own quiet way, Mr. P. V. Narasimha Rao allowed the bureaucratic instruments to recover their lost efficacy, and, only then, began tapping the potential of reconciliation inherent in electoral democracy. On the one hand, the secessionists were disabused of the notion that the 'Indians' could be driven out of Kashmir; on the other, Dr. Abdullah was back in business after the 1996 elections. But the Kashmir dynasty was no wiser than before and had no interest in addressing itself to the sources of alienation.

A political and military stalemate persisted. Kargil and its July 4 (1999) denouement in Washington disabused the Kashmiris of the illusion that Pakistan was capable of qualitatively changing the 'ground realities' in Kashmir. The Kargil war provided the objective conditions for the November 2000 Vajpayee peace offensive strategy, trying to break out of the stalemate. The Ramzan initiative, of unilateral ceasefire, was meant to build on the logic and calculations behind the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen's 'ceasefire'. The Ramzan peace offensive showed to the people of Kashmir — for the first time in nearly a decade — the humane and reasonable face of the Indian state.

That strategy was based on a recognition

of the Kashmiri alienation, and there was a belief that if this alienation could be addressed, then terrorism would automatically get de-romanticised. No one was under the illusion that Pakistan would go along with this approach or that Islamabad would stop sponsoring, financing and training jihadi groups; and, nor was there any doubt that the security forces would have to stay put, just to tell the Pakistani establishment that the low-intensity conflict would not yield dividends on the ground.

Moreover, the Ramzan peace initiative was strategically aimed at de-linking the pro-Pakistani and pro-Independence voices in the Valley, calling the decade-old Pakistani bluff that it was supporting a 'freedom struggle' in Kashmir. Unfortunately, the internal equations within the Vajpayee Government did not allow the Ramzan initiative to explore its own potential. Internal equations saw to it that the initiative died a premature death. An entirely needless controversy was stoked up on the question of allowing or not allowing this or that member of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference to go to Pakistan. The political component of the Ramzan peace initiative was never allowed to get operationalised.

On the other hand, the combined resources and ministerial stewardship at the Home Ministry and the 'Raksha Mantrayala' failed to provide the leadership, inspiration and imagination that would have allowed the security forces to take care of the other element of the 'core issue': the jihadi groups. Despite a stern administrator and astute political manager presiding over the internal security apparatus, the militant remains unbowed. It is against this internal deadlock that the Agra summit came about; the inconclusive outcome should surprise no student of realpolitik. A new decade now begins in Kashmir.

In the next decade, three inter-related tasks would have to be undertaken. First, the requisite political imagination would have to be found to isolate the pro-Pakistani voices from the other values and aspirations within the Kashmir Valley. The Indian polity has had many successes in dousing the urge for secession and separation; it is time to tap those skills, experiences, administrative mechanism, and patterns of political behavior that have helped in addressing grievances of distance, dissent, discrimination, and disaffection. This is the primary task of any just and fair polity, and this cannot be held hostage to the Abdullah dynasty and its doubtful claim to being the 'only nationalist voice' in Kashmir.

Second, the Pakistani establishment will have to be exorcised of the notion that there is tiredness and fatigue in New Delhi. If Gen. Pervez Musharraf behaved in the manner he did in Agra (and thereafter), it was only because he thought that the jihadis had bled India enough and that the Indians were prepared to throw in the towel. All that he had to do was to ask for Kashmir and it would be given to him. Inversely, we should also disabuse ourselves of the paternalistic notion that Pakistan is a failed state and of its concomitant policy implication that let us bend over backward to accommodate Pakistan. If Pakistan chooses to go the Taliban way, that is Pakistan's business.

The third and last task is to ensure that there is no outbreak of a 'Robin Raphel fever' once again in Washington. Any show of American 'interest' would complicate the first two tasks; the price of American intrusiveness would be paid by the jihadis, the Kashmiri civilians and the Indian jawans. It took seven long years before the Robin Raphel fever subsided and Mr. Bill Clinton came to reaffirm that international borders could no longer be redrawn in blood. And before the new U.S. administration becomes 'interested' in Kashmir, it should be reminded of another President Bush's wisdom: "Freedom is not the same as independence. Americans will not support those who seek independence in order to replace a far-off tyranny with a local despotism. They will not aid those who promote a suicidal nationalism based upon ethnic hatred". Amen.

Centre plans tough measures in J&K

Jay Raina
New Delhi, July 23

29/7
THE VAJPAYEE Government is set to re-orient its Kashmir policy following the failure of the Agra summit. To begin with, it will redeploy security forces to take the challenge of Pak-based jihadi outfits head-on and also speed up the revival of the political process in the troubled State.

Sources said security forces are to be given a free hand to stamp out mercenaries operating in the Valley to send a clear signal to their masters across the borders. The State-wide action would be in place soon after the completion of the ongoing Amarnath yatra.

On the political front, the Government may initiate discussions on the ruling National Conference's autonomy demand even though the Union Cabinet had rejected it earlier.

Top Government sources said the effort will be to resolve the domestic discord within the framework of India's democratic dispensation and constitutional safeguards. The move will be supplemented by mobilisation of the State's pro-peace population by co-opting all the State-centric democratic formations and other neutral organisations for a broad-based dialogue.

Simultaneously, the Centre may also nudge the Farooq Abdullah regime to streamline its functioning to back up the peoples' mobilisation for peace.

The Government's Kashmir pointsmen K C Pant, who is to return from his week-long overseas assignment early next week, may be directed to assess all the possible political alternatives to ensure greater involvement of

FIVE BSF JAWANS, MILITANTS HURT IN TWIN BLASTS

FIVE BSF personnel and three pro-government Ikhwan militants were among 21 people injured in two separate explosions in Srinagar and in north Kashmir's Bandipora quarter on Monday.

An IED fitted in a bicycle was detonated by militants on the Babademb road in old Srinagar injuring five BSF personnel. Three civilians were also hit by the splinters, and the condition of one of the injured is stated to be critical. Moulana Azhar Masood's Jaish-e-Mohammad claimed responsibility for the attack on the BSF.

In the other incident, militants tossed a hand grenade on a group of pro-government Ikhwan militants at Bandipora in north Kashmir, injuring three of them critically.

Meanwhile, four of the seven Village Defence Committee (VDC) members kidnapped from Tagood village in Doda district yesterday were killed by the militants, while three others managed to escape.
HTC, Jammu

Kashmiris in the much-desired peace process.

Sources said even as doors for a dialogue with the Hurriyat may not be closed, the thrust would be engage others in a broad-based dialogue to assuage the hurt sentiments of the Kashmiris.

Having sold out its heart to jihad-inspired trilateral Kashmir talks, the Government is apparently dismayed at the Hurriyat stance leading to its prevailing isolation from the composite peace process.

On its part, the Centre appears convinced that Pervez Musharraf's Kashmir-centric agenda was primarily dictated by Pak-based jihadi organisations that had warned him against any shift on Pakistan's stated stand on Kashmir.

No wonder, the Pak military ruler went to the extent of comparing the ongoing terrorist violence in Kashmir with "freedom struggle". The latest spurt in mercenary-sponsored violence is perceived as part of Pakistan's freedom struggle-related "grand design".

Political observers attribute Musharraf's tough Kashmir stance to the coincidence of Prime Minister AB Vajpayee's invitation to Pak President along with the withdrawal of the unilateral cessation of combat operations in J&K. This is perceived to have buoyed Musharraf's hard stance owing to a feeling that New Delhi was looking for help from Islamabad to control terrorist violence in Kashmir.

The Prime Minister's Musharraf-invitation is also partly perceived as acceptance of Vajpayee's failure in achieving any substantial gains from his 6-month long Kashmir cease-fire initiative. Indeed, Vajpayee had staked a great deal in announcing the Government unilateral cease-fire around Ramzan followed by repeated extensions spanning around six months.

The new Kashmir re-think is obviously meant to obviate all such assessments and bring about a modicum of change on the ground through both tighter security measures and heightened political activity.

TUESDAY, JULY 24, 2001

THE CHALLENGE OF MILITANCY

49-10

THE KILLINGS OF Amarnath pilgrims at Sheshnag and the massacre of innocent civilians in a Doda village, separated by less than 24 hours and together accounting for over 25 deaths, are a clear and ominous pointer to the sort of challenge the security forces are up against in militancy-stricken Jammu and Kashmir. That the abrupt collapse of the Agra summit — a disappointing denouement to what was truly a major initiative for peace through negotiations at the highest political level — would provoke the insurgent elements to strike with greater vigour was only to be expected. Indeed, the pro-Pakistan outfits such as Lashkar-e-Toiba and Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, who had made no secret of their designs, have made it a point to sustain pressure by resorting to murderous attacks even on the summit-eve and while the talks were on, their targets being military/paramilitary camps. And their refrain was that they would continue to target security forces and Government installations as long as India refused to accept Kashmir as a “disputed territory” and “withdraw its forces from the Valley”. For all the publicly enunciated strategy of ‘selective targeting’ of Government establishments and security personnel, the jihadi groups — particularly the ones manned by mercenaries — have precious little in their track record to substantiate it. The Sheshnag and Doda episodes only serve to reinforce this point about the militants being totally devoid of scruples and basic concerns for human values. It is strange that Gen. Musharraf should have chosen to describe such forces as freedom fighters.

With the Amarnath pilgrimage season yet to be over and given the heightened threat from the militants, the civil administration and the security establishment have their task cut out in the immediate context. Even last year, over 30 persons were killed in an attack on the Pahalgam base camp by an outfit that was out to sabotage the ceasefire tried out on the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen's initiative. After all, can there be a softer target than the hordes of pilgrims trekking to the holy

shrine? The official response to the Sheshnag killings has been on much-too-familiar lines. The attack has been vehemently condemned for its savagery, and high-powered ministerial teams have made visits to make a spot assessment of the security milieu. That the Yatra remained suspended only very briefly on account of the dastardly attack by militants should indeed have come as a matter of profound relief and reassurance to the pilgrims, apart from being a measure of the administration's confidence in its ability to see the pilgrimage through against all odds. On test will be the effectiveness — in qualitative and quantitative terms — of the ‘beefed up security’ arrangement that is claimed to have been put in place.

The grisly Doda episode has exposed in its own way the strategic and logistical inadequacies of the anti-insurgency campaign in general, as much as it has proclaimed the insidious designs of the foreign-based militant outfits. Whether it is stopping infiltration of terrorists into or tackling militancy within Jammu and Kashmir, the onus lies primarily with the Central and State Governments. It would, of course, be quite logical and perfectly in order to seek the assurance of Pakistan in ending the menace (to the extent that it derives sustenance and support from across the border). But there is no way they can make the perceived non-cooperation of the neighbour an excuse for not discharging the responsibility they owe to the citizenry. In the course of the polemical exchanges between the two sides (in the context of the Agra summit), the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, declared, with a palpable sense of authority and vehemence, that India has the strength and the stamina to stop terrorism in Kashmir. All that needs to be done is to demonstrate it on the ground by initiating substantive measures that address, not just the policing aspects, but also, more critically, the concerns which are at the root of the pervasive sense of alienation of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

MAJOR MASSACRES IN DODA SINCE 1993

AUGUST 14, 1993: 17 minority community members killed on the Sarthal-Kishtwar road ^{SSK}

JANUARY 5, 1994: 16 Hindus brutally killed in Barshalla village ^{MT-9}

JANUARY 12, 1994: Seven Muslims killed in Bhaderwah tehsil

MAY 8, 1994: 17 Hindus massacred in Sumbar village in Ramban tehsil

JUNE 7-8, 1994: Eight Hindus killed in Kalmadi village ²⁷⁷

JULY 8, 1994: 11 Hindu Village Defence Committee members massacred at Dessa

JUNE 28, 1994: Nine Hindu members of a marriage party killed at Champnari

AUGUST 27, 1994: 20 Hindus killed in Shrawan and Thukral villages of Ramban tehsil

JULY 28, 1994: Five Hindu families (15 members) wiped out in Lehota near Thathri

AUGUST 2, 1994: 14 Hindus killed in Pogal. Eight VDC members killed in Dacchan

SEPTEMBER 24, 1994: Six Hindus killed in Patti Mohalla Doda

MAY 4, 1994: Seven Hindus abducted and killed in Kishtwar

JULY 25, 1994: 13 people, including six pilgrims, killed in a clash between security forces and militants at Sheshnag

10/9

Ivanov breaks protocol 22/7

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, JULY 21. The Russian Foreign Minister, Mr. Ivanov, has expressed gratitude to India's outgoing Ambassador to Moscow, Mr. Satinder Kumar Lambah, for his weighty contribution to Indo-Russian relations.

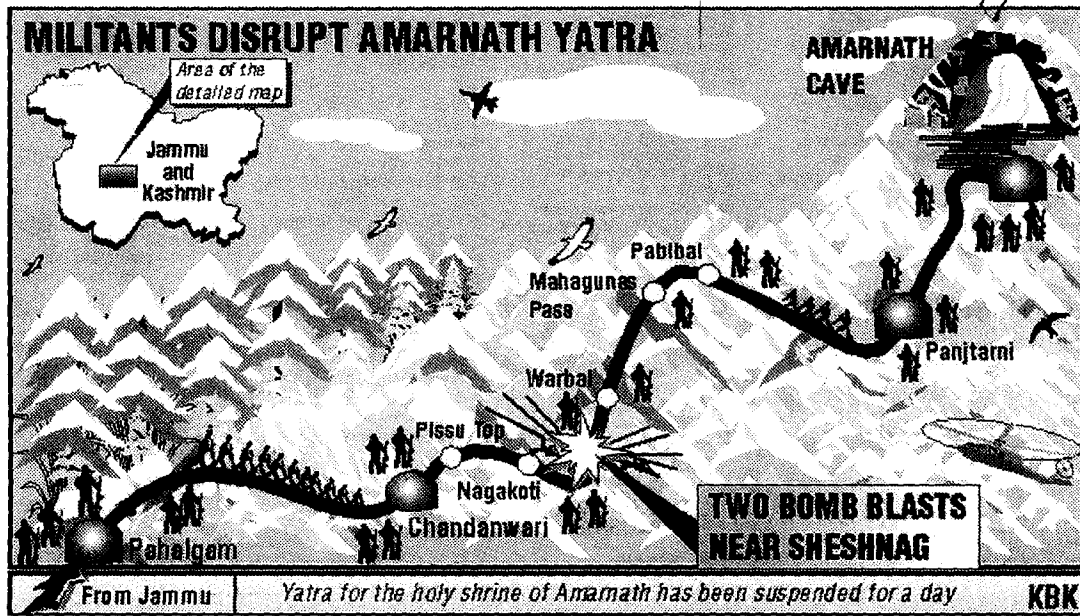
As a special gesture, Mr. Ivanov received a farewell call from the Indian Ambassador. Outgoing ambassadors in Russia are normally bid farewell by a deputy for-

eign minister. However, Mr. Ivanov broke the tradition to underline New Delhi's importance to Russia and to demonstrate his personal regard for Mr. Lambah, diplomatic sources said.

The sources quoted Mr. Ivanov as telling Mr. Lambah, who will be leaving Moscow later this month, that Indo-Russian relations had risen to new heights during his tenure, as marked by the bilateral Declaration on Strategic Partnership signed last year. The past

two-and-a-half years also saw a quantum jump in the political, military, economic and cultural ties between the two countries.

As of last year, India and Russia put bilateral summits and foreign ministers meetings on an annual basis. Political interaction had expanded to include formalised contacts between the security councils of the two countries, a joint working group on Afghanistan and a working group on global and regional stability.



Blasts, firing kill 13 near Amarnath

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, July 21. — Thirteen people, including six Amarnath pilgrims, were killed as suspected militants set off two improvised explosive devices and clashed with security forces at Sheshnag, 19 km from the shrine.

In the pre-dawn attack penetrating the four-tier security for the pilgrims, two police officers, four porters and a suspected militant were killed and 14, including eight pilgrims, injured.

Three of the six pilgrims have been identified as Asim Ghosh and Surojit Konar (from West Bengal) and Tuka Ram Kore (Maharashtra), a spokesman said.

Suspected militants triggered a powerful IED half a km from a police

camp at Sheshnag around 3 a.m. As the police camp in-charge, DSP Parveen Kumar Sharma, ASI Mohammad Safi Akbar and some pilgrims rushed to the blast site, another explosion took place followed by intense firing, resulting in the death of the two police officers and injury to six people.

Militants hiding in the area fired around 7 a.m. again while trying to escape, causing more casualties.

The bombs were triggered by two militants, who dressed as *sadhua* had infiltrated the security lines. Securitymen are still searching for one.

Though the yatra was suspended for a day today, it will be resumed early

tomorrow morning.

The BSF has sent reinforcements to Sheshnag. Helicopters will lift the injured to Pahalgam. The pilgrims have been stopped at base camps at Pahalgam, Nunwan and Chandanwadi. Armymen have cordoned the area and a massive search has begun.

The Governor, Mr Girish Chandra Saxena, also Shri Amarnath Shrine Board chairman, has rushed to the spot.

Central team: The Centre will send a two-member team to Srinagar and Sheshnag tomorrow for an on-spot assessment of the situation.

Mr LK Advani said the government would deal firmly with militant outfits operating from across the border.

He directed the minister of state for home, Mr ID Swami, and the special secretary in the ministry looking after J&K affairs, Mr AK Bhandari, to visit Srinagar and Sheshnag.

The team is expected to return to Delhi on Monday and submit a report to the home minister, officials said.

Abdullah condemns: Dr Farooq Abdullah today condemned the killings and said the act demonstrated the ruthlessness of those having no regard for human values and people of J&K.

More than 3,000 Amarnath-bound

■ Asim & Surojit will not return: page 7
■ More reports on page 10

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AMARNATH:

(Continued from page 1)

pilgrims had camped for the night at Sheshnag after crossing the Pissu Top at a height of 3,377 metres. Traditionally, the pilgrims take a dip in the Sheshnag lake and camp along its banks through the night. The pilgrims then resume trek early in the morning, aiming to cross the Hamagunas peak (4276m) and reach Panjtarni for darshan at the cave shrine early next morning.

This year, for the first time the base camp for the pilgrimage was shifted to Pahalgam in

THE STATESMAN

Little choice for Hurriyat after talks collapse

Rashid Ahmad
Srinagar, July 22

THE FAILURE of the Agra summit has left the Hurriyat with little room for manoeuvre.

The moderates in the Hurriyat had, of late, taken a position on Kashmir independent of Pakistan. The JKLF boycott of Pakistan High Commissioner Ashraf Jahangir Qazi's tea party and Abdul Gani Lone's pre-summit outburst in which he stopped just short of terming Pakistan a "*badbakht mullak*" (malignant country) betrayed the bottled anger against that country and its Government.

Earlier, there had been an aborted attempt to clear the amalgam of pro-Pakistan hard-

line leader Syed Ali Geelani, when, a few months back, Hurriyat had asked Jamaat-e-Islami to withdraw him and send some other representative.

The developments in the Hurriyat after Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee announced the ceasefire last November indicate that the moderates were vying for a bilateral settlement with New Delhi.

A Hurriyat leader was reported to have told executive council, the conference's apex decision-making body, "*Nahi azadi milay gee, na Pakistan, kuch doosra soochiye*" (neither we will get azadi nor Pakistan. Let us concentrate on something different).

Sources said that the Hurriyat was in constant touch with some

HURRIYAT LINKS ATTACK TO KASHMIR

THE HURRIYAT today linked Saturday's attack on Amarnath yatris with the "unresolved Kashmir issue".

"The need of the hour is to accept political realities and iron out realities and find out an ever-lasting and fair solution to the Kashmir issue as per political aspirations of Kashmiris," a Hurriyat spokesman said.

The incident is "regrettable and mysterious" and Hurriyat conference has always condemned killing of the innocent and described the incidents as "cowardly and anti-human".

"Till we don't think over it, the innocent people whosoever they are...Will continue to be the victims," he said.

PTI, Srinagar

top-level officers and ministers in New Delhi. It had even offered to visit Pakistan to motivate militant leaders on a "solution".

A section of Hurriyat leaders privately said Pakistan was a "meek pleader" of their case and was using Kashmiri people for its

own end of annexing four meadows, rivers and landscapes".

"But General Pervez Musharraf's hardline stance at Agra has disarmed them (Hurriyat leaders) absolutely," says Mushtaq Ahmad Rathir, a college teacher in Sopore. "They have been left without any agenda now."

What is being appreciated here, as Musharraf's bluff, is that during the entire "Agra saga" the General did not refer even casually to the UN resolution on Kashmir. Observers and senior political analysts feel that that the Pakistan President's obsession on a solution for Kashmir has won him many a heart of the Kashmiri people. "He looked without inhibitions and represented the will of all sec-

tions of Kashmiri people," says Maqbool Madni, a student.

"I doubt Hurriyat has been left with anything to say," said Tahir Mohiuddin, editor of prestigious Urdu weekly Chattan.

"My contention has always been that Hurriyat had no role either before the summit nor has it any in future role to play," said Hakim Manzoor, renowned poet and writer. "The ultimate decision has to be taken by India and Pakistan and Hurriyat is just to keep the local sentiment alive."

The message seems to have worked well with the Hurriyat leadership, too. They are busy in an assiduous exercise of showering praises on Musharraf to keep itself in tune with the common sentiment.

Parties back PM's firm stand on J&K

HT-9
20/7

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, July 19

PRIME MINISTER Atal Bihari Vajpayee today won support from the country's entire political leadership as he assured an all-party meeting that the Government would not make any concessions on Kashmir to Pakistan.

"Jammu and Kashmir is an issue linked to India's sovereignty and integrity," he told a gathering of 37 parliamentary party leaders, including leader of the Lok Sabha Opposition Sonia Gandhi and her Rajya Sabha counterpart and party colleague Manmohan Singh.

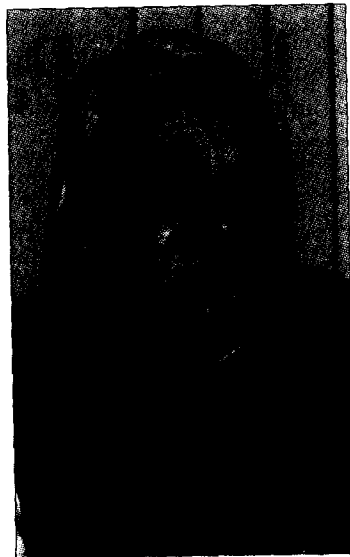
Vajpayee rejected outright Pakistan's attempts to paint Kashmir as the "core issue" of the talks.

He stressed that India has never accepted religion as the basis of the partition of the country.

"This position will be elaborated at the summit," and all discussions on Kashmir will be "within the framework of the Indian Constitution, the Shimla agreement and the Lahore Declaration," Vajpayee said. The assembled leaders agreed.

Briefing newsmen about the meeting, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pramod Mahajan said that leaders across the board were keen to see that the Agra summit was at least "process-oriented" if not "result-oriented" with a mechanism set in place to keep the Indo-Pak dialogue going.

The Prime Minister explained that India was keen on giving peace with Pakistan another chance. And though terrorism continues in Kashmir, Vajpayee felt that the border has been quiet after Kargil, and that the people of Pakistan too want



ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE

ed peace.

At the beginning of the meeting, at which the TDP was absent, the Prime Minister explained why his Government decided to give peace another chance in its relations with its western neighbour.

Admitting that relations with Pakistan had dipped virtually to a "nil" after the Kargil conflict, he maintained that there has been a slight change since then. Although terrorism continues to rear its head in Jammu and Kashmir, the border has more or less been quiet and the people in Pakistan want peace.

International opinion too is keen that the two countries find a solution to their problems, he said, even while making it "crystal clear" that the US had no direct or indirect role in the summit.

Further, Vajpayee pointed out, India has always tried to give peace a chance, despite the wars that it has fought.

Hurriyat blames 'rigidity', demands role in peace

Srinagar, July 17

KASHMIRI SEPARATIST groups today blamed 'rigidness' for breakdown of the Agra summit talks and underlined the need to involve the people of Kashmir in the talks. But they expressed the hope that the deadlock would not end the dialogue.

"We know the history of Indo-Pak dialogue and that is why we demand involvement of the people of Kashmir," Hurriyat Conference chairman Abdul Ghani Bhat said.

"We thought the situation required that leaders demonstrate a more mature sense of judgement and come to grips with the problems. But as the reports suggest, rigidness rather than realism produced what it did," he added.

Saying the summit should not be weighed in scales of success or failure, the Hurriyat leader said, "The end (of the summit) should make the beginning and the parties should adopt realistic approach to the problem."

"We should recognise realities on the ground and move forward in tune with the beat of peoples' hearts. Let us hope that the people around who behave unrealistically understand the situation in its proper perspective," Bhat said.

Senior Kashmiri separatist

NOT A FAILURE: FAROOQ

THE SUMMIT should not be termed a 'failure' as the dialogue process has begun and doors are open for future discussions, said Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah on Tuesday.

"We cannot say it is a failure as Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee has accepted an invitation to visit Islamabad. It is a 54-year-old issue and cannot be resolved in just four meetings," he said.

PTI

leader Shabir Ahmad Shah termed the breakdown of the summit as "unfortunate" and indirectly blamed New Delhi, saying India should have played a role of a big brother.

"Though there was no expectation of any miracle, the rigid attitude adopted by New Delhi was responsible for the failure of the summit," Shah, who heads Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP), alleged.

He appreciated the Pakistan President's stand that New Delhi should accept Kashmir as an 'issue', if not a 'dispute', and involvement of the people of Kashmir in the dialogue for a lasting solution to the issue.

Shah said Prime Minister Vaj-

payee had, in a communication to him through Government interlocutor on Kashmir K C Pant, accepted Kashmir as an issue.

"But what happened at the summit?" he asked. However, Shah said he was not a pessimist. The Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), one of the Hurriyat Conference constituents, also blamed Delhi for the failure.

"The failure of the summit talks is unfortunate not only for the people of Jammu and Kashmir but for India and Pakistan as well," JKLF acting chairman Bashir Ahmad Bhat said.

He said, "Had New Delhi been serious in resolving the Kashmir issue it should have extended the ceasefire and invited Pakistani leaders for the dialogue."

Demanding the involvement of Kashmiris in the talks, he said Delhi and Islamabad had been talking for the past 53 years "but the end result has seen more bitterness than resolving the issue."

J&K Congress president Mohammad Shafi Qureshi said, "It is very sad that the summit was inconclusive. There were a lot of hopes generated by both sides. Everybody was happy that dialogue was taking place and bitterness would end."

PTI

It's now or never, feel Kashmiris

Srinagar July 15

THE INDO-PAK summit has raised hopes of a new dawn over the trouble-torn Valley. The people of Kashmir harbour hopes of lasting peace as the leaders of the two nations meet in Agra.

A vast majority feel that it is a "now or never situation". From commoners to intellectuals, all seem optimistic and have pinned high hopes on the summit.

The mood seemed upbeat following Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's recent positive statements. He has reiterated that without a resolution to the Kashmir issue, no improvement would be possible in the bilateral relations.

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the architect of the peace move, too has accepted that Kashmir will be the major topic in the summit.

1677
"When the two meet, the relations are bound to improve and peace cannot be far away," said a cart-puller in Lal Chowk, Rafiq Ahmed.

"It is a golden opportunity for the two leaders and their countrymen to break the ice on the Kashmir issue. Urges and aspirations of the people of Kashmir are attached to the summit and Inshaallah it will be a success," university teacher, Mohammad Akbar, said.

"Like the rest of the Kashmiris, I too am optimistic about the summit," he said. Both the leaders know that once the Kashmir issue is settled, the subcontinent will wear a new look of peace, tranquility, development and prosperity.

Ghulam Mustafa, a motor mechanic, said: "I think something serious is cooking. They have something on their minds

otherwise what was the need of this rendezvous."

"Things have been already settled, only a final announcement remains to be made," Shafkat Wani, a doctor, said. "India is providing a red-carpet welcome to Musharraf, who is considered to be the mind behind Kargil. It means serious business will be held at Agra as India has forgotten the past and wants a new beginning in its relations with Pakistan."

"Let us all pray for the positive outcome," said Haji Mohammad Yousuf Mir, who spent 23 days at a refugee camp in Delhi during the Partition. "At that time it was easy for politicians to solve the Kashmir tangle but today let us pray for something positive."

"The polity of India and Pakistan is complex and it is very difficult to expect miracles but one expects something from the sum-

mit," said Abdul Majid Khan, a banker.

Security forces too feel the summit would lead to peace and they would be able to go back to their barracks. "We want an end to the violence so that we can move back," said a security officer leading a patrol party in Srinagar.

An Army officer said if the summit ends on a positive note, the condition of the borders will certainly improve. "Before cease-fire the guns used to boom frequently and our troops had to remain vigilant and ready for any sort of option. No doubt, our jawans are still keeping vigil, but the tension is much less."

"We have very high hopes on the summit and we pray to God that this kind of atmosphere that is prevailing at present in the camp may last long" said jawan Jaswant Singh.

PTI

We are satisfied: Gani Bhat

By Shujaat Bukhari

NEW DELHI JULY 14. At a meeting with the leaders of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) today, the Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, reiterated "his full moral, diplomatic and political support to Kashmiris in their just struggle".

Despite disapproval by the Government and a boycott by the ruling NDA, six APHC executive mem-

**President calls for peace; Advani raises terrorism issue: Page 8
Musharraf's wins some points, loses some: Page 9**

bers led by its chairman, Prof. Abdul Gani Bhat, made it to the Pakistan House at Tilak Marg here.

The 20-minute meeting took place prior to the reception in honour of the Pakistan President organised by the Pakistan High Commissioner, Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi.

While the Jamat-e-Islami leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, stressed on the need for a solution to Kashmir in accordance with the wishes of the people and U.N. resolutions, others — including Prof. Bhat, Mr.

15/7
Abdul Gani Lone and Mirwaiz Umer Farooq — adopted a soft line, stressing the need for peace in the region. Another executive member and JKLF chairman, Mr. Yaseen Malik, who is away in London, had announced a boycott of the meeting. Pakistan officials were trying to downplay the meeting, dismissing it as "routine". Later, the APHC chairman described the meeting as "good and positive". Gen. Musharraf "understands our point of view well... We are satisfied." Hurriyat leaders were hopeful that Gen. Musharraf would try hard to bring them into the dialogue on Kashmir at a later stage. "We told him that the inclusion of Kashmiris in the dialogue process alone can pave the way for a solution," the former chairman of the APHC, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, said. The Hurriyat did not want to derail the summit and wished it a success.

Pak. support.

The Pakistan Foreign Secretary, Mr. Inamul Haq, said the meeting between Gen. Musharraf and Hurriyat leaders was held in a cordial atmosphere, during which Gen. Musharraf reiterated his Government's full moral, diplomatic and political support to the "just struggle of Kashmiris". He said Pakistan would like to invite the Hurriyat to Pakistan, but much would depend on India's stand.

To tea with three-month timetable



When the six of us from the executive council of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference — chairman Abdul Gani Lone (Muslim Conference), Syed Ali Shah Geelani (Jamaat-e-Islami), Abdul Gani Lone (People's Conference), Maulana Abbas Ansari (Ittehadul Muallimeen), Sheikh Abdul Aziz (People's League) and myself (Awami Action Committee) (the JKLF has decided not to partici-

● Mirwajz Umar Farooq is a member of the Hurriyat executive council

GA 19/7
pate in the meeting) — go to meet Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf over tea tomorrow, it will be with the hope that he will carry with him our expectations when he meets Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee hours later.

Our immediate concern, we will tell the General, is that India and Pakistan should chalk out a time-bound strategy — we would look at a period of about three months from the summit — and evolve a mechanism to involve us. Our chairman, Abdul Gani Lone, will speak on our behalf. The others present will, if needed, emphasise the point.

Today, General Musharraf has said he is willing to extend his stay in India, if required, to discuss Kashmir. If he gets more time to talk to people here, that is a

very good sign and we welcome it.

As Kashmiris we believe that if India and Pakistan were to come close to each other, it is in our interest. We will support any initiative that brightens the prospect of closer ties. But Kashmir is the bone of contention, it is the core issue.

Although we are not a participant in the talks, we would like to put forward our point of view. Without the involvement of Kashmiris, Kashmir cannot be settled. We are the primary party and both India and Pakistan have to involve us.

Kashmir is not a territorial dispute. It is a political issue concerning 13 million people. This fundamental thing has to be kept in mind — that it is an issue concerning people and not a line on a map. This is also why the people of

Kashmir have to be taken into confidence. And the Hurriyat is their representative.

Bilateralism has failed over Kashmir. We have seen Tashkent, Simla and Lahore. All these agreements have failed because the people of Kashmir were never a part of them. That is the reason we call for a tripartite dialogue.

It is unfortunate that the NDA partners have decided to stay away from the tea meeting. It is sad that they are ignoring the realities. The Hurriyat Conference is a reality in Kashmir. We were looking forward to an interaction with the Indian leadership.

We have invested so much into the movement. More than 60,000 people have lost their lives. All of it for a cause. It is important that people on the ground feel that the summit has made a difference.

THE TELESCOPE

Risk-cut centres could get the nod

Kashmir may get joint panel

SRINJOY CHOWDHURY &
NILOVA ROY CHAUDHURY
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, July 12. — A bit of Kashmir for lots of confidence. The Indian side thinks General Pervez Musharraf may settle for any small movement forward on what he calls the "core" issue: Kashmir. In return, he may respond positively to the confidence-building measures (CBMs) to be announced by India.

Among the important CBMs India is likely to offer at the summit is a proposal for Joint Risk Reduction Centre — one each in India and Pakistan, or just one for both countries — so that a genuine mistake by one is not misinterpreted as an act of aggression by the other.

This and other CBMs from India are likely to get quicker responses, said officials, if India gives a commitment to continue talks on Kashmir through a joint working group or some similar mechanism. A JWG, officials said, would allow Gen. Musharraf the leeway he requires in domestic politics to respond positively to India's other suggestions.

India has already offered relaxation on visas, entry points, tariffs as well as more educational/cultural exchanges.

As for the risk reductions centre (RRC) proposal, officials said its need arises because the two countries can pick up through their surveillance and electronic warfare systems the preparations of a missile launch. The missile may have a dummy warhead or a conventional one and the presence of such a centre can ensure that there is no panic by the other country and subsequently, a nuclear response.

India has declared it won't attack Pakistan's nuclear installations. Pakistan too has ag-

reed to that. India has spoken of a "no-first use" which, it hopes, Pakistan will agree to. The RRCs will allow talks on testing and experimentation of missiles. There has always been a risk of accidental nuclear war and the two nations have had their share of false alarms. A false alarm is usually called a "broken arrow."

There is also hope that the two countries will agree on measures to ensure there is no increase in tension between the militaries of the two countries. There is some possibility of discussions on Sir Creek, especially of assessing the situation from the Arabian Sea side.

According to the present arrangement, the director-general of military operations speaks to his Pakistani counterpart every Tuesday. But there is a proposal for regular day-long meetings between the two DGMOs, perhaps once a year or every six months. There could also be meetings between the corps commanders and perhaps, divisional commanders between the two countries.

There is a strong possibility of talks about a hotline to link the commanders of the 14, 15 and 16 Corps (all in J&K) with their Pakistani counterparts. Regular meetings between border personnel is also a possibility as is some arrangement about release of soldiers who cross over by mistake.

Only after strong guarantees by Pakistan will India thin down its troop-levels in J&K, it was learnt. The troop-levels are the same along the LoC except in the Dras-Kargil-Batalik region where both sides have positioned troops along the border. The other possibility of a cut is only if infiltration is checked by Pakistan and then, India would not need troops for anti-militancy operations.

THE STATESMAN

JKLF strikes a different note

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, JULY 11. The All-Party Hurriyat Conference suffered a setback today with one of its constituents — Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) — deciding to boycott the tea party at the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi in honour of Gen. Pervez Musharraf on Saturday. All the seven executive members of the APHC have been invited to the party.

Confirming the decision, the JKLF senior vice-president, Mr. Javed Ahmed Mir, said, "the stand of the JKLF as a propounder of the cause of people of Jammu and Kashmir is very clear and there can be no compromise on that." The APHC, as the basic party to the dispute, should have been ready to participate in a significant meeting and a meeting over a cup of tea was of no importance. Criticising the Hurriyat's defence of the invitation for the party, Mr. Javed Mir said, "when the Government of India invited us for talks, we (Hurriyat) rejected it saying unless Pakistan was not involved we cannot enter into a dialogue. But now when Pakistan has accepted the invitation from the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, Kashmiris, the basic party to the dispute, have been ignored." "We have to discuss the Kashmir problem, not sip tea," he said. The Hurriyat leaders, he said, had become very vocal in

support of the invitation which was nothing but "rubbing salt in the wounds of bruised Kashmiris".

Mr. Javed Mir recalled that before the signing of the Lahore declaration, the Hurriyat had resisted the move saying there was no participation of Kashmiris in the process. "This time they (Hurriyat leaders) are very eager to have tea with the dignitaries. We are unable to understand it." Asked whether it would lead to further differences within the Hurriyat, he said, "the unity is not more important than the sacrifices of 70,000 Kashmiris."

Meanwhile, the JKLF chairman, Mr. Yaseen Malik, told *The Hindu* over phone from London that the APHC leaders' decision to attend the tea party would be a clear violation of the Hurriyat constitution. "The Hurriyat constitution not only has complete Independence as an option but is also committed to tripartite talks on Kashmir." He would return to India on July 20 to take up the matter.

In another development, the Awami Action Committee of Mirwaiz Umer Farooq strongly denied that the Hurriyat Conference had suffered a split. The AAC general secretary, Mr. G. M. Bhat, said a report in this regard was baseless. There was no truth in the report that there was a division in the Hurriyat.

Hurriyat split over tea party

Rashid Ahmad
Srinagar, July 10

PAKISTAN HIGH Commissioner Jehangir Qazi's invitation to the All-Party Hurriyat Conference leadership to the reception of President General Musharraf could well snowball into a major crisis within the umbrella organisation.

While Hurriyat chairman Prof Abdul Ghani Bhat is keen to accept the invitation, Mohammad Yasin Malik, Abdul Ghani Lone and Mirwaiz Umer Farooq have expressed serious reservations.

The JKLF, a Hurriyat partner, has officially confirmed that it would boycott the reception. A statement issued by the party described the invitation as an "affront to the people of Kash-

mir". It said the tea party was no remedy to the "wounds of the Kashmiri people".

The JKLF expressed shock over non-inclusion of Kashmiri representatives in the Agra summit and said India and Pakistan have always been keeping the Kashmiri people out of any meaningful dialogue. Sources close to the Hurriyat said JKLF chief Yasin Malik, who is in London, spoke to Prof Ghani over the phone on Monday and urged him not to accept the invitation.

Yasin is reported to have threatened to call a strike in the Valley on the eve of Musharraf's visit. The pro-independence leader is miffed with the Pakistani President for going into a bilateral dialogue with India, ignoring the Hurriyat.

However, Abdul Ghani Lone,

who is considered close to the JKLF leadership, has reportedly prevailed upon them to give up the strike plan. Lone, who himself is against attending the Pakistan High Commissioner's reception, reached here from Delhi today to have further discussions with Hurriyat leaders on the issue. Sources said that Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, who is currently in Delhi too, is unlikely to attend the reception.

But Ghani is determined to meet Musharraf. So are Shaikh Abdul Aziz of the Peoples' League, Jamaat-e-Islami leader and former Hurriyat chairman Syed Ali Geelani is indisposed. Sources said if Geelani recovers by Saturday, he, too, would attend Musharraf's reception.

More reports on Page 9

Govt in a spot over Pak tea invitation to Hurriyat

APMC LEADER FOR ONE-TO-ONE MEET WITH PUNJZ

THE HURRIYAT on Monday said it expected to have a "one-to-one meeting" with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf during a reception hosted by the Pakistani High Commission.

"We have written to Musharraf about a one-to-one meeting during his visit to the country for talks with Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and we are hopeful," Hurriyat chairman Abdul Gani Bhat said after receiving an invitation from Pakistani High Commissioner Ashraf Jehangir Qazi.

Bhat, who along with former Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, met Qazi today, said the modalities of Hurriyat's participation in the reception are still being worked on.

Asked if the Hurriyat had conveyed to Qazi its willingness to meet Musharraf separately during the reception, Bhat said: "There is no need to talk when our letter to him makes it amply clear."

Bhat said the Centre should not raise a "hue and cry" over this. "We received the invitations in response to our communication to him. As far as Indian response to our letter (for a meeting with Vajpayee), we are still waiting."

PTI, New Delhi

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, July 9

1097
THE HURRIYAT today confirmed receiving an invitation from the Pakistan High Commission to a "high tea" on July 14 in honour of visiting Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf even as the Government seems to be caught in a bind.

Former Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umer Farooq said: "We have received an invitation from Pakistani High Commissioner Ashraf Jehangir Qazi for high tea on July 14."

The invitation has been extended to all seven executive members of the 23-party conglomerate.

External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh today conceded to

the Opposition that the Government cannot call for a boycott of a function hosted in honour of a dignitary even if the invitation to the Hurriyat was a thorny issue.

The Opposition leaders, who attended an all-party meeting chaired by the Prime Minister, sought the Government's "guidance" in responding to the invitation.

Singh told the Opposition that the Government could not ask them either to attend or boycott the tea party as it is in honour of Musharraf. On its part, New

Delhi has conveyed to Islamabad its reservations about inviting the Hurriyat to tea with Musharraf.

Explaining the Government's dilemma, Parliamentary Affairs

Minister Pramod Mahajan said India's response to the tea would have to be decided after taking into account all factors. "If it is a function to honour a dignitary, who is here at our invitation, we cannot possibly say it should be boycotted by our leaders and officials."

India has conveyed to Pakistan through Home Minister LK Advani's statement and the Indian Foreign Secretary's communication to his counterpart that the Hurriyat should not be invited as it does not have locus standi nor legitimacy.

Advani yesterday said India expected its guests to respect its views and not hurt its sentiments.

Mahajan said Singh told the Opposition that India hopes

"wisdom would dawn (on Islamabad) to remember that Gen Musharraf's visit to India is to meet Prime Minister Vajpayee and that focus should not be lost".

"The Hurriyat should not be focus of the summit," Singh told the Opposition.

"There is an elected Government in Jammu and Kashmir. All Hurriyat leaders are Indian nationals. If the Hurriyat leaders had contested the elections held in the State and won, they would have had legitimacy to speak on behalf of the people," he said.

Responding to queries from leaders about the official reception for Gen Musharraf, Singh said: "We will go by the global protocol for any visiting head of the State."

THE HINDUSTANIAN

CLICHE-RIDDEN APPROACHES WILL NOT WORK, SAYS PM

Kashmir not the only subject: Opposition, Govt. agree

By Neena Vyas

NEW DELHI, JULY 9. Political parties across the board have put their weight behind the Government stand that while India will not shy away from discussing the Kashmir issue, it cannot be the only subject of the coming talks between the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

The unanimous view was that issues related to trade and commerce, easier communication and travel between the peoples of the two countries, the question of release of prisoners-of-war (PoWs) and, above all, the problem of cross-border terrorism and the nuclear question must be addressed at the summit.

What emerged at the all-party meeting called by Mr. Vajpayee here today was a consensus that the talks must be held within the framework of the Constitution, the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration in the spirit of improving relations with a neighbouring country through bilateral discussions.

Mr. Vajpayee emphasised that despite the "low-point" of "virtually non-existent" bilateral relations after the Kargil war, he had invited Gen. Musharraf "in keeping with our consistent commitment" to "a positive and constructive relationship of peace and friendship with our neighbour". He noted that after the 1965 and 1971 wars also attempts were made to establish peace.

At Agra, India would not shy away from discussing the Kashmir issue, but "narrow and cliché-ridden approaches have not worked in the past, nor has violence", Mr. Vajpayee noted, clearly but indirectly referring to Gen. Musharraf's insistence on Kashmir as the "core issue". The two countries will have "to seek another way" to take forward the bilateral relationship to address "the core concerns of our people in their struggle against poverty".



The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, with the Congress president, Ms. Sonia Gandhi, the Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, and the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani (extreme right), at the all-party meeting on the Indo-Pak. summit in New Delhi on Monday. — Photo: V. Sudershan

The Prime Minister said the Kashmir issue was "tied to the question of India's territorial integrity" and "it cannot be resolved on the basis of religion for India had never accepted Partition on that basis".

Foreign policy

The tone of the meeting was perhaps set when Mr. Vajpayee pointed out that on foreign policy issues the country was one, and when the Leader of the Opposition, Ms. Sonia Gandhi, had responded to issues during her recent visit to the United States she spoke for the country, not just the Congress. At the meeting, Ms. Gandhi stressed that the summit was not a partisan issue. The Congress had always favoured a dialogue with Pakistan to resolve all outstanding issues. Pointing out that the talks should not be confined to the Kashmir issue, she wished Mr. Vajpayee all success.

The three-hour meeting, attended by 37 party leaders, including three Ministers (Mr. L.K. Advani, Mr. Jaswant Singh and Mr. Pramod Mahajan), addressed

the concerns of political parties over the summit. To questions, Mr. Jaswant Singh, External Affairs Minister, categorically stated that it was a "bilateral summit" and there was "no room for a third party". He emphasised "the U.S. had no role to play in Agra, either directly or indirectly".

Mr. Singh told the Opposition leaders that the Government would raise the question of "confidence-building relations in relation to the nuclear issue". The proposal of a "no-war pact" made by Pakistan "cannot be meaningful unless it covers cross-border terrorism, the proxy war in Kashmir and the activities of terrorists". If Pakistan were to demand the reduction of armed security forces in Jammu and Kashmir, India's response would be that "it was the sovereign function of a government" to decide where to send its security forces. On the return of PoWs, a question raised by some party leaders, he said the Lahore Declaration had started a process which the Government would like to "revive" at Agra.

A word of caution came from the Rashtriya Janata Dal which warned against "too much euphoria", reminding that the Kargil conflict had followed the Lahore Declaration. The Government must not lower its guard on the borders. The CPI(M) wanted the nuclear issue to be taken up seriously to "avert any nuclear confrontation".

Briefing reporters later, Mr. Mahajan, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, said the "national consensus" evolved at the meeting had no doubt strengthened the hands of the Prime Minister, who would now go to the summit backed by the good wishes of all parties. Mr. Vajpayee noted that the meeting had once again demonstrated the "strong national consensus" on foreign policy issues.

While no one was sure of its success, the general view was that it was a good beginning. They hoped it would be result-oriented, but at least it should help set up a mechanism to take the dialogue further.

More reports on Pages 11, 12

THURSDAY, JUNE 7, 2001

OVERTAKEN BY EVENTS

110-12

THE VISIT OF the Government of India designated 'negotiator', Mr. K. C. Pant, to Jammu and Kashmir last week has, predictably, proved to be a diffused exercise that has been overtaken by events. True to the mandate that ordained a dialogue with people drawn from "all walks of life", he has indeed interacted with practically everyone and every group which had cared to meet him and had something to say on the hows and wherefores of "restoring peace". At best, the week-long exploratory voyage must have served as a 'window of opportunity' for Mr. Pant himself to get an insight into the perceptions and aspirations of the various sections of the population in different regions. However, much of what he had heard during his interaction with mainstream political parties, civic bodies, pressure groups and outfits representing religious or regional interests is by no means new or profound. For instance, the suggestion for a trifurcation of the State and the sectarian demand for Ladakh being carved out as a Union Territory have been floating around for a long time now. Nor is it a revelation that the State in general and some regions in particular are crying for economic development. It is also common knowledge that this crass negligence of basic developmental needs and the resultant pervasive joblessness contributed not a little to the alienation of the people and, by extension, to the growth of militancy in the State. Given this context, yet another fact-finding exercise of the type Mr. Pant carried out does appear redundant.

As for the ticklish and more problematic issue of engaging the separatist groups, Mr. Pant's 'Mission Kashmir' could not make any headway, for obvious reasons. If the very format and conceptualisation of the so-called dialogue initiative suffered from serious flaws (notably, blurred perspective), the Vajpayee regime's abrupt change of tack — as reflected in the termination of the six-month-old unilateral ceasefire and in the Prime Minister's snap decision to invite Pa-

kistan's Chief Executive for talks — sent confusing signals about the Centre's strategy. The impending Vajpayee-Musharraf summit inevitably shifted the focus away from the internal dialogue track pursued by Mr. Pant — even if the latter was not rendered totally irrelevant — while the separatist outfits that have been rooting for a direct involvement of Pakistan in any effort at unravelling the Kashmir imbroglio became much more wary of doing business with the official interlocutor; this is quite understandable. The only exception was Mr. Shabir Shah, leader of the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party, and even he insisted on terming his meeting with Mr. Pant 'informal'. If Mr. Vajpayee's 'summit' initiative made a positive impact on the likes of Mr. Shabir Shah and Mr. G.M. Shah (Awami National Conference), quite a few statements by some high ranking colleagues of the Prime Minister striking a tough posture had the effect of putting them off completely and introducing a jarring note in their interaction with Mr. Pant, much to the latter's embarrassment.

For its part, the All Party Hurriyat Conference — the separatist umbrella outfit that is sharply divided between the pro-independence and pro-Pakistan factions — found itself caught in a cleft stick, so to say, in the wake of the summit call which it perceived as the Vajpayee regime's counter to its persistent demand for a visit to Pakistan to work for 'peace'. In fact, the Centre's recent strategic moves on the Kashmir front lend themselves to a strong suspicion of the Hurriyat factor having figured as an important determinant. After his visit, Mr. Pant too has asserted that the ground situation in the State did "not at all" reflect the Hurriyat's claim to the "sole representative" status. Maybe, its claim is exaggerated, and the role of elected representatives is not to be minimised in a democratic polity, but the Hurriyat does represent a segment of opinion that cannot be ignored.

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THE HINDU

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MUSHARRAF WRITES TO ABDUL GHANI BHAT

'Keen on meeting Hurriyat'

By Shujaat Bukhari

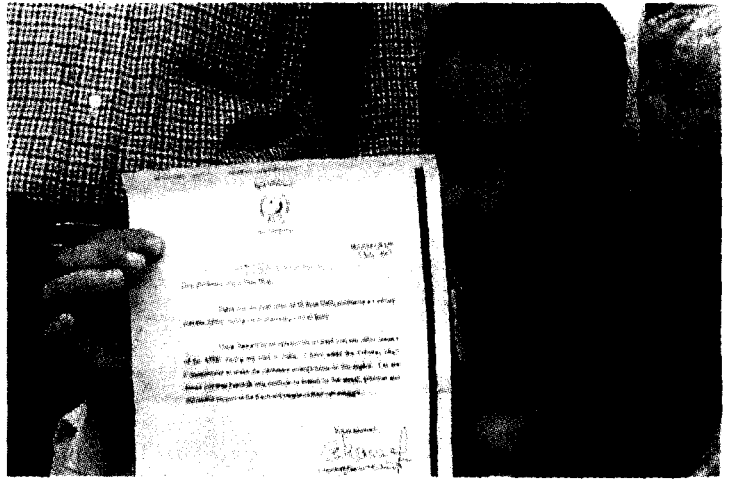
SRINAGAR, JULY 5. The Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has written to the All-Party Hurriyat Conference chairman, Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat, expressing a desire to meet the APHC leaders during his coming visit to India. The Hurriyat also hopes for a similar response from New Delhi.

Speaking to mediapersons here on Thursday, Prof. Bhat said Gen. Musharraf had acknowledged his letter seeking a meeting before or after the summit. "I look forward to an opportunity to meet you and other leaders of the APHC during my visit to India. I have asked the Pakistan High Commissioner to make the necessary arrangements in this regard," said the letter from Gen. Musharraf.

He also reiterated full moral and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people in their just struggle.

Prof. Bhat said, "we wrote to the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of India on June 22 and proposed a meeting outside summit either before or after. These were released to the press and we waited for a while for replies from both sides. This created a bit confusion and many stories were circulated dismissing the APHC as irrelevant." Brushing aside the criticism, Prof. Bhat said, "we never took it to our hearts that we have been marginalised. We knew the whole process had to proceed smoothly forward and it did."

Asked whether the Government of India would allow the APHC



Mr. Abdul Ghani Bhat, Chairman of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference, shows a letter from the Pakistan President, Gen. Musharraf, to journalists in Srinagar on Thursday. — AP

Musharraf's itinerary in India

JULY 14: Arrival in New Delhi at 8.30 a.m.; Ceremonial welcome at the Rashtrapati Bhavan at 9.00 a.m., followed by floral tributes at Rajghat and official engagements. A meeting also with the Leader of the Opposition, Ms. Sonia Gandhi.; Lunch with the Prime Minister, Mr. Vajpayee, at 1 p.m.; Visit Neharwali Haveli, the ancestral house



where he was born, followed by prayers at the Dargah of Nizamuddin.; In the evening, high tea at the Pakistan High Commission.; Attend a banquet hosted by the President at 8 p.m.

JULY 15: Leaving for Agra at 8.30 a.m and drive down to Amar Vilas Hotel for stay.; At 11.30 a.m., a drive to Jaypee Palace hotel for a lengthy session with Mr. Vajpayee.; After the summit, visit to the Taj Mahal, attending a cultural programme and dinner hosted by the Governor of Uttar Pradesh.

JULY 16: Breakfast with intellectuals, followed by another round of talks with Mr. Vajpayee and address either a joint press conference with the Prime Minister or one on his own.; Scheduled to leave for Jaipur at 2 p.m. on his way to Ajmer Sharif, return to Jaipur from where he would leave for home.

leaders to meet Gen. Musharraf as also about the meeting they had sought with the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, he said, "let us hope for the best," adding "I do not think the Prime Minister will block the passage to sanity." On writing identical letters to Mr. Vajpayee and Gen. Musharraf, he said, "we have reached a stage where we have to take measured steps and not speak words which can vitiate the political climate."

Earlier, the APHC executive met for over three hours and discussed the letter received by Prof. Bhat last evening. Besides Prof. Bhat, Moulvi Abbas Ansari (Ittehadul Muslimeen), Sheikh Abdul Aziz (People's League), Mr. Bashir Ahmed Butt (JKLF), Mr. G. M. Bhat (Awami Action Committee), Mr. Ghulam Ahmed Gulzar (People's Conference) and Sheikh Ali Mohammad (Jammat-e-Islami) attended. Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone,

Mr. Ali Shah Geelani, Mr. Yaseen Malik and Mirwaiz Umer Farooq are out of Kashmir.

Wedding invitation

In another development, the senior Hurriyat leader and Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front vice-chairman, Mr. Javed Ahmed Mir, has invited Mr. Vajpayee and Gen. Musharraf for his wedding reception here on July 23. Expressing the hope that his invitation would be accepted, Mr. Mir said, "it is another opportunity for them to discuss Kashmir with an open mind and that too on the land which is in trouble."

In an attempt to make it an event where people from across the border can meet, Mr. Mir has invited leaders from Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir as well as several diplomats and journalists from New Delhi.

Musharraf writes to Hurriyat leader, calls for meeting

By Seema Guha
The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: Pakistan President Gen Pervez Musharraf has written to Hurriyat chairman Abdul Gani Bhat saying that he wants to meet the Kashmiri leader during his stay in India. New Delhi had expressly asked the Pakistani leader not to do so.

Gen Musharraf's letter was released on Thursday by Mr Bhat.

"I am looking forward to an opportunity to meet you and other leaders of the All-Party Hurriyat

Conference (APHC) during my visit to India. I have asked the Pakistan high commissioner to make the necessary arrangements in this regard. Let me assure you that Pakistan will continue to extend its full moral, political and diplomatic support to the Kashmiri people in their struggle."

The letter, dated July 2, was incidentally signed General and not

President Musharraf. Ever since Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee invited the Pakistani leader for talks, the President had said he hoped to meet the Hurriyat delegation while in this country.

India's reaction to President Musharraf's letter was predictable. "We have always maintained that this is a non-issue," spokesperson of the external affairs ministry Nirupama Rao told reporters at



her briefing. She said Pakistan was aware of India's position on the issue. New Delhi believes that the

Hurriyat has no role to play in bilateral matters. But despite Gen Musharraf's soothing letter to Mr Bhat, expressing support for the Kashmiri cause and his eagerness to meet Hurriyat leaders, Pakistan high commissioner Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, during his meetings with Indian officials, has not raised this issue.

► See Edit: Islamabad Signals, Page 12

Army plans special force for shrine siege

Arun Joshi
Srinagar, June 3

THE ARMY is now planning to raise a special commando force of its own on the pattern of the National Security Guards and train it in dealing with operations involving flushing out of militants from mosques and shrines in Jammu and Kashmir.

Ironically, the dangers of the recurrence of such explosive situations have arisen because of the decision of security forces to withdraw the cordon around a village mosque in south Kashmir early this week. The Army after exhausting the option of persuading the foreign militants through locals to vacate the mosque, decided to withdraw the cordon.

The local Army commanders, after having secured the green signal from their higher-ups had opted for withdrawing the cordon because storming the mosque could have resulted in high casualties and damage to the place of worship. The withdrawal, however, was attributed to the "local law and order problem that could be dealt locally."

Fears have since been voiced that militants could occupy the mosques again and inflict damage. To counter that situation, suggestions have been mooted that either a unit of the NSG should be stationed in Kashmir or the Army should raise an elite unit.

Sources said the Army is amenable to the second suggestion and measures are already under way in this regard. "Now there are dangers of a repeat of the Hazratbal and Charar-e-Sharief incidents and we will have to be prepared for that kind of emergency," said a BSF official.

Those who decided to give safe passage to militants had good intentions in intervening in the matter. They did not want any rise in tension or street demonstrations when the peace initiative was on. Chief negotiator K C Pant has been talking to people and leaders of various hues to elicit their views on the situation. Any injudicious step could have worsened the situation for the present and had its effect on the talks to come.

But, however good intentioned the decision, long-term dangers have perhaps been ignored. The State Government has not taken into account, how in 1996, the security forces were allowed to flush out militants when they attempted to re-enter the Hazratbal shrine, a contrast to the safe passage that was given to militants at the same shrine in October-November 1993.

The disastrous result of the safe passage in 1993 was visible in 1995 when militants occupied the Charar shrine and reduced the shrine to ashes before they left the town.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

JUNE 3, 1996

Hizbul sets terms for peace in J&K

Srinagar, June 3

THE HIZBUL Mujahideen has said it will halt all its militant operations in Jammu and Kashmir if India and Pakistan adopt a "realistic approach" to solve the Kashmir issue.

"Our activities will lessen proportionally to both the countries giving up their rigid stand to solve the Kashmir problem in a realistic approach," Hizbul chief commander Abdul Majid Dar told PTI in an exclusive interview.

By the same realistic yardstick, the 46-year-old Dar admitted that a solution could not emerge from just one meeting between Prime Minister Vajpayee and Gen Pervez Musharraf.

"We know there cannot be miracles overnight. Our judgement criteria will be the joint statement issued after the meeting between the two leaders. If we feel both are agreeing to solve the problem and in principle agree that this is a dispute and want to solve it according to the wishes of the people, we will react accordingly," Dar said.

Asked why the Hizbul had stepped up its activities even after the Prime Minister had invited Gen. Musharraf for talks, Dar said, "The initiative of Vajpayee was abrupt and we never knew he will take such a stand."

About K C Pant's recent Kashmir visit as the Government's interlocutor, Dar said "It is also a confused move. Last year we announced ceasefire. Had the Government announced that the Hurriyat conference and Hizbul Mujahideen were invited for talks and simultaneously engaged in a dialogue with Pakistan, probably a solution would have emerged by now."

"Even if the Government had announced similar measures during the Ramzan ceasefire, it could have helped in confidence building in the State," Dar added.

"Such uncoordinated efforts are likely to bear no fruit." "We welcome the Vajpayee-Musharraf meeting. Though it is late, it is a positive step. If both countries move away from their beaten tracks, we will be most happy and we will co-operate," he said.

PTI

Crowding out, courtesy APHC

By Sajad Gani Lone

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THE SIMULTANEOUS announcement of the withdrawal of the ceasefire and the invitation to General Musharraf from Mr. Vajpayee has established an unequivocal relationship between the Kashmir issue and Pakistan. This amounts to an implicit admission by India that Pakistan has a role to play in the establishment of peace in Kashmir as well as the resolution of the problem. The fortitude of the Kashmiris played a decisive role in securing the elusive invitation for Pakistan. However, *ad interim* the message for the Kashmiris is *de trop*. Their fate will be discussed *in absentia*.

New Delhi has had various mechanism at its disposal for the resolution of the Kashmir issue. It could look for an internal solution involving the Kashmiri leadership, or an external solution involving Pakistan. A more realistic solution could have been a mix of both with a balanced trade-off between the two. The Indian perception in search of a solution has come a full circle. Pre-invitation efforts to seek peace in Kashmir were overtly biased in favour of an internal solution. The APHC was the focus of attention. Involvement of Pakistan at a later stage was subject to fulfillment of certain conditions. An end to crossborder terrorism was a prominent pre-condition. Post-invitation, the focus is on Pakistan. The APHC has no role in the new scenario. The variables are the same. The intensity of militant activity has shown no signs of abating. Yet, there is a complete u-turn in New Delhi's policy. The shift may have been dictated by exigencies at home or external considerations, and left New Delhi with little room for manoeuvring. Whatever little manoeuvrability New Delhi may have had, it has used to elbow out the Kashmiri leadership, with Pakistan quietly acquiescing.

The absence of any strand of Kashmiri representation at the negotiating table needs to be analysed. The main topic under discussion is supposed to be Kashmir, the brunt of military action from either side is being faced by the Kashmiris and, yet, they have no representation. India and Pakistan view the issue as a territorial dispute and will at the most discuss Kashmir (the land), but who will discuss Kashmir (the people)? The Kashmiri leadership has been crowded out from the talks.

India and Pakistan in pursuit of their own interests have aided and abetted the crowding-out process. The Kashmiri leadership has at times been a mute spectator and at times intentionally aided this process.

The role of India in excluding the Kashmiri leadership from talks is very explicit, whereas Pakistan has played an implicit role. India has managed to portray the Kashmiri leadership as a proxy of Pakistan, with no independent decision-making capabilities. The frequent visits of the Kashmiri leadership to the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi and the servile pandering to telephone calls from Islama-

der the garb of framing the modalities of the ceasefire to allow the differences among the Kashmiris to grow. An enervated, maliciously isolated Majid Dar quietly withdrew in his shell. Pakistan was never happy with the ceasefire. It worked cleverly behind the scenes through Syed Salahuddin, and saw to it that the ceasefire was called off. India earned its share of brownie points, Pakistan escaped unscathed and the Kashmiris got the flak.

If the APHC faltered at the first ceasefire call, it did not do any better at the second ceasefire call. The APHC was caught in a muddle and waffled around. It was tardy in its response and very grudgingly gave a

ated a miasma by cleverly making an unofficial leak, indicating that a particular member of the APHC would not be given travel documents. An attempt was made to lionise this particular member, whose rabble-rousing demagoguery had invariably gone against the interests of the Kashmiris. The APHC ignored the importance of the visit and instead joined issue with India over the composition of the delegation. In the melee of claims and counter claims, the visit could not take place.

In the run up to the summit, another piece of theatre involving the Kashmiris is being enacted. General Musharraf in a recent press conference expressed his resolve to consult Kashmiris, before going to India. This was in stark contrast to the earlier assertions wherein the APHC was almost synonymous with the Kashmiris. The definition of Kashmiris has been broadened for the purpose of the theatre. The General did invite Kashmiris. The Pakistan unit of the APHC, and some other Kashmiris around the globe have been invited to confer with the General. And what does the APHC 'Srinagar' have to say about it. Mum is the word. The same APHC indulged in blustery and taunted, mocked and jeered at Mr. K. C. Pant for collecting an unrepresentative crowd. The crowd collected by Mr. Pant was at least present in Kashmir.

The APHC has to rethink its priorities. It has to make up its mind, whether it is pro-India, pro-Pakistan, anti-India or pro-Kashmir. It has to recognise that Pakistan has international compulsions and its own interests which unfortunately do not coincide with the interests of the Kashmiris. A tiny minority may subscribe to Pakistani advocacy on Kashmir, but an overwhelming majority of Kashmiris would want the Kashmiris pleading their own case. There is a lurking danger, that the two powers might draw up the contours of a solution, and the Kashmiris may be saddled with a Hobson's Choice. It is too early to call Pakistan an adversary but clash of interest does not fit Pakistan in the category of a friend either.

(The writer is the son of Abdul Gani Lone, Chairman of the J&K People's Conference, and son-in-law of the JKLFL leader, Amanullah Khan).

The actions of the APHC leaders have conjured up a stereotyped image of the Kashmiri leadership, dependent on Pakistan.

bad have only helped India in this. Pakistan blatantly makes the Kashmiri leadership dance to its tune, thereby lending credibility to the impression created by India. The Kashmiri leadership, especially the APHC, has augmented the Indian portrayal by its actions. These actions have conjured up a stereotyped image of the Kashmiri leadership, dependent on Pakistan for every move.

The quixotic behaviour instrumental in the banishment of the APHC from the talks finds its chronological origins in the unilateral ceasefire announced by the Hizbul Mujahideen commander, Abdul Majid Dar. It was a unique opportunity to portray a more humane face, and to convey the message that Kashmiris do understand the language of peace, if an honourable settlement is made. The ceasefire was announced from Srinagar for a period of one month. It was called off after 15 days by a fellow Kashmiri, Syed Salahuddin, from the safe confines of Islamabad. Throughout these 15 days, Mr. Salahuddin indulged in provocative flummery, making it blatantly obvious that he was against the ceasefire. The non-combatant APHC was not too happy either. Far from welcoming the ceasefire, it termed the step hasty. India played its cards well. It welcomed the ceasefire and termed the Hizb its very own people. But it cleverly procrastinated un-

cautious welcome mired with conditions. Pakistan welcomed and reciprocated the ceasefire along the LoC. Covertly, the militants upped the ante and recorded the highest number of hits during the ceasefire period. True to its "fault finding tendency", the APHC was quick to point out the high number of casualties as a result of retaliatory action by the Indian military authorities. The APHC chose to keep silent on the increased intensity of the strikes by militants. Pakistan ensured peace along its side of the LoC and earned some desperate grace marks. India succeeded in conveying its yearning for peace. And what did the Kashmiris convey? India was addressing an international audience through the ceasefire, while the APHC was busy playing to the gallery across the border. The Kashmiris once again came out the lone losers.

Not content with the earlier forays into disaster, the APHC now wanted to visit Pakistan, on the invitation of its foreign office. For the first time, it seemed that the APHC was playing its cards right. A visit by the Kashmiri leadership to discuss Kashmir, cleared by Indian authorities by issuing travel documents, and facilitated by Pakistan by issuing visas, would have meant an implicit official endorsement of the Kashmiris as a basic party to the dispute. Too good to be true. New Delhi cre-

TO THE EDITOR

THE HINDU

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No Pak invitation for Hurriyat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, July 1. — Islamabad has agreed to New Delhi's request not to invite Hurriyat leaders to meet Gen Pervez Musharraf in India.

Officials today confirmed media reports saying Pakistan was no longer pushing for a meeting between Hurriyat leaders and the President. "This proposition to not to invite Hurriyat leaders has been made to us by India and we've accepted it", an official said.

The *Dawn* quoted a senior official as saying: "We're not pressing hard for the meeting. We expected that the Indians would show better judgement and not impede the APHC's formal meeting with Musharraf. That didn't happen. So at this

MUSHARRAF'S 'SPECIAL ENVISSARY'

ISLAMABAD, July 1. — President Pervez Musharraf has sent poet Ahmed Faraz as special emissary to hold talks with Indian leaders and intellectuals, media reports said today.

Faraz, a friend of Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and Mr IK Gujral, is in New Delhi interacting with Indian political and literary personalities, the daily, *Dawn*, reported. Indian High Commission officials here said they were not aware of any special emissary status accorded to Faraz. However, they said the poet had sought visa to go to India last month which was "promptly granted". — PTI

point our focus is on the main summit."

The decision follows strong messages sent by India through diplomatic channels that it wouldn't allow Hurriyat leaders to meet the General even if Pakistan invites them for a "High Tea" to be hosted by the Pakistani high commission to New Del-

hi on 15 July.

The official, however, denied that Pakistan, by dropping the proposal for a Hurriyat-Musharraf meeting, has accepted India's position on Kashmir. "Our position is that Kashmiris are an integral part of any final solution to the Kashmir problem". "Stop empty boasting": Dis-

tancing himself from the belligerent stand traditionally taken by Pakistani Generals and Prime Ministers, Gen Musharraf has wondered why should Islamabad think of hoisting a green flag over Red Fort when its own economy needs immediate attention.

Speaking at a conference on Prophet Mohammad in Islamabad, Gen Musharraf "asked the audience why they felt the need of challenging India constantly...", the *Friday Times* said. Being a veteran of the Kashmir war, he said, he knew exactly where Pakistan was headed, but there was no need to spoil its economic chances by making violent statements about it.

■ Photograph, another report on page 8

Rift in Hurriyat widens

Arun Joshi
Jammu, June 30

CONTRADICTIONS AMONG All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leaders are becoming louder by the day as the Indo-Pak summit approaches. If Syed Ali Shah Geelani tirelessly sings for Pakistan and the virtues of an Islamic State, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chief Mohammad Yasin Malik feels that Pakistan too has not been fair to Kashmiris.

He has also not forgotten those 1994 days when the Hurriyat leaders used to call him an un-Islamic character.

APHC Chairman Abdul Ghani Bhat is not happy the way his colleagues are trying to steal the limelight. He mooted a proposal of writing a letter to Prime Minister Vajpayee and Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf seeking an audience in the executive council of the Hurriyat Conference a week ago.

It was delivered to the two sides. Bhat felt what he did was mandated by the executive council.

CENTRE'S STAND ON APHC MEETING COLONIAL : LONE

THE HURRIYAT Conference on Saturday criticised the Centre for not allowing a meeting between its leadership and Pakistan President General Pervez Musharraf during his coming visit to New Delhi.

In its first reaction to the Centre's rejection of the proposed meeting, the Hurriyat termed the Government's approach as "unrealistic and improper", that not only attracted abhorrence of every Kashmiri against it but against the entire country.

"Every Kashmiri gets enraged and the extreme hatred increases thousand fold against the Indian leadership and the entire country by adopting rigid and authoritarian approach," senior Hurriyat executive member, Abdul Gani Lone, said addressing public meetings at various places, including Trehgam and Tangdhar in Kupwara today.

Lone said the "colonial approach" of the Indian leadership had frustrated the hopes generated among the people for a peaceful solution of the Kashmir issue. "This policy will prove fuel to the fire to the already explosive situation in Kashmir," he said.

PTI, Srinagar

But Syed Ali Shah Geelani raked up the question of the contents of the letter. "I know that Qazi Ahadullah, who represented me in the meeting agreed to this. So I am also indirectly party to the decision, but as far as the contents are concerned, those were not discussed".

Geelani who is regarded as a hardliner saw an opportunity of

becoming a real hero slipping into the hands of his rivals within the secessionist conglomerate. He has not forgotten that it was Bhat who had asked for his replacement from Jamaat-i-Islami.

So he had a dig at these men in Hurriyat Conference where the likes of Bhat were forced to review the stand.

PANT-G.M. SHAH MEETING FAILS TO MATERIALISE

Ladakhis demand U.T. status

By Vinay Kumar

SRINAGAR, MAY 30. The Centre's principal interlocutor on Kashmir, Mr. K.C. Pant, today faced an such overwhelming opinion in Leh for granting Union Territory status to the hilly Ladakh region, that he could not turn up in time for a meeting with the Awami National Conference (ANC) president, Mr. G.M. Shah. The Pant-Shah meeting is now likely to be held tomorrow at Mr. Shah's Maulana Azad Road residence.

Mr. Pant who turned towards the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir was deluged by a cross-section of the people of Leh who came out in hundreds demanding Union Territory status for Ladakh.

"There were a number of demonstrations in the main bazaar of Leh. People were expressing support for the demand of giving Union Territory status to Ladakh," Mr. Pant told newsmen later in the evening.

The entire route of Mr. Pant's motorcade was lined up with people holding mini-tricolours and demanding separation from Jammu and Kashmir. Shops in the Leh's main bazaar downed shutters, and at some points Mr. Pant's motorcade had to be taken through an alternative route.

A memorandum, demanding

U.T. status, drafted by 19 organisations was handed over to Mr. Pant. During his four-hour stay in Leh, he had a packed schedule and met representatives of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC), Ladakh Buddhist Association, Anjuman-e-Imamia, Anjuman-e-Moin-ul-Islam, Christian Association, BJP, Congress, and the National Conference. However, the Ladakh Muslim Association was opposed to the demand of U.T. status for Ladakh as well as trifurcation of the State.

In reply to a query, Mr. Pant said representatives of the National Conference also expressed support for the demand of U.T. status for Ladakh.

(According to PTI, the LAHDC chief stressed that the Himalayan region had been violence-free even when the entire State was under the grip of militancy. "I regret that no one has paid attention to our problem of development which is being damaged because of militancy in Kashmir." The Ladakh Buddhist Association said "the entire region should be separated from Jammu and Kashmir" so that the pace of development could be increased.)

Asked if any attempt was made

from his side informally to contact the Hurriyat Conference leaders, Mr. Pant replied in the negative. "My objective is to create a right kind of atmosphere for talks which will ultimately lead to the restoration of peace and normality in the State which has suffered a lot during the past decade. I am not here to precipitate matters. The process of dialogue needs a lot of hard work and patience."

Referring to different shades of opinions being expressed during his meetings with organisations, groups, political parties and individuals, Mr. Pant said: "Different people are throwing up different ideas. I am eliciting opinion. There are many suggestions and a variety of inputs. When I go back to New Delhi, I will analyse them and see if another round of meetings with certain people or groups would be needed."

'Window of opportunity'

Describing his peace mission to Kashmir as a "window of opportunity", Mr. Pant said such an opportunity would not come again. "This is a serious effort by the Prime Minister who has lent credibility to it. This is also necessarily an issue which will take time. Anybody working with fixed ideas and a set frame of mind will not

be able to work here. The world is changing fast and deep-rooted conflicts such as Kashmir are being attempted to be solved."

When asked if he would be unveiling an economic package for the State, Mr. Pant, who is also Deputy Chairperson of the Planning Commission, assured there would be no delay from in finalising the plan for Jammu and Kashmir. He said politics and economics could not be separated as these were crucial aspects of development which has a social dimension to it.

Mr. Pant will visit Kargil tomorrow. As the Pant-Shah meeting could not take place, a peeved Mr. G.M. Shah, after waiting for 90 minutes, told reporters that Mr. Pant should have reached in time to keep the appointment. On his part, Mr. Pant said that he got delayed in Leh and would meet Mr. Shah tomorrow.

PTI reports:

Mr. Shah, even while hoping to meet Mr. Pant, said, "What shall I talk when they have already stated that Kashmir is an integral part of India?" However, in a written statement, Mr. Shah welcomed the Prime Minister's invitation to Gen. Pervez Musharraf and also appreciated the latter's statement that he would visit Delhi with an open mind.

PM satisfied

MANALI, MAY 30. The Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, today said he is satisfied with the response of the Pakistan Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, to his invitation for talks. He said the dates for the meeting would be decided soon.

"I am satisfied with his reply," Mr. Vajpayee told reporters before returning to Delhi after a week-long sojourn here, a day after Gen. Musharraf's acceptance letter was formally handed over to New Delhi. On being asked whether he would send a response to the General's letter, Mr. Vajpayee said, "The time for correspondence is over. Now the meeting will take place." — PTI

Hurriyat reply to PM: Page 13



The Centre's interlocutor, Mr. K.C. Pant, listening to the representatives of the Ladakh Buddhist Association, who called on him at Leh on Wednesday. — PTI

Hurriyat wants talks with Pervez, not Pant

Indrajit Hazra
Srinagar, May 30

THE ALL-PARTY Hurriyat Conference (APHC) today expressed its determination to hold talks with Pakistan's Chief Executive General Pervez Musharraf during his visit to India and rejected Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's proposal that they negotiate with New Delhi's special emissary, K C Pant.

"We have decided to visit New Delhi when Musharraf visits India for peace talks with Vajpayee," APHC chairman Abdul Gani Bhat said, adding, "We will move ahead with our plan to meet General Musharraf even if impediments are raised by New Delhi."

But there was a positive note as well. "Vajpayee's invitation to Musharraf is to be welcomed. It seems that the saner elements in

Delhi have prevailed," he said.

The APHC reaction came a few days after Jaswant Singh ruled out the possibility of allowing Hurriyat leaders to hold talks with Musharraf.

Singh's stand was strengthened by Vajpayee's ultimatum from Pirni that the Hurriyat must talk with K C Pant.

Vajpayee's compulsions seem to be clear. The fuel that runs Pant's Mission Kashmir is running low without the Hurriyat's participation. While Pant is putting up a brave front and meeting all the people he can (read: those willing to talk to him), the general feeling in Srinagar is that the purpose of his visit is just to add more files in some government office in the capital.

The Hurriyat's refusal to talk has turned Pant's exercise of "understanding the hopes and

PM HAILS MUSHARRAF RESPONSE

THE PM on Wednesday hailed Gen. Musharraf's readiness for a dialogue with India, and expressed satisfaction at the Pakistani Chief Executive's reply.

Detailed report on Page 9

aspirations of the people of Kashmir" into a no-show. But by continuing to hold its breath till it turns blue, the Hurriyat runs the risk of simply withering away. This is possible despite demands from Pakistan to make the Hurriyat party to talks between India and Pakistan.

Bhat said: "Because the Government of India refuses to recognise the core issue, which is the dispensation of a permanent settlement of J&K." According to Bhat, Pant has come to "catch

fish in a desert".

The news that Pant today called on Jammu & Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party leader Shabir Shah at his house for an 'informal' meeting didn't elicit any response from the Hurriyat chairman. While most people in Delhi are counting the last days of the Hurriyat, most people in Srinagar (including those sceptical of the Hurriyat) are not counting on Pant's exercise leading anywhere.

This outlook has been reinforced by the fact that Pakistan and India will now be addressing the Kashmir problem one-to-one. Even Pant has gone on record stating that the talks between Pakistan and India is separate from that between the Kashmiri people and himself.

Therefore, the question: Why is he here?

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

2 SECURITYMEN KILLED; ENCOUNTER CONTINUES

Militants holed up in mosque

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, MAY 30. A fierce encounter is on between four militants holed up in a mosque and security forces in a south Kashmir village. At least two security persons, one of them an Army soldier, have been killed in the encounter, which has been raging for the last 16 hours.

Reports reaching here said the security forces had cordoned off Kharwar village in Pulwama district, around 65 km from here, early today on receiving information that some militants were hiding there. The forces came under heavy fire as soon as they entered the village, and a soldier and a surrendered militant, Abdul Rashid alias Nasir — who was working as a Special Police Officer —, were killed on the spot.

The militants, reportedly affiliated to the Lashkar-e-Taiba, then took shelter in the mosque. The security forces, comprising personnel from 1 Rashtriya Rifles, the Border Security Force and the Special Operations Group of the State police, later tightened the cordon and asked the militants to surrender. However, they refused and are still holed up in the mosque, from where they continued firing at the security forces.

The security forces are working on a strategy to force the militants out of the mosque without disturbing its sanctity. Senior officers have rushed to the spot.



Soldiers encircling the mosque from another direction. — AP

PTI reports:

Despite repeated warnings to surrender, the militants continued firing for most part of the day at the troops before calling a halt in the evening, sources said.

The security forces made a vain bid to persuade the militants to surrender by sending a team of local residents inside the mosque after the firing stopped.

The sources said wireless intercepts between the holed-up militants and their associates outside revealed that the militants included a senior commander of the outfit.

The wireless intercepts also revealed that one of the foreign militants, said to be an Afghan national, has either been killed or injured in the exchange of fire. However, it was yet to be confirmed.

Pak. Armyman surrenders

A Pakistan Army Naik, Makar Hussain of the 2 Sindh Regiment, surrendered before the Army in Khour sector of Jammu with one AK rifle, three magazines and some Pakistani currency. Officials, however, did not say how he had entered India.



Security forces taking positions outside a mosque in Kharwar, Pulwama district, on Wednesday. — PTI

Jaswant statement hurts me: Shabir

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR MAY 29. The Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP) chief, Mr. Shabir Shah, today conveyed to the Centre's interlocutor on Kashmir, Mr. K.C. Pant, that he was "upset and hurt" over the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh's statement that Jammu and Kashmir was an integral part of India. However, the meeting was cordial and both sides agreed that the process for restoring peace in the State and finding a solution to the problem was a long one.

After a 70-minute meeting at Mr. Shabir Shah's Rawalpore residence, he and Mr. Pant addressed a joint press conference. Mr. Pant said the meeting took place in a cordial atmosphere. "What his anxieties/concerns were, he explained and I have taken note of them. We should realise that this is an old problem and there are complexities."

Though Mr. Shah was appreciative of the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee's initiative on Kashmir, he was irked over Mr. Jaswant Singh's statement. "I am deeply hurt and upset over this," he said adding "it should not have come at this time. I have brought this to Mr. Pant's notice." However, Mr. Pant maintained that "this is not news and should not surprise you." This was the stand of the Government of India and it had been decided by Parliament, said Mr. Pant adding there was no room for annoyance. He further said "this is a statement of fact." The Pakistani High Commissioner had also been giving all kinds of statements in Delhi. We are a democracy and not a dictatorship," he said.

Mr. Shah said he was not dismayed over Mr. Pant's letter in which he had said that Kashmir was not a law and order problem. "We have initiated a process and will take it to its logical conclusion."

On his part, Mr. Pant said Mr. Shah had created a "window of opportunity and we take the benefit by extending it. We have to be prepared/patient to understand each other to build trust and go ahead to see how things evolve as a solution." On his demands for creating a conducive atmosphere, Mr. Shah said the human rights angle was always important. The security forces should investigate the people's complaints and punish the guilty. Mr. Pant said that dialogue was a process and not an end. "We have to work together for the welfare and cause of the people."

Mr. Pant who arrived at Mr. Shah's residence in the morning amid tight security, was accompanied by his wife Mrs. Ila Pant. Mr. Shah received him at the entrance and also saw him off. In the meeting, Mr. Shah was joined by his colleagues Moulana Abdullah Tari and Mr. Saleem Geelani. Mr. Shah also handed over a two-page memorandum to Mr. Pant in which the confidence building measures have been discussed. Mr. Shah is the only top separatist leader whom Mr. Pant has so far met during his visit. The Hurriyat Conference has already rejected the talks offer. After an executive meeting of the Hurriyat, its chairman, Prof. Abdul Gani Bhat, said that nothing was going to come out of the talks unless the Hurriyat was involved. He was referring to the proposed high-level summit between the Prime Minister, and Gen. Musharraf.

Include us in talks, says Hurriyat

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, MAY 29. The Hurriyat Conference today expressed its desire to share the platform with New Delhi and Islamabad for the proposed talks and warned that if the demand was not met, no permanent solution to the Kashmir issue could be found.

In an obvious reference to the Centre's interlocutor, Mr. K.C. Pant's visit, the conglomerate termed it an attempt to make the outfit irrelevant.

"We are seriously concerned about the efforts which are being made to make the forum irrelevant. This is done because they are scared of the emergence of the Hurriyat as an effective body," a Hurriyat's spokesperson said here.

The Hurriyat convened an

emergency meeting of the executive to discuss the invitation extended by the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, to Pakistan's Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

The meeting was attended by its chairman Prof. Abdul Gani, Mr. Abdul Gani Lone, Mirwaiz Omer Farooq, Moulvi Abbas Ansari, Mr. Bashir Ahmad Bhat, Sheikh Abdul Aziz and Qazi Ahmadullah.

"Since talks at the highest level are to take-off, we welcome the move. But, both the heads are stressed upon to include the Hurriyat in the talks so as to respect the aspirations of Kashmiris", the spokesperson added.

If it was not done, a long-lasting and permanent solution of the Kashmir issue could not be found.

"Thus, the dream of restoring peace in the sub-continent and establishment of friendly ties would never materialise. We would consider the non-inclusion of the Hurriyat, an imperialistic approach and this would be fought intrepidity."

Eid on June 5

NEW DELHI, MAY 29. Meeladul Nabi, the birthday of Prophet Mohammed, will be celebrated on June 5, a prominent Islamic cleric announced here today.

The moon of Rabi Ul Awwal was sighted commonly on May 24 and the 12th Rabi Ul Awwal will fall on June 5, the Shahi Imam of the Fatehpuri Mosque, Mufti Mohammed Mukarram Ahmed, said in a statement. — PTI

Pervez will harp on Kashmír

AGENCIES

ISLAMABAD, June 29. General Pervez Musharraf has said he will try to evolve a "time bound" framework to resolve the Kashmir issue during his summit with Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee.

The issue could even be resolved in "months" if the two countries are "sincere and open minded", he said.

During his interactions with foreign journalists and PoK leaders yesterday, the Pakistani President said he would be flexible and have an open mind in his meeting with Mr Vajpayee next month.

He, however, warned that there would be "no progress if the two sides stick to their stated positions too rigidly."

'Kashmir main issue': Gen Musharraf said rivalry over Kashmir was the only significant obstacle to friendly ties be-

■ **Musharraf rules out early polls, page 9**

tween the two nations.

"Other issues are minor irritants ... If you want to improve relations, solving the core issue of Kashmir is a must," he said. "If there is sincerity from both the sides, the (Kashmir) dispute can be resolved in less than a

year." "I go with all sincerity and I hope there is sincerity on their part too," he added.

After the meeting, Kashmiri affairs minister, Mr Abbas Sarfraz Khan, said all issues, including Siachen, could also come up for discussion during the summit.

"The President said he himself believes that there can't be any instant solution for all the problems and that he is going to India with an open mind and with an effort to create a conducive environment for future talks," Mr Khan said.

The minister added previously there was no framework for the talks, nor timetable for the resolution of the Kashmir problem.

THE SUNDAY

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'PROBLEM CAN BE RESOLVED IN LESS THAN A YEAR'

Musharraf for 'framework' to resolve Kashmir dispute

By B. Muralidhar Reddy 10-1

ISLAMABAD, JUNE 29. For the first time since the Indian Government invited the military ruler and President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, to visit India for peace talks, the military government has said the General would try to get a "framework" for resolving the Kashmir dispute accepted at the Agra summit with the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee.

The Kashmir Affairs Minister, Mr. Sarfraz Khan, today quoted Gen. Musharraf as telling representatives of political and religious groups from the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on Thursday, about his intention to look for a "certain framework" to resolve the Kashmir issue.

"During my talks with the Prime Minister, I would call for a certain framework for the resolution of the Kashmir problem. I would also urge the Indian leadership that the dialogue must continue under the framework," Gen. Musharraf was quoted as saying.

Mr. Khan's statement is significant and tallies with the assessment given by the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Enamul Haq, during a meeting with a group of editors and columnists here a few days ago.

Mr. Haq said Pakistan would not insist on immediate resolution of the Kashmir problem as a "pre-requisite" for normalisation of ties with India as long as New Delhi was willing to accept Kashmir as the centrality of the problem between the two countries and agree for a mechanism for its resolution.

Pakistan did not expect the Kashmir issue to be resolved in one meeting. Significantly, Gen. Musharraf echoed the same sentiments in the series of meetings he has had in the last few days as part of the consultation process in the run-up to the summit.

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"The President (Gen. Musharraf) said he believes there cannot be any instant solution for all the problems and that he is going to India with an open mind and with an effort to create a conducive atmosphere for future talks," Mr. Khan said. He added that the representatives of Kashmiri groups had denounced the suggestion for the so-called "third option" envisaging an independent Kashmir.

Three options

In a related development, the Jamaat-e-Islami daily, *Jasarat*, has reported that three possible options would be considered to resolve the Kashmir issue during the coming summit meeting.

Quoting reliable sources, it said the first was the conversion of Line of Control into international border. The second suggested division

Ban on Indian sugar to stay: Pak.

KARACHI, JUNE 29. Pakistan today said it would continue a ban on the import of Indian sugar, imposed in March this year, and the issue would not be discussed in the India-Pakistan summit scheduled for next month.

"We have banned the import of Indian sugar...It will continue and we had already taken a decision on it," the Commerce Minister, Mr. Abdul Razzaq Daud, told presspersons here.

The Minister, however, refused to answer a query on whether Pakistan would grant MFN (most favoured nation) status to India during the summit. — Reuters

of Kashmir giving the regions of Jammu and Ladakh to India and PoK to Pakistan apart from holding a plebiscite in the Valley. According to the third option, India and Pakistan should accept the Chenab River as a permanent border under which India would get some districts of Jammu and Ladakh while the Valley, the PoK and two districts of Jammu would go to Pakistan.

The paper said any of the options could be selected at the summit and that the Foreign Ministries and other institutions concerned had completed the groundwork. The Foreign Ministers of the two countries had also taken the big powers into confidence regarding these options during their recent visits. The paper said the summit could prove to be the beginning of a major breakthrough. UNI reports:

Meanwhile, Gen. Musharraf has said the Kashmir dispute can be resolved in less than a year if both sides are "sincere and open minded." Talking to Islamabad-based foreign mediapersons on Thursday, he, however, warned that his meeting with Mr. Vajpayee would become a farce if the dispute was sought to be sidetracked and got bogged down on other issues.

"There must be an absolute, unequivocal acceptance of the fact that Kashmir is the issue that has bedevilled our relations... we have to resolve it. I would be really disappointed if we follow the hackneyed path of past bilateral meetings that have bogged down on other issues," he said.

Brushing aside India's concern on cross-border terrorism and whether he would rein in the armed Islamic groups operating from Pakistani soil, Gen. Musharraf insisted that the Kashmir insurgency was indigenous.

Pant meets Shabir Shah, others

By Vinay Kumar

SRINAGAR, MAY 29. The Centre's interlocutor, Mr. K.C. Pant, today continued his efforts of holding talks with various groups and individuals in Kashmir, adding a political component in the process.

If by taking an unusual step of driving down to the residence of senior separatist leader, Mr. Shabir Shah, in the morning for an informal meeting Mr. Pant signalled flexibility in his approach, his meetings with political parties on the other spectrum — the National Conference, BJP, Congress, CPI and the CPM — conveyed the feeling that he was eager to mould himself into a patient negotiator who was ready to go through the long-drawn-out process.

Mr. Pant sought to make a distinction between the two processes of India-Pakistan bilateral talks and the simultaneous peace process initiated by the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, in Jammu and Kashmir. "The two processes are separate and should not be confused. They can go on simultaneously," he said.

The Union Government's pointman on Kashmir, who has so far failed to evoke any response from the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC), umbrella organisation of 23 militant outfits, agreed with the Prime Minister's suggestion of asking the Hurriyat Conference to participate in the talks.

"The Prime Minister has given a very sound advice to the Hurriyat Conference. I know all Hurriyat leaders are mature people and they will act accordingly," Mr. Pant told reporters at a press conference this evening.

'Useful insights from press'

Similarly, he had a word of praise for the Srinagar-based senior journalists who met him. "Though no two editors will share the same opinion, they gave very useful insights of the present situation to me.



Mr. K.C. Pant and Mr. Shabir Shah at a press meet in Srinagar on Tuesday. — Photo: Nissar Ahmed

They also gave suggestions about priority areas and their analysis was very perceptive."

Mr. Pant also met the pro-independence outfits like the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF-Amanullah) faction and the leaders of the Quami Mushawarat Council (QMC). The two organisations demanded reunification of the State and told him that Kashmir should not remain a bone of contention between India and Pakistan and rather act as a "bridge of friendship."

Among the political parties, the CPI(M) delegation, led by Mr. Yusuf Tarigami, favoured efforts to reduce the level of violence in the State and also a broader space of dialogue by persuading the Hurriyat Conference and indigenous militant groups to participate in the process of dialogue. The party also wanted a number of confidence building measures to be taken to promote peace in the troubled State.

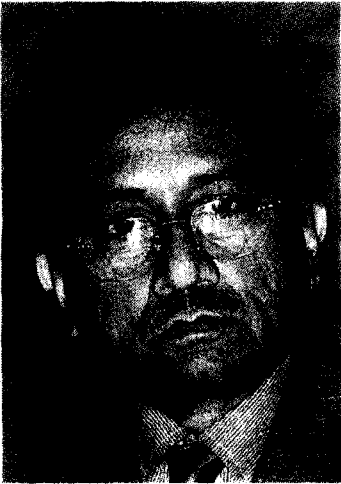
Shabir Shah 'upset': Page 13

'KASHMIR IS CORE, BUT WE WILL DISCUSS OTHER ISSUES TOO'

Musharraf accepts talks offer

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 29. The Pakistan Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, today maintained that the "root cause" of the tension between India and Pakistan is the unresolved Jammu and Kashmir dispute, but declared his readiness to discuss all other outstanding issues between the two countries during his proposed summit meeting with the Prime



Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee.

In his reply to the invitation extended to him by the Prime Minister to visit New Delhi for peace talks, Gen. Musharraf said that while he was looking forward to "sincere and candid discussions for a solution to the Kashmir issue in accordance with the wishes of

the Kashmiri people, he was willing to discuss all other outstanding issues.

The position taken by Gen. Musharraf is a modification of the earlier stance of his Government that any talks with New Delhi would have to be Kashmir-centred. Of course, he has often reiterated that the dispute was the source of all problems. However, the willingness of Gen. Musharraf to be flexible is evident from the interview he has given to the BBC.

The rest of the four-para letter reciprocates the warmth demonstrated by Mr. Vajpayee in his invitation. In response to the sentiments expressed by the Prime Minister that India wishes to see a stable, secure and prosperous Pakistan, Gen. Musharraf said, "We wish to see a stable and prosperous India at peace with its neighbours."

The very fact that Gen. Musharraf refrained from making any reference to the contentious issues raised by the Foreign Ministers of Pakistan and India respectively in their separate press conferences in the last two days is indication that the General would like to facilitate a conducive atmosphere before the summit.

There was considerable anxiety both in Islamabad and New Delhi after the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, raised the issue of the United Nations resolutions on a plebiscite in Kashmir at his news conference in Peshawar on Sunday. The External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh,

followed suit in New Delhi ruling out a plebiscite and declaring that the whole of Jammu and Kashmir was an "integral part of India".

Gen. Musharraf avoided the temptation of responding to such provocation. This is evident from the fact that the draft of the letter to Mr. Vajpayee was lying with him for the last three days, and yet he chose not to make any amends in the wake of the rhetoric from both sides.

India happy

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 29. India today reacted positively to the formal ac-

ceptance of the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee's invitation for talks by Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

"We are glad that the Chief Executive of Pakistan has very kindly accepted the Prime Minister's invitation to him to visit India," a spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs said. The dates for the visit will be finalised through diplomatic channels, he added.

The letter confirming Gen. Musharraf's visit was formally handed over today to the Foreign Secretary, Ms. Chokila Iyer, by the Pakistani High Commissioner, Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi.

Text of letter: Page 13

'Any day from end June'

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 29. Pakistan is proposing any time between the third week of June to first week of July for Gen. Pervez Musharraf's visit to New Delhi. In an interview to the BBC, he said, "I am available as soon as we arrive at a mutually convenient date. We are proposing June 20, 25, end of June or early July as possible dates. We have to arrive at a coordinated date."

A senior Government official had indicated last week that Gen. Musharraf would have no problem in visiting New Delhi any time after the third week of June. The official was commenting on media speculation about the possibility of the meeting in the first week of July. The General has no engagements abroad in June. He is expected to be busy with the budget for 2001-2002, due in the third/fourth week of June.

Asked if he was looking forward to visiting his old home in Delhi, Gen. Musharraf said, "I would like to if I get an opportunity. It is not a primary issue, but if I get an opportunity I would like to go and see it." He said he did not have many memories of his stay in Delhi, where he was born, since he was too small.

Pervez to forcefully take up J&K issue

Islamabad
27 JUNE

PAKISTAN PRESIDENT Pervez Musharraf has said that he will meet Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee with an "open mind," but warned that he will "forcefully" take up the Kashmir issue.

On Wednesday, newspapers quoted General Musharraf as telling editors and senior journalists here that he will take the initiative in discussing all the major issues with India, including Kashmir.

General Musharraf said he sensed that India was keen to resolve the dispute over Kashmir, which has caused three of the four major conflicts between the two countries.

He added that he was optimistic about a breakthrough. "I will forcefully take up the issue of Kashmir" with Mr Vajpayee, he was quoted as saying.

But he cautioned against placing too much hope on the visit as the complexities of the problem and the mistrust of half a century cannot be removed overnight.

Meanwhile, a senior diplomat has warned that General Musharraf may walk out of the July summit at Agra if India refused to discuss Kashmir.

Although Pakistan said Gen Musharraf will show flexibility, there was no apparent change in Islamabad's "firm stand on the Kashmir issue," the diplomat said. "Both the countries are not ready to give up their rigid stands on the issue. No solution is possible if they continue with this." — IANS

Hurriyat date with Musharraf unlikely

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 27 JUNE

IT IS unlikely that Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf will include a meeting with the Hurriyat leaders in his itinerary when he visits here next month. According to sources, high commission representatives have conveyed to the Pakistan government India's unwillingness to let them meet General Musharraf.

Although the Pakistan government have been insistent on the Hurriyat's visit to Pakistan, India has been reluctant to oblige. India has serious reservations about giving a passport to the hardline Jamaat leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani to visit Pakistan. Besides, in India's assessment the Hurriyat is a political grouping without sufficient political base, and their travelling to Pakistan would serve to give this primarily pro Pakistan conglomerate undeserved legitimacy.

There have been noises from Pakistan that General Musharraf should meet the Hurriyat leaders in Delhi, even if informally. Hurriyat leaders said that their visit would help to "strengthen" India's peace initiative, because they would use the opportunity to "talk" to the militant leaders. Its an argument India is unwilling to buy.

According to Indian government sources, Pakistan has been "made aware" of Indian displeasure on this score. Questioned about it, the MEA spokesperson said: "Our views on this subject are well-known." The foreign minister, Jaswant Singh had categorised the Hurriyat meeting with Pakistan government as a "non-issue".

However, individual Hurriyat leaders have travelled to other countries including Pakistan. At present, another Hurriyat leader Mirwaiz Umer Farooq is attending the OIC meeting in Mali where he's reported to have had a two-hour long conversation with the Pakistan foreign minister Abdul Sattar.

Another leader Sheikh Abdul Aziz was permitted to travel to Islamabad in the third week of April for his brother's wedding. He held numerous meetings with Pakistan government representatives though news footage showing him kissing the ground as he alighted from the aircraft did nothing to enhance his credibility here. Known as a close associate of Ali Shah Geelani he was also nominated part of the group that was to travel to Pakistan.

No meeting with Hurriyat, India tells Pak

K.J.M. Varma
ISLAMABAD 27 JUNE

INDIA HAS officially informed Pakistan that it is not willing to permit Hurriyat leaders to meet President Pervez Musharraf during his forthcoming visit to India.

The Indian reservations on the Hurriyat leaders' efforts to politically resurrect themselves by meeting General Musharraf at New Delhi has been conveyed at the highest level in Islamabad during mutual consultations between the officials of the two countries to prepare ground work for the forthcoming summit between General Musharraf and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, official sources said here.

The Indian stand to keep the Hurriyat leaders out of the broad parameters of the crucial summit assumed significance in light of Tuesday's assertion by the Pakistani President that he would try his best to meet them during his stay in India.

Obviously, keeping the Indian reservations in mind, General Musharraf, during his interaction with senior editors of Pakistani newspapers, said while he continued to make efforts to meet the Hurriyat leaders, it however, was not his endeavour to go for a confrontation with Indian leaders on the issue.

Resolving Kashmir

It's about People, not Territory

By GHULAM NABI KHAYAL

9-10
27/6

THE summit between prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and president Pervez Musharraf may not fulfil all the high hopes the people of Kashmir have begun to attach with it. But many probabilities could be explored and an initiative made with sincerity and boldness could create a conducive atmosphere for the resolution of all disputes, including the core issue of Kashmir.

The dispute over Kashmir is full of complications, the most disturbing being the rigid postures adopted by both New Delhi and Islamabad. As secretary-general Kofi Annan has asserted, the United Nations resolutions adopted on Kashmir over 50 years ago cannot be implemented due to the changed circumstances in this region. But Pakistan still claims that implementation of these resolutions is the best way to solve the problem, which would also ensure the people of Jammu and Kashmir their right of self-determination.

Of late, some fundamentalist organisations have taken full control of Pakistan-based militancy in Kashmir. These outfits believe there is no way to resolve the Kashmir tangle except for continuing with the *jihad*, which only uses human beings as cannon fodder but does not guarantee any positive outcome. Three armed conflicts which took place between India and Pakistan are a testimony to the fact that guns provoke confrontation, not conciliation.

There are also forces active in Pakistan which propagate that Kashmir should necessarily become a part of Pakistan. According to them, this would complete the "unfinished agenda" of Mohammad Ali Jinnah, who had once described Kashmir as "the jugular vein of Pakistan".

India is treading on the same path of no return. New Delhi has not budged an inch from its much-repeated claim that the entire Jammu and Kashmir state as it existed on August 14, 1947, which includes Pakistan-controlled Azad Kashmir and the northern areas of Gilgit and Baltistan, is an integral part of the Indian Union. The claim about areas across the borders could not be turned into a reality by any Indian government during the last 54 years. On the contrary, the bitter fact is that India has virtually conceded Azad Kashmir and the northern areas to Pakistan.

There is an increasingly strident demand from some sections in India to scrap Article 370 of the Constitution. This group favours com-

plete merger of Jammu and Kashmir into the Indian Union and rehabilitation of non-Muslims in the border areas of Kashmir Valley, turning this Muslim-majority state into as good a Hindu area as any other Indian state. Cries for declaring war against Pakistan and recapturing Azad Kashmir by force are also heard from these quarters from time to time.

The people of Kashmir, whose sentiments are by and large represented by the All Party Hurriyat Conference — at least in the real trouble spot, the Kashmir Valley — are caught in a dilemma while more than 50,000 of their brethren have already lost their lives during the last one decade. Obviously, they crave peace and restoration of normalcy more than anyone else.

The communal, parochial and fundamentalist forces aggressively active in both India and Pakistan have never thought of analysing the

IN BRIEF

- No one craves a return to normalcy more than Kashmiris
- India, Pakistan should initiate confidence-building measures
- The Jhelum Valley road should be opened to traffic from both sides

emotions and sentiments of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, who basically want a peaceful political future guaranteeing a stable economic life.

As far as his personal wishes can be analysed, president Pervez Musharraf has been demonstrating a clear desire to resolve disputes between India and Pakistan, which, of course, may not prove a difficult task. But both the parties will have to address and seek a viable solution to the Kashmir problem in the larger interest of the whole sub-continent. Otherwise, both Mr Vajpayee and general Musharraf will have to accept that they failed to accomplish their task.

General Musharraf has all the opportunities now at his disposal. It remains to be seen to what extent he is capable of containing fundamentalist forces in his own country, which are opposed to parleys on Kashmir. It is also up to the general to convince these forces that any solution which may not be acceptable or prove helpful to the Kashmiris cannot be thrust upon them

either by India or by Pakistan.

Of course, it's unrealistic to expect a 54-year-old problem to be solved in three days. After all, both the Vajpayee government and the Musharraf regime are under pressure from certain quarters that desire a continued strained relationship between New Delhi and Islamabad. Tension between the two countries provides these quarters with a readily available platform for the dissemination of their heinous policies and programmes of hatred and fundamentalism in the name of religion. It will be a colossal task to overcome these evil forces. Still, even if the summit does not achieve much, some headway could definitely be made by taking up confidence-building measures on a priority basis.

To begin with, all parties should agree to put a halt to armed militancy in Kashmir, provided the huge deployment of the army and paramilitary forces is confined to the borders and vital installations in Jammu and Kashmir. The irritating show of force all over the valley should be reduced to a minimum, in accordance with security requirements.

All the detained persons who are languishing in various jails without legal trial should be released. Once freed, a watch can be kept upon their activities. Kashmiri youths who had gone across the border to receive training in arms should be approached, and those eager to return should be provided safe passage and freedom.

Finally, the Jhelum Valley (JV) highway, which connected Srinagar with Rawalpindi and even Sialkot and Jammu in pre-partition days should be thrown open to people from both sides of the border. Naturally, a strict vigil will have to be kept on unwanted elements sneaking into each other's side illegally. This job could be assigned to the Border Security Force and the Pakistani Rangers respectively.

The painful partition of the sub-continent ripped apart scores of Kashmiri families. The reopening of the JV Road could help them reunite. This physical interaction could prove a vital factor in a lasting settlement of the Kashmir dispute. The artificial barriers created by the authorities have suppressed the natural urge of these people to meet and understand each other in a proper perspective, with an on-spot assessment of many dimensions of the standard of their political, social and economic life.

(The author is a Sahitya Akademi award recipient, based in Srinagar)

Kashmir & Secession

A Right Not Recognised By Law

By RAHUL SHIVSHANKAR

MMOMENTS after prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and president Pervez Musharraf had resolved to "tone down the rhetoric" ahead of the Agra summit, Pakistan was back in rhetoric mode. In a statement, the government said, "Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory where people are waging a struggle for their right to self-determination", and that as an upholder of human rights, Pakistan is morally obligated to support the Kashmiri demand that a plebiscite should decide J&K's future.

It's immaterial whether or not Pakistan's support for the Kashmiri cause is out of genuine concern for human rights. The world over, there are 140 minority groups wanting secession. And yet, the fact is that claims for secession from representative democracies are not considered by the international community.

To understand why this is so and to place the Kashmiri demand for secession in its proper perspective, two questions need to be asked.

First, what does 'self-determination' mean in international law? Second, does the principle of self-determination grant an affirmative right to secessionist groups, like in Kashmir, or is it — as Clyde Eagleton says in *Excesses of Self-determination* — merely a case of "a noble word being abused".

Though the term 'self-determination' was first used by Woodrow Wilson, it formally appeared on the international legal landscape in the United Nations Charter in 1945. That too only because it was supported by nation-states under colonial rule and foreign occupation.

According to Frederic L Kirgis Jr, for two decades thereafter, most states in the UN General Assembly believed that the right to self-determination applied only to people under colonial domination by foreigners. However, in the 1970s, the international community expanded the concept beyond this *external* or anti-colonial concept of self-determination. In its *Declaration on Principles of International Law Regarding Friendly Relations*, the UN General Assembly said, "Emergence into any political status freely determined by a people constitutes a mode of implementing the right of self-determination."

However, the UN added the caveat: "This shall not be construed as authorising any action which could dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity of sovereign states conducting themselves in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and thus possessed of a government representing the whole people belonging to the

territory without distinction of any kind."

The two declarations clearly establish that while the international community recognises claims of right to *external* self-determination, it isn't likely to consider demands for secession or *internal* self-determination, when made by indigenous groups against "representative" democracies, as such demands are destabilising. Also, to recognise such claims would be to uphold a "theory incompatible with the very idea of the state as a territorial and political unity." An idea on which the present international world order is based.

Scholars also differ on the scope of the right to *internal* self-determination. Catherine J Iorns says in *Indigenous People and Self-determination: Challenging State Sovereignty*, "The right to internal self-determination is merely the right of indigenous people to have a representative democratic government chosen

compactly inhabiting a region, which overwhelmingly supports separatism. J&K does not consist of one people, there are three major religions and at least four major linguistic groups. The state is not even a unit geographically, "it was an agglomeration of territories brought under the political power of one Maharaja" (Sisir Gupta). Though no plebiscite has been held, elections in the state — and not all of them have been rigged — show that there are some sections in the state that support secession and there are others that don't.

On Pakistan's and the All Party Hurriyat Conference's plebiscite demand, United Nations Committee on India and Pakistan (UNCIP) members Sir Owen Dixon and Josef Korbel have said, "the mere technicality of holding a plebiscite seemed beyond the scope of reality." And on whether a plebiscite offered a solution to the Kashmir problem, the UNCIP representatives said that they were discouraged by "experiences in Europe with plebiscites which turned into mere instruments of propaganda, pressure and falsification."

Third, secessionist groups must establish that there exists a realistic prospect of conflict resolution and peace within and between the new [and] old state as a result of the envisaged secession and lastly the group must prove that the central government rejected all compromise solutions.

The Kashmiris don't possess these two characteristics either. In fact, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) leader Sardar Ibrahim Khan said, "From August 13 to October 22, 1947 our state was independent and the result was that we were invaded by Pakistan. What is the guarantee that we may not be victims of a similar aggression in the future? Besides the situation of the state is such that powers are bound to covet bases on its territory. For this reason the state cannot maintain its independence."

As for the last condition, the Indian government has made many attempts to compromise with secessionist leaders. The Delhi agreement, the cease-fire initiative and the recent appointment of an interlocutor, K C Pant to talk with leaders in Kashmir, bear testimony to this.

Clearly these requirements weaken the Kashmiri demand for *internal* self-determination. The trouble is that as long as vested interests keep misleading the Kashmiri people, as a scholar noted, they "will continue to put their lives on the line, hoping that those noble words of self-determination amount to much more than political rhetoric."

IN BRIEF

- Claims for secession from representative democracies are not considered by the international community
- The right to internal self-determination is merely the right to choose a representative government
- The Kashmiri people are being misled by vested interests

through a legitimate political process. Those in favour of the principle point out that minorities must possess some characteristics in order to qualify for the right to secede.

Let's consider each of these characteristics and determine whether they apply to the Kashmiri cause.

First, indigenous groups must prove that there exists a pattern of systematic discrimination or exploitation against them by either a non-representative government or a foreign power.

Clearly this doesn't apply to the Kashmiri case. To begin with, India is not a foreign power in Kashmir. The state's accession has never been doubted internationally. In fact, by accepting India's complaint against Pakistan in 1948 and by implementing the first part of the Security Council resolutions, the UN indirectly recognised the accession. Besides, far from being exploited, the rights of the Kashmiri people have been secured through Article 370 of the Indian Constitution which accords a special political status to the state.

Second, groups must prove that they are a distinct, self-defined community or society within a state,

Counter-insurgents not afraid of Pakistan, but fear J&K Govt

New Delhi, June 24

BARELY A WEEK after a counter-insurgency leader was gunned down in Kashmir, Kuka Parrey, the pioneer of the movement, today lashed out at the Central and State Governments for "ignoring and weakening those fighting for the nation" and warned if this situation continued, things may get "very bad" in the State.

"The Centre took the help of counter-insurgents and then simply disposed them off," said Parrey, leader of J and K Awami League Party and patron of Ikhwan counter-insurgent group.

The MLA charged that New Delhi had always pursued such policies and this was the main reason for the current problem in Jammu and Kashmir.

Referring to the killing of Muslim Mujahideen chief Ghulam Nabi Azad, he feared that "all those nationalist forces who helped improve the situation till 1997 may meet the same fate." He warned the two Governments that if their "policy of ignoring the nationalist elements continues, they may be forced to venture on the wrong path. We are not afraid of Pakistan but fear that the Jammu and Kashmir Government may get us killed," said Parrey, who started the counter-insurgency movement in Kashmir in 1994 by launching Ikhwan-ul Muslimoon.

He said thousands of militants had surrendered and taken up guns against Pakistan over the past several years.

"However, the surrenders have stopped in view of the treatment meted out to the counter-insurgents," he added.

As the nationalist elements are being ignored, foreign militants are gaining an upper hand and the situation is getting worse, Parrey said, adding "it is better that the Government realises this before it gets too late."

He alleged that many in the Jammu and Kashmir administration, both political and bureaucratic, were helping militants and Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah "knows about it". Regretting that no corrective step had been taken in this regard, he said: "I don't know what is the weakness of Farooq Abdullah." Parrey, whose original name is Jamshed Shirazi, said because of an ISI plan and "role played by politicians" in the State, the counter-insurgents had been split into smaller groups. He stressed that in view of the attitude of the two Governments all surrendered militants needed to reunite "for their own safety".

On the recently withdrawn six-month-long ceasefire in the State, he said though people had been happy during ceasefire, its withdrawal had been necessitated as militants had used it to regroup and dump arms. **PTI**

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

51-8 OIC: 25/6

(Continued from page 1)

participated in the OIC summit in Doha. Mr Farooq met General Pervez Musharraf on the sidelines of the summit. Significantly, the Hurriyat leader had then claimed that Pakistan's position on the Kashmir issue had "changed". "Islamabad was ready to give up its insistence on UN resolutions - which included a plebiscite - in favour of a negotiated solution," he had said after the meeting with Gen Musharraf.

'More Kashmiris favour independence': More people in Jammu and Kashmir prefer to stay with India than a merger with Pakistan but the wish to be independent beats both. At least this is what a study carried out by a foreign delegation in the state including PoK and north areas claims, a report from Srinagar adds.

The Centre and the state government has, from time to time, ruled out holding of a referendum in the state. The study, conducted by Belgian Association for Solidarity with Jammu & Kashmir, from 18 June to 13 July last year, claimed 38.25 per cent population polled favoured independence against only 24.35 per cent who want merger of Kashmir with Pakistan. Around 37.40 per cent would like to remain in the Indian union.

Kashmir violence: One person was killed and seven injured in fresh violence in Jammu and Kashmir while Special Operation Group of the state police arrested five Hizbul Mujahideen militants since last evening. Munir Ahmad Lone was killed in a mine explosion at warsun in Kupwara district last evening, an official said. The Special Operations Group (Badgam) arrested five Hizbul Mujahideen from different areas in the state.

Mirwaiz to attend OIC meeting

UNI & PTI SA 27/6

NEW DELHI, June 24. - The Centre has allowed former All Party Hurriyat Conference chairman, Mirwaiz Omar Farooq, to attend a Organisation of Islamic Conference meeting at Mali from tomorrow. The APHC enjoys an observatory status in the OIC.

Mr Farooq left for Bamako, Mali's capital, today to participate in the OIC foreign ministers' meeting. The five-day meeting will discuss Kashmir, Afghanistan, Palestine and other issues being faced by the Islamic world, APHC spokesman, Mr Abdul Majid Banday, said.

Mr Farooq will meet Pakistani foreign minister, Mr Abdul Sattar, and ministers of other Islamic countries and brief them about the conglomerate's stand on the Indo-Pak summit.

Before leaving for Bamako, Mr Farooq said the dialogue between India and Pakistan was a positive step towards finding a lasting solution to the Kashmir issue. He hoped the APHC would be included in the talks. The amalgam would make serious efforts to bridge the gap between the two countries, he said.

"The conglomerate has no objections if the two countries start the process of resolving the issue bilaterally with genuineness and sincerity," Mr Farooq said. But at a certain stage, the people of Kashmir will have to be included in the process.

In November last year, Mr Farooq and senior Hurriyat leader, Moulvi Abbas Ansari

■ See OIC, page 8

THE STATESMAN

U-turn puts Hurriyat on road to dialogue

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: In what is being seen as a significant development in Kashmir politics, the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) has sought a meeting with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to help him "translate" his proposed peace talks with Pakistan's President Pervez Musharraf into a "purposeful political exercise".

In a letter to Mr Vajpayee, APHC chairman Abdul Gani Bhat said the Hurriyat executive council had unanimously decided to help consolidate the peace process in Kashmir. The letter was made public after Mr Bhat, accompanied by senior Jamaat-e-Islami leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, met Pakistani high commissioner Ashraf Jehangir Qazi in New Delhi on Friday

morning.

The APHC's letter states, "Let there be no misgivings about it. Your Excellency, sensitivities notwithstanding, we will have to demonstrate a deeper sense of responsibility and a higher degree of understanding in dealing with the situation which has unmistakably assumed alarming proportions."

Pointing out the reason for the APHC's

decision to write to Mr Vajpayee seeking a meeting, especially when it had spurned all advances for a dialogue from New Delhi, Mr Bhat said, "The APHC feels summoned to acknowledge with appreciation the statesmanship of Your Excellency and the President of Pakistan, Gen Pervez Musharraf, to have agreed to initiate a dialogue with seriousness and courage at the summit level."

'Musharraf will serve out five-year tenure'

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan government has indicated that General Pervez Musharraf will remain President for a period of five years even as his controversial takeover has been challenged in two high courts on constitutional grounds.

"The tenure is well-defined for the office of president. It is very clear," Gen Musharraf's press secretary Major General Rashid Qureshi was quoted by *The News* as saying on Friday. Maj Gen Qureshi's statement clearly indicated that Gen Musharraf was thinking of completing a five-year tenure as president, and not merely completing the remaining term of ousted president Rafiq Tarar, the paper said. (PTI)

Hurriyat slams Pakistan for floating rival parties in J&K

Srinagar, June 21

IN AN unexpected move, the Hurriyat Conference today blamed Pakistan for the mushrooming of political outfits in Jammu and Kashmir, which, it said, was aimed at weakening the 23-party conglomerate.

"Every day, new political outfits are taking shape in the State to weaken the Hurriyat Conference and the responsibility for this lies with the friends and sympathisers of the movement from across the border," senior Hurriyat executive member Abdul Gani Lone said. Mushrooming of political parties in the State was "painful and unfortunate", he added.

Lone, who is also the president of the Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference, said: "It is unfortunate that even two-person organisations are being floated with no mass base at all. Formation of such outfits is given wide publicity in the media just to weaken the Hurriyat Conference."

On the growth of militant outfits in 1988-89, Lone said: "We are repeating the same mistakes willingly or unwillingly." On the proposed Indo-Pak summit, Lone cautioned: "If any attempt is made to harm the Hurriyat Conference or a parallel organisation is formed, it will harm the ongoing movement in Kashmir."

Lone did not identify any of the outfits in his address at the public meeting at Zahchaldara-Handwara, his home town, 100

km from Srinagar.

Hurriyat general secretary Ghulam Ahmad Gulzar said people of Kashmir had made numerous sacrifices for the "just and honourable" solution of the Kashmir issue.

'All parties near unanimous': K C Pant, Centre's interlocutor on Kashmir, today said political parties in the country, irrespective of their differences, were near unanimous in their approach to the Kashmir issue, a report from Delhi says.

"It is a healthy development as all party representatives I have met so far have been appreciative of the peace moves and have been unanimous on the Kashmir issue," Pant told reporters here after meeting representatives from Samajwadi Party and Akali Dal.

Pant, who visited Kashmir recently, said his aim was to take the next step in consultation with all political parties.

Samajwadi Party leader Amar Singh welcomed the announcement of Vajpayee holding consultations with all opposition parties before his summit talks with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf. "We welcome the talks and nomination of K C Pant as negotiator on Kashmir," Singh said.

Punjab Chief Minister Prakash Singh Badal too lauded Pant's efforts. "This is a sensitive issue and no diversion of views in the political parties should emerge on Kashmir."

PTI



A boy on Thursday examines the debris of the house destroyed in the gunbattle between Lashkar militants and security forces in Badgam.

PTI PHOTO

There is no escaping Kashmir: Hurriyat

Rashid Ahmad
Srinagar, June 20

THE ALL-PARTY Hurriyat Conference has described the Prime Minister's statement that Kashmir was integral part of India and that he would discuss Pakistan-occupied Kashmir with General Musharraf as mere "play on words".

"Whether that or this part of Kashmir, the hard fact is that Kashmir will be the agenda of the Vajpayee-Musharraf talks," Prof Abdul Gani Bhatt, APHC chairman, told the Hindustan Times.

Bhatt said neither Vajpayee nor Musharraf could close eyes on Kashmir. "Notwithstanding their statement, they are talking on Kashmir and that's the bottom-line," he said.

He said India had a long-standing position on Kashmir and it was unrealistic to expect a major departure so soon. Such statements before the summit were quite expected.

"These are mere words. Reality is something different," the APHC chief said.

He said Kashmir was eating up their (India's) vital resources and the Indian leadership could not sleep over it for too long. Gani said the realisation seemed to have dawned on Indian leadership, and Vajpayee was on record to have said: "We shall have to go beyond the beaten track."

WILL IT BE LOVE OR LUNACY?

A CHOICE between love or a lunatic asylum: that's what the Hurriyat Conference chairman had to say about the choice of venue for the Indo-Pak summit.

"Well, they have a choice. Either they stick to the 16th century message of peace of epitome of love, the Taj Mahal, or the lunatic asylum which is in its vicinity," Abdul Gani Bhat said in New Delhi on Wednesday.

Bhat, however, feels that the two leaders would be encouraged by the beauty of history in the city.

They might even "promise yet another Taj Mahal to the people of entire subcontinent by burying their differences and making concerted efforts in resolving the Kashmir issue by involving its people", he felt.

"The two leaders have the capacity to rise to the occasion," he said.

PTI, New Delhi

"Statements or no statements, they have to talk, and they have to be guided by the under-currents of history rather than brinkmanship," said Bhatt.

However, Shabir Shah, chief of Democratic Freedom Party, described Vajpayee's statement as "unfortunate". He said it was quite disgusting that the Centre

was trumpeting on talks on one hand, and on the other, it was expressive of intransigence.

He said such statements could never be helpful in finding solution to the issue of Kashmir. Shah hoped that New Delhi would see reason and shun its rigidity on Kashmir.

The Indo-Pak summit, he said, could prove the beginning of a new era of peace and prosperity in the Subcontinent if pursued sincerely and earnestly.

The Prime Minister yesterday said that Kashmir is an integral part of India and a "closed topic" at the summit talks with Musharraf.

"The one-third part of Kashmir which is in Pakistan" will be discussed. "We will try and find solutions for that and other related questions," Vajpayee told reporters at Mumbai's Breach Candy Hospital.

The Pakistani Foreign Minister, Abdul Sattar, on the other hand, "hoped" the talks would address the "core issue of Kashmir, which is the root cause of tension between India and Pakistan."

But he added: "More than once in South Asia, bilateral understandings were problematic."

Indirectly seeking US mediation, Sattar said that the world community is able to regulate relations between individuals and within a state.

There can be no talks on Kashmir, says PM

Santosh Banerjee

The Times of India News Service
MUMBAI: The forthcoming round of talks between India and Pakistan would be held on the premise that Kashmir is an "integral part" of India, said Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee at a press conference held here on Tuesday.

Mr Vajpayee said there was "no reason why any issue concerning Kashmir should be raised" at the meeting, scheduled for mid-July, between him and Pakistan's chief executive Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

Asked to clarify India's stand vis-a-vis the strife-torn state where Pakistan-sponsored terrorism has resulted in heavy loss of life and property, Mr Vajpayee categorically said, "Our stand is clear and constant. Kashmir is an integral part of India. What we will discuss is the one-third portion

of Kashmir occupied by Pakistan (PoK). "I shall hold an all-party meeting to review our relations with Pakistan and to discuss the path to be adopted hereafter," Mr Vajpayee said, adding that "any suggestion will be welcome."

At the press conference held at Breach Candy Hospital just before his departure for New Delhi, Mr

Vajpayee answered questions ranging from the forthcoming talks to Pakistan's reduced defence expenditure to the violence in Manipur.

About Pakistan slashing its defence budget by Rs 2 billion, Mr Vajpayee observed that there did not appear to be any connection between this cut and the forthcoming round of talks. However, both countries could discuss their substantial expenditure on defence equipment and forces and consider

whether a portion of the same could be diverted towards developmental activities.

Touching upon the riots in Manipur, Mr Vajpayee appealed to the people of the state to maintain peace. He ruled out any change in the borders of either Manipur or any other state in the north-east in light of the

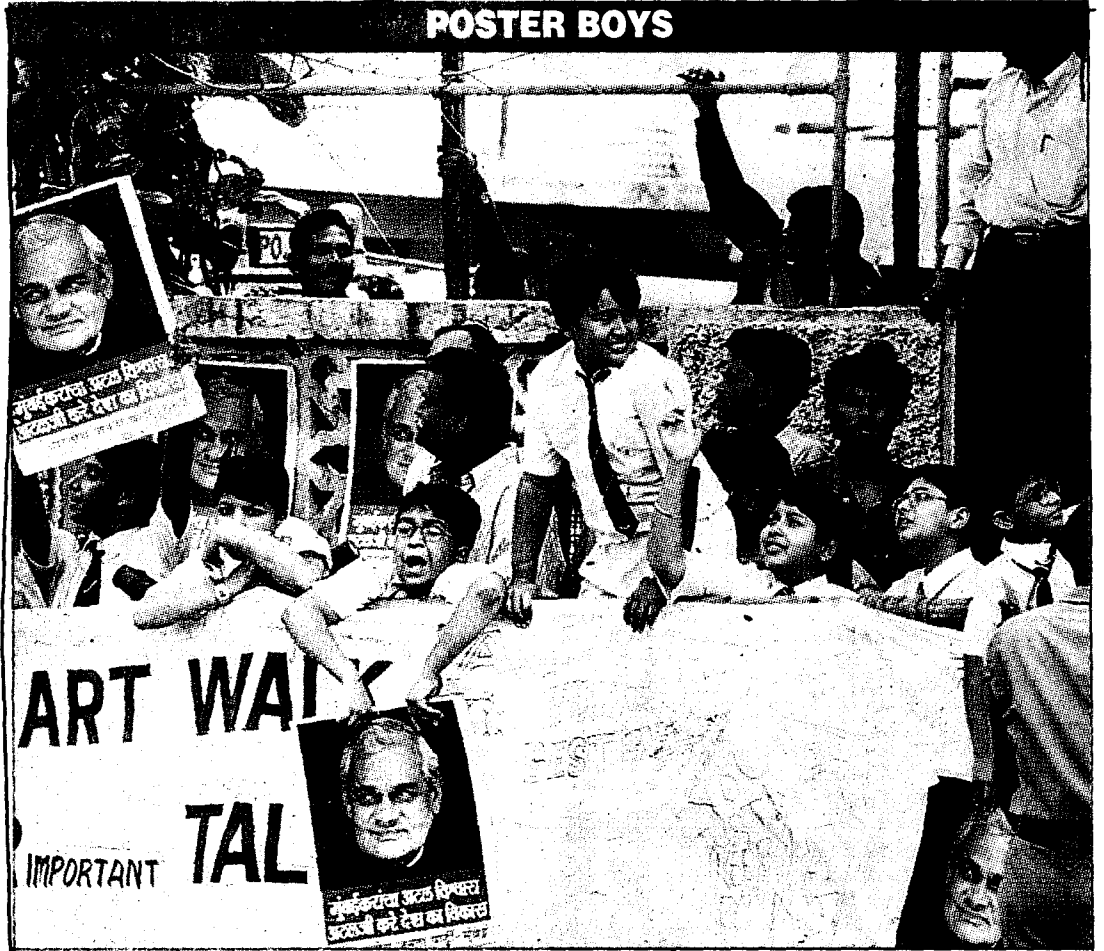
extension of the Naga ceasefire to other Naga-dominated areas of the region. He felt that the violence had been triggered by "misgivings".

Incidentally, attempts made by a section of the press to raise the controversial Enron issue were ignored by the Prime Minister, who had just 12 days ago stated that the Centre was hopeful of a positive outcome

Musharraf visit begins July 14

NEW DELHI: Pakistan's military chief Pervez Musharraf will visit India for three days from July 14 and his summit meeting with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee will be held in Agra.

Announcing the schedule for the summit, an external affairs ministry spokesman said, "Gen Pervez Musharraf and Begum Musharraf will visit India from July 14 to 16. Their stay in India will include a ceremonial welcome in Delhi, a retreat in Agra, where discussions will be held, and a visit to Ajmer Sharif." (PTI)



MANNING THE BARRICADES: Holding placards of Atal Behari Vajpayee, school children gather outside Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai to bid farewell to the Prime Minister who left for New Delhi on Tuesday afternoon.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

A peaceful solution of the Kashmir crisis will rob Islamabad of its favourite obsession

False hopes

BY MAROOF RAZA

1876
H AVING BEEN taken by surprise by Atal Bihari Vajpayee's invitation to General Pervez Musharraf for talks, Pakistan's establishment has responded by painting itself into the corner over the Kashmir issue. Sadly enough, Pakistan has never quite risen above its obsession with Kashmir. Witness the Musharraf interview on PTV last Friday.

By the kind of factionalism that exists across Pakistan's Islamic groups today, it is clear to any observer that Islam doesn't hold Pakistan together any more, but anti-Indianism does. Its obsession with Kashmir is Pakistan's best bonding adhesive. Therefore, New Delhi must learn to live with a Pakistan that will be hostile to India, because any talks without Kashmir is meaningless for Islamabad.

Pakistan's High Commissioner to India, Jehangir Qazi, was also echoing this sentiment in his recent statements to the media. It is about time that South Block should remind Pakistan that the UN resolution on Kashmir was binding both on India and Pakistan. But by repeatedly parroting the assertion that India must hold a plebiscite on Kashmir, Islamabad has been trying to absolve itself of any responsibility of implementing the UN resolution of August 13, 1948.

This UN Security Council resolution was to be implemented in three parts: (a) It called for a ceasefire (between Indian and Pakistani troops in 1948). (b) It had asked Pakistan, as the aggressor, to withdraw all its forces (both regular and irregular) from the entire territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The resolution however accepted that India could retain part of its troops in Kashmir. And only if this clause was implemented by Pakistan would the final part of the Security Council resolution become binding on India, that reads as follows: (c) "...that the future status of Jammu and Kashmir shall be determined in accordance with the will of its people..."

But it was Pakistan that refused to withdraw its forces on the grounds that India could manipulate the results of the plebiscite. Hence, the UN resolution has remained unimplemented and it is not because of India.

It needs to be emphasised that 'plebiscite' was India's idea because the best chance that the Nehru government had of securing the Kashmiri vote to join India was in the immediate aftermath of the Pakistani aggression of Kashmir in 1947 — when the rapes and plunder by its forces had left Kashmiris disgusted. It can be argued that the decision of successive leaders of Kashmir — from Sheikh Abdullah onwards — to remain



ELUSIVE PEACE: A Srinagar street

within the Indian Union indirectly reflects the choice of the Kashmiri people, since it is they who gave their mandate to these leaders. The fact that New Delhi has over the years mishandled its relations with the people of the Valley is altogether another sad matter.

There are in fact two related issues about Kashmir and Indo-Pak relations that must be understood. One, that given the choice, most Kashmiris would opt for independence and *not* for India or Pakistan. Those who insist otherwise are simply deluding themselves. The other is that the peaceful coexistence with India is anathema to Pakistan's establishment. And those who hope that track-II diplomacy and the goodwill these initiatives generate truly reflect the Pakistani pulse, are wrong and have little sense of reality.

Pakistan's agenda is to contest India, as long as it can. And the ceasefire had only helped in legitimising the hard line of *jehadi* and *Ahle-e-Hadis* outfits. To what extent Musharraf can antagonise them, is anybody's guess.

Pakistan's insistence that India must include the Hurriyat leadership in any dialogue over Kashmir should be countered by New Delhi with the insistence that India would like to invite the dissenting leadership of the northern areas (under Pakistan's control). Apparently, former J&K Chief Minister G.M. Shah had arranged for 40 such leaders to come over to India to participate in the talks, but they were denied visas by New Delhi.

India has been so obsessed with those

in the Valley that it has failed to capitalise on the simmering discontent in the northern areas following Pakistan's Kargil (mis)adventure. These sections felt used and let down after the conflict. India will do well to ask for autonomy for these people — citing the views of Pakistan's courts on the matter — and link it to any autonomy for the Kashmir Valley. That would put Islamabad on the defensive and ensure that the Hurriyat is destined for the dustbin of history.

Besides, while Musharraf and his team have been reminding the world — since the Pokhran-Chagai nuclear tests — that the region is a nuclear flash point, there is a need to put in place a viable conflict prevention mechanism between the world's two newest nuclear powers. For the hawks in Pakistan who are of the view that the nuclearisation of the sub-continent has provided the strategic space for another Kargil type of military action — a limited war — without the conflict escalating into a full-fledged war, India needs to spell out its 'threshold of patience' against the escalation of tensions along the line of control or against repeated terrorist attacks.

It must be made clear that India would be willing to escalate the cost for Pakistan too. It is possible to target some terrorist camps within PoK by air and shoulder fired missiles, without violating Pakistan's air space or crossing the border. India's recent military manoeuvres (exercises) in Rajasthan — Poorna Vijay — where troops practised military responses to a possible Pakistani nuclear strike,

has conveyed India's determination to deal with Pakistani threats. This has rattled Islamabad.

And so, what can we realistically expect from the parleys between Vajpayee and Musharraf or from the meetings that will follow this? The hopes are high — as they always are — but the truth is not much is bound to change. New Delhi wants to retain the Kashmir Valley with perhaps an eventual conversion of the LoC as the border. But the Pakistani establishment would be left rudderless if the Kashmir issue was so easily resolved, with Pakistan being left with what it already holds!

Any worthwhile concession that could lead to an eventual solution of the Kashmir issue would require a strong leader in all the three centres that are concerned with decisions over Kashmir: Delhi, Islamabad and Srinagar. Political leaders who can take tough decision and still survive the negative political fallout of this decision. The last time in the past 50 years when we had three such leaders was in the mid-Sixties, when Nehru, Ayub Khan and Sheikh Abdullah were all alive.

Apparently, by 1953, Nehru had decided on a plebiscite over Kashmir even if it meant that India could lose the Valley. And by 1956, Nehru had publicly offered a settlement of Kashmir with Pakistan over the ceasefire line (now converted into the LoC).

On May 23, 1964, Nehru asked Sheikh Abdullah (following the Sheikh's release from prison) to meet Ayub Khan in Rawalpindi, in an effort to resolve the Kashmir imbroglio. Although the Sheikh's references to India's secularism were a disappointment to the Pakistani general and civilians alike, and his idea of a confederation for Kashmir was dismissed by Ayub Khan, the Pakistani leader agreed to a summit with Nehru, to be held in June 1964. This message was urgently telegraphed to Nehru on May 26.

But just as Nehru's consent reached Karachi, the world also learnt that Nehru had died in his sleep. And with that a major opportunity for a peaceful solution over Kashmir was also lost. Wonder when such an opportunity would come again?

To be honest, I am not sure if Vajpayee, Musharraf and Farooq Abdullah have, as yet, attained the stature of their respective predecessors to make any major concessions and to survive the domestic political fallout, that would inevitably follow.

The writer is a strategic affairs expert and author of *Wars and no Peace over Kashmir*

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

13 JUN 2001

Hizbul kills Kashmir's first counter-insurgent

Srinagar, June 16

THE MAN who founded the first counter-insurgency group in Jammu and Kashmir paid with his life today for his efforts to end militancy in the State. Activists of the Hizbul Mujahideen shot dead Ghulam Nabi Azad, who once commanded a division of the outfit, as he emerged from his heavily guarded home in Anantnag district's Shulipora village.

Azad was immediately rushed to hospital, but was declared brought dead, officials said. The killers fled, and a hunt is on to trace them.

Hizbul Mujahideen claimed responsibility for the killing, warning counter-insurgent groups to stop "anti-movement activities" "Our activists killed Azad for leading a group of counter-insurgents," a spokesman of the outfit said. Police cordoned off the village after the assassination.

Azad came into limelight when he founded the first counter-insurgency group, Muslim Mujahideen, and became its chief after giving up the path of violence in early 1994. He was also president of the People's Patriotic Front.

He helped police and other security agencies in anti-militancy operations, and was responsible for the killing and capture of a large number of militants in south Kashmir. He was top on the hit-list of militants and has survived several attempts on his life.

Azad formed strong ties with the ruling National Conference in the late Nineties, but had drawn away from it in the recent past.

Encounter

A top Lashkar-e-Tayyeba militant, Abbu Shamas, and two of



AP PHOTO

The funeral of People's Patriotic Front chief Ghulam Nabi Azad at Shulipora on Saturday and (inset) a relative of Azad cries as his body is carried away for last rites.

his associates were killed in an encounter in Bandipora of north Kashmir last night, after BSF and Rashtriya Rifles soldiers conducted a joint raid to flush out militants in the area.

The house where the mili-

tants, believed to be Pakistanis, were hiding, was damaged in gunfire, a BSF spokesman said. A large quantity of arms and ammunition were found in the house.

PTI

Hurriyat top brass under house arrest

HT Correspondent
Srinagar, June 15

ABOUT HALF-A-DOZEN front-line All-Party Hurriyat Conference leaders, including Syed Ali Geelani and Professor Abdul Gani Bhat, were put under house arrest today to stop them from leading protest demonstrations.

Many other functionaries of the amalgam, along with Javaid Ahmad Mir and Shahid-ul Islam, were among those taken into preventive custody.

Police swooped down on Geelani's residence here in the early hours and restricted him from venturing out. Police and paramilitary police personnel had been deployed at his residence, sources said.

Geelani was taken into custody at Bijbihara yesterday while on his way to Shangus, where six

Lashkar-e-Tayyeba militants, holed up inside a mosque, were killed on Tuesday.

Geelani, however, was released late in the evening. The Hurriyat leader had called for protest rallies across the Valley against the recent violent incidents at Char-e-Sharief, Shangus, Kupwara and Doda.

The call came three days after Hurriyat chairman Professor Abdul Gani Bhat had announced that Hurriyat had suspended all its activities in view of the forthcoming Indo-Pak summit.

Geelani, whose call was supported by various constituents of the amalgam besides militant groups, was expected to lead the protest demonstrations personally.

A police officer said Geelani's movements had been restricted "to avoid breach of peace".

Police personnel were also

deployed at Hurriyat chairman Professor Abdul Gani Bhat's office-cum-residence. He, along with Haji Ghulam Nabbi Sumjhi, Shabir Ahmad Dar, Abdu Rasheed Untoo and Altaf Masoodi, were not allowed to move outside the house.

The police had earlier arrested Javaid Ahmad Mir, known for organising and managing protest demonstrations, and Shahidul Islam along with human rights activist Mohammed Ahsan Untoo.

Despite the preventive measures, protest demonstrations were held at Maisumma, Jamia Masjid, Safakadal and Sopore. The police resorted to lathicharge and used teargas to disperse demonstrations at Maisumma and Jamia Masjid. The protestors retaliated with stones. At least six persons were injured.

Hurriyat stopped from leading protest march

The Times of India News Service and Agencies

SRINAGAR: Six leaders of the All-Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), including its chairman Abdul Ghani Bhat and Syed Ali Shah Geelani, were put under house arrest to foil any attempt to lead a protest march in the Kashmir Valley on Friday afternoon against the Charar-e-Sharief incident.

Contrary to its earlier pronouncements not to hold any demonstrations in view of the forthcoming Vajpayee-Musharraf talks, the Hurriyat Conference gave a call for rallies outside various mosques to register its protest against the Charar-e-Sharief incident in which six persons were killed and more than 60 injured when an unidentified person hurled a hand-grenade at the congregation last Friday.

Besides Mr Bhat and Mr Geelani, the leaders put under house arrest were Qazi Abdullah, Gulam Nabi Sumji, Sheikh Aziz and Shabir Ahmad Bhat of the Muslim Conference.

But a police spokesman said that the Hurriyat leaders were being kept in protective custody for the day and the security around their homes would be removed by late evening.

Meanwhile, security forces gunned down eight foreign mercenaries belonging to the Lashker-e-Toiba (LeT) outfit in the Kangotta forests in Rajouri district on

Thursday evening, an official said here on Friday.

Acting on a tip-off, security forces launched an operation in the forest area of Buddha tehsil, he said, adding that LeT militants were engaged in a gun battle in which the foreign mercenaries were shot dead. The security forces did not suffer any loss of life, he said.

A Pakistani intruder was killed and 11 Bangladeshi nationals were

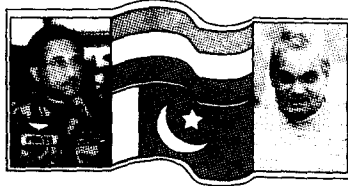
arrested along the international border in the Jammu division where the Pakistani Rangers and BSF troops exchanged fire at 15 places on Thursday night, a BSF spokesman said here on Friday.

In a strike ahead of the month-long annual Amarnath yatra, militants on Friday engineered an improvised explosive device (IED) blast on the route in south Kashmir, wounding four BSF jawans.

Official sources said the IED was planted at Athnar, eight km from Pahalgam, which serves as the base camp for the yatra. The explosion occurred when a BSF vehicle crossed over it at about 9.30 a.m.

Talking to this newspaper on the telephone,

the Hurriyat chairman alleged that they were living in a region where the law of the jungle operated. "Anything can happen to anybody, any time here," Mr Bhat said, adding, "There is no reason to question why in Kashmir."



Musharraf keen on one-to-one dialogue

By Seema Guha

The Times of India News Service

NEW DELHI: Although a clear outline of the structure and content of the Vajpayee-Musharraf meeting has not yet been finalised, there is one thing Pakistan and India agree on—the summit will focus more on substance than on frills. Highly placed sources say Islamabad has indicated that General Pervez Musharraf is keen that the summit should devote more time to one-to-one meetings with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee rather than delegation-level talks. But the structure of the meetings has not been worked out.

The finer details of the summit will be finalised only after the dates for the visit are announced. The PM himself will decide these dates and is looking at a time-frame between July 9-22. Sources said the Musharraf visit was likely to end before the parliament session begins on July 23.

The general's close aides are keen that the visit should be short. He should also be seen to be conducting solid business.

Hurriyat looks a divided house prior to talks

Rashid Ahmad
Srinagar, June 14

THE HURRIYAT executive, which ended yesterday's meeting without any decision, did not meet today as it had agreed to.

Its chairman said some of the members were busy elsewhere, but sources said serious differences had emerged between the members, some of whom wanted to go on the offensive against the Government.

The executive met yesterday to discuss the emerging political situation in the backdrop of the proposed Indo-Pak summit, and to define a role for itself. Hurriyat chairman Abdul Gani Bhat said today: "The executive council will meet in the next few days though no specific date has been fixed."

Some members of the amalgam are reportedly upset over the decision to suspend activities till Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee meets Pakistan's Chief Executive, General Pervez Musharraf.

Former Hurriyat chairman Syed Ali Geelani, who did not attend Wednesday's meeting, called for "massive" demonstrations tomorrow against what he called the "reign of terror."

Geelani's call has found support among militant groups. United Jihad Council, a Muzaffarabad-based platform of 14-Kashmiri militant groups, head-

ed by Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin, has described Geelani's protest call as "appropriate and well-timed".

The Hizbul chief alleged that the security forces were continuing with their excesses under the cover of the proposed dialogue process. Salahuddin appealed to the people to take to the streets on Friday in response to Geelani's call.

Jamiatul Mujahideen and Dakhtar-e-Millat have criticised the Hurriyat for "suspending" activities. Jamiatul Mujahideen accused the Hurriyat of speaking "the Indian Government's language".

The Muslim League, which is one of the member-parties of the Hurriyat's general council, went a step ahead and called for a protest strike on Friday. People's League and Islamic Students League, too, are reported to have criticised the amalgam over the decision.

Sources said that the Hurriyat was also divided over the recent statements of Abdul Gani Lone and Molvi Omer Farooq. Lone had asked militants to keep away from mosques. Mirwaiz had said granting internal autonomy to the State would break the ice.

Few bought the amalgam's explanation that such statements were aimed at putting pressure on the two countries to include Hurriyat in the proposed talks

The wave of hope can become a reality. It is possible to solve the Kashmir tangle

Architecture for peace

BY PREM SHANKAR JHA

15/6

THREE WEEKS ago, when Atal Bihari Vajpayee formally announced the end of the ceasefire in Kashmir and suddenly invited General Pervez Musharraf to New Delhi, I was among those who had felt that he had made a mistake. His *volte face* had relegated the dialogue with the Kashmiri separatists through K.C. Pant to the sidelines without giving it a chance. Since he had also dropped all pre-conditions to a meeting with Musharraf, hardliners in Islamabad were bound to see this as a victory over India. That, I feared, would make it impossible for Musharraf to adopt the flexibility that is a prerequisite for the negotiated settlement of any dispute, even if he wanted to.

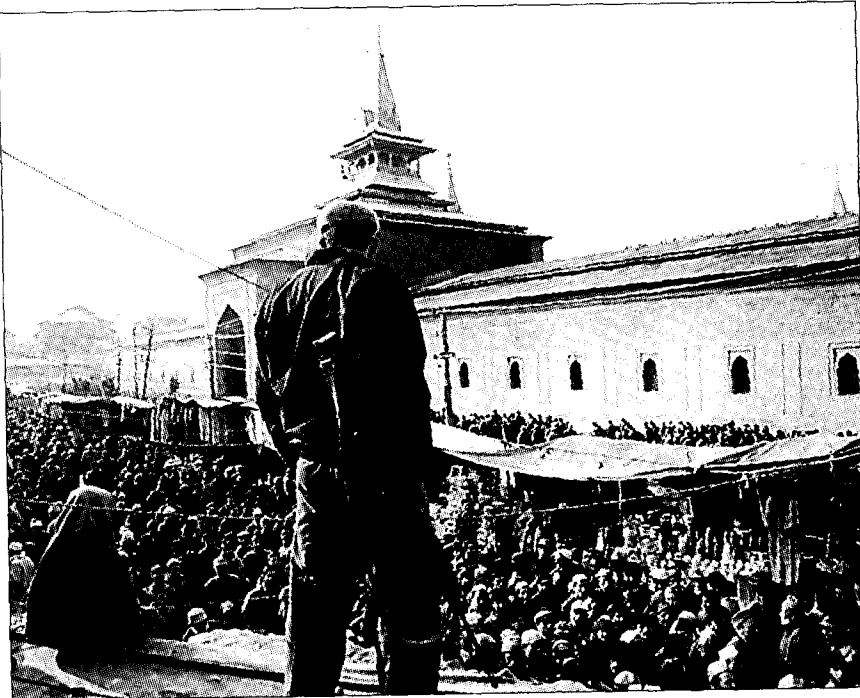
My objections were not without merit. The Pant dialogue is dead. And Pakistanis have perceived Vajpayee's invitation as a diplomatic victory for their government. Most attribute it to the sacrifices made by the *jehadis* in Kashmir. Despite that, I was wrong, because I had not factored into my assessment the deep longing for peace that exists not just in India, but also in Pakistan. That has strengthened Musharraf's hands in dealing with the hawks in his own establishment. For the first time in decades, there is the whiff of peace in the air.

A quotation from a recent column of Ayaz Amir, one of Pakistan's most respected columnists who is no dove on Kashmir, illustrates the change that is taking place in public sentiment. "India and Pakistan must settle their differences by themselves, on their own terms, and not as a result of outside prodding. India is right in this, and Pakistan wrong."

What a long way this is from Pakistan's earlier harping on the UN resolutions and its incessant attempt to internationalise the Kashmir dispute?

Amir's sentiments are widely shared. Over the past two years Pakistani newspapers have been saturated with an awareness that their country is approaching a dead end. The national debt exceeds the national income; three quarters of the federal government's current revenues go into servicing it. This leaves nothing for education, infrastructure and health. The military budget swallows over five per cent of the GDP and all of it is financed by increases in the national debt.

Externally, Pakistan is bankrupt and is living on an IV drip of foreign exchange administered by the IMF. At home, private armies of *jehadis* have proliferated. Sectarian strife is rampant, and the country is awash in guns. The *jehadis* and their patrons in the religious and political establishment are building their strength by posing as champions of Islam, fighting the 'Indian oppressors' in



HOPING AGAINST HOPE: In front of a Srinagar mosque

Kashmir. This is dragging Pakistan towards a Taliban type of State.

The prospect of a breakthrough holds out the promise of reversing this trend. This realism is reflected by the businesslike way in which Musharraf is preparing his country for the talks. The invitation caught him by surprise. But forced to choose between ducking the challenge it posed and meeting it, Musharraf has chosen to do the latter.

Signs of his seriousness abound. When asked in a BBC interview whether he would be prepared to consider a settlement based on the Line of Control, he refrained from playing to the gallery at home and said that he would prefer to cross this and other bridges when he got to them. Soon after, various *jehadi* outfits, including the Hizbul Mujahideen, announced that they would refrain from violence in Kashmir in order to give the talks a chance.

Through the Pakistan High Commissioner in Delhi, Musharraf poured cold water on the Hurriyat's ambition to meet him during his visit. And Ali Shah Geelani suddenly emerged as a critic of the very same *jehadis* whom he had welcomed to Kashmir a few days ago.

What is more telling is the way in which Musharraf has been preparing public opinion at home. Speaking at a conference of religious leaders and scholars on the occasion of the Prophet's birthday, he said (in Ayaz Amir's words):

"By speaking irresponsibly we have given a handle to others to malign us. Little wonder Pakistan is called all manner of things: failed State, terrorist State. We should learn to relate our utterances to our strength. We are a weak country, left behind in the race for development. While there is no question of discarding principles, it (is) not wise to speak intemperately... What was the need to talk of planting the banner of Islam on the Red Fort in Delhi? Did we not realise the difficulty we thus caused our brethren-in-faith across the border?"

Musharraf's message was unambiguous: a nation's true strength lies in its economy and human resources. Pakistan has devoted too much to building its military strength and too little to building up its human resources. The time has come to restore the balance. What is as significant as the speech is the fact that it was televised by Pakistan TV.

There is a wave of hope in both the countries. No one expects a resolution of the dispute in one meeting. But the visit will be a success if the leaders are able to agree on a set of guidelines for negotiations in the future.

The first is to accept that neither country will agree to a solution that threatens its domestic stability, social harmony and unity. This would require India to drop its insistence that PoK (Azad Kashmir) is an integral part of

India, and Pakistan to drop its insistence that a solution should be found on the basis of the 1948 UN resolutions alone.

The second is to accept that the dispute cannot be resolved if it is seen as a purely bilateral one, because that will turn it into a zero sum game in which each country will view the other's gain as its loss. The way to avoid this is to make the restoration of peace, democracy and genuine autonomy to Kashmir one of its two goals. That will enable both countries to present the compromises they make in search of bilateral peace as gains they have secured for the Kashmiris.

If these two constraints are accepted there are only two ways to go. The first is to unite the Kashmir Valley and POK into a joint protectorate of both the countries. This new entity would be independent in all domestic matters but dependent on India and Pakistan for its external security. The second is to accept the LoC as the international border but make this the starting point of a process that restores social and economic unity to the two parts of Kashmir.

The joint protectorate (or condominium) idea has been around ever since militancy in Kashmir began. It suffers from one fatal flaw. There has to be a great deal of mutual trust between the two countries for it to work. That is precisely what has never existed.

A durable peace will only emerge from a step-by-step process that builds trust at each step. A six-step process suggests itself.

The first is for Pakistan to prevent the *jehadis* from coming to Kashmir and for India to withdraw its security forces from counter-insurgency operations. The second is for India and Pakistan to hold genuinely free elections in the two parts of Kashmir. The third is to allow the elected governments to fine-tune their relationships with the two countries to assure themselves of genuine autonomy.

The fourth is to decide to what extent they will soften the border between them for Kashmiris to meet and trade with each other. The fifth would be for India and Pakistan to open up their parts of Kashmir to tourists from (and trade with) the other country. The last would be for India and Pakistan to open up their borders to each other for trade and transit, as is envisaged in the South Asian Free Trade Agreement.

The entire process would probably take 10 years — by when both leaders will be out of office. That is why it is necessary for Vajpayee and Musharraf to spell out where they intend to go even as they take the first step on the road to peace.

Omar Abdullah escapes another bid on life

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, JUNE 23. The Union Minister of State for Commerce, Mr. Omar Abdullah, a Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Mushtaq Lone, and Mr. Shariefuddin Shariq, MP, escaped an attempt on their lives when militants fired rifle grenades at the helicopter in which they were flying to Sogam village of Kupwara district today.

According to reports, the three National Conference leaders took off from Srinagar for Sogam, the home village of Mr. Lone to address a public meeting.

As the pilot was trying to land in a government school ground, militants hiding in the nearby jungles fired at least four rifle grenades towards the helicopter.

The leaders later landed in district police lines at Kupwara. Mr. Omar Abdullah wanted to reach Sogam by road but he was advised against it by the district authorities.

Mr. Lone confirmed that rifle grenades were fired at the helicopter.

Reports from Kupwara, however, said that panic gripped the entire area after the grenades exploded. The meeting scheduled to be addressed by the three NC leaders was cancelled.

Mr. Abdullah had escaped a similar attempt in Srinagar last month.

Meanwhile, two militants and a security personnel were killed in a gunbattle in Hafruda forests. Reports said that security forces cordoned off the area and launched a search operation.

THE



A peace procession with King Birendra and his family members' photograph passes through a Kathmandu street on Wednesday. Devyani Rana, Dipendra's fiancée, today refused to depose before the panel probing the royal massacres. — AP/PTI (Report on page 5)

Hurriyat a divided house

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, June 13. — The Hurriyat executive council meeting today saw differences of opinion over the group's "suspension of activities" before the Indo-Pak summit and Mr Abdul Ghani Lone's statement calling the militants not to misuse shrines.

The council met this morning to discuss the political situation in the Kashmir valley. It was the first meeting since the group announced "suspension of activities".

Though the leaders were tight-lipped after the meeting, sources said the several members criticised Mr Lone for making the statement.

The People's Conference leader and the Hurriyat executive member also came in for criticism from the Lashkar-e-Taiyaba chief, Hafiz Mohammad Sayeed.

Sayeed said that instead of encouraging the Mujahideen, Mr Lone had issued a "damaging" statement. He said the militants had entered the Shangus mosque for offering prayers. A Mujahid has to carry his weapon wherever he goes,

including mosques, he said.

At the Hurriyat meeting, the members expressed sharp differences over the statement announcing "suspension of activities".

There had already been much confusion over the issue.

The Awami Action Committee chief, Moulvi Omar Farooq, told the STAR TV that the Hurriyat was suspending their activities, but a few other leaders said they were suspending only "protest activities", not the political ones.

The meeting was attended by Prof Abdul Ghani Bhat (Muslim Conference), Mr Abdul Ghani Lone (Peoples Conference), Maulvi Omar Farooq (Awami Action Committee), Mr Bashir Ahmed Bhat (JKLF), Qazi Ahadulla (Jamaat-e-Islami), Shiekh Abdul Aziz (Peoples League) and Mr Abbas Ansari (Itthad-ul Musalmeen). Mr Syed Ali Shah Geelani, former Hurriyat chief, didn't attend the meeting, while Maulvi Farooq left halfway.

■ Editorial: Toughness & balance, page 6
■ Another report on page 8

THE STATESMAN

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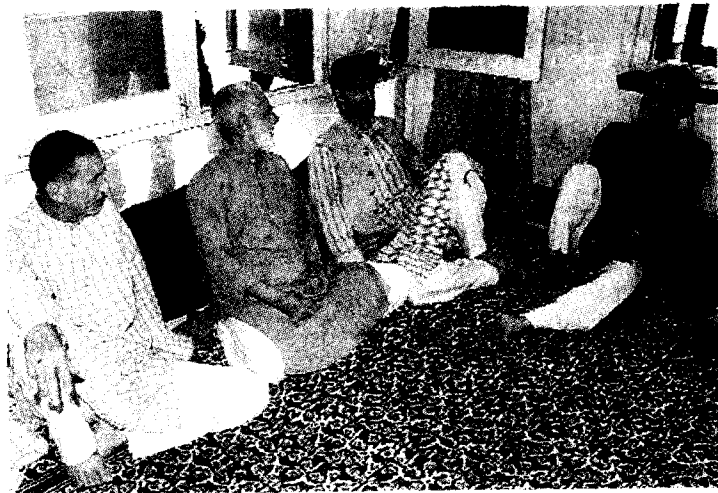
Hurriyat meet inconclusive

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, JUNE 13. The meeting of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference executive convened to discuss the coming summit talks between India and Pakistan today remained inconclusive.

Though a routine meeting, it assumes significance as the visit of the Pakistan military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, to India was on the agenda. The venue was also changed from the APHC's Rajbagh headquarters to the residence of its chairman, Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat, who chaired it. The JKLF chairman, Mr. Yaseen Malik, was away in the United States, and the Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, also did not attend the meeting, giving rise to speculation on "differences" in the conglomerate. However, Hurriyat sources said the forum was united on all issues. Mr. Bashir Ahmed Butt and Qazi Ahadullah represented the JKLF and the JeI.

Prof. Bhat said shortly before



The Hurriyat Conference leaders (from left), Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat (chairman), Qazi Ahadullah, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq and Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone, during its executive committee meeting in Srinagar on Wednesday. — Photo: Nissar Ahmad

the meeting that "there have been developments in the past few weeks and we are going to discuss those besides taking a view of organisational matters."

Sources said the meeting discussed Gen. Musharraf's recent statement asking Muslim clerics not to issue irresponsible statements against India. Since the

Hurriyat had extended full support to the proposed summit-level talks from day one, the meeting was expected to take a formal decision. On Tuesday, a senior Hurriyat leader, Mr. Lone, echoed Gen. Musharraf's views and said extremism would not solve the problem. Today's discussions revolved round these developments as also the Hurriyat decision to defer the general strike programme to help the summit become a success. A resolution welcoming the summit was expected to be adopted. It may also ask for a meeting with Gen. Musharraf, an idea opposed by both India and Pakistan.

Even as the meeting was in progress, word was sent to reporters that there would be no briefing or statement on the deliberations, which remained inconclusive. The Hurriyat headquarters was also tightlipped. However, the former chairman, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, left the meeting halfway. The sources said the deliberations would continue on Thursday.

THE HINDU

Militants killed as Army storms mosque

By Shujaat Bukhari

ANANTNAG, JUNE 12. After a 40-hour standoff in village Shangus, all the six militants holed up in the Jamai mosque were killed today when the Army stormed in with sharpshooters. One soldier lost his life and two were injured in the operation.

The operation, launched by 7 Rashtriya Rifles and the Special Operations Group of the Jammu and Kashmir police on Sunday, was called off early this morning after two more militants were killed. Of the six militants killed, four are from the Lashkar-e-Taiba and two from the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen.

A report here suggested that National Security Guard (NSG) commandos were airlifted from Delhi to take on the militants. The Army spokesperson was silent on this but said that sharpshooters were pressed into service to flush out the militants. Giving the details of the operation, he said that on Sunday on specific information the area was cordoned off but the militants opened fire killing a special police official (SPO) and later took shelter in the mosque.

"Keeping in view the sanctity of the religious place and sentiments of the people, the area was cordoned off and the security forces did not pursue the militants in the mosque," he said.

"They instead brought down a heavy volume of fire from inside the mosque." Repeated appeals from the security forces and the village elders fell on deaf ears. Exercising maximum restraint and patience, the security forces continued the cordon for 36 hours during which the militants kept on firing, injuring one civilian. With the militants not responding to the appeals, the security forces with the help of Army's sharpshooters killed two to three militants and later used teargas shells to flush them out. Around midnight two militants made a last-ditch effort to break the cordon but were killed. On searching, bodies of more militants were re-

covered. One security force personnel got killed and two others were injured, the spokesperson said. He appealed to the people not to allow militants to use "places of worship for nefarious activities".

A Lashkar-e-Taiba spokesperson said that two militants of his outfit managed to break the cordon and have reached their hide-out safely.

In Gagrin, near Shopian in South Kashmir, a militant and a CRPF jawan were killed when the former forced his entry into the camp of an SOG last night. Police said that the militant attacked the camp with grenades and opened fire. The fire was retaliated and

the militant was killed, as also a CRPF jawan. Fourteen persons were killed in other militancy-related incidents across the State.

Shrine attacked

PTI reports:

In Pampore, Pulwama district, militants made an abortive attempt to blow up an under-construction shrine complex last night, an official spokesman said. An improvised explosive device planted by the militants in the shrine complex of 'Char Yar' at Frastbal-Pampore exploded, causing minor damage to its wall.

Explosives haul

NEW DELHI, JUNE 12. The National Security Guard (NSG) said that a lot of explosive materials and radio communication sets were recovered today from inside the Jamai mosque in Shangus village in south Kashmir, the NSG Director-General, Mr. Nikhil Kumar, said.

The NSG DG expressed happiness over the 'smooth' operation and said, "we were tasked to end the misuse of the religious place keeping in view the sanctity of the mosque. We have done it brilliantly." Mr. Kumar maintained that only six militants were killed in the action. — PTI



The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, with Dr. Chittaranjan Ranawat at the Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai on Tuesday. — Report on Page 13

Security forces to go after militants

By Harish Khare

NEW DELHI, JUNE 12 As many as 92 militants have been gunned down by the security forces in Jammu and Kashmir in this month so far in what is seen as part of a 'go after them' strategy. The idea behind this pro-active approach, that came into play with the formal termination of the ceasefire, is that the security forces should be able to retrieve as much lost ground as possible before Gen. Musharraf visits New Delhi. When he comes here, the Pakistani ruler should be under no illusion about the Indian security forces' capacity to contain, and if necessary, take care of the jihadi and other militant outfits.

However, the security forces have also been cautioned that the militants would want to provoke them needlessly. Accordingly the forces have been advised to ob-

serve maximum restraint, and avoid, to the extent possible, any injury to civilians or any embarrassing violation of human rights.

A particular dilemma has presented itself to the security forces as the militants appear to have decided to use mosques for carrying on their activities. The militants' calculation is that once the security forces engage them, there is bound to be some damage to the mosque. Such damage, if any, can be used to excite religious sentiments.

For instance, militants belonging to the Lashkar-e-Taiba had sneaked into a mosque in Anantnag district. The easiest and no-casualty option for the security forces was to decimate the religious structure; but this option was firmly ruled out. Finally, the commandos had to storm the mosque, incurring an avoidable loss of life among the security

forces. The Unified Command headquarters has already warned the militants that they would not be allowed to misuse the mosques to attack the security forces. The onus has been put on the militants and their patrons that they must respect the sanctity of a place of worship.

The calculation is that the people of Kashmir have seen through this game. The various Hurriyat leaders did not find much public support. Even Syed Ali Shah Geelani, of the Jamat-e-Islami, could attract a crowd of only 200 people when he visited Charar-e-Sharief. What has been noted is that the state administration firmly turned down the demand that the local SHO, Mr. Imtiaz Dar, be shifted out. The message to the Jammu and Kashmir police is that the militants have to be stood down.

This tough and no-nonsense

approach to the militants has already restored the security forces' morale, according to senior officials. As part of a larger peace strategy, the idea is to demonstrate a capacity to protect India's security interests and to disabuse the Pakistani establishment that there was no battle-fatigue. In other words, peace and diplomacy would not be conducted from positions of weakness.

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, JUNE 12. The All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) today urged militant groups to spare places of worship from being used for operations. It also echoed the views of the Pakistan military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, on restraining activities against India.

A senior Hurriyat executive member, Mr. Abdul Gani Lone, told a news conference here that it was a tragedy that places of worship in Kashmir were being desecrated and blamed the security forces for damaging the mosque at Shangus. "Today, I came to know that the Army and police destroyed the mosque at Shangus. I strongly condemn the Army action.

Spare mosques, says Hurriyat

But I also appeal to the mujahideen not to use religious places, particularly mosques, for their operations as these involve the sentiments of the people."

Continuing with its policy adopted of late — support for the coming Musharraf-Vajpayee summit — Mr. Lone asked the militants not to convert Kashmir's struggle for right to self-determination into a war for disintegrating India. "I second what Gen. Musharraf has said. We better avoid extremism and acts that create hatred." He said, "We neither want India's disintegration nor do we want to vanquish it; there is no need to unfurl the flag on the Red Fort."

Mr. Lone clarified that the Hurriyat had not

suspended its anti-India activities but had only decided not to support the strike call given by the Kashmir Bar Association. "We do not want to create a situation which will harm the proposed high-level summit between India and Pakistan. We want it to be a success."

However, the spokesman of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, Mr. Abu Usama, denied that the militants of his outfit used mosques for operational purposes. "We do not enter mosques to take shelter nor we do use them as hide-outs," he told *The Hindu* over phone. "We only visit mosques to pray. The Indian forces laid siege, and our cadres fired at them only after they used a heavy volume of fire."

Hurriyat asks militants not to hide in mosques

HT Correspondent
Srinagar, June 12

HT-9 13/96
THE HURRIYAT Conference has asked militants not to "misuse" mosques as sanctuaries but at the same time has expressed shock over reports that the Army has destroyed a mosque at Shangus to eliminate militants who had holed up there.

Talking to reporters at the Amalgam headquarters here on Tuesday, Hurriyat leader and chairman of Peoples Conference, Abdul Ghani Lone said he was shocked over the "demolition of the mosque at Shangus by security forces". "I have come to know that security forces have destroyed a mosque at Shangus," Lone said. "I condemn it."

But Lone said "the Mujahideen should keep religious places, mosques in particular, out of the periphery of their activities". He felt that security forces could have used "some other means" to take on the militants without "desecrating and destroying the mosque".

"But they didn't", he said and described the act as "deplorable".

PTI quotes an Army spokes-

SHAH DECLARES WAR AGAINST J&K TRIFURCATION

SHABIR AHMAD Shah has opposed the proposed trifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir, terming those raising the demand as "enemies of India".

Shah, whose party is seeking dialogue with the Indian Government despite opposition from various quarters, admitted that Jammu and Ladakh have been the "victims of discrimination". "But, please don't forget that we too have been the victims of the atrocities," he said, while speaking at a seminar organised here on Sunday.

In a direct attack on the Sangh Parivar, Shah said, "We are already suffering because of one bloody line (the Line of Control), how many more lines do you want to draw." He added, "All the people, all the regions and religions of the State are linked together by destiny and those trying to seek a division are trying to draw a bloody line between regions and faiths."

Shah admitted that it would not be pragmatic to hope for "dramatic results" from Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's talks with Gen Pervez Musharraf, but contended that it was a beginning anyhow.

HTC, Jammu

man denying that the mosque was destroyed. "Only a small part of the annexe was damaged in the gunbattle," he said.

Lone is the first separatist leader to directly address militants to keep off religious places. Earlier Syed Ali Gilani, the fire-brand pro-militant leader asked militants to restrain from inflammatory rhetoric and slogan

shouting against India.

PTI quotes Lone as saying "Militants should not bring religious places, including mosques, in the ambit of their activities as it amounts to desecration of the place of worship."

He asked the army to "respect people's sentiments" and not damage places of worship where militants have holed up.

Lone says religious places shouldn't be misused; Army warns ultras

J&K mosque siege ends

KAVITA SURI
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, June 12. — All six militants holed up inside the Shangus shrine were killed late last night by elite NSG commandoes. A soldier was also killed and two others injured in the operation during which a portion of the mosque was damaged.

NSG commandos mounted an attack at around 3.30 a.m. and killed all six militants. The mosque was searched and the bodies recovered.

An LeT *fidayeen* was killed in Pulwama district after he stormed a heavily-guarded Special Operations Group camp at Gagran Shopian in southern Pulwama district late on Monday night.

Two CRPF members, including Inspector HK Gupta, were killed in the attack. Two critically-wounded SOG jawans have been shifted to a hospital.

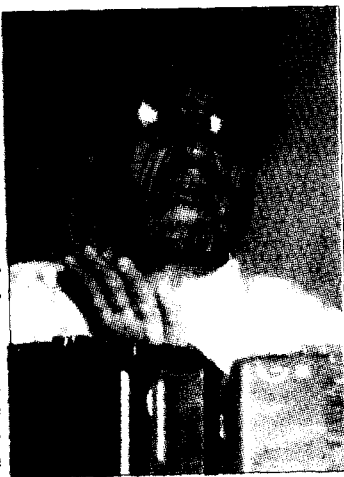
Lone's views: The All Party Hurriyat Conference leader and Peoples' Conference chairman, Mr Abdul Ghani Lone, today urged militants not to misuse religious places and said they should keep mosques and other religious places out of their area of activity.

"Every individual or a group

fighting for the cause of Kashmir's freedom should think about the sensitivity of this movement. I, therefore, request militant groups to keep religious places out of their sphere of activity," Mr Lone said, while addressing a press conference here this afternoon at the APHC headquarters. He said that by using mosques for their freedom struggle, militants are maligning the movement and giving a bad name to the cause at the international level.

Mr Lone, however, said that armed forces should also understand that religious sentiments of the people are attached with these things. "Besides, they have other means than destroying mosques," he said.

Condemning the Charar incident, Mr Lone demanded a judicial enquiry into it so that "the



Mr Abdul Ghani Lone addresses journalists at a Hurriyat office in Srinagar on Tuesday. — PTI

■ Another report on page 8

real culprits" can be brought to book. Hurriyat has alleged that state police have a hand in the incident.

Blaming state police for the Charar incident, he said there wouldn't have been a grenade attack on the congregation at the shrine, had there been adequate security arrangements. Besides, police should have exercised restraint and shouldn't have fired indiscriminately; fewer people would have died, he said.

Alleging that state police had arrested the vice president of People's Conference, Dr Ghulam Mohammad Hubbi, and his wife after beating them while they were on a 72-hour hunger strike in protest against the Charar incident, Mr Lone said there was no news of them after they were picked up by police on Sunday.

Mr Lone said Hurriyat was

running a peaceful movement but Centre wasn't interested in this. This, he said, was quite apparent from the denial of permission to the Hurriyat delegation to visit Pakistan.

On why the Hurriyat was insisting on going to Pakistan whereas they could talk to the Pakistan leadership on telephone, through mobiles and e-mail, he said had that been the case, even General Musharraf could have spoken to Mr Vajpayee over the phone or through e-mail; there wasn't any need for him to come to New Delhi.

Army warning: Unified Headquarters of security forces in J&K have said that they will now reserve the right to take military action to neutralise militants who take refuge in religious places.

Pant: Mr KC Pant held a series of meeting with leaders of political parties in Lok Sabha today and apprised them of his recent visit to Jammu and Kashmir, adds PTI.

Attempt on NC MLA: A National Conference legislator Mr Sadiq Ali and his family members had a narrow escape when militants hurled a grenade towards his Hassan Abad house late last night, adds UNI.

THE STATESMAN

HC-8 1986

A shifting Hurriyat

THE HURRIYAT'S decision to suspend their campaign in view of the upcoming meeting between Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and General Pervez Musharraf should help ease tension in the Valley. Its change of stance may have something to do with the general's no-nonsense remarks at a meeting with the Muslim clergy in Islamabad a few days ago. The general's message that it was time for the fundamentalists to observe restraint could not have been lost on their counterparts in Kashmir. But even as the Hurriyat leaders expressed their positive line, a bunch of extremists were engaged in a gunfight with the security forces from behind the walls of a mosque in south-western Kashmir. The confrontation ended with the death of six militants after a 48-hour stand off.

The incident demonstrates the limitations of the Hurriyat's claim to represent all the militant groups in Kashmir. The gesture

made by Hurriyat leaders publicly condemning the use of a place of worship as a hideout has made them sound a little more credible. This may help in changing the perception in the Valley that some Hurriyat leaders are in awe of the extremist groups and would do nothing to offend them.

The recent attempts to use places of worship as the venue of such acts, including the grenade attack in the Charar-e-Sharif precincts, show the kind of mischief which may be expected in the coming weeks. The changing situation signals a degree of isolation which the subversives may face in the days to come. As for the security forces, there is need for greater strategic vigilance so that any potential crisis can be taken care of through pre-emptive action. That would be one spin-off from the Hurriyat's somewhat mellowed public position in strengthening the constituency for a durable peace in the Valley.

THE HINDUSTAN TIME

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TUESDAY, JUNE 12, 2001

A POSITIVE SIGN

19-10
12/6

THE ALL PARTY Hurriyat Conference has done well to suspend its "organised political movement" against what it calls "state terrorism" in Jammu and Kashmir in the context of the forthcoming India-Pakistan summit. After the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's snap decision to invite Pakistan's Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, for bilateral talks, the separatist umbrella outfit could not obviously be seen as pursuing any activity that would have the effect of vitiating the atmosphere in the run-up to the historic meet. After all, such a direct engagement with Pakistan has been one of the major planks of its political platform; that, in the process, it found itself outmanoeuvred by the Vajpayee regime is a different matter. In fact, the 'summit' call, which came as a big surprise to one and all, has had a benumbing effect, compelling almost every player having stakes in 'Kashmir' to wait and watch what emerges out of the Vajpayee-Musharraf parleys. This, in turn, heightened the non-seriousness of the 'dialogue process' pursued by the Government of India's designated interlocutor, Mr. K. C. Pant. Maybe the Hurriyat leadership's latest constructive turn in approach has a lot to do with pressure from the peace-craving people of the State and, perhaps, also with the palpably positive signals — some discordant hawkish notes, notwithstanding — from the official Pakistan establishment in the 'summit' context. Whatever the motivation, there is no gainsaying the likely salutary impact of the Hurriyat's latest decision — loosely, a political equivalent of military ceasefire — on the atmospheric ahead of the summit.

In charting this course, the Hurriyat — to go by the enunciation of its spokesperson, Sheikh Abdur Rasheed — has been actuated by its "wish" that the forthcoming summit talks are not "disturbed or derailed in any way"; an undoubtedly noble sentiment. But, given the disparate character of the conglomerate — traceable as much to sharp differences among the constituents over ways of unravelling the Kashmir imbroglio as to

the ego-clashes between their leaders — and its reputation for speaking in different voices, some genuine misgivings are bound to arise about the Hurriyat's positive move enjoying the unanimous approval of its members and, more important, being followed up and acted upon at the ground level. From this standpoint, much more significant than Mr. Rasheed's remarks — and quite reassuring too — is the reported statement of Syed Ali Shah Geelani denouncing the jihadi groups that spread hatred against India. That Mr. Geelani, a Hurriyat leader with the image of an inveterate hardliner and one who has become an anathema of sorts to the Vajpayee Government for this reason, should decry any hate-India campaign and, inferentially, play down the 'religious dimension' of the Kashmir problem is indeed a hopeful sign.

Encouraging as these responses certainly are, a matter of grave concern is, however, the escalation in the jihadi elements' sinister attacks, marked by an increasing use of places of worship as hideouts. The grenade attack on the Charar-e-Sharief mosque premises, killing six persons and injuring scores of others who had gathered for Friday prayers — an incident that revived memories of the ghastly 1995 episode when the shrine was burnt down after a month-long standoff between security forces and militants holed up there — is a clear pointer to what is in store for the administration in the days ahead from those forces which are intent on scuttling any initiative to find a settlement of the Kashmir problem. Charar-type encounters with militants, involving as they did places of worship, demand utmost caution and tact from the security forces, for obvious reasons. Any inappropriate use of force or indiscretion on their part will necessarily be visited by a surge of hurt sentiments and disaffection. If the public protest that followed the Charar killings, wherein an accusing finger was pointed at the security forces themselves, is anything to go by, the law enforcement agencies do not seem to have got the message fully, as yet.

MOSQUE CORDONED OFF; POWER SUPPLY CUT OFF

Gunbattle rages, 3 ultras killed

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, JUNE 11. Three militants are reported to have been killed in a fresh gunbattle between security forces and the militants of the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) holed up in a mosque at Shangus, Anantnag district, in south Kashmir. A portion of the mosque has been damaged and the siege of the village continued for the second day. The entry of mediapersons into the area has been banned by the authorities.

Official sources in Anantnag told *The Hindu* that the battle between the holed-up militants and the Rashtriya Rifles resumed this afternoon resulting in damage to a portion of the mosque. The Director-General of Police, Mr. A.K. Suri, confirmed that three suspected militants were killed in the encounter.

This is yet to be confirmed as the area remains cordoned and the exchange of fire continues, he said. "Details are awaited." Reports said that the Army has taken over the operation; police, including the District Superintendent of Police, are a kilometer away.

(According to PTI, the security

forces tightened the siege and snapped electricity and water supply but ruled out storming the mosque. The militants then resorted to indiscriminate firing and in the retaliatory fire two militants are believed to have been killed. A portion of the bathroom annexe of the shrine was damaged in the exchange of fire.)

Lashkar storms STF camp

SRINAGAR, JUNE 11. In stepped-up offensive, a suicide squad, suspected to be that of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, stormed a police camp in south Kashmir tonight, injuring a sub-inspector, official sources said. The militants forced their way into a Special Task Force camp at Sohpiyan in Phulwama district, 52 km from here.

The attack set off a fierce encounter that continued till late in the evening, the sources said. — PTI

43-1 12/6
On Sunday evening, the Special Operations Group of the Jammu and Kashmir police and the Rashtriya Rifles laid siege to the Ganai Mohalla locality of Shangus village following a tipoff that a number of militants were present there. Soon after the cordon, the militants attacked the Army and killed a counter-insurgent who was accompanying them.

The militants later moved towards the Jamai mosque and took shelter there. A fierce gunbattle ensued and continued for more than two hours after which the security forces tightened the cordon with the arrival of reinforcements. They also used flashlights to prevent the militants' from escaping under cover of darkness. "The area was calm till Monday morning and the exchange of fire resumed shortly before noon," sources said. In all, seven militants are believed to have taken shelter in the mosque.

The sources said the attempts of the security forces to persuade the militants failed despite senior residents of the area being asked to prevail upon them. "We will prefer to die rather than surrender," the militants reportedly

conveyed to the Army.

Mediapersons were not allowed entry into the area. Police stopped journalists at Acchabal and then at Khanabal and asked them to return. Directions have come from the top brass not to allow the media, a police officer said.

A LeT spokesperson, Mr. Abu Usma, confirmed that the militants of his outfit were involved. He rang up newspaper offices in Srinagar and said the militants had taken on the security forces. He did not give details.

This is the third incident of militants taking shelter in a mosque in the last two weeks. Late last month, at Kharwar in Shopian militants were given safe passage by the security forces at a time when the Centre's Kashmir interlocutor, Mr. K.C. Pant, was on a visit to the Valley. This was followed by the encounter at Sopore, where too militants tried to hide in a mosque but the security forces shot them down before that.

In other incidents, soldiers were killed in a militant ambush at Zachaldara in Handwara. Two persons were injured.

THE HINDU

Army battles to break J&K shrine siege

Three militants gunned down

HT Correspondent
Srinagar, June 11

SECURITY FORCES have killed three of the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba militants holed up in a mosque at Shangus village in Anantnag district.

A senior police officer, who confirmed the three deaths, said the mosque was not damaged in the shooting. The militants still inside the mosque are firing away, he said.

An agency report said that Black Cat commandos were flown in from Delhi to break the siege. Earlier today, a senior police officer said security forces had been instructed to observe restraint and not storm the mosque. "We want to tire them out, even if it takes us several days," the officer said.

Unofficial reports said there was a sharp exchange of fire for an hour after 11:30 am, and then again later in the afternoon.

Civilian movement has been restricted in the village, and journalists are not being allowed anywhere near the mosque. Sources said three or four militants are still holed up in the mosque.

The militants were trapped yesterday after Rashtriya Rifles and the Special Operation Group cordoned off the village's Ganai Mohalla. As forces zeroed in on a house where the militants were hiding, the latter opened fire. The man who had led the forces to the house was killed in the firing. A shootout followed. The

militants left the house, but ran inside the mosque for cover as the soldiers kept firing. The exchange of fire continued even after the militants went inside, but it stopped during the night.

Shootout at SOG camp: A member of the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba's suicide squad attacked a Special Operation Group camp at Gagrin in Shopian today. A shootout was still on when last reports came in. Initial report said one SOG man was killed.

Stray killings: Militants struck in north Kashmir today, killing two jawans and injuring two in an ambush on a patrolling party at Ahgam village near Zachaldar woods.

But the Hizbul Mujahideen lost one of its senior commanders at Tral quarter in southern Pulwama district, in an encounter with the BSF. The slain militant, identified as Saleem Khan, was the outfit's district commander.

Unidentified gunmen shot dead a man and his son at Batapora near Magam in Budgam. A militant released from custody got killed under similar circumstances at Qazipora in Pulwama. All three were said to be informers of the Army.

Unidentified assailants forced their entry into a house at Manchwa in Budgam and fired indiscriminately. Two women were injured.

Related reports on Page 9

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

11.6.2001

Hurriyat puts brake on movement

SR-1
11/6

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SRINAGAR, June 10. - The All-Party Hurriyat Conference today decided to suspend its agitational activities temporarily in view of the proposed summit between Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and General Pervez Musharraf.

In a statement, the Hurriyat said, "The situation in which the people of J&K find themselves demands an organised people's movement. But in view of the proposed summit, the Hurriyat has decided to suspend the same for the time being." The Hurriyat wants the Vajpayee-Musharraf summit to succeed and it would not indulge in any act which would derail the dialogue, the statement said.

Terming the summit as a "good beginning" towards restoring peace in the state, the Hurriyat demanded its inclusion in the proposed talks.

MILITANTS FIRE FROM MOSQUE, COP KILLED

SRINAGAR, June 10. - Militants holed up in a mosque in Kokernag, near Srinagar, fired at security forces late tonight, killing a police officer, officials said.

The Rashtriya Rifles and Anantnag unit of Special Operations Group surrounded the mosque on receiving the news that foreign militants were holed up inside. Troops asked the militants to surrender. The ultras started firing killing the SOG officer. Officials said four militants were hiding in the mosque. Escape routes had been sealed and reinforcements of security forces were being rushed in, officials said. The encounter was on till late into the night. Police were taking precautions to avoid damage to the mosque, sources said.

- PTI

The APHC announcement comes nearly three weeks after the Centre called off its unilateral ceasefire in the state and invited Gen Musharraf for talks in New Delhi.

In Mumbai, Mr LK Advani said signals ahead of the proposed Indo-Pak summit had been "positive" so far. The Hurriyat statement alleged that several agencies were un-

nerved following the peace process set in motion by Mr Vajpayee. These agencies have started engineering acts of terrorism in J&K. "Their gameplan is to defame militants," the statement said.

Referring to Friday's explosion at Char-e-Sharif shrine, the Hurriyat said militants were not responsible for the blast and the "incident is part of a

dangerous gameplan"

The president of Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party, Mr Shabir Ahmed Shah, said recent statements by Gen Musharraf were "positive and indicated his seriousness to resolve the dispute which has strained relations between the two nations." The issue, however, cannot be resolved in one meeting and will take time, Mr Shah said. Some elements were trying sabotage the Prime Minister's peace initiative, Mr Shah said. But he did not name any party or leader.

Border firing: One person was killed in firing by Pakistan Rangers on border outposts and civilian areas along the border in Jammu since last evening.

Bus service: Delhi government has decided to increase the number of Delhi-Lahore buses from two to four from 1 August. The fare, from August, may be increased from Rs 800 to Rs 1,000 per passenger. **AP-UNI**

THE ST. JESUIT

Hurriyat puts off stir till summit

HT Correspondent
Srinagar, June 10

THE HURRIYAT Conference says it is upset over "police excesses" throughout the Valley, but will not take to the streets now with the Indo-Pak summit due soon.

A Hurriyat statement, which said the summit should be held in a congenial atmosphere, declared: "We don't favour any kind of disquiet and unrest at a time when the heads of two Governments are to meet."

The umbrella organisation of militant outfits said it was ready to start a massive agitation. "But," the statement said, "we suspend it for the time being and we don't want to create bad blood by taking to the streets." The explosion at Charar-e-Sharief on Friday, the Hurriyat said, was engineered by local police and was aimed at "sabotaging the proposed summit".

Such incidents, it said, were being "staged" to harass locals and defame the Mujahideen in the international community. The Hurriyat also referred to reports of rape in Marmat in Doda and the recent grenade explosions at Kupwara, Batamaloo in Srinagar and Charar-e-Sharief to establish

ULTRAS HOLED UP IN MOSQUE KILL OFFICER

MILITANTS HOLED up in a mosque on Sunday night fired on security forces, killing a police officer in Anantnag. Sources said troops of Rashtriya Rifles and Special Operations Group surrounded the mosque at Kokernag on a tip-off that some foreign militants were hiding there. When the troops asked the ultras to give up, they responded by opening fire, killing an SOG officer.

Sources said four militants were hiding in the mosque. All escape routes had been sealed and reinforcements rushed to the mosque. The encounter was on till late into the night.

PTI, Srinagar

what it called "excesses". A senior Hurriyat leader, Ghulam Mohammad Hubbi, meanwhile, has been arrested on charges of involvement in "incidents of violence and stone throwing at Charar-e-Sharief".

The towns remained shut for the third consecutive day on Sunday, as protests continued in and around the town. Over half a dozen men were reportedly arrested for fomenting trouble in the town.

Geelani stance: General Pervez Musharaf's recent rebuke to the fundamentalist clerics in Pakistan for irresponsible rhetoric against India has found favour with former Hurriyat chairman and hard-line pro Pakistan Jamaat-e-Islami leader Syed Ali Geelani. He actually went a step

further than Gen. Musharraf. He said it was un-Islamic to use foul language against a people or country. He made it clear, however, that his statement should not be taken to undermine the importance of Jihad.

"Our struggle is not aimed against the people of India nor are we against the Indian statehood," he said.

He said that he had, on many occasions during public meetings, stopped enthusiastic youth from shouting provocative slogans. He said that other slogans like "crush India" were also in bad taste. "I have always sought that this kind of slogans should not be raised."

Abdul Majid Dar interview on P9

Pant briefs Cong. on J&K visit

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JUNE 9. The Centre's interlocutor on Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. K. C. Pant, today began consultations with leaders of political parties by briefing Congress leaders on his recent visit to the State and talks with a cross-section of the people and groups there.

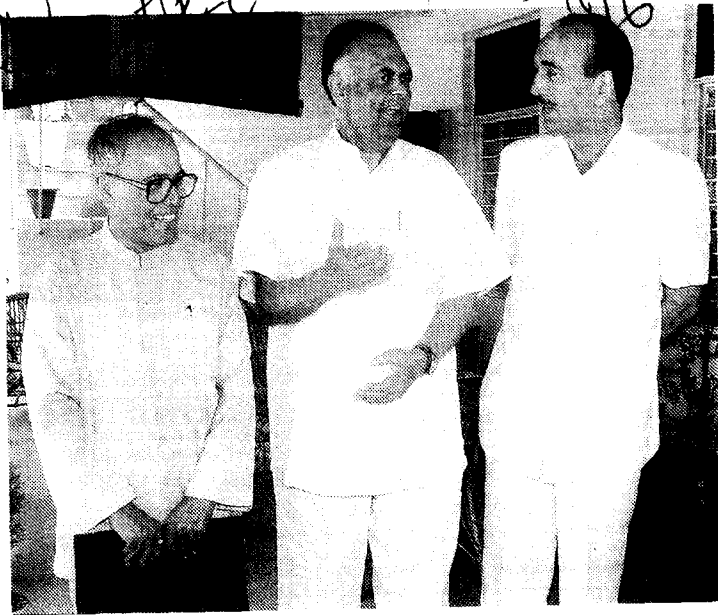
During a hour-long meeting with Congress Working Committee members, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee and Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad, Mr. Pant told them of the divergent views expressed by the people during his recent six-day visit to the State.

Later speaking to reporters, he said a forward movement had to be seen in the interaction with various sections of people and that at present he was meeting leaders of political parties.

Referring to today's meeting, Mr. Pant said there was no difference in perception since everyone had genuine concern for peace in the State.

Mr. Mukherjee said the overall impact of Mr. Pant's interaction was positive and as far as the political parties were concerned, they were for restoration of peace in the State.

The Congress president, Ms. Sonia Gandhi, had deputed Mr. Mukherjee and Mr. Azad to meet Mr. Pant after he requested all parties to take part in the discussion on Kashmir. Mr. Mukherjee



The Centre's interlocutor, Mr. K. C. Pant, flanked by the Congress leaders, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee and Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad, in New Delhi on Saturday. — Photo: Anu Pushkarna

said he would brief Ms. Gandhi on the meeting.

'Positive impact'

PTI reports:

To a question about the All-Party Hurriyat Conference's absence from the parleys during Mr. Pant's visit, he said, "the entire issue has to be seen in totality. When you hold talks there will be some successes and some failures but when you see the issue in its

entirety, the overall impact has been on the positive side."

Mr. Pant, during the second phase of his interaction, would meet representatives from other parties including the BJP and the Left parties, official sources said.

Asked whether there was any deadline for him, the Centre's interlocutor said, "though there is no deadline, I am of the opinion that peace has to be restored in the State as early as possible."

Four women killed in ~~HT~~ J&K shrine explosion *9/6*

HT Correspondent
Charar-e-Sharief, June 8

MORE THAN 50,000 people had gathered at the shrine of Sufi saint Shaikh Noor-ud-din Noorani at Charar-e-Sharief when a grenade exploded, killing four women and prompting a police firing.

More than 60 were injured in the explosion that took by surprise the congregation preparing to pray on the occasion of Prophet Mohammed's birth anniversary.

The shrine, however, was not damaged.

No militant organisation claimed responsibility, but police suspected the Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Taiyyaba. They also thought that policemen were the target and that the civilian casualties were accidental. Locals, however, blamed the police, claiming that the local station house officer was responsible.

Jammu and Kashmir DGP AK Suri dismissed the allegations as "malicious" and "motivated". "The SHO was associated with the Special Task Force and people want him transferred," he said.

But locals claimed they had caught the SHO after the blast. He escaped but left behind his bullet-proof jacket, they said.

Shops downed shutters here with groups of people demonstrating against the police.

PTI quoted some protesters as saying that an improvised explosive device, wrapped in a polythene bag, was hurled at women devotees from the lawns of shrine.



Two women injured in the Charar-e-Sharief blast lie at a Srinagar hospital on Friday.

AFP PHOTO

MILITANTS TARGET FRIDAY CONGREGATION

4 killed, 60 injured in grenade attack on Charar-e-Sharief

By Shujaat Bukhari

JK HD-1 9/6

SRINAGAR, JUNE 8. Four women were killed and 60 injured, some of them seriously, when unidentified militants threw a grenade at the shrine of Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani on the premises of the famous Charar-e-Sharief mosque in central Kashmir on Friday. The incident evoked strong protests and the situation in the town turned violent.

Police said that about 15,000 devotees from various parts of the Kashmir Valley were about to offer prayers when the grenade exploded. Twenty of the injured, most of whom were removed to hospitals in Srinagar, were said to be critical. Some were admitted to local hospitals. Three of the four deceased were women — Nissara, Zubaida and Gousia.

An eyewitness said the grenade, thrown from the side of the *Talab* (pond), landed in the shrine complex. "We do not know who threw it," he said adding it was followed by firing. However, police denied that any of the injured had bullet wounds. Hundreds of blood-splattered sandals were later found in the complex.

Soon after the blast, local residents came to the shrine and began raising slogans against police. Some blamed the Special Operations Group of the State police. According to reports, around 60,000 people had gathered at the shrine and demanded a probe. "This is outrageous and amounts to desecration of the revered shrine," said a protester. Tempers ran high and the authorities found it difficult to pacify the protesters who reportedly attacked police. However, the attacks could not be confirmed.

Late in the evening, a police bulletin said:



The shrine of Charar-e-Sharief in central Kashmir (file photo) where four women were killed in a grenade blast on Friday. At right, an injured woman. — Photo: Nissar Ahmad

"Today militants hurled a grenade on the premises of the Charar-e-Sharief shrine where large number of devotees had assembled for Friday prayers. About 50 devotees were injured in the blast. The injured were shifted to different hospitals and four women died in hospital. Some of the policemen, including the SHO, present at the shrine escaped unhurt."

The State Revenue Minister, Mr. Abdul Qayoom, the Minister of State for Home and Law, Mr. Mushtaq Lone, the Kashmir IGP, Dr. Ashok Bhan, the Divisional Commissioner,

Mr. K. A. Ganai, the DC Budgam, Mr. Rohit Kansal, and the Budgam SSP, Mr. Ashiq Husain Bukhari, visited the spot. The Government ordered an inquiry and rushed additional police and paramilitary troops.

This is the second major incident after the 600-year-old shrine was destroyed in a mysterious fire which followed a month-long stand-off between the Army and militants in May 1995. Most of the militants led by an Afghan warlord, Mast Gul, escaped but the entire town was razed to the ground.

Hopes and fears on Kashmir

By Rajindar Sachar

AD-10 9/6
THE INVITATION to General Pervez Musharraf by the Government of India has naturally raised intense speculation as to the motivation and the results that might follow. I wish the ceasefire had been allowed to continue; but one can understand the embarrassing position the Government of India was forced into by the total repudiation of the ceasefire by the militants and also the pusillanimous reaction of the Hurriyat Conference leaders who went along with the militants in not responding to the invitation for talks by Mr. K. C. Pant. The Centre, however, must ensure that the withdrawal of the ceasefire does not lead to excesses by security forces.

With the start of Indo-Pakistan talks, the Kashmir problem will have a more definitive and hopefully more substantial grounding. Till now, because of the lack of any clear opening, the APHC was playing games and pretending to hold the key to open the lock of Pakistani intransigence. That bluff has now been called. Even Pakistan accepts that in talks between Heads of Government, the APHC is an unwelcome interloper. For this public humiliation, the APHC has only itself to blame. It made the mistake of assuming that India would never invite Pakistan for talks and that if it did the latter would insist on the Hurriyat Conference's presence at the table. But that bubble was bound to burst — the APHC forgot that for nations there are no permanent friends or enemies but only permanent interests.

I am surprised that the APHC has been showing such a lack of realism as not to realise that however long the solution may be in coming, no Government in India or for that matter in Pakistan could agree to independence for Kashmir. Ultimately, however it is camouflaged, both Governments will have to accept what was accepted by Bhutto in 1971 at the Shimla Talks — namely the LoC (Line of Control) as the border with some adjustments even a little more fa-

vourable to Pakistan, as Nehru was willing to concede some time in 1963-64, but unfortunately his death quashed that opportunity.

Where does the Hurriyat Conference with its self-inflicted wound fit in? Nowhere, I am afraid. It is doubtful if the APHC ever had a mass base. A disparate group, it, by a quirk of circumstances, was broadly seen to reflect the anger and dissatisfaction with the security forces

Hurriyat conference would take an independent initiative, undeterred by the militant threat, to join in the Pant talks and set an agenda for improving the conditions in the State.

We, of course, should expect no immediate solution. There will be the usual sparks in the early stage. But once both sides realise that mutual hostility will be our ruination, it is hoped better sense will prevail to consider in depth all mat-

considerations must be totally ruled out as it can only bring misery and weaken secularism in our country. It may suit Pakistan to communalise the situation. But Pakistan must recognise that any proposal for trifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir would be a non-starter. This solution would be a challenge to the secular base of our Republic and has already been repudiated by all political parties.

I know the goons of the VHP and some misguided elements of the Sangh Parivar may also wish to communalise the solution to serve their larger goal of fighting against secularism. But such attempts will be stoutly resisted.

Both Pakistan and India must stop playing to the gallery of hawks — witness Pakistan talking of plebiscite when even the U.N. Secretary General has ruled it out and the External Affairs Minister resurrecting the old resolution by Parliament on Jammu and Kashmir. More sobriety is required.

There is also valid criticism from the Opposition parties of being ignored in these talks. The Government should rectify it by involving them to arrive at a national consensus. General Musharraf would then know that there is unanimity on this national agenda so that waiting further to find a permanent solution will be of no use.

People in both the countries yearn for peace. The Indian delegation which went to Pakistan to attend the World Punjabi Conference came back with praise for the friendly and warm regard shown by Pakistanis, notwithstanding the somewhat shrill note by some sections of the media. Both India and Pakistan need to be reminded of the sombre words of Brutus in Shakespeare's Julius Caesar: "there is a tide in the affairs of men, which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; omitted, all the voyage of their life, is bound in shallows and in miseries. On such a full sea are we now afloat; and we must take the current when it serves, or lose our ventures."

We should expect no immediate solution. But once both sides realise that mutual hostility will be our ruination, it is hoped better sense will prevail.

and the Centre. It had no agenda, no mass programme. Take for example, Mr. Lone's remarks that when General Musharraf comes to India, the Hurriyat will be meeting him (which will serve the same purpose as a visit by an APHC delegation to Pakistan). This suggestion I would have thought would be embarrassing to General Musharraf. But surprisingly, I find that Pakistan's Foreign Minister has also come out with a similar suggestion (obviously as a morale-booster for the Hurriyat Conference) but which he should have known will hardly be seen in diplomatic circles as a friendly act — it will be like if Mr. Vajpayee during his Lahore visit had wanted to give a private audience to the MQM leader, Mr. Altaf Hussain.

But if in spite of everything the General does express a wish to meet the APHC leaders, (the initiative should be his and not the Hurriyat conference's), the Government of India should not raise any objection, in deference to our ancient tradition of extending all courtesies to invited guests. In the context, I must compliment Mr. Shabir Shah for having read the situation better. I still wish the

terms of trade, and goodwill and certainly Kashmir. It is well known in trade circles that thousands of crores of rupees worth of trade is being illegally transacted between India and Pakistan through Nepal and Dubai, denying to both Governments legitimate taxes.

Numerous mutually beneficial results will accrue if we settle our differences. We both are victims of the WTO manoeuvres and globalisation. A big challenge which India is facing is with regard to the pressure being mounted by MNCs to have our patent legislation amended like they got done in Pakistan. How both countries would benefit if we were to work together was highlighted in the September, 1996, "Pakistan Network" newsletter which said Pakistani consumers could have saved over Rs. one billion on only nine medicines in 1995 if the companies had offered the same price as in India.

It is wrong to treat Jammu and Kashmir as a problem of Kashmiri Muslims as some in the Pakistani media do. The Kashmir problem is the concern of all three regions — the valley, Jammu and Ladakh. Any stance based on communal

THE HINDU

9 10 2001

Referendum no solution, says Pant

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, June 4

HTF9

THE CENTRE'S emissary to Jammu and Kashmir, K C Pant today ruled out the possibility of "referendum" as an option to resolve the Kashmir issue.

"Hardly anybody spoke to me about referendum. UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's remarks on the irrelevance of such an option apparently had its impact," Pant said here today at a Press conference sharing his impressions on his six-day mission to Jammu and Kashmir.

Pant said even as a cross-section of people represented by about 100 organisations including several national and State-centric political parties that met him during his stay in the State had complaints against regional bias and unequal development, the majority spoke in favour of protecting India's unity, democracy and secular character.

Elaborating on the Hurriyat stance, he said the leaders of the multi-party conglomerate would have to do a lot of "explaining" to the people on their response to invitation for talks.

In an indirect reference to the party's stand as being "the sole representative organisation" of the Kashmiris, Pant said "no one can claim to represent all the views" of the State populace that is marked by great diversities as in the rest of the country. He said during his marathon discussions with even non-political academicians, NGOs and other opinion makers, the concern for maintaining the composite character of the State came to the fore.



KC PANT

Pant, however, indicated that the demand for the trifurcation of the State had been raised by some organisations. "My impression is that the common people want to get out of the prevailing spectre of bloodletting," he said.

Replying to a query over the possibility of his talks with the Hurriyat leaders, Pant shot back, "I have invited them for unconditional talks. It is for them to decide their future course of action."

On his part, the Centre's Kashmir pointsman made a direct reference to several demands voiced for regional autonomy to meet the aspirations of the people. "This is an important issue that has to be seen from a national perspective," he said.

Pant singled out three essential points that would guide him in further discussions: sensitivity to the sufferings of the common populace, measures to offset the ill-effects on development especially the basic amenities and employment avenues and return to normalcy.

THE HINDU
MUMBAI
JUNE 4, 1990

Hizbul says it will halt activities if India, Pak adopt realistic approach

SRINAGAR: The Hizbul Mujahideen has said it will halt all its militant operations in Jammu and Kashmir if India and Pakistan adopt a 'realistic approach' to solve the Kashmir issue.

"Our activities will lessen proportionally to both the countries giving up their rigid stand to solve the Kashmir problem in a realistic approach," chief commander of Hizbul Mujahideen Abdul Majid Dar said in an exclusive interview after the group withdrew its ceasefire in August last year.

By the same realistic yardstick, the 46-year-old Mr Dar admits that a solution could not emerge in only one meeting between Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Pakistani military ruler General Pervez Musharraf.

"We know there cannot be miracles overnight. Our judgment criteria will be the joint statement issued after the meeting between the two leaders. If we feel that both agree to solve the problem and in principle agree that this is a dispute and want to solve it according to the wishes of the people, we will react accordingly," said Mr Dar, who came into prominence in July last year when he suddenly announced unilateral ceasefire.

Asked why the Hizbul had stepped up its activities even after the second initiative of Mr Vajpayee in inviting General Musharraf

for talks, Mr Dar said "the initiative of Mr Vajpayee was abrupt and we never knew he would take such a stand."

About the recent visit of the government's interlocutor on Kashmir, K.C. Pant, the Hizbul Mujahideen chief said, "It is also a confused move. Last year we announced a ceasefire. If the government would have announced that the Hurriyat Conference and Hizbul were invited for talks and simultaneously engaged in a dialogue with Pakistan, probably a solution would have emerged by now."

"Even if the government had announced the similar measures during the Ramzan ceasefire, it could have helped in confidence building in the state," Mr Dar, who has visited Pakistan thrice, said.

He said, "Such unco-ordinated efforts are likely to bear no fruits."

Outlining the action plan of the Hizbul in the present scenario, Mr Dar said, "We welcome the Vajpayee-Musharraf meeting. Though it is late but it is a positive step."

He said, "If both the countries move away from their beaten tracks, we will be most happy and we will co-operate."

Mr Dar made it clear that the Hizbul would not be a 'hurdle' in any peace moves. "We will never create hurdles because we know our people are dying. Some fools alone will allow this blood-shed to

continue."

"Now what remains to be seen is that whether the step has been taken only to score some diplomatic points or there is some seriousness," Mr Dar said. (PTI)

India to discuss opening of Leh route with China

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

LEH (Ladakh), June 1. — Mr LK Advani today said India will take up with China the issue of opening of the Leh route for Kailash-Mansarovar yatra.

Speaking after inaugurating the three-day Sindhu Darshan Festival at Shey, 10 km from here, Mr Advani said China had earlier expressed reservations and the government intended to take up the matter with Beijing again.

Speaking about the festival, he said he looked forward to the day when rivers like Sindhu and Brahmaputra became instruments not only for strengthening the cultural unity of the country but for forging a friendship between India and Pakistan.

The chief minister, Dr Farooq Abdullah said he hoped the Sindhu would carry the message of peace, brotherhood, cooperation and tranquility where-ever it flowed.

He said festivals like the Sindhu Darshan helped promote tourism in the Ladakh region and give a fillip to its art and culture. The Union tourism minister, Mr Ananth Kumar, said the Sindhu Ghat and Sindhu Cultural Centre, financed by the Centre, was under construction at the Sindhu site at a cost of Rs 3 crore.

Hurriyat hopes to be a key player

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SRINAGAR, June 1. — The Hurriyat Conference today expressed confidence that it would emerge a key player in any "serious and realistic" dialogue that would start soon to resolve Kashmir issue, PTI reports from Srinagar.

"The day is not far off when a dialogue based on serious and realistic grounds will be initiated in which Hurriyat will be taken into confidence to resolve Kashmir issue," the Hurriyat chairman, Mr Abdul Gani Bhat, said at a Friday congregation in Kulgam.

Another Hurriyat leader, Maulana Mohammad Abbas Ansari, asked both India and Pakistan to discuss the Kashmir issue with an open mind. "There won't be any solution unless the Kashmiri leadership is involved in the dialogue," the Maulana said in Srinagar.

Foreign secys may talk Kashmir: The foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan are likely to discuss the Kashmir issue on the sidelines of the Saarc meeting

13 ULTRAS KILLED, NC LEADER INJURED

SRINAGAR, June 1. — A day after the six-month J&K truce expired, security forces today gunned down 13 militants, arrested a woman ultra and seized a huge cache of arms and ammunition.

The ultras killed three people and shot and wounded a National Conference leader. Of the 13 militant killed, seven were members of the Lashkar-e-Taiyaba. They were killed in encounter at Badohar Topo and Loran Mandi in Poonch today. — UNI

scheduled for 8-9 June, SNS adds.

Soon after the Prime Minister invited Gen Pervez Musharraf for talks, the external affairs minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, said the foreign secretaries might discuss the Kashmir issue during the meeting to prepare the ground for the summit.

However, other Saarc members, such as Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, fear the foreign secretaries' standing committee meeting might lose its focus if Mrs Chokila Iyer and Mr Inamul Haq decide to talk Kashmir.

This is the third special session of the standing committee; it had been postponed several times because India and Paki-

stan were not willing to see each other eye to eye.

Mrs Iyer will leave for the meeting on 7 June.

Pant: Mr KC Pant has cautioned people against expecting overnight results from his peace endeavour. "No cut and ride solution was possible...and the (peace) process was beginning," he said.

The Centre's chief interlocutor on J&K arrived in Jammu today. About the Kashmir issue, he said it was a "political one coupled with some economic difficulties." He had been asked by various groups in Srinagar and Jammu to create more job opportunities. "Rapid development was another issue which needed to be addressed quickly."

He said he had come across divergent views from various groups in Jammu "over the demand for a separate Jammu state". Refusing to name the groups, he said: "Some groups favoured J&K's unity."

On Hurriyat's absence in the talks held by him in the Valley, Mr Pant said: "I'd invited them but there was no response. But as far as my visit to the valley is concerned, it was fruitful... people came in large numbers...despite threats from militant organisations."

Abdullah: The J&K chief minister today hoped the Indo-Pak summit would "break the ice" and pave way for further talks. On converting the LoC into international border, Mr Farooq Abdullah said: "I don't think there is any other solution."

CPI-M: The CPI-M today said the Vajpayee-Musharraf talks should be held in accordance with the spirit of the Simla Agreement. The party asked the Centre to clarify the agenda of the dialogue.

■ Photograph on page 8

THE STATES

1991

Dealing with Kashmir

By Badri Raina

410-10

IT IS a good thing that India has now invited Pakistan's chief executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, for talks. After the unimaginative bumbling of the last six or eight months, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee and the chieftains in the CCS (Cabinet Committee on Security) must avoid feeling shamefaced about having come off the high-horse — which, of course, they have. One would also like to believe that this new course has not been adopted just to please 'international opinion' (read the American establishment). Simultaneously, the Government of India, and especially the many extra-brazen BJP spokespersons, must avoid replicating the war-mongering rant which some erstwhile High Commissioners to Pakistan are currently, and repeatedly, dispensing over premier media channels. The rant has been sounding along the following lines: O.K., so you have been saying you are ready to talk anywhere, anytime; now we have called your bluff, so talk, but not about Kashmir first. And if you fail to follow the Indian Government's blue-print for talks, be prepared for 'tough steps'. These are gentlemen who were full of applause at Pokhran II, but subsequently do not seem to have the acumen to recognise that no real tough steps are available to India after that tactless event.

As is painfully evident everyday, the present Indian Government is young in governance but, hopefully, it is picking up some salutary lessons. The first of these must be never to suppose the 'enemy', however contemptible, to be obtuse. Gen. Musharraf is hardly fool enough not to realise that the Indian establishment has eaten crow, or else why would it descend to talking while 'cross-border terrorism' is still very much on. He can also be trusted to judge that with respect to Jammu and Kashmir India is indeed faced with a bigger problem than Pakistan. Yes, Kashmiris in Pakistan-occupied areas may have no real freedom, they are, nonetheless, not up in arms. Our stakes in that unfortunate State, however, impinge crucially on the very character of the Indian state and polity. Furthermore, the complacently hardline delusion that Pakistan, riven with internal problems, is about to collapse as a state must be ejected as a policy input.

Very few states in recent history have collapsed as we expect Pakistan to collapse everyday, and so long as a Pakistani collapse remains inimical to neo-imperialist designs such a thing is unlikely to happen. Even where such efforts have been made — and how — the results have surprised the sheriffs of international virtue: Iraq and Mr. Saddam Hussein, for example, offer trenchant evidence of this reality. We may like to believe that American commitment to 'democracy' constitutes some

in Musharraf's Pakistan itself. In telling him so, the Indian Government will only be underscoring what he must already be sensible enough to realise. All over the world, religious identity by itself has failed to furnish viable nationhood, not to speak of a viable state, and any suggestion that this need not be true of Kashmir must be categorically rejected.

In this context one is aware of one section of well-intentioned 'radical' opinion in India which tends to base its notion of

fuses the validity of the constraints outlined above, our problems with Pakistan are likely to be prolonged until, perhaps, a new concatenation of global realities overtakes the India-Pakistan logjam. One does not know what international considerations Gen. Musharraf may bring with him as shaping input, or whether these will outweigh the 'jehadi' compulsions within Pakistan. Should, however, the LoC become a basis for negotiation at some point, a departure may emerge. However, it is the compounding political failure of the Indian establishment within Kashmir which calls for rethink and correction. The 'autonomy' resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly had offered a substantive opportunity to the Government of India to alter the character of political possibilities in that State. At that time, however, 'autonomy' based on the specific and special provisions of the Accession Papers and the Delhi Agreement of 1952 seemed to Mr. Vajpayee's Cabinet too excessive a demand to be entertained, even if piloted by one of the NDA constituents, the National Conference. Having rejected that demand of the elected Assembly, the Government of India got inexplicably busy foregrounding the APHC. Now, since the Hurriyat Conference seems to have refused to settle for anything less than 'autonomy', or indeed talk at all, the wheel has come full circle.

It is tragic that any groundswell that may have then existed for the 'autonomy' line has since been largely frittered away. And yet there is no go but to acknowledge, finally, the special features of Kashmir's accession to India and to make such acknowledgement, painstakingly, a workable basis for transformative politics within Kashmir. The recently concluded, but not sufficiently emphasised, panchayat elections throughout the State in which between 60 and 80 per cent people voted offers solid ground for such transformation. Equally forcefully must be emphasised the requirement that 'autonomy' for the State must be accompanied by devolutionary mechanism for all regions of the State along non-sectarian lines.

(The writer is Reader, Department of English, Kirori Mal College, New Delhi.)

It is a good thing that India has invited General Musharraf for talks... When he arrives, New Delhi must put some honest cards on the table.

overriding metaphysical factor in our favour, but such has not been the history of America's international relations. Indeed, whether it has been ours is equally a matter for introspection.

If and when, therefore, Gen. Musharraf arrives, India must put some honest cards on the table. Clearly, no Government in India can allow the Valley to join Pakistan for the simple and ineluctable reason that such an event could spell the collapse of the secular state in India by lending credence to the 'two-nation' theory and, inferentially, providing justification for the notion of a 'Hindu Rashtra'. As to 'independence' for contiguous areas in India and Pakistan along communal principles, the same argument applies. Such 'independence', one ventures to prognosticate, can eventually translate into one of two possible results: either the 'Talibanisation' of Kashmir, or its conversion into an imperialist enclave, or both. Those factions in the Hurriyat Conference which hold that the problem in the Valley is 'political' rather than a religious must pick up the courage to envisage the likely fate of ethnic Kashmiri Muslims in a Pakistan where the dominant Punjabis brutalised and decimated the erstwhile eastern wing, and have effectively colonised the 'muhajirs', the Sindhis, the Baluchis, and the Pathans of the NWFP. Indeed, conceding secession in Kashmir will not have replicating consequences in other Indian regions alone but

the freedoms of peoples here and there on the politics of sub-national identities. Often such notions of freedom seem both abstract and oblivious of the consequences of fractious identity assertion. The recent and continuing history of Yugoslavia offers the most painful paradigm of what can happen here, not to speak of places such as Rwanda. Nor is it clear that decrying the nation-state is not a procedure which effectively plays into the hands of trans-national interests who hold neither the nation-state, except their own, nor identity sacrosanct. It should also be recognised that the worst violators of human rights (the United States, according to no less than Amnesty International) tend to deploy the human rights argument disingenuously to further corporate global interests and then merrily trample on the human rights of the vast masses of the globally immiserated. In passing, one would hope that in all this there is food for reconsiderations on behalf of Kashmiri Pandit groups which desire a return to the Valley but along narrow, sectarian lines. It seems ironic that while Indian Muslims outside Kashmir seem fully cognisant of the meaning of the Kashmir imbroglio for them and for secular India, the highly literate Kashmiri Pandit groups should rather fail to realise the meaning of Kashmir for Republican India, and the meaning of their own role in the process.

If it be the case that Gen. Musharraf re-

THE HINDU

- 2 JUN 2001

Many takers for Vajpayee initiative, says Pant

By Vinay Kumar

JAMMU, JUNE 1. The Centre's interlocutor on Kashmir, Mr. K. C. Pant, arrived here today on the last leg of a six-day visit to the State and described it as "a successful experience". During his two-day stay here, he will meet the representatives of political parties and other groups as part of his efforts to build on the process of dialogue aimed at restoring peace in the troubled State.

Addressing a crowded press conference at the Circuit House here, Mr. Pant cautioned that there could be efforts to derail the ongoing process. "There are people who will not tolerate this exercise. I see this exercise as a rewarding one. I feel that people in different regions of the State are entitled to be heard."

Asked whether the people who met him over the past four days were those whose not-so-critical positions were already known, Mr. Pant said: "I do not label people. They change with the passage of time. Somebody who was a militant ten years ago is not the same today and somebody who was a former Chief Minister now objects to the statement that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India."

Parliament's resolution on Kashmir was widely known and only Parliament could change its stand, he said. "Even I cannot do anything in this regard." He was hopeful that his visit would serve "an important purpose as things move along". He had gained insights and hoped the contacts made during the trip would be retained and would go a long way in consolidating the dialogue process. "I have heard diverse views over the past four days. But there has been an overwhelming desire of the people to speed up development and generate more job opportunities for the unemployed youth. There are political and economic dimensions to the problem which is very complex in nature," he said.

The key expressions in Mr. Pant's expositions were "understanding", "peace is necessary for development", and "creating a climate of trust and understanding to find an agreed solution to the tangle". "Dialogue is the beginning of a process. I am here to elicit opinion of the people, to know their minds and to gauge the kind of difficulties people have been facing over the past 10 to 20 years," he said.

Asked whether the organisations and groups who met him in

Jammu voiced any opinion for a separation of the region, Mr. Pant said he heard the view of both the groups — those who wanted to remain part of the State and those who wanted separate Statehood.

"Most of the people were appreciative of the Prime Minister's initiatives and his pursuit of peace in Jammu and Kashmir. They described the invitation to Gen. Pervez Musharraf as a bold and imaginative step," he said.

To a question, he said the ceasefire was not extended in the State as it was not serving the purpose for which it was promulgated. His exercise was part of the plan to kickstart the political dialogue, a demand which he said had found overwhelming support from the people in the State. The people, by and large, had expressed their opinion in favour of maintaining the basic unity, democratic and secular character.

Today, Mr. Pant representatives of the Gujjar United Front, the Panthers Party, the Muslim Federation of Jammu, the Janata Dal (U), the Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party, the Panun Kashmir, the Shiromani Akali Dal and Shiv Sena. He will wrap up his visit tomorrow after meeting with other groups and political parties.

Militants granted safe passage

By Our Special Correspondent

SRINAGAR, MAY 31. Security forces surrounding the Kharwar area in South Kashmir today quietly lifted the cordon around a mosque in which four militants of the pan-Islamic Lashkar-e-Taiba had taken shelter, facilitating a safe passage for the ultras.

On Wednesday, the security forces comprising personnel from the Rashtriya Rifles, BSF and the SOG threw a blanket around the mosque after the four ultras withdrew inside. One army jawan and a militant died in the shootout and two others were injured. Even after the militants' ammunition

was exhausted during the long exchange of fire, the security forces were reluctant to storm the mosque and flush out the ultras. Senior officials who reached the spot later also failed to reach a consensus on entering the mosque.

Today, on the instructions of the Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, the security forces lifted the cordon and facilitated a safe passage for the militants who escaped under the cover of darkness. This was done to avoid a situation which would have embarrassed the Centre's interlocutor on Kashmir, Mr. K. C. Pant, here on a six-day visit. However,

officials were tightlipped over the issue. There was no mention in the daily bulletin of the police as well. A report said the security forces initially started shelling the mosque but withdrew later. Another said the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and the Lashkar had denied that the four militants had been given a safe passage and said they had inflicted casualties on the security forces before reaching their hideout safely.

Meanwhile, 15 more persons, including 11 militants and three security force personnel were killed in militancy-related incidents across the State since Wednesday morning.

7 JUN 2001
SHEHNAZ

THE HINDU

Pant keeps his date with G. M. Shah

By Vinay Kumar

SRINAGAR, MAY 31. The Centre's interlocutor on Kashmir, Mr. K.C. Pant, today visited Kargil and also kept his date with the Awami National Conference president and former Chief Minister, Mr. G.M. Shah.

Mr. Pant's keenly awaited 40-minute meeting with Mr. Shah at the latter's heavily-guarded Maulana Azad Road residence turned out to be a damp squib. It was clear the two leaders did not hit it off well as Mr. Shah made no effort to hide his displeasure over the remark of the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, that Jammu and Kashmir remained an integral part of India. The meeting could not be held on Wednes-

day as Mr. Pant's return from Leh was delayed by more than two hours. After the meeting, Mr. Shah told mediapersons: "Mr. Jaswant Singh has already made the statement on Jammu and Kashmir being an integral part of India. What talks can be held when there are such statements being made from New Delhi? We will talk to one who admits that Kashmir is a problem."

Outlining his party's approach, the former Chief Minister said he favoured tripartite talks involving India, Pakistan and the people of Kashmir. "All solutions are there, only the three parties have to sit together and find one."

Mr. Shah said past efforts to have bilateral talks with Pakistan

had failed and cited the examples of the Nehru-Liaqat, Indira Gandhi-Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Rajiv Gandhi-Benazir Bhutto, and Vajpayee-Nawaz Sharif meetings. "As long as the three parties do not hammer out a solution, Kashmir will be caught in the proxy war which will turn into a regular war and then into a nuclear war," the ANC leader said.

Even as Mr. Shah put across his views, Mr. Pant remained composed and said Mr. Shah was a veteran politician fully conversant with the Constitutional and legal issues. "I have taken note of Mr. Shah's opinion. So many others have also expressed such opinion. This is only the beginning of a process. We are not going to find a solution overnight, the problem is complex and dialogue is the need of the hour. Trust has to be carefully built upon," he said.

In Kargil, Mr. Pant met representatives of a cross-section of political parties, religious bodies and associations. The overwhelming opinion was that the people wanted to be part and parcel of the State and were totally against any division.

Prominent among those who met Mr. Pant were the National Conference Lok Sabha member, Mr. Ghulam Hassan Khan, the party MLA, Mr. Mohammad Abbas, chief patron of the Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust, Sheikh Mohammad Hussain Zakiri, and representatives of the Ladakh Buddhist Association of Zaskar and the Congress.

Mr. Ghulam Hassan, who vehemently opposed the demand for a Union Territory status for Ladakh, described it as an attempt to divide the State on communal lines.

Later talking to reporters, Mr. Pant said that from his discussions with various groups in Kargil it was clear that the people were keen on a rapid pace of development. "The Kargil war made people aware of the hard conditions of life in the region. Almost all groups who met me want completion of the runway of the airport, adequate water and power and boost to the tourism."



The Centre's interlocutor, Mr. K.C. Pant, with the former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Mr. G.M. Shah, in Srinagar on Thursday. — Photo: Nissar Ahmad

Pandits ask Pant for separate homeland

The Times of India News Service

SRINAGAR: The Panun Kashmir, an organisation constituted by Kashmiri Pandits after their mass exodus from Kashmir in 1990, has asked the Centre to create a separate homeland for the displaced community to the north and east of the Jhelum river with the status of a Union territory (UT).

A delegation of the Panun Kashmir, comprising three members, met K.C. Pant, the Centre's interlocutor on Kashmir, here on Wednesday and conveyed their views to him.

Talking to reporters here on Thursday, the Panun Kashmir leaders said if the UT was created, it would not be subject to the "fetters" of Article 370 and would enjoy all benefits that other states enjoyed under the Constitution of India.

They said all Kashmiris, who have faith in the Constitution, should have the right to settle in this land.

They said the Panun Kashmir was firmly of the view that the secessionist movement in Kashmir had three genres— secession from India and

merger with Pakistan, independence and Article 370 and autonomy.

They said the Hindus of Kashmir had an inalienable right on Kashmir and that they exercised their right to have and grow in Kashmir not on the basis of the goodwill of the Muslims of Kashmir, but as a fundamental right by virtue of being the aboriginal natives of this land who have a history of more than 5,000 years of continued civilisational development here.

The delegation chose to meet Mr Pant here because this land belongs to them. Its members said that in no way did they want to give an impression that their position vis-i-vis Kashmir stood diluted due to the tragic consequences of the mass exodus from here.

The solution to this imbroglio, they said, lay in the reorganisation of the state. It would also empower such groups in J&K which had been marginalised and had refused to submit to the dictates of separatist politics.

Shabir backs out of peace talks

HT Correspondent
Srinagar, May 28

KC PANT landed in Srinagar as the Centre's representative for talks with Kashmiri militants. But Democratic Freedom Party chief Shabir Shah, among the few militant leaders who had been willing to talk, backtracked.

"Let Pant first talk to his own people," Shah said, miffed at Pant's statement that he would be talking to "his own people" and that the invitation to General Pervez Musharraf would not affect talks with militants.

"I am not one of his own people," Shah said at his party headquarters. "His own people are the men from the Congress and National Conference, who do not challenge the accession. Let him talk to them. And when he finishes, he should come to us."

Shah said Pant's statement was bound to create misgivings among the people. "I am a pro-freedom leader, challenging the accession of the State with India," he declared. Shah said Pant had not got in touch with him. But if Pant visits his home, he will treat him as a guest and won't mind talking to him informally.

"But for formal talks, which can be held only at our party headquarters, Pant has to come with an open mind and a clear agenda," he said.

SANGH LAUDS TRUCE END

THE SANGH Parivar has lauded the Centre's move to end the unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir. According to RSS leader Madan Das Devi, the step was long due as a one-sided ceasefire had become meaningless. He also supported the Prime Minister's initiative to invite General Pervez Musharraf for talks.

HTC, New Delhi

Shah decried what he described as widespread excesses, custodial killings and victimisation of innocent people at the hands of security forces. It is not possible to hold talks in such an atmosphere, he said.

He appealed to Prime Minister A B Vajpayee to restrain security forces. Criticising the move to call off the ceasefire, Shah said it was paradoxical to call off the ceasefire on the one hand and hold a dialogue on the other.

Shah sought the release of all Kashmiri detainees and withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. "Dialogue needs a congenial atmosphere", he said, "and Vajpayee should ensure this atmosphere."

However, he clarified that he was not putting conditions for dialogue. "It is a mere request," Shah said.

Musharraf flexes nuclear muscle

THREE YEARS to the day after his nation first tested a nuclear bomb, Pakistan's military ruler on Monday urged nuclear scientists to expand their research, vowing to strengthen the nation's security.

General Pervez Musharraf said Pakistan's successful nuclear tests in 1998 were "momentous events in the history of our nation". The statement comes days after Pakistan responded positively to India's invitation to Gen. Musharraf for talks on Kashmir.

Gen. Musharraf called on nuclear scientists to "broaden the base of scientific research so that their work in the future is more scientifically advanced, technologically innovative and economically cost effective".

In an interview on Friday, Gen. Rashid Quereshi, Musharraf's chief spokesman, said the world need not fear a nuclear war between India and Pakistan.

"Pakistan understands, as I'm sure does India, the destructive power of these weapons whose use would be unimaginable and unacceptable," he said.

AP, Islamabad

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

29 MAY 2001

Take the High Road

As New Delhi prepares to spread out the welcome mat for Pervez Musharraf, there is a marked divergence of views on how the operative word is spelt. The noises being made by the visitor's side — most notably by high commissioner Ashraf Jehangir Qazi — suggest that they expect 'welcome' to be spelt with a capital 'K' for Kashmir. Though spokespersons of the international community, from Bill Clinton to Kofi Annan, have ruled against a plebiscite in the state, Pakistan continues to harp on this single, outworn theme. In marked contrast, Prime Minister Vajpayee's gracious letter of invitation to Pakistan's chief executive made no mention of either Kashmir, or of the related issue of provocative cross-border terrorism. Indeed, the exemplary restraint of New Delhi's communique was noted with satisfaction by Islamabad. Regrettably, however, the message between the lines was misunderstood. The Indian refusal to see Kashmir as a 'core issue' between Pakistan and itself, arises not from a blinkered approach to bilateral relations, but from a genuine desire to enhance the scope for a mutually beneficial discourse. Consequently, Kashmir cannot be the sole point on the Indian agenda in the forthcoming talks. Unfortunately, the Pakistani military-bureaucratic establishment has a vested interest in fostering tensions between India and Pakistan, a mission in which it also has the support of the Pakistani clergy and the extremist militias.

In reality, Kashmir is a symptom of the feudal obscurantism of the Pakistani ruling class. It is a diversion from the larger issues of economic and political stagnation in Pakistan. There is increasing evidence to believe though that Pakistan's rulers cannot count on international support for their cause — China, in view of Tibet, Russia because of Chechnya, and the US, in the light of its policy imperatives in the Balkans and elsewhere, are no longer interested in changing the status quo in Kashmir. In other words, the Indian stress at the forthcoming talks will have to be on the future benefits of a reconciliation between India and Pakistan. Energy is a major area of cooperation, especially given the importance of the proposed oil pipeline linking India and Pakistan. Other obvious common interests are trade, joint ventures, common market and people to people contacts with the consequent expansion of bilateral tourism. With imagination, India's grand offer of reconciliation can match Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. For all this, it is almost certain that the Pakistani leadership would harp only on Kashmir, which would merely serve to isolate them further in international public opinion. In contrast, Mr Vajpayee's latest diplomatic offensive adds to his already considerable international stature — the Lahore bus trip, his restraint during the Kargil war, his initiative on non-initiation of hostilities in Kashmir and now his invitation to General Musharraf would undoubtedly rank as statesmanly gestures. Mr Vajpayee should take this further and spell out to the Pakistani leader his vision of Indo-Pakistan reconciliation and cooperation and how it can simultaneously restore Pakistan's international image as well as rescue it from the economic mire in which it is caught. Let the Delhi summit be the starting point of a sustained peace offensive by India.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

MAY 1998

Enter Musharraf, exit ceasefire

Brajesh stays, in both posts

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, May 23: Setting at rest speculation raging for months, the government today announced that the Prime Minister's principal secretary, Brajesh Mishra, will also continue to hold the post of the national security adviser till the new National Security Council (NSC) is firmly in place.

"The NSC is still in a formative stage. The Prime Minister is in charge of the NSC and it is best at this stage that the principal secretary continues as the NSA," defence minister Jaswant Singh said after the 135-page report of the group of ministers on national security was released. When the NSC becomes fully functional, the two posts would be segregated, Singh said.

A decision on the appointment of the chief of defence staff to serve as a single-point military adviser to the government on strategic forces will be "taken soon" after Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee holds consultations with various political parties, home minister L.K. Advani said after releasing the report.

The decision to allow Mishra to continue as the NSA, even if temporarily, is a double-edged one: it staves off the pressure from the Sangh for his head and gives Vajpayee enough ground to justify Mishra's continuance as his principal secretary, a post more important from his viewpoint. The RSS has demanded Mishra's exit from the Prime Minister's Office on the argument that he was "incompetent" and that he was not an elected representative of the people and, therefore, not "sufficiently accountable".

But BJP sources said Mishra's job as NSA would be a "token" one, given that Advani and K.C. Pant, the adviser on Kashmir, have virtually taken over the handling of the state. The decision to call off the ceasefire itself, said sources, was an indication of which way the "wind was blowing".

They said the "moderate" approach advocated by the Vajpayee-Mishra combine had ceased to work and, henceforth, Sangh hardliners were expected to play a "crucial" role in shaping the Kashmir policy.

At various news conferences, including some addressed by the *sarsanghchalak*, K.S. Sudarshan, the Sangh has dropped enough hints that Mishra and N.K. Singh should go. Singh went and it was expected that after his departure the hardliners would be silenced. Pant's appointment as Kashmir adviser was a signal that Mishra's clout was diminishing.

See Page 6

FROM PRANAY SHARMA, CHANDAN NANDY AND MUKHTAR AHMAD

May 23: Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee today sprung a surprise by inviting Pakistan's chief executive Pervez Musharraf to Delhi for talks to settle outstanding issues, including Kashmir.

The decision came hand in hand with the announcement of withdrawing the six-month ceasefire in Kashmir.

"A gratifying feature of these last six months has been relative peace along the Line of Control on account of restraint exercised by both sides," a statement issued by the government said.

"There has been also considerable lowering of cross-LoC exchange of fire. In this regard, the government has decided it will continue to observe maximum restraint as hitherto," it added.

Vajpayee's bold initiative in inviting Musharraf to Delhi is cleverly balanced with his decision to call off the ceasefire. India had maintained that it would not return to the talks table with Pakistan unless Islamabad "created the right atmosphere" by withdrawing its support to terrorists who were launching their battle against India from Pakistani soil.

Calling off the ceasefire will help in taking care of possible adverse domestic reaction to the decision to invite Musharraf as it will indicate that the government is giving a free hand to the security forces to tackle militancy. There has been growing pressure from the Sangh parivar and BJP hardliners who felt that the ceasefire was blunting counter-terrorism operations.

After an hour-long meeting of

the Cabinet Committee on Security, chaired by Vajpayee, foreign and defence minister Jaswant Singh said: "In pursuance of the Lahore Declaration and the Simla Agreement, Prime Minister Vajpayee has decided to invite General Musharraf to visit India at his early convenience. A formal invitation will be delivered shortly."

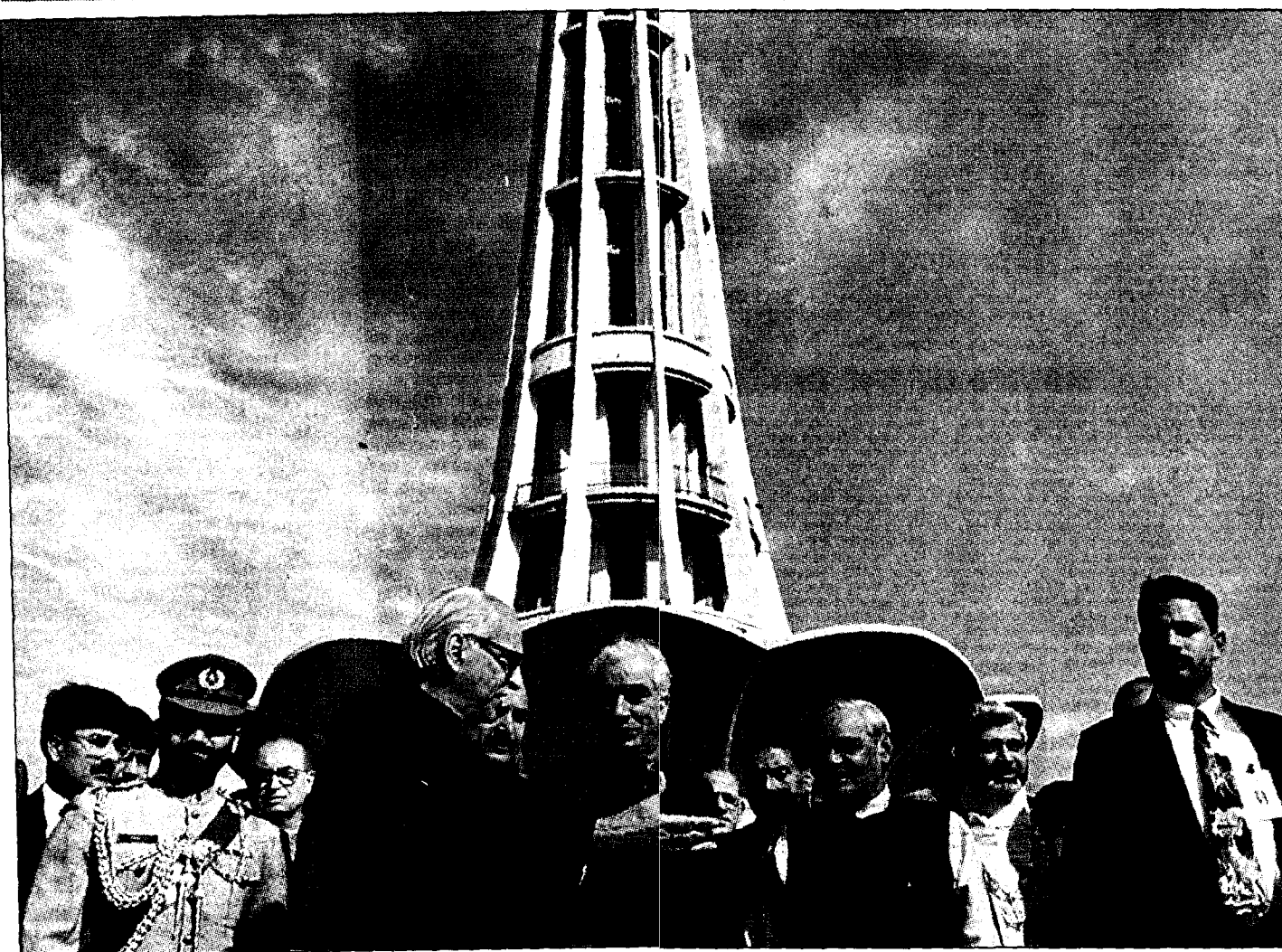
Singh said the stalled eight-point agenda "can be the starting point" for talks with Musharraf. "The composite dialogue agenda provides the framework for talks," he said. Singh was not prepared to say whether Kashmir could form part of the proposed discussions, but the agenda he spoke of contains the issue.

Vajpayee's last peace initiative in February 1999, when he rode the peace bus to Lahore, ended in disaster as within months the Kargil war broke out. The bus was in the news today, too, when passengers escaped unhurt after it careened out of control in Punjab.

After the Kargil conflict, India began to argue that it will not be able to resume dialogue with Pakistan unless Islamabad makes its intentions about peace clear. The fact that the Nawaz Sharif government was overthrown in the next few months and replaced by Musharraf's regime — the man Delhi blames for the misery in Kargil — only strengthened India's argument.

While this had gone down well with the international community, over the past few months key world players have become a little restive at what many have been describing in private as India's obduracy. The diplomat in Vajpayee realised that the outside world wanted India to show much more flexibility. The politician in him used it at a time when the rul-

DIPLOMACY BUS RETURNS TO LAHORE ROUTE VIA KARGIL



Vajpayee stands near Minar-e-Pakistan, where Pakistan had been conceived, during his visit to Lahore in 1999. (AFP)

ing coalition looks increasingly besieged from within.

By breaking the ceasefire in Kashmir, Vajpayee is signalling that he is not going soft or making any compromises on the nation's unity and integrity.

The basis for calling off the ceasefire is the assessment that, over the past six months, militant groups neither saw reason, nor recognised the imperatives of

peace, dialogue and cooperation and continued with the violence.

"This phase, therefore, is now over. These terrorist groups have hindered the restoration of peace... Hereafter, security forces shall take such action against terrorists as they judge best. They will, in the process, continue to exercise maximum care that no harassment is caused to civilians," the government statement said.

But the government said the "dialogue process initiated by the Prime Minister under (Planning Commission deputy chairman) K.C. Pant shall continue unhindered". Singh again invited "all sections in Jammu and Kashmir to join the dialogue", but was non-committal when asked whether the government would allow the All-Party Hurriyat Conference to visit Islamabad. The invitation

to Musharraf now takes centre-stage, rendering the Hurriyat's insistence on being allowed to visit Pakistan a non-issue.

Hurriyat chairman Abdul Gani Bhat ridiculed the ceasefire withdrawal, saying none "ever existed on the ground", but struck a more positive note on the invitation to Musharraf. "This is a big change which will lead to some change," he said in Srinagar.

Scam grounds Air-India maharaja

FROM JAYANTA ROY CHOWDHURY

New Delhi, May 23: Air-India managing director Michael P. Mascarenhas was today suspended and his deputy J.N. Gogoi asked to take over the job.

Mascarenhas, who has long been under a cloud over a slew of deals, has been suspended on the basis of a vigilance report which indicts him for favouring Air-India's former general sales agent in the United Kingdom, Welcome Travels, with larger than permitted commissions in the form of incentives.

An internal note says the report has found a "conspiracy to unduly favour Welcome Travels" and "there is a genuine apprehension of tampering with documents. As such, it was also decided that Mascarenhas and P.K. Sinha, regional director, India, be placed

under suspension."

The Air-India chief is being accused of having paid Welcome Travels £725,000 beyond what the company was supposed to have received. Not only was this firm paid undue commissions termed productivity-linked incentives over and above the normal rates, it also took incentive cuts on tickets sold by Air-India's own offices in the London sector.

Incentives were negotiated without permission from the airline's board of directors and were being paid on gross, and not net, revenues as contracted, civil aviation ministry officials said.

They claimed that the suspension orders were issued today after the charges were confirmed by three sets of reports — pre-



Mascarenhas

pared by M.B. Sagar, acting chief vigilance officer, the comptroller and auditor general of India and by V.K. Verma, Air-India's director, corporate affairs.

Mascarenhas had earlier come under a cloud over an aircraft wet-lease (hired with crew) deal he had signed with an unknown company called Caribjet which tipped the country's national carrier into the red.

Air-India ran up a Rs 321-crore loss during a three-year period by flying wet-leased planes, rented on terms loaded in favour of leasing companies.

A special audit probe conducted by the government had revealed that "wet-lease losses have constituted over 45 per cent of total losses run up by the national

carrier between fiscal years 1994-1995 and 1997-1998".

The report said the cost of the first wet-lease deal signed by Air-India with Caribjet for two Air-bus-310s in November 1994 was jacked up by the airline's then commercial director, Michael Mascarenhas, by \$157 per block hour which worked out to a total additional payout of Rs 3.37 crore.

This was also done by the airline management without reference to the board. The total rent eventually worked out to \$1.72 million a plane a month, which was higher than the \$1.62 million quoted by a rival bidder that was rejected.

No action was taken against Mascarenhas on the basis of this report despite the fact that the charges were far more serious and the losses ran far higher than those for which he has now been suspended.

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Reconsider decision on ceasefire: Shabir Shah

29/5

By Our Special Correspondent

SRINAGAR, MAY 28. The Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party chief, Mr. Shabir Shah, today urged the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, to reconsider the decision of withdrawing the ceasefire, stop human rights violations in the State and withdraw the Disturbed Area Act and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act before starting the peace process. However, he said was willing to meet the Government negotiator, Mr. K. C. Pant, informally.

Maintaining that confidence-building measures (CBM) were necessary for creating a conducive atmosphere for talks on Kashmir, Mr. Shah told presspersons today that rampant crack-downs, house-to-house searches, arrests and frisking of bus passengers, besides custodial killings at the hands of security forces should end immediately.

Though Mr. Shah was not insisting on these measures as a pre-condition, "it is important to realise that an atmosphere has to be created." If there were hurdles in pursuing democratic activities like holding public meetings and demonstrations as was the case in Pulwama, talks were not possible. Mr. Shah also urged the Government to release 4000 Kashmiri youth languishing in various jails.

On talks with Mr. Pant, currently on a six-day visit to Kashmir, the JKDFP chief said "let him first talk to his own people, then we will see." "His own people" were those from the National Conference, the Congress, the BJP, the



The JKDFP leader, Mr. Shabir Shah, along with Moulana Abdullah Tari, addressing medlapersons in Srinagar on the eve of Mr. K. C. Pant's visit. — Photo: Nissar Ahmad

CPI (M) and the People's Democratic Party who did not challenge the accession of the State. He expressed his willingness to meet Mr. Pant informally during the course of which he would raise issues relating to CBM.

"Agar woh hamarey ghar atey hain to ham unhe mehmaan ki hasiyat se welcome karengey" (if he comes to my house, I will welcome him as a guest), Mr. Shah said. By inviting Pakistan's Chief executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf,

for talks, Mr. Vajpayee had accepted that Pakistan could not be ignored. Mr. Shah said he would start his 11-day tour of Jammu from May 31, which was part of his exercise to take the people of all the regions into confidence.

Army officer killed

Militants detonated an improvised explosive device near Sopore in which a Major and a woman were killed and seven others injured. Three school children were injured in another blast.

Pant on Kashmir mission from today

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

Musharraf.

NEW DELHI, May 27. — The government's interlocutor for Jammu and Kashmir, Mr KC Pant, will embark on a six-day tour of the state tomorrow to hold discussions with groups and individuals even as Pakistan said it would start the process of arriving at a mutually-agreed date for Chief Executive, General Pervez Musharraf's visit to India for peace talks.

Pakistan's High Commissioner to India, Mr Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, told a private TV channel that despite opposition to Indo-Pak talks by headline groups, Gen Musharraf will come to New Delhi and all that remains to be finalised are the dates. Mr Qazi ruled out any role for the Hurriyat in the talks between Mr Vajpayee and Gen

former chief minister, Mr GM Shah.

An official spokesperson said the discussions were aimed at "restoring normalcy and establishing durable peace" and give Mr Pant an opportunity to acquaint himself with the security situation, specially in view of the decision to call off

■ **Editorial: Strategy in Kashmir, page 6**

the ceasefire.

The deputy chairman of the Planning Commission will also visit Leh and Kargil districts of Ladakh region. Delegations from this Himalayan region who earlier met him in New Delhi, had demanded a separate Union Territory status for Ladakh.

Mr Pant will meet migrants in

Jammu. Nearly two lakh migrants from the Kashmir Valley, who had left their homes in early 1990s, live in Jammu. Mr Pant will hold discussions with stake-holders and representatives of trade and industry.

The APHC had, earlier, sought permission to go to Pakistan, ostensibly to convince militant groups in Pakistan to give up militancy. The Centre, however, refused to accede to the demand and announced plans to talk to all groups in the state rather than just the Hurriyat.

11 ultras killed: Eleven militants were killed in separate incidents in Jammu and Kashmir since yesterday, PTI adds from Srinagar. An official spokesman said today militants, wearing uniform, forced

their entry into the house of a National Conference activist in Hanjipora-Trehgam village in Kupwara and ran away with seven rifles. Seven foreign mercenaries belonging to Lashker-e-Tayyaba were killed in three different encounters with security forces in Jamshed Roopwala, Pari Bahal and Masot in Poonch, he said. Two foreign mercenaries were killed in Banihal area of Doda district of Jammu region in another gun-fight which was initiated by militants who attacked a security patrol in village Mangooos in the area last evening, he said. A woman was killed in the exchange of fire and a militant was apprehended along with one AK-47 rifle, the spokesman said.

STRATEGY IN KASHMIR

Appealing to divergent audiences?

IT is difficult not to harbour reservations over the new strategy in J&K because the two faces reflect a cluttered mind. What is billed as a major initiative for peace seems at variance with the scrapping of the cease-fire, even though the latter was only partially successful. Sure there is cause to welcome the chance of reviving the bilateral dialogue with Pakistan, but it must be emphasised that Pervez Musharraf was the first to make the offer. India had insisted that the right climate for talks be created by Pakistan ending support to militancy. Has that climate been created? Not if the reasons advanced for scrapping the cease-fire are valid. It is India, not Pakistan, that has shifted its posture. Even while appreciating the prospects of high-level political interaction, it must be underscored that in the absence of solid preparatory groundwork a Vajpayee-Musharraf summit would be as much use as the bus ride to Lahore. The spin doctors of South Block would be putting out the line of a "great initiative," hopefully it will not fizzle out a gimmick. The potential for a breakthrough would have been enhanced had the cease-fire been extended.

A certain inconsistency in approach is also evident. The military go-slow, and the subsequent attempt to open a dialogue with the secessionist forces had sent out a signal, that Pakistan was not the sole factor in the equation. That approach will be diluted now, not because of talks with Pakistan's chief executive but because it was the cease-fire that contributed to some elements displaying an inclination to negotiate. To say that the process had made no headway would be incorrect, what more could have been expected in such a short period? The government says that K C Pant will continue his efforts, but the main focus now lies elsewhere, and the role of the representatives of the Kashmiri people — even if the claims to represent them are questionable — appears diminished.

Was there such deterioration in the ground situation that the cease-fire had to be abandoned? True there had been no let-up in militancy after India's unilateral Ramzan offer, but recent weeks have not been witness to any higher levels of violence. Remember that the army chief himself had stated that even during the cease-fire his men were not sitting back and allowing militants to take control. The respite was not fruitless. The shelling across the LoC had tapered off and border villages breathed easy, and in the interior too the local populace was relieved by the lifting of excessive security restrictions. Will those happy developments continue now that the cease-fire is "off". It would be a pity if Kashmiris continue to suffer while the government seeks brownie points from abroad, and tries to refurbish its image in its own hawkish domestic constituency. The risk of trying to appeal to such divergent audiences is the possibility of a "no show". The greater risk is if we have allowed ourselves to be talked into participation in George Bush's new gameplan over China and Musharraf is being summoned to receive an ultimatum.

28 MAY 2001

Pak drops bombshell, wants plebiscite in J&K

Sourabh Shukla
New Delhi, May 26

BARELY 24 hours after New Delhi delivered a formal invitation to Islamabad for an Indo-Pak summit, the High Commissioner of Pakistan to India, Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, has forcefully reiterated his country's demand for a plebiscite in Kashmir.

In an exclusive interview to *Hindustan Times*, the Pak envoy made it clear that Islamabad's willingness for a bilateral dialogue did not signify any change in its fundamental position on the issue. "What we have in mind," he emphasised, "is the implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions for a settlement acceptable to a majority in Jammu and Kashmir."

Mincing no words, Qazi declared: "A plebiscite is what we have in mind. It did not happen earlier because India did not agree to it." He said the 1999 Lahore Declaration and the 1972 Simla Pact did not contradict the position that J&K had to decide its final disposition in favour of India or Pakistan in accordance with the mechanism laid down in the UN resolutions.

The generally soft-spoken envoy's observations on Kashmir are reminiscent of the position Pakistan had taken in earlier rounds of bilateral negotiations. The then Pak foreign secretary Shahryar Khan's much-hyped 1994 talks with his Indian counterpart, J N Dixit, had broken

PAKISTAN TO CONSULT JEHADI GROUPS ON MUSHARRAF VISIT

PAKISTAN ON Saturday expressed satisfaction at the tone and tenor of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's letter to Gen. Pervez Musharraf, saying it had no "painful references or irritants". Musharraf, who met senior officials and advisors soon after the letter was delivered, ordered consultations with hardline religious and jihadi groups opposed to talks.

A Pakistan information ministry spokesman said Friday night a reply to the letter would be delivered to India in two or three days.

Besides drafting the response, Musharraf instructed his senior officials to begin consultations with leaders of various religious parties, militant groups and 'Centre-Right' intellectuals and senior journalists about the broad agenda that could form part of the framework of talks, the official said.

PTI, Islamabad

down amid identical hyperbole. A few weeks later, Parliament passed a resolution reaffirming Kashmir's status as an integral part of India.

Coming ahead of a formal acceptance by Gen. Pervez Musharraf of Vajpayee's carefully-worded invite, Qazi's comments seemed a preview of sorts of the position Islamabad might take at the proposed summit. On



Pak envoy Ashraf Jehangir Qazi

the Hurriyat's involvement in the talks on Kashmir, the Pak envoy strongly pitched for a trilateral process involving India, Pakistan and the multi-party conglomerate dominated by Pak-inclined outfits. "We support the inclusion of Hurriyat," he remarked, adding, "It may not be that they all sit on the same table. But a guarantee should be there to enable participation of the organisation that represents the interest of the Kashmiri people."

The Pak envoy did not stop at this. He said the K C Pant-led dialogue initiative was flawed because it treated the Hurriyat at par with other Kashmiri groups known for toeing New Delhi's line. Qazi insisted that any settlement has to be acceptable to the Kashmiri people.

Full text of interview on Page 9

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

A FEEL-THE-PULSE MISSION

Pant to visit J&K

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 26. The Centre's designated interlocutor for Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. K.C. Pant, is scheduled to visit the troubled State for four days, beginning on Monday. The details of the mission are being kept somewhat guarded, but indications are that, among others, Mr. Pant would hold discussions with Mr. Shabir Shah, president of the Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party. However, the All-Party Hurriyat Conference is adamant not to enter into a dialogue with Mr. Pant, who is also scheduled to visit Jammu and Ladakh.

Notwithstanding the high-intensity bilateralism involved in the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's invitation to the Pakistani Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, to visit India, the Pant mission will seek to reaffirm its relevance during the visit.

The initial reaction from the Valley, in particular, is that while it is just as well that India would be talking to Pakistan, there is no dilution in the assertion that the "people of Kashmir" cannot be kept out of the picture. For about a decade, the rhetoric in the Valley has centred around "freedom struggle". The Pant mission has the potential of addressing that perception. According to many analysts, the challenge before Mr. Pant is to convince the people in the troubled State that his mission is not yet an-

other Centre stratagem to filibuster the 'movement'.

Mr. Pant is proceeding on the principle that neither the calling off of the "ceasefire" nor the proposed summit has in any way made the role of the designated interlocutor redundant. The idea is to open a dialogue with various groups and individuals from both sides of the secessionist/accessionist divide to assess in a comprehensive and composite manner the nature of the 'aspirations' of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Moreover, Mr. Vajpayee's invitation to Gen. Musharraf takes care of the refrain in the secessionist rhetoric that Pakistan had to be involved in any "lasting solution"; in addition, it is possible for Mr. Pant to initiate a dialogue with all those groups and individuals who otherwise would have been willing to talk to the Centre's authorised negotiator but were reluctant to do so because of the fear of incurring Pakistan's anger. Talking to Mr. Pant may not be such an act of "betrayal" now that New Delhi is willing to sit across the table with Gen. Musharraf.

'Third option not workable'

ISLAMABAD, MAY 26. The Pakistan High Commissioner to India, Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, has said that the third option of granting independence to Kashmir other than the proposals for its accession to India or Pakistan, is not 'workable' as it is not part of the United Nations resolutions on Kashmir.

"Pakistan's stand on the Kashmir dispute is still based on the U.N. resolutions. For Pakistan, the resolutions are still valid and if all the parties agree to any third option of independent Kashmir, this option would have to be made part of the UN resolutions," Urdu newspaper *Jang* today quoted him as saying. The U.N. Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan had during his visit to Pakistan earlier this year, said the resolutions on Kashmir were no more relevant and India and Pakistan should settle the issue in accordance with the spirit of the Shimla Accord and the Lahore Declaration.

Mr. Qazi told 'Aaj Tak' that India should not impose any pre-conditions for the talks, look beyond Kargil episode and adopt a "sincere" approach towards resolving the Kashmir issue. "Both sides should look towards the future instead of raking up the past," he said.

Meet likely in July

NEW DELHI, MAY 26. The proposed summit meeting between the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, and Pakistan's military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, is likely to take place in early July, highly-placed sources said today.

They said the Prime Minister would be undergoing knee surgery operation on June 7 and he might take a week's time to recover. Hence, the talks would in all probability take place in early July, the sources said, adding New Delhi was awaiting a response from Islamabad.

The British High Commissioner to India, Sir Rob Young, called on the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, and appreciated India's offer for talks with Pakistan. — PTI

the past, he said, the programme. — PTI

THE HINDU

27 MAY 2001

Pant defends two-track Kashmir talks

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, May 25

DAYS BEFORE his maiden peace mission to Kashmir as Delhi's emissary, Planning Commission Deputy Chairman KC Pant today reiterated the Government's two-track policy formulation to resolve the tangle.

"Bilateral talks with Pakistan and dialogue with the Kashmiri people would be undertaken simultaneously to bring about peace," he told reporters here this afternoon.

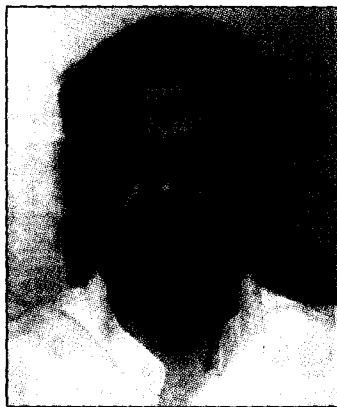
The interlocutor, who is slated to visit Srinagar apart from Jammu and Ladakh during his six-day peace mission, is likely to leave for the State's summer capital early next week.

He maintained that the Prime Minister's new initiative to engage Pakistan's military ruler in a dialogue would not affect the peace talks with Kashmiri separatist leaders. He asserted that the unilateral six-month cease-fire had been called off after serious thought. It had failed to achieve desired results, he explained. Replying to a query regarding the Hurriyat Conference's participation in talks, Pant said it was for the Hurriyat leadership to decide.

"I have formally invited them along with three other separatist organisations apart from other strands of public opinion. The Hurriyat has not formally responded to my invitation," he said.

Asked whether representatives of Kashmiri Pandits would be part of the dialogue process, he said many other groups, including the Pandits, would be invited in the second phase.

"In the first round, we have



invited elected representatives apart from four other separatist organisation," he said. The Centre's emissary indicated that he would also make an in-depth study of the prevailing economic situation in J&K besides working out parameters of several schemes to ensure employment for the youth. "I have already set up task forces within the Commission itself towards that end," he added.

The BJP today asked the Hurriyat Conference to present its case before Pant and stop rooting for tripartite talks involving India, Pakistan and itself, adds PTI.

Welcoming Home Minister L K Advani's statement ruling out any role for Hurriyat in the Indo-Pak talks, BJP general secretary Narendra Modi accused the Hurriyat of projecting itself as the sole representative of the people of Jammu and Kashmir when the "ground reality is otherwise."

Modi said the Hurriyat, like any group in the State, was free to send its suggestions to the Centre through Pant.

Russia hails invitation to Musharraf

By Vladimir Radyuhin

MOSCOW, MAY 25. Russia has appreciated India's decision to invite the Pakistan's military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, to New Delhi. "We hope for an early resumption of political dialogue between India and Pakistan in the spirit of the Simla Accord and the Lahore Declaration," the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Moscow, which in the past welcomed India's repeated extension of unilateral ceasefire in Kashmir, praised India for consistent efforts to improve relations with Pakistan. The invitation to Gen. Musharraf "could be seen in the context of India's recent efforts to ease tension and promote the atmosphere of trust in relations between India and Pakistan."

Annan welcomes India's offer

GENEVA, MAY 25. The United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, has welcomed the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's invitation to the Pakistan Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, for talks and said he was encouraged that Islamabad responded positively to it.

"He believes that a meeting now at the highest level would further ease the tensions in the region and facilitate resumption of a sustained dialogue which is very much in the long-term interests of both countries," Mr. Annan's spokesman said.

'An encouraging sign'

The British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Robin Cook, said: "It is encouraging that the Indian Government has announced that it will continue its dialogue with a range of Kashmiri opinion." — PTI, UNI

Hurriyat has no role in Indo-Pak. talks: BJP

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 25. The Bharatiya Janata Party today lashed out at the Hurriyat and the Taliban, telling the Hurriyat plainly that there was no role for it in the proposed dialogue with Pakistan as tripartite talks was unacceptable to India. The party criticised the measures taken by the Taliban taking Afghanistan towards "religious apartheid."

In a statement, Mr. Narendra Modi, BJP general secretary and spokesperson, said if the Hurriyat had anything to say on the resolution of the Kashmir issue, it should make its views known to

Mr K.C. Pant, government authorised interlocutor.

The party's charge was that the Hurriyat had lost touch with reality, was not able to gauge the new mood of the people in the Valley in favour of peace, and that it was mistaken if it thought space given to it by the media could help it win the hearts of the people.

The BJP rejected the charge made by the Congress leader, Mr. Salman Khursheed, while talking to journalists in London, that the Vajpayee Government was not consulting the opposition on crucial decisions on Kashmir. Mr. Modi said that Mr. Vajpayee had assiduously tried to build a na-

tional consensus on Kashmir and that Mr. Khursheed was guilty of trying to create an impression that there was disagreement.

The spokesperson alleged that the new laws being enforced in Afghanistan making non-Muslims wear yellow clothing and also force them to mark their homes was a dangerous move towards "religious apartheid." It was a "criminal move" and was "against humanity," he added.

Significantly, he noted that the Afghan website, dharb@cyber.net.pk was an address in Pakistan, once again establishing Pakistan's close links with the Taliban.

We remain relevant: Lone

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 25. Senior Hurriyat leader, Mr. Abdul Gani Lone, today castigated the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, for "ruling out" a mediatory role for the All-Party Hurriyat Conference. "Where have we said that we wanted to mediate between India and Pakistan? All we have said — and say it again — is that we can help create a conducive atmosphere for the success of New Delhi's peace initiative," Mr. Lone said.

At the same time, Mr. Lone rejected the suggestion that there could be a convergence of approaches between Mr. Advani and Syed Ali Shah Geelani, two 'hard-liners' reinforcing each other's extreme views and constituency. "Mr. Geelani is honest in his views and says what he means; Mr. Advani is simply sabotaging his Prime Minister's peace politics," Mr. Lone said.

Not bothered with the power games in New Delhi, Mr. Lone reiterated that any attempt to bypass the APHC — recognised by the Organisation of Islamic Countries, including Pakistan — as the "true representative of the people of Jammu and Kashmir" would not pay any peace dividends.

Talking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Lone made a reasonably convincing case as to why the APHC thinks it is entitled to call itself the "sole" or "true" represen-

tative of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. "We articulate the pain and sufferings of the people of Kashmir; we see the Farooq Abdullah Government as one in a long line of regimes New Delhi had imposed on the people of Kashmir; Dr. Abdullah had a historic opportunity to align himself with the people of Kashmir, but he chose to side with those who perpetrate atrocities on the people of Kashmir. Naturally, this Government lacks legitimacy."

Mr. Lone went on to argue that even the military regime in Pakistan would not be able to ignore the Hurriyat, not withstanding the attraction of bilateralism. "Without an endorsement from the Hurriyat leadership, no peace package can be sold to the people of Pakistan. No regime — military or civilian — can take the risk of ditching the representatives of people of Jammu and Kashmir. Statesmanship in New Delhi and Islamabad requires taking account of this reality," he said.

The Hurriyat leader acknowledged that perhaps both New Delhi and Islamabad were responding to gentle pressure from the friendly international community, but he asserted that the same international opinion recognises the centrality of the people of Kashmir to any lasting resolution of the Kashmir problem. The challenge is to devise ways and means of accommodate this centrality.

Caution, the buzzword in Pak.

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 25. The much-awaited invitation from New Delhi was delivered to Pakistan's military establishment today, even as the Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, was being bombarded with advice from all sides — almost as if the package came marked 'Caution, handle with care'.

Everyone who is anyone in the militant, religious, political or media circles has some counsel for the Chief Executive. The overwhelming view is that he must tread carefully.

Otherwise, he could go the

Nawaz Sharif way. There have been complaints galore. Some have taken exception to the unilateral announcement of the acceptance of the offer without taking the 'nation' into confidence.

While the militant groups denounced it as yet another gimmick and advised him to reject it outright, the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) is sulking.

Perhaps it has good reason after the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdul Sattar, dashed hopes of a tripartite dialogue by suggesting that the idea did not emanate from

Islamabad. APHC leaders of the Pakistan chapter, Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Safi and Prof. Ashraf Sarraf, are feeling left out.

They have urged the Government to take the Kashmiri leadership into confidence on the Indian invite and urge New Delhi to allow participation of the Kashmiri leadership in the talks.

The duo is of the view that by offering talks only to Pakistan, India is trying to create a rift between Kashmiris and Pakistan.

He was quoted in the Urdu papers as saying that the

Hurriyat had foiled the "Indian conspiracy" by refusing talks without participation of Pakistan and the military Government should reciprocate the gesture. Mainstream parties have welcomed New Delhi's invitation but with the condition that the military Government take them into confidence.

The acting president of the Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), Mr. Javed Hashmi, has asserted that before holding talks, Gen. Musharraf would have to take all parties into confidence. His contention is that the nation would not accept any individual decision.

APHC leader meets Pak. envoy

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 24. A senior Hurriyat leader and its former chairman, Maulvi Umar Farooq, had a meeting with the Pakistani High Commissioner, Mr. Ashraf Jehangir Qazi, and is believed to have discussed the implications of the Centre's latest move in Jammu and Kashmir. Later, the Mirwaiz told *The Hindu* that the Vajpayee Government's latest initiative was a "welcome move".

At his meeting with the Pakistani envoy, the Mirwaiz is believed to have shared his views and probably got an indication of Islamabad's initial reaction to the Vajpayee Government's move. The meeting was intended to convey the message that there continues to be a convergence of perceptions between Pakistan and the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and, more particularly, that the bilateralism between New Delhi and Islamabad would not necessarily leave the APHC in a limbo.

The Mirwaiz is of the view that while it is a positive development that India and Pakistan should be talking across the table but insists that "at the end of the day, the negotiation table has to accommodate Kashmiris".

For now, the formal view would come only after

the Hurriyat executive meets in a few days time, but the APHC is taking the view that in any tripartite problem it is not necessary that all the three parties should talk at the same time: "any two parties can talk, and the third party can come in at a later stage", argues the Mirwaiz.

This very line of argument is being taken up by the designated interlocutor, Mr. K.C. Pant, who has asserted that there is no contradiction between the Centre's decision to call off the "ceasefire" and the continuation of the dialogue process. Mr. Pant does not believe that his mission has been undermined in any way, and he hopes to visit Jammu and Kashmir shortly. "One process (dialogue) is aimed at restoration of peace while another (calling off the ceasefire) is getting tough with those who threaten it," says Mr. Pant.

However, Mr. Pant does not believe that in the light of the Centre's latest initiative there is any need to issue a fresh invitation to the APHC. The APHC has so far not replied formally to Mr. Pant, but has publicly ridiculed his mission.

The Centre's hope is that the proposed Vajpayee-Musharraf meeting would generate sufficient momentum which should entice the various separatist groups which want to interact with the Pant mission.

1 No role for Hurriyat: Advani

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 24. A day after the Vajpayee government invited Pakistan's chief executive, General Pervez Musharraf, for talks and called off the ceasefire, the Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, today asserted that the peace initiative in Jammu and Kashmir would continue.

"The moratorium on pro-active action against militants in Kashmir has ended but the peace initiative has not ended," Mr. Advani told reporters here.

The decision to revoke the ceasefire and invite Gen. Musharraf was part of a "carefully crafted strategy" evolved over the past two months, he said and categorically ruled out any intermediary role for the All-Party Hurriyat Conference in talks with Pakistan. "India will have direct talks with Pakistan. For this we do not need any intermediary, there is no scope for this."

Stating that all moves of the

Vajpayee Government were aimed at restoring peace in Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Advani said the Government recognised that militancy had not ended there and Pakistan had not been able to rein in all the militant groups. "However, restraint along the Line of Control has been a gratifying feature. There is a sense of relief along the border."

Asked about the Government's earlier stand that talks would not be held with Pakistan until it ended cross-border terrorism, Mr. Advani said in the post-Kargil phase the Centre had insisted that unless a conducive atmosphere was created it would not talk to Pakistan.

The non-engagement of Pakistan over the past year has led to global endorsement of India's views on cross-border terrorism, he said adding there had been a sea-change in world opinion. "We felt that non-engagement of Pakistan has made its contribution and also made Pakistan

squirm sometime. Taken together, the invitation to Gen. Musharraf and ending the ceasefire has sent a right message," he said.

The Government's peace initiative had begun with the Lahore bus trip of the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, in February 1999, not the Ramzan ceasefire, he said.

Asked when the invitation to Gen. Musharraf would be sent, Mr. Advani said the "letter is being drafted and it will not be delayed for long." Though no decision has been taken on it, the invitation could be delivered by the Indian Ambassador in Islamabad, he said adding that all possibilities were being explored.

Describing yesterday's decision as a "major initiative", Mr. Advani said it was taken in the spirit of 1972 Shimla Accord and the February 1999 Lahore Declaration. "I do not think Gen. Musharraf is going to drag it on for long. His visit to New Delhi can take place soon," he said.

THE HINDU

25 MAY 2001

The endgame in Kashmir

Battle for the mind

92-6
25/5

THE ceasefire in Kashmir has been called off and a new strategy initiated of engaging the Musharraf regime. It is not sufficient, however, to announce a strategic initiative and then sit back and await reactions. Any good strategic plan must not only unleash a new set of dynamics, but also contain the means of adjusting, tweaking and fine-tuning the unfolding situation, in order to continuously direct it towards a desired end. Now that Pakistan has been addressed, it must also be pressured.

Notwithstanding India's insistence to the contrary, there are, in fact, three parties to the Kashmir problem — India, Pakistan and the Kashmiri people. Eventually, Pakistan has to be incorporated into any long-term solution, if only because she physically occupies one-third of the state and wields clout even on Indian territory through her proxies, the jihadi groups and the All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC). While India and Pakistan are locked into inflexible positions, the entity of Kashmir is more difficult to identify and deal with due to its polarised and fragmented condition. The mainstream politicians are alienated from the people, largely discredited, and concerned more with their safety and material comforts than with serving the masses. They tread a carefully calibrated path somewhere between autonomy and secessionism, but lacking just sufficient nationalism to stay on the right side of the Constitution with enough separatism to stay alive in militant territory. The remarkable absence of assassinations of mainstream political leaders in J&K is due less to the well-known abilities of the J&K Police than to a militant decision not to target them. Presently useless levers to influence events in Kashmir, the mainstream politicians will sit on the fence and jump onto the side of nationalism when militancy appears to be dying down.

The APHC is a divided house. Once the Pakistani and militant position is moderated, the APHC will be willing to participate in the political process within the state. Until then they need to be contained through constant engagement, but cannot do much to favourably influence events on ground.

The next set of actors is the militant groups operating in the state. The indigenous Kashmiri groups like the Jarmu

and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and large portions of the Hizbul-Mujahideen (HM) would probably participate in the later stages of any settlement as evident from the unilateral ceasefire declared by the HM in July 2000. However, the majority of terrorists operating in the state are pan-Islamic fanatics, well beyond the pale. Sworn to die in endless jihad, these groups oppose any settlement short of total independence from India. To negotiate with them is to bestow on them an aura of strength. They have to be physically eliminated on the ground.

Due to little success in dealing with representa-

tions where the people can justify to themselves, without humiliation, the acceptance of less than what they had demanded and sacrificed and fought for.)

All insurgency manuals in every professional army lay primary emphasis on WHAM! Winning Hearts and Minds. The quest for a higher body count, however, has sidelined that understanding in Kashmir.

With its massive deployment of security forces, the Central government already has in place a statewide infrastructure immune to terrorist coercion. Transforming their present adversarial relationship with the local people into one of trust, confidence and



AJAI SHUKLA

Building a political consensus on Kashmir and placing it outside the cut and parry of day-to-day politics will reduce the chances of being deflected from the overall aim

tives, the only option available to the Centre is to reach out directly to the people. The potential of the Kashmiri public to influence the situation is enormous and radiates in all directions. The mainstream politicians and APHC leaders will have to reflect popular emotion or risk being marginalised in any post-conflict settlement. The security forces have struggled for a decade, in ever-increasing numbers, to eliminate militancy, but are not yet in sight of this goal. The day the common Kashmiri turns his face on the jihadi groups, that species will become extinct as quickly as the militants did in Punjab once the populace decided that peace was a better lifestyle. Despite this, no direct and concerted attempt has been made on the feelings of the Kashmiri people. The common person lives on a tightrope — death in an encounter or cross-fire yawning from one side and a throat slit by the terrorists from the other.

Paying, as they now are, the soul-price of their Faustian pact with the international Islamic terrorist network, they will accept help in extricating themselves, provided this comes from a quarter that enjoys some legitimacy in their eyes. To gain this the government must create condi-

respect will open the faucet for the intelligence required for eliminating terrorists. Since the beginnings of insurgency in J&K, the over-riding emphasis of the security forces has been on killing as many terrorists as possible, regardless of civil-military relations. While arguably necessary initially, this approach has obviously proved counter-productive in the long run, since terrorism still flourishes and has indeed expanded substantially. A new operational philosophy has to be implemented, which measures success not in terrorist corpses, but more in terms of the goodwill generated by the forces.

While implementation of this new operational philosophy will initially bring down statistics of terrorists killed, the benefits will soon accrue. The first of these is seizure of the moral advantage. Over a period of time, greater transparency will inevitably build up further the international pressure on Pakistan to stop supporting terrorism in Kashmir. The next advantage will be the completion of small community development projects. Their implementation by army engineers and units will create not only goodwill for the security forces and development on ground but also create employment for locals, who

might otherwise swell the ranks of the terrorists. Army doctors can take medical treatment to remote and inaccessible areas. Similarly, the security forces can assist in education, organising sports events, creating school infrastructure and a host of similar activities that will bring them close to the affections of the locals.

At no stage of this strategy should counter-terrorist operations flag. However, a rigid code of interaction with locals must bar any kind of intimidatory interaction with locals. When intelligence does start flowing, it must be acted upon with dispatch in order to build confidence. But at all times, it must be understood by all commanders on the ground that performance is not being measured by the number of terrorists killed, but by the relationship established with the locals.

Building a political consensus on Kashmir and placing it outside the cut and parry of day-to-day politics will reduce the chances of being deflected from the overall aim. This is especially important when faced with the sensational acts of terror that the jihadi groups will resort to.

The security establishment is likely to protest the imposition of restraints on its activities and has already railed against 'the destruction of the intelligence network' during the cease-fire. Sections of the forces, particularly those who have operated for extended durations in Kashmir, will argue that the Kashmiris will never embrace the Indian cause, being inherently pro-Pakistani.

These arguments, all emerging from a narrow tactical perspective, do not hold merit. The primary aim of people-friendly operations is the creation of a reliable intelligence network and the forces will soon start reaping the benefits of committed informers. Regarding the proclivity to Pakistan that some believe the average Kashmiri to be born with, it is worth remembering that terrorism did not exist in the state for over forty years. The Kashmiri youth only picked up the gun when successive governments failed to address the problems of the state.

The people of Kashmir are the centre of gravity of that conflict. They are exhausted, frustrated and ripe for being won over by magnanimity. The time to do it is now.

The writer is a retired army officer who has served in Kashmir

AVOIDING TRILATERALISM

That may not be the solution

INVITING Musharraf for talks is one way of getting around the notion of trilateralism that the Hurriyat and most other anti-integrationist Kashmiri leaders talk about and separating the historical territorial dispute with Pakistan from the militancy phenomenon in the Kashmir valley, in other words, denying Pakistan any authority over what India does with what it considers to be its own citizens on this side of the Line of Control. Whether this amounts to a genuine "peace process" or not is a different matter altogether. This is nevertheless, better than just sending K C Pant to Srinagar to make the best out of a stalemate, firstly, because Pakistan is well and truly involved in Kashmir and can't be kept out indefinitely, and secondly, because it recognises that there is no point in beating about the bush with Sir Creek and Siachen, it is Kashmir which is the problem. Refer to the exchange of letters between Shabir Shah, leader of the Democratic Freedom Party and Pant to get an idea of GOI's thinking on the issue. Pant's letter to the Hurriyat and other Kashmiri leaders talks about "how peace can be restored in Kashmir" which, as Shah says in his letter, is not mentioned as "an issue". The critical word is "restored", it implies, very strongly, that the Government is thinking in terms of a return to the status quo ante. No wonder the Hurriyat wasn't interested.. Shah asked that Kashmir be discussed as a dispute, Pakistan be included and pro-Indian elements be excluded. This is a proposition that, by default, makes much more sense in terms of a genuine peace process, one that fulfils two crucial conditions: militancy is quelled definitively, genuine democratic processes involving all Kashmiris take root and the international community accepts the resulting situation as legitimate. No one, on the Indian side, wants to pick up that particular gauntlet, because it may immediately involve an admission that India is not in charge in the valley. And no one has a better idea either.

The Hurriyat has perked up and says the invitation to Musharraf is "a big change", in other words, that the whole dialogue process with Pant looks less like a collaborationist venture. However, as we said, the Government of India has no intention of giving the impression that talking to Musharraf and, eventually, to the Hurriyat are two elements of a single interface. Pant has absolutely avoided giving the impression that there is any kind of anti-Indian opinion in Kashmir independent of militant activity. This may be short-sighted. People certainly want peace but most independent observers would agree a significant portion of Kashmiri opinion does not want to spend the rest of its life voting for the National Conference or the Congress. If the Government of India's idea is to conclude a "separate" peace with Pakistan - in exchange for what? - and then "restore peace" in Kashmir, it may find itself back to square one.

THE STATESMAN

25 MAY 2001

J&K move an all-BJP affair

Vinod Sharma & Udayan Namboodiri
New Delhi, May 24

THE DECISION to call off the Kashmir ceasefire and invite General Pervez Musharraf for talks was an all-BJP affair. But before announcing it to the press, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee personally spoke to Congress president Sonia Gandhi, TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu, Suresh Prabhukar of the Shiv Sena and the Samata Party's George Fernandes. Home Minister L K Advani informed Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah of the decision.

Sources said Vajpayee, Advani, Jaswant and National Security Adviser Brajesh Mishra finalised the all-important move over lunch yesterday.

Shortly before the Cabinet Committee on Security meeting convened to put the official seal of approval, these leaders reassembled in the Prime Minis-

ter's room at 7, Race Course Road to draft the Indian statement. Vajpayee was not present, but Yashwant Sinha and KC Pant joined the group.

At the CCS meeting, which began around 7.15 pm in the conference room of the PM's residence, top officials, including the Foreign, Home and Defence secretaries besides the Army chief, the DGMO and heads of various Intelligence agencies, joined the Cabinet ministers.

The business of taking key non-BJP political parties into confidence occurred shortly before the official announcement by Jaswant Singh.

Sources agreed that the Vajpayee-Musharraf summit would give the military ruler the legitimacy that an Indian recognition guaranteed to any Pakistani head of Government. In 1993, Balakh Sher Mazari had been bitter about not receiving a congratulatory message from New Delhi on his appointment as interim Prime Minister after

Sharif's dismissal. Musharraf was similarly ignored when, even after the October 1999 coup, India continued to refer to Sharif as "Prime Minister".

Among the many factors that guided the Government's latest peace offer was the realisation that Musharraf's position as the Pakistani CEO cannot be ignored any longer. "We have got to deal with him. It's for the people of Pakistan to fight for democracy," a PMO source said.

In fact, the MEA played down today Pakistan's abetment of terrorism in Kashmir while highlighting its restraint along the LoC during the ceasefire period. "A conducive atmosphere has been created by cessation of firing from across the LoC," the spokesman said, evading any reference to the hitherto strict official line that there can be no resumption of dialogue without Islamabad stopping export of terrorism.

Related reports on Page 9

Centre's move pushes Hurriyat to sidelines

Rashid Ahmad
Srinagar, May 24

THE ALL Party Hurriyat Conference may find itself in a cleft stick over its stance on talks with the Government, with the latter inviting Pakistani leader Pervez Musharraf for talks. The amalgam, which had been under sharp media and diplomatic attention over the past some time, may be sidelined in the scenario likely to emerge in the wake of fresh government initiative.

The Hurriyat is a motley group of organisations with varying ideologies. Most of these groups want Kashmir's merger with Pakistan. In the event of a direct dialogue between India and Pakistan, there seems, at present, little scope for these groups to be included as a party in the dialogue. That would be a negation of sorts for the Hurriyat as a platform, which has been pleading for a tripartite dialogue.

Hurriyat grew in image and stature when it welcomed the Prime Minister Vajpayee's unilateral ceasefire in November. It, however, insisted that a team of its leaders be allowed to visit Pakistan to convince militant leaders to respond to Indian Prime Minister's offer favourably.

Initially the Government

TALKS OFFER SHOULD HAVE COME EARLIER: CONG

A CAUTIOUS Congress on Thursday welcomed the Government's initiative to hold talks with Pakistan's military ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf but said large-scale killings in Kashmir could have been prevented if the decision had been taken earlier. Stating that the Congress had always been a votary for holding talks with Pakistan, CWC member Natwar Singh said the BJP Government had been stonewalling these suggestions. "After claiming for months that it will not hold talks with Pakistan till terrorism ends in the Valley, the NDA regime has now done a U-turn by extending an invitation to Gen Musharraf," he said.

He said Prime Minister A B Vajpayee had merely informed Congress President Sonia Gandhi that the Government was terminating the ceasefire. The Congress leader said the NDA, which was a mere conglomerate of parties with no common ideology, should take Opposition parties into confidence before opening talks with Gen Musharraf. "The NDA does not have the right to make unilateral policy announcements on such a serious issue without talking to the Opposition. A national consensus has to be built on an issue of such vital import," he said.

HTC, New Delhi

seemed willing to accede to the Hurriyat demand. But New Delhi backtracked when it found Syed Ali Gilani's name in the Hurriyat delegation. Syed Gilani is a known hardliner with staunch leanings towards Pakistan.

Hurriyat again caught the spotlight when it refused to accept New Delhi's offer of dialogue with K C Pant as chief negotiator, unless its leaders were allowed to visit Pakistan.

Shabir Ahmad Shah, who operates outside the Hurriyat, has

however agreed to speak to Pant.

Observers, however, feel that Centre's fresh initiative has edged Hurriyat out of scene, at least for the time being.

"It is a deft move to push Hurriyat into background," said a keen Kashmir watcher. "I don't think that Hurriyat has any role in the new scenario," said Hakim Manzoor, a prominent writer.

But Hurriyat chairman Abdul Ghani Bhatt disagreed. "We are relevant in all situations as we alone represent the aspirations of Kashmiri people," he said.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

25 MAY 2001

Pak insists on Hurriyat role

HT Correspondents
Islamabad/New Delhi, May 24

PAKISTAN, WHICH has promised to respond positively to India's invitation to its Chief Executive, today pledged to abide by all its agreements with New Delhi, including the Lahore Declaration. Islamabad, however, was upset with the withdrawal of the ceasefire in Kashmir, saying this meant State terrorism would be practised in the Valley without restraint.

India and Pakistan did not see eye-to-eye on another matter: the involvement of Hurriyat Conference. Islamabad insisted that Hurriyat should be part of the talks, whereas New Delhi saw no role for the umbrella organisation of Kashmiri militant groups in bilateral talks.

The day after New Delhi decided not to renew the Kashmir truce, security forces killed eight Lashkar-e-Tayyeba militants at Baramullah.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar told a press conference in Islamabad this evening, "We have not yet received any official communication, but the Chief Executive will respond to the Indian

Prime Minister's invitation in a positive spirit."

In New Delhi, Home Minister L K Advani was cautious in his first comments on the invitation to Pakistan's military ruler, saying it would be naïve to expect too much. At the same time, he called the move a "major initiative".

Asked whether the Hurriyat was still relevant in the changed situation, he said: "It certainly has implications for the Hurriyat, which had no locus standi to seek the role of an intermediary between India and Pakistan. But the Pant initiative will continue."

In Srinagar, Hurriyat chairman Abdul Ghani Bhatt insisted that the formation continued to be relevant. The group's executive will meet next week to shape its response to the invitation to General Pervez Musharraf.

Sattar said today that the Hurriyat delegation should be allowed to visit Islamabad for any dialogue that is aimed at reaching a settlement that takes into account the will of the Kashmiri people.

He also suggested that the Kargil conflict was a thing of the past and that it would not affect dialogue with India.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

25 MAY 2001

Centre invites Musharraf for talks on J&K

But calls off 6-month ceasefire

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, May 23

IN WHAT appears to be a two-pronged strategy on Kashmir, the Centre today invited Pakistan's military ruler Gen Pervez Musharraf to visit India to carry forward the "composite bilateral dialogue" process between the two countries while at the same time calling off the six-month long ceasefire.

The announcement came after an hour-long meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security chaired by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

In what looked like to be a complete foreign office show, External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh, while briefing newsmen on the policy shift, declared an end of the six-month long "unilateral cessation of combat operations" in J&K. The fifth phase of the "cease-fire" comes to an end on May 31.

Spelling out the four principal components of the new initiative, Singh explained that these hinged on the Government's commitment to carry on with the Kashmir dialogue process under the PM's emissary K C Pant, continuation of maximum restraint along the Line of Control (LoC) and renewed invitation to all sections in J&K to join the dialogue for peace.

Explaining what amounted to a complete about-turn in calling off the six-month ceasefire, the External Affairs Minister said from now on, the security forces in J&K "shall take such action against terrorists as they judge best".

He regretted that various terrorist groups, mostly foreign, had failed to recognise the imperatives of peace, dialogue and cooperation. "They have also failed to see reason and refused to shun violence during the last six months of the ceasefire," he remarked.

Replying to questions about the Government's change of stance on bilateral dialogue without insisting that Islamabad first stop cross-border terrorism, Singh asserted that New Delhi's invitation to the Pak ruler was in pursuance of the Lahore Declaration and the 1972 Shimla Pact. He expressed optimism over the outcome of the talks proposal, given Gen. Musharraf's oft-repeated intent to set up a negotiating table with the Indian premier.

"We have looked into all aspects of the move, especially its international ramifications," Singh told *Hindustan Times*. He said the invitation to the Pak CEO was the outcome of "considerable preparatory work."

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

24 MAY 2001

CEASEFIRE OFF; NO MENTION OF 'KASHMIR' IN TALKS OFFER

Vajpayee invites Musharraf

By Harish Khare

NEW DELHI, MAY 23. In a major shift of strategic gears, the Vajpayee Government today aborted the 'Ramzan initiative' in Jammu and Kashmir and has revoked the 'ceasefire' (non-initiation of combat operations). More significantly, it decided to invite the Pakistan Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, to visit India "at his early convenience", in pursuance of the Lahore Declaration and the Shimla Agreement.

Also, Mr. K.C. Pant will continue his labours as chief interlocutor while the security forces will be free to go after the militants. The Army, though, would continue to exercise the maximum restraint on the Line of Control.

These decisions were taken by the Cabinet Committee on Security. The Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, presided; others who participated included the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, the External Affairs and Defence Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, the Finance Minister, Mr. Yashwant Sinha, the Deputy Chairperson of the Planning Commission, Mr. K.C. Pant, and the National Security Adviser, Mr. Brajesh Mishra.

The Government's formulation

avoided any mention of "Kashmir" in connection with the invitation to the Pakistani leader. According to Mr. Jaswant Singh, the talks could take place under the existing composite dialogue agenda, which has eight points, including Kashmir.

The decks for this evening's decisions were cleared when Mr. Advani and Mr. Singh met the Prime Minister. The two senior Ministers had gone to Srinagar last Saturday (May 19) to understand for themselves the "ground situation". In Srinagar, the two Ministers heard the perceptions of the security agencies on how the militants had not reciprocated and how the security forces were finding themselves on the back foot.

A MEA show

Much of the talking at the CCS meeting was apparently done by Mr. Jaswant Singh who argued that the ceasefire had run its course and that it was about time the civilian population's sense of security was restored. According to a statement issued, the terrorists "hindered the restoration of peace in Jammu and Kashmir and have inflicted misery upon the people". Henceforth, the security

forces should be free to take "such action against terrorists as they judge best".

Whereas the revocation of the ceasefire should satisfy Mr. Advani — who has had reservations about it — the invitation to Gen. Musharraf should gratify the Ministry of External Affairs, which has found itself under pressure from the international community to start a dialogue with Islamabad. In fact, the dominant input of the MEA in the decision was reflected when Mr. Jaswant Singh briefed the media after the meeting — it became a MEA show.

The decision to revoke the ceasefire undermines the rationale of the Pant mission, though the Government's statement notes that "our invitation to all sections in Jammu and Kashmir to join this dialogue (with Mr. Pant) is reiterated".

Cutting APHC out

On the other hand, the decision to invite Gen. Musharraf has the effect of cutting the All-Party Hurriyat Conference out of the picture. The APHC has been positioning itself as the sole representative of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and was insisting on playing mediator be-

tween India and Pakistan.

By inviting the Pakistan Chief Executive, the Centre has rendered most of the Kashmiri groups rather issueless. Mr. Singh pointedly remarked that "the APHC has no place in any kind of tripartite talks".

(According to PTI, the Hurriyat chairperson, Prof. Abdul Gani Bhat, reacted cautiously to Gen. Musharraf being invited, saying "let us wait and watch". "However, we still believe that tripartite talks could produce better results by including the principal party, which is Kashmir." About the calling off of the ceasefire, Prof. Bhat said, "Ceasefire or no ceasefire, the situation will never change; and as a matter of fact the ceasefire never existed.")

The decision to revoke the ceasefire, coupled with the invitation to Gen. Musharraf, is being explained as a signal to the various jihadi groups that they have not been able to dent the Indian state's capacity to cope with the insurgency. Mr. Singh was careful to assert that notwithstanding the invitation to the Pakistani leader, the fight against terrorism would continue.

Opposition welcomes decision: Page 13

THE HINDU

24 MAY 2001

Aziz returns from Pak. amid drama

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, MAY 23. Police fired in the air and burst teargas shells at Lal Chowk here to disperse a procession protesting the "arrest" of senior All-Party Hurriyat Conference leader, Sheikh Abdul Aziz, who returned from Pakistan today. A few hundred Aziz supporters had arrived in a number of vehicles at the Airport Road to receive him, but were denied entry by police and asked to "go back".

Mr. Aziz was reportedly taken into custody soon after he landed at the Srinagar airport and was not allowed to meet his supporters. As news of the arrest spread, the procession moved towards Lal Chowk, heart of the city, waving Pakistani flags and raising pro-Pakistan and pro-Lashkar-e-Taiba slogans — 'Jee-*way jee-way Pakistan*' '*Lashkar ke mujahidou ham tumharay saath hain*' (Long live Pakistan; We are with you, mujahideen of Lashkar).

Police stopped the processionists and asked them to disperse. They, however, resisted and police resorted to lathicharge, used teargas and fired in the air.

Shopkeepers downed shutters and ran helter-skelter. Pitched battles continued for some time and a few activists were arrested.

However, police denied that Mr. Aziz was arrested and said he had reached his Pampore residence to which he was escorted. Mr. Aziz, who spent over two months in Pakistan, has been very critical of India and the security forces.

With a red carpet welcome there, he also rejected the 'third option' for Kashmir, to which JKLF reacted strongly. Both Mr. Aziz's People's League and the JKLF are constituents of All-Party Hurriyat Conference.

3 injured in Army firing

In other incidents, at least three persons were injured, two of them seriously, when the Army opened fire in Sundroo village near Achabal in Anantnag district. Eyewitnesses said that Army cordoned the area and started searching the houses during which some youth were "severely tortured".

The local populace protested and this led to a violent reaction from the Army which opened fire upon a procession of over 2,000 people, said a resident whose relative was injured in the action.

Three persons, including 12-year-old Sumaya and 16-year-old Ashiq Hussain, were critically injured. "The firing was unprovoked and unjustified," said another relative. However, police said the militants opened fire at the Army and in the exchange of fire these persons were injured.

Tragedy averted

A major tragedy was averted in the Magam area when police recovered a live hand-grenade from a person at the 'Chahlum' procession addressed by former Minister and Shia leader, Moulvi Iftikhar Ansari



People in Srinagar protest against the arrest of senior APHC leader, Sheikh Abdul Aziz, who returned from Pakistan on Wednesday. — Photo: Nissar Ahmad

Police sources said that Mohammad Safdar Dar, reportedly working for Rashtriya Rifles, was seen moving in suspicious circumstances and was caught with a hand-grenade and knife. He was taken into custody.

Around 15,000 people were attending the Chahlum ceremony held in the memory of Hazrat Imam Hussain, the Prophet Mohammad's grandson.

Hurriyat in a fix

NEW DELHI, MAY 23. Sharp differences have surfaced again in the All-Party Hurriyat Conference over backing the demand for accession of Kashmir to Pakistan.

After its executive member, Sheikh Abdul Aziz, on a personal visit to Pakistan, went public propagating accession to Pakistan, former Hurriyat chairman, Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, said, "These can be his personal remarks and the Hurriyat's agenda is not confined to this."

He said all the three options — accession to India or Pakistan, or Independence — were open for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. However, Mr. Aziz, who returned from Pakistan after meeting Gen. Pervez Musharraf, and other top-ranking officials, defended his stand that Kashmir's accession to Pakistan was inevitable.

"I have not said anything wrong. Kashmir's fate would be completed only after it is annexed to Pakistan," Mr. Aziz told PTI on his return.

This statement further fuelled the infighting among the Hurriyat constituents.

The JKLF leader, Mr. Javed Ahmed Mir, said Mr. Aziz had been sent to Pakistan to attend a family function and not to indulge in making statements on the future of Kashmir.

There was a feeling in the Hurriyat that his statement might cause further setback to the possibility of its delegation visiting Pakistan for talks with the Government there and the militant leadership to facilitate a dialogue on Kashmir.

The Government already has reservations on the Jamaat-e-Islami leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, and Mr. Aziz being part of the delegation in view of their pronounced pro-Pakistan leanings. However, after persistent pleadings by unofficial mediators, Mr. Aziz was allowed to go to Pakistan after he assured that he would refrain from pursuing a political agenda.

Violation of the assurance, Hurriyat insiders said, would create further hurdles in the way of the Centre allowing a Hurriyat delegation to visit Pakistan and as a damage-control measure, the APHC might try to replace him.

The JKDFP leader, Mr. Shabir Shah, who is no longer with the Hurriyat, termed it "an internal matter of the conglomerate, but if they feel that he had exceeded his brief by making such statements, then action should be taken." Mr. Aziz's statement was a "headache of the Hurriyat".

THE HINDU

24 MAY 2001

Hurriyat ignores Shah talks initiative

HT Correspondent
Srinagar, May 22

THE ALL-Party Hurriyat Conference has decided to ignore Shabir Shah's letter.

The letter does not deserve to be given any thought since the Hurriyat has already rejected the Government's offer of dialogue. The umbrella organisation's chairman, Abdul Ghani Bhatt, told the *Hindustan Times*.

Shabir Shah, who unlike the Hurriyat, has agreed to talk to the Government's chief negotiator K C Pant, had sent copies of Pant's letter to Hurriyat leaders, seeking their opinion and support.

"We have already made our

stand known," Bhatt said, "and we don't need to deliberate further on the issue."

He said that when the Hurriyat executive meets next, the letter may come up for a "mention". "But we are not going to call any meeting to discuss the letter."

This was Shah's second letter to the Hurriyat, and according to him it is an improvement on the first one. Gani, on the other hand, felt it was an "exercise in futility". "It would be good if he succeeds in bringing peace here," was his sarcastic comment.

Shabir Shah, however, continued with his mission to garner support for dialogue. He met Shia spiritual leader Agha Syed

not immediately known.

Agha's son, Syed Hassan, is a senior Hurriyat leader. Quraishi is also a part of Hurriyat Conference though Inquilabi operates outside the Hurriyat.

Gani asserted that no peace could be guaranteed in the sub-continent unless the core issue of Kashmir was resolved, and this could not be achieved without dialogue with the Hurriyat Conference.

A group of young men frequently interrupted Gani with slogans in favour of Pakistan and the Mujahideen.

The Hurriyat chairman, who reiterated that any dialogue should include

Pakistan, seemed embar-

rassed. Slogans shouting alone will not resolve the problem," he said at one point, as the enthusiastic youths kept on interrupting him.

He reiterated that a dialogue was possible only if India lets a Hurriyat team visit Pakistan and any dialogue must involve Pakistan.

"The peace process should start from Islamabad," he said. "We will first talk to the Pakistani Government and the Mujahideen."

He alleged that some forces were out to break the Hurriyat platform and claimed that the components of the amalgam were united and all such moves would fail.

Shabir office attacked

MILITANTS ON Tuesday lobbed a grenade on the headquarters of Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party, which has initiated a move to hold talks with the Centre. No one was injured in the attack, the third since JKDFP chief Shabir Shah initiated the move for talks a week ago.

PTI, Srinagar

Musatafa Al Muswi, Fazlul Haque Quraishi and Mohammad Azam Inquilabi.

However, their reaction was

Pakistan may step up terrorism in Kashmir: Report

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, May 21. — "Today, when the present regime in Pakistan is facing increasing difficulties, both internally and internationally, there is every possibility that a frustrated and desperate General Musharraf may resort increasingly to bolder terrorist activities within Jammu and Kashmir as a diversionary tactic," a recent home ministry report said.

Claiming that the ratio between security forces and militants killed in the state has increased, the government also claimed that over 200 training camps were operating in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir to provide training to the militants to create trouble in India.

The report said: "As a part of its overall strategy for continuing the current proxy war, Pakistani agencies arranged

for weapons training on a massive scale to Kashmiri youth through specially set up training camps."

It said: "Pakistan has established a few transit camps for various militant groups to train them in weapons and tactics."

Asserting that the ratio of security forces and militants killed which had at one point gone down to 1:3.3, has increased to 1:3.8, the report stated that militancy in Jammu and Kashmir has taken a toll of about 24,000 lives of civilians, security forces and militants in the last decade. "The militants, aided and abetted by ISI, have caused enormous damage to the people and also the economy of the state," it added.

The report said General Zia-ul-Haq had launched a proxy war against India after his country found that it was making no headway in a frontal war. It said: "The proxy



Chairman of the People's League of Kashmir Sheikh Abdul Aziz (raising his hand) poses for a photo session with militants of Pakistan's Jamat-Islami. On Monday in Lahore. — AP/PTI

war began surreptitiously by in the state and exploiting trained these youth in subver-

sive activities, equipped them with sophisticated weapons and infiltrated them back to foment trouble in the valley. However, with growing disenchantment with their misadventure and waning local support, Pakistan was forced to take recourse to pushing in foreign mercenaries into the state, who today, constitute a major portion of the terrorists active in Jammu and Kashmir."

The report estimated that between 1,500 to 2,000 foreign mercenaries are currently operating in the Valley.

The gravity of the war like situation can be gauged from the fact that between 1990 and December 2000, over 32,250 weapons of various calibers, over 3.29 million rounds of ammunition, over 1.30 lakh explosive devices and huge quantities of other war materials were seized by the security forces in the state.

Despite the spurt of terrorist

incidents in the state in the post-Margil phase, the number of incidents during last year (3074) was almost equal to that of 1999 (3071). The number of civilians killed showed a decline to 762 in 2000 compared to 821 in 1999.

However, the number of militants killed last year (1520) was higher than that of 1998 (999) and 1999 (1075).

The report claimed that Pakistan has lent a new dimension to the proxy war by increasing cross border firing by the Pakistani army to augment and facilitate infiltration, using alien mercenaries to provide cutting edge leadership to militant activities.

Expressing serious concern over the continued use of "fi-dayeen" (suicide squads), the report said: "As compared to the last couple of years, the recruitment drive, which was stepped up by militant tanzeems, has received a better response."

THE STATESMAN

Shabir invites Hurriyat for talks

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, MAY 20. In yet another move to seek approval for his response to the Centre's offer, the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP) chief, Mr. Shabir Ahmad Shah, has invited the All-Party Hurriyat Conference for a discussion to reach a consensus. This development comes even as his emissaries arrived in Delhi to hand over his letter to the Pakistan Chief Executive through the Pakistani High Commissioner.

Sources said that Mr. Shah has sent a letter to the Hurriyat chief, Prof. Abdul Gani Bhat, along with a copy of the letter of the Centre's chief negotiator, Mr. K.C. Pant. He has reportedly sought time for a discussion with the Hurriyat leadership over the contents of Mr. Pant's letter.

Prof. Bhat, when contacted by *The Hindu*, confirmed that he had received the letter, but said that the Hurriyat executive would meet to discuss it and decide accordingly. The Hurriyat chairman did not specify a date for the meeting.

Commenting on the contents of Mr. Pant's letter, he said it was just a replica of the Centre's initial statement with a little difference.

JKDFP team in Delhi

Meanwhile, the two-member team of JKDFP, comprising Moulana Mohammad Abdullah Taari and Mr. Saleem Geelani, arrived in New Delhi to meet the Pakistan High Commissioner, Mr. Ashraf

Jehangir Qazi. They will hand over a letter written by Mr. Shah to Pakistan's military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf. Mr. Shah has urged the General to come forward and contribute to the restoration of peace and stability in the subcontinent.

Pak. top brass to meet

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, MAY 20. The top brass of the Pakistan military is meeting here tomorrow to take stock of the situation on the International Boundary and review the developments in Kashmir. The meeting of Pakistan's Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC) will be presided over by the Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf. The situation in Kashmir is one of the topics on the agenda. The meeting assumes significance in the wake of the letter written by the JKDFP president, Mr. Shabir Shah, to Gen. Musharraf.

The chief spokesperson of the Pakistan military, Maj. Gen. Rashid Quereshi, said that the meeting of the JCSC would review the Kashmir situation. However, he was not prepared to comment on the letter of Mr. Shah on the plea that he was not aware of the contents.

The meeting, to be held at the Army headquarters at Rawalpindi near here, would be presided over by Gen. Musharraf and would be attended by the chiefs of Navy and Air Force and other top military and intelligence officials.

A non-starter: Page 15

THE HINDU

7 1 MAY 2001

Shabir's messengers to meet Pak envoy today

New Delhi, May 20

BRAVING THREATS of some militant organisations, Shabir Shah's representatives arrived here today to hand over a letter for Gen Pervez Musharraf, seeking his cooperation in the peace process to solve the Kashmir issue.

The move is seen as an effort by Shah to woo Pakistan's support to the stand taken by him on New Delhi's offer for talks.

Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP) secretary-general, Maulana Abdullah Tari, and spokesman, Saleem Geelani, will hand over the letter to Pakistani High Commissioner Ashraf Jehangir Qazi tomorrow. They will also discuss the present situation in Kashmir.

"We have a clear stand that we want a solution to the Kashmir issue and for that we will have to carry along all the parties to the dispute," Geelani said.

Stating that Pakistan was "undoubtedly" a party to the dispute, he said: "Our party president wants to keep everything transparent and we have written to Gen Musharraf seeking his cooperation in the proposed parleys on the dispute."

But he refused to divulge the contents of the letter. "It broadly seeks Islamabad's continued positive response and contribution in the restoration of peace and stability in the sub-continent," he said.

Militant outfits, including Al-umer Mujahideen, have threatened to kill the two representatives and recently a grenade was lobbed at Tari's house.

Shah's hopes that the move would ease pressures on it and the militant outfits would be tamed, party members said.

All three parties to the Kashmir issue — India, Pakistan and the people of Jammu and Kashmir — should come forward and contribute to the restoration of peace and stability in the region as "bottlenecks" have been removed, Geelani said.

Asked to elaborate on the "bottlenecks" that were to be removed, he said: "New Delhi no longer considers the Kashmir issue a law and order problem but a dispute."

On KC Pant's response to the clarifications sought by Shah, Geelani said: "The reply was not disappointing."

"But dissatisfaction should not mean that we are convinced. It is a long way to go," he said.

On JKDFP leader Hakeem Abdul Rashid's resignation, Geelani said: "This a party where people come and go but the show must go on." Rashid had "revolted" against Shah on the call of his conscience following the latter's "inclination" to enter into bilateral talks with New Delhi on the Kashmir issue.

Shabir sends Pant's letter to Hurriyat

New Delhi, May 20

IN A bid to arrive at a consensus on the letter sent by the Centre's interlocutor, KC Pant, Shabir Shah has sent a copy of it to several intellectuals, including Hurriyat Conference leaders.

"I have sent a copy to intellectuals, opinion makers and all seven Hurriyat executive leaders and sought their views on the issue," the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Front (JKDFP). Shah said he is eagerly awaiting a reply.

In a veiled attack on Hurriyat leaders, Shah said he was neither in favour of opposing the dialogue nor imposing any conditions.

"Yes, I would prefer to meet Kashmiri leaders and military rulers in Pakistan but it is not a condition. I can even talk to them from my home," he said.

After the JKDFP responded positively to the Centre's talks offer, Hurriyat chairman Abdul Gani Bhat had said that Shah was putting "the cart before the horse".

"If the horse (Hurriyat) wants to come forward, I have no problems at all. I will extend all cooperation if the amalgam leadership voices the sentiments of Kashmiris," Shah said. He said that in order to arrive at a consensus he would also meet Kashmiri pundit leaders in Jammu.

"It does not matter whether

NO PAK VISIT, NO TALKS: BHAT

HURRIYAT CHAIRMAN Abdul Ghani Bhat today said there can be no talks with New Delhi until a Hurriyat delegation is allowed to visit Pakistan.

"We want to start the peace journey from Pakistan by taking the Mujahideen into confidence," Bhat said at a seminar on the 11th death anniversary of Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq.

"The ice would have started melting had the Hurriyat delegation been allowed to travel to Pakistan," he said. Hurriyat's visit to Pakistan could agree Mujahideen groups to end operations for a stipulated period and end the hostilities.

Bhat said the APHC stands for a just, viable and permanent solution to the Kashmir issue which was acceptable to India, Pakistan and primarily, to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

He said: "If Kashmiris are given right to self-determination under the supervision of world bodies then there would be no need for tripartite talks."

But he said bilateral and unilateralism is no solution to the Kashmir imbroglio and tripartite talks involving all the three parties to the issue was the best way to solve the problem.

PTI, Srinagar

they support us or not. They have every right to live and no one can deny this to them," Shah said.

On the proposed talks on Kashmir, he said: "People should not expect wonders overnight."

Shah did not rule out the possibility of a deadlock in the talks, but said "everyone including India, Pakistan and people of Jammu and Kashmir should work together to avoid such eventualities".

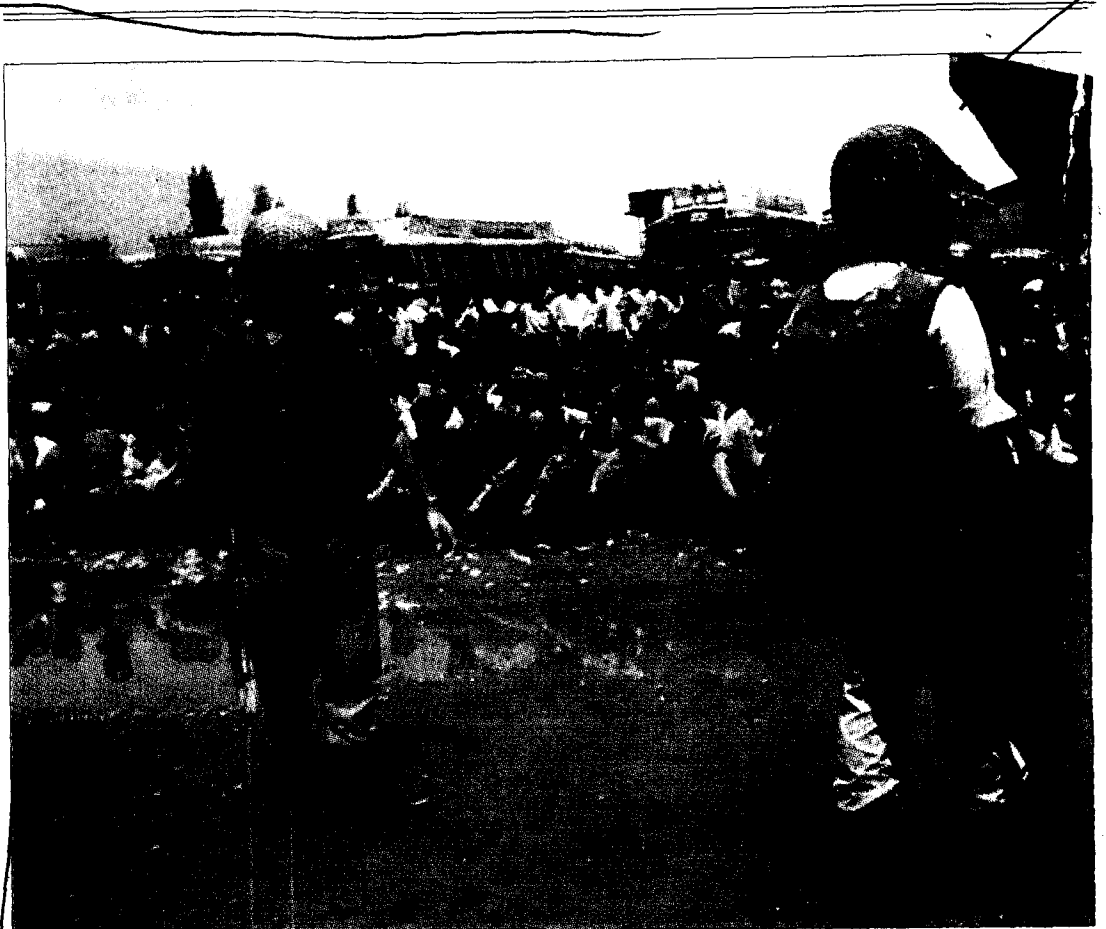
On the Hurriyat leader Sheikh Aziz's comment that Kashmir's accession to Pakistan cannot be stopped, Shah said: "This is an

internal matter of the conglomerate and if they feel that he had exceeded his brief by making such statements, then action should be taken."

"For me and my party all options that can bring peace in the south-east Asia are open," Shah said.

On what transpired in reported talks between him and leader in PoK Sardar Abdul Qayoom, he said: "I have briefed him on everything and he (Qayoom) has told me that the process of dialogue should not stop."

PTI



PTI

Securitymen stand guard during a cordon-and-search operation in Srinagar on Sunday.

AP PHOTO

Advani hints at J&K ceasefire extension

HT Correspondent
Srinagar, May 19

UNION HOME Minister LK Advani today hinted that the unilateral ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir, due to expire at the end of this month, may be extended again.

The "feedback is positive and the Cabinet Committee on Security, the ultimate decision-making body, would consider the gains of ceasefire while deciding on the issue," Advani said after a three-hour meeting of the unified headquarters. He said the committee would soon meet in New Delhi to decide on the issue.

The Home Minister, External Affairs and Defence Minister Jaswant Singh and a battery of officials reached Srinagar today to take stock of the situation in the context of the ceasefire announced last November.

Since then the ceasefire has been extended thrice for its "positive results". The meeting at SK International Convention Complex hall on the sprawling southern shore of Dal Lake was attended by Governor GC Saxena, Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, Minister of State for Home Mushtaq Ahmad Lone, corps commanders, paramilitary and police officers.

Advani said the meeting was very significant as it provided the opportunity to assess the security situation in the State and analyse the gains registered in the ceasefire. "The feedback was positive, though some negative remarks were there... We got valuable inputs that will help the Centre to take the right decision to achieve the objective of peace and security," he said. Advani said he was happy with the peace process and its dividends. He did not agree that the peace process was a non-starter and said it is a "sound and correct initiative".

Related report on Page 9

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

20 MAY 2001

HD-12
19/5

The LoC & Kashmir

By Chinmaya R. Gharekhan

The search for a possible solution to the Kashmir issue will have to be built around converting the LoC into some kind of boundary, upgrading its status.

WHILE THERE might be a significant body of opinion in Pakistan especially among the establishment in favour of continuing the status quo in Kashmir, we in India ought to, sooner rather than later, give serious thought to ways and means of finding at least a semi-permanent solution to the problem. Since war is not an option and since neither side will give up its well known positions, the search for a possible solution will have to be built around converting the Line of Control (LoC) into some kind of a boundary between the two countries, upgrading its status to a more official, more permanent, more formal line of demarcation.

Kargil was not just a military humiliation for Pakistan. It also had the effect, not the one intended by Pakistan, of a greatly enhanced concern and respect for the sanctity and inviolability of the LoC. In the wake of our war with China in 1962, there was pressure on India — and on Pakistan — to settle the Kashmir issue. Even independent of this external pressure, there was a school of thought in India that a good faith effort to settle the issue ought be made, since there was no way India could compel Pakistan to vacate its aggression. The Americans had made it clear to us that it would be very difficult for them to persuade Congress to agree to sell military equipment, which India needed to defend itself against China, unless India settled the Kashmir question.)

Six rounds of talks were held between India and Pakistan between December 1962 and May 1963. The Indian team was led by Sardar Swaran Singh, who was then Minister of Railways and included Gundevia who has left an eminently readable account of all this in his delightful memoirs 'Outside the Archives'. Pakistan's delegation was headed by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Minister of Industries at the time. The formula governing India's approach, which had been approved by Jawaharlal Nehru, was: modify the ceasefire line somewhat in favour of Pakistan and treat the new line as the international boundary. Since at that time, as at present, we rejected any attempt to deal ex-

clusively with Kashmir, the communique announcing the talks mentioned 'Kashmir and other related matters'. It is worth emphasizing that the entire Cabinet had agreed to the proposal for talks even though, if successful, they would have led to a partition of Jammu and Kashmir.

Nothing came out of the talks essentially for two reasons. Pakistan demanded at the beginning the whole of the Valley and subsequently the whole State. Bhutto treated with contempt India's offer to give 1,500 square miles more than what Pakistan already occupied. He was prepared to concede only the district of Kathua to India. The second reason was the partisan attitude of Britain and the United States in support of Pakistan.

The situation today is vastly different, though one element remains unchanged and has, in fact, been reinforced — war continues to be a non-option. The desirability of working for a solution has become even more urgent. Politically, it would be impossible for either India or Pakistan to publicly and formally to propose settlement on the basis of converting the LoC into the international boundary. In India, any Government would have to respect at least the letter of the Parliament resolution of 1994.

There are two aspects: substantial and procedural. What should be the substance, content of a possible settlement along the LoC and how do we get there? As regards substance, a future agreement ought to strengthen the LoC's non-violability. The language of the Shimla Agreement of 1972 in this respect will have to be reinforced. The agreement, while not converting the LoC into a *de jure* boundary, should be made more formal and binding. The Heads of State of the P-5 and other countries, including all our neighbours, could be invited to witness the formal conclusion of the agreement. The agreement could also be registered with the United Nations. The

possibility of concluding a no-war pact or a friendship treaty along with the signing of the agreement on the LoC could also be considered. The idea of permitting some role to the U.N. observers need not be rejected out of hand. After all, the observers have been there all these years and we have not been able to get rid of them. We have even been paying for them. In the post-Cold War era and in the context of a new agreement, which would carefully define the new mandate for the observers, we ought to be willing to look positively at this matter.

Regarding the mechanism of getting there, it might of course be ideal to negotiate directly and bilaterally with Pakistan. But the strictly bilateral approach raises two difficulties. First, there will be the political backlash which any Government in India will face in taking such an initiative. Second, it could be perceived by Pakistan as a sign of India's weakness. To get around these difficulties, two possibilities could be considered.

It would be highly desirable for the major political parties in India to consult among themselves in an effort to arrive at at least a minimum of consensus on the broad parameters of the approach to the solution of the Kashmir problem. The initiative for such consultations will perhaps have to come from the governing party or coalition. The other, more controversial possibility is to consider third party good offices. Here, it might be worthwhile to go back to the Swaran Singh-Bhutto talks of 1962-63. When the Americans realised that the talks were not going anywhere, they suggested what President Kennedy, in a letter to Nehru, described as "the discreet and unobtrusive good offices of a common friend". Interestingly, India agreed to the proposal, again on condition that the 'common friend' must not confine himself only to Kashmir. It was Pakistan's President Ayub Khan who laid down conditions to the mediation pro-

posal which India could not accept and which even the Americans and the British could not press us to accept. Today, when India is so much more confident of herself internationally, the idea of good offices could be given renewed consideration.

A suggestion has been put forward that India should withdraw the item relating to Jammu and Kashmir from the Security Council. The argument is that since it was India that took the issue to the Council, it is up to us to withdraw it. This, however, is not the case. The item can only be deleted by a formal decision of the Council, which in effect means with the consent of both parties. We ought to know better than to presume Pakistan's concurrence to any such idea.

Similarly, the proposal to have the resolutions relating to Kashmir abrogated is a non-starter. There are only two ways to have a resolution 'abrogated'. One is to adopt a new resolution which, by its content, would effectively nullify the previous resolution. The other is to pass a resolution which would expressly declare the earlier resolution null and void. It is not politically realistic to expect us to successfully try either of these two methods. Other countries have their own concerns and are loath to create a precedent which might be used against them at some stage.

Under the present circumstances, when Pakistan continues to foment and assist militancy in Kashmir, it is not possible to engage into any meaningful talks with it. No situation, however, remains static for ever. A time may come when the leadership in Pakistan might seriously wish to come to honourable terms with India. The Kashmiri people are sometimes projected as the third party whose views would have to be taken into account while a solution is under negotiation. India will obviously have to end the alienation of the Kashmiris and win over their hearts and minds through good governance. As far as the status of Kashmir as an integral part of the Indian Union is concerned, their views are no more relevant than the views of, say, the people of Nagaland about the status of their State.

SECRET

19 MAY 2001

Pant is our guest: Shabir Shah

NEW DELHI, MAY 18. The Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party leader, Mr. Shabir Shah, today said that Kashmiri leaders around the world favoured a dialogue and he would like to meet the Government's interlocutor, Mr. K. C. Pant, during his visit to the State. ¹⁰⁻¹ ^{18K}

Welcoming reports that Mr. Pant would be visiting the Valley, Mr. Shah told PTI over the phone from Srinagar "Mr. Pant is our guest and I would like to play host to him. There will be some talks on Kashmir and he will get the feel of the situation."

Mr. Shah also said Mr. Pant could meet him at his residence if he wished. *Agar woh mere ghar aana chahe to mujhe bahut khushi hogi* (if he likes to come to my house, I will be very happy," he said.

Was this his way of inviting Mr. Pant to initiate talks on Kashmir? "Sure, sure," Mr. Shah said, "I have not imposed any conditions, I can meet Mr. Pant anywhere in the country but I would like him to

visit the Valley first so that he gets a feel of the situation." ¹⁹¹⁵

"Whether I go first and meet him or he comes first to the Valley is not a condition at all," he added.

Mr. Shah is already in touch with the Kashmiri leaders around the world, including those in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. "I spoke to Sardar Abdul Qayoom in PoK and other leaders in the U.S. and Britain. Everyone is of the opinion that the process of dialogue should not stop," he said.

'Pak. participation a must'

Stating that the Centre's reply to the clarifications sought by him were "not disappointing," Mr. Shah said "the Government has made it clear that the talks are aimed at resolving the dispute and that it is not averse to involving Pakistan in the talks." To carry forward the peace process, Pakistan's participation was compulsory.

THE HINDU

MAY 19 1975

Farooq reticent on truce extension

Arun Joshi
Jammu, May 18

FAROOQ ABDULLAH apparently has some reservations on extending the ceasefire in the State. He hasn't gone public with these, though.

The fate of the ceasefire will be decided at a meeting in Srinagar tomorrow. Home Minister L K Advani and Defence Minister Jaswant Singh will take part in the deliberations.

"We'll hold discussions tomorrow. Let's see what comes out of that," the Chief Minister said when asked about his comments

1995
on the extension of the ceasefire. Farooq has his own reasons for being reticent. Although the decision on the truce is the Centre's, anything that goes wrong is blamed on the State Government.

During the truce, killings have gone up and the militants have set up base in towns and villages which hitherto used to be sanitized, thus adding to the fear psychosis among the people.

The Chief Minister, however, said the peace process would march ahead. "The Hurriyat Conference has no following among people. If they have any

base, let them face elections. They have no guts because they know people are not with them."

About the proposed early elections, he said polls will be held "when I am ready". He ridiculed the BJP for raising the bogey of the polls under President's rule.

Regarding the comments of the US Secretary of State Collin Powell that the US would not interfere in Kashmir, he said: "I am happy that he made this statement. It makes it clear that no third-party help is needed. This is an eye opener for all those clamouring for the outside mediation."



FAROOQ ABDULLAH

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Shabir to seek public opinion on Pant's letter

HF-9
1975

HT Correspondent
Srinagar, May 16

THE PROSPECTS of an immediate dialogue between Shabir Shah and the Centre's Kashmir interlocutor, K C Pant, appear bleak. Shah said he wanted to seek public opinion on Pant's rejoinder to his queries.

In a letter to Shah, Pant had addressed Shah's clarifications on the talks and had sought for a meeting. Shah released copies of the letter to the press here on Wednesday and said that he would seek public opinion before responding to it.

Party general secretary Moulana Mohammad Abdullah Tari distributed copies of the letter to media persons at the party's Raj Bagh headquarters.

Shah had sought clarifications on three main issues from K C Pant before entering into a formal dialogue with him.

He wanted to know if the talks were for the mere restoration of peace in the State or to resolve the core issue of Kashmir. He had also demanded that the talks be tripartite, involving Pakistan as third party to the dispute of Kashmir.

Shah had also sought that pro-India political groups and personalities be kept away from the dialogue. Pant, in his rejoinder, had diplomatically disagreed with Shah on all the three points.

Though Pant admitted that the "end result of dialogue" should be resolution of the Kashmir problem, he told Shah in no-uncertain terms that discussions with him would be for the restoration of peace.



AFF

Maulana Abdullah Tari, one of Kashmiri separatist leader Shabir Shah's special envoys, gestures as he reads to the Press a letter from Government's pointman on Jammu and Kashmir K C Pant on Wednesday in Srinagar.

"It is important to emphasise peace because it's necessary to alleviate the sufferings of people and not because the Kashmir problem was being treated merely as a law and order issue", Pant's letter said.

He said the solution to Kashmir's problem could be evolved only in an atmosphere of peace.

Pant is silent on Shah's demand for "tripartite talks" and has instead reiterated the govern-

ment's established stand that it was not averse to talking to Pakistan.

"The government of India is not averse to engage Pakistan in meaningful talks on Jammu and Kashmir and is hopeful that Pakistan will cooperate with India and initiate measures that would facilitate the process".

Pant was emphatic in rejecting Shah's demand for keeping away pro-India groups from dialogue.

"At this stage, we are keen to understand the concerns of all sections of the people of J&K," Pant's letter said. "It would have been against the spirit of democracy not to give those who have a stake in the future of J&K a chance to express themselves."

PANT'S SECURITY UPGRADED

THE CENTRE has upgraded the security of K C Pant to Z category before his visit to Kashmir sometime next week. Sources said the security of Pant, who would visit the Valley to hold talks with former Chief Minister GM Shah, had been upgraded following reports that militants might try to create some mischief. Under the new security cover, Pant will have a 24-hour armed escort besides a couple of pilot cars. In addition to the Z category security, Pant has been provided with additional armed guards at his residence and office to prevent any untoward incident. Pant was earlier covered under the X category security.

PTI, New Delhi

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

1975

Letter for letter: Pant reply to Shah

Srinagar, May 15

AN EMISSARY of K C Pant, Centre's negotiator on talks with Kashmiri groups, today met Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP) president Shabir Shah and handed him a letter with clarifications sought by him.

Immediately after receiving the letter from Pant's emissary Naresh Kumar Jain, the executive committee of the JKDFP met to deliberate on its contents. Both Jain and Shah refused to divulge the letter's contents, written in response to Shah's communication seeking certain clarifications from the Centre for a dialogue with Delhi.

Shah said the details of the letter would be made public only after the JKDFP executive body discussed it. "We have not hidden anything from the public so far, nor do we intend to do so in future."

Earlier this month, a two-member JKDFP team comprising Saleem Geelani, spokesman and chief organiser of the party, and Maulana Abdullah Tari, secretary general, had handed over a letter to Pant seeking clarifications on whether talks would be held with Pakistan.

The JKDFP also sought to know if the Government was serious about holding talks with groups like the National Confer-



Pant's emissary Naresh Kumar Jain (right) with Shabir Shah in Srinagar before leaving for New Delhi.

A PHOTO

ence and the Congress and whether it planned to hold talks with Kashmiri militant groups.

Jain and Shah came out after remaining closeted for nearly 20 minutes. Asked about his mission, Jain said he was entrusted with the job of handing over the letter. "Shah will disclose the

contents of the letter." Asked where the talks would be held — Srinagar or Delhi — Jain said "preferably in Delhi". On the proposed visit of Pant to Srinagar, he said: "Pant will visit Srinagar but no date has been fixed yet."

Jain said no date had been fixed for talks with Kashmiri

groups. Shah said he would enter into a dialogue with New Delhi to resolve the Kashmir issue and welcomed the recent remarks of Atal Bihari Vajpayee that he would leave no stone unturned to foster friendly relations with Pakistan.

PTI

Kashmir is a leftover of history and a complicated issue: Zhu

China backs peace for J&K

Islamabad, May 12 (Agencies): Calling the Kashmir problem "complicated", visiting Chinese Prime Minister Zhu Rongji said Beijing would support all efforts in resolving the issue peacefully.

"Kashmir is a leftover of history and a very complicated issue," Zhu said addressing a joint press conference with Pakistan's military ruler Pervez Musharraf here last night.

China would try its utmost to support efforts aimed at resolving the dispute through peaceful means, he said. Zhu said developments in South Asian region were linked to stability and prosperity of Asia in particular and the world at large.

"As a close neighbour, China cares about the situation in the region and sincerely hopes that it will be able to maintain peace and stability and that countries in the subcontinent can live together in peace," he said.

To a question on increasing defence cooperation with Pakistan

in respect to the increase in India's defence budget, Zhu said China and Pakistan continued to cooperate with each other but "in strict observance of international agreements."

Earlier, speaking at the banquet hosted in Zhu's honour, Musharraf said the "movement" in Kashmir could not be "bracketed with religious extremism, separatism or terrorism."

He claimed Kashmir "is not and never was a part of India". Musharraf said Pakistan maintained a minimum level of deterrence that could counter "any aggression" from India.

"We are very confident that this level of deterrence is maintained," Musharraf said, adding that no increase in defence spending by India can deter Pakistan from maintaining the deterrence level.

"We will always maintain it and we are maintaining it," he said adding that China has provided all assistance that Pakistan

needed in all fields of activity. "We are very proud of it and extremely grateful to them for that," Musharraf said.

Zhu arrived in Islamabad yesterday and held discussions on regional and economic matters with Musharraf. The two sides signed seven project agreements which officials say might involve about \$500 million of investment by Chinese companies in Pakistan.

Zhu said Musharraf had also asked for Chinese support in developing Pakistan's Gawadar port and a coastal highway in Baluchistan province. "Last year Pakistan-China trade hit a record high of \$1.16 billion, doubling that of 10 years ago," he said.

Zhu praised Musharraf's record since he took power in a bloodless coup. "Your country is more stable and the downward spiral of the economy has been reversed and the people's living standard has also improved somewhat," Zhu said.

Musharraf has begun political

and economic reforms and tried to improve the investment image of Pakistan after it was badly tarnished by a row with foreign-backed power companies.

Missile defence

Pakistan issued an implicit attack on the proposed US missile defence system today. "We are against any action that re-initiates a nuclear and missile race," Musharraf was quoted as saying by the official APP news agency.

The criticism from Musharraf contrasted with India's support for the controversial US plans yesterday during a visit to New Delhi by US deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage.

US President George W. Bush has sent envoys around the world to drum up support for the scheme, which he says would eliminate the risk of missile attacks by "rogue states". China is deeply suspicious that the US plan for a missile shield would neutralise its nuclear force.

THE TELEGRAPH

73 MAY 2001

17 journalists hurt in BSF attack

Srinagar, May 10

SEVENTEEN JOURNALISTS, mostly videographers and photo journalists, were injured today when BSF men assaulted them at Magam on Srinagar-Gulmarg Road where 11 people were killed in a blast yesterday, officials said.

The BSF jawans led by an assistant commandant beat them up with gun butts and lathis and threw B Kumar, a Delhi-based cameraman of Enadu TV, into a stream after he received serious head injuries, the sources alleged. Their cameras and other equipment worth lakhs of rupees were either damaged or thrown into the stream by the BSF men, the officials said.

The incident took place when the scribes were covering from a distance BSF assault on villagers, who after receiving bodies of victims of yesterday's blast were raising slogans.

Two FIRs have been registered against the BSF personnel in connection with the assault on journalists and Minister of State for Home Mushtaq Ahmad Lone and DGP AK Suri have assured a probe into the incident.

The injured include S Irfan of PTI, Fayaz Ahmad of UNI, Naseer Ahmad of Zee TV, Shujat Bukhari, Nissar Ahmad Bhat of Hindu, Aijaz Rahi and Mehrajuddin of Associated Press, Bilal Ahmad Bhat of ANI, S



A woman on Thursday mourns the death of her husband, killed in the Magam blast.

Tariq of NDTV, Tauseef of AFP, Sanam Aijaz of ETV, Javid Ahmad Shah of Indian Express and Sayed Muzaffar Hussain of Urdu daily Srinagar Times.

Naseer Ahmad, a witness, said the incident took place near main Magam Chowk where the BSF men first beat up the villagers without any provocation and then their officer ordered them to pounce on the journalists.

6 MASSACRED

MILITANTS KIDNAPPED 11 Hindu shepherds from a village in Doda, Jammu and Kashmir, on Thursday and shot eight of them, a police spokesman said.

PTI, Jammu

The BSF men fired a few rounds in the air, surrounded the journalists and beat them up one by one, he said. Their fury subsided after DIG of BS, RP Singh, reached the spot.

However, later when the journalists went looking for their expensive cameras, BSF DIG in charge of Magam, AK Malik, reached the spot and ordered his men to take action against the scribes who were once again beaten up, Naseer alleged. The journalists then ran to the nearby Magam police station and took shelter, he said.

Minister of State for Home Mushtaq Ahmad Lone, DGP AK Suri, I-G BSF, Srinagar, GS Gill and I-G of CRPF, PC Joshi reached the spot, gave a patient hearing to the journalists and assured a probe into the incident. The injured journalists were then taken to hospitals in Srinagar for treatment.

BSF DIG AK Vaishnava said an inquiry will be conducted by a BSF officer.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

11 MAY 2001

BSF attacks mediapersons in Kashmir

By Our Special Correspondent
SRINAGAR, MAY 10. In an act of high-handedness, personnel of the Border Security Force unleashed an unprovoked assault on 17 reporters, newscameramen and photojournalists of international and national media organisations in Magam in Budgam district of central Kashmir today.

So unprovoked and so inexplicable was the behaviour of the BSF that the Union Home Ministry expressed regret over the incident and ordered an inquiry.

"The exact sequence of events and the provocation which led to an altercation between the BSF and members of the media are not

yet known and are being ascertained. Yet, there can be no two opinions that whatever happened was most unfortunate and should have been avoided. The Home Ministry expresses its deep regret over this episode and also conveys its sympathies to those who have received injuries or suffered loss of any kind, including dignity," the Ministry statement said.

The mediapersons had gone to Magam, about 25 km from Srinagar, in the wake of Wednesday's blast in which 11 persons, including eight civilians, and a BSF officer, were killed.

As the scribes were witnessing the funeral procession of three civilians, there was an altercation

between the local people and a passing BSF convoy. Without provocation, the BSF men ran amuck, punching and beating up the journalists with rifle-butts and shouting at them. They snatched their video equipment and cameras, smashed them and threw them in a stream.

Among the injured are Mr. Shujaat Bukhari of *The Hindu* and Mr. Sheikh Mushtaq of Reuters. Mr. K. Kumar, a Hyderabad-based videographer of Eenadu TV, was severely beaten up and thrown into the rivulet. The newsmen took shelter in the Magam police station.

According to the journalists, the BSF men, belonging to 194 Battalion,

ion, were led by their Deputy Commandant, Mr. I. G. Munda, who was particularly rough.

At least 13 cameras, including that of *The Hindu* photographer, Mr. Nissar Ahmad, and that of Zee TV were smashed, Mr. Shujaat Bukhari said.

As news of BSF high-handedness reached Srinagar, the DIG (Police), Mr. R. P. Singh, came to the spot and expressed apology. He was requested by the journalists to help retrieve their cameras and video equipment. As Mr. Singh moved towards the rivulet, the BSF DIG, Mr. A.K. Mullick, arrived on the scene. He suddenly flared up and started shouting to his men and escorts to "shoot" the

journalists and demanded how the mediapersons could enter the area without his permission.

Yet another round of beating began and the journalists took shelter in the police station. They lodged two FIRs against the BSF personnel. Cameras of Reuters, ANI, AP, Eenadu TV, NDTV and Aftab were also damaged.

Pant to visit Srinagar

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 8. The Centre's designated interlocutor on Kashmir peace talks, Mr. K.C. Pant, today announced that he would soon visit Srinagar to have more meetings in a bid to strengthen the peace process.

"I have accepted the invitation of the Awami National Conference to visit Srinagar but the dates will be firmed up later," Mr. Pant told reporters today after meeting Mr. Muzaffar Shah of the ANC.

The ANC of the former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Mr. G. M. Shah, extended an invitation to Mr. Pant to visit Srinagar and other parts of the Valley to get a first hand feel of the situation.

Mr. Muzaffar Shah handed over a three-page letter of the ANC to Mr. Pant, saying his party saw the opportunity as a "positive development" and would not put any hindrances or conditionalities for the peace talks.

"Exchange of views is the only way out for finding permanent solution to the vexed problem of Kashmir," Mr. Shah, son of Mr. G. M. Shah and also the spokesman of the ANC, told reporters.

Mr. Shah said that ANC's "mantra" for solving the Kashmir problem was "consultation, consensus, compassion, compromise, and no-confrontation."

He added that there was no

harm in talking without bothering about the results.

Responding to queries, Mr. Pant said that he had gladly accepted the invitation and took advantage of Mr. Muzaffar Shah's presence by listening to his views on broader aspects of the Kashmir issue.

"Whatever discussion has to take place will be with Mr. G. M. Shah when I visit Srinagar," he said. Mr. Pant also held meeting with senior most Ladakhi leader Kushak Bakula.

Coup report baseless, says ISI chief

ISLAMABAD, MAY 8. The Director-General of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence, Maj. Gen. Rashid Quereshi, today described as 'baseless' a report about an attempted coup against the Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf.

Replying to a query from a journalist on whether a coup was attempted yesterday, he said no such incident had taken place.

The journalist brought to his notice national dailies receiving telephone calls on this issue.

The news about the alleged coup and its denial was not published in any daily except the *Nawai Waqat*. - UNI

THE HINDU

29 MAY 2001

'Solving Kashmir problem will take time'

By Our Special Correspondent **COIMBATORE, MAY 8.** The Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, today admitted that solving the Kashmir problem would take time. "But we are determined to solve it", he added addressing a public meeting at Tirupur on the last leg of his election campaign.

Mr. Advani, who arrived at the venue almost one-and-a-half hours behind schedule as his helicopter developed a technical snag before departing from Mayiladuthurai, said he was asked time and again why the Kashmir problem had not yet been solved.

But this was a "problem of 50 years" and when the previous Governments administered "more medicines there were more diseases." "Hence I cannot cure it in three years. It is an inherited problem. But we are determined to solve it."

He said communal riots were 'minimal' during the period 1988-2001 when the BJP was at the helm. "I am saying this with a sense of pride, happiness and gratification." He also said the Muslim community had not progressed during the past five decades because the other political parties who were in power never bothered about their welfare. They were considered just a 'votebank'. But the BJP-led NDA did not treat them as a votebank. "We do not try to appease them. We provide them equality, due protection and strive for providing better education".

In his 30-minute speech, Mr. Advani dwelt at length on the trials and tribulations of the BJP and its emergence as the premier party at the national level and also the stupendous challenges it had to face including cyclones in Orissa and Gujarat, the earthquake in Gujarat

and the war in Kargil. The "proxy war" that Pakistan had been waging for the 15 years had also been successfully defeated. India had emerged as a nuclear power despite threats and economic sanctions.

Despite several natural calamities, the Indian economy had become a "vigorous one and recognised as one of the fastest growing in the world".

He claimed that the secret of the NDA's progress and success was "it says what it means and means what it says".

He observed that people did not like leaders who said one thing and did another. They wanted 'dependability' and "we have had problems with two ladies (AIADMK leader, Ms. Jayalalitha and the Trinamool Congress leader, Ms. Mamata Banerjee) and their credibility has now been affected".

THE HINDU

Pak participation a must: Shabir

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, May 4

THE SHABIR SHAH-led Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP) has made it clear that it will not participate in talks with the Government unless Pakistan is drawn into negotiations.

At a press conference here today, party secretary-general Maulana Abdullah Tari said the JKDFP wanted a clear signal from New Delhi that it would be willing to invite Pakistan for the talks at some stage, even if not

immediately.

He clarified that the party was not setting any pre-condition now. The invitation from Government negotiator K C Pant had been discussed at the JKDFP's general council meeting.

All its leaders, including those representing Kashmiri Pandits and the Sikh community, wanted the Government to clarify its position on the matter, Maulana Tari said.

He claimed even the Pandits had agreed that there could be no solution to the Kashmir problem without Pakistan's participation

in the negotiations.

"We are not insisting that Pakistan be called in right away. The Government would be sending a positive signal all over Kashmir of its sincerity if it gives a clarification that it is not rigid about excluding Pakistan. We believe from our experience of the past that there are three parties to the dispute. In the past, the Governments of India and Pakistan kept the Kashmiris out and struck bilateral deals, which proved useless. Now India wants bilateral talks with Kashmiris leaving Pakistan out.

This will not work", Maulana Tari said.

"There is no disagreement between us and the Hurriyat on this. If the Hurriyat leaders are saying that India is being insincere by insisting on keeping Pakistan out, they may be right", he said.

The JKDFP leadership will take a final decision on whether or not to respond to Pant's offer after a formal reply is received to their letter which was delivered to Pant by Maulana Tari and the party's chief organiser Saleem Gilani.

Centre must recognise sombre realities, says Hurriyat chief

By Shujaat Bukhari

Allowing a delegation of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference to visit Pakistan would be the most important ingredient in the peace process initiated by the Government of India five months ago, according to Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat, APHC chairman. Stressing that the BJP-led Government "backtracked" on the issue, he says the prevailing confusion is not unexpected.

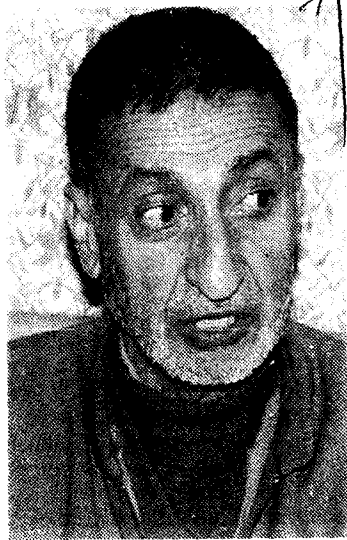
The college teacher-turned-politician, who was dismissed from Government service in 1986 for airing anti-India views, Prof. Bhat was elected chairman of the 23-party conglomerate last year in a direct contest with another executive member, Mr. Abdul Gani Lone. He believes that there is no alternative to talks but insists on the recognition of "sombre realities" by India.

The involvement of Pakistan in any kind of negotiations is not only necessary but also vital for the peace process to fructify.

Prof. Bhat describes the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party chief, Mr. Shabir Shah's recent move to send a team to Delhi as a "premature abortion of an effort which did not exist." In an interview to *The Hindu* at his residence here, Prof. Bhat maintained that the APHC had not rejected the offer of talks but wanted New Delhi to ensure that the dispute on Jammu and Kashmir was addressed.

Shujaat Bukhari: Why did the APHC decide against entering into a dialogue with the Centre?

Prof. Bhat: Peace process has to be viewed with reference to the dispute of Jammu and Kashmir. If you talk peace without taking into account the issue which constitutes a threat to it, you are going to end up nowhere. The APHC has to take a position which is commensurate with sombre political



The chairman of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference, Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat.

— Photo: Nissar Ahmed

realities. Without involving Pakistan, India and the people of Jammu and Kashmir, we cannot restore peace in South Asia. Both India and Pakistan are nuclear. If they fight another war, it will be a disaster and if you want to banish the ghosts of war and ensure nuclear peace, the dispute of Jammu and Kashmir has to be addressed.

You mean India should accept it is a dispute?

No, I do not say that because I believe the GoI has recognised Kashmir as a dispute and the international community has also done so. Above all, India and Pakistan have fought three wars over it. If they say it is not a dispute I will be amused.

What is the reality?

The reality is that there are three parties to the dispute. Future dispensation is involved. It is not an ethnic issue, not a law and order problem and of course not an internal dispute. Therefore, when you talk in terms of peace it has to be comprehensive, purposeful and result-oriented.

But a beginning has been

made... Why don't you cooperate with the (peace) process?

If you want to purchase peace, you cannot do it by any stretch of imagination unless you address the issue. You have to have a road map. If the APHC (delegation) had been given an opportunity to travel to Pakistan, it would have helped. This is the most important step, if at all, for the GoI and the people of Kashmir. It is the right step in the right direction.

In the past, you emphasised flexibility on the issue. Apparently the Centre has been flexible and not put any conditions. Why have you not moved ahead?

The Hurriyat has demonstrated a deeper sense of flexibility than the GoI with reference to peace process. We did not, as a forum, reject the unilateral ceasefire announced by the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, but we did reject the same announced by the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen. We thought the Prime Minister was clear about it (the announcement). That is why we suggested that we be allowed to go to Pakistan. We wanted to talk to the mujahideen in Pakistan and the Government of Pakistan. India was honour-bound to allow the visit. They (the Centre) backtracked. It is not a healthy trend in politics.

Do you think the ceasefire is still relevant?

It is not. It can only be relevant if the other party accepts it. It can be successful only when APHC is allowed to go to Pakistan so that we talk to the mujahideen and return with a message of peace.

Why are you putting conditions when the offer of the GoI is not conditional?

The (Centre's) statement was cleverly drafted. You will not come across a single sentence where it committed that it (the offer) was unconditional. I suspect that the offer is conditional when you go deep into it. When you talk about law and order, it is an internal track and it becomes a domestic issue. When they refer to

agreed solution it is, I believe, autonomy which, of course, is not a solution to the problem.

When you oppose the involvement of diverse political parties, like the pro-India groups, in the dialogue how can you take into confidence the people of all regions and religions?

We feel the APHC represents whole of Jammu and Kashmir. We represent the predominant view in the State.

But there seems to be a clear division among the people of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh?

I agree. There is dissent along communal lines. This is the bottomline. That is why we say that plebiscite is the only solution. If the majority goes in favour of India we will accept it and withdraw our demand. A majority decision has to be accepted by all the parties to the dispute.

How do you view the proposal based on the division of Kashmir State?

It will be if and when we sit down and talk about solutions.

You do not rule out division as proposed by the U.S.-based Kashmir Study Group?

I do not rule it out. This is my personal view. I was in its favour in 1994 when I said the Dixon plan can be implemented with alterations here and there.

Mr. Shabir Shah has recently sent a team to Delhi expressing his willingness to join the process?

One party can never do it. He has every right to choose his path. But he may not be knowing this path is strewn with thorns and prick of the thorn is so dangerous that you can bleed profusely.

But he has started from somewhere?

I consider it a premature abortion of an effort which does not exist at all. When he apparently says he is walking, he is not walking and he never will walk. It is always a collective leadership which can take a decision.

THE HINDU

27 MAY 2003

Govt. not surprised at Hurriyat's posturing

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 5. The Union Home Ministry is not surprised at the stance taken by Mr. Shabir Shah's Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party or by the All-Party Hurriyat Conference towards the K.C. Pant mission. Both have taken the position that Pakistan would have to be involved in any kind of meaningful talks. Their negative stance simply confirms the severe constraints on these outfits' autonomy of thinking and behaviour.

In other words, the Home Ministry as far as analysts are concerned, these self-styled representatives of the people of Jammu and Kashmir have reacted in an entirely predictable manner. Security agencies are aware that a section of the Hurriyat leadership is being constantly threatened by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence and militant outfits to toe a pro-Islamabad line.

It has been noted that the Hurriyat chairman, Prof. Gani Bhatt, has gone public that the conglomerate would not take any decision

under duress, thereby confirming that threats have indeed been directed at the Hurriyat leadership. Threats have also been held out against Mr. Shabir Shah's party for even considering the possibility of talking to Mr. Pant.

A political resolution of the stalemate in Jammu and Kashmir does not suit Pakistan's strategic interests in Kashmir. In Islamabad's scheme of things, the strategy of jehadi violence was paying off and all that Islamabad needed to do was to stay the course and see to it that no major "separatist" defects from the "resistance" camp. Hence, the tactics of threats and intimidation against those groups and individuals who may be inclined to talk to Mr. K.C. Pant.

Nonetheless, the analysts see no reason to be particularly disheartened. In their perspective, Mr. K.C. Pant has to ultimately address himself to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, who want a way out of the decade-old violence and counter-violence. For the beleaguered people the nature of violence has ceased to matter, and all that they want is a

respite from this seemingly unending cycle of violence.

From New Delhi's perspective the people of Jammu and Kashmir would sooner or later recognise that the APHC or Mr. Shabir Shah are hostage to the ISI, and are under pressure from the Pakistani agency, spurning the option of dialogue. New Delhi's objective has to win over the hearts and minds of the people of Kashmir. The Pant mission, by its very nature, cannot achieve any breakthrough overnight; it is a long haul but Mr. Pant is a patient man.

Sooner or later, the Hurriyat's contemptuous insistence that, Mr. Pant not talk to "all and sundry" is bound to recoil on the resistance leaders. The "all and sundry" that the APHC ridicules happen to be part of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, no more or no less than Mr. Geelani or Mr. Shabir Shah. The Pant mission, nonetheless, provides various "resistance" groups and leaders an opportunity to break loose from the ISI apparatus, if they have the moral courage.

THE HINDU

6 MAY 2001

Talk to foes, Shabir Shah tells Pant

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, May 3

J&K Democratic Freedom Party chief Shabir Shah today sent a set of three questions to KC Pant, the Government-appointed negotiator for peace talks in Jammu and Kashmir. The letter is being seen as a setback of sorts for the peace process.

Shabir Shah wanted to know whether India considers Kashmir a law-and-order problem or the "core issue". Secondly, would India recognise that bilateralism has not worked since

1953 and bring Pakistan, a "principal" in the dispute, to the negotiating table at a later stage? Third, does India intend engaging the militants in talks, either directly or indirectly?

Shah's emissaries were JKDFP secretary general, Maulana Abdullah Tari, and chief organiser, Saleem Gilani. They handed over the letter to Pant at his home this afternoon, but said they had no authorisation to go beyond exchanging a few niceties. There was a tinge of sarcasm in Shah's "advice" to Pant. The former Amnesty

International "Prisoner of Conscience" awardee said the Government should talk with people who disagree with it and not with those who are on its side.

Shabir sought a "clarification" on the role of the National Conference, Congress and political outfits launched by former militants in the proposed talks. Pant said after his brief interaction with the JKDFP that he would make no comment now.

In an atmosphere of mistrust, Pant had been looking forward to a breakthrough today with Shah. A breakthrough with

Shabir would have sent a message to the All Party Hurriyat Conference that New Delhi was getting somewhere with its much publicised peace process.

Unlike the Hurriyat, Shabir Shah, who insists on three-way talks, has not said that he will not join the talks. It is this that makes Government circles feel that Shah is only playing hard-to-get with his questions.

His emissaries are expected to give a clearer idea of his strategy tomorrow at a Press meet.

Photograph on Page 9

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 4 MAY 2001

HD-1 SHABIR SHAH'S EMISSARIES HAND OVER LETTER 915

A window of opportunity: Pant

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 3. The Centre's designated negotiator, Mr. K. C. Pant opened "the window of opportunity" to receive a communication from the emissaries of Mr. Shabir Shah, president of the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party. Mr. Saleem Geelani and Mr. Abdullah Tari met Mr. Pant at his residence and handed over a letter from Mr. Shah.

The emissaries propose to release the communication to the press tomorrow. However, it is believed that Mr. Shah has sought a number of "clarifications" from Mr. Pant. He had already publicly stated the points on which he and his party would want clarifications before they could sit down across the negotiation table. These include whether the "dialogue" was aimed at "resolving the dispute" or merely "restoring peace"; whether Pakistan was to be brought in at a later stage, if not now; whether Mr. Pant intends to talk to other groups such as the National Conference, the Congress, the BJP, etc.; and, whether the designated negotiator would be opening a dialogue with the militant groups as well.

Even though the tenor of Mr. Shah's reservations about the Pant mission was known, symbolically it was a movement forward that the emissaries handed over a communication to the designated

negotiator. Mr. Pant allowed himself to comment that "this was the proper way" to go about and that Mr. Shah's communication would be "duly replied". However, Mr. Pant was careful to use the phrase "restoration of peace" while speaking to mediapersons.

By contrast, he was critical of the public response of the Hurriyat leadership and noted that "negotiations cannot be conducted through newspapers". He was responding to the Hurriyat chair-

man, Prof. Abdul Gani Bhatt's public statement that the separatist conglomerate would not be sending any letter or communication to Mr. Pant's invitation.

"It is a serious matter. There has to be an increased level of understanding and one has to build a climate of trust," said Mr. Pant in his first reaction to the Hurriyat formulations. He noted that the effort had to be to raise the "level of understanding" among various groups and individuals, even if

they held conflicting views. But, remarked rather disappointingly, that the Hurriyat's stance was "no way to handle a waxed issue".

Mr. Pant also revealed that he would visit Srinagar at some time, though not in the immediate future. A number of political groups in Jammu and Kashmir had demanded that Mr. Pant should visit the state rather than conduct a dialogue from New Delhi.

'APHC will not be cowed down'

PTI reports from Srinagar:

The Hurriyat Conference has said it will not be influenced by threats by certain groups saying it will hold talks with the Centre if it was for resolution of the Kashmir issue.

"Threats would not deter the APHC from taking a decision according to the wishes of Kashmiris," the APHC executive member, Mr. Abdul Ghani Lone, said at a seminar here on Wednesday.

Warning against attempts to bully the leaders into toeing any particular line of action, he said, "decisions made under duress are not in the interest of anybody".

The chairman, Mr. Abdul Ghani Bhat, who presided over the seminar, referred to the recent grenade attack on the APHC headquarters and said such incidents would not intimidate Hurriyat.



Mr. Saleem Jalani and Maulana Abdullah hand over a letter on behalf of Mr. Shabir Shah, president of the JKDFP, to Mr. K. C. Pant, peace negotiator, in New Delhi on Thursday. — Photo: Shanker Chakravarthy

THE HINDU

4 MAY 2001

Bilateralism unhelpful: Geelani

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MAY 2. The senior Kashmir leader, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, has asserted that the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) had not rejected the Centre's offer of dialogue but merely reaffirmed its view that bilateralism was an unhelpful format for resolving the Kashmir problem. Mr. Geelani made these observations in an interview with a news website here.

According to Mr. Geelani, the only solution was tripartite talks — involving Pakistan, India and the “people of Kashmir” — and the United Nations resolutions. As he sees it, the “the policy of the current military regime (in Pakistan) is very positive and realistic”. But he was harsh on the previous regimes in Islamabad.

“During the last 50 years, the weak policies and parasitic character of successive

governments have reduced the Kashmir issue to a border dispute between two countries.

The damage done by the Tashkent and Shimla agreements, and recently the Lahore declaration, to the international status of the Kashmir issue is irreparable. Pakistan has gained nothing and has lost a great deal in the last half century by forming an alliance with the U.S.,” Mr. Geelani said.

The Jamaat-e-Islami leader was candid in saying, “On a practical level, I am in favour of Kashmir (merging) with Pakistan. I believe the interest of Kashmir will be best served if it is part of Pakistan.” He also

justified ‘jihad’, which he described as “a struggle and exerting effort for a cause”. And, he asked rhetorically, “if jihad is not justified in Kashmir, where else would it be?”

While Mr. Geelani was justifying the Hurriyat’s non-response to Mr. K.C. Pant’s offer, a two-member team of the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party arrived here with a communication from their president, Mr. Shabir Shah, seeking clarifications on the proposed talks.

The team, consisting of Mr. Saleem Geelani, JKDFP chief

organiser, and Maulana Abdullah Tari, secretary-general, is likely to meet Mr. Pant tomorrow.

Mr. Shah, while expressing his willingness to sit across the table with Mr. Pant, had observed that he would need some clarifications.

Mr. Shah and his party has, like the Hurriyat, stressed the centrality of Pakistan’s role in any resolution of the Kashmir problem.

The Centre is aware that Pakistan and its jihadi outfits have threatened various groups and individuals who may be inclined to enter into a dialogue with Mr. Pant.

Hurriyat rules out formal rejection of govt talks offer

Our Political Bureau

NEW DELHI 2 MAY

MAINAINING ITS hostile stance towards the Centre's proposal to hold discussions, the Hurriyat Conference, on Wednesday, ruled out any formal communication of its recent decision to reject the dialogue offer to the government's chief interlocutor, Mr K.C. Pant.

"The Hurriyat does not believe in useless formalities and our statement in the press is enough," chairman of the 23-party conglomerate Abdul Gani Bhat told news agencies in Srinagar on Wednesday. He was reacting to Mr Pant's refusal to comment on the Hurriyat's rejection of the offer, stating that he was yet to receive a formal communication in this regard from the outfit.

Mr Bhat said: "We have not sent any letter, nor do we intend to send one."

He continued: "What if we send him a letter? Then Pant will send us another and ask us to reciprocate ... No, we are not going to do this," he said, calling such an exchange a futile exercise.

An executive council meeting of the Hurriyat had, last week, spurned the Centre's offer of dialogue, saying that no talks on Kashmir could be held without the



PARLEY JI: Saleem Jalani and Maulana Abdullah arrive in New Delhi on Wednesday for talks with K.C. Pant. — PTI

involvement of Pakistan. It had also reiterated its pre-condition that a Hurriyat delegation be allowed to travel to Islamabad to talk to the military government and the militant leaders.

When reminded that the Hurriyat itself had waited for a formal invitation from the Centre before formulating a response, Mr Bhat clarified that "these statements were made in individual capacities... We never made a col-

lective statement setting any pre-condition of formal invitation."

The Hurriyat chairman also distanced himself from Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party chief Shabir Shah's move to seek clarifications from the Centre on its offer. "We are least concerned with what he does... Hurriyat will discuss the future strategy shortly without waiting to see what comes out of Shah's parleys," he said.

The Economic Times

3 MAY 2001

MAY 2001

Musharraf

AA-2/MS

■ Continued from Page 1

India." Though absent from the list of "designated terrorist organisations," the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba has been listed in the appendix of the report under "other terrorist groups."

Another group mentioned under this category, the Jaish-e-Mohammed, was founded by Maulana Masood Azhar, with the aim to unite Kashmir with Pakistan. Azhar, a former Harakat ul-Mujahideen leader was released after a December 1999 hijack drama involving an Air-India flight.

The report noted that the Harakat ul-Mujahideen, the only Pakistan-based group designated as a foreign terrorist organisation, continued to be active in Pakistan without discouragement from the government of Pakistan.

Noting that credible reporting had indicated Pakistan was providing the Taliban with material, fuel, funding, technical assistance, and military advisers, the state department report underscored the US concern about these media reports.

"Pakistan has not prevented large numbers of Pakistani nationals from moving into Afghanistan to fight for the Taliban. Islamabad also failed to take effective steps to curb the activities of certain madrasas, or religious schools, that serve as recruiting grounds for terrorism. Pakistan publicly and privately said, it intends to comply fully with the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1333, which imposes an arms embargo on the Taliban."

In a trip report put together after a recent visit to India and Pakistan, an influential former deputy assistant secretary of state for South Asian affairs, Ms Teresita C. Schaffer made a mention of General Musharraf's "unwillingness" to confront militant organisations in his 18 months in office. Pakistan's Chief Executive simply cannot crack the whip, even if he wanted to because the militants represent the popular Kashmiri cause, Ms Schaffer noted.

Ms Schaffer, now serving as a director of the South Asia programme at the Washington, D.C.-based Centre for Strategic and International Studies, said, it appeared that Gen. Musharraf had "consciously or unconsciously" made an "implicit bargain with them (the militants): because their activities in Afghanistan and Kashmir are vital to Pakistan's strategic goals, and they will be allowed considerable domestic freedom of action." The state department report noted that the security problems associated with various insurgencies, particularly in Kashmir, persisted through 2000 in India.

Further confirming the trend of terrorism shifting from West Asia to South Asia, the state department report said the Taliban continued to provide a safe haven for international terrorists, particularly Osama Bin Laden and his network.

Islamic extremists from around the world — including North America, Europe, Africa, West Asia and Central, South, and Southeast Asia — continued to use Afghanistan as a training ground and base of operations for their worldwide terrorist activities in 2000. "The Taliban permitted the operation of training and indoctrination facilities for non-Afghans and provided logistic support to members of various terrorist organisations and mujahideen, including those waging jihad in Central Asia, Chechnya, and Kashmir," the report said.

There was an appreciative mention of India's "continued cooperative efforts" with the United States against terrorism. The US-India Joint Counter-terrorism Working Group, founded in November 1999, met twice last year and agreed to increased cooperation on mutual counter-terrorism interests.

Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, Cuba, North Korea, and Sudan continue to be the seven governments that the US secretary of state has designated as state sponsors of international terrorism. Of the seven, Iran remained the most active state sponsor of terrorism in 2000.

THE ASIAN AGE

2 MAY 2001

Musharraf supports Kashmir militants: US

BY ASHISH KUMAR SEN

San Francisco, May 1: The US state department has noted with some concern Pakistan's increased support to the Taliban and its continued assistance to militant groups active in Kashmir.

The report on the patterns of global terrorism over the year 2000, released by the office of the coordinator for counterterrorism in Washington, D.C., on Monday, noted that General Pervez Musharraf's military gov-

ernment, like the previous Pakistani government, supported the Kashmir insurgency, and Kashmiri militant groups continued to operate in Pakistan, raising funds and recruiting new cadre.

Acknowledging that several of these groups were responsible for attacks against civilians in Kashmir, the report makes a mention of the suicide car-bomb attack against an Indian garrison in Srinagar last April, for which the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba had claimed responsibility.

Delhi disappointed Lashkar, Jaish not in US terrorism list

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, May 1: There was a sense of disappointment in the Indian foreign office over a US state department report which has not included Pakistan-based militant outfits Lashkar-e-Tayyaba and Jaish-e-Mohammed in its list of designated terrorist organisations.

New Delhi on Tuesday reacted guardedly to the latest report from Washington, which has kept the two outfits, active in Jammu and Kashmir, in the "under watch" group. A foreign office official said the US report has established the "terrorist credentials" of the two

◆ Turn to Page 2

◆ Turn to Page 2

KASHMIR THE FUTURE OF TALKS BETWEEN KASHMIRI GROUPS AND THE CENTRE

Searching for solutions

A recent seminar organised by separatist leader Shabir Shah brought together leaders of different faiths and ideologies in Jammu and Kashmir on a single platform. MUZAMIL JALEEL reports

THOUGH the Centre's dialogue balloon has already been punctured in Kashmir, K C Pant's invitation of formal talks has achieved three things: it has managed to generate debate within the separatist camp on what the future plan of the movement should be, it has forced moderates to harden their stand, and it has called into question Hurriyat Conference's claim that it was the sole representative of the Kashmiris.

A meeting of teachers, doctors, trade union activists, journalists and separatist politicians organised by separatist leader Shabir Shah's Democratic Freedom Party last week was an attempt to step out of the borders the Hurriyat has drawn regarding the Kashmir issue. The presence of intellectuals from all religious and ethnic communities of the state, apart from those separatist political outfits which are not part of the Hurriyat conglomerate enabled the gathering to discuss the hopes and fears of a people

pulled in various directions by pro-independence, pro-India and pro-Pakistan lobbies. The obvious question that cropped up in the discussions was is there a future for the dialogue between the Centre and the Valley groups.

"We are not against dialogue. Who would be? We want to know the agenda of these talks. If it is just restoration of peace, nobody in Kashmir is going to accept it. Talks should be aimed at resolving the Kashmir issue keeping in mind its historical perspective. It will automatically lead to peace," said Nayeem Ahmad Khan, a top separatist leader and head of the National Front. "We know the credibility of accords signed by New Delhi with groups all across India. We know the outcome of the Longjail accord or similar peace talks initiated in Nagaland. We will not allow the Government of India to reduce this issue to a mere law and order problem," he added.

Khan criticised the Hurriyat for claiming they were the only people

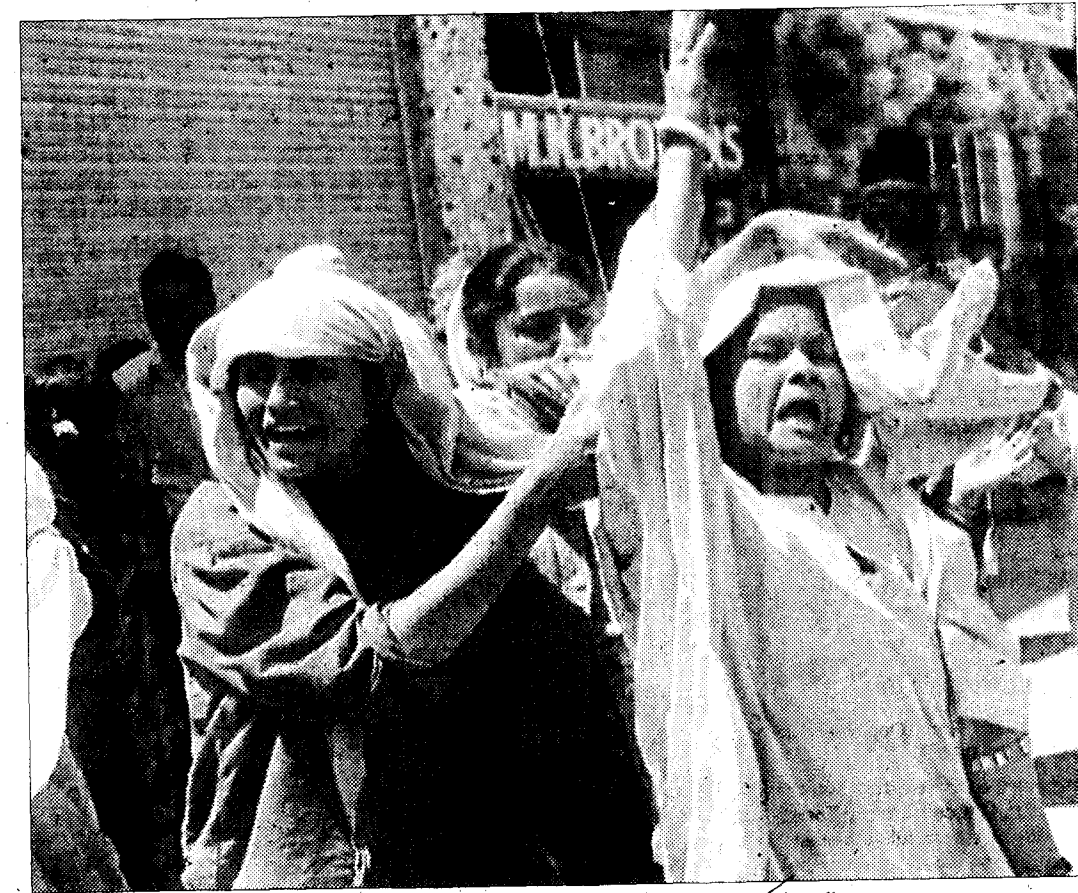
who represented the "Kashmiri movement". "We are the architects of Hurriyat Conference and nobody can ignore us," he said.

A former Advocate General of the J & K Government, Abdul Karim called the talks offer a "spider's web", and asked all groups to respond cautiously. "It is a well-planned conspiracy to engage us in a futile exercise. If they (the Centre) are serious regarding talks, they should engage all the parties to the dispute. They should immediately start tripartite dialogue," he said. He blamed the Centre for trying to divert the attention from the real issue by inviting even those who don't have any problems with Delhi.

In fact, this point was also raised by a journalist from Rajouri Mir Abdul Salam. "Pant's talks offer is just a delaying tactic," he said. "When Delhi invites pro-India parties for talks, it is like a master asking his loyal servant whether he wants to be with him or to join his enemy". He, how-

ever, criticised Hurriyat for not involving people from Jammu in its decision making bodies. "How many people are there from Jammu and they claim to represent the sentiments of the entire Jammu and Kashmir. In fact, they don't even look beyond Banihal tunnel," he said.

One of the first militant leaders and chief of pro-independence Mahaz-e-Azadi Azam Inqillabi stressed the need to involve Pakistan in the dialogue. "Without Pakistan's involvement, nothing is going to be achieved," he said. Criticising Hurriyat Conference, he demanded launching of a joint Kashmir working group to forge unity among all separatist groups and thus broaden the spectrum of the Hurriyat Conference which is already a conglomerate of 23 parties. "Nobody can sideline the pro-independence groups. If anybody tries that, we can sabotage the process," he said hinting at Hurriyat which is a forum dominated by pro-Pakistan outfits.



He said the delay tactics by the government in addressing the Kashmir issue will have serious implications. "We have done a lot for the restoration of peace. there is not a single political party (in the separatist camp) that is now linked with militants. Isn't that a concrete step towards peace," he said. "K C Pant's letter should have come seven years ago. Now there is a need for more serious

efforts". Senior Kashmiri Sikh leader Janak Singh Sodhi too criticised Hurriyat for not involving minorities in it. "A party which does not have a representation from

Jammu Dogras or Sikhs or Kashmiri Hindus cannot claim to represent everybody in Jammu and Kashmir State," he said. He called for a serious debate on the talks offer. "If we will not accept talks offer, what is the way out then?" he asked. Sodhi said this was the first time when the Sikh leadership of the state was being consulted by the separatists. "We are happy to be here today. We are also party to this issue," he said. "We want to know the aim of this movement. If it is independence then we should be categorical. If you talk of Pakistan then 80 per cent people will go against you."

Mufti Azam of Kashmir Mufti Bashir-ud-Din, the biggest cleric of the Valley who stands recognised officially as well, said the only way out to end this impasse was to allow Hurriyat to visit Pakistan. "If they want to go to Pakistan and talk to leaders there, what is bad about it?" he asked. "Talks have a meaning only if they lead to a resolution. If not, there is no fun to engage in a dialogue".

Former Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir High Court, Justice Jalaludin too blamed the Government of trying to treat the symptoms and not the disease. "Without a clear agenda, desired peace will not be achieved through these talks," he said. "Pakistan is a party to the dispute and nothing will be achieved by ignoring that ground reality."

Shah seeks clarifications on J&K talks proposal

Masood Hussain
SPRINGAR 30 APRIL

PROMINENT SEPARATIST leader Shabir Ahmad Shah will be sending three members to seek "clarifications" from the Gol point man K.C. Pant about the contents of the invitation letter. Founder president of Democratic Freedom Party (DFP), Mr Shah is the most mobile leader in the separatist camp and works independent of APHC, the 23-party alliance that has rejected the offer.

Addressing a crowded news conference on Monday following a 10-day exercise to arrive at consensus, Mr Shah said extending invitations to the "in-line-with-India" parties had added ambiguity to the process. "But in the beginning I am ready for bilateral talks wherein we will work out the modalities for tripartite talks. But India has to show its willingness for talks with Pakistan," Mr Shah said. To prove the representative character, he said his party is ready to contest elections.

DFPs three-member team includes Mohammed Abdullah Tari, Syed Saleem Geelani and Hakeem Abdur Rashid. The delegation is reaching Delhi "within a couple of days." It would not enter into discussions with Mr Pant but would simply "hand over" the letter.

The three-page letter, which the delegation will be personally delivering in the office of the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, was released late on Monday afternoon to the media. It has asserted that the Kashmir issue is tripartite in nature and that all kinds of bilateralism have failed in the past.

"By not involving any of these three parties in parleys to eke out an acceptable solution to all three of them will be, according to my opinion, is hoping against hope," the letter signed by Shabir Shah said.

"One does not really understand the motive behind your proposition of diluting the proposed dialogue to that sundry



Shabir: Re(a)d letter man

level," the letter said. "Even if they (political parties in the mainstream camp) are presumed to exist as one of the determining factors to focus of the contours of the peace process, I believe that their viewpoint will be presented by the chief negotiator himself from Gol in due course of the parleys that will fol-

low," it added.

Demanding that the "redundant elements be discarded" and that Kashmir should not be portrayed as "a law and order problem," Mr Shah said that the "basic initiative lies with the Gol." He has expressed his readiness to jump into the dialogue if he is assured that in due course of time, all the three are involved in the comprehensive dialogue.

Earlier, talking to media persons, Mr Shah said: "The (invitation) letter is silent about the resolution of the Kashmir issue. The contents show Kashmir is treated as a part of India and the objective is to create confusion and undermine the importance of pro-freedom movement," he said.

Not approving the Hurriyat decision of instant rejection of the offer, Mr Shah said the multi-party alliance should have "done what we did." His party had a series of meetings. Initially, it was a day-long conference in which over 100 eminent personalities from across the state commented on the Gol's

invitation letter.

Within hours after Mr Shah made the announcement, militant outfits especially Al Umar Mujahideen and Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen, threatened him with dire consequences.

The Mushtaq Ahmad Zargar chief said he would not shy away in using his outfit's might against any such move. Addressing a local news gathering agency from PoK, he said Mr Shah is entering into a sellout with New Delhi and his move is allegedly anti-Islam and anit-movement. Zargar said only resolution to the Kashmir issue lies in accession with Pakistan.

Zargar was one of the three militants whom external affairs minister Jaswant Singh flew in his plane to Kandhar (Afghanistan) and freed him in the hijack drama of December, 1999.

Another militant outfit, Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen, meanwhile, said nobody would be allowed to become a Yassar Arafat of the state.

Ready for talks, Shabir seeks clarification



HT Correspondent
Srinagar, April 30

UNLIKE THE Hurriyat Conference, Democratic Freedom Party chief Shabir Ahmad Shah today expressed willingness to hold talks with the Centre's interlocutor, K C Pant.

But Shah sought some clarifications from Pant regarding the agenda for talks before formally entering into dialogue as Pant's letter to him was ambiguous.

Criticising the Hurriyat for rejecting the dialogue offer, Shah said that it meant their case was not strong.

"They should have not have rejected the offer...and instead got their stand acknowledged by holding talks with Pant," he said.

The Freedom Party chief said he was not afraid of dialogue. "Our case is very strong and I am ready to discuss it at any level, with any person, anywhere."

He said a three-member party delegation, including vice-president Moulana Mohammad Abdullah Tari, Saleem Gilani

DEATH THREAT BY ULTRAS

THE AL Ummer Mujahideen has issued a death threat to Shabir Ahmad Shah if he enters into dialogue with K C Pant.

Mushtaq Ahmad Zaragar, chief of the Srinagar-based outfit, told newspaper offices on phone that Shah is "anti-movement, anti-Islam, and a traitor".

Zaragar threatened that the Al Ummer, would tackle him with full might should he go ahead with the talks. He said he would not allow sell-out on any leader's part.

"Over 100,000 people have sacrificed their lives," was Zaragar's justification.

Zaragar said Kashmir's merger with Pakistan was the only solution to the Kashmir issue and his outfit would strive for this.

HTC, Srinagar

and Hakim Abdur Rasheed, would leave for Delhi on Wednesday to meet Pant.

"After we are satisfied with Pant's explanations, I will visit Delhi to proceed with dialogue with him."

But Hakim Rasheed, present when Shah made the announcement to mediapersons, accused Shah of "telling something otherwise than what had been decided at the party's working committee meeting".

Rasheed said the working committee had taken a different

decision and withdrew from the delegation. But he did not elaborate what the decision had been.

Shah had organised a seminar of prominent citizens, intellectuals, political leaders and senior ideologues on Saturday to deliberate on the Centre's dialogue offer. This was followed by a working committee meeting on Sunday.

He explained that the decision to send a delegation to Delhi had been taken in Hakeem's absence.

Shah said Pant's letter did not mention Kashmir issue, which is the core issue and any dialogue aimed at restoring peace should revolve around it.

He urged for the inclusion of Pakistan in the talks, saying bilateralism has failed to bring peace in the region. He felt that there was no harm in beginning with a bilateral dialogue, but insisted that Pakistan's inclusion at other stages was essential.

"Enough is enough...time is now ripe for holding a trilateral dialogue to resolve the issue of Kashmir," Shah said.

He said mainstream parties should not be part of the dialogue.

Shah pleaded for an end to "atrocities" by security forces and sought the release of all jailed persons to infuse confidence among the people.

Shah said he was even ready to contest elections to determine his representative character. "Please note...the elections should be for determining the representative character of the leaders, and not for any administrative purpose," he said.

JKDFP TEAM TO MEET PANT

Shabir Shah ready to join peace process

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, APRIL 30. Seeking clarifications from the Centre on its offer of talks on the Kashmir dispute, the chief of the Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party, Mr. Shabir Shah, today said his party was ready for a dialogue at any time, anywhere.

A three-member JKDFP team would meet the Government interlocutor, Mr. K. C. Pant, to hand over a letter discussing flaws in the offer to various sections of people in the State. Shortly after the announcement, one of the members of the proposed team, Mr. Hakeem Abdur Rasheed, withdrew saying he was not consulted on the issue.

At a crowded news conference, Mr. Shah said his party was not against the dialogue process but said it should be meaningful and lead to a final settlement of the Kashmir imbroglio. The letter written by Mr. Pant to him and other leaders was vague and described the problem as one merely relating to law and order. "It is full of ambiguities and it has also been sent to those who are agents of India and believe in the State's accession to India," said the JKDFP chief adding "we do not accept the accession".

Trilateral talks

The JKDFP discussed the letter and later a meeting of over 600 people from all walks of life deliberated on the issue. The party's executive committee believed in the resolution of the Kashmir conflict through a genuine political dialogue involving India, Pakistan and the true representatives of the Kashmiri



The JKDFP leader, Mr. Shabir Ahmed Shah, at a press conference in Srinagar on Monday. — Photo: Nissar Ahmed

ris. "The letter talks about peace with reference to law and order which is not the case," he said. The Centre should make it clear what it meant by "its own people", "peace" and why Pakistan did not figure anywhere.

A JKDFP team comprising Moulana Mohammad Abdullah Taari, Syed Salim Geelani and Mr. Rasheed would shortly leave for Delhi, and hand over a letter to Mr. Pant explaining the party's stand. Copies of the letter were later distributed to mediapersons. "One does not really understand the motive behind your proposition of diluting the dialogue to a sundry level," the letter said.

A dialogue, though aimed at achieving peace, had to revolve around resolution of the Kashmir

problem. India should simultaneously talk to Pakistan as well so that the latter was involved in the process. The Indian Government, he said, should put an end to human rights violations in the State and free all detenus.

Asked whether he would himself lead the dialogue, Mr. Shah said, "it remains to be seen and depends upon the response of the Government." While insisting on trilateral talks to resolve the issue, he said a beginning should be made adding the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) should not have rejected the offer. Instead, it should have told New Delhi about the offer being inappropriate or incomplete.

Militants' response good

It appeared that the Centre's objective was to create confusion besides deliberately undermining the importance of pro-freedom movement parties in the State, he said adding the JKDFP letter to Mr. Pant demanded that pro-India parties be delinked from the process. Mr. Shah also said the separatists were ready to fight elections if only to prove their representative character. On consultations with the militants on the issue, he said his party leaders in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) were in touch with militant groups and there had been a good response. "I will go to Ladakh and Jammu to talk to people from different shades of life," he said.

Immediately after the announcement, Mr. Rasheed said he had not been consulted before being named in the team to Delhi. "When the decision of constituting the team was taken I was not there. I am not going," he said.

31 MAY 2011

AUTONOMY WILL PUT THE CLOCK BACK: ADVANI

Centre willing to give 'special powers' to J&K

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JULY 25. The Centre today announced its willingness to grant "special powers" to Jammu and Kashmir, if needed, but ruled out accepting the J&K autonomy resolution.

The Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, told the Rajya Sabha that the resolution, which sought a restoration of the pre-1953 status, was not acceptable. Agreeing to it would mean turning the clock back to a phase where there would be no role for institutions such as the Supreme Court, the Election Commission or the President of India in the State, he said. This would also deprive the people of Jammu and Kashmir the rights and powers they got after 1953.

Replying to the supplementaries during question hour, Mr. Advani said this view was conveyed to the State Government and emphasised that the NDA Government favoured devolution of powers to States. "If J&K needs special powers, we are willing to give them," he said. Mr. Advani's thrust on 'special powers' meant a rejection of 'autonomy'.

Referring to the Government's Ramzan initiative and subsequent withdrawal of unilateral ceasefire, which he preferred to describe as 'non-initiation of combat operations', he said that initially violence had come down but on appraisal it was found the move proved costly since there was a greater loss of lives of civilian and security personnel during the period. Mr. Advani said the Government decided to restart its 'pro-active' approach in dealing with militants while inviting the Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, for talks. "What is happening in Jammu and Kashmir is naked terrorism." For the past few years those who were killed or arrested were either from Pakistan, Pak.-occupied Kashmir or from Afghanistan and there was no question of this being any freedom struggle, he said.

In this context, the Home Minister said that during his meeting with Gen. Musharraf, the latter refused to accept that terrorism was going on though he expressed willingness to cooperate in dealing with the problem elsewhere. Gen. Musharraf said that so far as Jammu and Kashmir was concerned, there was no cross-border terrorism because there was no border, Mr. Advani said. Gen. Musharraf maintained all that was there was LoC and Pakistan had nothing to do with it. On the Hurriyat Conference, Mr. Advani reiterated the Government was willing to talk to all but if the conglomerate thought

it represented Jammu and Kashmir, it was mistaken.

Mr. Advani said Gen. Musharraf denied the presence of the underworld don, Dawood Ibrahim, wanted for the Mumbai serial blasts, in Pakistan. But the Government had information that Dawood Ibrahim was back in Pakistan.

Top Hizb leader killed

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, JULY 25. In a major setback to the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen militant organisation, its deputy chief commander and spokesman, Abdul Hamid Tantray alias 'commander Masood', was killed in an 'encounter' with the special operations group (SOG) of the Jammu and Kashmir Police in Pulwama district on Tuesday night.

Police claimed he was killed in an encounter with the SOG but the Hizb says he was arrested and later 'killed in custody'. A police bulletin said here this evening the encounter took place at village Pohu. A pistol, six rounds of ammunition, and incriminating documents were recovered from the militant. An FIR filed by the SOG in Pulwama police station says that a party of the SOG raided a house in Ratnipore village and arrested Abdul Salam Mir. While returning from there, it reached village Pohu and saw a person moving about in a suspicious manner. He was asked to stop but he did not and instead opened fire which was returned by the SOG. The body later found in the spot turned out to be that of 'commander Masood'. The Hizb chief commander, Mr. Abdul Majid Dar, said Masood was arrested on Tuesday morning from Pampore and "killed in the evening in custody".

A moderate

Masood shot into prominence when the Hizb announced a unilateral ceasefire in August 2000. He was one of the four Hizb commanders who held the first round of talks with the Union Home Secretary, Mr. Kamal Pandey. A moderate militant leader, he was an active member of the Jamat-e-Islami. He quit his Government job to join militancy in 1990. One of the oldest guerillas in Kashmir, he founded the Al Badr (local) outfit in the early 1990s and later merged it with the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen. He was writing articles on the armed struggle in leading newspapers of Kashmir, including the mass-circulated weekly *Chattan*.

Hurriyat strike paralyses Valley HC-9

HT Correspondent
Srinagar, July 27

A GENERAL shutdown crippled life in Kashmir Valley on Friday. Business and commercial establishments were closed and vehicles remained off the roads during the strike called by the All Party Hurriyat Conference to mourn the killing of senior Hizbul Mujahideen commander, Mujahid Masood. Banks, educational institutions and courts were closed, while attendance was thin at Government offices.

The Hizbul commander was killed by a police task force on Tuesday night reportedly after his arrest from a Pulwama village earlier in the morning. Masood's killing is being mourned widely in the valley. The strike was supported by the Hizbul Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Tayyeba, Tehreek-ul-Mujahideen and other militant groups. Besides the separatist groups, mainstream political parties and politicians also protested what they described as custodial killing of the Hizbul commander.

The CPI (M) leader and MLA, Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami said though Masood was a militant, the security forces could not take law into their hands.

"It is shocking," said Captain S K Tikko, general secretary of the Awami League. Captain Tikko praised the Hizbul commander for his will for peace and said he was the only person to hold talks with Home Ministry officials, leading a group of Hizbul commanders last year, without wearing masks. He dubbed Masood's killing as "anti-national" and

demanding an inquiry.

Mahbooba Mufti, vice-president of Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's Peoples Democratic Party, described it as a "conspiracy" to eliminate the soft liners from Kashmir scene. The PDP leader, who visited the slain commander's family on Thursday, said that she was told that Masood was brutally tortured and killed in custody. BJP leader and former MP Abdul Rasheed Kabli alleged that the National Conference did not want to see the end of bloodshed in the State.

THE HINDUSTAN
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