

Shed non-alignment bogey

THE current year's defence budget is a whopping 2.8 per cent of our GDP, an amounting to about Rs 58,000 crore. Since Independence there has been no proper technology for India's defence planning, resulting in its budget increasing by leaps and bounds more in ad hoc fashion than by mind application. Three factors warrant consideration in reconciling the elements of cost vis-a-vis force levels.

First, it has never utilised the potential of its indigenous defence production to the optimum. India's ordnance factories are capable of providing the complete wherewithal for the armed forces, relative to its threat perception. India's indigenous processing of tritium for the nuclear blasts at Pokhran II has ever remained an incredible event for the nuclear-five nations as they just could not believe that India's scientists were that erudite.

The import syndrome in weapons systems has affected India adversely. For instance, its first indigenous tank, the Vijayanta, had many flaws. India did little to eradicate these while blueprinting the next generation Arjun.

In the meantime, the country procured the Russian T55, then the T72 and now it is getting the T90. Instead of progressively trying to improve the standard of its own products, the trend has been to stymie the local development of an essential weapon till a critical stage is reached and then scream for imports, citing national security as a specious cause.

The same goes for military aircraft and warships. India has become a major client of Russia for both. It let the HF 24 Marut die a natural death instead of continuing to develop successive models.

India today is saddled with an obsolete — and doctrinally outdated — Russian aircraft carrier at an unimaginable cost. To tell the truth, an imported weapon system has the inherent perk of a quip which is absent in local manufacture.

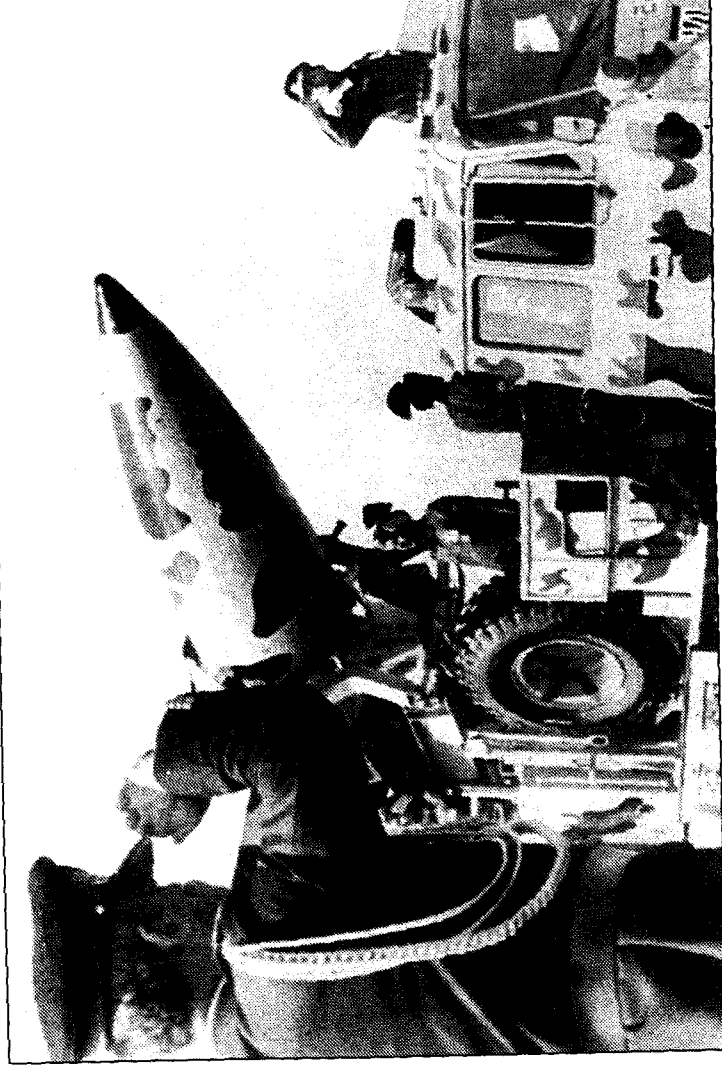
The international arms industry thrives on world market trade of arms and developing countries. Bofors proved the point in India's case!

The fundamental problem for this huge lacuna in weapons procurement is India's insidious government monopoly on the subject. This has to be drastically altered. It must involve the private sector in a big way in arms production.

There is great scope for a flourishing military-industrial combine in India. Most sane thinking countries of the world have successfully utilised such a combine for their weapons programme.

This not only improves the quality of arms made locally but also

India has never tapped the full potential of its indigenous defence production and it must be kept in mind that cost-effective defence is linked to a pragmatic foreign policy. To secure best results, defence should be shared by several countries, writes JK DUTT



curtails the plague of graft. India desperately requires an objective and transparent procedure for arms procurement for its armed forces.

Second, cost-effective defence is indubitably linked to a pragmatic foreign policy. To secure best re-

sults, defence should be shared by several countries, leading to a mutual defence system. England makes a good case study.

What England spends on its defence budget as a Nato member is far less than what it would have had to spend had it not been a

member of this alliance. The European Union at its Nice meeting recently has decided to raise a combined military force from within its own member-states to reduce individual expenditure on defence.

Similar steps have been mooted by the Gulf Co-operative Council. India, too, needs such a way out if it is to manage the prohibitive costs on its defence, costs that keep mounting every year.

India has to shed its unrealistic "non-align-

ment" bogey and initiate strategic alliances with other countries. For starters, it could initiate the forming of an Indian Ocean Treaty comprising all the littorals of this key waterway, with the main headquarters at Colombo and two or three sector headquarters. The advantages do not need elaboration.

More important, India ought to institute a full-fledged strategy alliance with the USA. This was suggested by Bill

Clinton during his India visit and reinforced when Atal Behari Vajpayee made his reciprocal trip.

The aspect of security is an integral element of a strategic alliance and the USA can conveniently help India out in this field.

As an example, if it were to raise a joint Indian Ocean Strike Command with the US Pacific Fleet, such an organisation would go a long way in ensuring peace in the Indian Ocean — the new US Secretary of State, Colin Powell's remarks come to mind.

This apart, India's Blue Water aspirations will get a fillip via this mode.

Lastly, we should implement Chanakya's maxim, "There are no fixed boundaries in trans-border relations" in letter and spirit. Several instances of this maxim prevail in the world.

India should convert the Line of Control in Kashmir into a formal Indo-Pakistani international border.

This will end the gargantuan consumption of funds in that state, something that has become India's bane for 52 years now.

Also, it should cede the area under Chinese occupation in Aksai Chin on a *quid pro quo* arrangement whereby China disengages from Bara Hoti in the Uttar Pradesh-Tibet sector and from the northern Mishmi Hills in Arunachal Pradesh.

As a consequence to this kind of settlements, India can reduce the overall strength of its armed forces.

This in turn will cut its defence expenditure.

(The author is a Lieutenant-Colonel, retired, Indian Army.)

PSLV launch by June: ISRO chief

By Our Staff Reporter

KANCHEEPURAM, MARCH 4. The Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Mr. Kasturirangan, today said the country would be launching another PSLV by the month of June. Apart from an Indian Remote Sensing Satellite, the vehicle would also carry a Belgium Corba satellite and another German satellite.

Mr. Kasturirangan was speaking to presspersons after inaugurating the National Science Day celebrations at the Sri Chandrasekharendra Vishwa Maha Vidyalaya (Deemed University) at Enathur near here. The space scientist further said that the announcement regarding the launch of Geo Stationery Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) would be made next month. He further said that PSLVs were a valuable asset to the ISRO.

Stating that India had attained

self-sufficiency in the field of remote sensing satellites, Mr. Kasturirangan said that data from these satellites regarding imaging and other information were being received at 10 ground stations. Work was also on pertaining to sending an unmanned spacecraft to the moon.

However, its purpose was yet to be decided, he added. The ISRO, he said was at present collaborating with the NASA in the field of training and material resource exchange.

Earlier, speaking after inaugurating the Science Day celebrations, he said that India had best of talent in the field of science and technology.

The others who spoke included Mr. Amitabh Kumar, Director (Operations), Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited, Sri Jayendra Saraswathi of the Kanchi Mutt and Dr. B. Srinivasan, Vice-Chancellor of the university.

THE HINDU

MAR 2001

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DEFENCE / REAL-TERM INCREASE 7.9 PER CENT

113

Focus on IAF, minimal hike for Army

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, FEB. 28. Sustaining the cycle of post-Kargil modernisation, the defence budget shows a modest hike over last year's revised estimates. The Government has allocated Rs. 62,000 crores for defence which is nearly 13 per cent higher than the revised spending of Rs. 54,461.45 last year. When adjusted against an inflation rate of eight per cent, defence spending for the current year shows a real-term hike of around 7.9 per cent.

Curiously, contrary to earlier trends, the revised estimates, especially on the capital head, which caters for military hardware procurement, are lower than the allocations provided in last year's budget statement. This indicates that the Ministry of Defence (MoD) has been unable to spend all the funds provided to it by the Ministry of Finance.

The allocations this year show that the Centre has continued with last year's practice of modernising the armed forces selectively. The focus this year appears to be on the Indian Air Force (IAF). The increase in spending for the Army is minimal, and, in fact, shows a real-term decline when adjusted against inflation. Spending for the Navy is slightly higher than last year. This indicates that a decision to fully unleash naval modernisation is yet to be taken, though allocations for the acquisition of the relatively inexpensive equipment may have been made.

sation gets Rs. 3518 crores.

The hike in the IAF expenditure is mainly on account of the MoD's inability to conclude a long-pending deal for Advanced Jet Trainers (AJT). The deal for 66 trainer jets will cost the exchequer nearly Rs. 5,000 crores, which will have to be paid over a period of time. The real-term decline in the Army's budget could be mainly on account of the recently concluded T-90 tank deal with Russia. The Army's pending procurement agenda includes Self-Propelled guns and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and other sensors for intelligence gathering and surveillance. The Navy began a modest modernisation drive recently by signing the deal for Israeli-made ship-borne Barak missiles. But a much larger allocation would be required if the Navy were to begin the acquisition process for the Russian aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov. The Gorshkov package, which would include around 40 MiG-29 K jets, will cost an estimated Rs. 6,000 crores.

9,271 cr. for para-military forces

The budget has proposed a significant increase in the allocation for the Central police organisations and construction of residential accommodation for their personnel, setting aside Rs. 9,271.25 crores. It represents a hike of nearly Rs. 800 crores against last year's revised estimates.

As the paramilitary forces, particularly the BSF, the CRPF and the CISF, are deployed for

assistance in maintenance of law and order, prevention of border crimes, performance of internal security duties and providing airport security, the need for better mobility and accommodation at several places has been acutely felt over the past few years.

The budget provided Rs. 90.44 crores for meeting the expenses on salaries and tour expenses of Union Ministers, officials of the Cabinet Secretariat and the Prime Minister's Office. It represents a moderate hike of nearly Rs. 13 crores from last year's revised estimate of Rs. 77.80 crores.

An allocation of Rs. 83.58 crores was made to the elite Special Protection Group (SPG) against last year's revised estimate of Rs. 76.12 crores, and the lion's share of Rs. 2,243 crores went to the Border Security Force.

A total of Rs. 8,977.61 crores was allocated to the Central police organisations, including the BSF, CRPF, Assam Rifles, Indo-Tibetan Border Police and the CISF, representing a marginal increase of eight per cent over the last year's revised estimate of Rs. 8,309.87 crores. For construction of residential accommodation for the personnel of Central police organisations, the budget provided Rs. 293.65 crores, nearly doubling last year's revised estimate of Rs. 158 crores.

For the Indo-Pakistan border scheme to check inflow of arms and ammunition from across the border by erecting wire fencing, a provision of Rs. 99 crores was made.

THE HINDU

1 MAR 2001

Defence allocation hiked by Rs 7,538 cr

Shishir Gupta
New Delhi, February 28

THE ALLOCATION for Defence in the Union Budget 2001-2002 indicates that the Government is in control of the security situation and is happy with barely sustaining the post-Kargil modernisation of armed forces.

Consequently, Yashwant Sinha has only nominally hiked the Defence allocation by Rs 7538.58 crore to Rs 62,000 crore for fiscal 2001-2002. The revised outlay in the current fiscal stood at Rs 54461.45 crore.

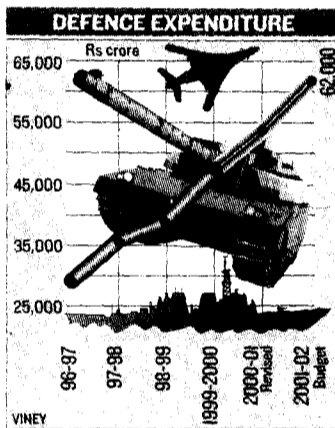
In fact, the percentage hike in defence allocation has come down to 13.7 per cent as compared to the huge 28.2 per cent 2000-2001 increase in the aftermath of the mountain war India fought with Pakistan. When adjusted against inflation, the budgetary increase works out to only 8 per cent. This shows that the hike in defence budget is marginal, hovering around 2.6-2.7 per cent of the GDP.

In GDP terms India's defence outlay is much lower than the money spent on defence forces by China and Pakistan. While Pakistan's defence budget stands at \$ 2.8 billion (4.7 per cent of its GDP), the Chinese outlay is estimated at 15 billion US dollars (more than 3 per cent of its GDP).

An analysis of the proposals brings out greater focus on modernisation of the Indian Air Force and the Army. The allocations for the Indian Navy will only maintain the status quo in terms of its force levels.

The defence outlay for the IAF has been hiked from Rs 11300.92 crore from the current fiscal to Rs 15172.72 crore, representing a big 24.3 per cent jump. Constituting 24.47 per cent of the total defence budget, the whopping

increase perhaps means that the deals for the purchase of Advanced Jet Trainer, mid-air refuellers and air defence equipment might come through. A clear indicator of the IAF's acquisition of 66 AJTs is the steep rise (Rs 1991.87 crore) in the capital outlay under the head "aircraft and aero-engines". The Air Force is currently negotiating the purchase of trainers with British Aerospace and of IL-78 M mid-air-refuellers with Uzbekistan. In case of the Army, the outlay has gone up from Rs 34127.22 crore to Rs 34895.96



crore. In actual terms, it only represents a 5.6 per cent hike.

However, the Indian Army continues to get a lion's share (56.28 per cent) of the defence budget. But with the T-90 tank deal clinched, the Army perhaps is not looking for any major acquisition in the coming year as negotiations for the self-propelled gun deal have barely begun.

For the Indian Navy, the outlay has been enhanced from Rs 8,214 crore in the current fiscal to Rs 9138.82 crore. The Navy's share of the total defence outlay stands at 14.74 per cent.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

1 MAR 2001

Kashmir truce model for NE

FROM CHANDAN NANDY

New Delhi, March 2: After Jammu and Kashmir, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee now wants to try out the ceasefire experiment in the entire Northeast.

The truce proposal — in all probability a conditional offer — is likely to be announced in Parliament later this month. According to sources, it will be offered to all insurgent outfits, including both the Isak-Muivah and Khaplang factions of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim, Ulfa, National Democratic Front of Boroland and those operating in Tripura.

The chief ministers of Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh today "informally" gave the Centre the go-ahead to extend its four-year ceasefire with the NSCN(IM), paving the way for a unilateral truce with all militant groups.

Sources said Vajpayee and home minister L.K. Advani convinced the three chief ministers — Prafulla Mahanta (Assam), Radhabinod Koijam (Manipur) and Mukut Mithi (Arunachal) — that their green-signal to broaden the existing ceasefire with the NSCN(IM) would "usher in peace" and ultimately benefit the Northeast.

"Their (the chief ministers') response has been positive. They were earlier reluctant but have now changed their stand. The Centre's objective is to bring peace and development to the region," Advani told reporters, but added in the same breath that "extension of the ceasefire" did not mean the government had conceded the NSCN(IM)'s "demand for a Greater Nagalim".

The sources said Vajpayee would make the truce announce-

ment towards the end of this month, now that the "clearance" of the three states, which have a sizeable number of Nagas, has been obtained.

But they warned that the "road to peace is fraught with danger" because of the region's "inherent complexities". According to an observer, the Northeast was "more complex" than Kashmir.

The Centre had been trying to coax and cajole the three states into giving their consent on extending the Centre-NSCN(IM) ceasefire. Last year, the three chief ministers — Manipur was then led by W. Nipamacha Singh — had opposed the move, saying it would aggravate the situation.

A hint of what the Centre was planning came on February 27 when Koijam declared a month-long "ceasefire" with all 17 groups operating in Manipur without

consulting the home ministry. But not all are optimistic. A senior official said the experience of the Centre-NSCN(IM) truce had made them wiser. "Nearly four years have elapsed but constructive dialogue to bring about a political solution to the Naga problem has yet to start. If anything, the NSCN(IM) has been able to make the Centre wilt before some of its major conditions before the ceasefire came into effect in July 1997," he said.

The sources said the Centre would also have to take into account the fact that some outfits could reject the truce offer. The People's Revolutionary Party for Kangleipak (Prepak) has already rejected Koijam's "ceasefire".

Moreover, with Assam going to the polls soon, Central officials wonder what made Mahanta give his consent.

Akash test-fired

BALASORE, FEB. 27. Akash, indigenously built multi-target surface-to-air missile, was successfully test-fired from the Interim Test Range at Chandipur-On-Sea, about 15 km from here, today, sources said.

With a range of 25 km, Akash could deliver 55 kg of explosives and had the capacity to strike targets simultaneously.— PTI

Trains blocked

By Our Staff Reporter

BHUBANESWAR, FEB. 27. Movement of goods trains was affected in many parts of Orissa today as the Left parties and the Janata Dal (S) blocked them to register their protest against the Centre's 'neglect' of the State in the Railway Budget. The student wing of the Biju Janata Dal stopped goods trains at several stations.

PTI reports from New Delhi:

The BJD MPs today staged a dharna at the entrance of Parliament House protesting the "injustice" meted out to Orissa in the Railway Budget. They asked the BJD leadership to decide on whether to continue in the NDA and the Government.

— Details on Page 13

Surrenders

SRINAGAR, FEB. 27. A self-styled district commander of the pro-Pakistan Hizb-ul-Mujahideen outfit, Jehangir Ahmad Khan, laid down his arms in north Kashmir today.

Jehangir alias "Kinga", carrying a reward of Rs. 2 lakhs on his head, surrendered before the IG, BSF, Baramulla, Mr. B.N. Chaturvedi.— PTI

Mild quake

GUWAHATI, FEB. 27. A mild earthquake measured on the Richter scale of 2.5 was felt in parts of Assam and Meghalaya.

THE HINDU

28 FEB 2001

No ceasefire in Kashmir, says Advani

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, February 27

HOME MINISTER L. K. Advani today sprang a surprise in the Lok Sabha by stating that there was no ceasefire on in Kashmir, but only non-initiation of combat operations against terrorists.

"We did not use the word ceasefire because such a term implies reaching an understanding with the other side," he said during Question Hour in reply to a question raised by Sunderlal Tiwari and Satyavrat Chaturvedi of the Congress.

Advani reiterated that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India. The launching of the "peace process" has trapped the

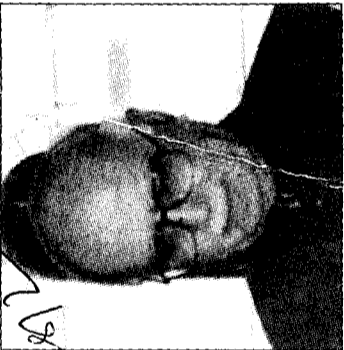
Pakistani Government almost in a "pincer like" grip. On the one hand it now feels the pressure of the Kashmiri people's desire for peace and on the other, the international community wants Islamabad to rein in the terrorists, who are out to subvert the process.

"The Prime Minister has never said it is a ceasefire but the Government has only instructed the defence forces not to open fire but respond to militant attacks. If they inflict injury on the people of Kashmir then the forces have instructions to take action," Advani said.

As for Pakistan's response, Advani said there has not been any except for bringing down the intensity of shelling along the

Advani made a distinction between the Hizbul Mujahideen and other groups like LeT, Jaish-e-Muhammad and Harkat-al-Mujahideen. The Hizb, he said, is largely in favour of the peace process. This organisation is mostly Kashmiri. The LeT is a sworn opponent and one of the most dangerous terrorist organisations. The security forces have killed 184 militants since the beginning of the peace process.

The Congress members, who were backed by Samajwadi Party's Mulayam Singh Yadav, repeatedly pointed out that the Government's statements, which talked of "ceasefire", "zero tolerance" and "neighbouring country's role" often confused the people about its policy on Kash-



L K ADVANI

Line of Control. "But it is not as we expected. We hoped it will stop sponsoring the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba (LeT) but Pakistan's reaction has been inadequate".

mir. Mr Yadav charged the Government with having a "soft policy".

Santosh Mohan Dev (Congress) said the Government has not been prompt with its responses on statements by Hurriyat leaders, who have undermined India's sovereignty in Kashmir.

In another significant statement today, Pranod Mahajan, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, ruled out any possibility of the "trifurcation" of Jammu and Kashmir along communal lines. "The idea is not even remotely considered by the Government," he said in response to a special mention by National Conference member Abdul Rashid Shaheen.

Centre considers truce extension with three Naga groups

Kohima, February 25

UNION HOME Minister L K Advani today said Government was "actively considering" a proposal to declare ceasefire with three key Naga insurgent groups other than NSCN(IM) and a suggestion to extend the truce to areas outside Nagaland where the groups are operating.

"So far there is a ceasefire agreement with one group—NSCN (IM)—but the Centre is actively considering a proposal to bring other groups under the purview of the truce," Advani told reporters here, at the end of his two-day visit to North-East.

The Centre entered into a ceasefire with National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN-ISSAC-Muivah) in 1997 and the other three outfits are NSCN (Khaplang) and the two factions of Nagaland National Council

(Federal).
The S C Jamir Government in Nagaland favours bringing all underground groups in the State within the purview of peace process.

Sources in Union Home Ministry said an announcement of a formal ceasefire agreement with NSCN(K) and the two factions of Nagaland National Council (Federal) would be made in the current session of Parliament. "We are moving in that direction and ground rules have already been prepared," they said.

Earlier, Advani told at a press conference that "the extension of the ceasefire to other areas in the North-East is being actively considered by the home ministry."

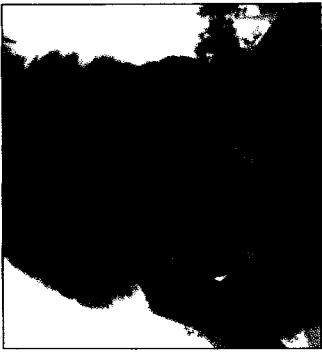
Quoting statistics about incidence of violence in Nagaland, the Home Minister said before the declaration of ceasefire in July 1997, the killings per month

was 17, which came down to eight a month after the announcement of truce.

In the last six months, killings have further declined to one or two in a month, the home minister said. However, Advani pointed out that statistics were not the correct measure or a kind of visible proof of the ground situation, but "what I saw in people's action here has made me confident that peace is a dynamic force here."

"The kind of enthusiasm and exuberance that prevails among the people here gives me immense pleasure because such an attitude actually helps in creating an atmosphere of peace that comes after prolonged violence," he said.

"After talking to the people, I have a feeling that there seems to be a season of peace here. Everybody talks of peace, villagers



L K Advani wears a ceremonial headgear at Kohima.

declare peace zones and even apprehend militants," the home minister said.

He added that the Centre will sanction another battalion of IRB for Nagaland during the next financial year and discussions have already been held with the

State Government in this regard. The home minister said the Centre was concerned about both the security aspects and development needs of the North-East.

When asked why the Centre failed to impose President's rule in strife-torn Manipur, the home minister pointed out the Government did not have necessary support from the main Opposition party (Congress). But he hoped the new Government in Manipur would effectively contain militancy in the State.

When asked about the government strategy towards flushing out North-East militants from the neighbouring countries, Advani said necessary assistance and cooperation were being sought from Bangladesh, Bhutan and Myanmar in this respect.

In Patna, Advani said

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Mukut Mithi had favoured the extension of the Disturbed Areas Act, promulgated in Tirap and Changlang districts following growth of insurgency, and that he had assured that the Centre would extend the term by another six months. The term would expire in March.

"But keeping in view the marked improvement in situation and if similar situation prevails in the two disturbed districts the Centre will consider providing 'peace bonus' to Arunachal Pradesh," he said.

The Centre had earlier provided "peace bonus" to Mizoram after normality returned, he added.

Advani said he had gone to Arunachal on Mithi's invitation to participate in the Brahmputra festival.

PTI

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

26 FEB 2001

GoM to submit security report on Monday

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Feb. 22. — The group of ministers, headed by the Union home minister, deputed to examine the recommendations of the Subrahmanyam Committee recommendations, will submit its report to the Prime Minister on Monday.

A senior home ministry official said Mr Advani was giving the final touches to the GoM's report after examining the recommendations of the Subrahmanyam committee. The reports of the task forces were submitted to him in October last year. The GoM approved the final draft report on 19 February.

Without disclosing the contents of the report, home ministry sources said the GoM has analysed in-depth the national security.

The GoM, which was set up to analyse the reports of the four task forces related to intelligence apparatus, internal security, border management and defence management, also comprises the defence minister, Mr George Fernandes, external affairs minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, finance minister, Mr Yashwant Sinha, and national

security adviser, Mr Brajesh Mishra.

Earlier, while releasing a book, "Kargil and After: Challenge for Indian Policy", Mr Mishra also said the report is ready and will be submitted to the Prime Minister shortly.

Mr Mishra said though the Kargil episode was a military and diplomatic victory, it had exposed some shortcomings "in our policy".

"We are not leaving anything to chance and a proper analysis is being made to overcome all shortcomings," he said and added: "This led to formation of the GoM, which made a detailed study of the recommendations made by the committee."

He also said the Kargil conflict had led the world community to ponder whether an international law should be framed for such conflicts and added that India has always been for peace but other nations should not take this as "our weakness".

He, however, refuted an opinion that the nuclear tests carried out by India and the tit-for-tat response by Pakistan had led to the Kargil conflict.

THE STATESMAN

23 FEB 2001

Text of PM's speech on ceasefire extension

NEW DELHI, FEB. 22. The following is the full text of the Prime Minister's statement in both Houses of Parliament on Jammu and Kashmir: "As Hon'ble Members would recollect, the Rashtrapatiiji during his address to the joint sitting of both the Houses of Parliament had given voice to the Government's approach to the whole question of Jammu and Kashmir. He had then, amongst other things, shared with the Hon'ble members of Parliament that: "The Government is pursuing a multi-pronged strategy to bring peace and normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir. As part of this, it launched a major peace mission on November 19, 2000, by announcing a unilateral non-initiation of combat operations in the State during the holy month of Ramzan. This bold initiative was extended twice upto February 26, 2001. As anticipated, this was warmly welcomed by the people of Jammu and Kashmir who were longing for an end to militancy and violence in their beautiful State. The international community has also given overwhelming support, because it sees in it yet another demonstration of India's sincere commitment to a peaceful and permanent solution to the Kashmir issue."

The Rashtrapatiiji had also then informed the Hon'ble Members that:

"Militancy in Jammu and Kashmir is now increasingly confined to foreign mercenary groups. This has widened the scope for democratic activity in the State. The people of the State participated enthusiastically in the recent panchayat elections. I reiterate the Government's readiness to have talks with every group in the State that abjures violence."

"The Government has decided to pursue this path by initiating talks with various groups in J and K. "The Government has seriously addressed the question of continuing with the peace process and further extending the period of non-initiation of combat operation by our security forces. In this regard, the Government has benefited by the detailed briefing of and consultations with all political parties that it had on February 21, 2001."

"Having examined all aspects of the question in its totality, the Government has decided to further extend the period upto the end of May. Let this opportunity not be missed by all those that desire peace, for our patience is not infinite. "I wish to make it abundantly clear that the peace process is only for those that wish to benefit from it. We will not let this process be derailed, diluted or misused. For such organisations or elements, as have vowed to disrupt the peace process, or intend

to continue with violence and the killing of innocents in J and K, my message is unequivocal and clear. If you inflict injury on any Indian citizen in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, or elsewhere, or commit any act of violence or terrorism, then the security forces have clear instructions to act decisively and to defeat such intentions. Law and order shall be maintained. Those who think that our security forces are less determined today to put an end to terrorism are only deluding themselves."

"It is my hope that Pakistan will act, even now, and abjure violence, give up their continuous hostile propaganda against India, stop promoting and aiding cross-border terrorism, take the path of peace through bilateral talks as enshrined in the Simla Agreement and the Lahore declaration, thus creating a conducive atmosphere so that the comprehensive dialogue process can be resumed resulting in a lasting solution to the problems."

"The process of peace is to enable our citizens in Jammu and Kashmir to live peacefully. It is their voice that has to be heard, not of the militants or foreign mercenaries."

"Peace is our objective, to peace and dialogue we remain committed because that, above all, is what the people of Jammu and Kashmir need most". — PTI

Colombian twist to Purulia armsdrop case

Soumen Datta
Kolkata, February 24

The CBI has sought the help of Interpol to probe a possible Colombian connection to the sensational Purulia armsdrop case of December, 1995. A senior member of the investigating team told *Hindustan Times* that Interpol is keen to cooperate with the Indian sleuths as it is probing a case relating to international terrorism that bears a striking resemblance to the Purulia incident.

In fact, Interpol has already drawn up a chart that lists the

similarities between the Purulia and Colombia incidents and has passed on its findings to the Colombian authorities.

An Interpol report says that over the last three years, a huge cache of arms and ammunition has been smuggled into Colombia.

In fact, Interpol estimates that around 10,000 AK-47 assault rifles alone have found their way to different terrorists outfits operating in that country in the last 6 months. And in all the cases, the arms were airdropped to their destinations. Investigations have revealed that the end-

user of the weapons was the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, a terrorist outfit operating in that country.

What has struck Interpol sleuths is the manner in which the entire operation was planned. Just as in the case of the Purulia incident, the arms were bought abroad through an arms dealer. The aircraft was purchased from Latvia and the plane happened to be the Russian IL-76, very similar to the AN-76 that was used for the Purulia operation.

The crew, too, was predominantly Russian with some Peruvian nationals aboard. The arms dealer who supplied the weapons was told that the consignment was meant for the Colombian army.

Investigations revealed that this man was completely in the dark about the whole operation and he told Interpol that on the face of it, the deal seemed completely above board.

Forged documents saying that the arms were meant for the Colombian Government were even produced by the buyers.

Before the arms were dropped, detailed maps and nav-

igational charts were drawn up of the airdrop zone. The IL-76 took off from Amman, in Jordan, enroute to Colombia, and in a virtual replay of the Purulia episode, it refuelled once before entering Colombian airspace. And after dropping the arms consignment, the aircraft left undetected.

There's yet another common factor: in both the Purulia and Colombian cases, the passengers on board the aircraft that delivered the weapons comprised nationals from different countries.

The CBI is now keen to follow

the Colombian trail and probe whether the same group of mercenaries was involved in the Purulia operation.

Kim Peter Davy, the kingpin, is still missing and CBI sources feel that he could well be a member of an international racket that arms terrorists groups all over the world.

The Interpol is also under pressure to stop the arms flow into Colombia and its sleuths are likely to dig into the Purulia issue in the hope that this could put them on the trail of the perpetrators of international terrorism.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

25 FEB 2001

Ceasefire gets three more months

SM 2372

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Feb. 22. - The Centre decided to extend the Jammu and Kashmir ceasefire by three months till end-May. It was not an ad hoc decision, senior officials said, but a well-thought out strategy to push for peace in the region.

(It is part of a "multi-pronged strategy" that includes issuing passports to the Hurriyat Conference leadership, initiating talks with Hurriyat and other political and local militant leadership in Kashmir, and talking to the Pakistani leadership under the Simla Agreement and Lahore Declaration terms.)

Making a suo moto statement in Lok Sabha today, Prime Minister Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee said his government's patience shouldn't be tested; perhaps indicating that his government had given a last chance to 'peace' in the valley.

"Let this opportunity not be missed by all those who desire peace, for our patience is not infinite," he said after the Cabinet Committee on Security decision last night to extend the ceasefire.

In a stern warning to "such organisations or elements as

have vowed to disrupt the peace process, or commit any act of violence or terrorism," he said "security forces have clear instructions to act decisively to defeat such intentions".

Mr Vajpayee renewed his appeal to Pakistan, saying "it is my hope that Pakistan will act, even now, and abjure violence, give up their continuous hostile propaganda against India, stop promoting and aiding cross-border terrorism and take the path of bilateral talks as enshrined in the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration."

Hurriyat reaction: Hurriyat Conference today said it hoped that the ceasefire extension was aimed at initiating a dialogue to solve the Kashmir issue while other organisations dubbed it a "political gimmick".

"The extension ... is probably aimed at initiation of a dialogue which is the need of the hour for a breakthrough," Hurriyat chairman Mr Abdul Gani Bhat said, adding "we should ignore hostilities of yesterday and capture tomorrow's brightness to resolve the dispute peacefully and with cooperation".

The Hizbul Mujahideen said the extension was a "political

gimmick".

Pakistan based Lashker-e-Taiyyaba called the ceasefire a "fraud with the sole aim to strengthen the Army and paramilitary forces in Jammu and Kashmir."

Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (UK & Europe) in London has said the ceasefire extension should be followed by "concrete measures" such as the release of political prisoners and an end to "killing of innocent people" in the state.

Bid on Hurriyat chairman: Hurriyat Conference chairman Mr Abdul Gani Bhat escaped a bid on his life today with the timely detection of a live grenade tied to his vehicle at a village in north Kashmir, 55 km from here, adds PTI from Srinagar.

Cong stand: The Congress today said it went along with government's assessment on the ceasefire extension at the all-party meeting yesterday despite being "fully alive to the incompetent" handling of law and order situation in the state.

Farooq hails extension: Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Dr Farooq Abdullah welcomed the ceasefire extension hoping it would facilitate fresh hopes of peace in the state.

THE STATESMAN

23 FEB 2001

Other steps must follow, say parties

By Neena Vyas

NEW DELHI, FEB. 21. The Government decision to extend ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir today was made easier with party leaders across the political divide virtually giving their prior approval. But not before warning that continuous extension cannot be an end in itself, and that the Government must take other political, economic and diplomatic initiatives simultaneously to effectively convert the ceasefire into a meaningful peace initiative.

The parties' green signal for yet another extension was given, but not without criticising the Government handling of the situation. The Government must ensure security of the common man, who has paid the price with increased number of civilian deaths during the three-month ceasefire, it should initiate a dialogue with the people and those who represent them and not only with militants, and it must think about an internal dialogue on greater autonomy for the State.

Thirty leaders representing 21 parties discussed for over two-and-a-half hours the issue of the ceasefire extension at a meeting called by the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee. The Prime Minister said he had listened "carefully" to the party leaders and would consider their view when taking a decision later at the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security Affairs in the evening.

After a 35-minute presentation by intelli-

gence agencies on the ground realities in the State, the Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, gave the Government's perception — the ceasefire was welcomed by the people of the State and praised by the international community even as Pakistan had been isolated. However, militants had struck several times and civilian deaths had increased during the ceasefire period, he admitted.

A cryptic remark by the Leader of the Opposition, Ms. Sonia Gandhi, at the end, summed it up. "The meeting was a government briefing on the positive effects of the ceasefire. They asked for an endorsement, we gave it." The CPI(M)'s Mr. Somnath Chatterji expressed dissatisfaction thus: "Ceasefire for what? There has been no dialogue, no initiative to normalise the situation. The question of more autonomy for Kashmir needs to be looked at, and talk of trifurcation of the state coming from certain quarters should be stopped."

Perhaps the strongest indictment came from the RJD leader, Mr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh. "Had the Government thought of consulting the Opposition at this late stage because there were serious differences on the issue of extension of ceasefire within the Cabinet? Would the Government talk to the Sangh Parivar which has been making dangerous demands for the trifurcation of the state?" Mr. P. A. Pandian of the AIADMK listed the attacks at

the Red Fort, the Police Control Room in Srinagar, the attempt on Dr. Farooq Abdullah's life and the threat held out to the PMO. There had been no positive response from Pakistan's military ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, he added.

The allies and supporting parties led by Mr. K. Yerran Naidu of the Telugu Desam Party, were softer on the Government, saying the results had been "satisfactory", and that there was a need for another extension to consolidate the gains made. The BJP leader, Mr. V. K. Malhotra, wanted the Government to ensure the security of "pro-India elements in Kashmir, including a sizeable number in the majority Muslim community" as they were "obvious targets" of militant attacks. The Government should effectively counter Pakistan's propaganda, he said adding there could not be any ceasefire against foreign militants terrorising the State.

The National Conference leader, Mr. Abdul Shaheen, said his party was the first to talk about the need to discuss greater autonomy, and that today, civilians in the State were being targeted by "both sides," an unambiguous reference to the firing on civilian demonstrators by security forces." The CPI(ML), which was not invited to the meeting, later said, "if custodial deaths continue and killers in uniform are not brought to book", the ceasefire would remain an eyewash.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2001

FACING A CRISIS OF INITIATIVE

INDIA'S INTRACTABLE PUZZLE of winning the confidence of the alienated sections in Jammu and Kashmir as also breaking the barrier of an escalating estrangement with Pakistan calls for political courage and diplomatic finesse. Having taken the surprisingly firm steps of declaring and sustaining a unilateral ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir, New Delhi is now beginning to make no secret of its despondency. At stake is what can only be seen as a crisis of initiative. The stark reality is that there is no transparent sign of a new sense of direction in the President, Mr. K. R. Narayanan's latest traditional address to a joint session of Parliament. However, the President, who by convention outlines the policies of the Government on such occasions, has done well to reaffirm the Centre's readiness to hold talks with any disaffected group in Jammu and Kashmir that might be willing to abjure violence. This does not of course indicate any way out of the crisis, especially when the threshold of trust between the Centre and the Kashmiri separatist groups remains very high despite the current ceasefire in the State. All the same, the President's statement can still serve as a marker for a meaningful effort towards a dialogue with the various groups in Jammu and Kashmir, including the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC). Of negative significance in this context is New Delhi's proclivity to insist on conditionalities of an ideal ambience for the resumption of dialogue with Pakistan. This attitude is not rooted in the reality that the bilateral estrangement, which needs to be addressed through a diplomatic re-engagement, is in part related to the issues covered by New Delhi's conditionalities. There is no sign as yet that the Vajpayee administration wants to get off the beaten track as the Prime Minister indicated around the beginning of the year.

Two aspects of Mr. Narayanan's presentation about Pakistan merit particular attention. He noted that "there has been no let up in, much

less an end to, cross-border terrorism and vicious anti-India propaganda originating from Pakistani soil". As a result, the argument goes, Pakistan's "protestations about its eagerness to resume talks with India will not carry conviction so long as it allows the terrorists' guns and bombs to do the talking". The eloquence of the words chosen mirrors the President's deep-seated anguish. Yet, a point missed by the mandarins in India's foreign policy establishment is that the Centre's unilateral ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir was primarily an aspect of India's internal dynamics in regard to that State. All the same, the Vajpayee administration does not seem to have made a serious evaluation of Islamabad's apparent responses to New Delhi's cessation of security-related operations in Jammu and Kashmir.

In one sense, New Delhi's case is that Islamabad continues to sponsor and stoke "cross-border terrorism" despite its declarations about observing "maximum restraint" along the Line of Control (LoC) and pulling out some Pakistani troops from the same sector in Jammu and Kashmir. However, the point that New Delhi needs to address is whether Islamabad has indeed kept its word in regard to these two ostensible responses to New Delhi's ceasefire inside Jammu and Kashmir. The message from official Pakistan is that the LoC itself has remained unusually calm (in a relative sense, of course) in recent weeks. Diplomatically more challenging is Islamabad's argument that a de-escalation of the level of violence within Jammu and Kashmir may really depend on whether and, if so, in what manner the Government of India will talk to the separatist militants concerned. It is not in India's interest to dismiss this as a disingenuous ploy. The Centre's conditional offer to hold talks with all the groups will first face the more immediate test regarding how New Delhi resolves the issue of the APHC leaders' wish to travel to Pakistan.

THE HINDU

22 FEB 2001

All-party meeting gives Centre go-ahead on path of peace

Kashmir truce extended

STATESMAN NEW SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Feb. 21. — The Cabinet Committee on Security, armed with the unanimous mandate of political parties, today decided to extend the Kashmir ceasefire beyond 26 February. The Prime Minister is slated to announce the decision in Parliament tomorrow.

A CCS member said the ceasefire extension didn't mean operations against foreign militants would be suspended. It is not certain, however, whether the ceasefire has been extended by a month or by two months.

Sources said the service chiefs had been taken into confidence. The meeting noted that the decline in infiltration was more because of the snow blocking the passes. There had also been some discussions about the possibility of using the Nagaland model which allows insurgents to have camps in some areas.

Earlier in the day, the all-

party meeting resolved that the ceasefire should be extended and the government should start talks with political groups in the state, including the Hurriyat.

Even Shiv Sena, which was critical of the government's stand, endorsed the move. Mrs Sonia Gandhi, who had described the government as confused, said after the meeting the Congress was behind the government on the extension.

The government tried to scotch rumours about a division within by making Mr LK Advani brief the meeting. Some reports had suggested a rift between him and the Prime Minister on the issue.

This was preceded by a 35-minute briefing by the Intelligence Bureau chief with slides, pictures and graphs about the situation before the ceasefire and after. About 215 militants were killed in the valley during the ceasefire against 250 civilian casualties in the hands of militants,

he reported. He said the ceasefire had divided the militants and that could work to India's advantage. The general mood in Pakistan too was turning against the military government.

Mr Mulayam Singh Yadav, who spoke first, asked the government to move beyond the ceasefire and launch a political initiative. Mr Somnath Chatterjee endorsed his views. To this, Mr Advani asserted that the ceasefire was not an end in itself but a means to bring lasting peace in the valley.

A few leaders wanted to know the reason for not allowing Hurriyat leaders to visit Pakistan. At this point, the National Conference, which asserted its "right" to be consulted first on any peace initiative in the valley, came down on the government, questioning its stand to give "extra-importance" to Hurriyat leaders.

"What is Hurriyat. They all

have been MPs, MLAs and have sworn allegiance to the Constitution. They are not *farishtas* (God's messengers) who will resolve the problem," the NC leader Mr Abdul Rashid Shaheen, said.

The US Congress caucus on India appreciated the ceasefire and hoped it would lead to resumption of talks with Islamabad on Kashmir. The team met Hurriyat leaders Mr GM Bhatt, Mr AG Lone, Mr Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and Mr Sheikh Aziz.

Kashmir meet: Eighty-six political leaders and prominent personalities from the PoK and the northern areas will participate in the Kashmir conference, to be held in Jammu from 17 March, adds UNI.

Amanullah Khan, Sardar Abdul Qayoom Khan and Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry were among those who have approached the Indian mission in Islamabad for visa.

■ Another report on page 8

THE STATESMAN

22 FEB 2001

Army favours ceasefire extension

GAURAV C. SAWANT
NEW DELHI, FEB 21

THE Army has shown its willingness for another extension of ceasefire in the state of Jammu and Kashmir and has informed the Centre that it will be in its (Centre's) interest as well.

Official sources said that the Army indicated its "keenness" for extending the ceasefire not because of the "peace on the Line of Control" but also due to the improved situation in the interiors. They added that the impact of the ceasefire cannot be gauged in one or two months. "It needs to be given at least four to six months. Only then will it sink into the psyche of the state or the people," the sources said.

"We have tried several methods. This is one more road to take. But we should not take one step forward and then two backwards because of the fear of a roadblock. We must let ceasefire continue till we reach either a dead end or our destination," an Army official said.

The Army has not been sitting idle during the ceasefire period. More than 50 terrorists have been killed in operations based on specific intelligence inputs. "On the ground too there is a marked improvement in the situation, incidents like Haigam and the killing of Sikhs notwithstanding. The long term advantages of peace will far outweigh

Tum Dildaar Nahin

"We don't want to weaken the nation. True, we are Muslims but we are proud of being Indian Muslim." But he said that Centre perhaps have no faith on us. He said Hum wafadaar hain, Tum dildaar nahin and added Center ko shaq kee bimaari hai, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah said.

Abdullah has asserted that the Centre will have to talk to us on the Jammu and Kashmir's demand for grant of autonomy, reiterating that it will in no way weaken the state's ties with rest of the country. **ENS**



its short term disadvantages," highly placed sources at the Army headquarters here said.

"The people of Kashmir have for the first time, in over a decade of incidents of violence, experienced to live without the fear of the gun. Ceasefire initiative is no magic wand. No situation changes overnight. We need to give it at least between four to six months to know its impact," an official said.

'Hizb restraint only bright spot in truce'

AASHA KHOSA
NEW DELHI, FEB 21

IS THE Hizbul Mujahideen, unlike other militant outfits, showing respect to the Centre's unilateral ceasefire? Security forces say there are tell-tale signs of this on the ground in the Valley.

Officials say the "restraint" shown by the outfit remains the sole "bright spot" in the three-month-long ceasefire, which has been marred by violence. State and Central Intelligence agencies have hardly found any involvement of the Hizbul in violence.

"The Hizbul's only operation so far has been a grenade attack close to a venue of Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah's public rally in Srinagar. The outfit had claimed responsibility for it," a senior para-military officer said.

The outfit has been practically quiet ever since a ceasefire was first announced by its commander in Kashmir five months ago.

"Throughout the Centre's cease-

fire, we have seen tremendous restraint by them," a senior security officer said.

While this augurs good long-term results for the forces as the militants now stand divided as "natives" and foreign mercenaries, a "hot" summer is expected in Jammu and Kashmir.

A Border Security Force (BSF) report says around 350 insurgents have sneaked in from Pakistan in the first two months of the ceasefire, which is quite high as compared to the average intrusion in all the previous years.

On an average, 2,500 to 3,000 insurgents infiltrated last year.

During winters, militants descend from the snow-clad peaks to the populated areas.

Many are killed in encounters with security forces, taking the sting out of the militants' offensive in the summer months.

"This winter, we have not achieved the desired results and are likely to face more attacks during the summers," a security official said.

INDIAN EXPRESS

22 FEB 2001

Vajpayee calls all-party meet on ceasefire

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Feb. 20. — Faced with a barrage of criticism within and outside the government, the Prime Minister has convened an all-party meeting tomorrow to evolve a consensus on the ceasefire in Jammu & Kashmir.

Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee had earlier decided to convene an NDA meeting on the ceasefire. Mr Vajpayee's political managers calculated that non-NDA parties could complain that they were not being taken into confidence.

The BJP welcomed the move on the all-party meeting, scheduled for 12 noon in Parliament House. The all-party meeting will be held before that of the Cabinet Committee on Security. This indicates that the all-party deliberations could shape the outcome of the CCS meeting.

Top Intelligence officials will be present at the all-party meeting to brief leaders on ground realities in the Valley. The CCS meeting was postponed earlier amid varying perceptions of policy-makers. The CCS appears to be in two minds on ceasefire extension. Members favouring an extension hope the situation will improve and the people of J&K will decide that enough is enough. But the opponents believe, that's not happening.

The Congress has described the government policy on Kashmir as confused. Hardliners in the Sangh parivar and some Cabinet ministers are reportedly opposed to truce extension.

There is talk in government circles that those caring about international opinion favour extension whereas those concerned about the ground situation want that the truce should

be called off. Violence has not stopped and the initial euphoria that it would bring about peace in the Valley was waning fast, a Union minister said.

For extension of the truce, the Prime Minister and his managers would have to persuade party leaders that the ceasefire had paid off. The government does not want a political controversy on the ceasefire when Parliament is in session. Some government managers are confident that the Congress and other parties will appreciate the government move.

Expressing reservations about extension, RSS spokesman Mr MG Vaidya said security forces and the state police should be allowed to adopt a pro-active role to nab militants. The ceasefire should be limited to the LoC, he said. The BJP appears confused. The party opposed the earlier extension. This time Mr Bangaru Laxman has talked about a review but not with the same force.

Hurriyat leaders released: Five Hurriyat leaders, including Mr Yasin Malik, Mr Abdul Gani Bhat and Syed Ali Shah Geelani, detained and placed under house arrest, were released last night. Jammu & Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party chief Mr Shabir Ahmad Shah and his six colleagues, arrested for violating curfew on Saturday, were let off today, adds PTI from Srinagar.

PoK sit-in: Around 50 women, supporting independence for Kashmir, today staged a sit-in outside the UN office in Muzaffarabad in PoK demanding release of 14 activists arrested last week, AFP adds. Pakistan's military government has banned public demonstrations.

■ Photograph on page 5

India lodges protest on Pak intrusion

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
AND AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, Feb. 20. — India today lodged a strong protest with Pakistan over yesterday's airspace violation in the Chhamb sector of Jammu & Kashmir by two aircraft. New Delhi rejected as "totally baseless" Islamabad's denial of the incursion.

The protest was conveyed by the sector commander of the Chhamb area to his ranger counterpart in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, defence sources here said.

A protest is also expected to be lodged by the Indian high commission in Islamabad and by the government with the Pakistani mission here.

Mr George Fernandes said he would soon make a statement in Parliament on the subject.

Mr Fernandes refused to elaborate on the intrusion, saying Parliament was in session and he could not speak on the issue without informing the House first.

According to Army officials, the two planes entered Indian territory yesterday around 2.15 p.m. The planes may have been flying very low for "surveillance."

Though this is the first time the Army has officially admitted that Pakistani forces are involved in surveillance, many officials claim that unmanned Pakistani aerial vehicles often enter Indian airspace.

THE STATESMAN

21 FEB 2001

DAMNING THE LCA

Si b m Is there mischief afoot?

IT is rather intriguing that on the eve of the Light Combat Aircraft making its debut at an international air show, although on home turf, a host of questions should be raised about its indigenous content, likely obsolescence and slim chances of adhering to production schedules. Not that the queries are irrelevant, but their timing would suggest a campaign to ground the aircraft even before it has flipped its wings. All of which tends to confirm that powerful lobbies are at work, lobbies which would stand to gain if domestic efforts at building combat aircraft flounder. Two decades ago the Marut (HF-24) programme was abandoned in the wake of a similar brand of criticism. Is history going to repeat itself? There can be no overlooking the fact that the LCA development has been marked by substantial overruns of time and cost. Nor can anyone ignore its prototype being powered by an imported engine while the production version would use the indigenous Kaveri. Yet to highlight the imported content of the trial versions is not on. It would make little sense to manufacture every component of something that has yet to be cleared for production, and even when an assembly line is in place it will be impossible to provide for 100 per cent local manufacture. Even highly developed nations do not go it alone in aircraft production.

A former Air Chief going public over the issue confirms the view that the air force has not lent total support to the LCA project. It is understandable that in the short term the force would prefer the best fighter available in the global market, but looking ahead makes it imperative that India acquires the capacity to produce its own warplanes. The LCA has to be seen as part of that bigger picture and the air force would do well to look at the example set by the navy. Warship construction has sailed many a sea between INS Nilgiri and INS Mumbai. Not so long ago it was easy to discern the attempts of western arms producers to break the hold of the military-industrial complex of the erstwhile Soviet Union on the supply line to India. Now such action is evident on the part of representatives of rival Russian manufacturers: witness the tussle between the T-72 and T-90 tanks, and the bid to pressure the navy to change its choice of the MiG-29-K to the SU-33 for its carriers in the pipeline. It requires little imagination to conclude what fuels the interest of lobbies. Soon after the LCA made its maiden test flight this newspaper had cautioned that attractive offers would soon be made to divert the focus from indigenous potential. That such apprehensions appear to have been well-founded gives us no comfort.

Fleet Review a success

SEEMA KAMDAR
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

MUMBAI, Feb. 19. - The International Fleet Review was all it was touted to be and more. The five-day event went through with clockwork precision, testifying to the event management capabilities of the Indian Navy apart from its striking abilities.

Most naval officers and men were of the view that the event proved India's superior naval preparedness to the world. Capt (ret) Raj Mohindra, president of the Mumbai charter of the Navy Foundation, said: "It was an administrative and logistical marvel."

He believes that the IFR has projected India as a sea power to reckon with. "The world must know that India has a surface Navy and an under-sea arm that can stave off any challenge," he said.

But there were a few hiccups vis-a vis the organisers' handling of the viewing public.

8 Though the event was conceived as a communication exercise, it failed in doing so with the hordes gathered around the Gateway of India for the fleet review on 18 February. All they managed was a fleeting glimpse of one or two ships anchored close to the bay. The weather played spoilsport with the smog blocking out most of the 70 ships. Moreover, there was no alternative arrangement like a band to keep them entertained.

What was more disappointing was the absence of any live commentary to keep them abreast of what was happening. The surging crowds were kept at bay by wary police personnel for fear that they may spill over into the prohibited area and disrupt VIP movement. This attitude also irked many who complained bitterly that the show was not meant for them but only for politicians.

But the Navy more than made up for its faux pas the

next day by treating the sea of humanity gathered at Marine Drive to a grand marchpast and a spectacular display of fireworks in the sky.

The Navy Foundation, which comprises retired naval officers, contributed its bit by making the visiting naval officers feel comfortable. It held a reception for officers of the visiting naval fleet, escorting them on shopping and sight-seeing trips and inviting them to their homes.

All officers were unanimous in the judgment that the review had brought pride to them and the country. It served as a focal point of interaction among the 29 participating navies. While 19 had sent ships, the remaining had sent delegations that assessed the fleet on display.

Comparisons, though odious, are inevitable on such an occasion. The Indian Navy passed with flying colours, going by the reactions of the visiting naval officers.

THE STATESMAN

7 0 FEB 2001

Two Pak aircraft intrude Indian air space, 1 hit

NEW DELHI: Two Pakistani military reconnaissance aircraft on Monday crossed the Line of Control (LoC) in the Chhamb sector of Jammu and Kashmir and one of them was "hit" when Indian troops "engaged" them, defence sources said here.

"Two small fixed-wing Pakistani army reconnaissance aircraft violated Indian air space in the Chhamb sector at 1415 hours and were engaged by our own ground troops and forced to return," the army headquarters said.

One of the two planes, said to be an air observation piston-engined aircraft, 'Mushaq', was "hit" and a search was launched to determine whether the aircraft had crashed within Indian territory, the sources said. "A protest is being lodged with Pakistan for this air space violation," the headquarters said.

This is the first known Indian air space violation by a Pakistani military aircraft in more than a year. Indian Air Force jets had shot down a Pakistani navy reconnaissance aircraft, 'Atlantique', in the Kutch sector of Gujarat shortly after the 1999 Kargil conflict. The entire 16-member crew was killed.

'Mushaq' is a twin-seater low-flying air observation plane also used by Pakistan to direct artillery fire.

In another development, four security personnel were killed and 16 injured when militants attacked an Indo-Tibetan Border Police camp, two BSF pickets, an army convoy and ambushed a police vehicle in

Kashmir Valley on Monday, an official spokesman said.

Militants ambushed a Kupwara-bound police gypsy carrying two detainees on police remand at Amargarh in Sopore, killing three cops and injuring two others, said Baramulla SP Abdul Qayoom Manhas. Head constable Ghulam Rasool died instantly and five others, including a detainee, were seriously injured in the ambush, Mr Manhas said.

One ITBP constable was killed and five injured when militants fired four rifle grenades at their camp in Bemina here, official sources said. Elsewhere in the Valley, militants shot dead a policeman attached to the criminal investigation department in the Pattan area of Baramulla.

At least four civilians were injured when militants hurled a grenade towards an army convoy at Bijbehara, 45 km from here, on Monday evening, but it missed its target and exploded on the road, injuring four civilians, the sources said. The officials said militants also hurled grenades towards BSF pickets at Nawakadal and Narwarah in downtown Srinagar, but no one was hurt in the explosions.

Meanwhile, the crucial meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), which was put off on Sunday at the last minute, is likely to be held on Wednesday to decide whether or not to extend the cease-fire in Jammu and Kashmir beyond the February 26 deadline, official sources said in Delhi. (Agencies)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

20 FEB 2001

Army for extension of J&K ceasefire

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, FEB. 19. In spite of recent setbacks and the expression of serious reservations by a section of the security establishment, the Army appears keen on prolonging the ceasefire in Kashmir.

Highly-placed Government sources said the Army had continued to advocate extension of the ceasefire. Key paramilitary forces, which have faced the brunt of some recent attacks by insurgents in Kashmir, however, may not be so inclined. The State Government's response in favour of the ceasefire is also not encouraging.

The fallout of the slaying of Sikhs at Mehjoor Nagar and the firing on Kashmiri demonstrators at Haigam has sharpened the internal divide on the ceasefire extension. According to one view, the ceasefire has allowed the militants to consolidate. As a result, a drop in violence has not become perceptible. They also argue against extending the ceasefire since Pakistan has not responded positively by curbing cross-border militancy. However, advocates of the ceasefire point out that it would be wrong to disregard some of the gains. First, firing across the Line of Control, including at the Siachen glacier, has almost ceased. Cross-border infiltrations also appear to have dropped.

Second, the profile of militancy in the Valley has perceptibly altered. Militant violence is now being perpetrated essentially by two jihadi organisations — Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad.

Sources point out that even if the militants are regrouping, it does not justify the scrapping of the ceasefire. While offensive op-

erations are on hold, the security forces, and especially the Army, are well aware of the hideouts. A counter-strike against them is feasible, if required in the future.

Haigam fallout

There is a general agreement within the security establishment that the popular mood in the Valley is rapidly changing. The Haigam firing by the Army has triggered a violent and emotional response in many parts of Kashmir. The Army is keen on getting over the incident quickly.

There is a perception in the Government that Pakistan has not done enough to give peace a real chance. While, under international pressure, it has passed orders to stop the display of arms and curb open fund-raising campaigns by militants, it has not moved sufficiently on the ground. Contrary to reports, Islamabad is yet to issue instructions to curb "commando training" by the jihadi groups.

ITBP camp attacked

By Shujaat Bukhari

JAMMU, FEB. 19. Militants today attacked a camp of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) at Bemina on the outskirts of Srinagar. They fired four rifle grenades towards the camp which hit the building killing one constable, Rati Ram, and injuring five others. The Jaish-e-Mohammad owned up the attack.

Near Sopore, militants ambushed a police vehicle taking prisoners to a Baramulla court. A head constable, Ghulam Rasool, was killed on the spot. Four policemen and a prisoner were injured.

Pitched battles continue: Page 13

THE HINDU

20 FEB 2001

Army, para-military forces differ over truce extension

Shishir Gupta
New Delhi, February 18

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DIFFERENCES HAVE cropped up within the security and military establishment over the extension of ceasefire in Kashmir. While the Army has favoured that the non-initiation of combat operations (military jargon for ceasefire) in the strife-torn state should be extended, the para-military and police forces have vetoed the truce as they feel it will be used for further consolidation of *jehadi* groups.

According to Government sources, the extension of the ceasefire for the third time and overall security situation in J&K was discussed at a high-level meeting on Friday. Top Army brass, senior Border Security Force officials, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the senior intelligence officials participated in meet

It is learnt the Central Para-Military Forces were against the extension as their ground inputs suggested the *jihadis* had used the truce to consolidate their position. The BSF, citing intelligence inputs, said the ceasefire had been used by the *jihadis* to upgrade the hardware, improve communication, replenish arsenal and motivate the ethnic Kashmiri youth to cross over to training camps in PoK.

The para-military forces said the *jihadis* had been doing operational planning during the truce and will become "hard enemy targets" once the on-going process ends. The BSF was of the opinion that the security forces, including the Army, should concentrate on anti-insurgency operations as the Line of Control (LoC)



A security person takes guard in Srinagar on Sunday. Photo: AFP

was expected to remain quiet after Pakistan's "maximum restraint offer".

However, the Army differed. According to the Army, any move on the extension will have to factor the positive spin-offs of the peace process. The gains include: Pressure on Pakistan against overtly supporting a *jehadi* infiltration or any Kargil type of intrusion; international sympathy for India; reduction in cross-border firing and infiltration and serious differences between the *jihadis* and the Pak Government.

The Army was of the opinion the ceasefire had put Pak Government on the backfoot. Islamabad is in a cul-de-sac on the issue with little option but to react to

Indian moves.

The Army said the ceasefire had ensured better protection of military and security installations as a result the *jihadis* were hitting soft targets to gain mileage and discredit the process.

The Army was in favour of using the ceasefire for building confidence, introducing new steps for protection of remote areas and using high-end force multipliers to track infiltrators. By ordering a probe into the Sopore shooting, the Army has sent a signal that it will not tolerate trigger-happy personnel. It is understood that at the end of the meeting, differences remained unresolved.

Mourners throng slain Jalil's house

Rashid Ahmad
Haigam, February 18

IT WAS an unpleasant but all-too-familiar situation. A shocked 50-year-old Rafiq was lying dumb, flat in a bed. Grieving women had gathered there. Yelling and shrieking, hundreds of men, women and children congregated at Rafiq's house on the ritual -- the fourth day of mourning of her son Jalil Ahmad Shah.

Jalil was killed under mysterious circumstances in the intervening night of February 14-15. Security forces, describing him as a top commander of Harakat-ul Jihad-e-Islami (HUJI), said that he was killed in an encounter in Juhama forests of Baramullah. But his mother, sisters and villagers swear that he was not connected with militancy even remotely.

They admit that Jalil had association with the JKLF. "But he was never a militant," said Mohammad Sulthan Mir, neighbour of Jalil.

His mother said that security forces had arrested him on February 13 in broad daylight at Sopore, where he had gone for some business assignment.

Jalil was running a Unani medical shop and his family -- his mother, four sisters and a brother -- lived a modest life. One of his sisters was already married and another was to get married this year.

The political affiliation of the family, however, is strange. While Jalil was associated with the JKLF, his father, Abdul Kabir Shah, was a National Conference functionary.

Abdul Kabir had close association with Abdul Ahad Vakil, the Speaker of the State Assembly.

He was shot dead by unidentified men in 1995. Villagers, without reservations, said that militants killed him. Locals said that Jalil was a social worker and would always help the poor and needy.

He had recently donated blood for the earthquake victims of Gujarat. The blood donation camp was organised by the JKLF in Srinagar.

Guns and Butter

Synergise the Two for Security

By C UDAY BHASKAR

INDIA'S defence expenditure (DE) will soon come up for predictable pre-budget scrutiny along the 'guns versus butter' groove and this has to be juxtaposed against images of uniformed personnel providing succour to the ill-fated victims of the earthquake in Gujarat. This is symptomatic of the many duties that devolve upon the armed forces as part of their mandate. However, before examining the contextual backdrop of India's DE some basic figures warrant recall.

In the financial year 2000-01, the budgetary provision for defence was Rs 58,587 crore and this will now be revised based on actual expenditure. Adding the pension bill of Rs 12,000 crore, the overall outlay for existing infrastructure, both material/human and the retired fraternity — uniformed/civilian, works out to over Rs 70,000 crore — a not too immodest amount. The DE normally excludes the pension bill and is now 2.6 per cent of the GDP, though this figure will be revised.

India's DE has been the subject of considerable introspection both within the government and outside and this focus was further attenuated post-Kargil. While there is a traditional view that a poor underdeveloped nation like India cannot afford to spend such vast sums on defence, the reality check is perhaps different. Conceptually, for any nation, the DE is driven by perceptions of national security and the latter, like beauty, is inherently subjective and lies in the eye of the beholder. Thus the DE as a percentage of the GDP varies across a bandwidth from under one per cent (Japan) and can go up to 11 per cent (Israel) with North Korea estimated at 30 per cent.

Is India's DE adequate and should it go up? These are perennial questions with elusive answers and have been addressed in greater detail than ever before in the aftermath of Kargil. It is understood that the Vajpayee government will soon announce the determination it has arrived at on the plethora of recommendations since made. It is not the purpose of this article to make the case for increased defence outlay but to draw attention to areas that offer scope for ensuring a greater degree of 'bang for the buck'.

Historically, the Indian DE is becoming more of a strait-jacket with

the recurring component (RE or revenue expenditure) dwarfing the capital component, or that which allows for modernisation/acquisition/upgradation. Recurring costs include the pay and allowances of the personnel who comprise the defence infrastructure — uniformed and civilian, and the material inventory including consumables such as fuel, ammunition, food and clothing — items brought under the rubric of stores.

The DE for 2000-01 is instructive in the fine print. The Indian defence edifice is manpower intensive and is over a million-strong purely in the uniformed part. The Indian Army is the lead service with over a million troops and the Air Force and Navy are respectively 10th and 20th in personnel size. This large Army is inescapable given the broad and complex spectrum of tasks that devolve upon it and these range from macro-security issues

IN BRIEF

- Many defence areas offer scope to generate greater 'bang for the buck'
- With increasing recurring expenditure, it has become difficult to induct relevant technology into the Army
- Private sector participation can improve productivity in ordnance factories

such as WMD to micro-challenges such as low-intensity conflict and internal security duties and aid to civil power as in the case of the current earthquake. The buck in most cases stops with the military from Kargil to Kutch.

It thus follows that the RE component of the DE is on the increase and the capital share is shrinking progressively making it difficult to induct relevant technology into the military machine. Hence the anomaly of the Indian Army in the year 2001 still having to rely on the ubiquitous one-tonner of World War II vintage that barely does two km per litre of petrol. This has resulted in a catch-22 cleft wherein the Army cannot reduce its manpower if it is to meet all the tasks before it and is unable to modernise its inventory if its share of the cake is what it is — about 56 per cent of the total DE — that would then allow it to cut down manpower.

In this strait-jacket, the only wriggle room appears to be in those areas that account for most of the RE, namely pay and allowances and in stores. The budget details reveal that last year the total pay and allowances for personnel was Rs 15,043 crore of which Rs 12,922 crore was for uniformed troops including auxiliaries and reservists, while Rs 2,121 crore was for the civilian component.

The second area is the innocuous word in the budget papers that reads 'stores'. Under this head, the total is Rs 20,905 crore and the breakdown for the Army, Navy, Air Force and Ordnance Factories (OF) is 11,012, 1,610, 5,221 and 3,062 crore respectively. Of this total, Rs 5,391 crore are recovered by the OF for stores supplied to the armed forces. But it must be noted that stores mean different things for each of the services for their war wastage scales and inventory have varying specificity. Room for strategic wriggle exists in these areas if at all, given India's systemic traits and inflexible procedural rectitude.

The manpower bill is rising both for those on active duty and the pensioners and about 60,000 troops join the retired list annually. Many leave in their early 30s which means that they can legitimately claim pension benefits for almost 45 to 50 years. This is a trained, disciplined gene-pool that is struggling for lack of institutional astuteness and often ends up as glorified car hailers and ill-paid security guards. If comprehensive national security must now address social indicators such as health, education, services et al, this regular outflow can make a lateral entry to central or state governments and thereby reduce the pension demands.

In the stores area, inventory management and procurement practices leave considerable room for improvement. The productivity in ordnance factories and defence public sector units can benefit from private sector participation, as also from academia. The Navy has made modest but potentially significant advances in this area and this needs to be studied. In the final analysis, more than increasing the DE, getting a better return on current outlay and investment is a strategic imperative. Guns and butter are both integral to national security — the challenge is to synergise them.

After days of silence, QB-1 1917 Army regrets killings

■ Promises justice to families of protesters killed in Srinagar

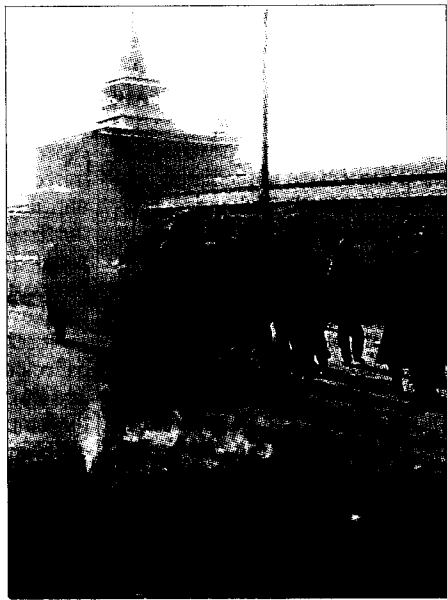
MUZAMIL JALEEL
SRINAGAR, FEB 18

THE Army today regretted the killing of five protesting villagers in Hygam and a teenager in Srinagar and promised stern action against those found guilty.

"We too are human beings. We too can commit errors. We too make mistakes," said Lt Gen J R Mukharjee, General officer commanding (GOC), 15 Corps. "I give my solemn word to the bereaved families and to the people of Kashmir that those of my men who are blameworthy will be brought to book and be dealt with according to the law," he said. Mukharjee was addressing mediapersons here.

Appealing to the people of Kashmir "to adjure this agitation and violence," Mukharjee said the people want peace and will not allow such an incident to derail the process as long as they are assured justice. "I give my word of honour that they will get justice," he said. "Apart from the judicial inquiry, we have also ordered a detailed investigation into these unfortunate incidents".

The Army had opened firing on a protest rally at Hygam on



Protesters outside the historic Jamia Masjid in downtown Srinagar on Sunday — PTI

February 15, who were demanding the body of a local youngster allegedly killed in custody. The police has already filed an FIR against the Army, claiming that the troops opened fire on the protesters and even attacked the police party led by the station house officer of Sopore police station. In fact, the complainant in the FIR is the SHO himself, who had a narrow escape in the firing.

Mukharjee, however, claimed that he has received conflicting reports regarding the incident and is waiting for the results of the probe ordered to "get to the bottom of it". He said his inquiry is time-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Hurriyat, JKLF men detained

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SRINAGAR, FEB 18

THE police today detained two senior leaders of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), including its chairman and senior executive member Mohammad Yaseen Malik, while Hurriyat Conference chairman Abdul Gani Bhat and another member have been placed under house arrest since last evening.

Malik was detained by police at Srinagar airport on his return here from New Delhi, official sources said.

He was scheduled to visit Haigam-Sopore to take part in the fourth day ceremony of JKLF leader Jaleel Ahmad Shah and six others who were killed in a firing incident on Thursday.

Police took Malik into custody as soon as he came out of the plane and lodged him at Humhama police division, they said.

Police and paramilitary forces laid a seige around the houses of Abdul Gani Bhat at Wazirbagh and his predecessor Syed Ali Shah Geelani at Hyderpora to stop the Hurriyat leaders from visiting Haigam-Sopore today where hundreds of people have assembled to attend the fourth day ceremony of those killed on Thursday.

INDIAN EXPRESS

19 FEB 2001

Air display leaves trail of excitement

By Srinivas Laxman

The Times of India News Service

MUMBAI: The might of India's military air power was displayed here on Sunday morning before lakhs of cheering spectators as planes of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Indian Navy flew past Marine Drive and Chowpatty carrying out demonstrations.

Unlike previous days, there was good visibility which allowed the public to have a clear view of different aircraft. The nearly 90-minute air display followed the international city parade where Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee was the chief guest.

The area echoed to the awesome roar of Sea Harriers, Sukhois, MiG-29s, Kirans and Jaguars. As the powerful jets flew past the milling crowd, many put on their binoculars to get a closer view of the aircraft.

However, it was the Russian-made Sukhoi which stole the show. Before an awestruck crowd, the pilot put the aircraft through incredible manoeuvres which made everyone below hold their breath. The deadly fighter executed hair-raising rolls in rapid successions, zoomed upwards in a few seconds, turned and performed a series of acrobatics. In a display of amazing control, the pilot then reduced the speed of the Sukhoi from 850 km to 250 km in split seconds. The aerobatics demonstration by the IAF's Suryakiran jet team kept the crowd enthralled. While executing their thrilling manoeuvres, the nine small jets simultaneously trailed the national colours. They ended their performance with what is known as a "shockwave formation". This team has now become an indispensable part of any air display all over the country.

Prior to this exciting demonstration, there was a flypast by Sea Harriers—the maritime version of the Jaguars—and the MiG-29s. However, these aircraft merely flew past the crowd without carrying out any drill.

There was a flypast by microlight aircraft by an army team. One of the planes trailed the banner of the international fleet review. The microlights took off from the US Club at Colaba, flew over Malabar Hill before entering Marine Drive. They circled twice over the area before flying out.



FLEET OF FANCY: Suryakirans of Indian Air Force fly in formation and paint the sky with the Indian tricolour to mark the end of the International Fleet Review in Mumbai on Sunday.

Following the display by microlight, there was the usual search-and-rescue demonstration by Chetak helicopters of the Indian Navy. They performed simultaneously opposite the Oberoi Towers, Churchgate and Chowpatty. "If we had planned the demonstrations in just one spot, not many would have seen them. Our idea was to reach out to the crowd so we decided to have it in three places simultaneously," a

naval official said.

In another demonstration, a Seaking helicopter lowered marine commandos into a Gemini boat. They then moved towards a simulated 'enemy' oil rig, placed explosives and left the area in just eight minutes. The crowd thought the operation was over. But that was not the case. The rig exploded with a bang, spewing black smoke.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

19 FEB 2001

Jawans opened fire in self-defence, says army

Probe ordered; Yaseen Malik detained; clashes continue

The Times of India News Service and Agencies

SRINAGAR: The army on Sunday admitted its troops and intelligence personnel opened fire in self-defence during protests over custodial killings at Haigam-Sopore and Maisuma in Srinagar and ordered a probe into the incident.

"Notwithstanding the judicial probe, we have also ordered a detailed inquiry into these unfortunate incidents," Lt. Gen. J.R. Mukherjee, General Officer Commanding, 15th Corps, told reporters here. The inquiry would be time-bound and any jawan found guilty would be brought to book, he said.

Expressing regrets over the deaths, Lt Gen Mukherjee said several demonstrators had blocked the National Highway at Haigam near Pattan on February 15, demanding the body of a slain militant—alleged to have been killed by security forces. The protesters did not allow the army convoy bound for Baramulla to proceed.

According to the Corp Commander, the officer-in-charge of the convoy urged the demonstrators to let the convoy pass. But one of the demonstrators fired shots at the convoy, forcing the army to retaliate in self-defence.

Meanwhile, the police on Sunday detained two senior lead-

ers of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, including its chairman and senior executive member Mohammad Yaseen Malik. Malik was detained by the police at Srinagar airport on his return here from New Delhi, official sources said.

He was scheduled to visit Haigam-Sopore to take part in the fourth day ceremony of JKLF leader Jaleel Ahmad Shah and six others who were killed in a firing incident on Thursday. The police took Malik into custody as soon as he came out of the plane and lodged him at Humhama police division, they said.

Hurriyat Conference chairman Abdul Gani Bhat and another member have been placed under house arrest since Saturday evening.

Meanwhile, sporadic clashes between the police and demonstrators continued for the fourth day on Sunday in the Valley, while the curfew imposed in parts of Srinagar city on Friday was extended to some more areas as a "precautionary measure".

KEEPING VIGIL



CCS meeting cancelled

NEW DELHI: A crucial meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), which was to take a decision whether to extend the ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir beyond February 26, was cancelled on Sunday at the last moment. The meeting is expected to be held after a couple of days, an official spokesman told reporters here. (PTI)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

19 FEB 2001

IFR PARADE / DANCE IN THE SKIES HAS MUMBAITES RIVETED

Navies must fight global terrorism: PM

By Arunkumar Bhatt

MUMBAI, FEB. 18. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, today emphasised cooperation among the navies of the world to curb drug trafficking and gun-running which he described as handmaidens of international terrorism.

Mr. Vajpayee was delivering a formal speech this morning after witnessing an impressive the International City Parade staged by sailors of 19 different navies, participants in the International Fleet Review that cheered lakhs of onlookers who had gathered soon after daybreak.

The Prime Minister said the Indian Navy had an important role in global maritime cooperation and also in preserving marine ecology, protecting ocean resources and commercial sealanes against piracy and other disruptions.

Mr. Vajpayee called for "institutional arrangements for such cooperation. He said that the IFR was an important first step in bringing navies together to start the endeavour."

He noted that 15 of the 25 foreign ships that have joined the IFR were from the Indian Ocean Rim countries, and this showed "a widespread recognition of the enormous potential for regional cooperation in the Indian Ocean Rim. I hope that the association will rapidly move to realise the promise of mutually beneficial collaboration."

In a rather emotional appeal, Mr. Vajpayee told the Rim countries: "As globalisation embraced

us and communication technologies connect us, oceans should unite us in our endeavor for peaceful economic development. Let us start this process with the Indian Ocean."

Lakhs throng shores

Mumbai, the commercial capital of the country, seldom gets a chance to see a military parade. And this was the first time Mumbaiites were to watch an International City Parade and its charming significance was not lost on them.

Contrary to the cynical thinking

on the IFR-related public holidays here, lakhs of people thronged the shores of Marine Drive, a beautiful four-kilometre curving stretch of Mumbai's Back Bay known as the Queen's Necklace. Both the sides of the road, the entire Chowpaty beach and all rooftops were plastered with onlookers. The police had to turn back lakhs of people for want of space.

The first contingent was that of the naval wing of the National Cadet Corps, holding aloft flags of 29 countries which sent their warships and/or high-level naval del-

egation. Each of the three naval commands of the Indian Navy had fielded a platoon in the march and so had the Indian Coast Guard, Sea Cadet Corps and the National Defence Academy.

A troupe of naval band separated two marching platoons and provided martial music.

Daredevil display

The Indian Special Marine Forces, whom the Navy calls Marcos (marine commandos), demonstrated a daredevil airborne operation.

They slithered down from three Sea King 42-C commando-carrying helicopters and landed on an inflatable boat, moved swiftly to different dummy targets, placed their explosive charges and withdrew quickly. Their helicopters returned and recovered them in the nick of time and flew away. And behind them, the targets blew up.

To minimise the time in recovery by the copters, the Marcos tied themselves to a thin line and remained suspended under the withdrawing helicopters.

Various types of aircraft in the inventory of the Naval Air Arm, the Indian Air Force and Coast Guard had the onlookers' rivetted to the skies. These included carrier-borne short take-off and vertical landing Sea Harriers, deep-penetrating strike aircraft, Jaguars, which have special anti-shiping abilities, and aerobatics by Su-30. But it was the Suryakirans which stole the show with their manoeuvres.

...but some watched birds

By Our Special Correspondent

MUMBAI, FEB. 18. While lakhs of people were watching the breath-taking acrobatics by supersonic warplanes of the Indian Navy and Air Force at the first ever International City Parade, five gentlemen were focussed not on the aircraft but birds.

They were not ornithologists but IAF officers and their mission was to report bird activities. Armed with powerful binoculars and high-frequency radios and walkie-talkies, they were relaying a running commentary on kites, crows and pigeons.

"Charlie Oscar, this is Mike Delta. Birds five zero meters above the rooftops of the buildings near the flyover bridge," creaked Junior Warrant Officer, M.A. Khan. Charlie Oscar was the temporary ground control station that the IAF had set up on the terrace of a high-rise building.

The station, manned by four officers, was guiding the aircraft performing a dance in the skies. Charlie Oscar was also providing flying data to the aircraft, some of which had flown in from far-off bases. The ground control would relay reports on bird activities in the area of operations to the airborne pilots.

According to Mr. Khan, the Air Force had to take these precautions because the low-flying supersonic aircraft could not risk a bird-hit. "Two kites hovering at 100-m altitude off Oberoi, Charlie Oscar," the Warrant Officer continued.

THE HINDU

19 FEB 2001

Tremors elbow out truce session

FROM OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Feb. 18: A day after Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee announced that a decision to extend the ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir would be taken today, the government deferred a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) which was scheduled to review the peace initiative begun in November last year.

The official reason for the sudden postponement was the "undue long time" being taken by an all-party meeting on disaster management.

The CCS meeting was to be chaired by Vajpayee and attended by home minister L.K. Advani, defence minister George Fernandes, foreign minister Jaswant Singh, finance minister Yashwant Sinha and national security adviser Brajesh Mishra.

The decision came on a day when the political temperature in Jammu and Kashmir rose as JKLF chief Yasin Malik and All-Party Hurriyat Conference leaders Abdul Gani Bhat and Syed Ali Shah Geelani were detained and the army admitted to "controlled firing in air" at Hygam. (See Page 6)

Apart from discussing the ceasefire and the public unrest in the state over the killing of six persons by security forces last week, the CCS was to have taken up the issue of providing travel documents to Hurriyat leaders for their proposed visit to Pakistan to hold talks with militant groups.

The "preventive detention" of the leaders in Srinagar may have played a part in the government's surprise move. Government sources said both Malik and Bhat would remain under detention till the unrest in Srinagar ended.

Pakistani Kashmiris said over 60 politicians and intellectuals from the Pakistani side were invited to a March 17-18 meet in Jammu being organised by former Kashmir chief minister Ghulam Mohammad Shah, adds Reuters.

The official reason to postpone the CCS to a later, as yet unannounced, date appears too simplistic. The Prime Minister had hinted that the government was having second thoughts on extending the ceasefire a third time.

It is believed that both Fernandes and Advani conveyed their displeasure over the "ground situation", which is being interpreted as going against the spirit of the ceasefire. The rationale is that Pakistan-backed militants have

not eschewed violence and the killing of innocents continues.

The government is also taking seriously Hizb-ul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin's threat that terrorists would target families of security personnel in Kashmir.

Despite having reservations about the ceasefire, the home ministry had "gone along" in January with the larger view in government that the truce be extended. Those reservations hardened with reports of militants having consolidated themselves.

Besides, intelligence inputs since Vajpayee declared the Ramzan ceasefire indicate that terrorist outfits, which have rejected the peace initiative, will continue to target security forces and civilians alike. Home ministry officials said if "the situation is allowed to drift, it will be difficult for security forces to regain control".

Initially, the army was upbeat about the ceasefire. But, of late, the army brass have maintained a "studied silence". Army sources said the number of security personnel killed since the ceasefire came into force has gone up substantially. "The LoC has been quiet. But the ceasefire has given the militants time to regroup. They might strike in a big way in the summer," an officer said.

THE TELEGRAPH

19 FEB 2001

CABINET COMMITTEE TO MEET AGAIN IN A F

Decision on ceasefire

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, FEB. 18. The Vajpayee Government has deferred by a few days a decision on the extension — for the third time — of the ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir. The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) was to meet this evening in this regard.

However, the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, landed in the capital only at 4 in the afternoon, and he had invited the leaders of political parties for a consultation

at 6.30 p.m. This all-party consultation on the Gujarat earthquake was to end at 8 p.m., and the CCS was to meet soon after. But the Disaster Management Committee meeting spilled uncontrollably beyond the stipulated time, and it was decided to reschedule the CCS meeting in the next few days.

The current ceasefire was to have expired on February 26, but it was felt that a decision could be taken eight days ahead as Parliament begins its budget session to-

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morrow and that it would not be prudent to allow the exigencies of parliamentary give-and-take to influence the integrity of its decision-making process.

The CCS is chaired by the Prime Minister, and is attended, among others, by the Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, the Finance minister, Mr. Yashwant Sinha, the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister

THE HINDU

'OCEANS NO LONGER DIVIDE THE WORLD'

Security of seas vital for peace, says President

1872
By Arunkumar Bhatt HD 1

MUMBAI, FEB. 17. The security of the seas was necessary for the independence and prosperity and security of nations as well as for world peace, the President, Mr. K. R. Narayanan, declared here this morning as the eighth International Fleet Review got off to a spectacular start.

Reviewing the maritime show, involving 29 countries, he said, "it would appear that our call for building bridges of friendship has launched a thousand ships in this historic harbour of Mumbai."

The IFR, being held for the first time in the sub-continent, is to mark the Golden Jubilee of the Indian Republic and the Navy.

About 70 ships — magnificent destroyers and frigates, snazzy submarines and crafty corvettes, business-like missile boats — presided over by the Indian Navy's flagship, INS Viraat, formed seven review lines in the harbour, as the Supreme Commander of India's armed forces sailed by in the presidential yacht 'INS Sukanya'.

Officers and crew, their chests ablaze with medals and insignia, stood to attention on the gaily decorated ships and doffed their caps to the President. Several warships' companies stood upright as per their naval customs and their commanding officers saluted the inspecting dignitary.

Underscoring the theme of the show, Mr. Narayanan said the oceans no longer divided the world. "Admiral Mahan's concept of the indivisible sea is today a



The President, Mr. K.R. Narayanan, greeting a ship's cheering company during the International Fleet Review in Mumbai on Saturday. Also seen (from the left) are the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, the Maharashtra Governor, Dr. P.C. Alexander, the Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, the Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Sushil Kumar, and the Western Naval Command's chief, Vice-Admiral Madhavendra Singh.

political, economic and strategic reality," he told the gathering.

The IFR was a demonstration by the participating countries to build bridges of friendship and symbolic of their desire to maintain peace and tranquility on the seas. "The seas and oceans are a rich resource of wealth and also crucial in preserving the environmental and ecological balance of

the world," Mr. Narayanan said.

The President, who was accompanied by the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, and several of his Cabinet colleagues, was escorted aboard INS Sukanya by the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Sushil Kumar.

At one stage, a mobile column of ten missile boats of the 22nd and 23rd squadrons of the Navy,

nicknamed Karachi Killers, steamed past the presidential column of three offshore patrol vessels and a minesweeper. Several contingents of the Navy's anti-submarine and commando helicopters — Sea Kings and Kamovs, surface attack carrier-borne Sea Harriers, long-range surveillance TU-42 aircraft and the Dorniers of the Coast Guard staged a fly-past.

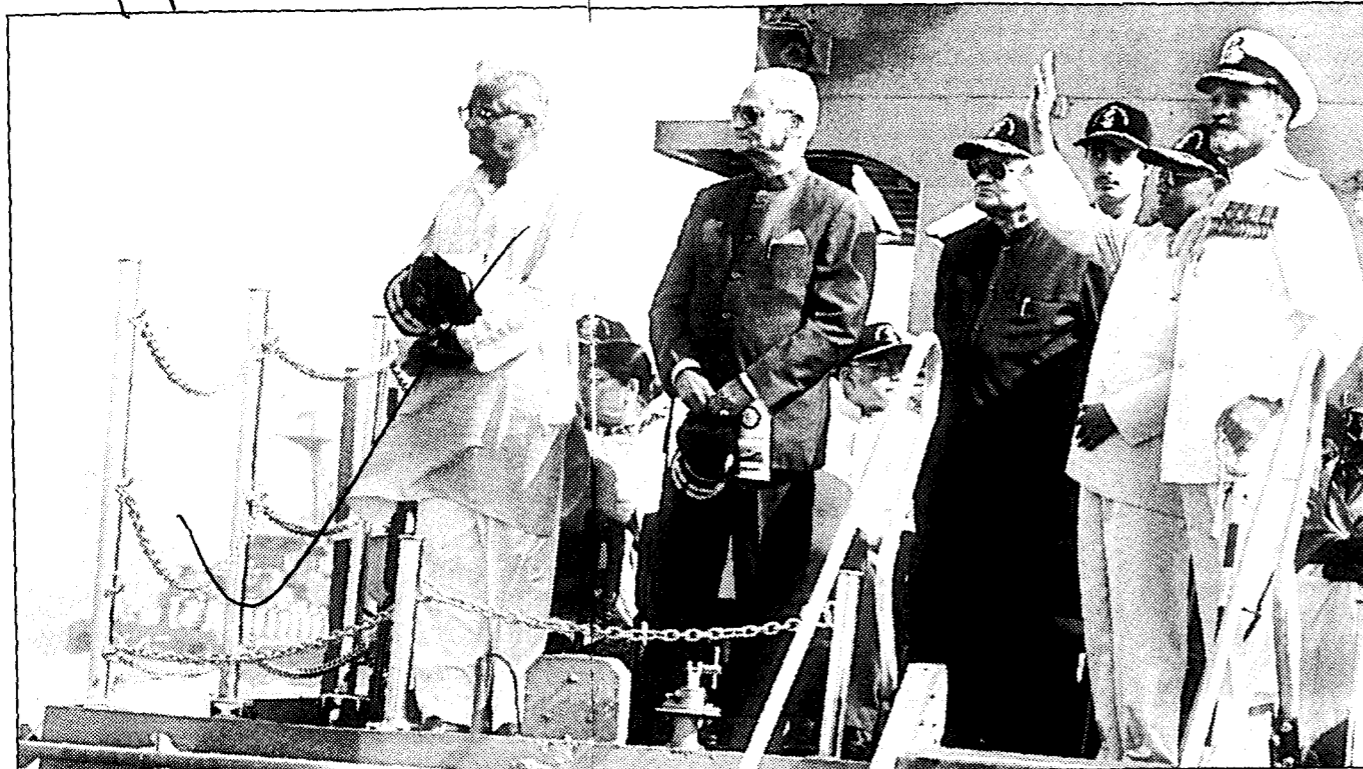
A diplomatic event: Page 9

THE HINDU

18 FEB 2001

Security of seas vital for world peace, says Narayanan

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Standing on board 'INS Sukanya', President K.R. Narayanan waves to naval personnel saluting from passing ships during the International Fleet Review in Mumbai harbour on Saturday. Others standing beside him include Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, governor P.C. Alexander, defence minister George Fernandes and chief of naval staff Admiral Sushil Kumar (right)

The Times of India News Service

MUMBAI: President K.R. Narayanan on Saturday declared that independence and the prosperity of nations and peace and tranquillity in the world depended on the security of the seas.

Addressing naval officials and other guests from the presidential yacht INS Sukanya at the end of the international fleet review here, he said the naval exercise was a magnificent demonstration by the navies of the world and it would build bridges of friendship among nations.

Remarking that the Indian navy had a creditable record of participating in UN

FLEET REVIEW PROGRAMME

- 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.: Parade by contingents of navies of different nations and an air show involving 70 aircraft of the IAF and the Indian navy
- Release of commemorative stamp by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee.
- The stretch of pavement between Hotel Marine Plaza and Chowpatty will be open to the public. The area between the hotel and Nariman Point will be reserved for invitees
- Marine Drive will be closed for traffic between 8 a.m. and 1.30 p.m.
- The cultural event slated to be held at Chowpatty has been cancelled in view of the quake in Gujarat

peace missions and combating piracy on the seas, the President stated that oceans no longer divided the world, but united it. Describing the ships that participated in the fleet review as "ambassadors that bring sentiments of goodwill and friendship", Mr Narayanan expressed his gratitude to the navies that had brought along relief material for the quake victims of Gujarat.

According to him, the ships which had taken part in the fleet exercise were not only a "bridge of friendship" among nations, but also a "humanitarian bridge" for all peoples affected by natural calamities.

A bridge too far

By Lalita Ramdas

MUMBAI: As I write, droning aircraft fill the otherwise quiet skies over the little corner of the Konkan where we live. They are rehearsing for the fly-past which will mark the grand finale of the International Fleet Review, a landmark event for the Indian Navy as it completes 50 years in the post-Independence era.

This event has been planned around the theme of 'Bridges of Friendship'—a worthy idea given the times in which we live, and appropriate too. After all, the seas have served as pathways to better communication across the centuries. Sailors the world over have traditionally believed in reaching out and understanding one other, united as they are by the sea which sustains and provides livelihood, but can also destroy in an instant.

Sadly, however, this massive exercise will remain a promise only half-kept. It is interesting that our media, which has waxed eloquent about the several ships and many navy chiefs who have come from far and near, has chosen to stay silent about the absence of a ship from the country closest to Mumbai along the same coast. I am talking about Pakistan—our brother, our neighbour, our 'enemy'.

Like our countries, our navies too were once the same. Officers and men of my father's generation—the late Admiral Ramdas Katari was the first Indian to head the navy of Independent India—trained and served together. So did those belonging to the generation of my husband, Admiral Ramdas.

After Partition, when some officers found themselves in a new country across a new border, it was into the hands of their brother officers of the erstwhile Royal Indian Navy that they temporarily entrusted their families. Admiral Husnain (retd) of the Pakistan navy, his voice choked with emotion, related his story to us in Karachi last May during a tea party. It was at the

home of the late Admiral Bhaskar Somu, a distinguished former chief of our navy. Manak Thai, who also died recently, that Husnain stayed until she could join her husband in Karachi during that terrible time in 1947.

And yet, tragically, we have been unable to live by this faith and trust. When the Prime Minister could take the courageous initiative of declaring a unilateral ceasefire, and there are today renewed hopes for dialogue, surely we could have seized the opportunity to build bridges without exception.

Instead, petty fears and narrow perceptions prevailed and Pakistan was not invited to participate in this much publicised and vaunted international event. This was certainly not for want of good intention. Within the navy, or so we were told, there were no misgivings and the Chief and his team were happy to extend an invitation to the Pakistan navy.

Three or four interventions by former

FIRST PERSON OUR BROTHER, OUR 'ENEMY'

Petty fears and narrow perceptions prevailed and Pakistan was not invited to participate in this much publicised and vaunted international event. This was certainly not for want of good intentions

naval personnel were also made with the top leadership of the country, suggesting that this was a golden opportunity for India to display its commitment to building bridges with Pakistan. But prejudice, suspicion and caution—be it bureaucratic or political in origin—won the day. So, once again, we managed to sow discord when we could

have created accord.

My husband and I are strong advocates of interaction between the ordinary people of India and Pakistan. We are leaving next week for Lahore as part of a delegation of retired Indian service personnel, under the banner of the Indo-Pakistan Soldiers' Initiative for Peace. But the decision to leave Pakistan out of the fleet review once again highlights our inability to intervene with the necessary strength.

For citizens who are looking for signs of peace and security, the International Fleet Review will always be remembered and regretted as a valuable opportunity lost.

Ceasefire hasn't delivered desired results: Vajpayee

HT Correspondents
Mumbai/Jammu/Srinagar, Feb. 17

ON THE eve of a cabinet review of the twice-extended ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir, Prime Minister Vajpayee today admitted the unilateral gesture had not delivered the desired results. Though, he said, it has made life a little easier for people in the troubled state.

"When we announced the ceasefire, the militants should also have responded. But despite our good intentions, there were some incidents. So, we will have to decide about its future", the PM said.

Surprisingly, Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah today publicly announced his support for a third extension to ceasefire. He had opposed the first extension.

The CM, however, attacked Hurriyat leaders for "abetting violence."

The CM's statement came amid

violent protests in Srinagar against the killing of six persons in firing by security forces on Thursday.

Over two dozen persons, including some policemen, were injured when demonstrators threw stones at the police in Srinagar and Baramulla.

Toady, yet again, mystery gunshots were fired on demonstrators at Zanza Kadal that left two persons critically injured. One was hit in the abdomen and another in the shoulder. Both are battling for life.

The police, present there in strength, swore they did not open fire. "Some unidentified persons were involved in the firing", said a police spokesman. "We are investigating", he said.

But that's only the official position. Privately, the police accused the counter-insurgent Ikhwan, associated with a local BSF camp, of firing upon the people. "That's not true," reacted a BSF spokesman, adding that not a sin-

gle Ikhwan man was working with the BSF in Srinagar.

The local residents had another version. They blamed the Special Operation Group (SOG) of the state police.

In the last two days, this is the second major incident when protestors were fired upon in full view of the police and security forces.

On Friday, a youngster was killed and two persons were injured in Srinagar's Maisumma locality under similar circumstances. "We're investigating the shooting," has been the stock reply of the government.

The indiscriminate firing on a mob at Haigam, which left six persons dead and 24 injured, is also mired into controversy. The Army had initially denied its involvement in the incident and blamed the police.

The police, on its part, held the Army responsible for killing the civilians.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

18 FEB 2001

More a diplomatic event

By Arunkumar Bhatt

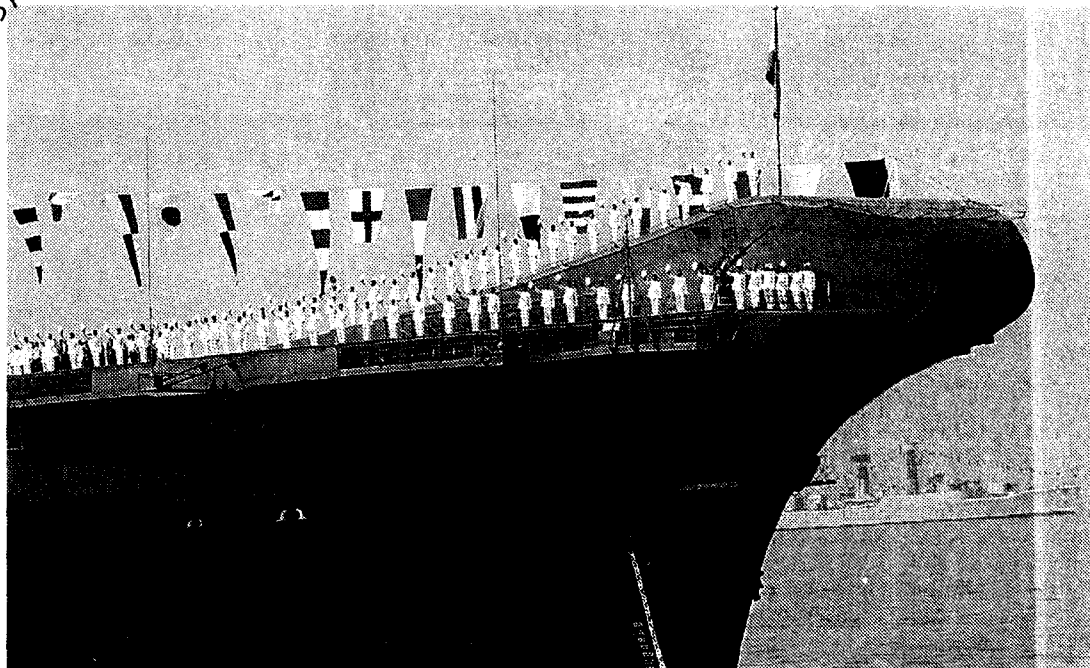
MUMBAI, FEB. 17. Today's International Fleet Review (IFR) was not as grand as what was inspected by Queen Elizabeth in 1977, organised to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of her coronation, and seafarers fear that future reviews would be less spectacular.

The gala show, so popular among sailors and sovereigns alike, is under the attack of fast growing technology. "Major reviews will disappear as smaller ships manned by fewer crew appear. A modern ship today carries the same punch which required 10 to 15 warships to fit in," says Captain David Cooke, commanding officer of HMS Cumberland that represents the Royal Navy at the IFR.

These ships not only have tremendous firepower and ability to respond instantly to any threat and even multiple threats, they require fewer sailors to man them. *RSS Endurance*, the top-notch warship of the Singapore Navy, is an interesting example.

This landing ship is so well automated that despite her size of 6000 tonnes, only two persons — in her bridge designed like an aircraft cockpit — can control the ship and if needed even one officer is enough, according to the commanding officer, Lt. Col. Sukhvinder Singh Chopra. There are 65 crew members.

The French navy's anti-submarine frigate, *Dupleix*, which can carry two helicopters, is a powerful military tool, capable of acting alone using her awesome weapons and sensor mix. She is one of the few warships to have optical anti-air self defence system and Sadral anti-missile systems. But what makes them surgical is the ship's ability to identify a friend or foe. While the ships have become smaller and more powerful, their



Indian naval officers on board the Indian aircraft carrier, Viraat, cheer during the first International Fleet Review, off Mumbai's coast on Saturday. — AP

utility as peacetime diplomats in sharp contrast to the Cold War's gunboat diplomacy, has gone up. Most of the 19 navies have sent the best warships and have had high-level interactions with the top brass of the Indian Navy and also its different specialists.

Capt. Cooke said that the IFR was a unique opportunity "for meeting people". Many of these navies were looking forward to hold bilateral or multilateral exercises in the Indian waters, immediately or little later.

The warships from Japan, Singapore and South Africa also brought tonnes of relief materials for the quake victims of Gujarat. The President, Mr. K.R. Narayanan, described the gesture as "a humanitarian bridge," taking a cue from the IFR theme: *Bridges of Friendship*.

The Japan Maritime *Self-Defense Force*, as it is formally known, has issued a special brochure on the occasion. "We sincerely hope that you will be our true friend forever by getting over the ocean together," says Capt. Kenji Matsubara, commander of its Fifth Escort Division.

The South African Navy describes the voyage of its *SAS Drakensberg* to Mumbai as *Operation Abridge*, again to respond to the IFR theme. The mission objective, according to her statement, is to promote new and existing maritime times, to strengthen bonds of friendship with navies of the countries visited and to gain experience of operating with other navies.

A French officer said that *Dupleix* was selected to participate in the IFR along with the nuclear

attack submarine *Pearl*, because the frigate is named after Joseph-Francis Dupleix, French Governor of Pondicherry in 1730-42. The crest of this ship has two elephants to show *Dupleix'* India connections.

The Singapore Navy has preferred not only its leading ship but also the commanding officer of Indian origin.

The *RSS Endurance* has an Indian officer onboard teaching navigation. The warship of Mauritius, *Vigilant*, is commanded by an Indian naval officer, Commander M. S. Pawar, who is on this teaching assignment.

Different navies have tried to highlight their India connections in their own ways just to be diplomat par excellence during the IFR which does not look like a military event.

THE HINDU

18 FEB 2001

Fleet review a grand show

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

MUMBAI, Feb. 17. — It was a ceremonial event unprecedented in scale and grandeur, hindered in part by a thick fog sitting on Mumbai harbour.

The President, Mr KR Narayanan, sailed past four rows of 70 Indian and foreign warships in the First International Fleet Review held by the Indian navy off Mumbai harbour today.

In what is dubbed as the biggest naval show in Asia, 45 Indian and 25 foreign ships from 19 countries were anchored up off the Gateway of India to greet the President, the supreme commander of the armed forces. In all, 29 navies of the world participated in the first fleet review after 1989 in the golden anniversary of the Indian Navy, with 10 sending in delegations.

The two-hour review was followed by a fly past of 58 aircraft including 23 helicopters. The pomp of the pageantry was matched by the majesty and variety of ships on display. Six Indian submarines, the aircraft carrier, *INS Viraat* and the three Delhi class destroyers — Delhi, Mysore and Mumbai — were the main highlights of the Indian contingent. *INS Mumbai* was commissioned on 22 January this year along with a corvette, *INS Kirch*.

During the last leg of the review, 10 missile boats and patrol vessels formed a mobile column that saluted the President in the reverse direction as his fleet of four missile boats and patrol vessels sailed past. In all, 84 ships took part in the review, dressed overall

PRESIDENT THANKS FOREIGN NAVIES



Mr KR Narayanan

MUMBAI, Feb. 17. — In his speech on board *INS Sukanya*, the Presidential yacht, Mr KR Narayanan thanked the navies of the US, Singapore, South Africa and Japan for bringing in relief material for survivors of the Gujarat earthquake. Contending that the oceans no longer divide the world but unite it, Mr Narayanan observed that India's trade and commerce and "its very existence as an independent nation depends on the control and safety of the seas around it."

He applauded the Indian Navy's record in UN peace missions and combating piracy, and highlighted the need to nurture the fragile marine eco-systems, and peace in the world. The IFR, he said, "is a magnificent demonstration by the navies of the world to build bridges of friendship among nations." — SNS

with ceremonial flags.

On his arrival at the Gateway of India at 9.30 am, Mr Narayanan inspected a guard of honour, followed by a 21 gun salute.

He was accompanied by the Prime Minister, the defence minister, the three Services chiefs and naval chiefs of visiting countries.

As he sailed past each ship, he was hailed by doffing of caps and three "jais" as a mark of respect by sailors lined up in white on the deck.

The Polish stood out because of their black uniforms. On *INS Godavari*, an assembly of civilians behind the officers' line-up, greeted the President by waving tiny flags of the tricolour.

The Indian fleet on display included six Indian submar-

ines, *Sindhukirti*, *Sindhurakshak*, *Shishumar*, *Shalki* and the Klub missile-firing *Sindhushastra* and six destroyers.

Among the foreign ships, France alone sent its nuclear submarine, *Perle*, along with a frigate, *Dupleix*. Other heavy duty ships that sailed in include *USS Cowpens*, a US cruiser, frigates from Bangladesh, Malaysia, UK, Thailand, Russia, and Morocco.

The naval fly past included an impressive array of low-flying helicopters — four anti-submarine *Kamovs*, nine *Cheetaks*, three anti-submarine version *Sea Kings* and three commando version *Sea Kings*.

This was followed by an air show of fixed-wing fighter aircraft in formation that included eight *Kirans*, 12 *Dorniers*,

long range maritime reconnaissance aircraft like three IL-38s and 12 TU-142 M, and Islanders (short range maritime reconnaissance aircraft).

Nine *Sea Harrier* aircraft brought up the rear by firing colourful flares in formation at the end of the 'roar' show. Thick fog marred a clear view of the alignment of the ships and the fly past for the hordes lined up along the promenade of the Gateway of India.

The day ended with the traditional Beating the Retreat ceremony in the afternoon and colourful fireworks display for which the President was the chief guest.

Tomorrow, Mr Atal behari Vajpayee will watch the international city parade and aerial acrobatics scheduled off Marine Drive, a seafront in south Mumbai which may be converted into an ad hoc viewing gallery by an estimated crowd of one million viewers.

Tight security

People have been barred from the waters off Mumbai since last night. Marine commandos scanned the seas in speedboats, guarding the President's yacht, *INS Sukanya*. Mr Vajpayee, Mr George Fernandes, and the three Services chiefs were on board.

Navy and Coast Guard boats kept vigil along the maritime boundaries.

Security for the Prime Minister's press conference in the evening, too, was very tight.

The press corps, which was asked to report an hour in advance, was frisked at every point, and electronic equipment was scanned.

THE STATESMAN

18 FEB 2001

HD-12
17/2

Getting the LCA airborne

By C. V. Gopalakrishnan

THE SUCCESSFUL maiden flight of the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) should end the gloom which might have been felt over the very slow pace of progress of the supersonic fighter aircraft. However, the plane which became airborne is still a technology demonstrator and nothing has yet been said about its being inducted into the Indian Air Force before a decade from now as had been indicated earlier. The production of all the assemblies, sub-assemblies and components required for an LCA squadron should take that long.

An optimistic assessment of the inordinate delay in designing and developing the LCA is that as a jet fighter of the future its progress could not be hastened. The big reduction in the estimated cost of the aircraft which is very much low at \$ 15 millions as against the \$ 195 millions of the U.S. F-22 while that of the other fighters like EFA, Rafale, Mirage, Tornado and Jas-29 range from \$ 25 millions to \$ 70 millions could support the claims about the gain from the advances in technology going into the LCA. The weight of the LCA also would be far less than other fighter aircraft — not more than 10,000 kg for the first prototype and it is expected to come down to 7,000 kg for the subsequent prototypes.

Therefore, if and when such a promising LCA comes into being, it should interest prospective buyers apart from its becoming the flagship of the Indian Air Force. It was not clear what the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, had in mind when he said that the cost would be higher if the LCA was going to be "produced for our own use. Taking along other countries, the price will come down". The anticipated involvement of the other countries could either be the seeking of their participation in production — for which there has already been an offer from Russia — or just the negotiation of sales of the plane to them. He had also said that the "thrust" would be South East Asia and South Africa. If Mr. Fernandes is just thinking of markets for the LCA, a successful outcome for such an effort would very much depend upon the

aerial defence outlook of the countries he is considering; the plus point here being the much lower weight of the LCA, the price of which will also have to be kept low.

Such expectations will materialise only if the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL), which will be making the LCA, lives up to them. The HAL has had enough experience for avoiding the kind of pitfalls which led to its earlier HF-24 project failing to get off the ground. Among the questions thrown up is whether India's technological competence is now higher than it was when it had taken up the HF-24 project for going ahead with the ambitious LCA design and development

ten years before the plane gets airborne should enable the design bureau of the HAL to achieve a perfection with its design and development if time alone were the major requirement. Achieving the best results would, however, hinge upon closing down the technology inputs and proceeding with the building of the plane within a timeframe during which further advances in technology would not take place to make the aircraft outmoded. A major requirement here is adequate funding for R&D for successful indigenisation of the LCA engine. A reason why the HF-24 project failed was due to the funding being a measly Rs.5 crore. If, according to reports, the LCA would cost Rs.

for a relentless honing of the performance of the aircraft.

The progress of the LCA programme requires the IAF as the user to be fully involved in it at all stages. This seems to have been ensured by the IAF with its Long Term Re-Equipment Plan, says Dr. Valluri who believes that the LCA design and development made it possible for India to shake itself free from dependence on foreign-made aircraft. Foreign support should be restricted to what can be readily acquired or where foreign engineers or technicians could be commissioned for assistance to make what is needed more quickly without the Indians having to start from scratch. The LCA programmers would seem to have shown an awareness of this by negotiating contracts abroad for the fly-by-wire control systems and skins for the carbon fibre composite (CFC) wings of the LCA. The National Aeronautical Laboratories seem to have made considerable progress with the integration of these systems. This should give an idea of the content of indigenisation. It consists not in foregoing what is already available but in stepping up the capabilities wherever it is possible in the production process. The progress made here would inspire further advances in technology both within the country and abroad.

Among the other major requirements is the ensuring of a compatibility between the LCA airframe and the engine. Though this sounds very elementary and much too obvious to be mentioned, the fact is that a failure to achieve such compatibility led to the failure of the HF-24 project. The "washing out" of 20 per cent increase in the thrust of the Orpheus 703 reheat engine of the HF-24 aircraft resulting from the improper design at the aft end is mentioned by Dr. Valluri as one of the reasons for the failure of the HF 24 aircraft.

However, it should not be forgotten that the huge expenditure which the LCA project requires can be defended only by its being an inescapable requirement for the country's defence.

A major requirement is adequate funding for R&D for successful indigenisation of the Light Combat Aircraft's engine.

programme. In a discussion of these and other matters, Dr. S. R. Valluri, former Director, National Aeronautical Laboratories (NAL) and the first Director-General of the LCA programme, draws attention to how at the very first step the HF-24 project stumbled because of the non-sanctioning of funding of Rs. 5 crores for the development of the reheat version of the Orpheus 703 engine of Bristol Siddeley of U.K. for achieving the design objectives of the HF-24 after the NATO countries expressed lack of interest in its development. The decision of the IAF to persist with the project by accepting a lower performing HF-24 should have been another wrong step. It is to be hoped that the decision to go for the GE F 404 engine for initially powering the LCA before its replacement by the indigenously-made Kaveri engine had been taken after an exacting assessment of the U.S.-made engine and there will be no repetition of the earlier mistake with the HF-24 project.

The delay in going ahead with LCA project since it was mooted almost 15 years ago and the long waiting period of about

3,000 crores, there is no getting away from such a heavy funding with an estimated 10 per cent of it going into R&D. The funding may even turn out to be very modest in view of the escalations in costs since the HF 24 programme was taken up. Dr. Valluri has also drawn attention to the neglect which R&D had suffered as a cause for the failure of the HF 24 project.

The importance which the R&D set up in aircraft production programmes merits arises from the proposed aircraft being equipped with the engine which would give the required high level performance. Ensuring this with a substantial indigenous effort implies that the Kaveri engine should not merely match the GE F 404 but also go much further ahead. Would the HAL R&D bureaus be able to claim — apart from achieving — that much between now and 2010? The imperatives which this call for would be the Kaveri engine punching far greater power into the LCA than the GE 404, flying higher with a payload more than what the existing aircraft have and achieving greater penetration and strike capabilities. The scientists and the engineers will have to be backed to the hilt by the R&D bureaus

NAVY COMES OF AGE

Signals Across The Tides

By KEITH FLORY

IT will be more than a ceremonial splash that the Indian Navy will be making in Mumbai over the weekend. The impressive foreign participation in the country's maiden International Fleet Review is reflective of the nation's increasing global stature, a recognition of the Indian Navy playing a dominant role in regional waters, and exemplifies how cooperation and understanding in the maritime domain can serve as a springboard for enhancing goodwill in an increasingly inter-dependent world. The new avatar of Gun-boat Diplomacy.

Like all military ceremonials, fleet reviews are steeped in tradition. In days of yore the monarch would inspect his marine forces by sailing past his warships, the naval equivalent of an army parade. Later an international flavour was added when fleet reviews were organised to mark major events in a nation's history. Indian warships have participated in some of

them: the coronation review in the UK, the American and Australian bicentennial celebrations. At home it was customary to hold a review once during the tenure of each President (the Supreme Commander of the Defence Services), but the last was conducted way back in 1989.

MUTUAL INTEREST

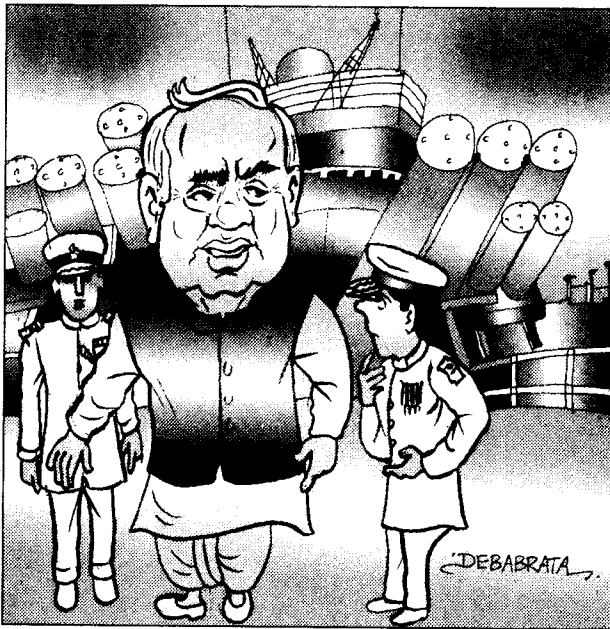
With 26 foreign warships, and some other countries sending delegations to join the related activities, the Mumbai show is said to be one of the largest ever (in terms of countries participating, not the number of ships at anchor). Another Indian "first" will be an international parade down Marine Drive, sailors from the ships/delegations will be on view and the Prime Minister will take the salute. An air/sea display will also be held and it is estimated that over a million people will witness it from what used to be known as the Queen's necklace and buildings alongside.

Over two years of preparation have been required. Selecting the date was critical since the weather had to be free of strong wind and sea conditions, a forenoon ebb tide, and what have you. And inviting, and making logistic arrangements, for some of the seniormost naval officers in the world: the first Sea Lord, the commander of the US Pacific fleet, a five-star admiral from Russia... The navy is confident that all will be shipshape for the exercise it has dubbed "Building Bridges of Friendship."

Yet there is depth to the frolic. The navy interprets the international response as a recognition of the role it is equipped to play in maintaining order and tranquillity in regional waters. The Indian sub-continent juts

out into some the most extensively used sea lanes through which much of the world's commerce is conducted. The tankers plying between the Gulf and the Far East are a significant component. If those waters were troubled, pouring oil on them would not suffice.

It was thus no surprise that once the cold war dissipated and India was not seen as a part of the erstwhile Soviet bloc the navies of western nations



were keen to build a relationship with the navy. A competent Indian marine force would reduce their apprehensions of what a troubled Indian Ocean would entail, more so since both the US and Royal Navy have scaled down their presence in this part of the world. Even the Australians, who had once viewed the Indian naval build-up as a threat, have now come on board. Joint-exercises have been held with all major navies. And despite the fears of diehard isolationists, it has been two-way traffic. Exposure to others' ways of functioning would facilitate inter-operability should that eventuality arise.

GLASS SLIPPERS

Fleet reviews and goodwill visits are an inoffensive way of projecting capability, flexing muscle if you will. An Indian flotilla visiting New York and other US ports was more than hoop-la, it demonstrated a capacity to operate and sustain warships a long distance from home. So also a trip to the Gulf states. They did make a statement. So will the festivity in Mumbai. Particularly the strides made in warship design and construction in the last 25 years. The guided-missile destroyers of the *Delhi* class are universally acknowledged as being highly potent surface combatants, they and a variety of others will be there for the foreign warships to savour, and understand the punch that can be delivered.

It is not ironic that the force which the Defence Minister recently observed had been given "Cinderella treatment" has outstripped its sister services in terms of indigenisation. The navy's total involvement in the domestic design and construction effort was perhaps necessitated by it consistently receiving the

wooden spoon in terms of budgetary allocations. Since it had no fairy godmother it did things for itself. Hence the glass slippers with which it will waltz in Mumbai have a special glitter, they were self-crafted.

Not that it has been operationally idle in recent years. The 1971 war proved its battle-worthiness. The strike by missile boats on Karachi harbour was shock treatment, the blockade of ports and the lanes to them in what was then East Pakistan played no small role

in cutting the adversary down to size. More recently, when war was being waged along the Kargil heights the navy adopted an aggressive, though stand-off, posture on the western seaboard which did contribute to the containment of the conflict.

In the international arena too it has performed with finesse. The Maldives will recall with comfort how two Indian warships were diverted to successfully intercept and apprehend the perpetrators of a failed coup attempt who sought to escape on the *Progress Light* taking one of their ministers and members of his family as hostages. Though not entirely foolproof, the *cordon sanitaire* in the Palk Straits has constricted the LTTE's supply lines.

USEFUL ROLE

There is another, non-hostile though critical, angle to the navy's operations. The Japanese were delighted a couple of years ago when one of its merchantmen that had been taken over by pirates was brought to book after being shadowed and intercepted by units of the Indian navy and coast guard. More recently, when an officer took seriously ill aboard the USS Hewitt the Americans sought the navy's help in evacuating the man to a Mumbai hospital. In times of domestic troubles the navy has sailed strong, it revived Paradeep port after the super-cyclone, and within six hours of the Republic Day earthquake its vessels had entered ports in Gujarat.

India projects itself as a stabilising entity in the region, and the navy translates that into reality in an international medium — the seas. That is what the International Fleet Review is all about, delve below the ceremonial festivity and the message is that the Indian Navy has now established its "turf". Yet having projected that image with some success, the navy has also acquired distinct responsibilities. The role of a regional player is not restricted to acquiring strength, it will have to use that to further national and global interests.

Having come thus far the navy cannot afford to back-off when the seas get rough. Will it get the political backing to fire a broadside should that become necessary?

The author is Associate Editor, the Statesman.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Fleet meet draws Narayanan, Vajpayee to Mumbai together

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

MUMBAI, Feb. 16. — For the first time in this city, the President and Prime Minister have come on a visit simultaneously. Both are scheduled to undertake the International Fleet Review tomorrow.

While Mr KR Narayanan, flew down this afternoon and is staying at the Raj Bhavan, Mr AB Vajpayee, is expected tonight and will stay at Sahyadri Guest House at Malabar Hill, used for VIPs.

The VVIPs' visits have put pressure on the local police administration which is leaving no stone unturned to ensure an event-free stay for them. Mr Narayanan will leave on 18 February morning, while Mr Vajpayee will depart for Delhi the same afternoon.

Mr Vajpayee is the special guest for the international city parade on 18 February while Mr Narayanan will review the naval pageantry of 25 foreign ships and 40 Indian ships lined up off Mumbai harbour tomorrow in a special entourage that will include four warships including the presidential yacht, INS Suvarna.

The President will also be the chief guest for the Beating the Retreat function to be held tomorrow. The fleet review will wind up with a fireworks display and illumination of all ships.

Mr Narayanan was received at the airport in the afternoon by Governor, Dr PC Alexander, the chief minister, Mr Vilasrao Deshmukh, and senior Army officers. All three defence chiefs - General S Padmanabhan, Admiral Sushil Kumar and Air Chief Marshal AY Tipnis will be present for the review. Police said unprecedented arrangements had been made for the IFR and the visits of dignitaries.

The 86 ships participating in the review are anchored off Gateway of India while the parade on 18 February will be viewed from Marine Drive by an expected crowd of one million.

A seminar on maritime matters was held today at Hotel Taj President. Mr George Fernandes, who was to inaugurate it, was held up in Delhi because of a Cabinet meeting. Mr Jaswant Singh, who was to conclude the seminar in the evening, too was absent.

China absent: China is the most striking absentee at the International Fleet Review being held in India for the first time after 1989. China had given a verbal assurance to India in September last year. But it changed its mind and decided to send a delegation instead. It backed out of this decision as well and is now expected to make only a port call next year to enhance mutual understanding

FRENCH HELP

MUMBAI, Feb. 16. — France has offered India its expertise and help in building a highly advanced Scorpin-class submarine which is under construction.

Rear Admiral Herve Jiraud, commander of the French forces in the Indian Ocean, said this submarine is superior to the Agosta-class submarine which have been sold by France to Pakistan.

Scorpin is the next generation submarine which is yet to be commissioned in France.

France was willing to share its know-how and experience with India on building the submarine in the Indian shipyard. — SNS

THE STATESMAN

17 FEB 2000

Fleet review

The Times of India News Service

MUMBAI: The playing of military bands at Marine Drive kicked off the much-awaited five-day international fleet review during the early hours of Thursday. A few hours later, the area echoed to the awesome roar of fighters of the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Indian Navy.

There was a rehearsal of the international city parade and the air show which are scheduled for Sunday.

As the sun rose over Marine Drive, bands of the Indian Army and Indian Navy marched along the seafront to Chowpatty playing famous songs like *Sare Jahan Se Achcha* and *Jai Bharati*. The parade began at Nariman Point at 6 a.m. and concluded an hour later.

Apart from the Indian Navy and the Indian Army, there were contingents from the Sea Cadet Corps, the National Defence Academy (NDA) from Khadakvasala and the National Cadets Corps.

The foreign countries represented at the parade included Australia, France, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mauritius, Morocco, Oman, Russia, Sri Lanka, the U.K., the U.S. and Bangladesh.

The colourful parade attracted the attention of the early morning walkers on Marine Drive, many of them deciding to sacrifice their physical exercise to enjoy the march past.

The balconies of several buildings were filled with people watching the early morning show. While the turnout of the group from the NDA was the best, many bystanders felt that the Russian team could have performed better.

Interestingly, the sounds of the drums and bugles did not bother the pavement dwellers outside the National Centre for Performing Arts who slept undisturbed! And further away naval officials were kept busy chasing away the stray dogs who were running through the marching contingents.

After the sounds of military band ended, it was taken over by the thunder of jets two-and-a-half-hours later which unveiled the might and capability of India's air power.

Sea Harriers, Jaguars, Mig-29s and Sukhois of the IAF streaked past the seafront to the loud applause of the huge gathering. The Sea Harriers and the Sukhois performed a series of aerobatics and the pilot of one of the Sukhois reduced the speed of the fighter from 850 kilometres to 250 kms in a few seconds and accelerated again.

Earlier, there was a demonstration by helicopters which has over the years become a common feature at most air displays. Equally thrilling was the aerobatic show by the IAF's Suryakiran team. There was a flypast by Dorniers, Il-38s and Tupolov-142s.

A model of the naval variant of the Light Combat Aircraft proved to be a crowd puller because the prototype of the Indian fighter has been flying for the last few weeks and hitting the headlines. There was also a float representing the naval dockyard at Mumbai.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

16 FEB 2001

4 killed in J&K firing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SRINAGAR, Feb. 15. — Security forces fired on people demonstrating against a custody death at Haigam in Baramulla today, killing four and wounding 26.

The demonstrators were protesting against death of Jaleel Ahmed Shah, a medical shop owner. Police claim Shah was a militant.

One person died on the spot. Three others, including a woman and her daughter, died of their injuries in hospital, officials said. Among the injured were Shah's sister and three other women. Seven people with serious head injuries were shifted to a hospital.

Members of Shah's family and people from Haigam and adjoining Bulgam, Tarzoo and Panzipora took to the streets with the shop-keeper's bullet riddled body as soon as it was handed over to them this morning. They demanded action against Army and the Special Operation Group who had arrested him a few days ago.

Judicial probe: The J&K government has ordered a judicial probe into the firing.

The Baramulla SP said: "An FIR has been lodged with Sopore police station against the Army for firing on peaceful demonstrators at Haigam." A magisterial inquiry too has been ordered.

Army reaction: The Army today said the police started firing at the demonstrators on Sopore-Kupwara road after "somebody" from the crowd fired at the police.



A woman weeps after her niece was killed in police firing at Haigam, Kashmir, on Thursday. — AP/PTI (Another photograph on page 8)

"Police opened fire when someone from the crowd fired at the police" an Army statement said.

PM seeks details: Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee today spoke to

J&K chief minister Mr Farooq Abdullah on phone and sought details of the firing incident, a report from Delhi said. He expressed sympathy for the bereaved families of those killed in the firing.

THE STATESMAN

16 FEB 2001

International fleet review off to a colourful start

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

MUMBAI, Feb. 15. - The Indian Navy mega-show, the International Fleet Review, began here today with Indian and foreign warships taking their due places and band performances signalling the beginning of a five-day grand event at four different places in the city.

The largest fleet review of its kind to be held in Asia, it is the eighth for the Indian Navy being held in the golden jubilee year of the Indian

Republic and of the Navy and has as its motto, 'Bridges of Friendship.'

In all, 61 Indian ships and 25 foreign ships are participating, the star attraction being the French nuclear attack submarine, *Perle*.

Thirteen naval chiefs from different countries have arrived so far for the event which includes, among other things,

a seminar on maritime matters, cultural programmes, and aerobatic display by about 55 aircraft.

On 17 February, the Pres-

ident, Mr KR Narayanan, will conduct a review of the participating ships, anchored off Mumbai harbour. Among the Indian attractions on review are, the Klub-missile firing *INS Sindhuashtra*, the destroyer, *INS Mumbai* and corvette, *INS Kirch* and *INS Virat*.

The international city parade, water sports and flypast will be held on 18 February down Marine Drive. The Prime Minister Mr AB Vajpayee will take the salute from ships and delegations.

France's active participation in the exercise is being interpreted as a great boost in the Indo-French defence cooperation.

The French team led by its naval staff is expected to share its knowhow in anti-submarine warfare with India. Some foreign ships have come in with relief material for the quake victims of Gujarat.

Among the notable absentees are China and Pakistan. There is anxiety among the naval organisers on account of low visibility which has not

cleared over the past three days. To facilitate better visibility, the state government has declared 15 and 16 February as public holidays for government and semi-government staff.

Governor, Dr PC Alexander has appealed to the people not to take out their cars, to minimise air pollution during these days.

However, this move has generated criticism from industries, which maintain that it would affect productivity.

Ships that have come to participate in the International Fleet Review at the Mumbai dockyard. The fleet review begins on Friday. Photo: Girish Srivastava

Showcasing finest maritime skills

Anand Adhikari
Mumbai, February 14

EVEN AS foreign ships are gearing up to showcase their maritime capabilities in the International Fleet Review (IFR) on Friday, the participating ships from the Japan and South Africa are reaching Indian dockyard with relief material for the victims of Gujarat earthquake.

"It is a gesture of goodwill. The 'JDS Amagiri' from Japan has arrived today, while 'SAS Drakens Berg' from South Africa is arriving on Thursday evening with relief materials for quake victims", said a Navy spokesperson.

The IFR will showcase as many as 24 foreign ships from 19 countries and 61 Indian ships. The Indian Navy had invited 62 countries and

was expecting at least 82-86 foreign ships to participate in the IFR.

The highlight of the IFR is going to be the French nuclear submarine "Pearle" which is arriving tomorrow evening. Pakistan, China,

International Fleet Review

South Korea, Belgium, Israel and New Zealand are not participating in the IFR.

Naval authorities are highly worried about visibility on D-day due to the permanent smog hanging over Mumbai. As a result, private vehicles as well as several polluting taxis have been

instructed to keep away from the key areas, leading to protests from citizens as well as the taxi men's unions. In addition, the government has asked the industries in and around Mumbai to shut their production units on February 18 and 19. The industry expects the production loss to Rs 800 crore for the shut down.

Pigeons at Marine Drive too can pose a danger to aircraft that will stage a flypast on Saturday. Their exhortation to people to desist from feeding pigeons on Marine Drive for a few days has also drawn public ire.

The President K R Narayanan, Prime Minister A B Vajpayee, External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and Defence Minister George Fernandes will kick off the review on Feb 17, 2001 off Gateway of India.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

15 FEB 2001

A maritime summit

By Arunkumar Bhatt

MUMBAI, FEB. 15. With the arrival of the naval chiefs of 13 countries here, the International Fleet Review hosted by the Indian Navy is becoming a major maritime summit, apart from being a ceremonial exercise.

The top naval brass of England, France, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Qatar, Malaysia, Kenya and Vietnam are here and more are expected to join the five-day fete, which began today.

The naval chiefs and captains of foreign ships participating in the IFR, called on the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Sushil Kumar, at INS Angre, headquarters of the Western Naval Command. They included the First Sea Lord and British Naval Chief, Admiral Sir Nigel Essenhigh, Vice-Admiral Jean Louis Battet, vice-chief of the French Navy, and Vice-Admiral David John Shackleton of the Australian Navy.

Twenty five foreign ships including the French nuclear-powered submarine, FNS Perle, are at their designated locations in the anchorage area along with 47 Indian warships — all spruced up for the President's inspection on Saturday. They also staged a full dress rehearsal of the International City Parade, scheduled for Sunday morning in the presence of the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee. The naval and air force aircraft rehearsed the air show that is to follow the parade.

'Too long a holiday'

† By Our Special Correspondent

MUMBAI, FEB. 15. The Govern-

ment's decision to close offices, schools and educational institutions in the city from Friday to Monday, during the International Fleet Review, has caused concern.

The idea is to keep as many vehicles as possible off the roads, especially in South Mumbai.

It is also to reduce the pre-noon smog, which reduces the visibility, crucial to acrobatic and formation flying of aircraft and enable people see the fleet review by the President, Mr. K. R. Narayanan.

The acute pollution and the particulate matter it leaves behind plus the atmospheric inversion, have prompted the decision.

But the implications are not acceptable as the city's economic health will be hit. The Indian Merchants' Chamber has said such slack over several days is not acceptable.

People have been asked to use public transport, in an attempt to keep private cars — close to a million of them — off the roads. Many areas in busy South Mumbai, Nariman Point included, are to be used for parking of cars, and to facilitate the easy movement of naval personnel to the port, where the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, will take a salute.

To compound matters, February 19 is the official holiday to mark Chatrapati Shivaji's birth, and after a day's "break for work", comes yet another holiday on account of Mahashivratri on February 21. That takes the city into a Friday-to-Wednesday break as it is tempting to take a day off on February 20 to stretch the "mini-vacation".

THE HINDU

15 FEB 2001

HD-13

Decision on ceasefire at appropriate time: Fernandes

PHAGWARA, FEB. 15. The Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, today said the Cabinet would decide at the appropriate time whether or not to extend the unilateral ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir. On the State Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah's demand for ending the ceasefire, the Defence Minister told UNI, "Dr. Abdullah was entitled to his own viewpoint".

On resuming talks with Pakistan, Mr. Fernandes categorically maintained that no meaningful dialogue was possible as long as Islamabad continued to support violence in Jammu and Kashmir as also elsewhere in India.

Regarding media reports that the Pakistan Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, had expressed willingness to visit India if he received "official invitation" from New Delhi, Mr. Fernandes said, "we have not received any official information on his desire to visit India". He praised those involved in relief and rehabilitation in Gujarat, particularly the Army, for doing a commendable job.

Liberate PoK: Farooq

By Our Special Correspondent

JAMMU, FEB. 15. The Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, today asked the Centre to liberate Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and the northern areas of Gilgit and Baltistan and on his part he would abrogate Article 370 and would not even insist on autonomy. In the same breath, he advocated a pro-active policy against militancy.

Winding up the discussion on the Governor's Address to the joint session of legislature, he said he was not against ceasefire, but calm borders alone would not work; peace should be everywhere.

Militant organisations such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad had not accepted the ceasefire and hence a pro-active policy was needed.

On autonomy, he said the National Conference

was not for weakening the country by making such a demand. But "we want to see India emerge as a strong democratic country". "The day you liberate PoK and other areas of the State, I will abrogate Article 370," he told the BJP members and asked them to tell this to their leaders in Delhi. Opposing trifurcation, he said it would lead to disintegration of country as was the case in the erstwhile USSR.

Dr. Abdullah said Jammu and Kashmir was fighting a "nation's war". India had taken efforts to negotiate with Pakistan and the latest initiative was part of that, but they were not responding. The State could neither fight nor win this "war" without the Centre's active support. The Centre must give Jammu and Kashmir a special treatment, he said.

Expressing resentment over the manner in which the Hurriyat Conference leaders were being "projected" by the Centre, he said "I do not understand this. They are constantly getting money and meeting Pakistan diplomats but still they are being treated as if they are good citizens of India".

J&K to seek CBI probe into girl's disappearance

By Our Special Correspondent

JAMMU, FEB. 15. The Jammu and Kashmir Government will seek a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe into the disappearance of a young girl, Meenakshi, from Udhampur which has led to violent protests in the town for the last six days.

Normal life in the town was hit for the sixth consecutive day today and two Ministers rushed from here to pacify the agitated people.

Announcing this in the assembly today, the Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, said he would request the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, to get the matter inquired by the CBI, though the investigations and efforts to trace the girl would go on.

THE HINDU

15 FEB 2001

Faith funds face punishment law

FROM CHANDAN NANDY

New Delhi, Feb. 12: The Vajpayee government proposes to replace the toothless Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act with a new legislation that will incorporate stringent penal provisions to prevent "anti-national and fundamentalist activities".

The home ministry and the banking division of the finance ministry are studying a Cabinet note on the proposed Act. Sources said the L.K. Advani-led Group of Ministers (GoM), which is going to recommend measures to beef up national security, is likely to approve the new legislation.

Under the FCRA, it is mandatory for all organisations receiving foreign funds to register with the home ministry and file returns on receipt and expendi-

ture of foreign exchange. But there are no stiff penal clauses if any organisation is found diverting money to build institutions that act as "fronts" for terrorist activities. The existing law has only a provision to cancel the organisation's registration.

The law scheduled to replace the 1976 Act will propose a maximum punishment of imprisonment ranging from five to seven years, as well as fines for such organisations.

"All organisations registered under the FCRA will come under the purview of the proposed legislation and there will be no discrimination. The objective is to stop anti-India and fundamentalist activities," a senior home ministry official said.

To broaden and decentralise the new law, the Centre proposes

to empower district magistrates to regulate the use of foreign exchange received by NGOs.

All organisations receiving foreign funds will have to register with the collectorates. They will have to submit details of the amount received and names of the donors.

They will also have to obtain "utilisation certificates" from the collectors. The district magistrates will send periodical statements to the home ministry.

District magistrates will also exercise control over the local banks where the foreign contributions are deposited.

For better monitoring, the Cabinet note has suggested that associations operating in the border belts and religious organisations be registered afresh with the home ministry.

"This has been proposed to keep better watch on religious organisations which receive thousands of dollars as foreign contribution, which are often channelised for activities other than those the funds were actually meant for," a senior official said.

Recent home ministry studies have revealed that mosques and madarsas have mushroomed in the border areas of Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal and Assam. Home ministry reports have pointed to the "growing use" of these mosques and madarsas by ISI agents and terrorist outfits.

The task force on border management had recommended close surveillance on such institutions as well as preachers and inmates of these places.

THE TELEGRAPH

13 FEB 2001

While it works on Agni III, India should consider developing cruise missiles and ICBMs

Load up!

HT-10
137

BY BRAHMA CHELLANEY

9-11
D S W. S. S. S.

PRIME MINISTER Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Government has wasted no time in ordering the Agni II's serial production after the missile was successfully tested in an operational configuration for the second time. Even the unchecked proliferation of ballistic missiles in India's neighbourhood, extending from Iran to China, and Beijing's continuing missile aid to Pakistan, New Delhi has no option but to give high priority to missile development, production and deployment.

Vajpayee's historic action in declaring India a nuclear weapons State will remain incomplete without the requisite missile capabilities in place. The credibility of India's nuclear deterrent critically depends on delivery vehicles with the needed range and payload capacity. Until the 'missile gap' is eliminated, delivery capability will stay as the missing link in the deterrent cycle.

India can confidently build warheads with yields ranging from the very low to about 200 kilotons, as stated by R. Chidambaram, the 'father' of the nuclear weapons programme. The 1998 tests perfected three types of warheads: the 15-kiloton fission weapon with a size and weight suitable for missile delivery; extremely low-yield devices appropriate for military and design-validation missions; and an advanced, two-stage thermonuclear warhead at the heart of India's deterrent.

The thermonuclear (hydrogen) weapon was tested at a controlled yield of 45 kilotons — a more difficult thing to do than at high yield — so as not to vent radioactivity or damage the nearby Khetolai village. Post-shot radiochemical analysis of rock samples, the most accurate way to measure test results, has confirmed that the weapon worked perfectly. India's spectacular success in matching design yield with achieved yield has given rise to some 'thermonuclear envy' in the West, with the doubting Toms unconsciously prodding India to retest its hydrogen capability.

A key question is how many tests are necessary before a warhead or delivery vehicle can enter production. Studies have shown that the number of tests per system over the past half-century has fallen inversely to the rise in computing power. The last major US nuclear warhead was designed on a 450-megahertz 'supercomputer', far slower than a home PC available in an Indian store. With today's spectacular supercomputing power and physics and engineering knowledge, repeated tests of

the same system are unnecessary unless the basic design is flawed.

So it is not a surprise that scientific adviser V.K. Atri has announced the serial manufacture of the Agni II after just two tests. The latest test provided a flawless demonstration of the rail-mobile, solid-fuelled missile that can be guided right up to its impact point.

It reflects India's growing confidence since going overtly nuclear that it tested the Agni II — a missile of relevance largely to China — while it was hosting the visit of a member of Beijing's ruling triumvirate. Although Beijing has put up a brave face in public, its diplomats are still incensed over India's action in setting Agni (fire) on Li Peng's tail 130 minutes before he departed for home from Hyderabad.

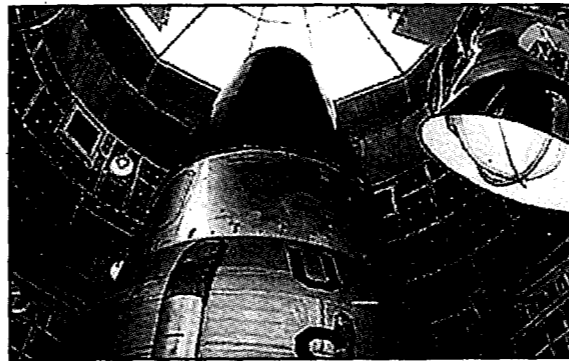
Li must regret his latest visit to India for he had to endure a double retaliatory snub. In 1979, when Vajpayee was in Beijing as foreign minister, China invaded Vietnam, forcing him to cut short his visit. Then in 1992, the Chinese carried out their most powerful ever nuclear test during President R. Venkataraman's State visit. Vajpayee took his sweet revenge by visiting Vietnam as Li arrived in India and testing the Agni II while the visitor was still on Indian soil.

In the missile field, India faces several challenges:

- China's burgeoning missile arsenal. China's fast-expanding capability to deliver weapons of mass destruction is driving its military modernisation. In the largest expansion of missile capabilities by any country, Beijing has added to its arsenal hundreds of new medium-range missiles of value only against its immediate neighbours. Many of the new missiles are targeted against Taiwan, but some also have been deployed in Tibet against India.
- China's continuing missile assistance to Pakistan. Bill Clinton, in a seemingly fitting finale to his

tainted administration, has outraged many with his parting presidential gifts, including the pardon of fugitive broker Marc Rich. One Clinton pardon — forgiving Beijing for all its past missile exports — is sure to cause headache to India. With its disdain for norms, China insists on being the international Marc Rich.

But unlike Rich, China is still involved in illicit trade. A reminder of that came last week when CIA chief George Tenet told a Senate panel that "Chinese help has enabled Pakistan to move rapidly towards serial production of solid-propellant missiles". He went on to say that "we cannot be sure" that China has ended its nuclear aid to



And now for the next step

Pakistan or that it will desist from helping Islamabad develop the Shaheen II.

■ The advent of missile defences. Missile defences should be seen not as the cause but the consequence of the international crisis in arms control. Under President Bush, the US will seek to rapidly develop and deploy anti-nuclear missile defences. That will certainly prompt Russia and China to build newer systems armed with decoys and other measures to outwit missile defences. India not only needs to deter regional missile threats, it also has to catch up with the technologies on countermeasures. Indian security will come under pressure not from US missile defences but from China's response to them.

■ The growing role of cruise missiles. While ballistic missiles utilise outer space and are essentially instruments of deterrence, cruise missiles are dependent on the atmosphere and air-breathing engines and serve largely as instruments of warfare. Ballistic missiles, principally of the intermediate and intercontinental range, are suitable mostly as nuclear delivery vehicles.

In contrast, cruise missiles, although initially developed for nuclear missions, have become

favoured tools of conventional strike because they are highly accurate and difficult to defend against. With improvements in their guidance, propulsion and warheads, cruise missiles have gained conventional utility even against hardened and mobile targets. Their stealthiness, flexibility of employment, and range-to-payload advantage over ballistic missiles demand that India invest in a major way in their development.

■ The need to build longer range ballistic missiles. Despite the Agni II success, India's missile reach still falls short of Beijing. The forthcoming test of the Agni III, therefore, is important.

In the final analysis, a country's international standing is founded on the reach of the weapons in its armoury. Intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) forces were the means by which the Soviet Union rode to superpower status and achieved strategic parity with Washington. China similarly is focusing on a new generation of ICBMs, such as DF 31 and DF 41, as part of its drive for recognition as a great power.

India's weaponry traditionally has been subcontinental in its reach. As a result, India has found it difficult to break free from the subcontinental strategic straitjacket. It is only with the Agni-class missiles and overt nuclearisation that India has gained greater strategic space, enabling it to fashion a larger Asian policy and improve its international standing. Imagine what India's international status will be if it developed an ICBM.

India's strategic vision has to match the fact that it is home to one-sixth of the human race. During Parliament's last session, Defence Minister George Fernandes said: "India has the capability to design and develop ICBMs... However, in consonance with threat perception, no ICBM development project has been undertaken." Why should India's security planning be driven by threat reaction rather than threat avoidance? In any case, India's northern neighbour is an ICBM power.

ICBMs are symbols of power and coercion in international relations. They provide their holder with enormous political and military leverage. But they are not for the lily-livered, as A.P.J. Abdu Kalam has cautioned.

While India has certainly boosted its image by going nuclear, it will truly emerge as an international power only when it tests its first ICBM. With political support, that capability can be within its grasp.

HD-1
12/2 ✓ JSK

Don't quit Valley, Hurriyat tells Sikhs

By Our Special Correspondent

JAMMU, FEB. 11. The Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, and his ministerial colleagues today shared the stage with prominent Hurriyat leaders at the Mehjoor Nagar gurdwara in Srinagar, where the bhog ceremony of the six Sikhs killed on February 3, was held. Both sides pleaded with the Sikhs not to migrate from the Kashmir Valley as such a step would only increase their problems.

Addressing a 10,000-strong gathering of Sikhs, Mr. Fernandes said migration was no answer. He assured the Sikhs of full support from the Centre and said "whatever decision is taken will be with unanimity". He reminded the Sikhs of the plight of Kashmiri Pandits, who migrated in 1990.

The Vajpayee Government was

for a solution of all problems through negotiations. That was why Mr. Vajpayee took a bus to Lahore and then announced a ceasefire in the holy month of Ramzan, but "our neighbour does not understand this gesture".

Mr. Fernandes denied an allegation by the Hurriyat leader and JKLF chairman, Mr. Yaseen Malik, that he, the Union Home Minister, Mr. L. K. Advani, and the Chief Minister, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, were against the ceasefire. The decision was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Security and there were no different opinions.

Mr. Malik declared that the Hurriyat Conference would not allow the migration at any cost. "They will migrate over our dead bodies" he announced amidst sloganeering against him by Sikh youth. Mr. Malik said he would go

on a hunger strike if the Sikhs decided to migrate. A section in the Government of India wanted to derail the peace process, he alleged.

The Democratic Freedom Party leader, Mr. Shabir Shah, also sought to impress upon the Sikhs that migration was not the solution. "We are part of the same culture, belong to this soil, there is no reason for you to leave the Valley, he said.

Another leader, Mr. Abdul Gani Lone, recalled how the Kashmiri Muslims had sacrificed their lives in 1984 while defending the Sikhs and there was no question of allowing them to leave. The Union Chemicals Minister, Mr. S. S. Dhindsa, the Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Prof. Chaman Lal Gupta, and other Sikh leaders spoke.

THE HINDU

12 FEB 2001

Lashkar threat to Vajpayee, Advani

UNI & PTI

NEW DELHI, Feb. 11. — The Lashkar-e-Taiyaba has threatened to target Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and Mr LK Advani as long as the Indian Army remains in Kashmir.

In what is being touted as his first media interview, Lashkar leader, Mohd Hafiz Sayeed, told *Aaj Tak* that the *jihad* against India will continue and more attacks like the one on Red Fort will follow.

Meanwhile, militants lobbed grenades and fired at the house of Jammu and Kashmir law minister at Janglat Mandi in Anantnag yesterday. But Mr PL Handoo and his family were away in Jammu.

CRPF guards returned the fire and repulsed the attack. Two auto drivers were injured in the crossfire.

Mod Sayeed said he is opposed to direct talks between India and Pakistan about Kashmir

■ See THREAT: page 8

THE STATESMAN

12 FEB 2001

LCA makes maiden public flight

By Our Staff Reporter

BANGALORE, FEB. 9. Ending two days of speculation, the indigenously-built supersonic Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) finally made its maiden public flight here at the 'Aero-India 2001' international airshow on Friday afternoon. The LCA Project Director, Dr. Kota Harinarayana, certified the success of the flight, fourth in the test flight series.

The flypast came two days after the scheduled flight at the inauguration of the airshow was cancelled due to a technical snag. Piloted by Wg. Cdr. Rajiv Kothiyal, the LCA Technology Demonstrator-1 took off from the HAL airport, escorted by a Mirage 2000 aircraft as 'chase'. Cheered by a huge gathering of visitors, foreign delegates and defence officials, the aircraft made a low descent before heading back to the airport.

A jubilant Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal A.Y. Tipnis, said "it is great that the LCA has been shown in public. The public has got the assurance that the LCA is in fact flying and it did well."

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) Secretary, Dr. V.K. Atre, said the LCA flight had capped a memorable three days at the airshow, silencing the sceptics. "The last three days have been some of the happiest. We have achieved maturity in the aviation sector. The Nishant, which was under attack (from sceptics) flew on all three days."

Dr. Harinarayana said the flight lasted about 25 minutes and reached an altitude of less than 3,000 metres. "We want to go up to 10,000 ft." The aircraft was likely



LCA's first public flight at the Aero India 2001 in Bangalore on Friday. — Photo: Bhagya Prakash

to cross the sound barrier after about 30 flights, he said.

Dr. Harinarayana said the public flight was special because it was only the fourth overall and that too at an international airshow.

Tipnis flies Sukhoi

Later, after a 22-minute flight aboard the Russian Sukhoi-30 MKI aircraft, Air Chief Marshal Tipnis said the aircraft had "enormous amount of power" and "tremendous manoeuvrability". "Even at zero speed, there is full control. With the civil nozzle control, you find that the aircraft can just turn on a spot," he told reporters.

He said the SU-30 MKI's manoeuvrability was extraordinary and "far superior than flying any other aircraft. The aircraft is pretty comfortable even at the stalling speed. It is fantastic that the air-

craft can do anything you want it to do."

India and Russia have already signed a contract for delivery of the aircraft, which includes the development of a new "international" aircraft by the Sukhoi Design Bureau with active participation from Indian aviation companies and the IAF. The contract also involves a licensed production agreement with Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL) as the manufacturing base.

Clearance for Agni-II

PTI reports:

In a related development, the Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM), Agni-II, which was successfully test-fired last month, has been cleared for production, Mr. Atre said. However, he declined to specify the production schedule for Agni-II. He also declined to comment on "Agni-III".

THE HINDU

10 FEB 2001

PM pledges Sikh safety; suicide attack on J&K cops

SNS& AGENCIES

SRINAGAR/NEW DELHI, Feb. 9. — A four-member suicide squad stormed the J&K police control room in Srinagar today, killing two policemen and wounding six, even as the Prime Minister promised additional security for and jobs to Sikhs to stop them from leaving the state.

In the first major attack after the ceasefire extension, the Lashkar-e-Taiyaba and Al-Umar Mujahideen *fidayeen* (suicide) squad forced its way into the control room at Batamaloo around 7.10 p.m after throwing grenades at its main gates and firing indiscriminately, officials said. This was the first Al-Umar attack in J&K.

All the four militants were later killed in the three-hour gun-battle with securitymen. Officials in Srinagar said constables Zahoor and Tariq were killed in the attack but didn't confirm the militants' death.

But the J&K chief minister said in New Delhi that the ultras were killed when Army and BSF jawans surrounded the control room complex and fired to flush them out. The ultras were identified as Salauddin, leader of the squad, Abu Hafiz, Abdullah Omar and

Abu Maviya.

PM's promise: Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee promised the special package to instill confidence among the Sikhs living in J&K after an-hour-and-a-half meeting with Dr Farooq Abdullah and the chemicals and fertilisers minister, Mr SS Dhindsa.

Dr Abdullah said security would be beefed up immediately. "In all hamlets a sense of security will be provided by adding more paramilitary forces."

The meeting was held to review the situation and take specific measures to instill confidence among minorities in the valley. Employment generation schemes will be worked out later, Dr Abdullah said.

The meeting was presided over by Mr Vajpayee, and attended by the home, defence and foreign ministers LK Advani, Mr George Fernandes and Mr Jaswant Singh.

The minister of state for civil aviation, Mr Chaman Lal Gupta and the national security adviser, Mr Brajesh Mishra, too were present.

Mr Fernandes, Mr Dhindsa and Mr CL Gupta will leave for Srinagar tomorrow.

The Centre is likely to divert the surplus security forces from the Kumbh Mela to the Kashmir valley.

The ceasefire apparently didn't figure at the meeting.

"The ceasefire was not the topic of discussion at all," said Dr Abdullah and Mr Dhindsa said that he was not against the ceasefire. Dr Abdullah said the responsibility to implement the decisions taken at today's meeting would be Mr Dhindsa's.

Hurriyat charge: The senior All Party Hurriyat Conference leader, Mr Abdul Ghani Lone, today criticised the Abdullah government for the killings of six Sikhs in Srinagar. But he refused to back the Akali Dal's demand for the Abdullah ministry's dismissal saying it was in any case an "illegitimate" government.

In a joint statement, Mr Lone and Mr Singh said such killings would only retard ongoing efforts being made to bring peace in the state and added that efforts would be redoubled to stop migration of Sikhs from Kashmir valley.

Addressing a Friday congregation in Delhi's Jama Masjid this afternoon, former Hurriyat chairman, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, today criticised the Centre for not issuing travel documents to the five Hurriyat leaders to visit Pakistan. He said the ceasefire was effective only on paper.

THE STATESMAN

10 FEB 2001

'Our LCA will be cheaper, better'

By Our Science Correspondent

D. S. Narayana

BANGALORE, FEB. 8. Dr. Kota Harinarayana, programme director for the Light Combat Aircraft, said today that the unit price of the LCA would be half of that of European fighter jets, while its performance would be comparable or better.

Speaking at the Aero International Seminar here, he said the LCA would cost about \$17 million apiece and the aim was to reduce it to \$15 million.

The F-22 aircraft of the U.S. would cost \$105 million to \$125 million. European fighters such as the EFA, Rafale, Mirage 2000 and the Jas-39 would cost between \$25 million and \$70 million each. A developing country like India could not afford such prices, Dr. Harinarayana said.

While the Tornado had 32,000 parts and the EFA 15,000 parts, the LCA's first prototype had 10,000 parts, and in the third prototype, it would come down to 7,000.

The extensive use of composites in the LCA not only reduced the aircraft's weight and radar signature but also reduced the parts needed. The indigenously developed co-bonding and co-curing technology for making composite structures had played an important role in this, he said.

Open system interface standards had been followed in the LCA's avionics and weapons systems. Industrial or commercial grade components could be used and upgraded from time to time. So the LCA's electronics was designed against obsolescence.

The LCA was the only single-engine fighter to have a naval variant. Some 80 to 90 per cent of the variant was the same as the Air Force version. The aim was to improve agility and performance. Integrated

flight and propulsion capabilities were key technologies. Instead of using swivelling nozzles for thrust vectoring, which added weight and reduced reliability, "innovative aerodynamics" was being looked at.

Flight today?

By Our Science Correspondent

BANGALORE, FEB. 8. The indigenously manufactured Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) is likely to make its first public flight tomorrow at the Aero-India 2001 air show being held at the Yelahanka Air Base here.

The LCA was supposed to do a fly-past on Wednesday when the air show was inaugurated. But the programme was cancelled after the aircraft developed a technical snag.

Speaking to presspersons, Dr. V.K. Aatre, Director-General of the Defence Research and Development Organisation, said that the problem had been rectified. In all probability, the aircraft would make its first public flight on Friday, he added.

Dr. Kota Harinarayana, LCA Programme Director, however, had a word of caution. If there was any chance of a problem cropping up, there would be no hesitation in cancelling the flight, he said.

One possibility being examined was using a vortex plate system. If fluidic thrust vectoring could be implemented instead of the mechanical version, it would bring down the cost substantially.

THE HINDU

9 FEB 2001

'LCA production needs tie-ups'

By Our Staff Reporter HD-1

BANGALORE, FEB. 7. Expressing happiness over Russia's reported desire to participate in the serial production of the Light Combat Aircraft, the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, today said cost-effective and economically viable production of the LCA demanded link-ups with other countries.

"My own thrust area is South-East Asia, South Africa, countries that can be called developing nations," he said.

Addressing reporters after inaugurating "Aero-India 2001" here, Mr. Fernandes said, "when we produce it (the LCA) for our own use, the cost will be more. Taking along other countries will bring the price down."

Mr. Fernandes said an agreement on the purchase of the British "Hawk" Advanced Jet Trainer would be signed at the earliest. On whether the deal would be struck in the current financial year, he said "it should be".

Asked whether cheaper alternatives were being considered, he said, "we have looked at only one trainer and this is the Hawk."

There is (now) a gap between the price suggested by the Ministry's price negotiating committee



An aerobatics display by Surya Kiran aircraft at the Aero India 2001 in Bangalore on Wednesday. — Photo: K. Bhagya Prakash

and the price offered by the British."

The test-flight of the indigenously developed Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile, Agni-II, was not designed to coincide with the visit of the Chinese leader, Mr. Li Peng.

"It was decided much earlier. There was no special factor in deciding the date." The missile was ready for induction now, he said,

without specifying the schedule.

Mr. Fernandes did not foresee any cut in the Defence Budget in the wake of the Gujarat earthquake saying "I am certain the Finance Minister, while finalising his budget, will give us everything we have asked for. No matter what the economic problems, the defence of the nation will not be held hostage."

The response from internation-

al aerospace companies for the show had "surpassed all expectations" he said.

Welcoming international collaborators to participate in the country's defence production arena, Mr. Fernandes said the Government had recently entered into a cooperative partnership with the private sector for the purpose.

Snag grounds LCA

The inaugural function did not see the LCA make its pre-scheduled flypast owing to a "small technical snag". But the stupendous manoeuvrability of the Russian Sukhoi-30 MK, the spectacular Suryakiran aerobatic display and the superior aerodynamics of the Tornados more than made up for the LCA's absence and the Hawk's delayed entry. Defence officials identified the snag as an error during the aircraft's pre-flight check and said it was being sorted out. Pointing out that the scheduled flight was not considered "appropriate" for the inaugural, Mr. Fernandes said: "The LCA will be flown at the appropriate time." The DRDO sources, however, said the flight would take place before the airshow ended.

CM expresses regret: Page 13

THE HINDU

- 8 FEB 2001

Congress briefed on ceasefire gains

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, FEB. 6. In its first serious attempt to garner support for its peace initiative in Jammu and Kashmir, the Vajpayee Government today shared ideas and information with the principal Opposition party, Congress.

Chaired by the Prime Minister, the two-hour meeting was attended by the top brass of the Government which included the Home, Defence and External Affairs Ministers, the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, and the Director of Intelligence. Dr. Manmohan Singh, Mr. Arjun Singh, Mr. Natwar Singh and Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad constituted the Congress delegation.

The Government made a 30-minute video presentation, and figures were provided to show the difference in the situation 68 days after the ceasefire and before the ceasefire. The tangible shown by the Government was that the Line of Control was quiet, and in its assessment the ceasefire had been welcomed by people in the Valley.

The Congress team expressed satisfaction with the talks, but pointed out that the meeting had taken place at the initiative of the Congress and not the Government. "These talks were held at our initiative," Mr. Azad said. The party also said the Government should have utilised the first two ceasefires

better. The delegation pointed out that after the massacre in Chattisinghpura, the Congress president had asked the Government to take special security measures to protect the Sikhs, "but unfortunately that was not done". The leaders said they would continue to support any initiative that helped bring back peace to the Valley.

Support for surcharge

In a separate development, the Congress extended conditional support to the Government's decision to levy a two per cent surcharge. However, it made it clear that the support would continue so far as the funds were being utilised for the relief and rehabilitation work in Gujarat.

Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad warned the Government that his party would oppose tooth and nail any attempt to divert the money to bridge the Budget deficit. The party wants the surcharge withdrawn once the purpose was achieved.

He also made it clear that the Congress was, in principle, opposed to the idea of increasing taxes through an ordinance; however, since the measure was related to Gujarat, the party had decided to support it. Mr. Azad said his party would have preferred if the government had waited till the Budget session and introduced it as a part of the Bill. "The procedure that they have adopted is wrong."

THE HINDU

- 7 FEB 2001

Army for review of disaster management

SRINJOY CHOWDHURY
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

57-8 912 ✓
NEW DELHI, Feb. 6. - Nearly two years ago, at the Army's disaster management seminar here, it wanted to "incorporate the armed forces at each level when contingency plans are formulated". This it felt will "facilitate more efficient response by the defence services".

The Army had another problem during disasters. "As soon as the Army comes in, all other agencies like the civil administration, police, home guards stand on one side and watch..."

This time, the armed forces were officially told about the earthquake a full three hours after the catastrophe. The first information about Bhuj may have come from the armed forces - the Indian Air Force had suffered a large number of casualties. There was little knowledge till much later about the situation in Anjar and Bachau.

But even now, the armed forces is not represented in the high-level groups though the Crisis Management Group comprises the Cabinet secretary and 20 other secretaries, including the defence secretary. The Natural Disaster

Management Division is a part of the agriculture ministry. However, senior officials of all three services were invited on certain days for the CMG meetings on the quake.

The armed forces and the paramilitary forces have been applauded for their work as have the volunteers and NGOs and perhaps, some sections of the central officials. This time too, the state government reacted slower than necessary.

The Army's report two years ago made that quite clear. It said that central agencies are forced to assist states which leads to difficulties in coordination during the planning and response stages. It said that despite existing structures, government response has often been "tardy and uncoordinated". Too much time is lost as "local authorities take time to get their acts together. Ad hocism and a plethora of nodal agencies further contribute to dithering an unacceptable delays".

The Army had thus called for a review of "existing disaster management mechanisms at the national and state levels, with a view to evolving efficient and speedy responses to disasters".

THE STATESMAN

- 7 FEB 2001

BOFORS: NOW THE TRIAL

THE ORDER BY the CBI Special Court restraining the Hinduja brothers from leaving the country, after the investigating agency interrogated them on their role in the multicore Bofors payoffs case, is clearly warranted for now. There might be some validity in the plea by the brothers that they cannot be kept away from their business headquarters — in the U.K. — indefinitely (on grounds that it could cause them heavy losses). But then they had in the past pulled out all the stops to frustrate the investigation. This experience lends credence to the CBI's apprehension that the brothers could derail the trial process in the future if they were allowed to return to London at this stage. The CBI as well as the Special Court judge, Mr. Ajit Barihoke, could not have glossed over the fact that Mr. S. P. Hinduja and Mr. P. P. Hinduja are now citizens of the U.K., while Mr. G. P. Hinduja is a Swiss national; the fact that Swiss nationals can be extradited (in the event of a need arising) only with their own consent, as pointed out by the CBI, is also of immense significance in this context.

The Hindujas relinquished Indian nationality within a week of the CBI obtaining possession of papers from the Swiss courts (in June 1999) giving details of their coded accounts — Tulip, Lotus and Mont Blanc — into which deposits were made by the Swedish gun manufacturer. Their role in stalling the transmission of the documents pertaining to the coded accounts to the CBI through a protracted legal battle in the Swiss courts (since 1993) until they lost the case in June 1999 must also have been one of the factors that the Special Court considered in the course of its hearing the plea by the Hindujas that they be allowed to leave the

country now that the agency had completed the interrogation. After all, the Special Court judge could not have remained oblivious of the provisions in the Swiss law (on extradition) and the possibility of Mr. P. P. Hinduja deciding to make use of that in the event of the trial going against him. Similarly, one could not have glossed over such information that members of Mr. Tony Blair's council of ministers were "involved" in ensuring that the Hindujas were issued with British passports; this clearly is an indication of their clout. To let them leave the country at this stage could lead to a situation where the Bofors trial will be caught in legal battles for extradition, delaying further the task of bringing the guilty to book.

The trial in the Bofors case is held up now with the "due process of law" taking its time with regard to the extradition of Mr. Ottavio Quattrocchi from Malaysia. And this was caused only because he was allowed to leave the country days after documents pertaining to his coded Swiss Bank accounts had been transmitted to the CBI by the Swiss authorities in July 1993. The trouble now is that the trial can begin only after the former representative of the Italian multinational, Snam Progetti, is extradited to face trial in the CBI Special Court. It may, indeed, be a bit longer before this is achieved. And it may not be reasonable to expect that the Hinduja brothers could be restrained from leaving the country till such time the trial commences. The imperative for the CBI at this stage is to complete its investigation into the involvement of the Hindujas in the Bofors payoffs case. And along with this, the agency will have to ensure that there is no avoidable delay in obtaining the extradition of Mr. Quattrocchi.

THE HINDU

5 FEB 2001

Agni II likely to be inducted in Army by end of 2001

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT

Bangalore, Jan. 25: The indigenously developed Agni II Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile is likely to be inducted into the armed forces by the yearend.

Scientific adviser to the defence minister, Dr Vasudev K. Aatre, said on Thursday that the nuclear-tipped missiles would be inducted into the armed forces this year, but declined to comment further.

"The induction sequence and procedure have already been programmed and induction into the services may start this year," Dr Aatre said.

He added that the final configuration trials had been done but hastened to say that he would not disclose the induction sequence and procedure.

The Agni-II missile was tested successfully over a 2,100 km range from the launch pad at Chandipur in Orissa on January 17 with a dummy nuclear warhead. The first test of the missile was conducted by India on April 11, 1999.

India had declared soon after the 1999 test that no further launches of the missile were required and it was ready for production as part of the Indian Army's move towards creating a nuclear shield.

fine tuning the Agni II's range and improving its Circular Error Probable.

Before Agni-II, India has test-fired the missiles—"Akash, Trishul and Agni-I which were all "technology demonstrators" and has already been inducted into the country's armed forces.

Dr Aatre, who was here to brief about the forthcoming Aero-India 2001 show to be held in Bangalore from February 7 to 11, said that the air show would have participation from over 100 companies from 40 countries including the United States of America, European Union, Russia among others.

"Several technological advances of Indian defence research including the electronic weapons systems, the pilotless target aircraft Lakshya, remotely piloted vehicle Nishant, the advance light helicopter would be demonstrated in the show," he said. "The Light Combat Aircraft is likely to be flown past the Yelahanka airbase during the show," Dr Aatre added.

Dr Aatre also said that a seminar would be organised on Aerospace technologies and strategies of the Indian Air Force during the Aero show in which chiefs of air staff from 12 countries are expected to participate.

THE ASIAN AGE

26 JAN 2001

Security forces on their toes

By Prashant Pandey

NEW DELHI, JAN. 24. With barely 48 hours to go for the Republic Day Parade down Rajpath here, and terrorist threats to the Prime Minister and some of his Cabinet colleagues looming large, the Delhi police have made unprecedented arrangements to foil any evil designs of the militants.

Spelling out the arrangements, the Special Commissioner of Police (Security and Operations), Mr. R.S. Gupta, said today that adequate security measures had been undertaken against the "backdrop of threats from militants supported by Pakistan". He said groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the Jaish-e-Mohammad and the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen seemed determined to strike on or around the Republic Day.

As many as 55,000 Delhi police personnel and 10,000 more from paramilitary forces have been deployed all over the capital. The In-

do-Tibetan Border Police, the National Security Guard, the Central Reserve Police Force, the Central Industrial Security Force, the Border Security Force and other defence agencies are helping the Delhi police in the security preparations.

16 types of threats

"We have identified 16 types of possible threats from the militants," Mr. Gupta said. The threats range from launcher attacks, explosions and shootouts to rumour-mongering. He said the focus this time was not only on the number of personnel deployed but also on strategy. While DCPs would take charge of the control rooms, others on the ground were being repeatedly briefed on tackling situations.

One of the firsts this time is helicopter surveillance on the parade route and other parts of Delhi.

The preparedness, most extensive in the history of the Republic Day parade, is also being con-

stantly reviewed. Security drills are being conducted on a regular basis and the gaps being plugged.

Regarding the number of militants who could have sneaked into the city, Mr. Gupta said while there was specific information about four militants, there were intelligence inputs on the possibility of some more men being present. High on the priority list is the contingency arising out of *fi-dayeen* (suicide squad) attacks. Quick Response Teams (QRTs) have been deployed at strategic points.

The airports have been put on a high alert and defence forces are taking all precautions in the air. The security ring extends to the neighbouring States. Hotlines have been established among top officers of the neighbouring States. Police have also given adequate attention to humanitarian needs in case of emergency.

The general public is being informed on the public address system to remain alert and report any suspicious activities. People have been urged to cooperate during security checks. On Republic Day, people have been advised not to bring bags, mobiles, remote-control keys for their cars and any such items.

THE HINDU

THE HINDU

24 JAN 2001

HD-12
29/1

The missile squadrons ✓

By C. V. Gopalakrishnan

THE SIGNIFICANCE of the test-firing of the Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM) Agni-II arises from its proposed induction into the country's defence arsenal to make it available for deployment like any other weapon of war. This distinguishes it from the missiles which had been test-fired earlier — the Akash, Trishul, the earlier Agni-I, the Prithvi — all of which were developed as "technology demonstrators" and intended to achieve a perfection to the skills built up for the design, development and production of missiles. Such technology demonstration was aimed at filling the country's defence scientists, engineers and technicians with a sense of confidence that they could take up the mass production of the missiles if the need arose. The Government's announcement that the Agni-II would be inducted into the defence arsenal takes the project a step forward.

If Agni-II could cover 2000 km in 648 seconds during which it could pick out its targets in the Bay of Bengal, it would raise questions about the missions which would be designed for it. Its elegant streamlining, to give it a very high velocity, could give only glimpses of the stupendous engineering which would have gone into giving it the capability for hitting its target 2000 km away with precision. Not to mention the miniaturisation which would have been required to ensure that the conventional warhead fitted to the nose of the missile would meet the demand to zero in on and destroy the target. The Agni missile has come a long way from the drawing board to its test-firing. The secrets of the missile arsenals which the developed countries have built up could not have for long been kept guarded from being prised open by scientists, engineers and technologists around the world. The graduation of the missiles from carriers of conventional to nuclear warheads should have made the stockpiles of the developed countries far more deadly.

India's Integrated Missile Development Programme undertaken by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) had taken up the development of only non-nuclear missile systems — Prithvi, Trishul, Akash and Agni. All these programmes have been successfully

completed to ensure their induction into the armed forces. The pressure on India to indigenise design and manufacture of the components for the missiles had become quite intense in view of the U.S. having tightened restrictions on their export. The restrictions should have delayed the progress of the Agni, the Prithvi, the Satellite Launch Vehicle-3 (SLV-3) the Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle, the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle and the Geostationary Satellite Launch Vehicle, in spite of the fact that the PSLV and the GSLV have no military applications to justify them.

The non-nuclear missile systems which are now in place and ready for development during a perceived emergency are themselves highly destructive. The further induction of missiles equipped with nuclear warheads by the nuclear weapon states is the biggest menace which the world is now living with since even an accidental detonation could bring about a global inferno which even a thousand Hiroshimas could not match. Grave doubts over the safety of simply maintaining squadrons of aircraft such as the U.S.' B-52s and FB-111s, which are nuclear weapon carri-

agreed to under START-I and START-II with the U.S.

A persisting disaster potential resulting from nuclear weapons and missiles awaiting dismantling is the radioactive contamination of facilities and the exposure of populated areas to the same. The volume of Russian liquid missile propellants packed in the missiles is also very high amounting to more than 100,000 tonnes which are to be destroyed under the START agreements. The storage cost of these propellants is itself very heavy and had been estimated at over \$50 millions. Their destruction, assuming that it could be safely completed, has been estimated to cost \$15 millions. The costs for the defanging of the U.S. non-nuclear and nuclear missile are even higher. According to an estimate made by the U.S. Department of Energy, the cost of decontaminating warhead production sites was as high as \$60 billions and it was placed even higher at \$155 millions by the U.S. Office of Technology Assessment. No immediate results could be expected since the cleaning up of the contaminated earth, waterways and the buildings requisitioned for missile production, nuclear and non-nuclear, would itself take as long as thirty years and the cost might actually go up to \$ 300 billions.

The enormous and crazy extravagance of the building of non-nuclear and nuclear missile stockpiles has been projected in all its starkness by a study of how much even a much smaller part of the billions of dollars could have made Earth a happier planet had they been spent on the following programmes: reforesting the earth: \$2 billions (cost of a nuclear submarine); providing safe water to all: \$5 billions (cost of a few nuclear bombs); rollback of deserts: \$2 billions (cost of a dozen nuclear tests); protection of the ozone layer: \$1 billion; reduction of air pollution: \$5 billion (cost of six stealth bombers); stabilisation of population: \$6 billions; cleaning up hazardous wastes: \$10 billions.

The fractional cost of these programmes for the implementation of which Planet Earth endangered by weapon programmes, non-nuclear and nuclear, is crying out bares the prodigal criminality of the nuclear weapon states.

The Government's announcement that the Agni-II would be inducted into the defence arsenal takes the project a step forward.

Exports were prohibited if the U.S. Commerce Department, which is empowered to implement the President's Enhanced Proliferation Control Initiative (EPCI), suspected that the components would be used for the production of chemical and biological weapons. The sense of insecurity arising from its fears over other countries developing their missile strike capability could be readily seen from the U.S. going ahead with its own missile development and production programme under its Theatre High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) for making advanced space sensors such as "Brilliant Eyes" which can significantly enhance the coverage of both "lower and upper theatre defences" and help ground-based interceptors "provide full coverage of the continental United States", according to an official statement made earlier by an acting Director of the U.S. Strategic Defence Initiative Organisation. A great deal of the destructive potential of conventional missile warheads had been discovered with their use during Operation Desert Storm against Iraq in 1990, the Falklands conflict (1980) and the Yom Kippur War (1973) and this led to the development of a later generation of cruise missiles, TV and laser-guided and anti-radiation missiles equipped with advanced sensors for increasing their lethal power.

ers, and nuclear missile armoury and fears of accidental triggering of the weapons have repeatedly been raised. The end of the Cold War has left unsolved the problems thrown up by the missile stockpiles.

The seriousness of the accidental going off of nuclear missiles and weapons had come to light from reports — there is in all probability a greater number of unreported incidents — of potential disasters which had been luckily averted. There was a collision at sea between a U.S. aircraft carrier, the USS Kitty Hawk, and a Soviet nuclear-powered submarine way back in March 1984 though this did not result in any catastrophe. There were a number of other such scrapes. The task of defusing the stockpile of nuclear warheads remains very much unattended to — since even if the nuclear weapon states muster the will to get down to it, the dismantling itself presumably calls for technology which may not be readily available or is yet to be perfected.

According to an earlier estimate, there were over 60,000 nuclear warheads in Europe and the U.S. awaiting defusing and destruction. The status of over 3,000 warheads in Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus which have seceded from the erstwhile Soviet Union is yet to be determined since it is not known whether these states accept obligations which the former USSR had

Decision on truce expected today ^{HFI} ₂₃₁

HT Correspondent and PTI
New Delhi, January 22

AS THE fate of the ceasefire extension hangs in the balance, the Government is likely to decide tomorrow on its extension beyond Republic Day amidst reservations whether it would be worthwhile in view of the continuing terrorist violence and lack of adequate response from Pakistan.

The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), headed by Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee is to meet tomorrow, four days ahead of the expiry of the extended ceasefire. Giving an indication of Centre's thinking, high placed sources tonight said that "the government is anxious to give peace to the people of Jammu and Kashmir but it has not been able to give it since Pakistan-sponsored militants have continued to sabotage the peace process by targeting innocent people and the security forces," high placed sources said tonight.

They said that non-extension of ceasefire beyond Republic Day would mean resumption of proactive operations by security forces against militants. During the ceasefire period, the security forces have not been initiating combat operations against militants and were reacting only to violent incidents,

they said. The CCS meeting is expected to be attended by Home Minister L. K. Advani, Defence Minister George Fernandes, External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and National Security Adviser Brajesh Mishra among others.

Earlier in the day, Fernandes, a CCS member, voiced deep concern over stepped up violence in Jammu and Kashmir aimed at "sabotaging the peace process" and said this and other factors would be taken into account while taking a decision on the ceasefire issue. Fernandes said: "Though such attacks to sabotage the peace process were anticipated, what is happening is a matter of concern. We expected Pakistan's Chief Executive to rein in these groups, which has not been done so far." He rejected suggestions that Pakistan does not have any control over pan-Islamic groups such as the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba and the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen. He said there was evidence on record that these groups had been "lauded, supported, armed and trained in so-called jihad by official Pakistani agencies".

He said Vajpayee, while announcing truce extension, had mentioned the activities of these Pakistan-based groups and urged the military ruler to take steps to control them.

● **BJP questions purpose of Hurriyat's visit: Page 13**

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

23 JAN 2001

J&K ceasefire extended for a month

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STATERMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Jan. 23. — In an effort to give peace "every chance" to succeed, the government today announced the extension of cessation of hostilities in Jammu and Kashmir for a month, "to coincide with the Republic Day 2001".

The decision to extend the ceasefire for a month, till 25 February, was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), chaired by the Prime Minister, when it met for three hours this morning.

The CCS, in a statement, regretted that "Pakistan has not recognised the demand of time for peace, and continues to promote, encourage and abet cross-border terrorism". It urged Pakistan to curb the activities of militant organisations controlled by that country, like the Lashkar-e-Taiyaba and the Jaish-e-Mohammed.

The meeting reviewed the fallout of the Prime Minister's ceasefire initiative, including the relative silence of guns along the LoC and increased militant-sponsored violence within the state, and opted to give peace a further chance despite perceived Pakistani intransigence to rein in militant groups indulging in cross-border terrorism.

Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee said the government wanted "a satisfactory solution to the Kashmir problem and decided to extend the ceasefire despite the acts of terrorism".

"We believe terrorist groups responsible for killing innocent people are bent upon breaking the peace process, and will be stopped," Mr Vajpayee said, "and the responsibility is Pakistan's".

On the possibility of resuming a dialogue with Pakistan, he said: "We want an early resumption of talks, but an environment for talks must be created. Starting talks when

killings are going on will not help. For talks to succeed a suitable environment has to be first created."

The Army chief, General S Padmanabhan, had publicly spoken in favour of extending the ceasefire recently, saying that firing along the LoC was down. The foreign ministry also favoured the extension as it established India's international credentials as the initiator of peace in the valley.

Musharraf firm on Kashmir

ISLAMABAD, Jan. 23. — Pakistan's military ruler, General Pervez Musharraf, has told a meeting of Army corps commanders here that Islamabad is not ready to make any compromise on the Kashmir issue.

He told the two-day meeting which began yesterday about his talks with the Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Mr Vijay K Nambiar, recently and expressed the hope that the Indian government will issue travel documents to Hurriyat leaders to enable them to visit Islamabad for talks.

The delay in issuing travel documents might "fritter away" the chance for resumption of talks on the Kashmir issue, he was quoted as saying. — PTI

Reservations, however, had been expressed by the Prime Minister himself, his senior Cabinet colleagues Mr LK Advani and Mr George Fernandes, Kashmir Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah.

"The government believes violence must be ended and peace, which has been welcomed by the people of J&K, given every chance," the statement said, extending the ceasefire "in that

hope."

The external affairs minister, Mr Jaswant Singh, said the decision to extend the ceasefire was unanimous. India wanted to create conditions conducive for the return of peace and normalcy in the strife-torn state. "Talks and guns cannot go together," Mr Singh said adding that peace was essential to allow any dialogue to take place.

This is the second extension to the ceasefire, unilaterally announced by Mr Vajpayee on 23 November last year, originally for a month. The current extension was due to expire on Republic Day.

BJP welcomes move: The BJP today welcomed the extension of the ceasefire and said it would give more time to Pakistan to respond positively to India's peace initiative.

The party was visibly embarrassed as it had indicated its opposition to any further extension. Party spokesperson Mr Jana Krishnamurthy said the government must have more information on the basis of which it gave another extension.

He said Pakistan's failure to take concrete steps to curb terrorist activities from across the border would further expose it in the international arena. This also might force India to call off the ceasefire any day, he said.

Left reaction: The CPI-M and CPI have welcomed the decision to extend the ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir as a positive step, but felt the government should follow it up with concrete steps in order to find a peaceful solution to the Kashmir issue.

'Wise decision': The Army has welcomed the ceasefire extension. Several days ago, Gen Padmanabhan had said he would favour a longer ceasefire. One senior officer called it a "considered decision" and a "wise" one.

19/10 Fire in the sky 19/10

THE SECOND flight test of the Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM) Agni-II is unlikely to have caused any surprise. The Agni system forms a key component of India's deterrence capability and it made no sense to delay the development of its operational *avatar* after the Shakti nuclear tests of May, 1998. India's desert derring-do at Pokhran finally cleared the way for Agni to have a deployable warhead. It is certainly a matter of satisfaction to see such a proven weapon of immense deterrence value come of age at a time when India faces not-so-friendly neighbours pursuing nuclear, chemical and biological warhead development programmes.

The fact that missiles make more than economic sense — shielding the country from external pressures and coercive diplomacy — only adds to their strategic value. Having rightly kicked the chemical and biological habits, it obviously hasn't taken New Delhi long to acknowledge its Hobson's choice: India's security imperatives call for nothing short of powerful missiles. And these can serve as instruments of deterrence only when they carry what they are supposed to counter — weapons of mass destruction. Initial reports from the test site in Chandipur-on-sea in Orissa speak of remarkable circular area probable (CEP) figures — which actually determine a missile's strike accuracy — for Agni-II.

This is a tribute to the fine band of Indian missilemen who staked their credentials on Agni, excelling in crucial operational areas like re-entry, long range manoeuvring and two-staged propulsion and stage separation. More importantly, the missile's guidance system and vehicle structure form an excellent configuration for its future modification. Thus, Agni-II's 2,000 km range design can be augmented to produce Agni-III with a range of over 5,000 km. That would not be unlike the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) Surya, which is already on the drawing board.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

19 JAN 2001

Agni will not escalate arms race: Fernandes

By Our Staff Correspondent

PATNA, JAN. 18. The Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, today hinted at the induction of the Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM), Agni-II, which was test-fired yesterday, in the defence arsenal soon. *9. D. S. N. S. S. S.*

The Defence Minister, who is on a visit to the State, described the test at the Interim Test Range, Chandipur, Orissa, as a "huge success" propelling the country's security measures to new heights and boosting the morale of the scientists.

Lauding the test, the Minister said the missile covered 2,000 km in 648 seconds and picked its target naval boats in the Bay of Bengal with perfection. "The test will not escalate an arms race in the region because we see it as an effort to acquire a credible minimum deterrent needed for India's security... Nobody should be worried about India's intentions," Mr. Fernandes said. He also addressed jawans of the Bihar Regiment Centre at Danapur cantonment.

Australia regrets missile test

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, JAN. 18 Australia, which led the charge against India for the May 1998 nuclear tests, said today that the Agni-II missile test would not have an impact on the restoration of bilateral defence relations.

The Australian Foreign Minister, Mr. Alexander Downer, made it clear in Canberra that his country's military adviser would return

as scheduled to New Delhi, but regretted the test.

Soon after the Indian nuclear tests, Australia had withdrawn its military adviser and sent Indian defence officials home as well apart from snapping all military-to-military links between the two

countries. Earlier this year, the Australian Prime Minister, Mr. John Howard, visited New Delhi, to cap a process of returning relations with India to normal.

On Agni-II test, the Foreign Minister was quoted as saying: "The actual timing of it we didn't accept, but the fact is they have already done one of these tests of a missile called Agni-II, so this is part of a general programme that both they (the Indians) and Pakistan have been pursuing."

Stating that there were no plans to resume defence links with Pakistan, the Foreign Minister said: "There aren't in the case of Pakistan because one of the other issues in Pakistan is the overthrow of democracy."

Japan critical, China cautious

PTI reports from Tokyo:

A day after the missile was test-fired successfully, the Japanese Government issued a statement saying it was 'strongly concerned' about the launch of Agni II. The missile launch "might hamper the moves towards easing of tensions in South Asia and intensify the nuclear arms and missile development race in the region," Japan said.

In Beijing, the Foreign Ministry said China hoped to see peace and stability and was unwilling to see any form of arms race in the region. Mr. Zhu Bangzao, a spokesman of the Ministry, said in that "China, together with the international community, hopes to see peace and stability in the region. We are unwilling to see any form of arms race in the region."

Peace won't be hampered, says Musharraf

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, JAN. 18 The Pakistan Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, has said that the testing of the Agni-II missile by India would not hamper the peace process in Kashmir.

In an interview to the State-run Pakistan Television, Gen. Musharraf argued that the test should be a matter of concern for China and other countries of the region.

The softer line taken by Gen. Musharraf is seen as yet another attempt by the military establishment to tell the world that it is keen on resumption of an early dialogue with India.

Gen. Musharraf told PTV that Pakistan had shown all flexibility for the peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute and it would not like any hurdle that may jeopardise the peace process. "There are indications from the other side which will pave the ground for the negotiations".

THE HINDU

19 JAN 2001

'AGNI-II TEST' A STEP IN SELF-DEFENCE'

Onus is on Pak., says PM

By Ganesh Prabhu

UDUPI, JAN. 18. The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, today said the onus of creating a conducive atmosphere for talks clearly rested on the Pakistan leadership of Pakistan and that India was ready to have a dialogue with Pakistan even at the highest level.

At a press conference here, he said: "We have strongly demonstrated our sincerity to create a conducive atmosphere for talks through specific confidence-building measures, such as unilateral cessation of combat operations in Jammu and Kashmir." However, the continuation of terrorist activities in and outside the State showed that the purpose of Indian unilateral initiatives was not being fulfilled, he added.

Mr. Vajpayee pointed out that international opinion had favoured India's initiative. Pakistan should demonstrate its sincerity and commitment to the dialogue process by unequivocally condemning violence by militant groups and checking their anti-India activities. What was particularly distressing was that Islamabad had done nothing to restrain terrorist outfits, operating from its soil, even as it professed eagerness to resume talks. Its argument that violence would stop once the talks began was strange, and neither convinced India nor the international community. There could not be meaningful talks for resolving outstanding issues and normalising bilateral relations when the guns of terrorist outfits



The Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee, at the inauguration of the renovated 'Rajangana' building of the Sri Krishna Temple in Udupi on Thursday. Also seen are the Union Ministers, Mr. Dhananjaya Kumar, Mr. Ananth Kumar, Ms. Uma Bharti and Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, the Karnataka Governor, Mrs. Rama Devi, Sri Visvesha Theertha Swamiji of Paryaya Pejavara Math and the Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr. S.M. Krishna. — Photo: K. Bhagya Prakash (Report on Page 13)

did their own talking, he remarked.

Vitiated atmosphere

Expressing concern at the violence unleashed by Pakistan-based militant organisations, the Prime Minister said that these activities had vitiated the atmosphere for resumption of talks between the two countries. Terrorist attacks on Indian security forces and civilians had increased both in number and in their gravity. The incidents at the Red Fort

and the Srinagar airport, combined with the threat to strike at the Prime Minister's Office, showed that militant outfits, opposed to peace and normalcy in the State, were alarmed at the prospects of a fruitful dialogue between India and Pakistan.

Asked about the increased threat perception among other countries after the second test-firing of Agni-II, the Prime Minister said the test was not a threat to any country. It was only a step in self-defence and India did not

have any aggressive designs, he added.

'Statute panel independent'

On the resignation of Mr. Sukumar Azhikode from the Constitution Review Committee, criticising the BJP Government for interfering in its activities, Mr. Vajpayee said the Committee was an independent body, outside Government control and that such allegations should not have been levelled. Asked about the criticisms from certain quarters of the "Sangh Parivar" against the economic policies of the Government and the stand vis-a-vis the WTO, he said the Government would change its policies according to the requirements. Reviewing policies was a continuous process. "We have to take advantage of criticisms and take remedial measures."

On the increasing criminalisation of politics, Mr. Vajpayee said that the BJP had already decided not to field candidates with a criminal background. If required, laws could be made to prevent it, or existing laws could be amended, he pointed out.

On the BJP's poll prospects in the coming Assembly polls in five States, Mr. Vajpayee said it was too early to make a prediction but sounded optimistic about the party's chances.

To another question, he said there was no proposal to impose President's rule in West Bengal. About his health, Mr. Vajpayee said: "My health is good. I am careful about it. There is nothing to report about it."

THE HINDU

19 JAN 2007

LAST MAJOR STEP BEFORE INDUCTION

Agni-II second test successful

By Atul Aneja *AD-1*

NEW DELHI, JAN. 17. India today successfully carried out the second test of the Agni-II missile to bridge a key gap in its evolving nuclear forces.

According to an official statement, the missile was tested in its "final operational configuration", meaning the final design for the "ready for battle" Agni has now been frozen. This is the last major step prior to the induction of this weapon.

Highly-placed sources in the Government said the test was timed for the departure of Mr. Li Peng, number two in the Chinese hierarchy, from Indian soil. This was necessary to signal to the Chinese that the test was not directed against them. India's linkage of its nuclear tests to a threat from China soured its relations with Beijing

S-D & R Security
in the past. In fact, China, along with Pakistan, the United States, the U.K, Germany and Japan, was given prior intimation about the test, a Foreign Office spokesman said.

The Agni tested today has a range of "about 2000 km". As in the case of the first test in April, 1999, the missile was powered solely by the user-friendly solid

A threat, says Pak.: Page 13

fuel. It was launched at 1001 hours from a mobile launcher at the Interim Test Range at Chandipur in Orissa.

The significance of today's test lies in its linkage with the Pokhran nuclear tests. While the tests had given India a capability to design atomic warheads, they did not address the question of delivering them. The development of the Agni

addresses this deficiency.

PM's pat for DRDO
UNI reports:

The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, has congratulated scientists and engineers of the Defence Research and Development Organisation for the Agni-II's second successful test flight this morning.

Mr. Vajpayee also spoke on the phone to Dr. Y.K. Atre, Scientific Adviser to the Defence Minister, at the interim test range at Chandipur and congratulated him. Earlier, Mr. Fernandes informed the Prime Minister of the successful launch. (A PTI report from Berlin quoted the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, as saying that the successful test-firing of Agni-II would not trigger an arms race in the sub-continent.)

THE HINDU

18 JAN 2001

Stage set for N-force command structure

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, January 17

WITH THE long-range Agni II missile moving closer to assembly line production, the stage is now set for the government to put in place the "command and control" structure for India's nuclear force.

A draft nuclear doctrine, prepared by the Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee, has recommended that Indian nuclear forces be headed by a 'three star' general.

The draft, under consideration of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) for some months now, details broad contours of the nuclear forces, together with suggestions about control of the nuclear button.

Highly placed government sources indicated that the draft proposed that the nuclear button should be in the hands of the head of the civilian set-up. The nuclear force commander, the draft says, would be responsible for land, air and sea-based nuclear delivery systems.

The Task Force on Higher Defence Management, on its part, has advocated placement of nuclear forces under the proposed Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).

The CDS will be the "single-point military advisor" to the civilian set-up but will be on par with the chiefs of staff of the three services.

However, there are inter-services differ-

News Analysis

ences over the creation of the CDS post. While the Army and the Navy have come out in its favour, the Air Force has advocated status quo and feels that there is no need for a CDS.

There are a number of other issues that have to be resolved by the government before a decision is taken on the nuclear force.

For instance, till Agni II took to the skies this morning, the Air Force had been rec-

ommending formation of a nuclear air command as it felt that it was the only strategic force. The Air Force view was that the Army was never intended to be a nuclear capable force as the policy on tactical weapons wasn't yet clear. Even a nuclear role for the Navy was ruled out by the IAF as the N-sub is still on the drawing board.

However, Army Chief General S. Padmanabhan last week spoke clearly about the Army's nuclear role. He laid emphasis on the second day (May 13, 1998) of 'Shakti' series of nuclear tests at Pokhran which tested low-yield devices. The successful test of the Agni II missile with the final operational configuration, carves out for the Indian Army, a major role in managing land-based nuclear weapons.

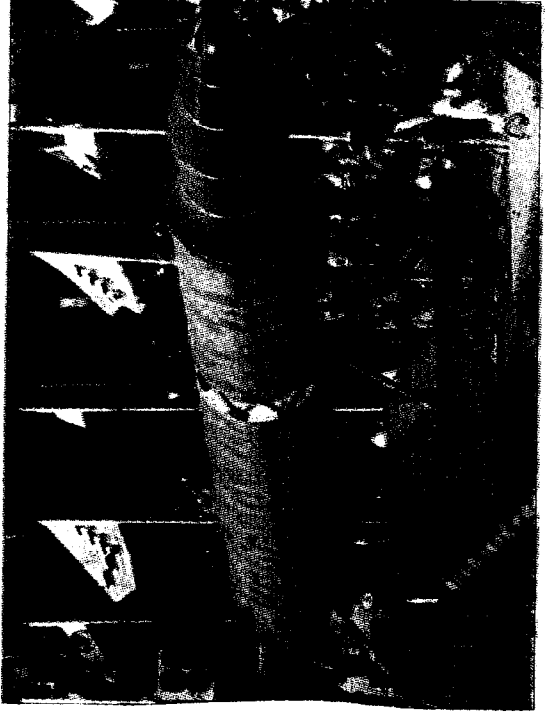
While the Air Force is already N-capable, time has come for the Indian Navy to speed up the N-submarine project to be able to complete the triad. It is in this context that the government needs to bring its nuclear forces under a single umbrella.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

18 JAN 2001

India testfires Agni II, Pakistan cries foul

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A file photograph of Agni II. — AP/PTI

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Jan. 17. — India's most potent weapons delivery system, the Agni II missile, was successfully testfired for the second time today.

The test was conducted from a launch pad at the Interim Test Range in Chandipur, Orissa, at 10.01 a.m. Reports from the site point to the use of facilities at Inner Wheeler Island, where the missile was first tested on 11 April, 1999.

A defence ministry release said the 2,000 km-range missile was launched "in its final operational configuration", suggesting that production and induction are on the cards.

"The flight test results indicate that mission objectives were satisfactorily met," programme director, Mr RN Agarwal, said. The flight of the missile "was monitored with shore and ship equipment networked in real time".

The defence minister, head of the DRDO, the air chief and vice-chief of the Army witnessed the trial.

Pakistan said the test is part of India's ambitious nuclear and missile programme which poses a threat to Pakistan's security.

"India's nuclear ambitions, which are clear from its draft nuclear doctrine announced in 1999, have a destabilising effect on the region," a Pakistan

foreign office communique said. Pakistan reiterated its proposal that the two countries should agree to a strategic restraint regime to promote nuclear and conventional stabilisation and strengthen peace and stability in South Asia, the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi said.

But a foreign ministry spokesman denied criticism of the test by other countries. But he admitted that several countries, including Russia, Germany, USA, UK, China, Pakistan and Japan had prior information of the test.

The test comes about a week ahead of Republic Day, when the country will show its military might to the world.

Earlier too, missiles have been tested around 26 January but this is the first to succeed.

India perhaps wants to tell the world in particular the new US administration, that it retains the commitment to acquire capabilities essential to preserve its security interests.

To its neighbours, the message is: despite the ceasefire in J&K and the desire to clarify LAC dispute, there would be no soft-peddalling on security.

The project is of domestic interest too. The government wants to silence critics who say its appeasing the USA and going soft in J&K. The Centre has, in recent year, openly stated that Agni-II is part of the defence effort.

STATESMAN
N 2011

The Sukhoi controversy

5-10
16/11
BRIJESH D. JAYAL

The recent agreement between Russia and India for licensed production of the Su-30 MKI multi-role combat aircraft has evoked considerable interest. Not surprising, considering that the 140 aircraft production programme stretching over 17 years and worth over Rs 15,000 crore makes it the most expensive defence programme in Indian history and the single largest defence deal ever signed by Russia with a foreign country.

The Su-30 purchase since its very inception has attracted comments on two quite disparate counts. The first, as expected in any major defence purchase, is the lack of transparency and the real or imagined aspects of corruption. The second is the strategic and operational implication of the programme. So involved have the issues become that it becomes difficult to separate the two.

At the 1993 Bangalore air show, the Su-27 (of which the Su-30 is a derivative) was on display. At the time, the air chief, A.C.M. Kaul, had categorically stated that such an aircraft was irrelevant to India's air doctrine. In a subsequent joint Indian air force-Confederation of Indian Industry seminar in February 1994, Kaul was openly critical of the indifferent product support being provided by the Russians to the detriment of IAF's operational capability and appealed to the private sector to help in the indigenization process. Clearly in early 1994, neither the Su-27 nor the Russian aviation industry was in favour with the IAF.

In a surprising turnaround and without any perceptible change on the national security horizon, by April 1995, the IAF was evaluating the Su-27. Considering that the in-service staff requirement process for such major systems itself extends to some years, this sudden change was intriguing. Equally surprising was the unusually hasty decision-making process resulting in the purchase of 40 aircraft with an advance of Rs 880 crore paid by April 1996.

The decision to opt for the Su-30 MKI (I denoting India) was based on an evaluation of the Su-27. The former was to be a significantly different and heavier derivative with major design changes to the airframe, engines, undercarriage and avionics. The Indian government hence committed its resources to a major development programme in Russia at a time when the Russian aviation industry was floundering. It was undergoing considerable downsizing with the Russian air force not placing any orders on it, international media was reporting major financial irregularities and it was seriously defaulting in support to the IAF. Tradition-

ally, the government of India is not known for taking such bold risks in respect of defence programmes as the services know to their peril.

To complicate matters, this major decision was taken by a caretaker Congress government, resulting in the then Bharatiya Janata Party opposition lodging a strong protest. Following subsequent elections, the Janata Dal government endorsed the previous govern-

ment's decision and later the shortlived BJP administration maintained *status quo*. The present government has now taken the programme a major step further. Reasons for the change of heart on the BJP's part have not been made known. This programme has had the support of three governments of different political persuasions -- in itself a rare phenomenon in Indian governance.



The first eight aircraft of phase one designated Su-30 K, but in reality Su-27 two-seat Trainers not required by the Russian air force, were formally inducted into the IAF in June 1997. Since then the programme has hit turbulence with reports of old components being fitted, serious delays in the development schedule and both sides pointing fingers at each other.

It was with the unfolding of the nuclear scenario in 1998 and the publication of two books on the Indian nuclear programme (*India's Nuclear Bomb* by George Perkovich and *Weapons of Peace* by Raj Chengappa), that the possible nuclear connection has emerged. While this would appear probable and justify some of the earlier happenings, major question marks still remain.

Chengappa mentions that in 1990 the nuclear weapon design was being optimized for carriage on the Mirage 2000 with the issue of single-versus-two crew still to be resolved. Had this integration failed, then in late 1993 Kaul would have known and his response in Bangalore towards a new induction not been negative. A fair assumption is that by 1993 the nuclear weapon had successfully been integrated with the Mirage 2000. If oper-

‘ The decision to opt for Su-30 MKI was based on an evaluation of the Su-27 ’

ationally a two-man crew was preferred, then the Mirage 2000 Trainers were available although additional procurements would have been necessary, an item reportedly on the IAF agenda.

Even if the Mirage was perceived to have limitations and was an interim solution, a two-squadron nuclear strike force of Su-30 should have been adequate for a nuclear deterrent posture. After all nuclear wars, if fought at all, can only be shortlived.

With both India and Pakistan having declared themselves nuclear weapon states, there is a growing view amongst defence analysts that future conflicts, if any, will be limited in nature. The pressure on the armed forces to refrain from escalating even such limited conflicts, lest they inadvertently cross the nuclear threshold, will put severe limitations on

the respective air forces in deploying strategic strike aircraft or indeed surface-to-surface missiles. Kargil was a preview of the shape of things to come.

Today the IAF has squadrons of the Jaguar, Mirage 2000, Mig 27 and Mig 29 amongst others. In due course, two squadrons of Su-30 MKI would be operational. This is a considerable force to display a deterrent posture as also for offensive operations including nuclear strike. Why then has the government committed itself now to a six to seven-squadron force of an exorbitantly expensive and over-performing weapon system in the context of the Indian security scene when the crying need was for the Mig 21 replacement -- a light combat aircraft?

One had expected that the decision to go in for licensed production would have been taken within the contours of an overall strategic defence review that the government had promised. It needs recalling that late in 1998, the government announced its intention to put in place a national security council and its supporting structures of a strategic policy group and the national security advisory board. The task of the SPG was to provide inter-ministerial coordination and conduct strategic reviews. The NSAB was to provide long term prognosis, analysis and solutions to policy issues referred to it.

The SPG was to have conducted the promised SDR based on which the NSC would presumably have evolved national security policy and priorities. Concerned ministries, including the ministry of defence, would then have evolved their respective strategies. Force development objectives, training, re-equipment and operational plans of the armed forces would have emerged from this logical sequence.

It is now well known that this eminently logical sequence was not followed and the draft "Indian nuclear doctrine" prepared by NSAB was officially released for debate. Where the doctrine now stands is not known. While there is talk of an SDR having been formulated, whether it has been deliberated and accepted by the NSC is doubtful since the latter has not even met.

Lack of or indiscriminate modernization of the armed forces is detrimental to national security. Licensed production of Su-30 would appear to fall in the latter category. Since the country is now committed to the Su-30 weapon system in India's armoury, the IAF needs to get on with operationalizing the system unencumbered. A government paper providing the entire background would enable security observers to determine whether this programme is a strategic security imperative or a monumental blunder. The controversy can then be laid to rest.

The author is a retired air marshal of the Indian air force

PM rules out tripartite talks with Pakistan

SFI 16/1 9-0 8 M Delhi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
and AGENCIES

NAMBIAR MEETS MUSHARRAF

NEW DELHI, Jan. 15. — The Prime Minister, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, today reviewed the situation in Jammu and Kashmir and rejected the notion of tripartite talks with Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir issue.

The unambiguous rejection came after an informal meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security, a PMO source confirmed. Along with other issues, the CCS discussed the statement from Pakistan foreign office on Friday that floated the tripartite process of negotiations for a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute.

The meeting was convened at the PM's residence and was attended by senior members of the CCS. The statement rejecting the concept of tripartite talks came from the foreign ministry spokesman this evening.

"Regarding a Pakistan foreign ministry statement about a Hurriyat delegation going to Pakistan for preparing the ground for a tripartite process of negotiation, we would like to

NEW DELHI, Jan. 15. — The Indian High Commissioner in Pakistan, Mr VK Nambiar, called on Gen Pervez Musharraf this morning. In this first meeting with the Pakistani ruler, he conveyed India's stand that it was ready for a dialogue if Islamabad stopped supporting cross-border terrorism. Sources here said Gen Musharraf expressed regret over the threat made by Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiyaba to the PMO. — SNS

make it clear that there is no question of a tripartite process and India rejects the very notion of tripartite talks," he said.

On Friday, Pakistan had called upon India to enable all Hurriyat delegation members to proceed to Pakistan to prepare grounds for a tripartite process.

The spokesman clarified that the government had not taken any stand on the request to issue a passport to Hurriyat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani.

The Hurriyat chairman, Mr Abdul Gani Bhat, expressed hope that the Centre would issue passports to all its leaders to visit Pakistan. He said though they had set today as the date for travelling to Pakistan, "when one is going to find a solution to a very big issue, such

small things can be adjusted".

The fresh spurt in terrorism continued to haunt Kashmir today, with militants gunning down the son of a National Conference leader and his driver at Bandipora while three foreign militants and a security jawan were among the eight killed since last night in other parts of the valley.

In view of the growing militant attacks in the state even after the extension of the ceasefire, Mr LK Advani said the Cabinet Committee on Security would review the "overall situation" before 26 January, when the ceasefire ends.

Stating that "we are not ready to believe that the Pakistan government has no control over militants", the home minister

said the CCS would review the peace process.

"If militant attacks, such as the one on Dr Farooq Abdullah, go on, we will have to see in what manner the peace initiative will continue," he said.

In an encouraging sign for the government, 74 per cent of some two-and-a-half lakh voters today cast ballots defying threats and boycott calls by militants and Hurriyat in the opening day of the first phase of panchayat polls in J&K.

Nuke seminar: India and Pakistan have to take concerted measures to prevent any accidental use of nuclear weapons, foreign affairs experts from the two countries said at a seminar in Islamabad today. They were unanimous that nuclear tests by the two in 1998 made South Asia more stable.

Call to check bigots: Mr Vajpayee today said the world was witnessing a battle between religious liberalism and fundamentalism, and only a joint effort by secular and liberal forces would check fundamentalists.

■ More reports on page 8

THE STATESMAN

16 JAN 2001

Army chief for J&K truce extension

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V(1)

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, January 12

9-17-81
9/8/81

INDIAN ARMY Chief General S. Padmanabhan today came out in favour of extending the cease-fire in Jammu & Kashmir beyond Republic Day as its advantages outweighed its disadvantages.

A confident General Padmanabhan said: "The extension of cease-fire is a decision that the Indian Government will have to take. My advice, if I am allowed (to make one), will be yes because it is a good thing to continue with."

Interacting with the media for the first time since he assumed office three months ago, the Army Chief said, the situation in Kashmir was on the upswing.

He blamed foreign mercenaries operating under the banner of Lashkar-e-Tayyeba and Jaish-e-Mohammed for the continuing violence. "Homegrown" Kashmiri militants, he said, were sick and tired of fighting.

Suggesting that there was less of fighting and a little more of talking in Kashmir, Gen Padmanabhan said it would soon be difficult for these groups to operate in the State. The Chief maintained that the Army was still carrying out "surgical strikes" in Kashmir on the basis of hard intelligence reports.

Admitting that cross-border infiltration and firing had reduced after Pakistan's maximum restraint offer, he, however, rubbished Pakistan's claims of a pull-out from LoC and the international border in J&K.

"No frontline troops have been pulled back by Pakistan either from LoC or from the Jammu border." Only those Pakistani troops, who were deployed in depth or were training during the winter have gone back to their barracks, he asserted.

He said the Army had indeed pulled back some troops though Pakistan's gesture was temporary and not significant enough.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

13 JAN 21

Brajesh rules out summit with Pak for the moment

Jay Mishra HIA 18/1
Bali (Indonesia), January 12

INDIA RULED out the possibility of an Indo-Pak summit 'at the present moment' even as reports from Islamabad speculated on Prime Minister A B Vajpayee's intent to invite Pakistan's Chief Executive Gen Pervez Musharraf to New Delhi for talks. 9-06 N.S.

Clarifying India's position today, the Prime Minister's National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra told reporters that "no invitation had been extended to Gen Musharraf."

There was "no move, at present, to hold an Indo-Pak summit," he said. However, "I do not rule out such a possibility in the future," he added.



On granting travel documents to the Hurriyat leaders for their proposed visit to Pakistan, Mishra said, "a decision would be taken after the Prime Minister returns to New Delhi this weekend". He refused to elaborate further. Mishra expressed concern at the rise of attacks against civilians in the ongoing second phase of the Ramzan ceasefire.

On the Red Fort attack and the threat to PMO, he said "such activities are being guided from Pakistani soil." The Government would soon review the situation on the Indian side of LoC and decide on how to proceed further.

Earlier during the day, while replying to a query over media reports suggesting that Gen Musharraf was ready to visit India for a dialogue on Kashmir, Mr Vajpayee is reported to have remarked, "I have seen the report, but no date has been fixed as yet."

Reports of an imminent Indo-Pak summit were denied by Minister of State for External Affairs Ajit Panja, who is accompanying Vajpayee on his week-long visit.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

13 JAN 2001

Guns fall silent, peace eloquent in Siachen

Ceasefire initiative pays dividends

Shishir Gupta
Siachen, January 9

INDIA'S CEASEFIRE initiative has paid dividends in the Siachen glacier. There has been a significant reduction in artillery firing from the Pakistani side along the 110-km-long actual ground position line (AGPL) separating the two sides.

The Pakistani howitzers had fallen silent on December 6 last year. However, Pakistan continues to indulge in sporadic incidents of small arms firing in this highest battlefield of the world.

Pakistani troops opened 200 to 250 rounds of small arms fire at Indian troops deployed at posts near the Chandan post in the Central glacier area last Saturday.

The Indian Army has not engaged Pakistan in artillery duel or small arms exchanges since Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee announced the Ramzan ceasefire initiative. In fact, New Delhi had directed the Indian troops well in advance not to fire at Pakistani positions along the Saltoro ridge on November 2, last year. Since then, the Indian troops have not fired a single round at their adversaries.

According to Major General Sheru Chhapliyal, Trishul Division Commander, barring an incident or two of small arms firing, Pakistani firing had reduced considerably in the glacier since the cease-



Gorkha Rifles soldiers on their way to a forward post. Photo: AP

fire initiative.

Siachen is divided into three sectors - southern, central and northern glaciers - with Indian troops occupying the Saltoro ridge. This strategic ridge starts at NJ 9842 (the point till which the Line of Control has been delineated under the Shimla Agreement) and culminates at Indira Col in the mighty Karakoram Range. The 86-km-long glacier is accessible from Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK) through three passes - Gyong La, Sia La and Bilafond La.

Braving temperatures of minus 40

degrees Celsius, avalanches and snow storms, the Indian Army troops occupy posts right from Rewari in the southern glacier to Bana top in the northern glacier. These posts are located at heights ranging from 16,000 feet to 20,000 feet.

The Pakistani army troops are deployed at areas facing the Saltoro ridge, with artillery guns located at Piun and Siari. While the Indian Army dominates the ridge in the southern and northern glacier area, they are matched by their counterparts in the central glacier area.

With troops actually locked in an eye-to-eye confrontation at some places in the central glacier, Pakistani troops frequently open small arms fire at night in this area.

According to Brigadier Ashok Duggal, Commander of the Partapur Brigade, before the ceasefire initiative, the two sides would exchange around 4,000 to 4,500 artillery shells a month in the glacier area. This brigade is responsible for the defence of the glacier.

Brigadier Duggal, who took command after his predecessor was shunted out

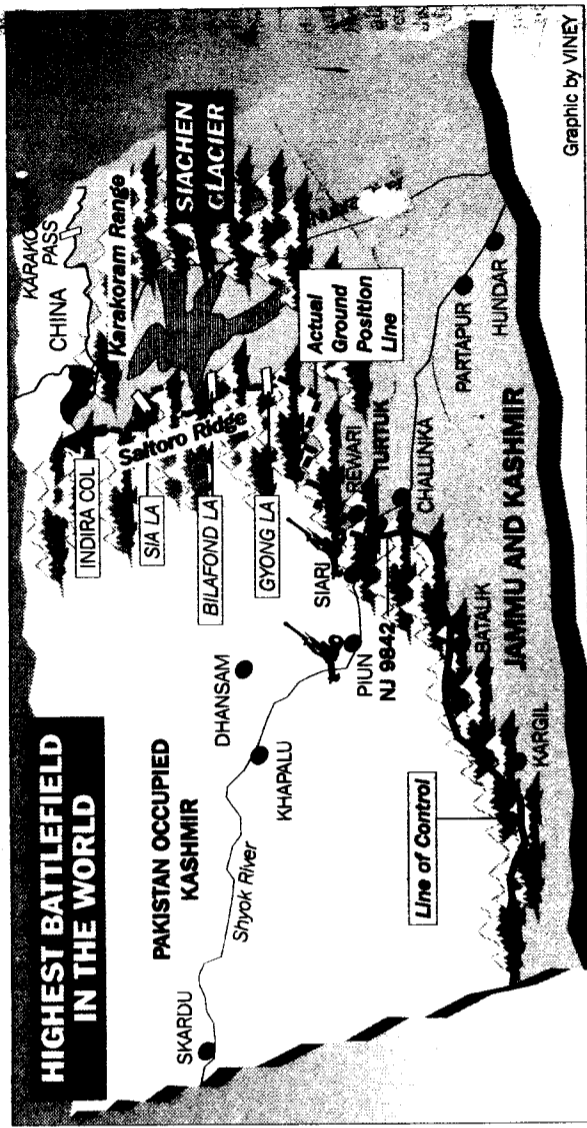
three months ago, maintained that even the small arms exchanges were heavy but could not quantify in terms of rounds.

It is understood that prior to the ceasefire initiative, Pakistan launched a fire assault on Indian posts in this icefield on October 26. During this "Diwali bumper", Pakistan rained artillery shells and managed to damage an Indian bunker. The adversary followed this by training its guns at the base camp on December 3.

Although the Indian troops planned to retaliate on November 3, the fire plan

was apparently never executed as the commanders were tactfully told by the top brass to hold their horses. A fortnight later, the troops were told to stop firing, as there was "some development" with regard to Pakistan.

While the Indian troops are on constant vigil in the glacier, there is a general relief among soldiers that Pakistani firing had gone down. This, perhaps, is the only period since 1984 that the two sides have chosen to keep silent rather than let the guns do the talking in the Siachen glacier.



Graphic by VINEY

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6, 2001

THE SUCCESSFUL LCA TEST FLIGHT

THERE IS WIDESPREAD exultation over the successful test flight of the Light Combat Aircraft which has been on the drawing boards since 1983. It is very likely that quite a few trial flights must have preceded the test flight before a decision was taken to make an announcement of it. This should help lift the cloud of gloom over the inordinate delay over the LCA but there cannot be real euphoria over it since the Defence Ministry does not expect that it could join the Indian Air Force fleet until 2012 or even 2015.

The LCA has still a long way to go before it develops combat worthiness to be able to ensure effective aerial defence for the country. This should make it clear that the successful completion of its test flight has just taken it to a stage where it could be equipped with the very wide range of equipment required for not merely making it an effective fighter aircraft but also producing squadrons of the same. The demands it will have to meet include the jamming of enemy radars as well as engaging in night warfare. The claims made about the LCA being an indigenously designed combat aircraft with just a four-tonne combat load would also merit some scrutiny though this is not intended to belittle the painstaking research and development which has gone into the programme. The LCA will have to wait until 2005 before it can be fitted with the Kaveri engine now being developed in Russia and it will, therefore, have to fly till then with the U.S. built GE 404 engines. If the development and production of an engine has to be completed and produced in Russia in spite of its having been visualised in India, it also exposes the need for our having to seek foreign support for this major project. The technological skills which India has for designing and making the LCA do not make it completely self-supporting to ensure serial production of the aircraft. This requires infrastructural and engineering facil-

ities which this country lacks in view of the still lingering inadequacy of our industrial sector. The initial resort to the U.S.-made GE-404 engine as a substitute for the Kaveri engine suggests that these two engines are of the same genre. This indicates that there is no major advance in technology for making the LCA wholly different from the existing genre of combat aircraft. Such a breakthrough can be expected only if both the airframe as well as the engine are of a wholly new and advanced technology which is still regarded as an impossibility at the present state of aeronautical knowledge and skills.

This throws up questions about the endeavours which can go into achieving originality and indigenously with a fighter aircraft in view of the likes of it having taken to the skies much earlier. They should probably relate to the efforts to make the IAF a "lean and mean force" (which is not a very pleasing description as it gives out a sinister ring) achieved with substantial reductions in weight and a swiftness in strike capability for distinguishing the LCA from other comparable aircraft. The objective is to ensure that the IAF keeps itself ahead of the potential hostile neighbours, principally Pakistan, in its aerial defence capabilities. This implies that the Aeronautical Development Authority (ADA), which has designed and developed the LCA, and the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. which will be manufacturing it, have to ensure that the technology going into the LCA will have to remain state-of-the-art by incorporating the ongoing improvements in the same. This will make very exacting demands on the LCA programme since it will have to depend to a substantial extent on U.S. companies such as Lockheed Martin for supplies of crucial components the continuity of which could be wrecked by changes in U.S. attitudes with which India has become familiar.

THE HINDU

5 JAN 2001

Defence team visits BDL unit

By Our Staff Reporter

HYDERABAD, JAN. 5. A high-level team of the Ministry of Defence was learnt to have arrived in the city today to probe the accidental firing of a short-range missile at the Milan complex of the Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) here on Thursday. One person was killed and five others injured in the mishap, which occurred in the presence of the Defence Secretary, Mr. Yogendra Narain.

The team visited the unit at Kanchanbagh where work has come to a grinding halt after the accident, which took place during a demonstration. No officials from the BDL were however, available for comments.

A holiday was declared at the BDL today and the establishment remained bereft of any activity. With Saturday and Sunday being holidays, the normal functioning is likely to commence only on Monday.

Meanwhile, the condition of the injured admitted to two city hospitals was said to be stable. According to Mr. Neeraj Saxena, brother of Mr. Rajiv Saxena, one of the injured, a minor surgery was performed at the Yashoda Hospital on Friday morning to remove a few splinters from the left hand and chest. Two others, Mr. Prabhakar Rao and Mr. Challa Rao, were also admitted here. The hospital's medical superintendent, Dr. A. Lingaiah, said specialists were attending to the injured.

THE HINDU

- 6 JAN 2001

The Hindustan Times

Flight to the future

THE COUNTRY set out in 1983 to build a front rank, multi-role, supersonic fighter aircraft for the future. Foreign collaboration was not deemed necessary to build the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), projected to serve as the backbone of India's fighter fleet. The programme proceeded after some critical initial support from the US in the provision of an engine and fly-by-wire technology for the prototype. Foreign technology is likely to be also needed in the future for the advanced avionics and electronic warfare equipment that a state-of-the-art 21st century fighter will need.

The LCA came home yesterday with its prototype clearing a flight of 18 minutes, about five years behind schedule and after a considerable cost over-run. There is a long way to go. The indigenous Kaveri engine is far from being complete, and nearly two-fifths of the airplane's systems are still awaited. This could take a dozen more years by which time further technological upgrades will be needed to keep the LCA in the front-line. Many will ask if this is not a quixotic misadventure. Many air force officers have asked whether, in strategically unsettled times, India would have been better served by sticking to off-the-shelf purchases of foreign-made fighters.

Scepticism is entirely in order. It needs to be appreciated that fewer than 10 countries in the world manufacture supersonic fighter aircraft. India is in a position to apply for membership to that club. India can master the basic engineering of the LCA, given a few more years. The delays in the LCA project are partly on account of the bureaucracy. But it will be difficult to develop the entire range of advanced technologies from scratch.

The work culture and the organisation pattern of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) cannot escape scrutiny, considering the fate of other key projects like the Arjun main battle tank. The DRDO is said to be unenthusiastic even about liaising fruitfully with the three armed services. Indeed, the LCA venture has been a huge learning experience and technologies and skills of extremely high order have been or are being absorbed. It may be too early to raise a toast, but denying the experts a pat on the back would be uncharitable given the conditions and pressures under which they have had to work.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

6 JAN 2001

Successful LCA test-flight puts India in elite club

The Times of India News Service
BANGALORE: India joined a select group of countries when it successfully launched its maiden test-flight of the indigenously-manufactured Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) from the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) airstrip here on Thursday.

The maiden flight of the first LCA Technology Demonstrator 1 (TD-1) aircraft took off at 10.18 a.m. The flight, which lasted about 20 minutes, was commanded by Wing Commander Rajiv Kothiyal of the National Test Flight Centre, Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), Chief of Air Staff

Air Marshal A.Y. Tipnis was in one of the two support Mirage 2000 aircraft which flew along with the LCA during its inaugural flight.

Conceived in 1983, the LCA is an advanced technology single-seater, single-engine, supersonic lightweight aircraft. It is an all-weather, multi-role, air-superiority fighter designed for air-to-air, air-to-ground and air-to-sea combat.

Termining the event a red-letter day in India's defence history, defence minister George Fernandes said India had demonstrated its prowess in aeronautics to the world. Congratulating the scientists of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), the Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), the Defence Research and Development

Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad, and everyone associated with the programme, Mr Fernandes said there was no looking back as far as aeronautics was concerned. He also congratulated the pilot who commanded the maiden flight.

Hitting out at critics of the programme, Mr Fernandes said, "I know there will be people who will

be concerned and jealous about India's progress in aeronautics. We should ignore them all. But there are also several others who want to join hands with us, and we welcome them. If they want to be associated with the LCA project, they are most welcome."

Mr Fernandes said Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee was elated when told of the achievement and congratulated all the scientists involved in the programme. The defence minister remarked that he was so excited that he wanted to inform the Prime Minister soon after the LCA prototype took off, but his colleagues advised him to hold on until the aircraft's touchdown.

According to Mr Fernandes, India's defence potential will go up when the fully-equipped LCA is inducted into the Indian Air Force. Admitting that the development of the prototype had taken long, he said the long haul had been fruitful. "The development of the design and technology has been the result of the toil of scientists and workers associated with the project."

FLIGHT TO GLORY



- Launch flight commandeered by Wing Commander Rajiv Kothiyal
- Air Marshal A.Y. Tipnis flies alongside in support aircraft
- Second and third prototypes to roll out this year
- PM, Fernandes congratulate scientists



SHOE-STRING THEORY: Celebrated British physicist mind by the Old Woman's Shoe at the Hanging Gardens 'Strings 2001', a six-day international conference on Str (Report on Page 3)

Restructuring defence & security

By V. Jayanth

BY THE end of September, the four special task forces set up by the Government to look at the recommendations of the Subrahmanyam Committee (that reviewed the security system in the wake of Kargil), submitted their reports to the Group of Ministers (GoM) which will take the final decisions. For three months now, the GoM has considered not just the voluminous main report, but also the distilled views of the expert committees. These task forces looked at the intelligence apparatus, internal security, border management and defence management. Though the winter session of Parliament was supposed to discuss the Subrahmanyam Committee's report, it failed to.

It is about time the GoM made up its mind what final shape it should give to the various recommendations for a comprehensive revamp of the defence establishment and coordination among various security as well as intelligence agencies around the country. Integrating the intelligence services and ensuring a greater level of interaction among the various agencies — the Intelligence Bureau (IB), the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and Military Intelligence to name the top ones — should take precedence over other issues. With continuing violence in Kashmir and the Northeast, which also involve borders with neighbouring countries, speed is of the essence. Having created a National Security Council (NSC), an Advisory Board and appointed a National Security Adviser (NSA), the GoM must make sure there is no duplication or overlap of responsibilities. Too many cooks spoil the broth. The focus must be on vertical as well as lateral coordination so that every piece of intelligence is considered seriously and acted upon. One arm of the Government must not work against the other, or in competition, and this is particularly true for the IB and the RAW. They must supplement and complement each other and also encourage the intelligence wings of the State Government to share information. An apex council, comprising all these agencies, must be able to sift through all intelligence reports regularly

and enable the NSA to provide detailed input to the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Committee on Security.

On the question of internal security, a number of problem States and areas have already been identified. Some States are hit by insurgency, a few others face problems from naxalites and left extremists, while a handful of States have to deal with communal tensions. These issues need to be addressed and reviewed constantly as part of the exercise to improve internal security. (In the Rajiv Gandhi administration, there was a Minister of State in

step up security. The spillover effect is also something that causes a lot of concern. The other aspect of border management relates to maritime borders. The Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea have all to be watched and constantly monitored. Apart from the territorial or security related tensions, the whole question of administering the Exclusive Economic Zone has to be considered.

The final aspect of the review revolves around the restructuring of the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Independent of the

their operations. The CDS will be in a position to optimise the available resources and prioritise the requirements.

The Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, is the alternative and an American model. Here, the seniormost among the three service chiefs becomes the Chairman and the post rotates among the chiefs, as and when they retire. After considering this option, the Arun Singh task force has suggested the CDS as that would become a full-fledged institution by itself. When a CDS does into effect, the rank of Defence Secretary, who is a bureaucrat, will also have to be promoted to that of a Principal Secretary, so that they remain on equal terms. Whatever the new system, the equation of the defence chief with the NSC must also be worked out. The important thing is to avoid duplication of effort.

But the more sensitive issue that the GoM and the Defence Minister in particular must sort out is integration between the uniformed services and the bureaucrats. Senior defence officials will have to be posted in the MoD, and some IAS officers should also be taken into each of the services so that there is greater interaction, a give and take. There is bound to be resistance from both sides, but the exercise must start from somewhere. At least at the level of Joint Secretaries, some IAS officials will have to be inducted into the three services in the administrative headquarters, while second or third level officers from the Army, the Air Force and the Navy must also be taken into the MoD, so that they could bring their expertise to play on matters relating to their force.

The Kargil affair has provided an invaluable opportunity for the Government to take a close look at the entire defence and security scenario in the country and make some long overdue as well as sweeping changes to the systems. Without concentrating powers in any individual or agency, the GoM must decentralise powers and bring about a friendly interaction and coordination among all the Government agencies involved in these sensitive duties. The decisions must be left to the Government, but the Cabinet must have the best and right inputs to take the right decisions in the national interest.

Ensuring greater interaction among the various intelligence agencies should take precedence over other issues.

the Home Ministry exclusively dealing with internal security.) There is need for close and constant interaction with the troubled States, overall management of paramilitary forces along with the Rapid Action Force, and helping the States enhance their intelligence and security systems. The IB and the RAW must share whatever intelligence they have with the affected States, particularly when they are on the borders, so that the focus can shift to prevention.)

The task force on border management has come up with its own recommendations, based on the Subrahmanyam report. This deals with the north and the west on one side, and the eastern flanks on the other. The porous borders on both sides posed serious challenges and the whole Kargil intrusion was a fallout of the traditional practices in winter along the Line of Control (LoC), as against the procedures adopted along the boundaries. The Government is raising a fence along the border with Bangladesh, but it will take a few years to complete. Many of the militant groups in the Northeast are reported to be moving in and out of the neighbouring countries — even functioning out of them. All these have to be reckoned with in evolving an effective mechanism to monitor the borders and

Arun Singh task force, the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, has promised a revamp of the MoD to bring about a healthier interaction among the service chiefs and the bureaucrats. This will involve a revamp of the entire defence establishment to increase the level of coordination among the three services and the MoD, and also providing the service chiefs greater say in decision-making. The Arun Singh committee has made some far-reaching suggestions in this regard and the GoM must decide quickly how to effect the changes.

A major recommendation from the Arun Singh task force is the creation of the post of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS). An earlier debate in the MoD centered over what would suit the Indian context — the CDS or the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. Both have their advantages and problems, but a final decision should depend on which system can operate better in the Indian scenario. The task force has preferred the DCS option, under which the seniormost officer from the services becomes the CDS and represents all the three wings. There will be a Vice-Chief of Defence Staff to liaise with the commanders. The purpose of this institution is to integrate the functioning of all services and remove the element of insularity in

THE HINDU

5 JAN 2001

A RED LETTER DAY, SAYS FERNANDES

LCA test flight successful

By Rasheed Kappan

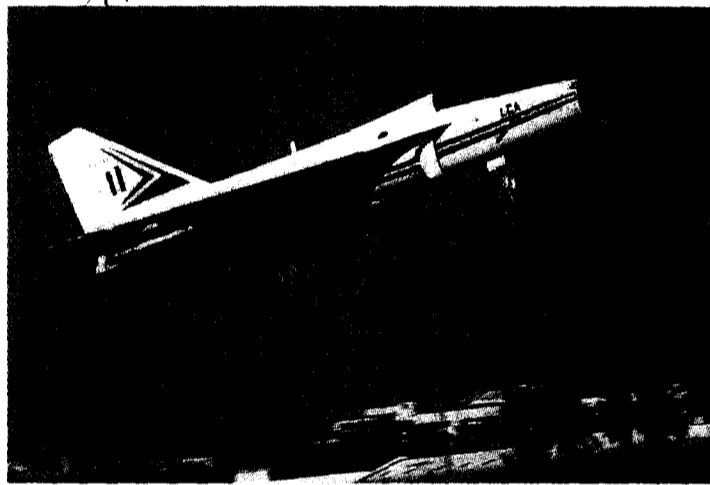
BANGALORE, JAN. 4. Creating aviation history, India's indigenously-built Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Technology Demonstrator 1 (TD 1) undertook its landmark first flight on Thursday.

Cushioned by a smooth takeoff and touchdown, the 18-minute flawless, maiden flight put the LCA project firmly in the Flight Test mode. The "red letter day" of Indian aeronautical industry, as the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, put it, had finally arrived.

Piloted by Wg. Cdr. Rajiv Kothiyal of the National Flight Test Centre, Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), the aircraft lifted off the Bangalore airport runway at 10.18 a.m. Watched by the Defence Minister and eager scientists and escorted by Air Chief Marshal A.Y. Tipnis in one of the two chasing Mirage-2000 aircraft, the LCA climbed to a height of 3,000 m before a neat touchdown. It clocked a speed of 450 kmph.

The country's second indigenous jet fighter after the HF-24 Marut of the Fifties had "success" written all over. "The flight met all the test parameters set for the process," ADA officials said. Ecstatic, the LCA Programme Director and Designer, Dr. Kota Harinarayana, certified its success.

LCA, the advanced technology,



The LCA taking off on its maiden flight in Bangalore on Thursday.

single-seat, single-engine, supersonic, lightweight, all-weather, multi-role, air superiority fighter designed for air-to-air, air-to-ground and air-to-sea combat roles had crossed its first major hurdle. "The end of the beginning," Air Chief Marshal Tipnis said.

Conceived in 1983, the Rs. 2,500-crore LCA programme completed its Project Definition Phase in 1989, and the Full Scale Engineering Development (FSED) Phase I was sanctioned in 1993. The basic design was finalised in 1990; two prototypes were originally meant to fly the next year and manufacture was scheduled

to start by 1995. Plagued ever since by the U.S. sanctions and delays, the project has now got a fillip with the successful maiden flight. The aircraft design is configured to match stringent demands of modern combat scenario, including speed, acceleration, manoeuvrability and agility. Also incorporated are features such as short takeoff and landing, excellent flight performance, safety, reliability and maintainability.

The LCA's development effort is spearheaded by the ADA and assisted by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and a host of defence research and develop-

ment organisations, besides various public and private sector establishments.

'A day of triumph'

Calling it a "day of triumph" for the country's scientists, engineers, technicians and all those associated with the project, Mr. Fernandes said the team's determination and perseverance finally silenced the "demoralising" critics. The country has now joined a select group of eight nations which have the capability to develop their own supersonic fighter aircraft.

"It is a proud moment, a historic milestone in Indian military aviation," said Air Chief Marshal Tipnis, adding a word of caution drawing attention to the road ahead. "Many more aeronautical heights need to be achieved. The efforts of all those working for the project need to be redoubled to ensure that the aircraft became a frontier fighter aircraft of the IAF."

PTI reports:

The Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, expressed happiness over the successful test flight and congratulated scientists and engineers and "everyone" associated with the project, Mr. Fernandes told presspersons.

The Karnataka Chief Minister, Mr. S.M. Krishna, also congratulated the scientists.

More reports on Page 14

THE HINDU

5 JAN 2001

LCA far from acquiring combat worthiness

HD-19
5/1
By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, JAN. 4. The maiden flight of the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) this morning is an important milestone in the development of this plane. But the much-delayed LCA is expected to take years before it can be fielded in combat.

The LCA, at one point of time, was meant to be the backbone of the fighter fleet of the Indian Air Force. Designed as a multipurpose plane, it was meant to intercept incoming hostile planes as well as to undertake ground attack offensive missions deep into enemy territory. Not surprisingly, designers say that the plane can attack with a four-tonne combat load. Apart from interdiction, the LCA was meant to be technologically equipped to jam enemy radars as well as specialise in night warfare.

Given its multi-role capability, the LCA's induction was central to make the IAF a "lean and mean force" based on hi-tech multipurpose planes. It was also meant as replacement for most of the MiG series planes with the IAF.

Despite this morning's flight, the LCA may be delayed. According to the Ministry of Defence, the LCA may be ready for combat duty "not before 2012, and probable by 2015". That would mean that the interdiction of this plane will take place after 32 years of its sanction in 1983. An estimated Rs. 3,000 crores have already been invested in this project.

The development of engines is central to this project. India's earlier venture, the HF-24, which was developed with German help in the sixties, suffered because of an underpowered engine. Several HF-24s were shot down during combat with Pakistan as they were lethargic in pulling up after a strike on account of a deficient engine. The Kaveri engine, which is being developed for the LCA, has already completed more than 1000 hours of testing in Russia. The LCA is expected to be fitted with the Kaveri engines by 2005 and during initial trials it is being powered by

the U.S.-built GE-404 engines. Given the delays in developing the LCA, the IAF has made its contingency plans. It has already signed a nearly \$ 3- billion deal for manufacturing around 140 Russian origin SU-30 planes in India. With the acquisition of over seven squadrons, which would be progressively inducted, the multi-role SU-30 is likely to be the backbone of the IAF in the next 20 years or so. The IAF is also upgrading the MiG-21 planes in order to off-set the LCA delays.

Since the LCA is likely to take another 15 years to develop, technologically it may not be the frontline plane at the lapse of this period. In fact, the IAF by then may be looking for technologically superior alternative to the SU-30 by then. The IAF's interest in the LCA by 2015 is therefore questionable.

Development of the LCA, however, will help in creating valuable infrastructure, generating advanced skills for aircraft designing and manufacture which can be harnessed subsequently.

SLRDC avionic systems flown in LCA

By Our Staff Reporter

HYDERABAD, JAN. 4. The Strategic Electronics Research and Design Centre (SLRDC) at the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) here has announced that eight avionic systems designed by it had flown in the maiden flight of the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) here on Wednesday.

In a press release, Mr. S.K. Rawal, General Manager, SLRDC, said the systems included the main communication system for air-to-air and air-to-ground communication, a standby communication system, a radio altimeter for measuring the aircraft's altitude while in flight, an audio management unit for giving different audio signals to the pilot and an identification friend or foe unit.

THE HINDU

5 JAN

Centre examines UK Bleach plea

BY OUR CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Jan. 1: The government has started examining the request made by Britain for remission of sentence awarded to Peter Bleach for his involvement in the Purlieu arms dropping case in December 1995.

According to a home ministry spokesperson, the process will take some time as a large number of inter-ministerial discussions are to be held on the issue. Britain had made a formal request to India for the release of Peter Bleach, last month. The British foreign secretary Robin Cook had written a letter to his Indian counterpart external affairs minister Jaswant Singh requesting his release in the first week of December.

The request made by the British authorities was a follow up of concerns conveyed by British home secretary Jack Straw to Union home minister L.K Advani that London wanted a "non-discriminatory" treatment for Mr Bleach. The British government had earlier maintained that it had

no intention of interfering in the Indian judicial process. But the issue has figured in the frequent talks between the leaders of the two countries.

The issue also came up when Mr Jaswant Singh visited Britain last November. He had then assured Mr Cook that he would "review the matter."

Of the 14 accused charge sheeted in the case, seven were absconding while the remaining faced trial. After completion of trial, six foreigners namely Peter Bleach from Britain and Alexander Klichine, Igor Moshvitine, Oleg Gaidah, Evguent Antimenko and Igor Timmerman from Latvia.

The seventh accused Vinay Kumar Singh was found not guilty by the court. Those convicted filed appeals in the Calcutta high court. The home ministry spokesperson said that though the appeals have been listed, the date of hearing is yet to be fixed. In July last year the President remitted the sentence of the five Latvians and they were released from the Presidency Jail.

THE ASIAN AGE

2 JAN 2001

'Point 5353 held by India'

By Atul Aneja

NEW DELHI, JAN. 1. The Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, indicated that Indian forces were now holding Point 5353, a 17,561-foot high feature which is important for the defence of a key sector on the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir. During his latest visit to the border areas, he stood on this peak and got himself photographed.

The issue of control over the point triggered a major controversy last year. Highly-placed Government forces said Pakistan had occupied the feature, located on the LoC, during the Kargil war.

It is not clear whether the Pakistani forces vacated the feature at the end of the Kargil war and subsequently re-occupied it or never left this high ground in the first place. By occupying the point, it kept a strict vigil on Marpo La, a key pass on the LoC which India dominates. Occupation had also supplemented Pakistan's observation of the national Highway 1A.

It is not clear from Mr. Fernandes' statement whether Pakistan vacated this area on its own or whether the height had been recaptured by Indian forces. Nevertheless, by controlling this height, India — in a military sense — had consolidated its hold over the LoC,

analysts here said. The Pakistani occupation of the point and its subsequent control by India raises a key question. Is it a violation of a confidence-building agreement concluded by both sides?

According to Mr. Fernandes, Pakistan, according to a report of the United Nations, "re-deployed" a division of its troops from the border in the wake of the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's peace initiative in Kashmir. But "taking in view the long borders, redeployment of one division cannot be termed as adequate", he observed. A conventional division comprises of around 10,000 troops.

Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) had added a new dimension to its anti-India campaign after the Prime Minister's declaration. Mr. Fernandes described the recent riots in Nepal and largescale destruction of property belonging to Indians as part of a "plot against India". Anti-India feelings, he said, were being spread by the ISI in a calculated manner.

India was ready to hold a dialogue with all its neighbours, including Pakistan. Islamabad, on its part, should reciprocate the initiative by containing ISI activities and eliminating cross-border terrorism, he observed.

THE HINDU

2 JAN 2001

Defence panel unhappy over delay in naval project *Sea Bird*

BY OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Dec. 31: The parliamentary standing committee on defence has expressed regret over the delays in commencement of the *Project Sea Bird*, which is one of the most strategic and ambitious projects of the Indian Navy.

"Such projects which are vital for nation's security, deserve to be accorded high priority and completed expeditiously," views the committee in its latest report which was tabled in the Lok Sabha. The

Project Sea Bird at Karwar was cleared by the Cabinet committee on political affairs in August 1985 and in 1995 the Union Cabinet approved the construction of the reduced phase-I of the project at a cost of Rs 1294.41 crores which is planned to be completed by year 2005.

The delay in the project has mainly been due to severe resource crunch which extended till 1995 and due to acquisition of land and evacuation of the affected families. The committee notes that the basic aim to establish a naval base at

Karwar apart from strategic reasons was to decongest the existing naval base in on western coast, particularly Mumbai naval base.

Keeping in view the future requirements of Navy, particularly for aircraft carriers, the committee said that necessary specialised facilities for dry docking and berthing of the aircraft carriers should be created at Karwar which at present are not available to the Indian Navy at any naval base on west coast. It added that the existing ports are already under severe strain.

THE ASIAN AGE

7 JAN 1997

High-tech systems being deployed along LoC, says Army chief

HD-13
1/1
NEW DELHI, DEC. 31. The Army has begun to deploy unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), remote sensing detectors and sensors on the LoC, while making determined efforts to fence the 100-km Jammu-Pathankot stretch of international border to check infiltration into Jammu and Kashmir.

A wide range of sensors, integrated observation equipment, hand-held thermal images and unattended ground sensors have been put in place along the 800-km long LoC after long trials, Army officials said.

The first batch of high altitude UAVs, which would enable the Army to "spot movements" across the LoC, have been deployed, the Army chief, Gen. S. Padmanabhan, said, adding "we have asked for more and will get them".

His remarks come with the turbulent State recently witnessing an upsurge in attacks, particularly

by Pakistani mercenary groups, which have rejected the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee's unilateral ceasefire and its extension. Gen. S. Padmanabhan has hinted that special forces - the para-commandos - would be used in surprise raids, to exploit the advantages of recent placement of hi-tech equipment.

The Army chief said that if the peace process gained momentum, Army's prime role would be to block infiltration along the LoC.

Some Kashmiri militant groups were clamouring for ceasefire as security forces, through sustained operations, had achieved total ground domination.

The installation of hi-tech sensors has made infiltration across the LoC perilous, and the ISI has now shifted the focus to the 100-km long stretch of international border facing Jammu division,

and over 56 attempts to sneak across were detected during the past two months alone.

To counter the menace, the Government has redoubled efforts to take up the electric fencing of the stretch at war footing with security force personnel, including those of the Army and the BSF taking on the task as civilian contractors turned tail on being fired upon by Pakistani Rangers. Army officials expressed determination to go ahead with the fencing.

The Pakistanis who did not interfere with the fencing work on the Punjab border have threatened they would not allow the international border in Jammu and Kashmir to be fenced. The Army officials said wide-ranging sensors could pick up movement of militants as well as troops build-up, to allow enough reaction time to security forces to surprise infil-

trating groups.

"We missed such sensors in Kargil conflict," top Army officials said, adding a large number of such sensors had been installed after evaluation and field trials.

They said more such sensors were being procured.

New DGOS

Lt. Gen. Vijay Lall today took over as Director General Ordnance Services (DGOS) and senior Colonel Commandant of Army Ordnance Corps.

A National Defence Academy (NDA) and Indian Military Academy (IMA) graduate, Lt. Gen. Vijay Lall took over from Lt. Gen. Bhatnagar who retired from services today, an official statement said here.

Prior to the new assignments, Lt. Gen. Lall commanded the college of materials management at Jabalpur. — PTI

THE HINDU

1 JAN 2001