

Another blunder, CPM wonders

C L Manoj in New Delhi

Nov. 22. — Another historic blunder in the offing? The CPI-M central leadership is debating whether party MLAs in Jammu and Kashmir should join Mufti Mohammed Sayeed's government.

The CPI-M's decision on not leading and joining the United Front Central government in 1998 had been described by Mr Jyoti Basu as a "historic blunder". That critique was very much on the minds of CPI-M leaders as the three-day central committee meeting began today.

There was less debate about the party's Uttar Pradesh strategy, on which there was "massive criticism" of Mr Harkishan Singh Surjeet's pro-Mulayam Singh Yadav stance. Party leaders said the politburo meeting

preceding the central committee deliberations "heatedly debated" the J&K government issue. "But in the end, a majority of politburo members decided in favour of joining the Mufti government". But the politburo has left the decision to the central committee.

"One young leader" — known for his orthodox theoretical views — however "opposed the move to join the J&K government". This leader said the same logic that applied to the Basu-related decision in 1998 was relevant here, according to party leaders.

The "orthodox" CPI-M doctrine is to not join any government in which the party does not command enough strength to influence policy matters. There has been considerable internal debate in the party over Mr Basu terming the 1998 decision as a "historic

blunder", especially after the BJP-led NDA consolidated its position at the Centre. The new party programme, framed at a special plenum a couple of years ago, saw the party subtly diluting its position on the issue.

The central committee has a number of "hard-liners" who have always opposed, because of their political compulsions in West Bengal and Kerala, the party joining governments that has either the participation or the backing of the Congress.

On Uttar Pradesh, Mr Surjeet came in for "heavy criticism" for "joining hands with Mr Yadav in trying to topple the BSP-BJP government". Some CPI-M leaders question Mr Yadav's "secular credentials". Their opposition to Mr Yadav sharpened when he walked out of the People's Front to back Dr APJ Abdul Kalam for the presidential elections.

THE STATESMAN

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CPM calls for peace but cadre killed in revenge

HT Correspondents
Kultali/Kolkata, October 3

UNIDENTIFIED ATTACKERS shot dead a CPI(M) member and threw his body in a field at Paitarhat in Kultali last night.

CPI(M) leaders said the murder is in retaliation to the killing of two SUCI leaders inside the party office in Kultali on Tuesday.

Kalipada Mandal (40), a local CPI(M) leader, was dragged out of his house and shot dead by unidentified attackers. They then cut off the head and dumped the body in a field nearby.

CPI(M) leader Dr Sujan Chakraborty said SUCI supporters killed Mandal in retaliation to the killing of district leaders Ashok Halder and Moslem Mistry in Tuesday's attack.

The SUCI had charged Sunderbans Affairs Minister Kanti Ganguly and district CPI(M) leaders of having plotted the attack on the party office. CPI(M) State secretary Anil Biswas today said he would talk with SUCI leaders to put an end to the violence.

SUCI leaders, however, denied the party's involvement in the killing. They said Mandal was murdered due to a local dispute. Police have no clue on the motive of the killing.

SUCI State secretary Prabhas Ghosh was unaware of the killing of Mandal but said the party did not believe in the "politics of annihilation". Biswas did not deny outright the charge on Kanti Ganguly but said the Minister was staying back home due to his son's illness. "I don't know about the incident (Tuesday's attack). As far as I know the Minis-

ter has been staying back home because his son is ill."

The SUCI, however, is not ready for talks until Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee gives a "free hand" to the police. "I talked to the Chief Minister, the party secretary and the Left Front chairman over the violence in South 24-Parganas at least on three occasions. We submitted a list of anti-socials on September 24 to the police. But Kanti ganguly won't let the police act," Ghosh said.

The 12-hour bandh called by the SUCI today was observed in Joynagar and Kultali. The party also observed "martyrs' day" today. The party had accused the administration of overlooking their request for security during the meeting in the party office on Tuesday. Gunmen barged into the SUCI office and gunned down an SUCI district leader and two party functionaries. Fifteen others were injured.

According to the FIR, local CPI(M) leader Ramshankar Halder and local ganglord Shahjahan Lashkar led the attack. The police also say the attack was led by Shahjahan. Three of the attackers have been arrested.

SUCI MLA Debaprasad Sarkar accused the CPI(M) of plotting the attack to wrest control over the area before next year's panchayat polls. "The SUCI had informed the police in advance about the CPI(M) attack but it was ignored," he said.

There is tension in Kultali following the killings, reportedly with a political motive. RAF jawans have been posted to check further violence.

4 OCT 2002

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

CPI lashes out at Bush 'war doctrine'

By Our Special Correspondent
R. P. G. I.

NEW DELHI, OCT. 2. The Communist Party of India has come out strongly against the U.S. President, George W. Bush's "war doctrine of pre-emptive strike". It said the doctrine reflected the U.S. intention to dominate the world and saw in it the greatest threat to mankind.

Commenting on the Bush administration's document "National Security Strategy of the United States", in which it declared that the U.S. would not hesitate to act alone, if necessary, to exercise its right of self-defence by acting pre-emptively against terrorists, the party said through this Washington had "given a burial" to its earlier Cold War doctrine of deterrent military strategy, under which awesome stock piles of armaments were built up.

"America thus reserves the right to strike anywhere, anytime and whenever it wanted, based solely on the perception of a real or imaginary threat. It today is the most powerful nation. After the demise of the Soviet Union, it is the sole superpower... the

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doctrine of pre-emptive strike by such power is thus an open declaration of its hegemonic intention to dominate the world", the CPI general secretary, A.B. Bardhan, said in the latest issue of the party organ, *New Age*.

The doctrine was announced when the Bush administration was "indulging in the rhetoric of war" against Iraq with or without U.N. sanction and the U.N. was grappling with the issue.

The party said the U.N. charter prohibits any nation from using force except for self-defence and the concept of unilaterally launching a war against another, on the mere suspicion that there is a likely threat to one's security at some future time, is also proscribed.

It said that while the U.S. never felt inhibited by such a prohibition, the Finance Minister, Jaswant Singh, had tried to rationalise it recently in Washington. The article joins issue with the Minister and disputes the contention that pre-emption was turning into an academic discussion.

"No, Mr. Minister. It is not an academic

discussion. The American administration which knows more about the business of war than we do, has not initiated any academic discussion. Its statement of doctrine has a specific context, and we must recognise it. Therefore, you are either trying to cover up the American intention behind that doctrine, or are trying to be more profound," the article said.

The article also juxtaposed the doctrine with some statements to analyse that what Washington meant to be conveyed was views like, "No one would be allowed to surpass or equal its power; Change your leaders as the U.S. demands; and that the United Nations must do what the U.S. demands or fade out".

It also sought to highlight that Mr. Bush did not have the backing of the nation with responsible voices speaking out against war. It linked the success of German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, to his stand against the U.S. move and charged that it was usual for American leaders to look at war as a solution of their country's and personal problems.

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK / CONG. OBJECTION IS 'IDEOLOGICAL'

CPI, CPI(M) for review of SC verdict

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 13. The CPI and the CPI (M) today termed the Supreme Court judgement on National Curriculum Framework (NCF) as 'unfortunate', and said it should be reviewed by the full bench of the apex court.

The Congress, on the other hand, said while it had no problem with the judgement delivered on the basis of legalistic merits, its objection was 'ideological and political, not legal'.

The two Left parties said the apex court had held that given the present legal situation, the procedure adopted by the National Council for Education, Research and Training (NCERT) in formulating the NCF was not

unconstitutional. "This is unfortunate. Tampering with the secular content of the education system has serious consequences to both our federal polity and secularism, which the Supreme Court itself has defined as a basic feature of our Constitution", the parties said in a joint statement.

Asking for a review, the Left parties said this was also necessary to establish a mechanism to evolve a national consensus on the 'concurrent' subject of education in the country's federal polity and made mandatory. They said till such a national mechanism was evolved, the States would retain their autonomy to work out their own curriculum framework.

On the issue of content of the

NCF and instructions in religion, they said the Supreme Court had correctly cautioned the Government to maintain a constant vigil on the part of those imparting religious education from the primary stage to the higher level otherwise "there is a potent danger of religious education being perverted". "Such caution, however, reassures no one today, given the aggressive communalisation of education undertaken by the Vajpayee Government," the statement said.

The Congress too expressed its apprehension saying while education of all religions was acceptable in principle, it could be violated in practice. "We have doubts about intent (of the BJP-led Government) and it

calls for continued vigilance," the party spokesman, S. Jaipal Reddy, said.

Mr. Reddy said the party would continue to insist that a meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) should be held and wondered why the Vajpayee Government was 'shying away' from consulting the body in time honoured tradition.

He said that while it was true that CABE was a non-statutory body it was equally true that this body had been instrumental in evolving a national consensus on curriculum framework between States and the Centre on one hand and on the other hand among various political parties in the form of Chief Ministers.

CPM men take on top cop at massacre site

Kinsuk Basu & Pramod Giri
Dhupguri (Jalpaiguri), August 19

A DAY after a CPI(M) minister slammed the police force and demanded a supercop to tackle the KLO menace, party workers today vent their rage on the State Director-General of Police, heckling and abusing him.

As soon as Vajpai reached the spot of Saturday's killings, a 500-strong crowd of angry CPI(M) supporters started abusing him. The mob demanded immediate suspension of the officer-in-charge of the Dhupguri police station. When efforts to pacify the mob failed and things threatened to spin out of control, reinforcements were rushed in to escort the DGP and senior officials away. This enraged the mob further and they started throwing stones at the police. No one, however, was injured. The DGP was accompanied by IG (North Bengal) Bhupinder Singh, DIG KL Meena and SP Siddinath Gupta.

The DGP later met local CPI(M) leaders, including district secretary Manik Sanyal. The CPI(M) leaders sought additional forces for KLO strongholds. Vajpai will submit a report on his visit to the Chief Minister after his return to Kolkata.

He announced that two companies of police commandos which had undergone training at an army facility would be deployed along the Indo-Bhutan border to aid the district police in combing operations. He promised to equip the police in the three districts with sophisticated weapons, including INSAS and AK-series rifles. "The police will match the firepower of the militants," he said.

He gave a clean chit to the police force in the three districts. He added that the police had gathered some clues on Saturday's massacre and hoped the militants involved in the incident would be nabbed soon.

But his words failed to pacify the local CPI(M) which had called a bandh to protest against Saturday's killings of five party workers. The bandh crippled life in Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar and parts of Darjeeling. However, there was no impact in the hill areas.

Bhattacharjee will visit Dhupguri on September 1 to address a rally against militancy.

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20 AUG 2002

KLO men kill 3 in CPM office

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JALPAIGURI, Aug. 17. — Suspected Kamtapur Liberation Organisation militants, armed with AK-56 rifles, raided the CPI-M office at Dhupguri in Jalpaiguri district this evening. The militants fired indiscriminately killing three persons and injuring 14.

The district magistrate, Dr Subroto Gupta, said two CPI-M activists were killed on the spot. According to Jalpaiguri Sadar Hospital sources, another CPI-M worker, Dulal Roy, died after admission.

The injured were being treated at the hospital. Three critically wounded were being

transferred to North Bengal Medical College and Hospital.

The state forest minister, Mr Jogesh Burman said in Siliguri that five KLO activists burst in when a zonal committee meeting of the party was underway at around 7 p.m.

Gopal Chaki, CPI-M's district committee member, and Tushar Basu, Dhupguri No. 2 local committee secretary of the party, died in the firing. The KLO activists came on three bicycles and escaped after the attack, he said.

Condemning the attack, the CPI-M leader, Mr Anil Biswas said the party would hold a

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statewide protest day tomorrow, SNS adds from Kolkata. A 24-hour Jalpaiguri bandh will be observed on Monday.

The CPI-ML (Liberation) too has criticised the KLO for the attack. The party's state secretary, Mr Kartik Pal said: "We strongly condemn this action."

CPI(M) wants Centre to maintain status quo

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MARCH 6. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has said that the Vajpayee Government is bound to maintain the status quo at the disputed site in Ayodhya and the acquired land around it.

In a statement, the CPI(M) politburo warned the Government that any move to allow 'puja' at the 'shilanyas' site, which is part of the acquired land or handing over any portion of the acquired land to the VHP, would be a "surrender to the VHP and subversion of the rule of law."

Reacting to the proposal mooted by the Kanchi Sankaracharya, it said the VHP had made it clear that it stuck to the original blueprint for temple construction, whereby the sanctum sanctorum of the temple would be located at the spot where the Babri Masjid stood. Any formal move for construction by doing 'puja' would at this stage mean accepting the VHP's plan, it cautioned.

"Such a move will flout the Supreme Court directive that nothing should be done till the title

deed suit being heard at the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court is decided through the judicial process." The statement said any repetition of history or surrender to communal pressures can lead to serious disruption of national unity.

Meanwhile, the president of the Indian National League, Ebrahim Sulaiman Sait, said the demand for return of any portion of the acquired land must be 'rejected' outright, because it would undermine the very objective sought to be achieved by the enactment of the apex court. "It is surprising that the Vajpayee Government has been in favour of such a preposterous demand."

The National Development Front of Kerala expressed apprehension that the latest initiative was also a part of the 'RSS-VHP-BJP gameplan'. The front, which campaigned for the Babri Masjid, was of the opinion that the VHP should come forward with a revised site plan of the temple building, which excludes the area where the masjid stood before the demolition.

RECEIVED

MARCH 6 1997

Anil's blame game

5/1/02 No way to tackle the ultra-Left 98 P P
WIM

It is intriguing to hear Anil Biswas, Secretary, West Bengal, CPI-M, say that his party will fight the PWG with development and not politics. One hopes this is true. The skepticism is not wholly misplaced as Anil's assertion goes against the grain of the CPI-M whose growth have not been through ideology alone. Terror (both administrative and party) chicanery and rigging have contributed significantly. They were in full flow both before and after the May 2001 state Assembly poll. It is unusual for Anil to speak in a conciliatory tone when it comes to his party's political opponents including Naxalites and Trinamul. He sounds nervous at the public outcry for the PWG leaders subjected to torture and various forms of police excesses. The suicide of Abhijit Sinha caused by untold police harassment is reminiscent of the dark days of the emergency has embarrassed Alimuddin Street. This gives the lie to claims of being democratic and tolerant towards the opposition hitherto branded as a conglomeration of thugs and pimps and treated accordingly. Intolerance for opposition led to systematic and ruthless liquidation of Congress and the Trinamul in large parts of Midnapore, Bankura and Hooghly. And now that the void is being filled up by underground PWG guerrillas pursuing armed struggle the Marxists are crying foul that they are unfairly targeted.

It is hypocritical for Anil to blame the Centre for the rise of the ultra Left and separatists like Kamtapuris. They tend to blame everyone but themselves for anything going wrong in the state. They have indulged in criminal negligence of tribals, restricting themselves to paying lip service to their plight. Can they say where the hundreds of crores of rupees, earmarked for tribal welfare and development have gone during its rule? Despite the tribal welfare department being under its control all through, it will not acknowledge the bitter truth. It does not care for the strictures from the Calcutta High Court and the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for not complying with their directives for improving the lot of the tribals. For it knows that so long as vote rigging is overlooked by the Election Commission it is secure in West Bengal.

31 JUL 2002

Training programme for CPI(M) members

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JULY 28. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) is currently busy putting select members, including a former Kerala Minister, through training in a school here.

The Central Party School, with some Politburo members as its faculty, is training some 100-odd members of the State Committees to provide an in-depth understanding of the party programme, which was updated in October 2000 at Thiruvananthapuram.

The programme, held after a gap of over three years, envisages preparing the State Committee members to be aware of the changes that have taken place in the international and national situation, which necessitated the changes and the revised formulation by the CPI (M).

"After the six-day programme, these members would go back and train others in their respective States," the Politburo

28/7 HD-11
member and CPI (M) Rajya Sabha leader, S. Ramachandran Pillai, told *The Hindu*. Among those attending the nearly 150-minute lecture on select topics is Sivadas Menon, who held the Finance portfolio in the last LDF Government in Kerala.

The programme began with the party general secretary, Harishan Singh Surjeet's lecture on the scope of the party programme and its evolution. Politburo member, Sitaram Yechury, gave his view on the experience of socialism in the 20th century and the struggle for socialism in the future, while Prakash Karat spoke on the nature of the capitalist path of development since Independence.

People's Democratic Revolution, its programme and the People's Democratic Front is the subject for Mr. Pillai while Problems of Caste and Communalism in the Struggle for People's Democratic Front would be the topic for P. Ramachandran.

CPM will tackle PWG politically

Kolkata
6/29/7
The Left Front government spells out its blueprint to contain the rising influence of PWG. Politics is the key to the strategy, says our reporter in Kolkata

July 28. — The Left Front will politically combat the PWG rather than through administrative measures, the CPI-M state secretary, Mr Anil Biswas said today.

He rejected Miss Mamata Banerjee's charge that the chief minister Mr Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee's meeting with the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister amounted to hobnobbing with them.

The chief minister visits the capital to attend Politburo and Central Committee meetings, Mr Biswas said. And during such visits it is only the norm in a parliamentary democracy that he should meet Central leaders, Mr Biswas said. "The chief minister only meets Central leaders, Miss

Banerjee is in an alliance with them." Mr Biswas said the last Assembly elections proved who is really working for the state and the panchayat elections would prove it once again.

Miss Banerjee had charged that Eastern Railway bifurcation was a conspiracy hatched by the Centre and state. Mr Biswas said a person who always conspires smells conspiracy in anything.

Medical camps in Midnapore: The district administration and the police in Midnapore West district are trying to win over the hearts of the people.

Both the administration and the police are organising medical camps in the PWG-dominated Salboni, Goaltore, Belpahari, Lalgur and Garbeta areas. The hospitals are situated far off and 90 per cent villagers lack adequate medical facilities.

The district police held a health camp at Patharpara in Goaltore yesterday where about 1,200 local people from adjoining villages were given treatment.

Medicines were also distributed among them. The SP, Mr KC Meena, inaugurated the camp. Plans are also there to organise more camps, it was learnt.

The district administration organised a medical camp at Kalaiboni in Salboni on Friday where about 300 villagers, mostly women, were treated by five medical officers and specialists.

Over the past seven months, 14 such camps were organised in the remote areas of Belpahari where more than 10,000 residents, mostly tribals, were treated.

The people of Lalgur, Jamboni, Goaltore, Salboni blocks will also be dispensed medical services by mobile health units in regular interval, Mr MV Rao, the DM, said.

Food processing unit: In a bid to engage the unemployed youth of Garbeta I block, the Paschimanchal Unnayan Parishad has allotted Rs 5 lakh as special fund to a four-member group to set up a food processing unit at Amalgore, the DM, Mr MV Rao said.

Earlier, the members were given management training as how to run the unit.

At Changsole in Salboni, the Hyderabad-based Visakha Industries, will set up their Rs 20 crore asbestos project. The work will start from 14 August. It will produce about 80,000 tons cement-asbestos sheets every year.

Bardhan calls for Central rule in Gujarat, not J&K

By Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR, JULY 21. The Communist Party of India today opposed the "move" for imposition of Governor's rule in Jammu and Kashmir and claimed that it was Gujarat which should be brought under Central rule in order to ensure free and fair elections. The party also termed the trifurcation demand of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh as a "divisive and dangerous slogan".

At the end of the two-day conference of Kashmir Council, the CPI general secretary, A.B. Bardhan, told a press conference that imposition of Governor's rule would have sinister implications in so far as Kashmir was concerned. "We do not think it is necessary. There are methods by which the Election Commission can ensure free and fair elections in the State," he said adding that "again and again Article 356 interfered with the democratic process". Also, elections should not be deferred. "No such step should be taken to vitiate the atmosphere". He appealed to all political parties, including the Hurriyat, to join the democratic process.

On whether elections in Gujarat should be held under Central rule, he said: "yes, I do feel so". The same Government, which carried out communal



carnage by conniving with the rioters, is holding elections, which is not fair, he said.

"Chauvinism, communalism and Hindutva is not supposed to ensure free and fair elections in Gujarat."

Vociferously supporting the demand for autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Bardhan said the relationship between that State and the Indian union was not the same as with Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

It has a special status and it acceded to India on some basis rejecting the "two-nation theory".

Successive Governments in

New Delhi had never honoured Article 370, which caused the further alienation of the people in the State.

It might not be possible to go back to pre-1953 status but a dialogue was needed with the political parties in Kashmir.

Organisations such as the RSS were indirectly pursuing the Pakistani agenda by demanding a trifurcation of the State and "this is a dangerous move and more dangerous is the double-speak of the BJP which has the RSS at its top and also rejects the demand".

Flanked by Shameem Faize and A.R. Tukroo, MLC, Mr. Bardhan said the promises made by the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, had not been carried out fully.

India should keep in mind that "we have to fight the battle against terrorism on our own".

For 20 years, we have been doing it and no one has come to support us."

However, he praised the role of the international community in its efforts to de-escalate tension between India and Pakistan.

Mr. Bardhan said it was time for downsizing the troops on the borders as the people, particularly farmers, were suffering in those areas. The conference re-elected Mr. Tukroo as State secretary of Kashmir Council for another term.

CPM sounds govt on People's War ban

BY OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

Calcutta, July 10: Several pressure groups, including a section of the CPM, have approached Writers' Buildings seeking a ban on the People's War.

The chief minister yesterday ruled out proscribing the People's War, saying his government and the CPM would face it politically. However, government sources said various quarters pressed for the ban, citing the Central ban on the organisation which was also followed by Andhra Pradesh.

Explaining the legalities of banning a political party, home secretary Amit Kiran Deb said:

"Since law and order is a state subject, a state government is not bound to follow the Centre and ban a political party or group. However, if a government wants to implement such a ban following the Centre, the state has to issue a separate notification as Andhra Pradesh did in case of the People's War and Bengal in case of Simi. The separate notification by the state is a must."

In the Assembly today, the Opposition walked out, demand-

ing the chief minister's resignation following the suicide of Abhijit Sinha, who was picked up for interrogation on his suspected links with People's War.

Earlier, the Trinamul Congress, the Congress and the SUCI tabled separate adjournment motions on the issue and demanded that the normal business of the House be suspended.

Speaker Hashim Abdul Halim, however, rejected the Opposition's demand but allowed Pankaj Banerjee of Trinamul, Asit Mitra of the Congress and Debaprasad Sarkar of the SUCI to read out their motions.

Buddhaddeb Bhattacharjee is expected to make a statement on the alleged police torture of lecturer Kaushik Ganguly and the circumstances that led to the suicide of Central excise inspector Abhijit Sinha on Sunday.

The chief minister will also make a statement on Subhas Bala, a criminal who terrorised Salt Lake and died in a police encounter.

"Events leading to Sinha's suicide remind us of the black days during the emergency of the 1970s when the police used to pick up innocent youths for suspected links with Naxalites,"

said Sarkar in the Assembly lobby.

Opposition legislators shouted slogans in the House, condemning the police and demanding punishment for those responsible for Sinha's harassment which prompted him to commit suicide.

A poster on Trinamul legislator Paresch Pal's chest demanded the chief minister's resignation. Pal's colleagues, including Kalyan Banerjee, Sonali Guha, Jyotipriya Mullick, Subrata Bakshi, Tapas Roy and Arup Bhadra, also shouted slogans, criticising the police.

Congress and SUCI legislators walked out at noon and were soon followed by Trinamul MLAs.

While Trinamul and Congress MLAs boycotted the proceedings of the house for the rest of the day, the SUCI member returned in the second half to participate in the discussion of the health varsity Bill tabled by health minister Surya Kanta Mishra.

Suspected Naxalite activists Kaushik Ganguly, Tinku Ghosh and Parashar Bhattacharya will be produced in court tomorrow in Paschim Midnapore.

CPI(M) demands President's rule in Gujarat

By Our Special Correspondent

BANGALORE, MAY 24. The CPI (M) has demanded the dismissal of the Gujarat Government and imposition of President's rule in the State. The demand was made by the party's Politburo on Thursday and the Central Committee endorsed it at a meeting here today.

The CPI (M) has all along opposed the use of Article 356 to dismiss elected governments. But the Gujarat Government has "set itself against the Constitution" and no other State Government has acted with impunity "supporting those who conducted pogroms against the minorities", according to a press release by the Central Committee.

Prakash Karat, Politburo member, told presspersons that so far the CPI (M) and other Opposition parties had, so far, been demanding the removal of Narendra Modi from the Chief Minister's post. The Gujarat Government continued to "brazenly violate the Constitution and was working in an anti-secular fashion". The violence against minorities also continued.

The party planned to spend Rs. 1 crore on rehabilitation of the people affected by the Gujarat riots. Mr. Karat said the party had collected money from various States for the rehabilitation work.

He said the Committee discussed the situation at the party congress held in Hyderabad in March. The two-month period had seen continuing violence against the minority community, and the toll had risen far



The CPI (M) general secretary, Harkishen Singh Surjeet, and senior leader, Sitaram Yechuri, at the Central Committee meeting in Bangalore on Friday. — Photo : T.L. Prabhakar

above official estimates. Over one lakh people living in relief camps had not received adequate relief.

The meeting decided to conduct an intensive campaign on the danger to national unity and communal amity.

The Committee had decided to call upon all democratic and secular forces to unite and conduct a peaceful campaign to mobilise all sections of people against the threat posed by the Gujarat events. The Politburo had been authorised to take steps to build such a broad-based movement.

The Committee strongly opposed the military collaboration of the country with the U.S. The recent joint exercise between the special forces of the U.S. and the Indian paratroopers at Agra marked a new stage in military cooperation. There were reports that the next joint exercise would be conducted in the North-East.

The U.S., with its close military and strategic ties with Pakistan, was unwilling to pressure the Musharraf regime to check the extremist, fundamentalist forces operating in Jammu and Kashmir.

By committing India to be a willing collaborator to advance the U.S. strategic interests in the region, the Vajpayee Government had "put the country in a subordinate position where its strategic and security interests were ignored and disregarded".

It called upon democratic and patriotic sections to realise the danger of such a military collaboration.

On the continued acts of aggression by the Israeli Government against the Palestinians, the committee decided to mobilise public opinion in support of the latter. It criticised the Vajpayee Government for refusing to condemn the Israeli action.

The meeting will continue tomorrow.

THE HINDU

25 MAY 2002

CPM to keep its ideology distinct from allies

5-10 24/3

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

HYDERABAD, March 23. — The CPI-M will maintain its ideological distinctiveness from its allies. The party feels it has failed to expand its base in the Hindi heartland and the South because it is not asserting its world view on different issues.

"While we are engaged with other parties for a united front, we found the need to demarcate with them. We should try to expand our independent activities," said CPI-M politburo member Mr Ramachandram Pillai at a press conference here.

He said the party's lack of base in the Hindi heartland and the South was an important issue and was discussed

at the 17th congress here. The party's achievement in West Bengal was difficult, but this is not enough and more effort is required, he said.

He said other reasons are that within the party there are small sections, which are inactive or are not as active as can be expected. Moreover, there are newcomers in the party who have not been educated on the party ideology properly, he said.

The party should also come to terms with information technology which has become a key element in Indian and foreign ideology, he said.

Mr Pillai said there would be no structural changes in the party hierarchy. He said the central committee would be elected tomorrow. On the

general secretary's election he said: "It's the will and the pleasure of the central committee to elect the general secretary."

On whether opinion is divided between politburo members Mr Prakash Karat and Mr Sitaram Yechuri for the key post, he said his colleagues have said enough on the matter. "Today I am giving you the liberty to speculate."

The party adopted four resolutions on Gujarat violence, Ayodhya, communalisation of education and the grim agrarian situation in the country. The resolution on the Gujarat communal violence was moved by Mrs Brinda Karat and the party's demand is that the present government has no right to



Mr Buddhaddeb Bhattacharjee with Mr Chandrababu Naidu in Hyderabad on Saturday. — AP/PTI

continue and the chief minister be removed from office. A resolution on Poto was adopted by the congress, Mr Pillai said.

CPM to seek Cong help, not hand

FROM TAMAL SENGUPTA
AND G.S. RADHAKRISHNA

Hyderabad, March 21: The CPM will not form any alliance with the Congress but is not averse to seeking the help of the "main Opposition party with a mass base" in its attempt to dislodge the BJP.

A day after the party revealed its divisions vis-à-vis its Congress position, its leaders tried to maintain a balance between avowed anti-Congressism and the need of the hour during the discussions on the draft political resolution at the ongoing party congress.

CPM politburo member Prakash Karat today said the party would seek Congress help to defeat the BJP-led government during the joint session of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, meeting to vote on the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance on March 26.

"We expect the Congress to support us in opposing the BJP attempts to gain approval for the controversial Ordinance," Karat said.

"As our only aim is to keep the BJP away from power, it will not be wrong to expect support from the Congress," he reasoned.

Karat's views were shared by Sitaram Yechuri, another politburo member, who did not rule out exploiting the Congress's strength in trying to dislodge the BJP, though the next Lok Sabha polls were still some time away.

"There is no doubt that Congress has managed to keep its mass base intact and is the

main Opposition party in the Lok Sabha," Yechuri said.

However, according to Yechuri, the Congress is, directly or indirectly, encouraging communal forces. "This, we feel, is equally dangerous," he said, adding that the CPM would not go in for any electoral alliance with the Congress. But even he could not vouch that the party would never seek Congress support.

Despite admitting his party's inability to combat the BJP at the national level, Yechuri made it clear that its only aim was to form a third alternative to both the Congress and the BJP.

"People in our country have no choice but to cast their votes either for the Congress or the BJP," he said. "We want to offer the people of India a third alternative to enable them to exercise their franchise in the right direction," Yechuri said, supporting his theory with the Uttar Pradesh poll results, which showed that people are "really seeking an alternative to both the BJP and the Congress".

It would be the CPM and the Left parties that would lead the third front, bringing the secular and democratic forces under one umbrella, Karat and Yechuri added.

The CPM expressed its displeasure over the Telugu Desam Party's stand on the BJP. "The Desam will have to tell the people clearly with whom they want to ally. We are not saying it is a communal party but it is providing support to the communal BJP," they said. The CPM has no plans of including the Desam in the third front until it snapped ties with the BJP, they added.

THE TELEGRAPH

22 MAR 2002

CPM axes *Ganashakti* editor

BY A STAFF REPORTER

Calcutta, Feb. 25: Acknowledging chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee's criticism of *Ganashakti*, the CPM today announced major changes in the party mouthpiece.

As reported by *The Telegraph* today, *Ganashakti* editor Dipen Ghosh was replaced with a relatively lightweight party functionary, Narayan Dutta, also a state committee member.

Among other notable appointments to the newspaper were those of Abhik Dutta and Atanu Saha who have been given high posts.

The changes were announced by CPM politburo member and Left Front chairman Biman Bose at the end of the four-day state party conference. "We made the changes unanimously," Bose said.

The changes were made following Bhattacharjee's expression of resentment over some reports published in the paper regarding madarsas a fortnight ago.

The party mouthpiece had carried at least three articles, quoting Bhattacharjee as saying that some unauthorised madarsas in the state were engaged in "anti-national" activities and that the government would initiate stern action against them.

Both Bhattacharjee and the party had to deny the *Ganashakti* reports following a Muslim backlash against the chief minister's controversial



Bhattacharjee

statements. This is the first time that the CPM has had to contest reports published in its mouthpiece. "Is *Ganashakti* our party paper or a bourgeois publication?" Bhattacharjee had asked at a recent state committee meeting.

A section of the party leadership had defended Ghosh initially.

However, it read the overwhelming mood and persuaded Ghosh to relinquish the post. Ghosh, known for his close proximity to state CPM secretary Anil Biswas, will now be a member of the state secretariat.

CPI(M) to back Buddhadeb's economic policies

By Our Special Correspondent

KOLKATA, FEB. 24. The CPI(M) today decided to extend full-fledged support to the Chief Minister, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, to allow him to formulate policy initiatives in view of the sweeping changes taking place in the world economy.

Sensing that some of the future policy announcements might be interpreted by certain quarters as a u-turn on the professed policies of the CPI(M)-led ruling left coalition, the party leadership assured the ongoing State party conference that the Bhattacharjee Government's policies would be formulated in tune with globalisation, provided they protect the interests of the common man.

The conference is currently discussing the need for re-inventing itself against the backdrop of globalisation and the inter-locked issues of disinvestment, private capital and the impact of liberalisation.

Placing a document

entitled, 'Left Front Government and its tasks ahead,' the State Industry Minister, Nirupam Sen, told the conference on Saturday that the world is undergoing drastic changes and the front Government would have to keep pace with those changes."

Mr. Sen is believed to have indicated that the Bhattacharjee Government might have to introduce certain economic policies in the coming days which perhaps would appear to many as 'harsh'.

But, the policies, apparently tough, would be necessary to get out of the financial jam the State Government was currently in, thanks to the Centre's economic policies which were impacting adversely the agricultural sector, employment generation and, above all, the State's finance, Mr. Sen explained.

Elaborating, he said that the Centre had virtually stopped recruitment under its liberalisation policy but the State had not followed in the Centre's footsteps.

However, there was need for restraint with regard to recruitment." It's not as if allocations should remain unutilised especially at times of financial distress. What has to be spent has to be done in a judicious manner so that the common man is benefited. This is where decentralisation takes a new meaning and we will let finances percolate to the lowest levels at the panchayat and the local bodies."

Mr. Sen emphasised that the proposed policies would not really mark a sea change, but would only mean implementation of the policies already announced in the past. Citing the instance of state public sector undertakings (PSUs), he mentioned that the Government had been pursuing a policy of making the sick units turnaround.

"It's not feasible to carry on with sick PSUs without even trying to make them profitable. It's our intent to bring capital, private or through joint ventures to revive the units."

25 FEB 2002

25 FEB 2002

CPM rallies behind govt reforms drive

BY A STAFF REPORTER

Calcutta, Feb. 24: Stepping out of frayed ideological cordons, the CPM today sought to dispel doubts about the Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee-government's ability to unveil bold initiatives on the economic and industrial fronts in the face of opposition from within the party.

On the third day of its 20th state conference, the party pledged support to the government which gives the impression of foundering on party orthodoxy while seeking to formulate policy initiatives aimed at ensuring go-go development for Bengal.

State CPM secretary Anil Biswas, one of the principal ar-

chitects of the party's refashioned attitude, said the party would infuse its own dynamics into Bhattacharjee's attempts to reconstruct the state's economy and industry by getting Citu, the monolithic labour arm, to support them.

"We, as a party, will stand firmly by the side of the government when it embarks upon executing its programmes. And we will take an 'active' role in 'convincing' our trade union (Citu) and other mass organisations to support the government in its endeavour to ensure progress of the state," Biswas said.

Underlining the need for better coordination between the government and the party,

Biswas said: "We would work unitedly and help each other in tackling problems and obstacles."

Citu, one of the perceived hurdles on the road Bhattacharjee's government wishes to walk down, and its responses to the contentious economic, industrial and labour issues figured prominently in today's discussions.

The 800-odd delegates at the conference examined the Citu factor in light of the changing economic and political scenario

across India. Many of them called for a balanced approach.

Biswas admitted that a large number of delegates expressed concern at the problems facing industry and workers in the state and the role Citu and the other Left

trade unions were expected to play in the changed political and economic situation.

But he deftly skirted the question on whether the party would put a cap on the trade union movement in the state.

Going by signals, a clash between the government-party combine and the trade unions is in the realm of possibility now that the CPM has pledged support for the Bengal government as and when it unveils its disinvestment programme.

Party delegates like Dilip Sen, an influential member of the Calcutta district committee, argued that trade unions will be made irrelevant once the party and the government put a cap on labour movement, dispose of sick public sector undertakings and begin to woo private capital.

"How can we oppose the BJP for its plan to close down the PSUs run by them when our government is going to take a simi-

lar decision regarding our own PSUs?" Sen asked during a discussion on "Left Front government and our responsibilities".

But he stopped pressing the point after he realised that both the party and the government had made up their minds.

Five delegates, including Harekrishna Samanta from West Midnapur, Tarami Patra (Bankura), Amal Halder (Burdwan) and Laxman Seth from Midnapore East discussed the report placed by industry minister Nirupam Sen yesterday.

However, except Sen, all the other delegates remained silent on Citu's role in regard to the state government's plan to close down the loss-making PSUs.



Buddha

expected to play in the changed political and economic situation.

But he deftly skirted the question on whether the party would put a cap on the trade union movement in the state.

CPM:

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(Continued from page 1)

bilateral discussions with the LF partners".

The state secretary's report highlighted the dangers of majority and minority fundamentalist forces and extremist groups such as the People's War Group and Kantapuri Liberation Organisation. "The state is not free from the dangers of terrorism which has no geographical, religious or racial identity. Nor does it believe in class struggle or contradictions," it stated.

Mr Nirupam Sen, minister for industries, placed during the day the document on "Left Front government and our tasks" the discussion on which will begin tomorrow.

The document urged the party to be united in its support to the policies the state government is going to implement to improve its performance.

The new government, under Mr Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, has pledged to offer a more dynamic, effective and sensitive administration to the people for which the party may have to shed some of its doctrinaire approach.

Already, the state government has met with some resistance from party hard-liners on some key issues. Mr Sen's document is apparently an attempt to carry the party with the government in its effort to deliver and refurbish its image that received a beating during the 24-year rule.

So far, 14 delegates have spoken on the political-organisational report.

THE STATESMAN

20/10/77

Divestment document on agenda today

Buddha selloff plan testfired

BY TAMAL SENGUPTA

Calcutta, Feb. 23: A day after committing itself to chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee's "aggressive" pursuit of private capital, the CPM today signalled a move to roll back the challenge from party hardliners and create space for the government to launch a disinvestment programme in Bengal.

On the second day of the party's 20th state conference, the CPM placed a statement of intent about the contentious and inter-locked issues of disinvestment, private capital and the impact of globalisation. The party picked industry minister Nirupam Sen — a favourite of the hardliners — for the job.

The document is expected to raise a storm when it is taken up for discussion tomorrow. To silence detractors, the document says, unlike the BJP, the state government would put in place a "safety net" before closing down or selling off sick units.

"What is going to happen in this conference is empowerment of Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee's government," said a party official. "It is something remarkable because never before has a state

conference been asked to formulate decisions in the context of sweeping changes in the global economy, politics and technology. The leadership realises that this empowerment is necessary if we want to continue as the Front for some more time."

Laying the roadmap for change, Sen said: "We would like all PSUs owned by the state government to do well on their own, but we should also be prepared to take practical decisions about the sick ones if they are beyond redemption."

"We may have to close them down and use their infrastructure and labour elsewhere. In the present economic situation, we cannot go on nursing this particular category," he added.

Sick PSUs will be clubbed into two categories: loss-making but salvageable, and loss-making and beyond redemption. "If necessary, we will have to consider a joint initiative of the state and the private sector to run some of these PSUs."

"Because of globalisation, the Left Front government is finding it difficult to work like before for the poorer sections of society. The changed circumstances are forcing us to allow the entry of private capital into

our state. Wooing private capital is now the order of the day. All states are doing it, we cannot be seen to be lagging on this count," Sen said.

Though a section in the CPM is likely to find the sweeping reforms unpalatable, state secretary Anil Biswas had said yesterday the delegates were expected to support the party's move to back the government's initiatives on the economic front.

Sen, during his one-and-a-half-hour presentation, also proposed an appreciable reduction in government expenditure, especially on account of ministers and bureaucrats.

"More stress will be given to the cooperative movement and we will try hard to utilise the banking facilities to mobilise money for the benefit of the poorer sections," Sen said.

Today's session also touched on corruption in the CPM ranks. "We believe we will not be able to remove corruption from the organisation by only taking penal action against a handful of party leaders. We have to inculcate among them party discipline and Marxist ideology," Biswas told reporters. Six resolutions were moved during the day by the delegates.

THE TELEGRAPH

24 FEB 2002

Purge in CPM put on hold

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, Feb. 23. — The CPI-M is, for the moment, not resorting to any purge of corrupt elements since that is not the only solution, the party's state secretary, Mr Anil Biswas, told the state conference today.

The more effective way to deal with what he called the "crisis in the party" is to ideologically reorient the members. "No Communist party in the world is immune to corruption and our party is no exception."

Corruption and immorality among a section of party-men and functionaries, factionalism and sycophancy featured prominently today in the debate on the political-organisational report.

Mr Biswas, who had placed the report yesterday, urged delegates to make an all-out effort to root out the

vices that have gripped a section of partymen.

"These vices are not district-specific and the party has to fight them wherever they exist," Mr Biswas said in reply to a question on whether the delegates had identified any particular district unit to have been severely affected by corruption.

The political-organisational report urged the state government to "improve its administrative efficiency, despite its increasing limitations".

It outlined the challenges before the state government in the wake of the "onslaught of the globalisation policy". Mr Biswas, in his report, stressed the need for "strengthening Left Front unity and holding Left Front committee meetings more regularly apart from continuing

■ See CPM: page 10

THE STATESMAN

BJP may revive temple issue, says CPI(M)

By Our Special Correspondent

KOLKATA, FEB. 22. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) thinks that the BJP — which it feels is facing a “rout” in the Uttar Pradesh elections — would revive the demand for construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya.

The CPI(M) general secretary, Harkishan Singh Surjeet, said here today that if the recent poll projections were anything to go by, the Bharatiya Janata Party would be defeated in U.P. “Then, it (BJP) would concentrate on reviving its earlier demand for a Ram temple in Ayodhya.”

Inaugurating the CPI(M)’s 20th State conference here, Mr. Surjeet said that communists

were alarmed at the developments that were taking place in Ayodhya with the ‘sants’ assembling there at the call of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP).

The CPI(M) leadership said the BJP had a “covert understanding with the VHP” on the temple issue as became evident from the way the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, urged the VHP to wait till 2004 to implement its agenda. “The Prime Minister had asked the VHP to wait till 2004 so that his party can run the Government for another two years,” Mr. Surjeet said.

Sensing dangers arising out of the VHP’s attempts to build a Ram temple in the disputed site

in Ayodhya, the CPI(M) politburo had discussed the issue on Thursday and decided to resist the move. The party, along with the country’s secular forces, will organise a string of rallies and protest demonstrations in the coming days.

“We must put up an organised resistance to foil the attempts of those who are trying to strike at secularism,” Mr. Surjeet said. Among those who were present at the conference were the veteran leader, Jyoti Basu, the West Bengal Chief Minister, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, Prakash Karat and Sitaram Yechuri, both politburo members, the State party secretary, Anil Biswas, the Left Front chairman, Biman Bose, and a host of other front-ranking leaders.

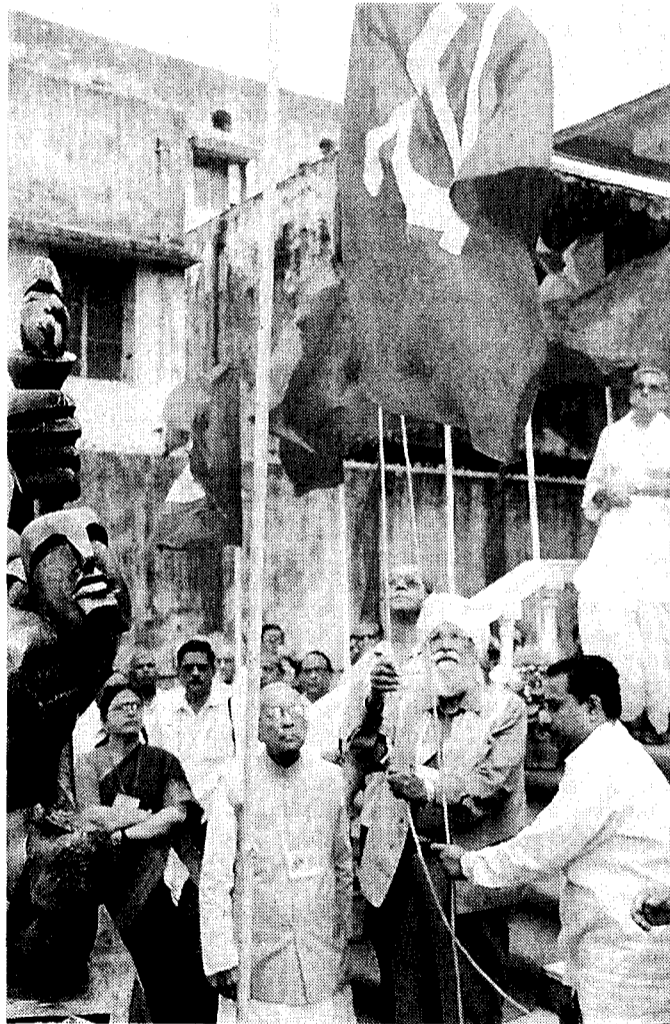
In the course of his hour-long speech, Mr. Surjeet dwelt on issues such as the international communist movement, the collapse of socialism in Russia and the rise of America as the sole superpower.

The collapse of the Soviet Union had given rise to a unipolar world where America dominated. None of the existing socialist countries was in a position to face the U.S. “China, Russia and India should come together to form a formidable force against the U.S.”

He said there was no move from the India Government’s side to forge a united front with China and Russia against America. “The Indian Government has no mind of its own. It is always trying to please the Bush administration,” he alleged.

He criticised the Vajpayee Government for its policies which, he said, were “ruining the country’s economy”. This apart, the Government was hurriedly selling off the profitable public sector units, changing labour laws that were detrimental to the workers’ interests and “saffronising” education.

He alleged that the BJP Government had “surpassed” the earlier ones with regard to corruption. The Tehelka tapes had shown the BJP president accepting bribe. “The party (BJP) was forced to remove its president from office on charges of corruption.”



Harkishan Singh Surjeet and Jyoti Basu hoist the party flag, at the 20th State conference of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), in Kolkata on Friday. — Photo: Sushanta Patronobish

Nirupam Sen declares incentives war on competition

Bengal bang on investor door

22/2/01 01 1-1 J.P.D. - CPM

BY A STAFF REPORTER



OLD ORDER CHANGETH: Basu with Surjeet at the meet.

Calcutta, Feb. 22: If Maharashtra can, so can communist Bengal.

Suitor Bengal is ready at last to roll up its sleeves and slug it out with other states to win the hearts of investors.

This means a raft of incentives, rebates, concessions — the whole works.

“Private investors will not set up their units in our state if there is no room for profit. Naturally, they will set up their units in those states where they will get maximum benefit,” said industry minister Nirupam Sen, acknowledging a fact that everyone knew but

few in the CPM were bold enough to admit.

“We (the government) are just not in a position to stop globalisation from influencing (economic, political and societal) life in Bengal. Yes, we may try, but we must remember all the other Indian states are actively chasing private capital. If we do not compete with these states, we will have to suffer economically,” the minister told a seminar on the Impact of Globalisation in Bengal.

The seminar was organised as part of the CPM's twentieth state conference.

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THE TELEGRAPH

CPM stand

► FROM PAGE 1

If such plainspeak from a CPM ideologue was not enough to leave the hardliners red in the face, then more was to follow. The state, Sen said, would no longer be in the business of setting up new units because neither did it have the resources nor the desire to do so. Haldia Petrochemicals was its last venture — and the experience was not particularly encouraging. Nor, said Sen, would Bengal oppose the Centre's move to close down sick public sector undertakings.

"Our powers are very limited. What can we do to prevent the Centre from closing down PSUs in our state? We can only request them not to shut down these units. Why, we don't have that kind of money to support them. Look at Indian Iron and Steel Company.... We sacrificed, at the behest of the Centre, Rs 350 crore for the interests of thousands of workers in the factory.... We cannot take over sick PSUs, we are already in a severe debt trap."

But to soften the blow and keep the red flag flying, Sen said the government accepted on principle the premise that privatisation has brought in its wake miseries for workers. But the ground realities precluded the state from opposing the closure of PSUs or taking over the same units at huge prices, he said.

Sen's observations will be a blow to the lobbies that are trying to build up a movement, with support from the government, for the takeover of Jessop, the state-owned engineering firm to be sold to a private party soon.

"We did not come to power saying we would shun private capital and establish socialism in Kerala, Tripura and Bengal.... We clearly told the people that we have to run our governments within the existing capitalist system in the country," Sen added. "But our aim will be to provide maximum opportunities to the working class within the existing set-up."

THE TELEGRAPH

23 FEB 2002

Pushed to a corner

9. P.P. CPIM **Buddhadev stands vindicated** S.S.A. 19/12

It is to Buddhadev Bhattacharya's credit that in spite of insistent pressures from within his own party, he had the courage to meet the Union home minister, in his official capacity, during the stay in the capital. The occasion was a meeting of the Politburo of which the chief minister is a member. If he took time off from a party conference to exchange ideas with LK Advani, it was because he felt quite rightly that matters that concern the nation take precedence over the party. We are reduced to compliment the chief minister on what any responsible person in his position would do without thinking and this is a reflection on Buddhadev's predecessor who still struts about the stage where he has no business to be. It is also a healthy departure from cynical positions taken by other party colleagues. Aftab Ansari's deportation was a vindication of the position Buddhadev has been taking. And all Marxists in good conscience should have stood solidly behind him. Instead Sitaram Yechuri makes no attempt to amend his statement that the Ministry of Home Affairs should not rush to the conclusion that the ISI were behind the attack on the American Center. And Surjeet persists with the hypocrisy that the CPI-M has generally displayed on such occasions by suggesting that the Politburo discussed everything except the obvious subject — the problem of unregistered madrasas funded from overseas and the fears, now real, that the underworld in the state have links with the ISI. In other words, the chief minister is a lonely man these days but he is right. The party can do worse than stand behind him in this hour of crisis. On the contrary, everything is being done to compel him to retract from the position that there a few things wrong with the madrasas which need to be rectified. The party has surrendered to political convenience at the cost of national interests and despite clinching evidence staring them in the face. This takes nothing away from Buddhadev's bold attempt to rise above party interests and see the problem for what it is — largely the Left Front's own creation.

While Jyoti Basu's only reason for his irresponsible behaviour is to embarrass his successor, he must eat his words over his strong denial of any ISI links in West Bengal. But the man is beyond redemption. If the crisis has now assumed more dangerous proportions, the country is entitled to expect that the CPI-M will view this as a social and national threat and provide Buddhadev moral and material support to cope with a potentially explosive situation. Buddhadev has followed his conscience in the past in what was seen as a virtual revolt. This time, again, he is being pushed to a corner.

Hang in there, Chief Minister!

THE STATESMAN

CPI insists on Poca debate

HT Correspondent
Kolkata, February 13

WATER RESOURCES Investigation Minister Nandagopal Bhattacharya of the CPI today fired another salvo at Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee on the introduction of the Prevention of Organised Crime Bill at the budget session of the Assembly.

Chief Minister told reporters at the Writers' Buildings yesterday that he was hopeful of tabling the

Bill in the Assembly session beginning on February 27. Bhattacharjee had ruled out any possibility of holding an all-party meeting on it before its introduction.

Expressing strong resentment against Bhattacharjee's remarks, Nandagopal has contended that the Bill and all the provisions contained in it need to be discussed threadbare first with the Left Front partners and with the Cabinet. It is only after a consensus is reached that such a Bill could be

brought forward for discussion and approval by the State Legislature, he said.

Reminded that the Bill has already been approved by the Cabinet at its meeting on December 6, 2001, Bhattacharya reiterated that he had duly conveyed his party's opposition to Poca at this meeting.

While both Bhattacharya and his party colleague, Minister of State for Civil Defence Srikumar Mukherjee, recorded their disapproval, all the other 26 mem-

bers of the Cabinet present at that meeting gave their nod to it.

Refusing to budge from his party's position, the CPI minister asserted that if Poto failed to prevent the dastardly attack on Parliament on December 13, 2001, why should we delude ourselves in believing that Poca would be the right answer to effectively deal with organised crime and terrorist attacks.

Even the attack on the American Center on Janu-

ary 22 was no justification for promulgation of Poca, he stated.

To bolster his point, Bhattacharya referred to the Chief Minister's statement to the press on January 22 to the effect that "no parallel should be drawn between the necessity for Poca and the terrorist attack on the American Center."

"I would have certainly introduced Poca, even if the incident didn't take place," the Chief Minister had clarified.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

14 FEB 2002

All-party meet okays talks with PWG

2 PP
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13/2

Statesman News Service

HYDERABAD, Feb. 12. - The all-party meeting convened by Mr N Chandrababu Naidu was today unanimous that the government take up the PWG's offer for talks. The government said it will work out draft modalities and necessary details in 10 days.

The TDP government, expressing its willingness for talks, sought political parties' opinion. They said it was a welcome move on the PWG's part, but asked the government to spell out clearly how it proposes to go about the exercise and also assess the possible repercussions.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet too

discussed the matter before the all-party meeting. Mr Naidu said the offer ought to be accepted, but the question of whom to talk to, on what basis, where and the agenda involved need to be thrashed out. Ministerial sources said they were briefed about the police point of view. The Cabinet was told the initiative and the exercise has to be political in nature. It wasn't fair for the home secretary or the DGP to be part of the process, police said.

The Cabinet was also briefed about the risks involved. One can expect the Naxalites to use this period by consolidating themselves by going in for fresh recruitments.

THE STATESMAN

13 FEB 2002

AYODHYA / READY TO FACE BULLETS: GIRIRAJ KISHORE

VHP move will be a serious provocation: CPI(M)

By Our Special Correspondent

COIMBATORE, FEB. 12. Even as the CPI(M) politburo member, Prakash Karat, today demanded that the Government should not allow the shifting of Ram temple construction materials to the "land in its custody" in Ayodhya, the senior national vice-president of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Giriraj Kishore, announced that his organisation was ready to face "even bullets if Government prefers to impose a ban on activities" (to accomplish its mission of building the Ram temple).

Mr. Karat, who was here in connection with the 17th State Conference of the party, apprehended that the transport of materials to Ayodhya, "in gross violation of law and court order", would lead to "serious provocation".

He alleged that the RSS-BJP-VHP were "working to a plan". He wondered why the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, was saying time and again that the temple issue was not on the "NDA agenda" but "why doesn't he say it is not on the country's agenda?"

"We want the Government to stay out of the issue and let the title (of the disputed land) be decided by the court."

Mr. Karat said the current situation could not be likened to that of 1990-91 and hence, by playing the communal card, the BJP would not be able to reap electoral dividends. It was headed for defeat in the Assembly elections which would be a defeat of its policies including that of Ayodhya. Besides, there was a "counter secular mobilisation" now which would defeat its "nefarious" designs.

If the same trend were to continue, his party, in consultation with other "national and secular parties", would launch a "joint movement against this".

Mr. Karat said the talk of "unification" of the Communist parties — the CPI(M) and the CPI — was "premature". There was some such talk in the CPI. However, it was only "left unity" as far as

the CPI(M) was concerned. "Let us strengthen left unity first which might lead to deeper unity."

Pejavar swamiji calls for restraint

By Our Staff Correspondent

Raichur, FEB. 12. The senior swamiji of the Pejavar Math in Udipi, Sri Vishweshwara Teertha, who is a member of the Ram Janmabhoomi Trust and also of the Advisory Committee to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, has appealed to the 'sants' not to hurry construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya and wait for some time as the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, has promised to address the issue after the Assembly election in Uttar Pradesh.

Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, he said that Mr. Vajpayee had told a 'sants' delegation recently that he was not in a position to hand over the undisputed land to the trust as his party had no majority in the National Democratic Alliance to take any unilateral decision.

The swamiji quoted the Prime Minister as saying that he was ready to resign than hand over the undisputed land to the trust. But Mr. Vajpayee agreed to pursue the suggestions made by him (the swamiji) while solving the Ayodhya row, the swamiji said.

The swamiji said that he had asked Mr. Vajpayee to expedite the disputed matter pending in the apex court and consult the Law Ministry on the possibility of giving some portion of the undisputed land in Ayodhya to the 'sants'.

The Prime Minister had agreed to these suggestions and promised to address the issue after the election. At the same time, Mr. Vajpayee had sought an opinion from the Law Minister, the swamiji said.

He said except the 'sants' and Paramhans Ramachandra Das, chairman of the Trust, the leaders of the VHP and the RSS had agreed to his suggestions and the views of the Prime Minister.

THE HINDU

FEB 12 1992

Religious touch to meet raises hackles

CM walks into fresh dispute

BY A STAFF REPORTER

Calcutta, Feb. 11: For the Bengal chief minister, it was a barely-audible *adaab*, accompanied by a more visible raising of the half-open palm to a corner of the forehead when presented with the bouquet. For the state's ruling Left Front chairman, it was a *salaam* at the beginning and an *adaab* at the end of a speech that read more like an ode to Saddam Hussein.

Everything seemingly went according to the script this morning as chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and Front head Biman Bose embarked on an effort to tidy some ruffled feathers within the minority community at the open session of the West Bengal Madarsa Shikshak Samiti's annual conference. But, within a few hours of the event, a part that was in the original script but was overlooked by everyone threatened to spoil the mood at the CPM headquarters.

The news that the gathering addressed by Bhattacharjee, Bose and three of the four CPM ministers from the community (Md Salim, Md Amin and Anisur Rahman) began with a reading from the *Quran* stirred up a controversy within the CPM with a section of the party saying that senior leaders should not have spoken at a meet that started with readings from a religious text.

The fact that state primary and secondary education minister Kanti Biswas stayed away after he was heckled at a similar function last year, for protesting against the *Quran*-reading part, highlighted the fractious mood



Buddha at the meet

within the party. The prevailing sentiment was that the party, which protested against renditions of the *Saraswati Vandana* at functions, should have been more careful when it came to *Quran* readings.

Despite the bitterness caused by the fresh controversy, nothing was left to chance in the damage-control exercise aimed at soothing the frayed nerves of the community. There were promises of more financial grant to madarasas, there were promises to give government affiliation to more madarasas, there were promises to instal computers in religion-teaching schools, and vows to protect the community "at the cost of everything" and some America-bashing for its "atrocities" in Afghanistan. But the audience response indicated that tempers would take some more time — and, probably, some more sops — to cool down.

The chief minister had creat-

ed a controversy with his statements that some unauthorised madarasas had become a refuge for anti-national elements.

Although leaders of the largely pro-CPM association repeatedly sought to remind the audience of the Left's contribution to madarsa education, the beneficiaries remained unimpressed. "We came to hear Buddhadeb apologise for linking a section of madarasas with terrorism or clarify he did not say what was reported in the media," a senior functionary said.

Instead, interspersed between the promises, they heard Bhattacharjee reminding them of the need to change their "mental make-up" to help the government modernise madarasas. They even heard state animal resources development minister Rahman concede that a section of madarasas did get "money from elsewhere".

The shadow of the "controversial statements" loomed large on everyone, right from the master-of-ceremony — who told the audience that the day to prove their "patriotism and discipline" had arrived — to those who addressed them. And, in a repeat of last week's Front meet where he was pushed into a corner and forced to blame the media for "creating a controversy where there was none", Bhattacharjee was again left to fend for himself.

Rahman said he would leave it to his boss to clarify matters. Bose, despite accusing some journalists of not knowing the "meaning of madarsa" when they "created the controversy", also left the stage to Bhattacharjee. Salim chose not to say anything at all.

■ See Pages 6 and 9

THE TELEGRAPH

12 FEB 2002

LF nod for tab on madrasas

HT Correspondent
Kolkata, February 10

CONCEDING THAT the Government doesn't have a ready record of unlisted institutions, Left Front leaders — after swearing their lungs out at Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee for his statements on madrasas — have okayed his move to keep tab on all unlisted education institutions.

The decision forms a part of the joint appeal the Left Front issued today to clarify its stand on madrasa education. The Government will first make a survey of all religious institutions as also those that claim to have affiliation from the Delhi Board.

Left Front partners also urged the Chief Minister to formulate some norms for institutions that have mushroomed in the State without the Government's recognition.

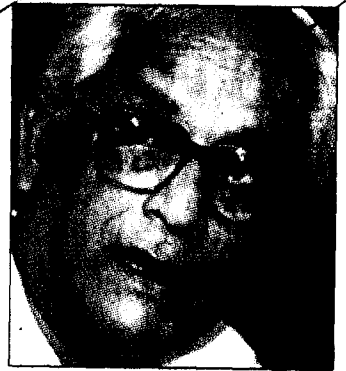
The reason, as CPI(M) MP Moinul Hasan puts it in Ganashakti: "There is no denying that the Constitution provides minorities the right to establish their own institutions, but they should conform to public order, morality and health as specified in the Constitution." He argues that the State needs to take stock of all such institutions in the interest of national security.

Possibly for the first time, the CPI(M) Central Committee has

taken note of minority fundamentalism in the country and its links with similar forces in Pakistan and Bangladesh. The party's Kolkata unit will take to the streets on Tuesday to campaign against the new trend.

"Fundamentalist forces are trying to tamper history and influence the curricula to push through the communal agenda. The RSS has been doing it for long as is evident from its bid to set up the Ram Mandir without waiting for the Supreme Court verdict. Muslim fundamentalists aided by the ISI are running a parallel campaign," CPI(M) State Committee member Rabin Deb said.

The issue of madrasas and



Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee

fundamentalism also figures in the seminars the party plans at Moulali Yuva Kendra during the CPI(M) State Conference from March 22 to 25. While Hasan will speak on the subject, the party has invited eminent historian K M Panikkar to speak on the saffron agenda.

CPM seeks Buddha-madarsa balance

BY A STAFF REPORTER

Calcutta, Feb. 7: As damage control continued apace, the CPM today appeared to be striving to reach a balance between efforts to distance the party from the controversy over Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee's reported remarks on madarsas and the need to stand firm behind the chief minister.

Bengal CPM secretary Anil Biswas suggested that Bhattacharjee's decision to speak out on some madarsas allegedly conducting activities not befitting institutions of learning had not been endorsed by the party.

"They (the government) will not take any unilateral decisions from now. There will be a lot more collective decision-making," he said.

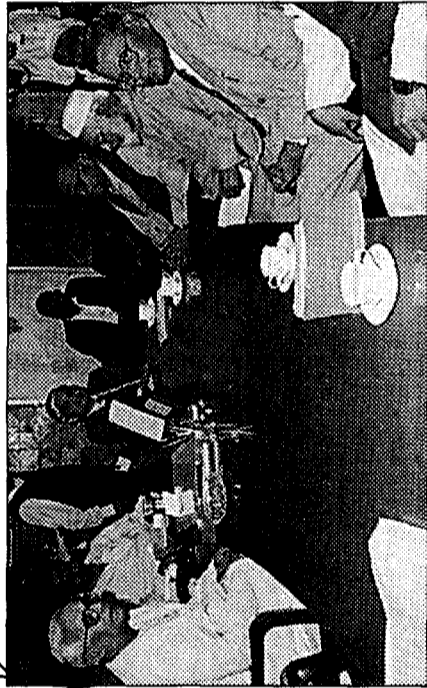
Latent in the comment is an

indication that the current controversy could cramp the chief minister's style of functioning with the party watching over him more closely than before.

The leadership — worried over reports from certain districts voicing apprehension of communal disharmony — has advised Bhattacharjee to consult the party before firming up government policy on major issues.

Biswas was, however, quick to point out that "there is no question of lording it over the government". It will only seek better "understanding" with the government to improve co-ordination.

As a result, a decision taken six months ago by the leadership requiring ministers to consult the party before committing a position on political or administrative issues could see stricter enforcement, sources said.



Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee (left) meets Muslim clergy and intellectuals in Calcutta. Picture by Aranya Sen

Simultaneously, the party is taking care to send out the signal loud and clear that it has no differences with the chief minister on the issues he has raised: the need to reform madarsa education and the threat from anti-national forces.

Biswas said fundamentalist forces were trying to extend the reach of religious education in Bengal. "We are not opposed to religious education," he said, echoing the chief minister who made the same point to a group of Muslim intellectuals today.

"But we have to decide whether we should encourage this or support the initiative for a scientific education system," Biswas said while releasing a book at the Kolkata Book Fair.

Former chief minister Jyoti Basu also came out in defence of his protégé. He said Bhattacharjee's comments, made in the wake of the American Center attack, were misrepresented in the media, which confused the issues concerning madarsas and the terrorist threat. Bhattacharjee had never intended to tie the two together, Basu said.

He expressed hope that the planned meetings between the government and the minority community would help straighten out the record. "The controversy would end very soon, in fact, tomorrow."

Again, he lent his voice to the issues raised by Bhattacharjee, saying he was concerned over the growing activities of the ISI.

With much the same thing in view, Biswas recounted his call to form local-level resistance groups, which, too, has created a controversy because they could become a parallel police force.

Biswas stood by his proposal. "I am willing to invite even our opponents, Congress and Trinamul Congress, to join the resistance groups which we seriously propose to set up. These groups will work against terrorism and nothing else."

Party mulls madarsa shield for Buddha

CM backs off crime-law controversy

BY A STAFF REPORTER

Calcutta, Feb. 5: Chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, who withdrew the Prevention of Or-ganised Crime Ordinance under pressure from Left Front part-ners, today refused to be dragged into a bigger row by discussing it at the Cabinet meeting before plac-ing his views at the Left Front meeting tomorrow.

The issue was raised by CPI leader and water resource minis-ter Nandagopal Bhattacharya, who urged the chief minister to explain the government's stand on the controversy.

This is significant as activists of the Jamaat-e-Ulema Hind burnt the effigy of the chief minister in Calcutta yesterday and demanded an apology from Bhattacharjee for his "unconstitutional and unde-mocratic remarks" on unaffiliat-ed madarsas of the state.

"I would request members not to create any pressure on me for any remarks on this sensitive issue. Let us discuss it at the Front meeting tomorrow before we dis-cuss it here," the chief minister told the meeting today. He asked Bhattacharya, particularly, to be present in tomorrow's meeting, where he would discuss the issue at length.

The CPI leader also asked his Cabinet colleagues to prepare their budgets for the next Assem-bly session, beginning on Febru-ary 27. The Cabinet will meet next on February 28.

Minority affairs minister Mo-hammad Setim also reserved his comments, pleading that "there is scope of being misinterpreted".

BY A STAFF REPORTER

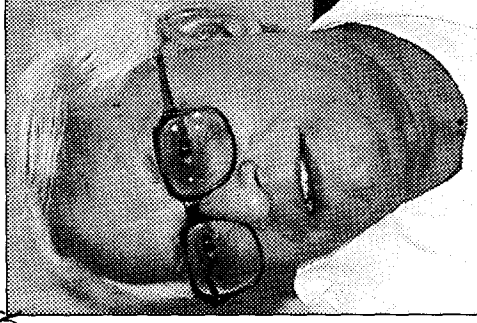
Calcutta, Feb. 5: The CPM lead-ership today considered ways to insulate chief minister Bud-dhaddeb Bhattacharjee from criti-cism likely to come his way by Left Front partners when the constituents meet on Wednesday to assess the impact of his stand on unauthorised madarsas.

At a special meeting of the CPM secretariat at the party headquarters on Alimuddin Street, veteran leader Jyoti Basu, state party secretary Anil Biswas and Left Front chairman Biman Bose counselled Bhat-tacharjee's government against emphasising its stand in public, party officials said. "A wrong message may go out and disturb the general Muslim sentiment," they advised in course of the meeting, keeping the panchayat election for 2003 in view.

The Front meeting tomorrow will also seek to assess the situa-tion in the state in the wake of the terrorist strike at the Ameri-can Center and the consequent statements of the chief minister. Apparently, the CPM brass felt the need to meet ahead of the Front meeting because it was worried about Monday's turnout of Muslims at a protest organ-ised by the Jamaat-e-Ulema Hind at Rani Rashmoni Square in Cal-cutta. The protesters demanded that Bhattacharjee retract his comments on madarsas.

The CPM has reportedly come to the conclusion that some of Bhattacharjee's remarks, though largely valid, have hurt Muslim sentiments in Bengal.

Two troubleshooters, Mo-hammad Amin and Mohammad Selim, both ministers, have been working quietly to pacify mem-bers of the minority community. The scheduled meeting between Bhattacharjee and Muslim lead-ers on Thursday indicates that this is having an impact.



Buddhaddeb Bhattacharjee

The party is also aware that most Front partners are unhap-py with the chief minister be-cause of some of his statements on unauthorised madarsas and other issues. These partners are likely to be vocal during the Front meeting tomorrow.

During the day, the CPM lead-ership, however, sought to dispel the notion that its leadership balling issue more out of con-cern. It argued that its secretari-ate could not meet on Fridays in the past few weeks as organisa-tional elections kept Biswas and other secretariat members tied down in district conferences.

Of the partners, it is learnt, the CPI is most vocal about the CPM and Bhattacharjee. A sen-ior CPI leader said he has con-veyed his party's "concerns and objections" about some of Bhat-tacharjee's statements to Bose.

The attack on the American Center was organised on Janu-ary 22 and the Front is meeting tomorrow — about two weeks after the incident. Moreover, Bhattacharjee also did not con-vene a Cabinet meeting to dis-cuss the issue after January 22.

BY SUNANDO SARKAR

Calcutta, Feb. 5: Muslim organ-isations and leaders of the state are looking with keen interest at three dates in February.

The dates, the leaders say, may turn out to be crucial in light of the recent pronounce-ments of chief minister Bud-dhaddeb Bhattacharjee and other CPM leaders about the unauthorised educational in-situtions run exclusively for Muslims.

February 6, Wednesday, is the day Left Front constituents meet — for the first time — to discuss Bhattacharjee's repe-ated statements blaming "a sec-ondation of madarsas" for encour-aging anti-national sentiments.

of which teach only Islamic and Arabic literature.

Monday, February 11, is the day Bhattacharjee is scheduled to come face-to-face — again for the first time since the contro-versy erupted — with a large gathering of Muslims.

The audience will be drawn from the avowedly pro-CPM West Bengal Madarsa Shik-shak Samiti, and the meeting — on the occasion of the organisa-tion's annual conference — is expected to present Bhattacha-ryee with an audience willing to give him a patient hearing.

"The community is waiting for a clear signal from the chief minister and the ruling coaliti-on on the recent spate of statements about madarsas,"

said Ahmed Hassan, editor of *Qalam*, a weekly popular among Bengali Muslims.

"The clarification, that only 'a section of' madarsas are under the government scanner, has confused Muslims even more," Hassan added, explain-ing why the dates are "very im-portant to the community".

The West Bengal Madarsa Students' Union held a meeting at Ghatakpur in South 24-Parganas today.

Besides demanding the wit-hdrawal of Bhattacharjee's "anti-madarsa" statements, the organisation asked the govern-ment to increase the number of madarsa colleges to accommo-date the thousands passing out of madarsa schools every year.

CPI talks of communist unity again

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, FEB. 3. The Communist Party of India has once again stressed the need for unity between the party and the CPI(M) while regretting that the latter did not share the urgency for such a move, considering the challenges and opportunities.

W. G. A. J.
"The issue of communist unity has acquired an urgency and new content in the coming days. It is well-known that the two communist parties are the core as well as the base of the Left Front. But should the two parties mark time at that point, looking to the tremendous challenges that communists face today? They are the target of reaction. The cultural and education thrust and the ideological offensive of the BJP are directed against the communists... Therefore, we cannot stop at Left unity. Left unity is not a substitute for communist unity or the need to strengthen the Indian communist movement. Communist unity to begin with, has to be between the CPI and the CPI(M)", the CPI notes in its draft Political resolution for the 18th party Congress scheduled to be held at Thiruvananthapuram, between March 26 to 31.

The CPI said that as long as there were two parties, with existing rival mass organisations in every sphere and in every class and section of the people, some conflicts and differences would continue to appear.

THE HINDU

Madrasa thorn in CPM flesh

CM's comment annoys party, Anil Biswas clarifies stand

HT Correspondent
Kolkata, January 28

ALIMUDDIN STREET is annoyed over the stance of its political rivals in West Bengal, equating Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee with his BJP counterpart in Uttar Pradesh on the madrasa issue. Party leaders have taken up a hurried operation to salvage the image of the party with the minority.

State CPI(M) secretary Anil Biswas today clarified that his party and the Chief Minister had nothing to say about madrasas in general, barring a few that have developed anti-national connections. "We have appealed to others to modernise their syllabi like Islamic education centres in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia have already done. We would like the West Bengal Board of Madrasa Education to ask these non-recognised madrasas to introduce modern subjects," Biswas said.

The party secretary also made amends to the Chief Minister's apparent apathy towards the

OPP TROUBLED OVER CPM VIGIL PANELS

CADRES ON ISI watch! Or, as George Orwell had put it in his novel *Nineteen Eighty Four*, "Big Brother is watching you".

State CPI(M) secretary Anil Biswas on Monday downplayed his proposal over the para wise vigilance. "This is nothing new. We always put our members on alert at hours of crises. This time it is to fend off terrorist fears in the State. I have not asked partymen to be de facto administrators. They should get in touch with police as soon as they get to know about such activities." Biswas will place the proposal in the upcoming Left Front meeting. "We have already held a Left Front rally against the attack at the American Center."

He tried to allay fears among the Opposition that these vigilance committees would be used to keep a tab on political rivals. Reacting to Pradesh Congress Committee president Pranab Mukherjee's protest, Biswas said: "We welcome the Congress and the Trinamool as well to participate in our vigilance drive. It is open to anyone willing to help the State thwart terrorist attacks. Why should one construe it as a political move?" The party secretary would not admit if the militants had already spread their tentacles across the State. "This is just a preventive measure," he said.

HTC, Kolkata

Arabic language. "We are not opposed to any language. Neither do we want to blame a particular community. Why should we, when 99 per cent of the Muslim population in West Bengal is sec-

ular?" Biswas also made it clear that his party did not subscribe to what is being taught at the schools run by the RSS and Anandmarg.

But this is not all. The party, it

is learnt, has engaged Minority Affairs Minister Mohammed Selim to mobilise opinion of Muslim intellectuals in favour of the modern syllabus. The city will soon witness a madrasa conference where noted Muslim intellectuals will try to discourage the minority from sending their wards to old-fashioned madrasas.

The Chief Minister, Commerce and Industry Minister and party central committee member Nirupam Sen will address the conference.

Selim, however, does not agree to the Chief Minister's plans to bring all madrasas under the Madrasa Board. "I don't think that the State has the adequate infrastructure or funds to affiliate all the madrasas," Selim said today. He also slammed leaders such as Sultan Ahmed for taking sides with the non-recognised madrasas. "It is hypocrisy and petty politics. These leaders send their wards to English-medium schools. Now they are upholding madrasa education only to gain a foothold among the minority," he said.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES