

WE WERE READY FOR WAR: PADMANABHAN

Nuclear command structure to be in place soon

By Sandeep Dikshit

NEW DELHI, DEC. 30. The much-awaited strategic forces command to manage India's nuclear and missile assets is likely to be announced early next year and its first chief could be T.M. Asthana, a senior Indian Air Force officer, official sources said here today.

Earlier in the day, the outgoing Chief of Army Staff, S. Padmanabhan, indicated the existence of an "informal" nuclear command structure and hinted at the possibility of a formal announcement soon. "If it does not appear to be there, it does not mean it is not there. What is invisible today will become visible tomorrow," he said responding to a question on when India would have a formal nuclear and strategic command to control its nuclear and missile forces.

"These are certainly things not in the public domain. We may have an informal structure already which in time could acquire a formal status," he said. Apart from indicating that a decision on creating appropriate structures for the management and control of nuclear weapons and strategic forces was close at hand, Gen. Padmanabhan was reiterating the observations by other senior officers who have claimed that given India's nuclear status, an "informal" strategic



The Army chief and outgoing Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, Gen. S. Padmanabhan, at a meeting to bid farewell to him in New Delhi on Monday. He is flanked by the new Chairman, Admiral Madhvendra Singh, Chief of the Naval Staff (left), and Air Chief Marshal S. Krishnaswamy. — Photo: V. Sudershan

command structure had been in existence for quite some time.

Official sources said Air Vice-Marshal Asthana had been attached to the Air Headquarters (AHQ) in anticipation of a formal announcement by the Cabinet Committee on Security. It was earlier planned to announce his name as the first chief of the strategic forces command this week, but with the Government deciding to hold back the announcement, the officer, who is being relieved

from the Southern Air Command, has been declared as attached to the AHQ while being named chief of IAF's training command.

Dispelling the notion that Pakistan's nuclear capability had deterred India from going to war twice last year, Gen. Padmanabhan said cryptically: "When we assess our adversaries, we assess all its capabilities. We had evaluated it (the nuclear capability) and were ready to cope with it."

The armed forces, he added,

had sized up the enemy and were only waiting for a "go-ahead" by the political leadership. "We were absolutely ready to go to war. Our forces were well located but such a decision is ultimately a political decision."

Speaking on the forward deployment, called 'Operation Parakram', by the armed forces, the Army Chief said it gave them an opportunity to upgrade training and assess equipment availability in a near-actual situation.

21 DEC 2002

THE HINDU

Vaiko charged under Pota

Statesman News Service

CHENNAI, Dec. 30. — Tamil Nadu police today filed a chargesheet against the MDMK general secretary, Mr Vaiko, and eight of his party colleagues, all arrested under Pota for their support to the LTTE.

The chargesheet was filed nearly 180 days after Mr Vaiko and his party colleagues have been in prison. It's significant that Pota provisions do not allow an accused to be detained beyond this time-period in the absence of a chargesheet.

The special judge of the designated Pota court here, Mr L Rajendran, posted the case for hearing on 2 January.

Mr Vaiko, who was produced before the court for remand extension, was taken back to Vellore Prison, while the eight others were sent to other central jails.

The filing of the chargesheet was said to have been delayed as the investigating officer was transferred to the Tamil Nadu Special Police Battalion in New Delhi.

The Judge, while extending the remand of Mr Vaiko and others on 18 December, reprimanded police for not filing the

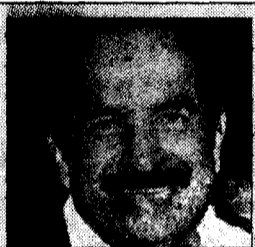
chargesheet and directed them that it should be done at the earliest.

Presenting the 518-page chargesheet to the court, the public prosecutor, Mr Jayakumar, said police attached 106 documents, cited 115 witnesses and 158 witness statements along with some video clippings, audio tapes and pro-LTTE books.

But police sources also state that the filing of the chargesheet was delayed as there was no clinching evidence to establish the fund source of health camps organised by Mr Vaiko and other transactions carried out by him.

The MDMK leader was arrested on 11 July on his return from the USA on the charge of making pro-LTTE speeches at a meeting in Thirumangalam near Madurai on 29 June. The eight others were arrested for organising pro-LTTE meetings.

According to Section 21 (2) of Pota, a person can be arrested "if he arranges, manages or assists in arranging or managing a meeting which he knows is to support a terrorist organisation, to further the activities of a terrorist organisation or to be addressed by a person, who belongs or professes to belong to terrorist organisation".



Mr Vaiko

'The filing of the chargesheet was delayed as there was no clinching evidence to establish the fund source of health camps organised by Mr Vaiko'

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Nuke forces command in pipeline

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Dec. 30: The Indian defence establishment has evolved its own structure for a nuclear and strategic forces command and only a formal shape has to be assigned to it, outgoing army chief and chairman, chiefs of staff committee, General S. Padmanabhan, said here today.

Handing over charge as chairman, chiefs of staff, to the navy chief, Admiral Madhvendra Singh, Padmanabhan said he would prefer not to make the strategic forces command a public issue. "These are things that should not be in the public domain. We may have an informal structure already."

"If it does not appear to be there, it does not mean it is not there. What is invisible today will become visible tomorrow," Padmanabhan replied when asked when the command would be formed.

An air force officer is likely to head the command, with Air Marshal T.M. Asthana topping the list of probables. Defence ministry sources said the strategic forces command would be formalised shortly.

Asthana was today attached to Air Headquarters, pending a formal announcement as commander-in-chief, strategic forces command.

It is possible that the announcement of the command being formed will be made by the Cabinet Committee on Security after the Prime Minister returns from his vacation in Goa.

Padmanabhan said the situation in Kashmir had improved because militants' supply lines were being cut off. "It is because their (militants') morale is low that they are hitting soft targets and indulging in barbaric acts like slaying women and chil-

dren," he said.

"We have been able to choke their money and arms supplies."

Padmanabhan said the creation of a chief of defence staff would effectively prove little more than a change in nomenclature for the structure headed by the chairman, chief of staff committee. The current structure has served well and ensured cohesion among the services. He said that till the government took a decision on creating the chief of defence staff, the institution of the chiefs of staff committee had to be made more effective.

On the setting up of the chief of integrated defence staff, which is directly under the chairman, chiefs of staff committee, Padmanabhan said operational and staff requirement of the system had been developed, "though a lot has to be done".

Air Marshal Asthana, tipped to head the strategic forces command, has been deputy chief of air staff. He was superseded by Air Marshal Madon who was appointed air officer commanding-in-chief of the Eastern Air Command.

Defence ministry sources explained that Asthana "was being held against" the post of air officer commanding the Bangalore-based training command. This was being done as a recognition that the officer has achieved the position as "air officer commander-in-chief".

A minor reshuffle in the top brass of the IAF has also seen Air Marshal A.K. Trikha being appointed as AOC-in-C, Southern Air Command. Air Marshal Trikha was commandant of the National Defence Academy. It was announced earlier that Vice Admiral S.C.S. Bangara, from the integrated defence staff, will take over as the head of the academy.

Portugal decision on Salem extradition after probe: CBI

NEW DELHI, DEC. 29. Cancelling the resident work permit and extending the judicial remand of the underworld don, Abu Salem, wanted in connection with the 1993 Mumbai blasts, the Portuguese authorities are considering the Central Bureau of Investigation's (CBI) extradition request and would take a decision on this after their probe was over.

"We handed over the extradition request to the Portuguese authorities and they have also confirmed to us in writing that Abu Salem's judicial remand had been extended by another 90 days," the CBI Director, P.C. Sharma, has said.

Mr. Sharma said the authorities in Lisbon had told "our officer that they would examine our request and also in the meantime extend the judicial remand of the accused to evade fears of his disappearance from the country." Cancellation of the work permit of Salem and extension of his judicial remand were heartening developments. The extension of judicial remand came close on the heels of the CBI sending an official with a formal extradition request where the agency has listed his involvement in three CBI cases, four cases with the Delhi

30/12 110-1
police and two cases registered against him by the Mumbai police. The request, which gave an executive assurance to the Portuguese authorities of not awarding Salem capital punishment in case of his conviction by Indian courts, highlighted his role in the conspiracy leading to the Mumbai bomb blasts.

In its request, the CBI said ".... Abu Salem is an associate of Anees Ibrahim Kaskar and at his instance procured nine AK-56 rifles for continuing terrorist acts in Mumbai in 1993." Abu Salem later parted ways with Anees and the Dawood Ibrahim gang and started his own business. The CBI has also alleged that he had handed over an AK-56 rifle to the bollywood actor, Sanjay Dutt.

Asked what were the chances of Salem's extradition, Mr. Sharma said "well, extradition is a sovereign decision of the country. We can try and hope for the best."

About Salem's role with terrorist groups such as the Al-Qaeda, he said, "I have no information on that but let me make it clear that such undesirable people don't come up so fast because of their hard work but because of some undercover links." — PTI

3 0 DEC 2002

THE HINDU

CBI seeks Interpol help to trace Quattrocchi

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Dec. 27. — The CBI has alerted Interpol about Mr. Ottavio Quattrocchi's disappearance from Malaysia where the Court of Appeals had directed him to surrender his passport.

In a communication to Interpol's headquarters at Lyon, the agency said that even though the Malaysian Court of Appeals had asked the Bofors case accused to surrender his passport, he did not respond to the directive and reportedly fled the country. Mr Quattrocchi had earlier told journalists that he was in Italy, but CBI officials said they had not received any independent confirmation of his claim.

"We have received no information about Quattrocchi's whereabouts although we have got in touch with the Malaysian authorities to verify his port of disembarkation," CBI director Mr PC Sharma said, adds PTI.

Mr Quattrocchi left Malaysia soon after Kuala Lumpur High Court ruled in his favour,

rejecting India's extradition request. The CBI said New Delhi was not given a proper hearing and the case was dismissed summarily and in a prejudged manner.

The Malaysian government appealed against the decision on New Delhi's behalf. A CBI official said Mr Quattrocchi

appears to have anticipated an adverse order by the Supreme Court and fled before it heard the appeal. The officer said he expected Mr Quattrocchi's lawyer to try and contest the appeal in his absence, asserting that the businessman would return to Malaysia only if the Indian request was rejected.



Quattrocchi: Most wanted

28 DEC 2002

THE STATESMAN

MiG crashes near Srinagar, militants claim missile strike

Srinagar: A MiG-21 fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force crashed on a house near the local air base here on Thursday, killing a father and injuring his son. A radical pro-Pakistan militant outfit, Jamiat-ul Mujahideen, claimed its cadre shot down the plane even as the IAF ruled out the possibility of any "external action".

The aircraft crashed at 2.25 p.m. as it was coming in to land at the Srinagar airport after an operational sortie. It fell on the house of Ghulam Ahmed Ganai in Lalgam village of Budgam district, about four km from the airport. While Ganai was killed, his two-year-old son was injured and their house, which caught fire soon after, was completely destroyed, air force sources said. The pilot, flying officer B.K. Singh, who bailed out, broke his left arm and was rushed to the hospital. He was reported to be out of danger.

A person claiming to be the spokesman of the Jamiat-ul Mujahideen told PTI over the phone that militants of the outfit had fired a missile at the plane causing it to crash.

He said the plane was shot down in response to Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's appeal to militants on Wednesday asking them to surrender arms.

"We will not lay down arms and all

such appeals will be merit the same reaction," the spokesman added.

IAF spokesman Squadron Leader R.K. Dhingra said in Delhi that the possibility of the aircraft being hit by a missile or ground fire was ruled out. His comments came in the backdrop of security forces recovering Pakistani-made shoulder-fired surface-to-air missile 'Anza' from militant hideouts in border district of Kupwara recently.

Dhingra said "a court of inquiry has been ordered into the accident to see whether the mishap was caused by a bird-hit or technical or human error".

The aircraft, which had a normal sortie of 30-35 minutes, would have flown almost over the entire northern Kashmir area bordering Pakistan. Senior police and security officials have reached the spot and a cordon has been laid around the village.

The MiG-21, which crashed, was of the Type-75 variant. As many as 17 of these aircraft have crashed this year alone, with the parliamentary standing committee on defence repeatedly asking the government to phase them out. The aircraft entered service in the IAF in the late sixties.

The government has ruled out phasing out these warplanes saying that massive upgradation of the MiGs is under way with Russian, French and Israeli collaboration. PTI

27 DEC 2002

MiGs to stay in service till 2020

By Sandeep Dikshit

NEW DELHI, DEC. 20. Despite frequent crashes of its MiG fleet, the Indian Air Force (IAF) plans to continue with some of the variants beyond the year 2020 through extensive upgradation which has already started.

Despite the unfavourable publicity that accompanies each MiG crash, the IAF believes that the refurbishment of 125 MiG-21 'BiS' type would be in synch with the underlying theme of its modernisation plan. Without giving assurances on the safety front, the Government asserts that modernisation of the existing assets along with imports and licensed manufacture would be a viable option.

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The cost of improving the MiG-21 BiS fleet, including the replacement of weapons systems, would be at least three to 10 times cheaper than buying a new European or American fighter plane. The total upgrade of the entire fleet is expected to cost over Rs. 3,000 crores which works out to about Rs. 22 crores per jet whereas the cost of a similarly potent fighter will range between Rs. 75 crores and Rs. 175 crores.

Comparing the financial details of the upgradation of 125 MiG BiS aircraft vis-a-vis the cost of purchasing new aircraft with similar technology, the IAF says that the cost in the latter case would have been substantially higher. As against Rs. 22 crores per BiS upgrade, a new

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AMX 'light fighter' is available for Rs. 75 crores but without radar and advanced missiles. A similarly equipped two-seater British Hawk is available off-the-shelf for Rs. 80 crores and the American F-16 being used by the Pakistani Air Force is priced at twice the cost. The French Mirage 2000-5 being negotiated currently by the IAF is available for Rs. 175 crores.

Giving a breakup of the costs involved in overhauling the 125 MiG-21 BiS, the IAF said the total cost was currently estimated at \$ 626 millions which was about Rs. 3,000 crores as compared to Rs. 2,000 crores when the upgrade programme was originally framed. About one-fourth of the cost was towards procurement of weapons and

the balance towards upgrading the aircraft. The cost of upgrade per aircraft works out to \$ 3.783 millions.

The IAF feels that since most MiG-21 BiS aircraft have completed less than 1,800 hours of life, they can be exploited for 1,600 hours or more. Therefore, by extensive upgradation, the aircraft can last for more than 15 years. While most MiG-21 variants will be phased out before the end of the current decade, the upgraded BiS, to be known as 'The Bison', will remain in service till 2021. Two of the earliest fighters, inducted in the IAF in 1976, have already been updated and will be in service till 2011. The last plane in this fleet, which was manufactured in 1986, will last till 2021.

Verdict evokes wide range of emotions

Statesmen News Service

NEW DELHI, Dec. 18. — As soon as the designated judge Mr SN Dhingra pronounced his judgement, Shaukat Hussain Guru shouted in the court room: "I am fighting for the liberation of Kashmir...". Even before he could complete the sentence, he was whisked away by security personnel.

Barring that outburst, SAR Geelani, Shaukat Hussain Guru and Mohammed Afzal, given the death sentence, maintained a stoic silence and remained cool. When Geelani was being taken to the lock-up room, he said: "If fighting for liberation of Kashmir is terrorism, then we are terrorists. I have been framed in the case, I am innocent. By convicting an innocent, you cannot suppress the libera-

tion. If there is no justice, there is no democracy".

For three days, it was the court of designated special judge Mr SN Dhingra which was the cynosure of all eyes. From media persons to lawyers to officers of special cell — which investigated the case — everyone was there to listen to the verdict. And fearing chaos and stampede, police made elaborate arrangements. Entry was restricted and mobile phones were not allowed inside the courtroom.

Curious onlookers gathered outside the courtroom. Many people were also excited when TV news channels brought outstation broadcasting vans for live coverage. The verdict was delivered at 12.07 a.m. and all hell broke loose. The few Shiv Sainiks standing outside the court, burst crackers and tried to wave their



GRIEVING SIBLINGS: Lali Jee, sister of Mohammed Afzal (Left) Naseema, sister of Shaukat Hussain

party flag, but policemen pushed them away.

Reiterating their clients' innocence, defence counsel for the four accused said they will move Delhi High Court against the special court's order awarding death sentence to three and rigorous imprisonment of five years to Afsan Guru. "My client (Delhi University lecturer SAR Geelani) is innocent and there is nothing on record to



say otherwise," Ms Seema Gulati told journalists immediately after the pronouncement of the order.

Both Ms Gulati and Ms Nitya Ramakrishna, counsel for Mohammed Afzal, Shaukat Hussain Guru and his wife Afsan Guru, said they would challenge the order in the High Court. "In any case, the High Court would have to confirm the death sentence," Ms Gulati said.

PROCLAIMED OFFENDERS

Maslana Masood Azhar: Chief commander and founder of Jabh-e-Mohammed. Security agencies believe he was the main conspirator of the attack on Parliament. Born in a family of a clergy, he began his career as a preacher. He was known for his rabble rousing speeches. Soon, he was inducted into the Harkat-ul-Ansar and started organising militant activities in the Kashmir Valley. Arrested in the mid 1990s, he was released in exchange of hostages during the Kandahar crisis. Close associate of Omar Sheikh. In 2000, he organised the drive to recruit people for jihad activities. After the Parliament attack, Pakistani authorities kept him in house arrest, but he was released few days back.

Chaudhry Babbar: Commander of Indian operations of Jaish-e-Mohammed and accused of masterminding the Parliament attack. Intelligence agencies say he is very secretive about his operations and moves with a large number of body guards. He is also known to change his appearance frequently. To his followers, he is also known as Abu Jehad and Sulehah. Few months back, he was spotted in the Valley.

Tahir: Local contact of Lashkar and JEM. Little is known about him except that he used to live in Tarai. He introduced Mohammed Afzal to Ghazi Baba. Presently he is hiding in Pakistan.

19/12
FIVE YEARS RI FOR AFSAN GURU

Three sentenced to death in Parliament attack case

By Anjali Mody

NEW DELHI, DEC. 18. The special POTA court today sentenced to death S.A.R. Geelani, Shaukat Hussain Guru, and Mohammed Afzal — the three men convicted of conspiring with the five terrorists (killed in a shootout with the security forces), the Jaish-e-Mohammad chief, Masood Azhar, and the JeM "commander" in Kashmir, Ghazi Baba — for the December 13 attack on Parliament. They were awarded the death sentence for offences under Section 3(2) of POTA (indulging in terrorist acts leading to deaths) and Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code (murder).

The court rejected the plea of leniency made on behalf of Afsan Guru, wife of Shaukat Hussain Guru, who has been convicted of concealing knowledge of the conspiracy, and sentenced her to five years' rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 10,000.

The designated judge, S. N. Dhingra, pronouncing the sentence, said that he "considers that she deserves no leniency." Making no mention of her pregnant condition at the time of the conspiracy, he said that "there is no doubt that she was having a difficult choice of going against her husband" but that "she had to give priority to

the nation and society." Geelani, Guru and Afzal have also been sentenced to life imprisonment on seven counts. One each under IPC Sections 121-A (conspiracy to wage war against state) and Section 122 (collecting arms with the intention to wage war against state); under POTA, for abetting terrorist acts, Section 3 (3) and harbouring terrorists, Section 3 (4); and membership of a terrorist gang, Section 3 (5) and possession of unauthorised arms etc. under Section 4 (b); and under Section 3 of the Explosive Substances Act. They have also been awarded a cumulative 30 years' rigorous imprisonment, for charges under Section 4 of the Explosive Substances Act and Section 307 of IPC (attempt to murder), and fines totalling Rs. 8.6 lakhs.

As he was led away, Geelani, suspended lecturer of Zakir Hussain College, Delhi University, asserted his innocence. "By convicting innocents, you cannot suppress emotion. Peace comes with justice. Without justice there will be no democracy, it is Indian democracy that is under threat."

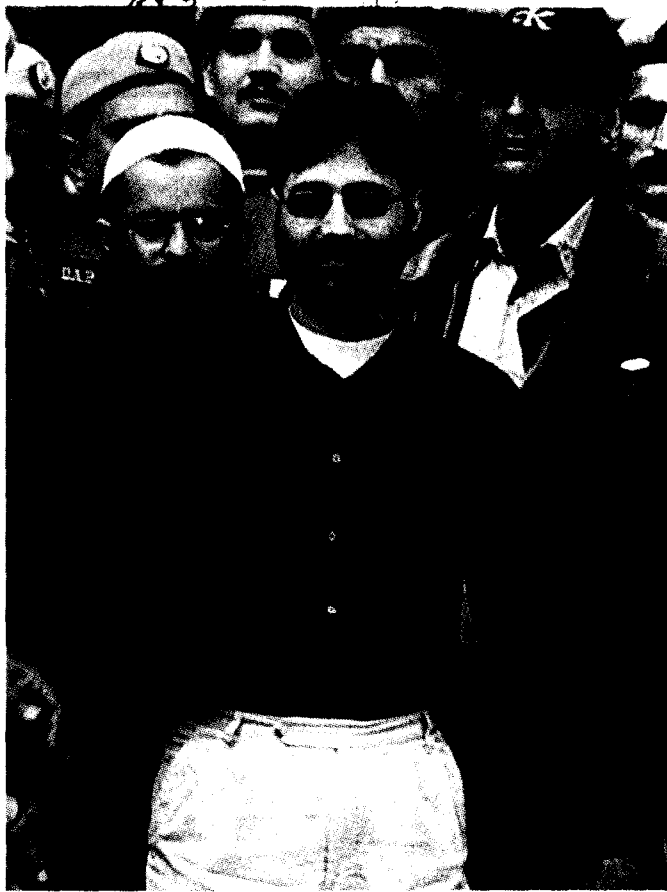
An agitated Shaukat Hussain, former student of the Delhi University, said, "if asking for the liberation of Kashmir is terrorism, then I am a terrorist."

The surrendered militant of the JKLF, Mohammed Afzal, said: "you are journalists of an independent country, you should report independently. But all you do is report what police wants you to."

As information about the sentence spread, Shiv Sena members, flanked by police vehicles, burst crackers outside the court.

And inside the court, as the judge got up to leave after pronouncing the sentence, lawyers from the Patiala House courts, who had filled the courtroom, shouted "kill them, they are terrorists."

In his 296-page judgment, Mr. Dhingra said the attack on Parliament was the handiwork of forces which wanted to "destroy the country and cripple it by killing or capturing its entire political executive, including the Prime Minister and the Home Minister... captivate entire legislature and the Vice-



Syed Abdul Rahman Geelani (centre), Mohammed Afzal (left) and Shaukat Hussain Guru being brought out of the Patiala Court after being sentenced to death in the Parliament attack case, in New Delhi on Wednesday. — Photo: S. Subramaniam

President, who were in Parliament."

Commenting on issues of evidence, the judge said that the single-judge order of the Delhi High Court, declaring the telephone interception by police as inadmissible in evidence, was *non-est* as the "single judge is not authorised" to hear the appeal against the order of the designated judge.

Commending the investigating agencies, he said that they "perform a tough job."

On the question of discrepancies in the police evidence and instances of evidence being tampered with, raised by defence counsel, he said it was the "usual practice nowadays to flog the investigating agencies."

Defence counsel, Nitya Ramakrishnan, commenting on the judgment, said, "from several assumptions and conjectures

in the judgment, which even prosecution did not care to assert in court, it appears that the learned designated court has added to the fund of prosecution material and the defence lamented that it was not awarded the privilege of cross-examining the source."

Sima Gulati, counsel for S. A. R. Geelani, declined to comment on the judgment as she had not fully read it.

"We will appeal against this verdict. This order is not sustainable in law. There is simply not enough evidence to convict Geelani," she said.

The other three persons, Afsan Guru, her husband and Afzal will also appeal against their convictions. They have 30 days to file their appeals before the Delhi High Court.

Verdict against appeal: Page 11

ATTACK ON PARLIAMENT



THE TRIAL CHRONOLOGY
Dec 13, 2001: Parliament attacked by Pak terrorists. Nine Security personnel and all five attackers killed

Dec 15: Mohammad Afzal, DU teacher S.A.R. Geelani, Shaukat Hussain Guru and his wife Navjot Sandhu alias Afsan Guru arrested

May 14, 2002: Chargesheet filed by Special Cell. Apart from the four arrested, Pak based Masood Azhar, Tariq Ahmed & Ghazi Baba accused of waging war against the nation and other charges

July 8: Trial begins under POTA in court of Special Judge S.N. Dhingra

Oct 30: Prosecution suffers set back as Delhi High Court rules that telephone intercepts can not serve as evidence

Dec 16: Court holds the accused guilty. Final judgement reserved.

Dec 18: Main accused Mohammad Afzal, Shaukat Hussain, S.A.R. Geelani given death sentence. Navjot Sandhu found guilty of concealing the plot sentenced five years in jail

KBK

SENTENCE TODAY IN DEC. 13 ATTACK CASE

Plea for lesser punishment

By Anjali Mody

NEW DELHI, DEC. 17. The Special POTA court today deferred pronouncement of the sentence in the December 13 Parliament attack case till tomorrow after hearing the defence arguments.

Nitya Ramakrishnan, counsel for the accused, Afsan Guru alias Navjot Sandhu, asked the judge to award a reduced sentence amounting to the period of incarceration that Ms. Guru had already served. She has been convicted of concealing knowledge of the conspiracy (the maximum sentence for which is 10 years imprisonment) and not for any other offences for which she was charged, Ms. Ramakrishnan said: "She has already suffered an extremely difficult period of incarceration on the strength of a law (POTA) which the court found was not applicable to her".

Pleading leniency, Sima Gulati, counsel for S.A.R. Geelani, said the evidence heard during the trial did not suggest that her client was involved in any overt acts relating to the conspiracy. The court should consider the fact that Geelani had no direct connection with the terrorists and that he had no history of involvement with any criminal act whatsoever.

Arguing for a reduced sentence for Shaukat Hussain Guru, his counsel also said that Guru had no previous history of involvement in any wrongdoing and that the evidence showed that his role was, at best, peripheral.

The Public Prosecutor, D.P. Agrawal, asking for the maximum sentence of death for Geelani, Guru and Afzal, said this was justified since the Parliament attack was "the rarest of rare cases".

He also argued against a reduced sentence for Geelani, saying that he was a university lecturer and would therefore have known exactly what was happening.

Arguing against the death sentence, Ms. Ramakrishnan said that before the judge extinguished "with his judicial pen the life of a human being", he must "consider whether it was at all right to take life in the name of justice". This was a time when the Government was "trading conditions", including the waiver of a death sentence for those it wanted extradited, she said.

The state's or society's need for retributive justice was also misplaced, she said since it bore at least some responsibility for the "alienation" that results in terrorism. Ms. Ramakrishnan

asked the court, when awarding the sentence, to consider what drove people to terrorism. The Judge interrupted her to say "that is a question that can be answered only by Osama bin Laden. They are the ones having schools and manufacturing factories for this type of people."

Ms. Ramakrishnan said the belief that the death sentence had a deterrent value did not hold, since the people who committed acts of terrorism and were brought into the country from outside, had not been caught. The state had no control over the real conspirators, such as Ghazi Baba and Masood Azhar, who were foreigners (declared proclaimed offenders) and was, in fact, complicit in releasing them from jail. The people before the court were mere "cannon fodder".

They were Indians, however, "misguided". Two of them, Geelani and Guru, had no history of past misdemeanours. And the third, Afzal, a surrendered militant, had once attempted to rejoin the mainstream. In dealing "with our own" Ms Ramakrishnan said the court should show firmness, but also a human face.

Outside the court, Geelani said: "I am innocent and I will fight it out". Guru said: "We believe in justice".

Centre's order to border States

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HT Correspondent
New Delhi, December 16

THE CENTRE on Monday informed the parliamentary Consultative Committee on Home Affairs that it had advised all border States to co-ordinate intelligence gathering efforts along with the Intelligence Bureau to identify "places of worship indulging in anti-national activities."

Briefing the Committee, comprising members drawn from both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani said that his Government was also considering the feasibility of enacting a Central legislation to regulate the activities of places of worship and religious instructions.

The Deputy Prime Minister also informed the committee the efforts it was making to strengthen border management, including the setting up of lead intelligence agencies, from among the principal border guarding forces. This would be done to augment the overall intelligence gathering efforts.

Advani's reference was to the innumerable unauthorised mosques and mad-

rasas that have mushroomed in several states which have borders with Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal.

Soon after the September 11 terrorist strikes in the US last year, the Government had given the Intelligence Bureau the nod to begin an exercise to identify illegal mosques and madrasas suspected to be "centres" from where terrorist and other anti-India activities are launched.

The IB has already conducted a study and has advised the Home Ministry that a central legislation was the "need of the hour" to curb the growth of unauthorised places of worship within a depth of 10 km in all border states. West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Rajasthan and Gujarat are states where the IB found large-scale construction of illegal madrasas and mosques.

Advani also told the Committee that State Governments have been advised to take action against religious institutions whose activities were in "contravention" of the provisions of the Religious Institution (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1988.

17 DEC 2002

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Court finds four guilty of 12/13 attack

Guilty may get death sentence

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A city court on Monday convicted three men and a woman of being part of the attack on Parliament House on December 13 last year. The court's order will be made public on Tuesday and could include the death penalty for the men.

Special judge S.N. Dhingra held the three accused—Jaish-e-Mohamad militants Mohammad Afzal and Shaukat Hussain Guru, and Delhi university lecturer S.A.R. Geelani—guilty of various offences under Pota, the IPC and the Explosive Substances Act.

Navjot Sandhu alias Afsan Guru, the wife of Shaukat Hussain Guru, was held guilty under

Section 123 of the IPC for concealing information regarding war against the state. The maximum punishment under this section is ten years' imprisonment.

Five terrorists, armed with automatic weapons and explosives, had succeeded in getting past the guards at the Parliament House gates on December 13 last year even as the house was in session. The terrorists were later killed in a gun battle with the security forces, in which eight policemen were also killed.

Jaish chief Maulana Masood Azhar, the outfit's chief commander in Jammu and Kashmir, Ghazi Baba alias Abu Jehadi, and a certain Tariq Ahmed have been de-

clared proclaimed offenders in the case.

Pronouncing the order in a packed court, the judge held Afzal, Shaukat and Geelani, along with the five slain terrorists and the three proclaimed offenders guilty of "hatching a criminal conspiracy, committing offences under IPC, waging war against India and collecting arms, ammunition and explosives and men for the purpose and to commit murder

of all the persons who came their way".

"They had the intention to capture Parliament House and to kill the Prime Minister and the home minister and to take hostage all the MPs and the VIPs present in parliament," the judge said in



Navjot Sandhu alias Afsan Guru, wife of Shaukat Hussain Guru, with her child in court.

his order.

"They attacked Parliament House, armed with lethal weapons and bombs, when it was in session," the judge said. "They were armed with AK-47 and AK-56 rifles, grenade launchers, hand grenades, rifle grenades, tiffin bomb, car bomb and one body bomb. In the process of attacking Parliament House, they killed nine persons from the security, the ward and watch staff and a gardener," he noted in his order.

Comment: Justice delayed is justice denied. But in this case, has justice been too speedy, perhaps at the expense of building up an unsailable case — particularly in the case of Afsan Guru?

SENTENCE TO BE PRONOUNCED TODAY

4 accused in Parliament attack case convicted

By Anjali Mody

NEW DELHI, DEC. 16. The Special POTA court today convicted three of the four accused in the Parliament attack case, Syed Abdul Rehman Geelani, Shaukat Hussain Guru and Mohammed Afzal, of conspiracy to commit terrorism and acts amounting to treason. The sentence will be pronounced tomorrow. The fourth accused, Afsan Guru/Navjot Sandhu, wife of Shaukat Hussain Guru, was convicted on the lesser charge of concealing knowledge of the conspiracy "although she was not party to the conspiracy."

Announcing the verdict one year and three days after the December 13 attack on Parliament, Judge S.N. Dhingra told a packed courtroom that having considered the entire evidence, he held that the three men "along with the five deceased terrorists, namely Mohammed, Haider, Hamza, Raja and Rana, and with Ghazi Baba, Tariq Ahmed and Mohammed Masood Azhar hatched a criminal conspiracy for committing offences like waging war against India, collecting arms and ammunitions and explosive substances and men for this purpose."

Geelani is a suspended lecturer in Arabic, Zakir Hussain College, Delhi University, Guru, a former Delhi University student, and Afzal, a surrendered JKLF militant. Ghazi Baba is



A.R. Geelani, Mohammad Afzal and Shaukat Hussain Guru, arrested in connection with the December 13 attack on Parliament, being produced at the Patiala House Courts in New Delhi on Monday. — Photo: Sandeep Saxena (Another photo on Page 11)

"commander" of the banned militant outfit, Jaish-e-Mohammed. Maulana Masood Azhar, founder of the JeM, was one of the terrorists swapped for the passengers aboard an Indian Airlines plane, which was hijacked to Kandahar in 1999.

Mr. Dhingra said Geelani, Guru and Afzal had conspired with the slain terrorists to "capture Parliament House and kill the Prime Minister and Home Minister and to make hostage all the MPs and VIPs present" and to kill anyone "who came in their way for the achievement of this object." So they also stood convicted of conspiring to kill the nine persons, including members of the Parliament security staff and a gardener, who died during the

attack. The conviction of Geelani, Guru and Afzal is the first under POTA. They have been found guilty of all the offences (under POTA, Cr.P.C and the Explosives Act), with which they are charged, barring two. The charges which have not been upheld are both offences under POTA: membership of banned organisation — Section 20 — and possession of the proceeds of terrorism — Section 3 (6) — an offence with which only Guru and Afzal were charged.

The two are also convicted of the additional charge of "harbouring and concealing the five deceased terrorists at various hideouts in Delhi."

The judge reserved sentence until 2.00 p.m. tomorrow. The accused will be given an oppor-

tunity to make arguments on the point of sentence. The maximum punishment for the charges pertaining to terrorism under POTA, that Geelani, Guru and Afzal have been convicted of, is death. The charge of concealing knowledge of a conspiracy to wage war against the state, of which Afsan has been convicted, is punishable by a maximum sentence of 10 years and a fine.

As he left the court, Guru, asked how he felt, said "I am honoured to be a Kashmiri and a Muslim." Afsan, who was carrying her baby, born while she was in jail, repeatedly asked the policemen surrounding her "tell me what I have done. What has this child done?" Afzal and Geelani did not comment.

17 DEC 2002

THE HINDU

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 2002

SETBACKS FOR THE CBI

THESE ARE BAD times for the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Its hopes of getting Anees Ibrahim, one of the country's most wanted criminals, have been dashed after he was apparently let off following his arrest in Dubai, ostensibly for lack of evidence. Its prospects of having Ottavio Quattrocchi extradited from Malaysia appear pretty bleak with the High Court in Kuala Lumpur squarely rejecting the CBI's plea for a review of the recent decision taken by a lower court. And finally, a cloud of uncertainty continues to hang over the fate of its plea vis-a-vis Abu Salem, whose deportation from Portugal has been tied up in such legal complexities that it cannot be taken for granted any longer. These are enormous setbacks for the investigating agency as they have a direct bearing on the fate of what are arguably two of its most important cases — the Mumbai bomb blasts (in which Anees Ibrahim and Abu Salem are key accused) and Bofors (in which Mr. Quattrocchi is accused of having played a central role).

The circumstances being very different, the reasons for the CBI's lack of success with respect to the three accused are obviously varied. Nevertheless, what they underline is the criticality of ensuring that the case for requesting that an accused person be sent back for trial must be as irrefutable or watertight as possible. In Anees' case, the CBI, which rushed documents pertaining to the cases against him, appears to have made no impact on persuading the authorities about the importance of detaining him. Some reports suggest that UAE officials were unimpressed with the evidence furnished by the CBI, which did not have fingerprints of the accused (a technical but nevertheless important requirement to conclusively establish identity in extradition cases). Anees' release on bail, and his subsequent reported passage to Pakistan, was facilitated by the fact that he was not arrested in Dubai for murder (as some had presumed) but for his involvement in an extortion case.

Even so, India has reason to be both perplexed and disturbed by the extraordinary contrast in the attitude of the UAE officials, who only recently went out of the way to cooperate in the deportation of other mafia dons such as Aftab Ansari, Muthappa Rai and Raju Anadkot. Perhaps not surprisingly, Anees' release has been coupled with speculation about the influence that his powerful elder brother, Dawood Ibrahim, exercises in the Emirates. This is the fourth time in recent years that Anees has been arrested by the Dubai police and then let off. Meanwhile, the task of getting Abu Salem, who is wanted in a few dozen cases of murder, extortion and forgery in this country, is proving to be much more difficult than presumed earlier. Having formally promised, in deference to European Union laws and sensitivities, that he will not receive the death penalty if found guilty, India is engaged in making both legal and diplomatic moves to secure his deportation.

In some ways though, it is the failure to secure Mr. Quattrocchi's extradition that will hurt the most. Although the CBI has challenged the Kuala Lumpur High Court's decision in the Malaysian Supreme Court, securing a favourable verdict will be an uphill task and may hinge on demonstrating that the lower court — which had described the extradition requisition papers as insufficient, vague and ambiguous — had erred because of a misunderstanding about Indian legal procedure. The failure to secure Mr. Quattrocchi's extradition has enormous implications for the Bofors case, which has already suffered from the sheer passage of time. Two of the accused, the former Defence Secretary, S. K. Bhatnagar, and Win Chaddha, are dead; so is Rajiv Gandhi, who was not even examined by the CBI. With the former head of Bofors, Martin Ardbo, having successfully evaded all extradition attempts, the failure to get Mr. Quattrocchi too would have a significant bearing on the CBI's attempt to establish the true nature of the conspiracy that attended the howitzer deal.

17 DEC 2002

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Quattrocchi gets back home

Vandana Saxena

KUALA LUMPUR 16 DECEMBER

IN yet another rude shock for Bofors investigators, businessman Ottavio Quattrocchi has left Kuala Lumpur for Italy even as Malaysia's highest court asked him on Monday to surrender his passport pending an Indian appeal in the case of his extradition. Quattrocchi left Kuala Lumpur on Saturday, a day after the high court here dismissed India's plea seeking a review of lower court's verdict throwing out the Italian's extradition. The sessions court in the country had also ordered return of his passport and bail.

Hearing an Indian appeal against the High Court order Justice Hamid Mohammad of the Court of Appeal, Malaysia's highest court, asked Quattrocchi to surrender his passport pending disposal of the petition. The Italian businessman and his lawyers were not present in the court

when the appeal filed by Malaysia's Attorney General on behalf of India was taken up.

Quattrocchi, when reached on mobile phone, said: "I am in Italy as my daughter wanted me to be here urgently."

He said he left Kuala Lumpur on Saturday and was not aware of

Monday's court order. "I was supposed to travel for a long time and I was told (on Friday) that this is the final stage and the order of the high court was final and conclusive."

"I am here on vacation and will be back in Malaysia," he said, adding "I have nothing to fear and I wanted everything to get

over before I left Malaysia that's why I waited so long." Quattrocchi's lawyers said their client has left Malaysia on Saturday and added "we are yet to receive the order." Kamarul Hisham Kamaruddin, deputy public prosecutor in the attorney general's chamber, moved an ex-parte application for interim order against Quattrocchi on Monday. — PTI



SAFE CUSTODY

'DEPORTATION PROCEDURES SIDESTEPED'

Anees Ibrahim whisked away to Pakistan?

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15/12

By Atul Aneja

MANAMA (BAHRAIN), DEC. 14. Anees Ibrahim, wanted by India for his alleged involvement in the 1993 Mumbai bomb blasts, appears to have been whisked away to Pakistan from Dubai and has not been legally deported.

According to highly-placed sources, the mandatory immigration procedures that have to be fulfilled for deportation have been side-stepped in Ibrahim's case. The details of what seems to be a "clandestine operation" are still being pieced together.

The name of Anees Ibrahim, brother of the Karachi-based underworld don, Dawood Ibrahim, is on the list of 20 fugitives whose return India has been seeking from Pakistan since the December 13 attack on Parliament last year.

Jolt to CBI

By Vinay Kumar

NEW DELHI, DEC. 14. Jolted by the surprise "deportation" of the underworld don, Anees Ibrahim, reportedly to Pakistan, the Central Bureau of Investigation today shot off a communication to the United Arab

Emirates, asking the authorities to confirm if the criminal wanted by India is still in their custody or not.

In the absence of any official communication from either the UAE or the Dubai Police, the CBI remained in "total darkness" over Ibrahim's whereabouts.

Barring a communication from the UAE authorities on December 11, asking the CBI to send its extradition request for him, the agency has not heard anything from Dubai through any official channel.

Reports mentioned the possibility of his having been taken either to Bahrain or Muscat from where the Pakistani agencies could have arranged for a safe passage for him to Karachi.

Asked about media reports from Dubai that Ibrahim could have made it safely to Pakistan, the CBI Director, P. C. Sharma, told *The Hindu* that he was writing to the UAE authorities to know the details officially.



The reports were "disturbing," he said, wondering why the confusion over Ibrahim's arrest was not being cleared either at the government or diplomatic level in Dubai. Initial reports had referred to his release on bail.

It was also not clear if Ibrahim had been arrested for his involvement in the murder of a fellow Indian businessman in 1995, or on the basis of an Interpol Red Corner alert notice in 1993 for his involvement in the Mumbai blasts. "We are trying to ascertain everything," he said.

Government sources said that there was a difference in dealing with the authorities in Dubai and the federal set-up in the UAE, headquartered at Abu Dhabi.

While deportation could have been decided by the Dubai authorities, the extradition request would be examined and decided by the federal authorities in Abu Dhabi.

Viewing the reports of deportation of the 42-year-old Ibrahim "seriously," sources said India was likely to take up the issue with the UAE at the diplomatic level, pointing out the "fishy role" of the law enforcement authorities in Dubai.

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India loses Anees trail in Pak dust

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Dec. 14: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) today took the third blow in its face in two days following reports that Bombay blasts accused Anees Ibrahim had been deported to Pakistan.

Anees, brother of underworld don Dawood Ibrahim, had been in Dubai police custody since December 3 but was given bail in an extortion case yesterday despite the CBI's requests to hand him over. A Malaysian court also threw out the CBI's plea to extradite Ottavio Quattrocchi, allegedly a Bofors kickback recipient.

CBI officials did not confirm the veracity of this morning's report in *Khaleej Times*, which quoted security sources as saying Anees had been deported to Pakistan. The report said Anees was travelling on forged documents.

A senior CBI officer said: "Up to now, we have no word from

Dubai authorities on the fact that Anees Ibrahim was granted bail in an extortion case or that he has been deported to Pakistan."

Government sources said they were not sure how or when Anees left Dubai. But they suggested he might have been al-

vices Intelligence has made there.

Second, it exposes India's lack of political influence in Dubai and an absence of high-level contacts between the two leaderships.

Indian agencies believe Anees could have been deported,

had "unofficially" come to know that Anees was being freed on bail but continued to be in the dark about its conditions.

Despite the developments, the CBI has decided to formally request the United Arab Emirates for Anees' extradition on advice from the Interpol in Abu Dhabi. "Most likely we will send the extradition request through diplomatic channels by Monday," a CBI officer said.

In all probability, the extradition request will contain details of the Bombay blasts case only. CBI sources said Mumbai police would take time to prepare documents on the criminal cases Anees was facing, so the agency had decided to go with the blasts alone.

If Anees has actually left Dubai, the CBI move would be meaningless. The Emirates did not bother to keep India updated ever while CBI official A.K. Gupta was in Dubai. When he returned on Friday, Gupta was not aware that Anees had walked away.

■ See Page 6

Masood Azhar set free

Islamabad, Dec. 14 (PTI): Lahore High Court today set free Masood Azhar, chief of Jaish-e-Mohammad, the banned outfit blamed for the December 13 attack on Parliament.

Azhar, who was under house arrest, was ordered to be released by the review board of the court despite reservations of security officials who felt the move could have an adverse impact on law and order in the country, the official APP news agency reported today.

■ See Page 4

lowed to go to Pakistan "as this would be the easiest way of getting rid of a problem".

If Anees has actually gone to Pakistan, sources say "this exposes a certain political dimension of the problem". First, it indicates the immense clout D-company has in Dubai and the inroads Pakistan's Inter-Ser-

if at all, only on the basis of his Pakistani passport. As Dubai immigration would have to keep a record of all deportation proceedings, things would become clearer in a few days, they said.

The agencies believe he left Dubai by land, moving to Muscat first and then flying to Karachi.

CBI sources conceded they

Anees and Ottavio walk away



A Malaysian high court has rejected India's request to extradite Italian businessman Ottavio Quattrocchi. Reuters picture shows Quattrocchi outside the court in Kuala Lumpur. The CBI said it has appealed against the ruling in Malaysia's highest court.

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Dec. 13: In a double blow to the Central Bureau of Investigation, Bombay blast accused Anees Ibrahim was given bail in Dubai and a Malaysian court threw out the request for extradition of Ottavio Quattrocchi, allegedly a Bofors kickback recipient.

While the Quattrocchi setback was expected, last night's grant of bail to Anees, brother of underworld don Dawood Ibrahim, came as a shock to the CBI, whose hopes had risen after the United Arab Emirates for the first time showed signs of entertaining its request for extradition.

Anees is believed to have been given bail in an extortion case, adding to the confusion around his arrest early this month. First, it was thought he had been arrested for travelling with forged papers. Then Dubai police said they were holding him on a murder charge.

Details of the conditions on which he was given bail were not known, one reason being that today was a holiday in Dubai. What the Indian authorities are most exercised about is whether or not he has slipped out of the Emirates.

"We are not worried about Anees getting bail so long as he remains in that country. But it's a different story if he has landed in Karachi," a government official said.

CBI official A.K. Gupta, who had been sent to Dubai after Anees' arrest, quietly returned to Delhi this afternoon. Neither the CBI nor the Indian embassy in the UAE has been officially informed by the Dubai authorities

of the development.

Till late this evening, the government was busy just piecing the news together.

Grant of bail is being interpreted here as indication that the Dubai authorities were unwilling to engage in any process which facilitates Anees' handover to India.

CBI sources said that a few

FUGITIVE FIASCOS

● **Anees Ibrahim:** 1996 in Bahrain, 1998 in Dubai, 2002 in Dubai... the arrest-and-bail cycle continues

● **Ottavio Quattrocchi:** Twice beaten by the Bofors case accused, the CBI is now moving the highest court in Malaysia

● **Abu Salem:** The Bombay blasts suspect once walked free from Sharjah because his photograph could not be furnished. Now in custody in Portugal, long-haul extradition process only option

● **Nadeem:** Request to extradite the music director, an accused in the Gulshan Kumar murder, was rejected by a UK court. India asked to pay Nadeem a hefty compensation

● **Iqbal Mirchi:** Lack of evidence prevents the Mumbai gangster's handover by the UK

days ago, they had sent to Dubai a request for "provisional arrest", which means Anees should be kept behind bars till papers seeking extradition reach the authorities there. But it seems the request has been turned down.

Anees had been arrested before, too, in 1998 — also on a murder charge — but was allowed to walk away for lack of evidence. It was the same case as the one now cited by Dubai police: the killing of Irfan Goga, also a gangster and

an Indian national.

A senior CBI officer said had the Dubai authorities been interested in holding Anees in custody, they would have opposed his bail in court since an international alert was pending against him. It is not known, however, what stand Dubai police took in court.

Government officials said the buzz in the underworld suggested Anees had already fled Dubai for Karachi, in which case extradition proceedings would cease to hold meaning.

The development has shattered CBI's optimism that it was making progress in the case as the Abu Dhabi Interpol had faxed a letter to its counterpart in Delhi on Thursday, saying Anees' extradition request be sent immediately.

CBI director P.C. Sharma, who was huddled in meetings since afternoon, had earlier told reporters that a deportation request was already pending with the Emirates. He said the agency was also moving an extradition request.

He had expressed hope that a "healthy trend of exchanging criminals between the two countries would continue uninterrupted".

The bail is not entirely unexpected, though, given the fact that Dubai has been resenting the pressure brought to bear on it by India for Anees' handover. The Americans are also believed to have played a role in his arrest.

In the Quattrocchi case, the Malaysian High Court rejected the CBI's extradition request, saying the offences alleged were "open to doubt".

The CBI has appealed to a higher court.

■ See Page 7

A year after December 13

By Harish Khare

The danger is that when we postpone the task of making a coherent intellectual effort to understand the nature of threats to our internal security, our policy choices may be made for us.

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IT IS most ironic that despite the presence of a self-certified *desh-bakht* in North Block for more than four years now, the nation finds itself less and less secure internally. Kaluchaak, Akshardham, Ansal Plaza, Raghunath Temple are only a few of the reminders of Lal Krishna Advani's failure as Home Minister to evolve a strategy of internal security, even after the December 13 outrage. One has only to recall the mind-boggling security bandobust during the last Independence Day celebrations to understand the nature and extent of vulnerability. So much so, even the strong-man himself has to have 2,000 policemen out to protect him every time he steps out of his office. The nation feels less internally secure than it did four years ago; the terrorist has moved from the periphery — the northeast and Kashmir — to the heartland.

Except raising more police battalions, earmarking more budgetary allocations for "police modernisation", we continue to reiterate, to quote from Mr. Advani's November 25 statement in the Lok Sabha, "the country's resolve to take all possible steps to combat and to defeat the scourge of cross-border terrorism in all its forms". This is fine; it is the responsibility of leaders to keep the citizens' morale high. But there has been no sincere effort to put in place a doctrine of internal security, even a year after "December 13"; the result is that we continue to do more of the same, with the same clumsiness and the same muddled intellectual thinking.

It is because of muddled thinking (primarily on the part of the political leadership) that our national security establishment has not been able to go about the business of making us less vulnerable. In recent debates at least three different theses about what and why our designated enemy, Pakistan, is doing what it is allegedly said to be doing are introduced to make us feel internally insecure. One view, favourite with the intelligence crowd, is of the "a thousand cuts" policy put in place by the Zia regime. The second view, increasingly discernible in Mr. Advani's pronouncements, holds that Pakistan is out to avenge the humiliation of its defeat

in the 1971 war. And, the third view talks of a globalised "jehadi Islam", especially after "September 11". Each view carries with it a set of assumptions which, in turn, prescribe a different category of possible solutions to the problem.

If pressed for a definite view, our wise internal security bureaucrat, ever ready to juggle contradictions, would answer that it is a mix of all three theses. All he would predict is that there would be more threats to our security. His political master would cynically choose one over the other, depending upon the political calculations of the moment. Mr. Advani's new fascination for the "Pakistan wants to avenge the 1971 defeat" thesis absolves the successive Congress Governments of all the ill-advised policies just as it allows the Abdullah dynasty to emerge blameless for its corrupt and corrupting habits. Similarly, the Narendra Modi/Praveen Togadia emphasis on "jehadi Islam", so vehemently being stressed currently in Gujarat, ignores the obligation of good governance. The debate has to move beyond political convenience.

A doctrine of internal security has to necessarily identify: (a) who is the enemy and what are his objectives (b) consequently, what then are the sources of threat to our internal security; (c) instruments that would be needed to neutralise the identified threats; (d) the changes, legal and administrative, needed to give the instruments the requisite teeth to deal with threats; and, (e) what, if anything, needs to be done to ensure maximum cooperation between the state and the citizens for securing ourselves at home by denying the enemy potential advantages; this primarily includes choices in resolution of political disputes at home. Muddling through is no option; though admittedly in these times of political instability and governmental drift

this is perhaps the only workable option. The danger is that when we postpone the task of making a coherent intellectual effort to understand the nature of threats to our internal security, our policy choices may be made for us. And, these may not be the optimal or the wisest of the choices. After all, like all modern societies, we too live in psychologically vulnerable times. The instant availability of information and images of terrorist attacks create an emotional overload, making the decision-makers' task unenviable.

In a democratic polity, the delineation of a doctrine, primarily, is the prerogative of the political leadership. The assumption is that ideally the political leadership of the day would be sufficiently mindful of the lasting national interests in its approach. The task has become decidedly more complicated after Godhra. In Gujarat, the country's ruling party has invited the voters to subscribe to the Modi/Togadia diagnosis of "terrorism and security". And, whatever the outcome of the Gujarat poll, the likes of Mr. Advani and Arun Jaitley and Venkaiah Naidu will continue for some time to have a say in how we define the problem and its possible solutions.

The career bureaucrats in our security establishment, too, have been assigned an institutionalised partnership, but they have been happy to pander to the political masters' predilections. The dominant inclination is to believe that aberrations such as Gujarat, even if politically inspired, do not change the nature of the game and that in any case there is inherent confidence in the professional competence of our security instruments to outmanoeuvre the "enemy". Rather touching. Intellectual laziness and career calculations have hampered the intelligence agencies' professional performance. Nor, for that matter, has the so-called "security commu-

nity" been able to come up with the critical imagination that would help us think through in our presumed war against terrorism. Pamphleteering is often confused with reasoned policy prescriptions.

A mature polity and its institutions are enjoined to mobilise our collective resources — administrative, political and intellectual — to defeat all those who would deny us peace at home. A mature polity also goes about this task in a calm and systematic manner, avoiding hysterical preoccupations of the day. In our case, particularly after the Gujarat votes get counted, the policy-makers, elected and bureaucratic, would be enjoined to find the answer to one basic question: if Pakistan is the designated "enemy", then do we regard the Muslims as intrinsically fifth columnists? If we are to opt for the "jehadi Islam" theory, as enunciated by the Narendra Modi/Praveen Togadia school, then the answer suggests itself. That answer begs the question: what is to be done with the 100 million Muslims? If we decide to conclude that the 100 million Muslims are willing accomplices in the alleged international jehadi Islamic conspiracy, then are we to purge, to begin with, our administrative cadres, police and armed forces, of all Muslim presence? More importantly, we may be forced to re-write our constitutional arrangements. It is possible to re-orient all the coercive instruments of the Indian state to deal with a vast segment of potential enemy-agents. The cost would be high, bitter and bloody; but, at least, everyone would know the lay of the land, as it were.

On the other hand, if we do decide that the 100 million Muslims are as much Indian as the Hindus, then the obligations of administrative fairness and neutrality become obvious in coping with threats to internal security. Also, we shall be obliged to so conduct our political disputes and electoral competitions in a manner that would promote reconciliation and civic harmony. Because of the absence of an internal security doctrine a year after "December 13" we find ourselves on the verge of a self-inflicted civil war. The Gujarat verdict should help us in our quest for security at home.

Quattrocchi case verdict likely tomorrow

By P. S. Suryanarayana

KUALA LUMPUR, DEC. 11. The Malaysian High Court today completed hearings in a "review" petition against a lower court's refusal to allow the extradition of Ottavio Quattrocchi, an Italian businessman residing in Kuala Lumpur, in connection with the investigations and trial in the Bofors payoff case in India. Later, Justice Augustine Paul, who heard the "review" plea, is understood to have told the prosecution and defence lawyers in his chamber that his ruling would be delivered in court on December 13.

During the day's proceedings in open court, Justice Paul at one stage cautioned Malaysia's Deputy Public Prosecutor, Kamarulhisham Kamaruddin, against adducing arguments that might compel the Bench to "aggressively disagree" with the judges or even "attack" certain aspects of the judicial process in India in relation to the Bofors case as prosecuted there so far. Justice Paul reminded Malaysia's Prosecutor, who represented India in the absence of a bilateral extradition treaty, that case laws had shown that mere "suspicion is not enough", in the absence of a formal charge, to justify an extradition demand. The perceived absence of a precise or plenary charge against Mr. Quattrocchi has served as the critical mass of the legal material in the present case.

Mr. Kamaruddin, who was answering the arguments raised by Mr. Muhammad Shafee Abdullah, counsel for Mr. Quattrocchi, said there was no

mandatory requirement of a full-fledged charge to press for the extradition of a person from one country to another. Arguing that the absence of a conspicuous charge was "not fatal" to the extradition plea, Mr. Kamaruddin disputed the contention that the case was flawed on account of the Indian authorities pronouncing only a *prima facie* case and not a formal cognisance in respect of Mr. Quattrocchi. The test of "*prima facie* (evidence) is consonant with taking cognisance" in a full legal sense, the prosecutor argued and emphasised that the test of *prima facie* was "the threshold for taking cognisance". Citing the Charron versus the USA case, Mr. Kamaruddin said the case law merely underscored that it would be a "respectable practice", as distinct from a "mandatory" one, to resolve an extradition question on the basis of a legal-grade charge.

In his deposition on behalf of the Italian national, Mr. Shafee said the Indian authorities had, contrary to their claims, proved "no hatching of conspiracy" by his client in conjunction with public servants in New Delhi, inclusive of the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, in the Bofors case.

As for the allegations of cheating by Mr. Quattrocchi, only a "prejudice" could be inferred from the material produced by the Indian authorities, Mr. Shafee argued and maintained that it would be amiss to see "something immoral about having an agent for lobbying" in connection with business transactions.

Addressing the impression

that Mr. Quattrocchi had "fled" from India at a sensitive juncture in the Bofors investigations, Mr. Shafee posed the question why the Indian authorities did not place his client in the legally relevant list of absconders. According to Mr. Shafee, Mr. Quattrocchi had bought an air ticket seven weeks prior to his departure from India, a fact that should speak for itself. It was at this stage that Justice Paul cautioned Mr. Shafee against a general and specific interpretation of "political" charges. Arguing that the extradition move was "a breach of Criminal Procedure Code (apparently, in India as also Malaysia) and a breach of natural justice", Mr. Shafee said it "is a rule of common sense" that a charge should have been preferred "at least by the commencement of hearings" in this case. He said that "we (therefore) blew our whistle before the game started". "We do not have a goal post (yet). They (the Indian authorities) are insisting that the game goes on (all the same). The goal post keeps on changing. This is not football or cricket. It is not a fair game at all".

The Malaysian Government, which represented New Delhi, today refrained from pressing for a judicial remedy on the issue of yesterday's denial of a special counsel for India's Central Bureau of Investigation.

After the completion of today's legal proceedings, the Malaysian Prosecutor indicated that any further appeal, one way or the other, against the prospective ruling by Justice Paul would be a delicate issue.

THE HINDI

1 2 DEC 2002

Advani, Congress trade fire

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi/Jammu, Nov. 25: The horrors of yesterday's attack on the Raghunath shrine were revived this morning when a second militant was killed in a gun battle with security forces close to the nearby Shiva temple.

As important visitors, including Congress president Sonia Gandhi, streamed into Jammu today, a controversy erupted over whether the new Mufti Mohammad Sayeed government had kept Delhi posted on the release of militants that the BJP is now blaming for the Raghunath temple attack.

Sonia said it was a "misunderstanding" that the state government was setting free militants unilaterally. "All these actions are being taken with the approval of the central intelligence agencies," she said. Her party is a partner in the Mufti coalition.

In the Lok Sabha, deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani categorically said the Centre was not consulted by the state government.

He said the Union home secretary had written a letter to the state asking it not to act in haste while releasing militants and emphasising that the Centre should be consulted on such issues.

When Congress leader Shivraj Patil insisted that central intelligence outfits were consulted, Advani said the role of these agencies should not be discussed in the House.

"Neither do I bring them (intelligence agencies) nor others should do it," he said.

Privately, Congress leaders said there was no difference between the Centre and central intelligence agencies, which report to the home ministry.

Party spokesman Jaipal Reddy said: "To the best of our knowledge, the Centre was con-

stantly kept informed. The government of India was in touch with the J&K government. Those released were released after due consultations with the Centre."

When Reddy's attention was brought to Advani's statement that the home secretary had written a letter to Mufti asking him not to release so many militants, he said he was "reasonably sure" about his stand. Reddy added that his information was based on the feedback from the state government.

In his statement in both Houses of Parliament, Advani said the attack was carried out by the Al Mansooran group, a front of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Toiba.

Last night's assumption that the attack had ended with the death of a militant in the Raghunath temple proved wrong as another was spotted by police hiding in a cowshed near a temple about 400 metres away. He was

shot after a nearly two-hour exchange, raising the toll to 13. Sources said he is the same man the security forces had thought they had shot in a building near the Shiva temple.

A slain auto-rickshaw driver had been mistaken for the assailant earlier. Jammu special superintendent of police Farooq Khan clarified that two militants had been killed — one at Raghunath temple last night and another this morning.

Sonia, who visited the hospital where the injured have been admitted, said the Congress would "stand as one with the Central and the state government in the fight against terrorism".

"Don't dare accuse the Congress party of being soft on terrorism. I have lost two members of my family because of it," she rasped at the insinuation that there was a change in her party's role in the battle against militancy.

■ See Page 6

26 NOV 2002

THE TELEGRAPH

Dawood brother held in Dubai

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, December 9

DAWOOD IBRAHIM'S younger brother Anees Ibrahim — one of India's most wanted criminals — has been arrested in Dubai. A senior CBI official has flown to Dubai to discuss Anees's deportation.

Anees (42), a prime accused in the 1993 Bombay blasts, was arrested on December 3, three days after he arrived in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) from Pakistan. Dubai authorities informed CBI about this late on Saturday night.

India and the UAE have an extradition treaty, but the CBI is more keen to seek Anees's deportation. Deportation is an executive action that takes less time, while extradition is a lengthy legal process. The CBI has been encouraged to seek deportation by its recent record: The success in getting two Dubai-based

IN THE NET



- * Prime accused in the 1993 Bombay blasts case
- * Among the 20 criminals India wants from Pakistan
- * Reportedly ordered assassination of Dawood aides Firoz Sadguru and Irfan Goga
- * Arrested in Dubai in 1996. Released for lack of evidence on Goga murder
- * Abu Salem started off as Anees's errand boy

gangsters — Aftab Ansari and Muttappa Rai — back to India.

Anees was held on the basis of documents handed over to the

Dubai police by the CBI and an Interpol red corner notice. The CBI is trying to find out what forced Anees to visit Dubai, especially in the backdrop of a "turnaround" in cooperation between the Emirates and India.

CBI Deputy Director (coordination) AK Gupta, who is also in charge of the agency's Interpol wing, will hand over Anees's "criminal digest" to Dubai. The Centre is in touch with the Maharashtra Government for the transfer of Anees's fingerprints to Dubai.

This is the second time that Anees has been detained by the Dubai police. In 1996, he was let off for want of evidence.

Anees was on the list of 20 "most wanted" that India handed to Pakistan a year ago. There is a Rs 10-lakh reward on him. The CBI claims that it was he who sent the grenades and AK rifles to Sanjay Dutt's home.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

1 0 DEC 2002

India should have N-armed submarines, says navy chief

AN TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India "conceptually" should have the strongest arm of its "nuclear weapon triad" undersea in the form of submarines capable of launching N-missiles, said Navy chief Admiral Madhvendra Singh on Monday.

Admiral Singh, however, refused to either confirm or deny the existence of N-arms on Indian warships or whether India was soon going to acquire Russian N-subs and the long-range TU-22m3 strategic bombers.

Any country with a declared policy of no first-use of N-arms, like India, must obviously have a nuclear triad. "The strongest arm of the triad is under the sea... It does not make sense to keep N-arms on land, where they can be targeted," said Admiral Singh, speaking to reporters in the run-up to the Navy Day on Wednesday.

Asked about the package deal to acquire the decommissioned Russian aircraft carrier 'Admiral Gorshkov', he said, "The price negotiations are going on. We may strike a deal... We have a professional team handling it to ensure the country gets a good deal."

This becomes important since the negotiations for the carrier have attracted some criticism for the sharp escalation in its high retrofitting costs to over \$1 billion. Some experts have even questioned the need to purchase a second-hand, partly-burnt carrier.

Admiral Singh, however, dismissed such reports. He said that the carrier was in a good shape and there was 'absolutely no doubt' that the navy desperately needed another carrier. While India's solitary carrier 'INS Viraat' has a residual life of only five to six years more, the proposed indigenous construction of a carrier will take almost a decade.

As for other major programmes, he said all the three much-delayed 'Talwar' class stealth frigates being built in Russia would be inducted next year. "They will be a considerable and powerful force," he said.

These frigates were to be delivered much earlier but their 'Shtil' surface-to-air missile systems are yet to pass muster. Consequently, around 500 Indian naval officials, sent to Russia several months ago to get the warships, have returned home empty-handed.

The navy will soon induct Kamov-31 early-warning helicopters, Israeli unmanned aerial vehicles, 'Prabal' and 'Kora' class missile corvettes, and 'Brahmaputra' class frigates. Admiral Singh also said the mid-life upgrades will also soon be underway for the 'Ranbir' class destroyers and 'Godavari' class frigates.

He said a long-term 'Vision-2025' plan, along with a 15-year shipbuilding plan, as well as an 'aviation masterplan' for modernising the ageing chopper and aircraft fleet had already been submitted to the defence ministry.

Nuke vessel on wishlist

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Dec. 2: The navy today made a strong pitch for acquiring a nuclear submarine, a day before Russian President Vladimir Putin, deputy Prime Minister Ilya Klebanov and their delegation are to reach New Delhi for talks on, among other things, arms sales to India.

Navy chief Admiral Madhendra Singh did not categorically mention "nuclear submarine" — the subject being designated as "confidential" — but said the concept of arming the navy with a nuclear submarine was justified. It is possible that the Russians may have linked the sale or lease of a nuclear submarine to the sale of the aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov. However, there was no official word on this.

The navy chief also said India was now closer to building its own air defence ship — an ambitious carrier development programme — which had moved from the drawing board stage to actual construction.

India is in talks with Russia to acquire at least one Akula II class nuclear submarine — a fact that is officially denied but nonetheless frequently referred to in strategic circles. Klebanov and his delegation are scheduled to meet Union defence minister George Fernandes tomorrow. The navy chief's utterances were not specifically timed to coincide with the visit of the Russians but it does make his position clear.

A nuclear submarine for the navy would not only arm it with a stealth weapon capable of staying underwater for long periods but also give it a launching pad for nuclear missiles from sea. (A "nuclear submarine" is essentially a "nuclear-powered" submarine).

The strategic objective of the Indian defence establishment, too, has been to acquire a "nuclear triad", jargon for making its air, sea and land forces capable of launching nuclear weapons. Singh said there was a case for having the strongest nuclear arm at sea because other nuclear assets were land-based. If the enemy were to target nuclear arms based on land, collateral damage would be much more than in such an event occurring at sea.

"...Conceptually, India being a declared nuclear state with a no first use doctrine, it must have a nuclear triad with the strongest arm being at sea — underwater", the navy chief said.

The admiral said the Centre had also approved development of the air defence ship. The ship, a 30,000-tonne vessel, was being built in the Kochi shipyard. It would take an estimated 10 years to be completed.

The navy chief said acquisition of three "Krivack" class frigates, the first of which was to be delivered by the Russians this year, has been delayed because certain technical glitches were being ironed out.

He said the deployment of

the navy in the North Arabian Sea during Operation Parakram was a "strong pressure force" on Pakistan.

The navy chief said negotiations for the Russian aircraft carrier Admiral Gorshkov were still on and were proceeding. He denied reports alleging that the 40,000-tonne ship was outdated and unusable. Asked if the deal was to be discussed tomorrow, he said: "Both the sides want a good deal and price negotiations are on by highly professional officers who were committed to India getting a good deal."

THE TELEGRAPH

3 DEC 2002

'ISI, AL-QAEDA PRESENT IN BANGLADESH'

We have proof: Fernandes

20/11
10/1
BANGALORE, NOV. 29. The Defence Minister, George Fernandes, today said India had intelligence information and "human evidence" to support its charge that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) and the Al-Qaeda were using Bangladesh territory for anti-India activities.

Responding to Dhaka asking New Delhi to provide "credible

evidence", he told reporters here: "We not only have intelligence information but also human evidence in the sense that our border security forces in that area and media people covering that area have personally told me about Al-Qaeda elements in Bangladesh".

Bangladesh had on Thursday rejected India's charge. "Nobody expects anyone to say tha-

2-08-11
t...yes..yes...we have them (ISI and Al-Qaeda) in our territory. They (India's charges) are contradicted. That was expected," Mr. Fernandes, who earlier attended the 'Rajyotsava celebrations' at the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, told presspersons here.

Mr. Fernandes said that he not only supported the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani's suggestion of capital punishment for rapists but would like to insist that India follow the example of China where corrupt people were punished by being shot to death. — PTI, UNI

Hasina denies charge

PTI reports from New Delhi Bangladesh's top Opposition leader, Sheikh Hasina, today rejected the charge by the BNP-led Government in her country that she was sponsoring anti-Bangladesh campaign during her stay here, saying it was India which had levelled the allegation about the Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka becoming a hub of ISI activities three weeks before her visit.

"I am not doing anything which is against Bangladesh. I will give my clarification when I return home," she told reporters after a 45-minute meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, here.

Dhaka's charge: Page 11



The former Bangladesh Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, with the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, in New Delhi on Friday. — Photo: S. Arneja

Al Qaeda-Dhaka 'link: George says there's proof

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BANGALORE, NOVEMBER 29

(ISI) or al-Qaeda activities on its soil.

UNION Defence Minister George Fernandes said India had intelligence information and "human evidence" of the presence of al Qaeda activists using Bangladesh territory for anti-India activities.

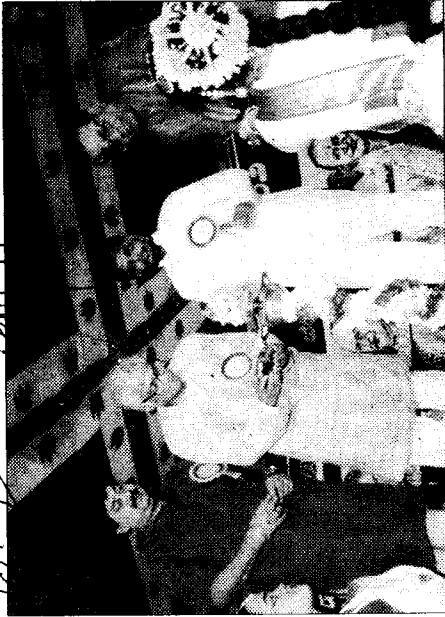
"We not only have intelligence information but also human evidence. Border Security Forces in that area and the media covering that area have personally told me of their presence," he told reporters after participating in a Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) function here today.

Bangladesh on Thursday had denied the existence of training camps for North-East militants on its territory and said it was not encouraging any Inter Services Intelligence

But the minister shrugged aside Bangladesh's denial saying "Nobody expects anyone to say that... yes... yes... we have them on our territory. That was expected".

As for abatement of cross-border terrorism after the installation of the new government in Jammu and Kashmir and with reference to the recent attacks on Raghunath Temple, the Defence Minister said there was no change in the situation. "I think they are in the same mode," he said.

Fernandes also said he saw some improvement in the Indo-China discussions on the border front. "Talks have been raised to a higher level. The frequency of the meeting as of now is going to be increased,"



Defence Minister George Fernandes at the celebration of Karnataka Rajyotsava in Bangalore on Friday. Keshav Vitta

he said, adding that earlier, the talks were held only once in six months. "The joint working group had met earlier this month and will be meeting again in January," he added.

Earlier, speaking at the HAL function, the Defence Minister referred to media reports pointing out the difference between setting up a business venture in China and India. Quoting a report, Fer-

mandes said: "The number of days to set up a business venture in India is 90 and 30 in China." He said though India was ahead of China during the sixties, now it (China) has taken the lead.

"Both the countries took to destiny at the same time. While China used revolutionary methods, India achieved it through non-violent means," he said.

The Defence Minister said it was clear from the fact that while China had set a target of 7 percent growth for the full year (2002), it had shown a 7.9 percent growth during the January-September period itself. Fernandes said China's march ahead was marked by discipline, work culture and integrity. "It is time for us to bring about a change," he added.

Bangla bashing, round II

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Nov. 27: External affairs minister Yashwant Sinha today said the Pakistani high commission in Dhaka has become the "nerve-centre" of ISI activities in promoting terrorism and insurgency in India.

He told Parliament: "Some al Qaida elements have taken shelter in Bangladesh... Though foreign media has also reported several such instances, our own sources have confirmed many of these reports."

Sinha is the second top Indian leader to make such an allegation. Earlier this month, deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani had triggered a diplomatic controversy by stating publicly that ISI activities had escalated after Khaleda Zia assumed power in Bangladesh.

He had also spoken of al

Qaida presence in that country. Both charges were hotly denied by Dhaka.

A large number of unauthorised madarasas have sprung up along the Indo-Bangla border, he said. Sinha echoed a long-held Indian view, voiced by Advani too, that major Northeast insurgent groups have established training camps in Bangladesh.

Sinha's statement came in response to queries from Trinamul Congress leader Mamata Banerjee who said "Bengal is the gateway" for insurgents from the Northeast, Nepal and Bhutan.

He said Delhi had taken up the issue with Dhaka from time to time and the Indian high commissioner in Dhaka had conveyed India's "strong concern over shelter being obtained on Bangladesh territory by people inimical to India's interests".

The Bangladesh government has assured "us" that it would not allow its territory to be used for such activities.

"The Bangladesh foreign minister has intimated that instructions have been issued not to allow the presence of Indian insurgents or their free movement across the border," the minister said.

The fresh burst of accusations from India comes when former Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is touring the country.

In Delhi today, she steered clear of charges that her country had become a safe haven for al Qaida terrorists and the ISI.

"We have seen such reports in newspapers. But independently, we don't have any information about them. Maybe the question should be directed to the Bangladesh government," Hasina said.

THE TELEGRAPH

28 NOV 2002

Dhaka centre of ISI, Al-Qaida activity, says Yashwant

AP

New Delhi: Suspending their mutual hostility for a change, the government and the Opposition on Wednesday shared concerns over the alarming rise in ISI activity in the eastern region and Bangladesh's role in it.

Responding to Congress member Shyama Sinha's observation about growing contacts between ISI and Bangladesh with Dhaka becoming a haven for Al-Qaida terrorists, external affairs minister Yashwant Sinha agreed that Dhaka had become a "nerve-centre" of terrorist activity.

He said that Indian intelligence channels had confirmed Western media reports of a mystery ship, S.S. Mecca, with Al-Qaida operatives landing at the coast of Chittagong.

"Some Al-Qaida elements have become active in Bangladesh," Sinha said adding that the issue had been taken up with Dhaka.

"It has been brought to the notice of the Bangladesh government," he said.

I never allowed ISI, Al-Qaida to operate in Bangla: Hasina

New Delhi: Bangladesh Opposition leader Sheikh Hasina on Wednesday said she had never allowed Bangladeshi soil to be used by ISI or Al-Qaida when she was in power and said such things would not be good for either her country or any neighbouring country.

Careful not to make any categorical statement regarding these activities, Hasina instead chose to point to recent press reports while responding to questions. It was for the Bangladesh government and the Indian government to sit down, discuss it and sort it out, she said.

The Awami League leader was more forthcoming on the internal situation saying the failure of the Khaleda Zia government necessitated fresh polls. The government's failure to improve the law

and order situation could have led to some terrorist activity. The government's failure was apparent from the fact that it had been forced to deploy the army.

Hasina said her party workers were being harassed and the minorities, which supported her party because of its secular democratic polity, were being targeted. The government wanted to eliminate the opposition. Bangladesh needed more time to have a practicing democracy.

Hasina denied any political content to her meetings with the Indian leaders and said her meeting with PM Vajpayee was a courtesy call. In her talks with Indian leaders, she had stressed the need for duty free access to overcome the trade imbalance, poverty alleviation and South-South cooperation. **TNN**



Bangladesh former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at a press conference in New Delhi on Wednesday. Hasina, the leader of the Opposition, accused the Dhaka government of trying to eliminate it through mass arrests, torture and false criminal charges.

2 8 NOV 2002

New twist to Tehelka controversy

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, NOV. 26. A new twist was today added to the controversy over the Tehelka Commission of Inquiry, with the former Samata Party president, Jaya Jaitly accusing the Congress and the portal, Tehelka dot-com of "subversion" of the probe.

Addressing a press conference here, she alleged that both had concealed the fact that the lawyer for the Commission, Siddharth Aggarwal and Tehelka's advocate in the panel, Siddharth Luthra, were from the same law firm 'Luthra and Associates'.

"This fact has been concealed from the Commission as well as other noticees before the Commission," Ms. Jaitly charged adding that senior counsel Gopal Subramaniam who brought in Mr. Aggarwal should not have done so and having introduced him, the counsel should have disclosed the Tehelka's lawyers' interests.

"Not only was this not done, Mr. Aggarwal, in breach of all norms of honest and fairness, cross-examined Tarun Tejpal and Aniruddha Bahal when his partner Siddharth Luthra carried out the examination-in-chief. The preparation for the examin-

ation-in-chief and the cross-examination was carried out in the very same office", she said.

Ms. Jaitly claimed that she had collected this information by carrying out a Tehelka-type operation through e-mail, and collected "incontrovertible proof" in defence of her charge.

Ms. Jaitly said even though she came to know of this fact two months ago, she preferred to "suffer in silence" rather than be charged with attempting to "derail" the probe,

"I had full faith in the fairness of Justice Venkataswami," she said adding that unfortunately, the Congress and the Tehelka had mounted an attack on the judiciary and Justice Venkataswami for which the latter had quit.

"They have questioned the wisdom and propriety of two Chief Justices of India. Having been caught on the wrong foot they are now trying to turn the tables on the Government and accusing it of sabotaging the Commission".

On the contrary, Ms. Jaitly said she had again planned to request the Commission to allow forensic examination to establish

the genuineness of the tapes, since she always expressed doubts about their veracity. "It was not in my interest to derail the probe", she asserted.

The CPI(M) parliamentary party leader, Somnath Chatterjee, charged the Government with scuttling the probe. He said the Government was not interested in the truth coming out and said the every effort was made by the Government lawyer to suppress the truth.

Not a single witness was cross-examined by the Government lawyer, he said and charged the Government with playing a "dubious role". He wondered how the issue was suddenly leaked and brought to public notice.

Meanwhile, the Congress MP, S. Jaipal Reddy, today gave an adjournment notice for discussion on the Venkataswami Commission. The Speaker, Manohar Joshi, said that while he could raise the issue after question hour, any decision on a detailed discussion would have to be decided by the Business Advisory Committee. The Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Pramod Mahajan, said the Government was prepared to discuss the issue after the BAC allotted time.

'Tainted' judges may be summoned to Delhi

By J. Venkatesan

NEW DELHI, NOV. 26. If necessary the Chief Justice of India (CJI), G.B. Pattanaik, is understood to have authorised the inquiry committee to summon the three Punjab and Haryana High Court judges to the capital for an inquiry and to get their version.

The committee, headed by the Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh, A.R. Lakshmanan which held its first sitting here in the capital on Monday to work out the modalities of conducting the probe, decided to meet again this weekend for taking further course of action.

It may be recalled that following the Service Commission scam highlighted in the media, the former CJI, Kirpal, appointed Justice Saharya to conduct a probe against the three judges and submit a report. Accordingly, Mr. Justice Saharya completed the inquiry and sent his report to Mr. Justice Kirpal in which he was understood to have stopped short of exonerating them.

But as there was no follow up action, the Committee on Judicial Accountability, which included the former Union Law Ministers, Ram Jethmalani, Shanti Bhushan, Rajendra Sachar, D.S.

Tewatia, Anil Divan, Indira Jaising, Kamini Jaiswal and Prashant Bhushan requested Mr. Justice Kirpal to take immediate action on the report and not to allot any work to the three "tainted" judges.

They wrote to Mr. Justice Kirpal saying that the delay in not taking any action "is causing grave disquiet in the public mind, leading to serious erosion of the credibility of the judiciary in the country".

They drew the attention of Mr. Justice Kirpal that their continuance was making a mockery of the in-house disciplinary procedure stated to have been evolved by the

Conference of Chief Justices of High Courts and Judges of the Supreme Court.

According to the sources, any further action by Mr. Justice Pattanaik on the three judges would depend on the inquiry by the three-member committee.

Regarding allegations against three sitting judges of the Karnataka High Court, the Chief Justice N.K. Jain is understood to have sent a report last week informing the CJI that no one is coming forward to corroborate the allegations against the three judges. The CJI feels that it will be difficult to take action in such cases, say the sources.

THE HINDU

27 NOV 2002

Advani denial draws charge of mischief

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi, Nov. 26: Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani reaffirmed today that the Centre was neither informed nor consulted before the Jammu and Kashmir government decided to release political prisoners shortly after Mufti Mohammad Sayeed took over as chief minister.

As the blame game between the BJP and the Congress intensified, Advani told the BJP parliamentary party, which met this morning, that: "To say that the detenus were set free with the Centre's knowledge and concurrence is baseless."

In an attempt to set the Centre's record straight before the issue became a talking point in the Gujarat elections, Advani said the Mufti government may have "informally" shared details of its decision with local intelligence agencies. It would be "improper" to even divulge this information inside the House and outside.

"But this cannot be treated as advice from the Centre," Advani was quoted as saying by BJP parliamentary party spokesman V.K. Malhotra.

The Congress, however, stuck to its stand that the detenus were released after getting the Centre's go-ahead and accused Advani of "misleading the country with a mischievous intent".

"Advani did not tell the whole truth either to Parliament or to people when he said that the government had not given any clearance for the release of detenus in J&K. We would like to make it clear that senior officers, including the joint director of the Intelligence Bureau, K.B. Singh, were consulted," Congress spokesman Jaipal Reddy said.

Reddy added that Sayeed had a meeting with Singh, who deals exclusively with Kashmir, on November 7. "It does not

lie in their (the BJP's) mouth to object to the action of the J&K government as a BJP-led coalition had facilitated a meeting of some Hurriyat leader with Pervez Musharraf (the Pakistan President) in Delhi," Reddy added.

Asked whether the Congress would move a privilege motion against Advani in the Lok Sabha, he said the party would first examine whether a case of breach of privilege could be made out.

Independent observers, however, believe that the home ministry could not have been kept entirely in the dark about such a significant move which was enshrined in the election manifesto of Mufti's People's Democ-

cratic Party. The well-entrenched intelligence network in the state keeps the home ministry in the know of even routine developments,

they said.

The observation was corroborated by reliable BJP sources who admitted that the home ministry was informed of how the local intelligence had warned Sayeed that eight of the 10 prisoners initially shortlisted were not "fit cases". "Their objections were obviously overruled for political gains," said these sources.

But the BJP and the Sangh parivar indicated that they were not willing to pass up the chance to have a go at the Congress. Vishwa Hindu Parishad general secretary Praveen Togadia told PTI that the VHP's slogan would be "Support the Congress and invite Raghunath".

BJP president M. Venkaiah Naidu charged the PDP-Congress coalition with "failure" to combat the surge in violence and Malhotra accused PDP vice-president Mehbooba Mufti of "sedition" for her alleged statement that India and Pakistan should keep off Kashmir.

■ See Page 6

QUOTE

Advani did not tell the whole truth either to Parliament or to people

JAIPAL REDDY

Deputy PM links temple terror to new Islamabad govt, questions violation of UN terms

Unfazed
Pakistan
replays
peace tune

Advani pins blame on Lashkar

OUR BUREAU

Nov. 25: Pakistan foreign minister Mian Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri said the top priority of the new government would be to normalise relations with India but added that "India will also have to play a role".

"My top priority would be to improve and normalise ties with India and other neighbouring countries," the foreign minister said in his first interview to the daily *Dawn*.

Kasuri expressed hope that India would respond positively to these sentiments. India "also has a role to play", the minister said. "We want to improve relations with India and wish peace and prosperity for the people of India," he said.

The minister maintained that Pakistan was sincere in its desire for peace with India. "We are prepared to go half way or may be even a step further in improving relations with India." But these relations have to be based on the rule of law and mutual respect, he added.

Regarding the Kashmir dispute, Kasuri said: "We want principled peace with honour and justice." He said "the desired objective of solution to the Kashmir dispute can only be achieved through what is acceptable to the Kashmiri people".

The continuing tension between the two countries has had a negative impact on the social and economic development of the two South Asian neighbours, the foreign minister said. The unfortunate situation requires sincere efforts by the leaderships of the two countries to amicably resolve all outstanding issues, he added.

India, however, made it clear that normalisation of relations between the two sides could only take place when the ground reality changes with serious action from Islamabad to stop cross-border terrorism and destruction of its terror apparatus.

Officially, India did not react to the Pakistani foreign minister's remarks. But, in private, South Block officials pointed out that resumption of dialogue between the two sides could only take place after Pakistan completely stops infiltration across the Line of Control and gives up its policy of compulsive hostility against India.

They also pointed out that, in the BBC's *Hard Talk* programme today, India's foreign minister Yashwant Sinha made it clear that Delhi would not return to the talks table unless there was a visible change in Islamabad's policy towards Delhi.

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Nov. 25: India blamed Pakistan for the terrorist strike on the Raghunath temple in Jammu yesterday, with deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani saying the attack was carried out by the Al Mansooran group, a front of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Toiba.

Advani placed a detailed report on the incident in both Houses of Parliament today, saying the attack was part of a deliberate design to create a communal divide in Kashmir.

The deputy Prime Minister, however, expressed confidence that the people of the state will not let this happen.

Twelve persons, including a policeman, a CRPF jawan and a militant, died in the attack and around 52 were injured. Curfew has been clamped in Jammu as a precaution, the minister said.

Sunday's attack has been a setback for improving ties with Pakistan. With the successful completion of elections in both Kashmir and Pakistan, the international community had hoped for a thaw in ties between the nuclear neighbours.

But the deputy Prime Minister's statement today clearly signalled a hardening in India's po-

sition on talks. He even wondered if the spurt in violence in Kashmir was linked to the formation of a new government in Pakistan.

Advani said the violence in the Valley, could also be linked to Pakistan's decision to free Lashkar chief Hafiz Mohammad Sayeed. Soon after he was freed, a senior member of the militant organisation vowed to continue the jihad in Kashmir and publicly called for stepping up terror strikes in the state.

Members of Parliament are aware that the UN in a resolution — after the September 11 terror strikes in the US — has made it mandatory for all UN members to ensure that terror is not incited from their soil.

By freeing the head of the Lashkar, an outfit New Delhi blames for some of the worst attacks in India, Pakistan has clearly violated the UN resolution.

Keeping this in mind, the Union home minister said: "Terrorists have shown their disdain for international opinion and efforts of various countries, which have been trying to apply moral and diplomatic pressure to end cross border terrorism."

Advani said a suicide attack on the Pamposh Hotel Complex in Srinagar on November 22 and



A policewoman walks past a bullet-riddled pillar at the Raghunath temple. (AFP)

an explosive device placed near the Jawahar tunnel moments before an army convoy was to pass, were run-ups to the main attack at the Raghunath temple.

"These terrorists have demonstrated their total lack of concern for the overwhelming yearning for peace demonstrated by the people of Kashmir when they braved violence and exercised their right to vote in the recent Assembly elections," the deputy Prime Minister said.

He assured Parliament that the government was committed

to providing all necessary assistance to the state in its fight against terrorism. Minister of state for home I.D. Swamy, accompanied by the CRPF director general, have been sent to Jammu for an on-the-spot assessment.

Advani went through a step by step account of how the attack took place. While one terrorist was shot in the main attack, the second terrorist ran towards the nearby Shiv mandir, lobbing grenades and firing as he ran.

The policemen on duty closed the doors of the Shiv temple pre-

venting the terrorist from entering. The area was cordoned off and the terrorist killed today morning.

The state administration had informed the Centre that additional forces had been put in place in the temple after the earlier attack on the temple in March.

In both Houses of Parliament, members stood up as a mark of respect for those who died in yesterday's attack. Advani asked all members to join him in condemning the incident and those responsible for the attack.



Sonia at the temple (PTI)

Teach them a lesson: House

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Nov. 25: Parliament adopted a unanimous resolution condemning the attack on the Raghunath temple in Jammu at the end of an impromptu discussion during which several members — including BJP allies — expressed disappointment at the government's inability to stop the attacks, as well as its reliance on the US which is helping Pakistan in cash and kind.

Members cutting across party lines strongly condemned last night's terrorist strike with some demanding that Pakistan be taught a lesson to put an end to the menace. "How long are we going to tolerate such incidents and when is our patience going to end?" they asked.

For more than six months jawans were deployed at the border, but still the government

could not stop the Pakistan gameplan of dividing Indian society along communal lines, the members said.

After deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani replied to the discussion in the Lok Sabha, Speaker Manohar Joshi read out the resolution condemning the senseless act of violence. The resolution said Pakistan-backed terrorists were desperate to disturb peace in the state. Both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha observed a minute's silence in memory of those killed.

Trinamul Congress chief Mamata Banerjee said the Intelligence Bureau should be revamped, implying that the government had failed to check the attack because of lack of intelligence input. She exhorted the Centre to take strong action, saying "India should not keep quiet". Mamata also blamed the US for helping Pakistan, which

exported cross-border terrorism to India.

Prabhunath Singh of the Samata Party asked if the government would mount pressure on the US to prevent the flow of funds to terrorists. BJP's Uttar Pradesh ally and BSP member Rashid Alvi wondered why no decisive action is being taken against Pakistan, which is responsible for cross-border terrorism in India. After months of deployment on the borders, armed forces were withdrawn without teaching Pakistan any lesson, he pointed out.

"About 25,000 people have fallen victim to cross-border terrorism. You (Advani) said it is a do-or-die battle. Where is the battle? What is the battle? Yesterday, you gave a warning. I hope this is the last warning," said Shiv Sena member Mohan Rawale.

Another ally, the Indian National Lok Dal, also flayed the

government for inaction. "When are we going to take steps?", asked Sushil Kumar Indora of the party. Whenever Israel, the US, or Russia is attacked, they gave a befitting reply, but not India, he pointed out.

America has a "double face", said BJP chief whip V.K. Malhotra, indirectly blaming the Centre's foreign policy for the situation. India is acting under pressure from the US while dealing with Pakistan, alleged Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav. He took the Centre to task, saying it has failed to take concrete steps to curb cross-border terrorism. "Those who fear for their own lives cannot protect the country," he added.

CPM veteran Somnath Chatterjee, however, said Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's efforts to provide a "healing touch" was the right approach.

Terror strikes 2 Jammu shrines

9 killed; police end siege of Raghunath temple

Arun Joshi
Jammu, November 24

TERRORISTS STRUCK this evening at the Raghunath Temple in midtown Jammu and an adjacent shrine, killing nine and injuring more than 45 people.

Security forces shot dead a solitary gunman who had entered the Raghunath Temple, but it took a fierce and protracted encounter at the Rupiyowala Temple only 800 metres away before another militant holed up inside could be shot dead.

Till late in the night, gunfire could be heard over the loud slogans against Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and his soft line against militants.

The terrorists opened the attack with the crackle of automatic gunfire and a volley of blasts just after 7 pm. Grenades flew in towards the Raghunath Temple from the Shahidi Chowk area, dispersing frightened devotees and bringing security forces rushing in towards the shrine. The number of attackers could not initially be verified, but at least one had clearly fired his way into the temple.

Shots rang out almost simultaneously near the smaller Rupiyowala Temple in the vicinity. Grenades went off on Panjbakhtar Road and in the crowded Hari Market area around the twin temples. Most of the deaths and injuries seemed to have been caused by these grenade blasts.

The gunbattle at the Raghunath Temple raged for over an hour and a half. But that there was just a lone terrorist inside was clear only after a sharp-shooter picked off a man and

the firing stopped.

This was the second attack on the Raghunath Temple this year. The first had taken place on March 30.

The police were unsure until very late of the number of terrorists hiding inside the Rupiyowala Temple. "We are working on it. We are trying to pin them down. It is only a matter of time now," senior superintendent of police Farooq Khan said some time before the second militant was also killed.

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee was with his senior colleagues, discussing the Justice Venkataswami issue when the news of the attacks was conveyed to him. NSG commandos were ordered in from Manesar, but were held back after forces in Jammu reported success.

The BJP has called a Jammu bandh tomorrow and an indefinite curfew has been clamped on the town.

Jammu & Kashmir Police said the terrorists' modus operandi was remarkably typical of the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba. The terrorist gunned down inside the Raghunath Temple was in his late teens and had an AK-47 rifle, some magazines and a bag of grenades on him. His height (5 feet 9 inches) and build strongly suggested that he was a foreigner, the police said. "They are Lashkar-e-Tayyeba men," Director-General of Police AK Suri said.

Though he admitted no ID had been found on the slain man, he pointed out that "the Lashkar had indulged in acts like this before".

Police also said both militants could be Pakistanis as the



SYNCHRONISED STRIKES: Terrorists attack Raghunath and Rupiyowala temples, less than 1 km apart. It's the second attack on Raghunath this year

MAYHEM OUTSIDE: Before the attack they lob grenades in markets nearby, killing six and injuring 45. Among casualties is a cop (above) at Raghunath

FIGHTBACK: Police shooter takes out terrorist at Raghunath, ending encounter. Forces later kill militant holed up inside Rupiyowala

Lashkar had a lot of Pakistanis in its ranks.

Asked why temples had been singled out for the attacks, Suri said, "It's is nothing but a renewed attempt at causing communal tensions. Since temples are worshipped by a particular community, they are targeting

them to trigger a communal backlash."

However, questions were raised about the preparedness of the State police as this was the second attack on the shrine this year. In the earlier attack, eight persons were killed.

Police sources admitted that

the "grenade explosions and the melee that followed created confusion and distracted the attention of the police and CRPF personnel".

The police top brass, however, denied their forces were ill-prepared.

More reports on Page 5

Pressure on Mufti to dump peace policy

HT Correspondent
Jammu, November 24

CHIEF MINISTER Mufti Mohammad Sayeed tonight came under pressure to abandon his "healing touch" policy with critics blaming his soft approach towards militants for the current spate in terrorist attacks.

BJP general secretaries Arun Jaitley and Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said the Mufti Government's "policy of appeasement" of secessionists had encouraged them to strike at the Raghunath temple. BJP chief Venkaiah Naidu urged the CM to review in the "national interest" his policy of withdrawing Pota and releasing separatists such as Yasin Malik and Showkat Bakshi.

Opposition NC's chief Omar Abdullah poured scorn on the CM for having argued that releasing secessionist leaders would heal wounds and bring down militancy — a logic that has been shattered with the CRPF camp attack on Friday (6 jawans dead), the bus blast on Saturday (12 soldiers and 7 relatives dead) and today's temple strikes.

"The Mufti's healing touch should actually heal the common man instead of encouraging militants to carry out such acts," Abdullah said.

The Government had released top separatist leaders such as Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Abdul Ghani Bhat and Abdul Ghani Lone in 1992, and Yasin Malik, Shabir Shah, Imran Rahi and Firdous Baba in 1994. That did not curb militancy.

OPPOSITION DEMANDS JPC PROBE

Govt. denies stalling Tehelka probe

By K.V. Prasad

H.O. 1
24/11

NEW DELHI, NOV. 25. The Central Government today denied there was any attempt on its part to "sabotage" the work of the Commission inquiring into the Tehelka episode and asserted it was committed to allowing the panel complete its task.

Dissatisfied with the assurance, the Opposition led by Manmohan Singh staged a walkout charging the Government with adopting "dilatatory tactics" to stall the probe and demanded a Joint Parliamentary Committee probe into it.

For the second consecutive day, the Rajya Sabha witnessed tumultuous scenes over the issue, with the Opposition members asserting that they did not cast any aspersion on Justice K. Venkataswami, retired Supreme Court judge, or on the judiciary but were concerned with the Government's conduct in appointing a judge to a Government job when he was heading a probe into the functioning of a Ministry. "It is not a reflection on a judge but government functioning," the Congress leader, Pranab Mukherjee, said.

Responding to members' concern, the Finance Minister, Jaswant Singh, said the Government "shall not permit any attempt to sabotage, dilute or sidetrack" the probe and was committed to seeing that the Commission came out with its final findings at the earliest.

He said having accepted the resignation of Mr. Venkataswami as head of the panel, the Government would consult the Chief Justice of India for filling the vacancy by nominating a retired judge of the apex court. Mr. Singh said he would convey to the Prime Minister a suggestion by the RJD president, Laloo Prasad Yadav, that the panel's new chief be appointed in consultation with the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Sonia Gandhi. He also read out the resignation letter written by Mr. Venkataswami, which was objected to by Hansraj Bharadwaj (Congress) and Janeswar Misra (SP), on the ground that it was improper to make such letters public.

Nilotpal Basu of the CPI(M) said while Mr. Venkataswami had shown "high moral level" by put-

ting in his papers, the executive which took the decision to appoint him should also resign. The RJD chief was shrill in attacking the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, and demanded that he be imprisoned.

The former Law Minister, Arun Jaitley, argued that the Government followed a convention in appointing Mr. Venkataswami on the recommendation of the CJI. He wondered why the Opposition did not object earlier when he was appointed last year, since he was then Chairman of the Chennai-based Railway Rates Tribunal.

No impropriety, says Venkataswami

By Our Legal Correspondent

NEW DELHI, NOV. 25. The retired Supreme Court judge, Justice K. Venkataswami, who quit as the head of the Tehelka enquiry commission and Chairman of the Authority for Advance Rulings (Customs and Central Excise), today justified his resignation saying "I do not like the judicial character of the commission being directly or indirectly undermined in any manner".

Addressing a press conference giving reasons for putting in his papers, Mr. Venkataswami said he accepted the second post in view of the request made by the (then) Chief Justice of India and he did not view this appointment as interfering in the discharge of his functions as the Commission of Inquiry.

However, since a section (of members) in Parliament had raised questions about the propriety and the ethical dimensions of a chairman of an enquiry commission holding an additional appointment, he said he had decided to relinquish both the posts.

Draft almost ready: Page 11

THE HINDU

26 NOV 2002

India releases details on Lashkar

Nilova Roy Chaudhury
in New Delhi

Nov. 25. — A day after ultras stormed the Raghunath temple, the Centre blamed the Al Mansooran, "a cover organisation of the Lashkar-e-Taiyaba" for orchestrating the attack that killed 14 people, including two terrorists. The government also blamed Pakistan for the release of the LeT chief Hafiz Mohammed Sayeed, that led to the "spurt of violence" in J&K.

As part of its diplomatic

offensive against Pakistan's cross-border terrorism, the government has brought out a virtual White paper on the subject in the form of a book and sent it to foreign governments and Indian missions.

Pakistan's Involvement in Terrorism Against India, the 115-page book gives details of the structure and functioning of the key militant outfits operating from Pakistan and shows that, far from removing the existing terrorist infrastructure, Gen. Pervez Musharraf has merely carried out "cos-

metic exercises" to address the concerns of the western nations, especially the USA.

The book compiles a list of terror camps, their locations, offices and addresses of terrorist leaders, cases of attacks by them in India, the links between the outfits and Pakistani agencies and claims made by terrorists.

The section on Hafiz Sayeed makes interesting reading. He heads the LeT's political wing, Markaz-ud-Dawa-wal-Irshad, and has called for continuing 'jihad' in J&K.

The LeT head office is at Chamberlane Road, Lahore, and is headed by Abu Marsad Rehman. Zaki-ur-Rahman Lakhvi is the supreme commander for J&K.

The LeT and other militant groups had kept their operations in J&K in abeyance for a while till the formation of the civilian government in Pakistan. "Conflicting messages" had been received by ultras in valley, but Sayeed's release last week appeared to give them the "green signal" to re-start operations.

Judge 'anguished', Tehelka probe on

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Nov. 25. — An "anguished" and "hurt" Mr Justice K Venkataswami today went public about his decision to resign, but his leaving is not likely to delay the tehelka probe by more than a few days.

He spoke of his "anguish" at the charges levelled against him. His decision to quit had been "spontaneous". He said the report on the government-ordered probe after the release of the Tehelka sting-operation tapes was almost ready. Had the Centre granted another extension, it would have been complete.

A law ministry official said the Tehelka panel secretariat, including investigating officers, is in place and a lot of work has been done. Transcripts, video-tapes and other material evidence is there. The new head, likely to be a retired SC judge, is likely to be appointed soon. Law minister Mr Jana Krishnamurthy is writing to the Chief Justice of India, requesting him to nominate another former judge. Law ministry officials said one retired SC judge should be

NEW DELHI, Nov. 25. — The Opposition, especially the Congress, today seemed to have been caught on the wrong foot in the Venkataswami issue. Mr Justice K Venkataswami's resignation citing unfair political charges, and the government's acceptance of his resignation, reduced opportunities for parliamentary high jinks. It put the Congress in the "unenviable position" of having to question the "integrity of the judiciary". Leaders said strategists had advised Mrs Sonia Gandhi that the party shouldn't be seen as "attacking and questioning senior judges".

Party leaders said they had "no intention of questioning the motives of Mr Justice Venkataswami or of the then Chief Justice". Dr Manmohan Singh said: "We never wanted to embarrass the judiciary." — SNS

replaced by another.

While the report is almost complete, the issues regarding the financial aspects are yet to be completed. The probe is still on.

Mr Justice Venkataswami said that for him, after holding 181 sittings and passing 720 interim orders, virtually uncontested, the furore in Parliament was a blow against the "dignity of the high office."

Taking up the job was a "call of duty," he said. His resignation was to ensure that "the dignity of the office" was maintained. Distressed, he wrote to the PM: "I've decided not to fun-

ction either as chairperson of the appellate tribunal or the inquiry commission."

He said the Tehelka panel didn't pay him. He was getting paid for being chairman of Railway Rates Tribunal, Chennai. He only accepted an allowance from the Tehelka panel.

He said he agreed to be the tax tribunal chairman only because he was persuaded by the then Chief Justice, Mr SP Bharucha. Mr Justice Venkataswami made it clear that though he headed the tax body since May 2002, he hadn't accepted any salary or allowance.

Cong falters

SNS

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26/11

Venkataswami's resignation to be accepted

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By Harish Khare

NEW DELHI, NOV. 24. The Vajpayee Government has decided to accept the resignation of Justice K. Venkataswami, the judge heading the Tehelka probe. It has also decided to request the Chief Justice of India to suggest a replacement.

The decision to accept the resignation was reportedly taken in anticipation of the Opposition parties keeping the Tehelka pot boiling. On their part, the Opposition parties are preparing to take the Government to task in the matter, when the two Houses of Parliament meet tomorrow. The Opposition parties may revive their original demand that a Joint Parliamentary Committee inquire afresh the veracity of the Tehelka revelations.

The Government took stock of the situation at a high-level meeting with the Prime Minister at his residence. Besides, the Prime Minister, those who attended the confabulations included the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, the Law Minister, Jana Krishnamurthy, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Pramod Mahajan, the Attorney-General, Soli Sorabjee, and the former Law Minister and BJP spokesman, Arun Jaitley. The judge, himself, is reported to be upset that the Government did not put up a stout defence when the Opposition sought to impugn his credibility. In fact, the Finance Minister, Jaswant Singh, had rather apologetically remarked that he was not the Finance Minister when the appointment was made.

The Opposition parties are inclined to believe that Justice Venkataswami had done the right thing in resigning; the Government's detractors are prone to blame the Government for appointing a judge simultaneously to another official panel when he was already heading a Commis-

sion of Inquiry against the Government. The Opposition's case is that the Government itself should have been alive to the perception of a possible conflict of interests, even as Justice Venkataswami's name was processed through the then Chief Justice of India.

Even the legal fraternity is of the view that it was the Government's obligation to anticipate the charge of making a "temptation offer", given the serious political import of the Venkataswami Panel. It is pointed out that though there are precedents of one retired judge heading two judicial panels, the Tehelka probe is a class by itself.

The Opposition thinking was revealed by the RJD leader, Laloo Prasad Yadav, who was reported to have observed in Patna today that the Government's intentions stood "exposed" and that if the Government was not agreeable to a JPC, the Opposition would want Justice Venkataswami's replacement to be decided jointly by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha.

Another Opposition member, Nilotpal Basu of the CPI(M) told *The Hindu* that the matter would be definitely raised, irrespective of the fact that Justice Venkataswami had taken the morally correct step.

The whole affair, according to him, compels the Opposition to question the Government's approach.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Jaitley had accused the Opposition parties of unfairly casting aspersions about the objectivity a judge. According to him, the onus was on the Opposition for creating a situation that would necessarily delay the Tehelka probe. The Government would not be inclined to concede the demand for a parliamentary probe.

Declines to reconsider decision: Page 13

2 5 NOV 2002

TEHNDG

Jawan faces court martial for ISI links

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Behrampore, Nov. 23: The army arrested a jawan, Nazrul Islam, here today and took him away to Madhya Pradesh, where he will face court martial at his regiment headquarters for his alleged connivance with the Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence.

The police also picked up two former armed forces personnel on similar charges from Nadia and from the Jalangi area in Murshidabad.

This is the second instance of defence personnel being arrested after air force police on Thursday picked up Aufan Ukil, a data operator from the base in Pune, for allegedly being on the ISI payroll.

Ukil, a resident of Nadia's Kailagunj area, is presently in Calcutta and is expected to be interrogated in the presence of four ISI "agents".

Islam, a 22-year-old youth from Kuchiamore village in the Domkol area, had been asked to report to the police yesterday but was later released and asked to come back again today. The soldier arrived at the district intelligence branch office at 10 am.

A little later, an army team from Calcutta arrived in a Tata

Sumo and took him away. The car had five soldiers with assault rifles and an officer in mufti. The team is bound for the Mahar regiment headquarters at Saugor in Madhya Pradesh.

Police and military intelligence officials have so far questioned 30 personnel belonging to the army, navy, air force and the Border Security Force following information gathered during the interrogation of some ISI "agents" — Ziauddin Biswas, his wife Ismatara, brother-in-law Hasan Habib and Ghulam Mur-taza. They had been arrested from the Jalangi and Domkol areas of Murshidabad on Sunday. Some more ex-servicemen have been detained by the police at the district intelligence branch office since last night.

Murshidabad police superintendent Virendra said Islam was picked up after police tapped Rinku Ahmed's telephone and recorded a conversation in which Islam called to say that he was willing to work for the ISI. Police arrested Ahmed from Jalangi yesterday.

"The jawan had been approached by Rinku six months ago, when he returned home on leave, to supply vital information in return of cash. He had refused then. This time, we had Rinku's line tapped and Islam

called on November 16 to say that he had changed his mind. We have this conversation recorded," the police chief added.

Continuing its drive against servicemen, police also arrested a retired naval staff and a former jawan from Nadia district and from Jalangi in Murshidabad, respectively.

Imdadul Mondol, 45, who had retired from the navy in 1993, was picked up from Gopalpurghat village in Nadia's Hogolberia police station area last night and brought here. Saha-deb Saha, 61, a jawan in the disbanded Bengal Regiment who retired in 1965, was arrested from Jalangi's Chuapara village today. Both of them have been remanded in police custody till December 2.

While both of them alleged that they were being framed, the police charged that the duo was involved in getting information for the ISI from inside defence establishments.

"Their ex-servicemen passes allowed them to visit the serving men in cantonments who are on the ISI payroll and get the information and hand it over to ISI agents waiting outside," Virendra said. They both handed over the information to either Ahmed or Ziauddin, he added.

IAF, troops stopped Pak intruders

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New Delhi: After nearly four months of silence, the Centre on Thursday said ground troops and Indian Air Force (IAF) fighters had been used to evict Pakistani intruders at Point 3260 in Machil sector of Kupwara on August 2 at the height of 'Operation Parikrama'.

In a written reply, defence minister George Fernandes told the Lok Sabha that in the last week of July, Pakistani troops had intruded approximately 800 metres into the Indian side of the Line of Control (LoC) in "a relatively low feature having little tactical significance". He said the Pakistani forces were pushed out on August 2 by the ground troops with assistance from IAF fighters.

"Point 3260 is not considered tactically important and viable for physical occupation by our own troops," the minister said, adding that being close to the LoC and the area not being physically occupied, Pakistani troops had entered it. Mr Fernandes said since the area around the feature had been closely patrolled, Indian troops had noticed the intrusion on



July 26, following which action was launched to force out the enemy troops and restore the sanctity of the LoC. He said no inquiry had been ordered into the incident and the Indian troops did not suffer any casualty in the operation.

Reports of intrusion, on the pattern of the Pakistani penetration in Kargil, have been surfacing in the media. They had even been dubbed by the armed forces in their border despatches as 'Kargil II'. However, the defence ministry, particularly the IAF, has consistently denied the use of air power.

According to sources, a battalion of the Sikh regiment had been guarding the sector at the time of the intrusion. Despite mounting two attacks, the ground forces were unable to dislodge the Pakistani forces, forcing them to seek air support. Four IAF multi-role Mirage 2000 fighters reportedly used precision bombs and missiles from a stand-off distance and flattened the hastily-built Pakistani bunkers and defences on the feature, paving the way for the Indian troops to evict the intruders. PTI

Bangla arrests with 'ISI' link

9.08.11 2/11 19/11
A STAFF REPORTER

Calcutta, Nov. 18: Nine Bangladeshis — all suspected ISI agents — were rounded up from opposite a movie theatre near New Market, late on Saturday night, days after deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani charged Bangladesh with doing very little to contain anti-India activities on its soil.

Two of them (47-year-old Liaquat and 30-year-old Arman from Dhaka) were arrested and remanded in police custody. The others were handed over to Bangladeshi intelligence agencies, officials said, explaining that they could not be arrested as there was no specific charge against them.

Liaquat and Arman were operating for the Islamic Aikya Front of Bangladesh and were trained in terrorist activities by the ISI, officials added. Indian intelligence agencies' "internal logbooks" listed the front as a cover organisation for al Qaida activists now taking shelter in Bangladesh, a Central Bureau of Investigation deputy inspector-general said in Delhi.

"We have specific information that Arman, Liaquat and the others had come here with plans to spread terror," a Calcutta police official said. "We have recovered several incriminating documents, including maps of defence and prohibited areas," he added.

The detective department used information provided by the director-general of defence field intelligence's office in Bangladesh to cement its allegation that the nine rounded up were here to promote the ISI cause. They had supplied the city police with a confessional statement given by ISI-suspect Baduddin Naseem, which listed the activities of his accomplices.

Calcutta police officials said Naseem had exposed Arman's and Liaquat's links with the ISI and giving details on how they travelled to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) for training in arms and jihadi operations earlier this year.

Showcasing it as a major breakthrough for the city police, detectives said Liaquat and Arman between themselves had more than 40 cases of murder, extortion, dacoity and robbery ranged against them in Bangladesh.

City police detective department deputy commissioner Soumen Mitra said policemen had seized counterfeit Indian currency and sophisticated arms from them.

THE TELEGRAPH

19 NOV 2002

140-10 18/11

CRASH LESSONS

9-03 N news

GIVEN THE ALARMING rate at which the Indian Air Force is losing aircraft and pilots, one might be forgiven for presuming that the country is engaged in war. The crashes have been occurring thick and fast, confirming over and over again the depressing truth about the IAF's appalling safety record, which must rank among the worst in the world. As many as 16 IAF aircraft have gone down this year. The most recent one was that involving a trainer variant of the MiG-21 fighter jet, which crashed near Bagdogra, killing two pilots during a routine sortie; the plane hit a high-tension wire while attempting to land. The Bagdogra crash closely followed that at Ambala earlier this month, when a Jaguar plunged into a residential area killing about 10 persons. It would appear that the country's naval units have not fared very much better. It was only last month that two Ilyushin Il-38 aircraft collided in Goa during a ceremonial flypast killing a dozen crew members, marking the worst naval air disaster in the country's history.

The recent months may have seemed particularly bad in terms of the frequency of crashes, but the truth is that the statistics have been appalling for over a couple of decades now. The biggest concern lies around the aircraft that was first inducted into the IAF in the 1950s and which still remains the backbone of the force — the MiG-21. Astonishingly, well over 200 of these Soviet-built fighter aircraft have been lost in non-combat crashes over the last decade. According to one estimate, the IAF loses one MiG every 2,500 flying hours or so, making them the most vulnerable aircraft in service anywhere on the globe. The recent Bagdogra crash is the 11th incident involving a MiG-21 this year. The main reasons why defence aircraft are so prone to crashes in this country are well known. Inadequate training which results in pilot error and poor maintenance which results in technical failures are among the main causes for crashes, which also occur at times due to unrelated phenomena such as bird hits. The question, of

course, is what are we doing to redress this. Unfortunately, the answer is not enough. Midlife upgrades on the various MiG variants, in order to keep them operational, have proceeded much slower than expected, despite the fact that a considerable sum of money has been set aside for this purpose. Vintage aircraft continue to remain central to the Air Force's capabilities, though its dependence on ageing MiGs and Jaguars will reduce as it begins taking delivery of more and more Sukhoi Su-30 fighter jets, the bulk of which are to be built under licence in India. Following the Bagdogra crash, the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, said experts who studied the MiGs failed to find anything that links the crashes with structural defects or deficiencies in the aircraft. But the issue here is not the essential airworthiness of the aircraft. Most often, they have to do with unsatisfactory maintenance procedures and, perhaps even more importantly, inadequate training procedures for pilots.

The Bagdogra crash focuses direct attention once again on the prolonged dithering about acquiring modern jet training aircraft. The total absurdity of a situation where pilots are trained on sub-sonic aircraft and then assigned to aircraft that fly at supersonic speeds is something that has been pointed out for many years now. The delay in inducting advanced jet trainers (AJTs) to improve pilot capabilities has been inexcusable given the fact that it was first proposed over 20 years ago. Reports that India is close to clinching a deal with British Aerospace for 66 Hawk AJTs have been accompanied by others which suggest that India's recent reluctance to sign on the dotted line is a result of its decision to take a hard look at another option, the cheaper Czech version (the L-159). Noting the delay in acquiring AJTs, Mr. Fernandes recently quipped that he hoped that the finalisation of the deal did not survive his stay as Defence Minister. The men at the helm of the Indian Air Force and the pilots who risk their lives by learning on obsolescent trainers will certainly hope so too.

Falling cutting teeth, fading hope

SUJAN DUTTA

Just after the crash in Ambala earlier this month, a retired air force officer said the "MiGs were beginning to drop out of the skies like birds dying in mid-flight". It was an uncharitable remark for the aircraft that is the mainstay of the IAF's fighting force. But 17 crashes in 11 months this year — 11 of them of MiG-21s — has meant that the Indian Air Force is losing more than one aircraft a month and it is not even fighting a war!

Every officer knows that the air force is stretching its resources to the absolute maximum for training its combat pilots. For close to two decades, it has been asking the government for an advanced jet trainer.

Yet, it is just as close to getting the AJT today as it was in 1984 when the proposal was mooted.

Why do the MiGs crash so frequently?

First, the MiGs are at once the backbone and the cutting teeth of the Indian Air Force. Among the MiGs, the MiG-21s make up a bulk of the IAF's fighter/ground attack planes, accounting for some 20 squadrons or between 320 and 400 aircraft. This means the chances that any accident of an IAF aircraft is more likely to be of a MiG-21 than any other aircraft.

Second, a squadron of fighters in the IAF would comprise between 16 and 20 aircraft. Some squadrons would have less. These are likely to be squadrons that have lost aircraft in crashes or to irredeemable technological defects. Resource limitations do not allow for crashed or grounded aircraft to be replaced on a 1:1 basis. In such cases, it is likely that there will be additional pressure on the aircraft and the aircrew.

Such pressures are more acute in training outfits and on trainers. The IAF has been using the MiG-21 FL for training. Beginning next month, the MiG-21 FL will be phased out over two years. There are two squadrons of the MiG-21 FL. Each MiG-21 squadron — as also squadrons of other aircraft — are said to be equipped with a trainer.

A trainer is a two-seater, dual-control version of the actual combat fighter. A qualified flying instructor usually takes the rear cockpit and the trainee the front. A trainee is not necessarily a rookie. All pilots have to go through training even after returning to operational flying following a gap. When Air Chief Marshal A.Y. Tipnis flew an MiG-21 shortly before he retired, he first flew a trainer with a QFI.

Third, the MiG-21 is originally of 1950s and 1960s technology. Under a license production agree-

MiG-21 CRASHES IN 2002



●March 15: Uttarlai, Rajasthan

●April 4: MiG-21 Bis; Jodhpur; Squadron Leader Prashant Bundela, ace who shot down Pakistani Atlantique plane in 1999, bales out but injures spine. Succumbs to injuries at military hospital in Pune

●April 20: MiG-21 U; trainer, goes missing with Squadron Leader T.J.A. Khan and Flying Officer Dahiya; no trace, presumed dead

●April 26: MiG-21 Bis; Sirsa, Karnataka

●May 3: MiG-21 Bis crashes in a Jalandhar suburb; Pilot, Flight Lieutenant S.K. Nayak ejects; eight killed

●July 15: MiG-21 U; trainer; Bagdogra; both pilots eject

●Sept. 9: MiG-21 Bis; Rajasthan

●Sept. 9: MiG-21 Bison crashes near Ambala

●Oct. 11: MiG-21 U, trainer, crashes at Rangapura

●Oct. 21: MiG-21 Bis; crashes during night flying; pilot ejects

●Nov. 11: MiG-21 U; trainer; Bagdogra; pilots die

ment with Russia's Irkutsk Aviation, a variant of the MiG-21, called the MiG-21 Bis is being upgraded. The upgraded MiG-21s, called "Bisons", are said to have technology from the 1970s and are expected to serve the IAF for another 10 years. The first squadron of Bisons was formed two months ago. It is based in Ambala. Two Bisons have crashed so far.

What is responsible for most of the crashes? Human error or technical defects?

Official statistics put out by the IAF say 40 per cent of the accidents are due to human error and 40 per cent due to technical defects. (The balance is because of unforeseeables like bird-hits).

Pilots who have flown the MiG-21, however, say it is a difficult plane to fly for the rookie. When the rookie graduates from a subsonic HPT-32 and Kiran (both subsonic, or capable of flying at less than the speed of sound) to the supersonic MiG-21 he has to make a quantum jump. A former wing commander says "it is like appearing for your post graduation immediately after higher secondary, without completing your graduation."

Apart from the demands of such high-speed, the MiG-21 also has mostly outdated avionics and navigational aids. It has an "endurance" time of 45 minutes, during which it must complete its mission and land. It is also a single-engine craft that flies on

the "afterburner" after a mission (e.g firing, which is an energy-consuming exercise) is completed. If the aircraft has flown in bad weather, the demands on the pilot and the plane increase manifold.

In the MiG-21, as also in other fighters (which do not afford pilots the comfort of civilian aircraft), human error can be technology-induced because the aircraft tests the limits of human endurance.

Can't pilots be trained to deal with the aircraft?

They are. That is why the MiG-21s are at the core of the IAF's fighting fleet. Having said that, to allow pilots to adapt better, the IAF desperately needs a stage III trainer. Rookie pilots are trained on the HPT-32 and the Kiran. Every modern airforce in the world, puts its pilots through a stage III trainer, also known as the lead-in fighter, before the pilot is fully operational.

The IAF — the fourth largest air force in the world — has perforce had to dispense with this. The MiG-21 "Type 69" — the kind of aircraft that crashed in Bagdogra on Thursday and the MiG-21 FLs have been making do as a stage III or "lead-in" fighter.

In fact, so acutely the IAF wants trainers that at one stage — in 1995 — it was considering buying second-hand trainers. An application for four McDonnell Douglas BAe TAV-8B attack aircraft trainers is understood to

be still pending with the US Congress.

What is the way out?

The IAF's unequivocal answer to this is the Advanced Jet Trainer or AJT.

The AJT was first recommended in 1984 by a committee led by the then chief of air staff, Dennis Anthony La Fontaine. Since the proposal was first made, the IAF has had seven chiefs. Air Chief Marshal S. Krishnaswamy, the current IAF chief, evaluated the AJT as an air commodore.

What's holding up the AJT deal?

Politics, bureaucracy and the colour of money. In the years since the induction of an AJT was proposed, the IAF has evaluated several aircraft. In June this year, quizzed on the deal 18 years after it was mooted, Union defence minister George Fernandes said: "AJT is where it is. Too many people are getting involved in the deal and there are too many interests which are deciding what is needed for the armed forces."

The first two aircraft to be considered for the AJT were the British Aerospace Hawk, used by the Royal Air Force, and France's Dassault Aviation's Alphajet. In 1997, the Alphajet went out of commercial production, practically leaving British Aerospace as the only vendor.

But there are trainers on offer from a host of other compa-

nies. A former bureaucrat who served in the defence ministry for three years says: "Just when we get close to a deal, someone somewhere wants us to take a look at another aircraft."

Apart from the Hawk, other known lead-in fighters are the T-38 (used by the US Air Force), the Russian L200 and L300, the Polish M-93 and the Czech L-159B. The IAF has projected a need for 66 aircraft. The price is anybody's guess. Latest reports say that the Hawk could cost the exchequer \$14.5 million apiece, the Czech makers of the L-159B claim their offering costs between 25 and 40 per cent less.

When will it come through?

Air Chief Marshal S. Krishnaswamy says he is certain the Cabinet Committee on Security will clear the AJT deal by the end of the year.

Assuming that he is talking of the financial year, it means the IAF cannot expect to get the AJT before 2004 unless a vendor is ready to deliver off-the-shelf. There is little indication that that will be possible.

In August this year, officials in the defence ministry claimed that price negotiations for the BAe Hawk had been completed. No figures were given out. They also said they were in the "process of structuring an agreement". It is understood that a Cabinet note has also been prepared and it recommends the purchase of 66 British Hawk

AJTs, 24 on ready-to-purchase basis and the balance to be produced under license at Hindustan Aeronautics. But the note also says the decision will have to be taken not only with the requirements of the air force in mind but also based on price considerations. A conservative estimate of the Hawk deal is Rs 6,600 crore. The government finds it on the higher side.

Sensing that there was still an opening that could be prised open, the Czech company, Aero Vodochody, along with representatives of Boeing and Honeywell have lobbied with the government and got an assurance that they would be allowed to compete on a level playing field. The air force was subsequently asked to evaluate a prototype of the L-159B Advanced Light Combat Aircraft (ALCA). The aircraft was first flown this year in June at Farnborough, UK.

Boeing has a 25 per cent stake in Aero Vodochody and the L-159B's engine and avionics are from Boeing and Honeywell. Under US laws, Boeing and Honeywell will have to secure export licenses if the L-159B is negotiated with India. India is chary of US military supplies as they have proved unreliable for political and diplomatic considerations.

If ministry officials are to be believed, the government has to choose between a tried and tested aircraft (the British Hawk) that is costly and a state-of-the-art trainer (the L-159B) that is cheaper.

Will the contract be signed this year?

It was just as likely that the contract would have been signed last year or the year before that. Meanwhile, the more the delay, the greater the number of players — the Polish are in the fray with their M-93, the Italians with their Aermachhi and the Russians with their MiG-AT. Admittedly, it is not an easy decision to make. Buying older aircraft will mean a guarantee on spares and longstanding technical support.

For British Aerospace, for instance, a deal on the Hawks will resuscitate its ailing manufacturing facility. Buying a state-of-the-art machine will risk allowing the IAF to be used as some kind of a guinea pig. The L-159B, is still under development and its first commercial product is not expected before 2004. Also it is not used even by the Czech Air Force; neither is the MiG-AT.

The other major consideration in choosing an AJT is to ensure that it can "convert" into a fully operational combat craft for an emergency. It would be uneconomical to buy an AJT then others for strike/intercept.

Where does all of this leave the IAF?

With what it has: the MiG-21.

Delhi police submit 'proof' of encounter

1A/11 Devesh K. Pandey 10-1

NEW DELHI, NOV. 13. In response to the notices sent by the National Human Rights Commission, the special cell of the Delhi police has submitted a comprehensive report substantiating its claim that the November 3 Ansal Plaza shoot-out in which two Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists were killed was a genuine encounter.

The report submitted this afternoon states that the Intelligence agencies had tipped off the special cell about the presence of two LeT terrorists — Dawood Ali from Kasoor and Ezaz Ahmed alias Deepak from Gujranwala, in the Punjab province of Pakistan — about three months ago.

The terrorists were planning to target busy marketplaces during Deepavali. Police also submitted that two unsuccessful attempts had been made to nab the terrorists before the encounter.

The report furnished a detailed account of the encounter, which had earlier been submit-

ted to the Home Ministry, mentioning that the unit, which was handed over the task of intercepting the militants, was asked to ensure that there was no civilian casualty or mass panic.

Following the directions, the special cell chose the Ansal Plaza underground parking lot — an enclosed area — to lay a trap.

A senior police officer said the report mentions the recovery of an AK-56 assault rifle, two Chinese pistols and ammunition, a matrix code, diaries, cellular phone and a fake identity card, proving that those gunned down in the encounter were Pakistani LeT terrorists.

The second part of the report deals with the antecedents of Hari Krishna, who claims to have witnessed what he calls a fake encounter.

The special cell has attached details of Dr. Krishna's location on the basis of his mobile phone record, proving that he entered the Ansal Plaza complex almost two-and-half hours after the encounter took place at 7 p.m. on November 3.

Threat on border still persists: IAF chief

By Our Staff Reporter

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOV. 12.

The decision taken at the highest level to redeploy Indian troops from the borders could mean de-escalation of tension even though the threat is perceived to be still there, the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal S. Krishnaswamy, said.

Talking to mediapersons soon after inaugurating the two-day Commanders' Conference at the headquarters of the Southern

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Air Command at Akkulam in the city today, he said the forces would continue to be operationally alert and ever prepared to meet any exigencies.

"The Air Force will go into action within the shortest time possible, if need be", he said. Sending unmanned aerial vehicles across the border, from either side, should only be viewed as part of routine operations.

The MiG- 21FL aircraft, first inducted into the Indian Air Force in the year 1966, were

being phased out in a time-bound manner. Some of them had already finished their 'technical life' and completed their engine hours. The other variants, MiG- 21M and MiG- 21bis continued to do well, he said.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation was in the process of developing 'Lakshya', a pilotless aircraft, would in all probability be inducted into the force this year. The commissioning of the advanced light helicopter, 'Dhruv', being manufactured

by the HAL, had also begun and four of 60 such machines, for which orders had been placed, had been supplied.

The joint exercise conducted by the Indian Air Force and the US Air Force, for the first time in 40 years, were mainly meant to explore the interoperability of the two forces.

In the changed global scenario there could be various possibilities, including some very basic exercises for a closer understanding of each other's operating techniques, the Air Chief said.

1 3 NOV 2002

Maritime patrolling will be strengthened: Fernandes

By Our Staff Correspondent

MANGALORE, NOV. 11. The country is for strengthening its maritime patrolling system to shut the seaways to subversive elements, the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, has said.

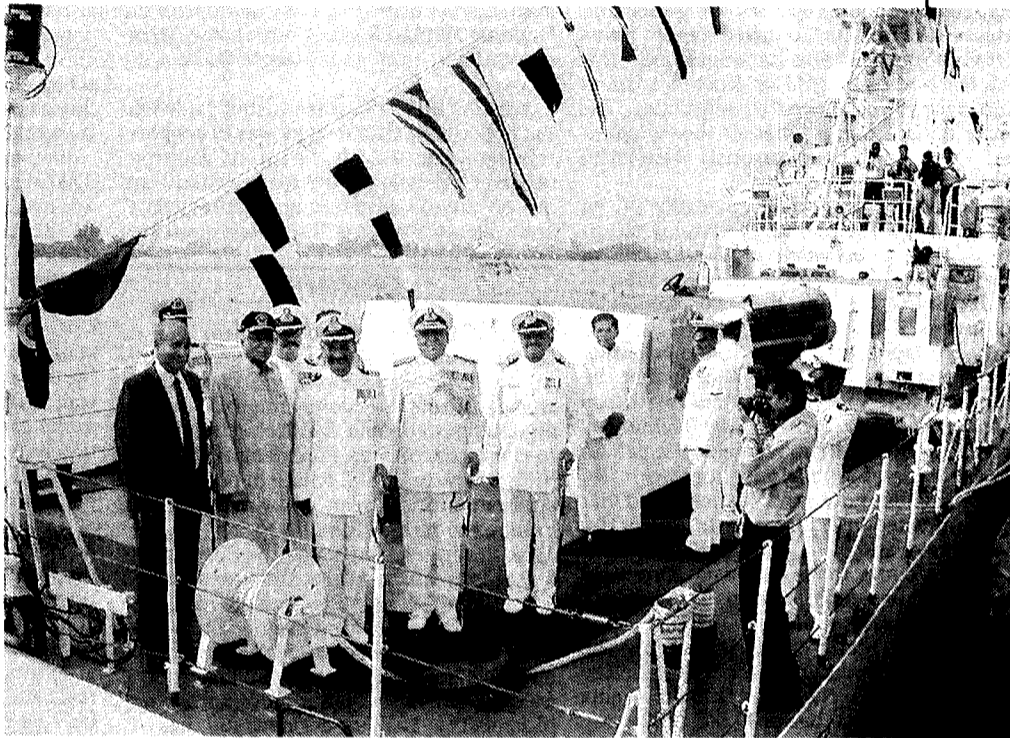
Inducting the first Fast Patrolling Vessel (FPV), *Sarojini Naidu*, into the Coast Guard, Western Region here today, Mr. Fernandes said that India had a long coastline and that most parts of the coast were vulnerable and unguarded. The CG presence was, therefore, being increased at all points.

In the tenth CG plan, the Government would augment the strike and interceptor capabilities of the force by providing more interceptor boats, FPVs, Advanced Light Helicopters, high-powered weaponry, and several other security systems with adequate ground support, he said. In addition to CG stations along the western coast, the Government planned to have five boat stations to act as a buffer force.

Mr. Fernandes said the invasion of subversive elements from the seas was causing worry to global economies, as they indulged in narcotics smuggling, gun-running, piracy and other illegal activities. This had given rise to global cooperation in coastal security management through the CGs of different countries. India was a party to the global understanding. About 200 ships passed through the Indian waters everyday and they needed to be protected.

Mr. Fernandes advised manufacturers and suppliers of maritime systems and vessels to ensure timely delivery of equipment, as it would bring down cost escalation and help save additional expenditure by the exchequer and additional tax burden on the people. He urged them to explore the global market for demands from other maritime countries. This would help improve maritime facilities on the home front too.

Appreciating the CG for being technology savvy, Mr. Fer-



The Defence Minister, George Fernandes (second from left), at the induction ceremony of the new Coast Guard patrol vessel, *Sarojini Naidu*, in Mangalore on Monday. — PTI

nandes said *Sarojini Naidu-FPV* was the first vessel in its class to have the jet propulsion system for navigation as well as for changing direction at a maximum speed of 35 knots. The ship increased the capabilities of the force in many ways, including those of interception, search, and rescue operations, security to offshore installations, and assistance to the Navy during wartime.

On the Deputy Prime Minister, L. K. Advani's statement that Bangladesh was the "bed of subversive elements," Mr. Fernandes said reports were being studied closely but it was premature to conclude that "groups within that country are backed by the government there." New Delhi needed more evidence and information, which would be for the intelligence agencies to provide, he told presspersons after dedicating the CG vessel.

Questioned about the series of accidents involving Air Force

fighters, Mr. Fernandes said the country needed an Advanced Jet Trainer, which would be procured when the need was felt.

But crashes occurred due to technical reasons. He referred to the recent crash of the Jaguar, and said it was one of the finest Air Force planes.

The Director-General of the Coast Guard, O. P. Bansal, said the CG, which was in its silver jubilee year, had contributed towards deterring piracy at sea and arresting poachers in the Indian territorial waters, and helped in the preservation, protection, and control of marine pollution.

It was the national co-ordinating authority for combating oil spills at sea. And the humanitarian service rendered to seafarers had enhanced its image.

The CG was a formidable maritime power with 52 ships and 42 aircraft. The assets were managed by 700 officers and 4,600 other personnel. For ev-

ery seven persons manning frontline ships and aircraft, only two were ashore to support them.

During the Ninth Plan, the CG had inducted two advanced offshore patrol vessels, six hovercraft, two IBS, seven Dornier aircraft, two Chetak helicopters, and one Advanced Light Helicopter.

It was for the first time in the past 25 years that the CG was holding the commissioning of any CG ship at Mangalore, away from the Goa shipyard where the vessel was built.

The Chairman and Managing Director of the shipyard, Sampathkumar Pillai, said the CGS *Sarojini Naidu* was equipped with three 35-knot diesel engines, one main jet propulsion thrust unit for navigation, and three other units for changing direction, which made the ship fastest in its class not only for cruising but also for turning.

A similar ship, *Durgabai Deshmukh*, would be ready for launch in March next.

12 NOV 2002

Ammo for Advani

OUR BUREAU

Nov. 11: Indian intelligence has satellite pictures of camps located in Bangladesh of militant groups active in the Northeast and reports suggest Dhaka has begun a crackdown by rounding up several activists.

The satellite images cannot, however, be used as evidence to prove Dhaka's support for militancy in India. They are generally makeshift huts, which can be quickly dismantled and shifted to another area, making it difficult to establish that they are training camps for militants.

As vindication of their stand, enumerated by deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani last week, intelligence agencies are citing reports of the recent arrest of 70-odd militants from the Northeast in the border areas of Bangladesh. These areas were mentioned by the director-general of the BSF in a list he handed over to his Bangladesh counterpart during the past fortnight.

61 12/11 9-03 N. K. Sanyal
The controversy set rolling by Advani's statement that Bangladesh was harbouring militants operating in the Northeast has refused to die down despite Dhaka's strong denial and summoning of the Indian high commissioner to lodge a protest. Two chief ministers from the Northeast met Advani today to keep up the heat on Dhaka.

This time there are no differences within the political establishment. Assam's Congress chief minister Tarun Gogoi dropped a bombshell after the meeting, saying: "Intelligence reports available with us show that these insurgent groups have become more active in Bhutan and Bangladesh."

Gogoi also said that in recent months Pakistan's ISI had stepped up its activities in the border areas of Assam, backing Advani up on his statement that "al Qaida and ISI activities had increased" after the Khaleda Zia government took over.

Tripura chief minister

Manik Sarkar, who belongs to the CPM, also lent his voice to the growing chorus of accusations against Bangladesh before Khaleda Zia's trip to India next month.

Sarkar, who too met Advani, claimed that there were 52 camps of separatists operating from Bangladesh. He said the "identified" camps belonged to the banned National Liberation Front of Tripura and the All Tripura Tiger Force.

Among the northeastern states, Tripura has the longest border with Bangladesh. "We have good neighbourly relations with Bangladesh and the government there should not allow its soil to be used by insurgents and terrorists," Sarkar said.

Chief ministers of northeastern states, long plagued by insurgency, hope that they have finally got the Centre to pay attention to their problems. They believe that with Advani airing their concerns, Bangladesh will be forced to take action.

1 2 NOV 2002

THE TELEGRAPH

Bad moon rising

Centre wakes up to N-E reality 57-8

The sooner Ufa and Bodo militants are flushed out from Bhutan the better, since they are a major security risk. Union home minister LK Advani has complained of Bhutan not taking "enough action" despite assurances. The North-east may not as yet resemble Jammu and Kashmir, but terrorist activities in neighbouring countries are acquiring a dimension Delhi cannot overlook. ISI has been active in the region since the early 1990s and the Centre remains noncommittal. The North-east must be protected from the designs of fundamentalist forces in Bangladesh. Advani has now articulated the danger to national security and wants the world to treat the ISI at par with the Taliban and Al Qaeda. ISI is fighting a proxy war and must be countered firmly. Dhaka is harbouring militants, an allegation the Bangladesh foreign secretary denies. Indeed, that country has kept mum about the training camps run by the National Liberation Front of Tripura in Bangladesh (the BSF listed several of these some time back).

No less significant was the recent haul of weaponry in Shillong. This cache could not have been smuggled in without the help of foreign agents, which reflects poorly on the Indian Intelligence system. Meghalaya has become a conduit for traffic to and from Bangladesh and bears watching. The BSF must step up its operations and involve the locals. Equally disturbing is the fear that has returned to grip tea gardens because Assamese and Naga militants have stepped up their activities. With only the big tea companies capable of maintaining a protection force, Dispur has to step in to prevent what the industry went through in the early 1990s.

1 1 NOV 2002

THE STATESMAN

POLICE REPORT ON ANSAL PLAZA ENCOUNTER IN A WEEK

Delhi doctor goes into hiding

By Devesh K. Pandey

NEW DELHI, NOV. 7. The doctor who alleged that the "encounter" at the Ansal Plaza basement here on Sunday evening — in which two terrorists were killed — was orchestrated has gone into hiding despite having been assured immediate protection by police at the instance of the National Human Rights Commission.

In a partial compliance report, the Delhi police today told the NHRC that they would provide adequate protection to Dr. Hari Krishna. The complete report would be submitted within a week, the Joint Commissioner of Police, Special Cell, Neeraj Kumar, said.

Dr. Krishna, a cancer specialist and gynaecologist who has a clinic at Greater Kailash Part-II in South Delhi, today told a section of the media over phone that police were not harassing him and that he did not need protection. A day earlier, his wife had claimed that he had left for Australia to see his ailing son-in-law.

Dr. Krishna had claimed that he was in the underground parking lot of Ansal Plaza when the "unarmed" and "crippled" terrorists were gunned down by plainclothes sleuths. Mr. Kumar

said police would certainly record Dr. Krishna's statement. To substantiate its claim that the shootout was genuine, the Special Cell is said to have sought help from the Intelligence Bureau and the Military Intelligence.

Well-informed sources said the agencies which were instrumental in providing information to the Special Cell about the presence of the Lashkar-e-Taiba operatives had intensified their efforts to establish the terrorists' identity. The mobile phone recovered from the terrorists contained three Pakistani numbers.

Since the agencies had prior information about the terrorists, it is said that the inputs about their movements had earlier been shared with the Union Home Ministry. Reacting to allegations about the "fake" encounter, police said such a view was gaining ground as no civilian or policeman was injured in the encounter.

Meanwhile, police said the post-mortem examination of the bodies of the terrorists — which had been preserved for 72 hours — would be conducted only after clearance from the Home Ministry.

In a related development, po-

lice have found that the Maruti car used by the terrorists belonged to Mohammad Gulrez Baqur, a resident of Tilak Nagar in West Delhi. He told police that he had bought the vehicle from Lucknow in February and it was stolen from outside his house on July 22.

Mr. Gulrez, who works in a software consultancy firm, reported the matter to police, but an FIR could not be registered as, according to the Deputy Commissioner of Police, West Delhi, Deependra Pathak, he could not give the chassis number and other details of the car.

See also Page 11

Jaitley defends police action

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, NOV. 7. The Bharatiya Janata Party today rose to the defence of the Delhi police whose version of the Sunday encounter in which two militants were killed at a shopping mall here has been challenged. "The police have done a commendable job in liquidating the militants. They (militants) were armed ... police have given their identity as Pakistani nationals," the BJP general secretary, Arun Jaitley, told correspondents here.

The police information was that the militants would pick out soft targets on Diwali eve. In fact, police had chosen a place to engage the militants where civilian casualties could be avoided.

Mr. Jaitley said police must furnish all the de-

tails to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) which had asked for a report. The NHRC yesterday issued a notice to the Delhi police following a joint petition from Kuldip Nayar, MP, and Praful Bidwai, journalist, in which they submitted that going by media reports, the incident had all the trappings of a "fake encounter".

Mr. Jaitley said that those who petitioned the NHRC must do so on the basis of hard facts rather than on the basis of "unverified statements". "When important persons lend their names to discredit the security agencies, particularly when security agencies have succeeded in saving innocent civilians from terrorists, they must be sure of their facts," he said.

8 NOV 2002

THE HINDU

Khaleda govt under attack over al Qaida, ISI

Advani in terror cry at Dhaka

OUR BUREAU

Nov. 7: For the first time in recent memory, a leading member of the Indian administration has lifted a finger of accusation at neighbouring Bangladesh as a shelter for terrorists.

Risking a possible diplomatic spat with Dhaka, deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani was quoted by PTI as saying at Bhiwani in Haryana today: "After the change of government in Bangladesh, there has been an increase in the activities of al Qaida and ISI there."

The statement could evoke an angry response from the Khaleda Zia regime in Dhaka, which recently had to fend off allegations made in an American news magazine that al Qaida activists had fled to Bangladesh by ship.

"Irrespective of foreign policy compulsions, one should not be supportive of terrorism anywhere in the world," Advani said in a reference to Pakistan and its intelligence agency, the ISI.

He regretted that the international community had not recognised the ISI as a major source of terrorism and urged that it be treated the same way as the Taliban and al Qaida.

Advani's description of the ISI as a terrorist outfit goes farther than the terminology thus far used by Delhi, but it is his attack on the Dhaka government that is being seen as more significant.

Asked whether Dhaka's support for militants was covert or overt, he said: "Covert. All insurgent groups of the Northeast are getting refuge there."

In the past, the government has accused the ISI of fomenting militancy in the Northeast and both Advani and chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee have expressed concern over its growing activities in Bengal. Many of these states share a border with Bangladesh.

At a meeting of the Bangladesh Rifles and India's BSF last week, Delhi had raised the issue of insurgent camps operating from Bangladesh in the Northeast.

The BDR chief refuted the charge and the Indian side is now expected to give to Bangladesh a list of the camps and their locations.

Advani's harsh words could well signal a change of thinking in Delhi, which has always treated Dhaka with a soft hand.

8 NOV 2002

Protect Ansal witness, urges NHRC

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Concerned about the safety of an eye-witness, Hari Krishna, who has claimed that the two men killed in an 'encounter' at Ansal Plaza last week were unarmed, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Wednesday directed the Delhi police to provide "immediate and adequate protection" to Dr Krishna and his family.

Acting on petitions submitted by Rajya Sabha MP Kuldip Nayar and others which raise doubts about the police version of the 'encounter', the NHRC also issued urgent notices to Delhi police commissioner R.S. Gupta, DCP Ashok Chand and ACP Rajbir Singh.

Mr Krishna, who said he was an

eye-witness to the shootout, had alleged in an interview to a newspaper that the two men gunned down by the police in the basement of Ansal Plaza last Saturday could "barely walk" and were unarmed. The police had said that the duo were armed with two Chinese revolvers and an AK-56 and had opened fire on a police team which happened to be in the basement on the basis of a "tip-off".

Mr Krishna, who said he was in the basement with his wife and son, claimed no gunfight took place and that it was the police which did all the firing. He also said that as a medical practitioner, it seemed to him as if the two alleged terrorists had not slept for several days or had taken sleeping pills.

Mr Nayar pointed to Mr Krishna's account and other media reports and requested the NHRC to institute a full inquiry into the matter. Alleging that the "entire operation has all the trappings of a staged encounter", he also said there was "reliable information" that Mr Krishna was missing from his residence. In its order, the NHRC said its director general (investigation) would be interacting with the police chief to ensure that Mr Krishna was provided the protection needed.

The South Asia Human Rights Documentation Centre has urged that the post-mortem be conducted "in full conformity" with NHRC guidelines.

● See Edit: Shot in the Dark, Page 14

Stocktaking summons on IAF brass

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Nov. 6: Defence minister George Fernandes has summoned the air force top brass, including commanders and maintenance engineers, to a meeting in New Delhi on Friday after a series of accidents, the latest being the Jaguar crash in Ambala yesterday in which six persons were killed.

IAF sources said the meeting will take stock of the force's inventory and re-evaluate, "if necessary", the maintenance procedures.

A total of 14 IAF craft have crashed so far this year, but at Air Headquarters in Delhi it has not rung alarm bells because the figure is less than the average of 20-22 recorded every year over the last half-decade. The Jaguars with the IAF have a crash rate of about one per year. This year, so far, two Jaguars have crashed.

Reports reaching here suggest a preliminary survey of the site and the events leading to the mishap have led officers to conclude that yesterday's crash was a "freak". The pilot, Flight Lieutenant Rehani, tried to stabilise the Jaguar immediately after take-off but the controls did not respond.

"It is almost akin to a car driver finding that the steering and gearshaft of the automobile not working even though the engine is running," one officer said. "It was definitely not pilot error. In fact, he tried to stabilise the plane and bailed out as a last resort."

The Jaguar, from the Ambala-based 14 squadron, went into a roll and came crashing down on two houses in Baghial, about 5 km from the airfield. Rehani's plane had a full-load of fuel and just after take-off would be at maximum power.

IAF sources said though Fri-

day's meeting had been called on an emergency basis, it was likely that it will cover familiar ground.

The Jaguar, a product of Anglo-French collaboration between British Aerospace and Dassault Breguet, is now produced under licence by Hindustan Aeronautics at its Bangalore facility. British Aerospace-Dassault Breguet continue to supply spares and expertise.

The maximum aircraft casualties of the IAF are of the MiG21s, which account for more than 50 per cent of the casualties. This year, however, at least two Jaguars have crashed. What is more, yesterday's crash in Ambala was the second time an IAF fighter came down on a populated area. In May this year, a MiG21 crashed into a Jalandhar suburb.

IAF sources said the number of crashes, though decreasing, point to an ageing of the fleet.

Over the last two decades, the new war birds in the IAF inventory are mostly the Sukhoi 30 (and the Sukhoi 30 Mki) that were inducted from the mid-1980s. In the 1970s, the IAF crash rate was an average of 40 per year, in the 1980s, 30 and in the 1990s, 25. The induction of Jaguars began in the late-1970s-early-1980s and the MiG29 and Mirage 2000s in mid-1980s. For 15 years, the only technological upgradation in terms of new aircraft has been the Sukhois.

The Jaguar is crucial to the IAF for its frontline deep penetration ground-attack role. The IAF has six squadrons (a little more than 100) of the Jaguar, the Indian version of which has been re-christened as the "Shamsher".

In May this year, the Ambala-based 14 squadron had lost yet another Jaguar which burst into flames at take-off and Flying Officer Paliwal was killed.

Day of crashes: in air, on ground

Jaguar rams into homes

OUR BUREAU

Nov. 5: A Jaguar fighter aircraft of the Indian Air Force today ploughed into houses near the Ambala airfield, killing at least five persons and seriously injuring the pilot.

The toll could rise because a number of people are said to be trapped inside the two houses that were damaged in Baghyal, which is 5 km from the airfield. IAF sources in Delhi said seven persons have been admitted to the military hospital in Ambala.

The bodies of a 40-year-old woman, Lajo, and a 12-year-old child, Bharat, have been recovered from the debris of the houses that collapsed after catching fire when pieces of the aircraft fell on them. Fragments of the twin-engine plane were strewn across an area of about 100 yards, eyewitnesses said.

The Jaguar is the second aircraft from its squadron to have crashed this year. Western Command sources said the aircraft was nearly 24 years old and "belonged to the 70 series technology and was going to be upgraded soon".

The IAF's Ambala base is a crucial establishment of the force, whose 14 squadron and 5 squadron comprise the Jaguar deep penetration strike aircraft.

In May, Flying Officer Paliwal was killed after his Jaguar could not complete a take-off and



Air force personnel inspect the wreckage of the Jaguar. (AFP)

crashed metres off the runway.

At least nine IAF aircraft have crashed this year.

Flight Lieutenant Rehani, 30, bailed out from his plane this afternoon but is reported to have sustained spinal injuries.

An IAF spokesman said preliminary reports suggest Rehani had lost control because of a mechanical failure. The plane was not stable enough for the pilot to eject. It was just about 5 km from the airfield and still climbing.

A pilot based in Chandigarh said most of his colleagues have been flying on a wing and a prayer for the last few years. "Over a period of time, parts like the undercarriage and wing roots, which take repeated stress, as well as the air frame, develop structural weaknesses. These result in hairline cracks, which can be confirmed with microscopic examination. Also, permanent wiring around the airframe, called 'looms', deteriorates and in several circumstances have resulted in short circuits," he said.

Investigations of several accidents, sources said, have revealed manufacturing defects. A 1998 classified report by then scientific adviser to the defence minister A.P.J. Abdul Kalam reportedly blamed Hindustan Aeronautics and the IAF maintenance systems for poor quality control during the manufacturing and overhauling stages.

Head into tail, courtesy rail

TAPAS CHAKRABORTY

Chhapra, Nov. 5: Can one train ram into the behind of another?

Anything is possible in the Indian Railways.

Divine this scene: one train stops at a railway crossing because the guard thought something was wrong; another bears down on it from the back; only the lonesome gateman at the crossing realises what is going to happen; waving a red flag he runs down the track to warn the onrushing train; it doesn't work; he clambers up a tree and waves the flag some more.

Welcome to the railways' latest technological advancement: back to the trees. It still did not stop the Gwalior-Chhapra Express from hitting the Jansevak Express from behind. Railway minister Nitish Kumar is fortunate that a mayhem on the scale of the Rajdhani Express derailment, in which over a hundred people died, did not occur.

Still, one passenger was killed, four suffered grievous injuries, two lost a leg and 24 got away with minor injuries. Rudal Majhi was the gateman who played God for the passengers of the two overcrowded trains.

Kumar was not so lucky that all the accidents are taking place in his home state Bihar — Rajdhani at Rafigunj and today's section of Northeastern Railway on the Sonepur-Gorakhpur section between Kopa and Tekniwas stations, about 10 km from here.

The Jansevak Express, which runs between Amritsar and

Barauni, halted for the guard to get off. "He was apparently told by the driver that a vacuum pipe which connects two compartments was missing," said Kundan Krishnan, the superintendent of police, Chhapra. As this checking was going on while the guard went over all the coaches, the train from Gwalior hit a little after eight this morning.

Majhi, who knew the Gwalior train's timing, had stepped in before that. "I saw the Gwalior train advancing menacingly from behind. I showed the red flag but it did not help. I got up a tree to hoist the flag so that the driver could see it and slow down," said Majhi, a Dalit.

While doing this he fell on the track, hurting his leg. "How can I see the loss of railway property and men? So I got up and began to scream. The driver of the train suspected something wrong. He slowed down," Majhi recalled.

The luggage van-cum-guard's coach, which forms the tail of the train, was hit. The hit coach was torn asunder from the rest of the train and rolled off the track to plunge into a canal.

Six rail employees have been suspended: the assistant mechanical engineer (power) (Varanasi division), area officer, the loco inspector at Chhapra, and the driver, assistant driver and the guard of the Gwalior train.

A Northeastern Railway official said the Gwalior train's driver may not have noticed the signal and overshot or there might have been a technical fault in flashing the signal.

Slanging match follows foiled terrorist strike

New Delhi\Islamabad: India and Pakistan got embroiled in a slanging match on Monday following Sunday's unsuccessful attempt by terrorists to strike at a shopping mall in New Delhi.

While deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani pointed the finger of suspicion at Pakistan, saying that the two terrorists slain on Sunday hailed from the neighbouring country, Islamabad hit back saying his allegations were "baseless and ludicrous" and reflected the deep anti-Pakistani malaise of the "Hindu fundamentalist leadership".

While his deputy took on Islamabad, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee ruled out any talks with Pakistan, asserting that it would not serve any purpose as long as that country fomented terrorism. "Until terrorist activities continue, a dialogue (with Pakistan) will have no meaning," he told reporters before leaving on a five-day visit for Cambodia and Laos on Monday.

But Pakistan's foreign office claimed that the country itself was a victim of foreign-sponsored terrorism and had been in the forefront of international efforts to combat global terrorism.

"The government of India would be well-advised to undertake impartial investigations into all such incidents which are rooted in an unjust and discriminatory social and political milieu and desist from pointing fingers at Pakistan," it said in a statement.

Earlier, Mr Advani had said, "We have been getting inputs that our neighbouring country does not plan to reduce its support to terrorist activities. They have been focusing on such activities to coincide with certain days and could flare up communal tension in the country." The intention of the terrorists was clear when they attacked



"We have been getting inputs that our neighbouring country does not plan to reduce its support to terrorist activities"

the Akshardham temple in Gujarat to create communal tension, he said.

He said that the two terrorists in Delhi belonged to the Gujranwala and Kasur districts of Pakistan. They were moved to Delhi from Mumbai and Jammu & Kashmir by those who planned the attack, he said, adding that the duo had set up a base near the capital to carry out a major strike on Divali.

Delhi police commissioner R.S. Gupta identified the two slain terrorists as Daoud Ali Ahmed and Izaz Ahmed. While Daoud Ahmed was a native of Bhumba Kalan village, Izaz Ahmed was a resident of Gujranwala, he said.

They belonged to the Lashkar-e-Toiba, which is backed by the Inter-Services Intelligence, he added. The duo had been sent by Lashkar's 'launching commander' Anzam Cheema, a native of Bahawalpur in Punjab province, to spearhead terrorist operations in India, mainly in Mumbai and Delhi, he said.

● See Edit: Urban Battle Zones, Page 12

5 NOV 2002

MAP REVEALS PLAN FOR ATTACKS DURING DEEPAVALI

Lashkar militants shot dead in Delhi shopping mall

By Devesh K. Pandey

Q- DSN comments HD1

NEW DELHI, NOV. 3. Two Lashkar-e-Taiba militants were shot dead by personnel of the Special Cell of Delhi police in the underground parking lot of Ansal Plaza, a busy shopping centre, at Hauz Khas in south Delhi today.

A map of the capital, an AK-56 assault rifle, two pistols and six magazines were recovered from them.

The terrorists, according to the Joint Commissioner of Police, Special Cell, Neeraj Kumar, were planning to attack visitors at the busy Ansal Plaza market. The identities of the militants have not been established yet, but the map recovered from them suggested that they were planning to target Sarojini Nagar in south-west Delhi, Lajpat Nagar and the Ansal Plaza market complex in South Delhi.

Mr. Kumar said that around a month ago, intelligence agencies had cautioned the Special Cell of the presence of some militants who were planning to target busy market places during Deepavali.

The Special Cell learnt that the militants might target South Extension or Ansal Plaza. However, this afternoon they got a tip-off that the militants were planning to target Ansal Plaza. Subsequently, over 25 plainclothes men were deployed in and around the market complex.

At around 7 p.m., a white Maruti car (registration No DL8C B 3241) entered the market complex.



One of the cars which was damaged in the encounter between the police and the militants at the Ansal Plaza in New Delhi on Sunday. — Photo: R.V. Moorthy

The security guard at the entry of the two-storeyed underground parking place tried to stop the vehicle for a routine check. However, the car forced its way into the basement. The terrorists parked the car near an exit point from where they had access to the market place through the stairs. The Special Cell sleuths who were deployed there challenged them.

Sensing that they had been

surrounded, the duo whipped out pistols from their bag and opened fire at the police party. The terrorists separated and one of them ran towards the exit.

Hearing gunshots, another police team arrived on the spot. In the 15-minute exchange of fire that followed, both terrorists were gunned down.

Satish Sharma and Ashok Rajpal, residents of Model Town

in north-west Delhi, who came down to the first floor of the underground parking lot through an elevator, were about to enter their car when they heard gunshots.

"We had no idea what was going on. It seemed as if bullets were being fired from various points. I ran towards a pillar, ducked and fell on the ground. The firing went on for several minutes," Mr. Sharma said, adding that bullet marks could be seen in many cars in the parking lot.

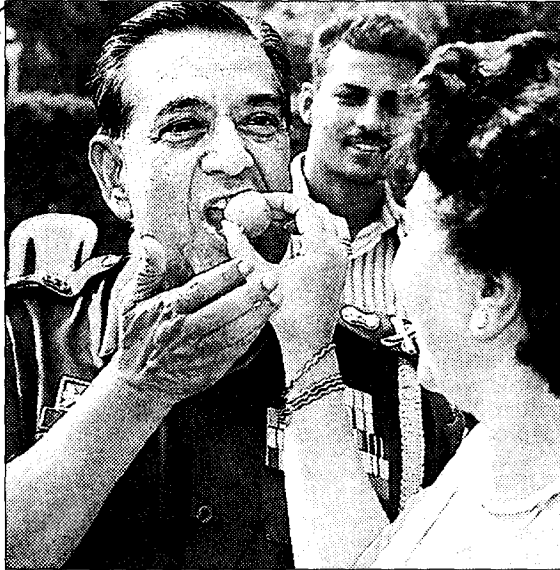
It seems they were Pakistanis: Advani

NEW DELHI, NOV. 3. The Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, tonight said that the two terrorists killed in the encounter at the shopping mall in south Delhi seemed to be Pakistanis and were planning to carry out the strike at the behest of Pakistan to trigger communal violence.

"We are waiting for the full report. From whatever information we have, it seems both of them were Pakistanis," he told 'Aaj Tak' when asked whether the nationality of the terrorists has been established.

"We have had intelligence inputs in the past few days that the terrorists have been told by their masters to choose days and places which would spark off violence," he said, adding the terrorists chose Deepavali for the attack in order to create tension.— PTI

See also Page 11



Lt-General Nirmal Chander Vij, who has been appointed as the next Chief of Army Staff, being offered sweets by his wife Rita in New Delhi on Thursday.

Vij is appointed new army chief

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

9/11/04

New Delhi: Lt-General Nirmal Chander Vij, who was commissioned into the Dogra Regiment in December 1962, will be the next Chief of Army Staff. Lt-Gen Vij, the vice-chief at present, will assume command of the 1.1 million-strong Army after Gen S. Padmanabhan retires on December 31. He will be the twenty-first Army chief.

Lt-Gen Vij, who handled the crucial Director General of Military Operations post during the 1999 Kargil conflict and is currently the seniormost Lt-Gen, in turn, will serve as the Army chief till January 31, 2005.

With India gearing up to procure advanced military hardware and force-multipliers in the coming months, Lt-Gen Vij will be the man responsible for modernisation of the third-largest Army in the world.

The new systems in the pipeline include the US AN/TPQ-37 weapon-locating radars and ground sensors, the Israeli unmanned aerial vehicles and surveillance equipment, the Russian 'Smerch' 300mm multiple launch rocket system, and the next generation of 155mm towed and self-propelled artillery guns, among others.

Lt-Gen Vij's elevation will lead to a major reshuffle in the top ranks of the Army. For instance, Lt-Gen Shantanu Chowdhry, chief of the Shimla-based Army training command, is likely to assume the vice-chief's mantle. Lt-Gen J.J. Singh, commanding a strike corps currently, in turn, is expected to replace him in Shimla.

PARLIAMENT ATTACK CASE

Phone intercepts not admissible evidence under POTA: HC

28/10
By Nirnimesh Kumar

NEW DELHI, OCT. 30. The prosecution today suffered a major setback in the Parliament attack case when the Delhi High Court ruled that the intercepts of the telephonic conversations between the accused could not be construed as admissible evidence under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA).

The four accused — Mohammed Afzal and Shaukat Hussain of the ISI-sponsored terrorist outfit, Jaish-e-Mohammed, S.A.R. Geelani, a suspended Arabic lecturer of a Delhi University college, and Navjot Sandhi alias Afsan Guru, wife of Shaukat Hussain — are facing trial in the Court of the Special Judge, S.N. Dhingra, in the Patiala House courts here.

Shaukat Hussain, his wife and Geelani had gone on appeal against an order by the Special Judge who had disallowed their plea that the intercepts could not be taken on record as admissible evidence as the same had been done without following the procedures laid down under POTA.

The High Court set aside the lower court order when the Special Branch of the Delhi police failed to produce a copy of the

request letter, which it had sent to the competent authority under POTA seeking permission to intercept the conversations between the accused on mobiles.

In the lower court as well, the Special Branch had failed to supply a copy of the request letter when counsel for Geelani asked for it.

Section 45 of POTA bars admissibility of intercepts of telephonic conversations as evidence during trial unless the accused is furnished with a copy of the order of the competent authority accompanied with a copy of the application under which the interception is authorised or approved.

Referring to the provisions of the Act, Justice M.A. Khan said: "Evidence which is illegally procured will not be admitted if the admissibility is prohibited by law." The Special Branch had intercepted conversations between the accused under the provisions of the Indian Telegraph Act, not in accordance with the provisions under POTA. "The prosecution cannot fall back upon the general law of evidence for the offence under POTA on the strength of evidence, admissibility of which is forbidden by Section 45 of POTA," Justice Khan said.

Atal alert on bio terror

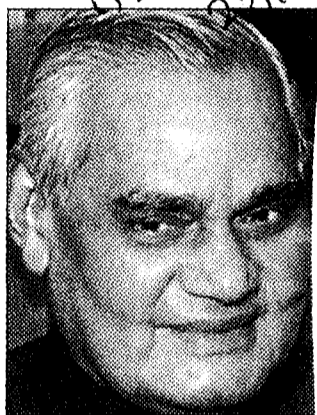
OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Oct. 26: Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee today asked the armed forces to be alert against the possibility of chemical and biological weapons falling into the hands of "non-state actors".

"We must sharpen our intelligence capabilities and build up our defence with the armed forces being an integral part of the multi-disciplinary effort. Technology has now created chemical and biological weapons of great diversity, which are difficult to detect. Many of the techniques and weapons can fall into the hands of non-state actors," the Prime Minister warned, addressing a conference of commanders from the armed forces today. He said the defence and national security apparatus should be fully prepared to face these challenges.

Vajpayee stressed that the mobilisation of troops along the Line of Control and the international boundary with Pakistan had buttressed India's position and convinced the world that Pakistan was sponsoring cross-border terrorism. He claimed that the global community had also been told that "we would not talk with Pakistan while the terrorists' guns are held to our heads. Most countries have accepted the validity of our position that we can have a meaningful dialogue only if cross-border terrorism ends". The Prime Minister said it was for India and Pakistan to resolve all contentious issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, bilaterally.

Keeping alive the speculation over his proposed visit to Islamabad for the SAARC summit, Vajpayee urged Pakistan and the members of the regional forum to first decide on the agenda.



Vajpayee

"We do not want to trivialise the association through a summit without substantive content. Let us, therefore, first talk of substance before we start focusing on dates," he was quoted as saying at the conference.

Vajpayee also referred to insinuations from Islamabad that New Delhi was not confirming the dates for the summit and holding the regional forum hostage to bilateral issues. According to the officially released summary of his speech — the proceedings of the commanders' conference are out of bounds for the media — the Prime Minister said India has always insisted that regional cooperation in South Asia should not be held hostage by bilateral political differences between member countries.

"We have consistently advocated economic cooperation and cultural exchanges as a means of preparing a climate conducive for political reconciliation. But we have reached a strange situation where every worthwhile proposal for economic cooperation is being systematically sabotaged on irrational fears and political considerations. Then we are told we are dragging our feet on dates," the release said.

No talks till Pakistan stops support to terrorism: PM

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, OCT. 26. The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, ruled out initiating talks till Pakistan stopped its support to terrorism and maintained that India's attitude had been appreciated by the international community. "We would not talk with Pakistan while the terrorists' guns are held to our heads. Most countries have accepted the validity of our position that we can have a meaningful dialogue only if cross-border terrorism ends." He was addressing the combined commanders conference of the armed forces here.

Though India could draw comfort from the international community's acknowledgment of the problem of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Vajpayee made it clear that India was firm on resolving the problem on a bilateral basis. "While the world should come together either to persuade or coerce Pakistan to stop cross-border terrorism, it is for India and Pakistan to sit together to resolve all issues between them,



The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, with the three Service chiefs before the combined commanders' conference at South Block in New Delhi on Saturday. —PTI

including J&K."

The Prime Minister said the 10-month-long military mobilisation had "sharply focussed" international attention on the ravages of terrorism. He felt the physical threat to voters and candidates in J and K had now been transformed into death

threats against the elected representatives.

The Deputy Prime Minister, L. K. Advani, said that India had to fight the cross-border terrorism on its own. Referring to Pakistan as an epicentre of global terrorism, he said the armed forces deserved praise for their

role in not only defending the borders but also coming to the aid of the civil authorities. The External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, gave an overview of the security scenario and diplomatic initiatives. The Defence Minister, George Fernandes, also spoke.

Pragmatic, prudent

2/10 Non-military follow-up required 4/18

The decision to initiate a calibrated disengagement — for that is what the official term “redeployment” would mean — along the Indo-Pak border is to be commended. It was not an easy one given Pakistan’s token efforts, at best, to contain cross-border terrorism, yet it reflects India’s capacity to modify its responses in accordance with changing realities, the hallmark of a mature nation. An early indication of the move’s success was Pakistan announcing a matching withdrawal, and international appreciation of a potential lowering of tensions. There will, obviously, be no pull-back from the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir and even along the international border in Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat an adequate presence will be maintained to guarantee national security. Armoured formations and heavy artillery will probably be the first to be pulled back, the strike corps may follow but the defensive echelons remain firmly in place. A return of the troops to their standard peacetime dispositions would be undertaken progressively, depending on what happens next. Sure there will be some diehards, mostly within the sangh parivar, who will accuse the government of backing down, their protestations must be ignored as being ignorant.

What is important is that India ensures that non-military pressure continues to be applied on Pakistan to abandon use of terrorism as an instrument of state policy. The unilateral Indian de-escalation must be used to impress the international community that it has to fulfil its promises of keeping Pakistan in check and hold Pervez Musharraf to his word — if experience shows his word falls short. India has, in fact, created the space in which such pressure can be intensified. It does not mean that India will rush to the negotiating table; on the contrary refusal to revive the dialogue until cross-border terrorism ceases becomes more justified. It is now for Pakistan to respond, and for the world to assess that response.

On a more realistic front, it would be necessary to accept that the post 13-December deployment served its purpose by drawing international and regional attention to the potential for trouble that Pakistan was creating by equating terrorists with freedom fighters. No further gains were likely to accrue; the soldiers were due a stint of rest if only to have them better prepared for future tasks. Our forces — the army in particular — have done their job with customary dedication and professionalism. To sustain the forward deployment was no longer cost-effective, and India would derive much comfort from the fact that its economy was able to absorb the financial burden of Operation Parakram better than Pakistan’s.

There is still be a lot of work ahead. Apart from the diplomatic offensive to be launched, out there on the frontline there are minefields to clear, ammunition dumps to shift, roads and bridges restored to civilian use. For while the soldiers who were deployed in the operation might get a special medal for the job, equally heroic are the villagers who cheerfully abandoned their way of life for over ten months. Their fields remained fallow during the kharif, hopefully some of them will be able to put down the rabi.

THE STATESMAN

21 OCT 2002

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2002

TOWARDS DE-ESCALATION

9/28/02
NEW DELHI'S DECISION to withdraw the army from forward locations on the border with Pakistan, where it has been deployed since December last year, is a positive development although it will be a while before it is fully implemented on the ground. The Defence Minister, George Fernandes, has claimed that the decision by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) was based on a cost-benefit analysis, conducted by the National Security Advisory Board and submitted to the National Security Council, that the disadvantages of the continued deployment far outweighed the advantages. This statement is however not sufficient to dispel the impression that sustained pressure from the U.S. and other interested third parties formed a substantial part of the inputs that went into the decision. The successful completion of the election in Jammu and Kashmir provided the Cabinet with sufficient wriggle room to extricate itself from a position which New Delhi should have *suo motu* recognised as an untenable one a long time ago. Coercive diplomacy as practised by New Delhi had blurred its own case as to which was the aggrieved party and which the belligerent. Instead of fully utilising the potential to focus global attention on the terrorist threat that it faces, New Delhi had caused international diplomatic energies to be frittered away in efforts to block armed conflict between two nuclear-armed adversaries. International consternation was further compounded when New Delhi did not heed the opportunities that it had to de-escalate and did not seem to appreciate that there were limits both to the quantum of third party pressure that could be applied and the results it could achieve. If, at the end of the day, cross-border infiltration has only been reduced and not eliminated the question that naturally arises is whether this outcome could not have been wrought through a more effective and creative deployment of the diplomatic energies that were dissipated in dealing with the concerns

raised by the forward deployment.

Islamabad has declared that it would make a positive and timely response. Once Pakistan too withdraws its troops from positions close to the border there should be a reduction of the tensions that have stayed at intolerable levels. Both armies will continue in a state of proximate hostility along the Line of Control but this situation is not outside the norm. Since the intent to de-escalate has already been signalled, the logical next step would be to revive full diplomatic relations and initiate other confidence building measures. A resumption of the dialogue to resolve all outstanding issues ought to follow without undue delay. While India's concerns about cross-border terrorism are not unwarranted, New Delhi must recognise that it needs to address other dimensions of the Kashmir situation besides the military or security related aspects. Militancy in the valley cannot be comprehensively and effectively brought to an end until and unless the people are persuaded to believe they have reason to rally to India's cause. They will do so only when New Delhi uses the opportunity created by the successful elections to the State Assembly to allow for the re-establishment of good governance at the local level and thereby reaffirm the moral authority of the Indian state.

The manner in which the personnel of the Indian army were exposed to a high-tension situation throughout the summer months with hardly a break and on the basis of fuzzy politics also needs to be addressed. Besides the financial costs, which have not been disclosed but must be substantial, this deployment has exposed the troops to wear and tear and blunted the preparedness of the army. There is a need for the public and responsible sections of the political class to seriously examine the process whereby a Government shifts an expensive war machine into battle-ready mode without adequate thought and then keeps it deployed in a state of high readiness beyond the dictates of all logic.

1 8 2002 2002

INDIA

✓ NO LOWERING OF VIGIL IN J&K ✓

Govt. orders withdrawal of troops from IB

AD-1
17/10

S. D. S. N. S. S. S.

By Sandeep Dikshit

NEW DELHI, OCT. 16. The Government tonight decided to withdraw troops posted in forward locations on the International Border (IB) with Pakistan, thus ending the longest and heaviest deployment of troops in battle-ready mode since Independence. The deployment along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir would continue. This was decided by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) at a 90-minute meeting chaired by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee.

However, there was no question of breaking diplomatic bread with Islamabad till it stopped supporting terrorism on Indian territory, the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, told presspersons. "We don't interact with Pakistan. There is no question of a dialogue with Pakistan as long as it supports terrorism," he said when asked if the Government expected Pakistan to reciprocate the gesture.

This is the third major step taken by India in the last few months to de-escalate tension with Pakistan. Warships were withdrawn from forward locations in the Arabian Sea in May and before that over-flight curbs on Pakistan planes were lifted. While the Pakistani Navy is too small to merit a mention, Islamabad has continued with the curbs on Indian planes flying over Pakistan.

The CCS decided to withdraw the troops following an interaction earlier in the day between the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) and the National Security Council (NSC), which is also chaired by the Prime Minister. Basing its recommendations on a 'cost-benefit analysis' concluded last week, the NSAB told the NSC that contin-



The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, at the National Security Advisory Board meeting in New Delhi on Wednesday. He is flanked by the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, the National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra, and the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha. — Photo: Rajeev Bhatt

ued full-scale deployment may not be the best option. The NSC was also treated to a 'major' presentation — by the former Chief of Army Staff, V.P. Malik — on the consequences of continued forward deployment.

Talking to *The Hindu*, Gen. Malik said there was total consensus in the NSAB against keeping the troops on a state of permanent alert as it was impairing their fighting ability. The NSAB document said the disadvantages of keeping the troops posted on the border far outweighed the advantages.

Mr. Fernandes maintained that the decision was based entirely on the country's security considerations, refuting suggestions that this step was taken under pressure from the international community. "The United States has never been a factor in our taking decisions."

The CCS, at its meeting, noted that troops had been asked to redeploy from posi-

tions on the International Border with Pakistan without impairing their capacity to respond decisively to any emergency. There would be no lowering of the vigil in Jammu and Kashmir, it resolved.

The CCS placed on record and acknowledged its wholehearted appreciation of the conduct of the armed forces. The successful completion of the elections in Jammu and Kashmir capped their achievements, noted the resolution.

A CCS statement sought to convey the impression that "as the armed forces have, with great distinction, achieved the objectives assigned to them, thus upholding all the traditions of the Indian military, they now be asked to redeploy". But given the evidence on the ground, there was no doubt that the withdrawal was unilateral. The decision was taken due to evidence of erosion in the fighting ability of the armed forces

and the heavy burden imposed on the exchequer without concomitant gains — political or tactical.

Flanked by the Defence Secretary, Subir Datta, Mr. Fernandes asserted that forward deployment had achieved its objective, which was "to act on the orders that would be given and secure the frontiers which were being threatened. They have done their job." When asked repeatedly about the timeframe in which the "redeployment" would take place, the Minister said the onus was now on the three service chiefs. Mr. Fernandes declined to field queries on the costs incurred so far, saying they were still being tabulated.

The Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, the Union Finance Minister, Jaswant Singh, the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, the three service chiefs and other senior officials attended the CCS meeting.

17 OCT 2002

Containing Pakistan

11-12 15/10 Talk First, De-escalate Later 11-12

By K Subrahmanyam

The National Security Council and the National Security Advisory Board are to meet tomorrow to consider continuing the mobilisation of armed forces on the border. The mobilisation of the forces was ordered in the wake of the attack on Parliament. Unfortunately, the government has not explained to the country in a coherent policy document the strategic logic behind the mobilisation. Therefore, there has been considerable adverse criticism about the mobilisation.

The Indian strategic posture vis-a-vis Pakistan which has become the epicentre of international terrorism has as its core the border mobilisation. It must now take into account the latest developments in Pakistan and also the likely rise in tension in West Asia which will have a bearing on the subcontinent. The situation in Pakistan following the elections can only be considered to have deteriorated. While the Taliban has been driven out of Afghanistan, two Pakistani provinces have now become Talibanised. The North West Frontier Province, adjacent to Kashmir, is likely to have a government of the Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal (MMA) with its declared sympathies for Al-Qaida and the Taliban. The coming to power of extremists in the two provinces is clear evidence that General Musharraf is either unable or unwilling to counter and neutralise terrorist elements in his country.

The war against terrorism has had a serious setback. If, at this stage, the tension in West Asia is to rise, it could trigger off greater terrorist activity by pro-Al-Qaida and pro-Taliban elements in Pakistan which could spill over into India. While General Musharraf may try to persuade Washington that the election results have made him more indispensable in the US war against terrorism, they have also increased his vulnerability. The rising anti-American feeling in Pakistan so clearly demonstrated in the elections has made the country increasingly unstable. In these circumstances, the internal dynamics within the Pakistani army leadership will need to be watched carefully. It may not be prudent to rely on the continuance of General Musharraf in power. India's forward deployment of forces has led to similar deployment by the Pakistani forces compelling their corps commanders and their troops to be preoccupied with this. The potential for corps commanders to contemplate action against General Musharraf in an unstable situation is curbed to that extent. In that sense, it is an insurance for him.

The effect of the Indian mobilisation has been interpreted in different ways by strategic commentators in India and abroad. One widely held view is that the mobilisation

compelled Washington to put pressure on Pakistan and General Musharraf's January 12 speech and his assurances of June 6 were the direct results of this pressure. Others question the direct linkage between the two. Even some of those who accept the first view raise questions on the continued viability of the mobilisation posture and its cost-effectiveness. There are complaints that the army has not been given a clear mission and, consequently, it has not been able to adjust itself to deployments for long periods in terrains and climatic conditions which vary from the Rann of Kutch to Siachen.

In the light of developments in Pakistan the war against terrorism with Pakistan as the epicentre is going to be a prolonged one and there are many uncertainties in the near future. The most appropriate strategy to deal with this situation in conformity with the global strategy against terrorism is one of containment of Pakistan — politically, militarily and economically. Pakistan has contained itself politically because of its own policy of terrorism. In the West, the US and the international security force in Afghanistan is containing it militarily and

their task is likely to become more difficult with the MMA coming to power in NWFP and Baluchistan. India has to keep up the containment in the East. In addition, Washington has to be persuaded to make the economic containment more effective in the light of its reverses in the war against terrorism in the recent elections.

IN BRIEF

- India's troop mobilisation was for containment, not hostilities
- Election results in Pakistan have been a victory for jehadi elements

Therefore, this is not the time for New Delhi to relax its military containment posture. India should offer to have a discussion at the political (but not summit), diplomatic and military levels about de-escalation in the light of new developments in Pakistan where General Musharraf has suffered a serious blow in his proclaimed efforts to fight terrorism. There has to be a careful assessment of the current and likely future situation in Pakistan following the victory of the jehadi elements. Though the assessment has to be made independently by New Delhi, US inputs would be useful.

If the armed forces are clearly informed that this deployment is for containment and not at this stage preparation for hostilities, they would adjust themselves and take all necessary steps to reduce the hardships to the troops. In these circumstances, a proactive approach will be to carry out an assessment of the Pakistani situation, offer to open a dialogue with Islamabad on de-escalation in the light of the post-election developments and to sustain the containment deployment of our forces. A unilateral announcement of de-escalation in deployment will reduce our leverage vis-a-vis the international community and Pakistan and come in the way of a containment strategy.

Mid-week meet on troop pullback

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Oct. 13: The government will take a decision on whether to withdraw troops from the border at a joint meeting of the National Security Advisory Board and the Cabinet Committee on Security on October 16, said deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani.

The decision to convene this meeting was taken at a CCS sitting held a day before Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee left for Europe, Advani said at a press conference today. "The NSAB meeting will make an in-depth study of the situation" before taking a decision on whether to withdraw the troops massed on the border for 10 months, he said.

The CCS could not take a decision as the elections in Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan were

not over before Vajpayee left. The government had maintained that the troops would remain in place till the Jammu and Kashmir elections were over because this would help assess Pakistan's "behaviour" and prevent it from sabotaging the exercise.

Even if Pakistan had wanted to disrupt the polls, its efforts have been thwarted, implied Advani. "The biggest winner (in the Jammu and Kashmir polls) was democracy and the biggest loser the ISI. If anyone has lost, it is the ISI and its concierges."

However, the deputy Prime Minister reiterated the government's position that talks with Pakistan would resume only if it stopped indulging in cross-border terrorism and would not depend on the security board's decision. "We are willing to have a dialogue with Pakistan on all issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, but dialogue and cross-

border terrorism cannot go together," he asserted.

Advani expressed doubts on whether the outcome of the Pakistani elections would facilitate this process. "The Pakistan elections have heightened our worries. Despite the assurances to the international community that it would stop cross-border terrorism, Pakistan has not fulfilled its commitment. The elections have only strengthened the army and not democracy."

Within Jammu and Kashmir, however, the Centre was ready to talk to elected representatives as well as others, provided the new government was also willing, said the deputy Prime Minister. "We have earlier said let the people of Jammu and Kashmir elect their representatives, we will talk to them primarily. But we will also ask the new government who else to talk to or not talk to," he said. If the state's milita-

nits were ready to shun violence, the government could consider talking to them, Advani said.

The parameters of the talks would be "how much power should be devolved", he said. "But this will take into account the relationships between Srinagar and New Delhi" and between Srinagar and Jammu and Leh and Ladakh, too, he added. Before the elections, the home ministry had appointed BJP general secretary Arun Jaitley as an interlocutor to discuss greater devolution of powers with the National Conference.

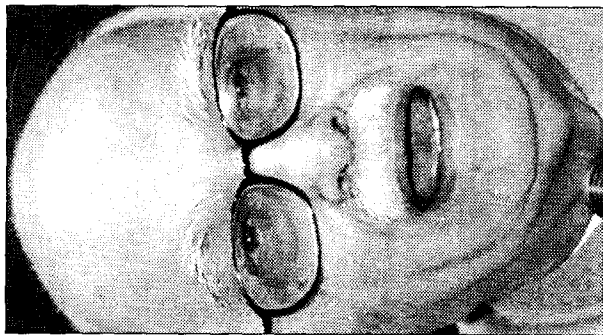
The deputy Prime Minister said People's Democratic Party president Mufti Mohammad Sayeed called on him today. "He told me the people of Jammu and Kashmir experienced fair and free polls after a long time."

Expressing his keenness to see a new government in place soon, Advani said he had advised

Governor Girish Saxena to proceed according to the Constitution and invite at the earliest whichever party or combination looked viable.

On whether the Centre would take steps to ensure the return of Hindu refugees to the Valley, Advani said: "Anyone who thinks in terms of restoring normality in Jammu and Kashmir would identify the return of Kashmiri Pandits as the touchstone." This was a major election plank of the BJP, but its inability to deliver cost it the Pandit votes.

Advani admitted that the BJP was "nursing its wounds" after the rout in Jammu. He, however, put up a brave face and declared: "If there is one development which simultaneously showcases our commitment to national security, national unity and integrity, and democracy, it is the successful completion of elections in Jammu and Kashmir."



LK Advani at the news conference. (AFP)

CCS clears purchase of 'vital defence equipment'

9-05/NSC
HD-8
6/10
By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, OCT. 5. The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) today cleared the procurement of "certain vital defence-related equipment" and reviewed the security scenario against the backdrop of ongoing elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

Briefing newsmen, the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, declined to detail the equipment purchase cleared during the 90-minute meeting.

However, informed reasoning in the light of the recent statements by the Defence Minister and the Indian Air Force chief points to the approval to purchase advanced jet trainers (AJT), most probably from the United Kingdom.

The decision comes days

before the IAF is scheduled to celebrate its 71st anniversary.

The absence of AJTs has cost the Air Force dearly both in terms of a large number of young lives as well as costly assets. The plan to procure AJTs was finalised in the mid-Eighties but inter-corporate rivalry among armament manufacturers and lack of political rivalry have led to successive Governments failing to seal a decision.

The meeting, also attended by the three service chiefs, reviewed a massive housing project in progress for the armed forces and improving the communication network of the Army.

"We had some defence-related procurement decision to be taken which the CCS has taken. I can't go into details. One way or the other, I am not in a position to

respond," said Mr. Sinha when asked whether the British Aerospace's Hawk AJT was the defence-related procurement in question. He maintained that the alleged "air dropping" incident in West Bengal was not listed on the agenda.

The Minister was more forthcoming on the review of the regional security scenario, which basically means the elections in Jammu and Kashmir. With polling over for a bulk of the seats to the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, the Central Government was in a self-congratulatory disposition.

The CCS noted with "great satisfaction the fact that despite all efforts to the contrary, people of the State responded splendidly to the democratic process. The large turnout of voters in the first

three of the four phases has been noted with great satisfaction by the Government".

"We used the opportunity to discuss the overall security scenario in the region. No decisions have been taken but an overall review has been carried out," said Mr. Sinha.

The CCS meeting took place just before the Defence Minister leaves for Oman and the Prime Minister, accompanied by the External Affairs Minister, departs for Europe. Besides these three prominent members of the Union Cabinet, others who attended the meeting included the Deputy Prime Minister, L. K. Advani, the Finance Minister, Jaswant Singh, the National Security Adviser, Brajesh Mishra, and the Cabinet Secretary-designate, Kamal Pande.

India's short reply to Pak N-missile

Statesman News Service & PTI

ISLAMABAD/ NEW DELHI, Oct. 4. — With Pakistan's successful test-firing of the medium-range surface-to-surface ballistic missile *Hatf-IV* today, India too test-fired the sophisticated short-range surface-to-air missile *Akash* from the Interim Test Range at Chandipur-on-Sea, Balasore.

Pakistan said the test was aimed at checking the technical aspects of the "indigenously-produced" missile, also known as *Shaheen*. The Pakistani foreign ministry spokesman, Mr Aziz Khan, said today's test had "nothing to do with the Indo-Pak situation" and all neighbouring countries were informed. India was reportedly informed last evening through charge de affairs Mr Sudhir Vyas.

The missile, which can carry nuclear warheads and hit targets within a 750 km range (that could target several Indian cities), was test-fired from a range on the Somyani coast. *Shaheen* weighs around 6,200 kg and operates on single-stage solid propellant. It is believed to have been reversed-engineered from the Chinese M-9 missile, probably with Chinese technical assistance.

India successfully test-fired *Akash* from the ITR at Chandipur-on-Sea at 4 p.m. today. The *Akash*, with a range of 25 km and payload capacity of 55 kg, can strike several targets simultaneously. Its support systems include the state-of-art *Rajendra* radar which can keep track of 64 aircraft within 60 km. Defence officials are collecting data on

the testflight for dissemination.

Terming Pakistan's missile test as a "further act of irresponsibility" by Islamabad, New Delhi today said it was not impressed with Pakistan's test-firing of *Shaheen* as it was "clearly targeted at the forthcoming general elections in that country".

"As we have said before, we are not particularly impressed with these missile antics of Pakistan... It's well known that Pakistan's missiles are based on clandestinely imported material, equipment and technology," the foreign ministry spokesperson, Ms Nirupama Rao, said. The foreign secretary, Mr Kanwal Sibal, said: "It is a provocation to the international community because it cannot but see in the timing and action of Pakistan a further act of irresponsibility." He said the more missiles they fire, the less they have in their kitty.

Moscow dismissive; UK concerned

Brushing aside Pakistani claims of indigenous missile development, a Russian arms expert today said *Ghauri* and *Shaheen* were "carbon copies" of North Korean and Chinese missiles, adds PTI from Moscow. On the *Shaheen* test, Russian experts said the tests show that South Asia still remains the world's most nuclear conflict-prone region of the world. He said Islamabad may be working on inter-continental ballistic missiles. Britain, too, expressed concern, saying restraint in developing nuclear weapons was in Islamabad's interests, reports PTI from London.

Terror team on Advani trail gunned down

30/9 HT

KS Dakshina Murthy
Bangalore, September 29

A TERRORIST who planned to assassinate Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani and HRD Minister MM Joshi was shot dead with four associates in a pre-dawn raid by police commandos in Bangalore today.

Al-Mujahideen chief Imam Ali (32) — prime accused in the RSS office blast that killed 10 people in Chennai nine years ago — was tracked on Friday after his disguise turned a giveaway.

As he lay low in Bangalore after escaping from Tamil Nadu police's custody in March, Ali's luck ran out three weeks ago when the police intercepted one of his mobile calls. It told them that the terror kingpin was hiding with three men and a woman in a house at the city's MSR Layout.

It also told them that all four men had tonsured their heads and marked their foreheads with sandalwood to pass themselves off as devout Hindus.

A team of city cops, posing as vegetable vendors, began visiting the neighbourhood every day, knocking at every door and discreetly looking out for tonsured men living in the same house.

There was one house with a "to let" sign. The owner had asked his "Hindu" tenants to vacate it by October 1 because he was unhappy at their habit of cooking meat in the house.

That gave inspectors Subramanyam and Sashikala the opportunity for a closer look at the occupants. Posing as a couple hunting for a house to rent, they had a thorough look around the flat accompanied by the landlord. Ali, ever the cautious terrorist, locked himself in the

He joined Jihad Committee of Coimbatore. Tried to kill Hindu Munnani leader Ramagopalan in Tiruppur in 1991

After the Babri Masjid was demolished, tied up with al-Umma of Coimbatore. Travelled to J&K and PoK for arms training.

Arrested in 1995, escaped police custody in March 2002. Formed al-Mujahideen

Charges against him

- * Carried out RSS headquarters blast on Aug 8, 1993, that killed 10 people
- * Planned to assassinate LK Advani, MM Joshi and VHP leader Ashok Singhal
- * Planned blasts in TN temples to spark communal unrest

bathroom, but the cops identified some of his "friends".

At 2 am today, a team of 45 cops from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka surrounded the house. They lobbed teargas shells through the front door and the window next to it, and then broke the door open.

"As the militants began shooting at us through the open door, we took cover behind the compound wall a few feet away," SP Ashok Kumar of the STF said. "Then we lobbed another teargas shell and rushed into the house, shooting all the time. We found our targets and the operation was over."

Related report on Page 7

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

7 9 SEP 2002

'MEDIA, OTHER SECTIONS SHOULD COOPERATE'

Help Govt. fight terrorism: Advani

By Vinay Kumar

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 29. As the country's top police, intelligence and security officials gathered today for their annual conference here, the spotlight was naturally on the recent terrorist attack on the Akshardham temple in Gandhinagar and the current Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir.

While describing "terrorism fuelled by religious extremism" as the greatest threat to India's internal security, the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, said that terrorism could not be fought only by the security forces.

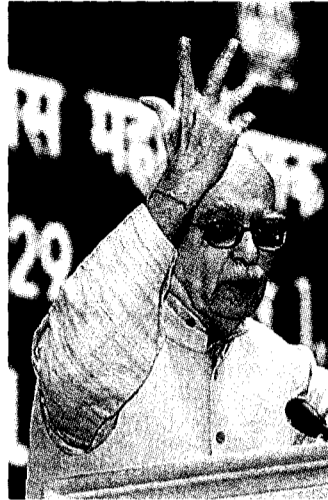
In his inaugural speech at the three-day conference of the Director-Generals and Inspector-Generals of Police, Mr. Advani listed three recent developments which had drawn the world's attention towards terrorism and internal security problems faced by India — the arrest of the fugitive, Abu Salem, in Lisbon, Pakistan's efforts to disrupt the Jammu and Kashmir polls and the storming of the Akshardham temple by terrorists.

Seeking the full cooperation of all sections of society, particularly the media, in the fight against terrorism, Mr. Advani said: "Terrorism is an evil which the Government alone cannot overcome."

Mr. Advani, a former journalist himself long ago, found himself expounding on the role of the media in tackling terrorism, pointing out how some of the reports of the storming of the Akshardham temple and the subsequent commando operation had lacked balance.

Asking the media to be "cautious and serious" in reporting terrorist incidents, Mr. Advani said the media should not contribute to the cause of spreading terror which the terrorists want to create in the minds of the people. "Showing shots of mangled corpses attract attention but the media should also think of the consequences as its impact is far and wide," he said.

He appeared sore at the media for giving little impor-



tance to the three commandos, including one of the National Security Guards (NSG), who had laid down their lives in the night-long operation at the Akshardham temple.

Referring to the criticism by a few newspapers who had questioned the clues worked out by the agencies in the Akshardham temple case, he said: "This kind of criticism is not fair, it acts as a dampener to the security forces. I expect fairplay and balance in the media reports," he said.

Pat for security agencies

He complimented the security agencies for providing an early breakthrough in the case which clearly pointed to the attack "being not merely an act of terrorism, but of cross-border terrorism. The entire country and the world would know the difference between the two."

Pointing out that the oft-quoted charge of "intelligence failure" against the intelligence agencies had become too cliched, he said their sources were "doing reasonably well." But the absence of specific intelligence input made it difficult for the Government to take any action, he said.

J&K elections

Turning to the Jammu and Kashmir polls, Mr. Advani said the democratic process was unfolding in the backdrop of a bold, sustained and successful campaign against cross-border terrorism. "Unlike in the late

80s and the 90s, what remains is almost exclusively terrorism by infiltrators from across the border," he said.

The Deputy Prime Minister said that cross-border terrorism, which was being pursued as a matter of State policy and as a strategy for proxy war by our neighbour, had completely changed the nature of engagement.

He said Pakistan's repeated demand for a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir would be negated if the Assembly polls were completed in a free, fair and participatory manner.

"The concern shown by the western nations underlines the importance they attach to the elections and it has even been realised by Pakistan whose primary aim was to disrupt the elections," Mr. Advani said.

Earlier, in his welcome address, the Intelligence Bureau Director, K.P. Singh, said that incidents of violence and terror strikes in Gujarat had shown that there was no room for complacency.

Listing the achievements of the police and security agencies in fighting terrorism, he said that over 2,800 terrorists had been killed in the past one year and human rights violations were "minimal."

PTI reports:

In a veiled criticism of the Haryana Police for their role in the arrest of the senior IPS officer, Ravi Kant Sharma, by the Delhi Police, Mr. Advani said it was wrong to adopt an attitude of "us-versus-them."

"We are worried about the criminal justice system, especially the division of police of two States. This reflects that even if an official of one State is arrested for some crime, the assumption is that he belongs to us. This is very strange," Mr. Advani said.

"The media reports in the last two days do not reflect well on the police department as a whole," he said in an apparent reference to reports that Mr. Sharma had enjoyed the support of the Haryana Police during his run from the Delhi Police.

Imam Ali shot dead in Bangalore

By K.V. Subramanya

BANGALORE, SEPT. 29. A suspected ISI agent, Imam Ali, who allegedly masterminded the bomb blast at the RSS headquarters in Chennai in 1993, and four militants, including a woman, belonging to his newly-floated organisation, the Al-Mujahideen, were killed in a pre-dawn encounter with the Tamil Nadu and the Karnataka Police here on Sunday.



Claiming to be timber merchants, Ali and his four associates hailing from Tamil Nadu were staying in a house in Sanjaynagar police station limits here for the past two months. They had planned to vacate the house on Monday.

On the basis of intelligence gathered by the Tamil Nadu Police, the Tamil Nadu STF commandos and the Bangalore City Armed Reserve personnel swooped on the house around 2 a.m. To incapacitate the militants, police lobbed a teargas shell into the house through a window and then stormed it.

The militants, armed with an AK-47 rifle, a country-made revolver and a pistol, refused to

surrender and fired at police. When the commandos retaliated, the five militants were injured. They were rushed to the M.S. Ramaiah Hospital, where all of them were declared brought dead, the Bangalore City Commissioner of Police, H.T. Sangliana, told presspersons. Fourteen Tamil Nadu policemen suffered minor injuries.

The others killed are Manga Basheer alias Anwar (35) of Tirunelveli, Mohammed Ibrahim (28) Seeniyappa alias Saifullah (30) and his wife, Yasmeen (30), all from Madurai district.

Preliminary investigations and telephone intercepts revealed that the group had planned to assassinate the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, the Union Human Resource Development Minister, Murli Manohar Joshi, and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader, Ashok Singhal. Ali's group had hatched a conspiracy to assassinate Dr. Joshi and Mr. Singhal at Allahabad in July 2002.

On Saturday, the gang had tried to kill the Tamil Nadu Additional Director-General of Police (Administration), K.V.S. Moorthy, in Chennai and a businessman in Bangalore. As Mr. Moorthy was escorted by an armed constable, they abandoned their plan.

It is said that the gang was nursing a grudge against Mr. Moorthy, who was earlier IGP (Prisons). It had also planned to vandalise temples in Tamil Nadu and Bangalore.

THE HINDU

30 SEP 2002

Gujarat 'voice' blurs Pak temple link

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Ahmedabad, Sept. 28: In a revelation that rebuts the government line that the Swaminarayan temple attack was carried out by Pakistanis, a highly-placed source today said one of the two raiders was speaking Gujarati and appeared to be "local".

"Even from their appearance, the militants did not seem to be Kashmiris or from across the border," he said.

Director-general of police K.

Chakravarty, however, repeated the official claim that the militants were "rank strangers". He said the taxi driver who had brought the duo to the temple complex, Raju Thakore, had identified their bodies.

The police are not questioning any more taxi drivers as the identity of the militants and the fact that they were not residents of Gujarat have been "conclusively established", Chakravarty added.

But top sources at Police Bhavan did not rule out the involve-

ment of a local. "One of the two militants could be from here as there may have been enough provocation for local Muslim youths to avenge the aftermath of the Godhra killings," a source said.

This is in line with claims made to the Anti-Terrorist Squad by the driver and the taxi owner, Mansukh Acharya, that one of the two passengers had asked for a bottle of water at Rajdhani Hotel near Gandhinagar in Gujarat.

A letter in Urdu found in the pocket of one of the slain mili-

tants had said the temple attack was aimed at avenging the riots.

But the BJP has been at pains to deny any link between the storming of the temple and the post-Godhra riots. Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani and chief minister Narendra Modi have pointed the finger at Pakistan, claiming that the militants came from across the border.

At a rally in Lucknow today, Advani said he suspected the outfit active in Kashmir. They had planned to capture the tem-

ple and take 500 people hostage to strike a big deal, he said.

In Patna, defence minister George Fernandes said: "We have not reached the conclusion that the terrorists were backed by Pakistan."

Chakravarty said the two militants were "rank strangers" and had only entered the state to execute their "mission". He accepted, however, that they could not have carried out their mission without local help.

Additional director-general of police Maniram, who led a

team that last night "reconstructed the terrorist attack", said the militants appeared to have been familiar with the temple complex, whose labyrinthine corridors and pathways can puzzle any first-time visitor.

Contradicting the earlier version that the militants had failed to enter the three exhibition halls because people had locked the doors, Maniram said the duo had entered the halls but from the exit, not the ticket counter that served as the entrance.

Inside the exhibition halls,

they killed some visitors before climbing on to the roof. Like Advani, Modi had said the duo had planned to take people hostage.

But what has baffled the investigating agency is that no hostages were taken. Neither did the duo appear to have attempted an escape. They also did not target the people after police reached the spot.

A senior officer has gone to the extent of saying the attackers did not appear to be by "dreaded" militants. "In fact," he said, "they looked like novices".

THE TELEGRAPH

29 SEP 2002

Temple terrorists were Pakistanis

Two detained for hiring Jawans may have fired out car to attackers shots in the dark

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad/New Delhi: The anti-terrorist squad (ATS) on Friday detained two persons who had reportedly rented out the white Ambassador car to the terrorists to reach Akshardham temple even as news reports from New Delhi suggested that the terrorist duo had been identified as Pakistani citizens.

Leads from intelligence agencies at Jammu helped identify the terrorists as Mohammad Amjad from Lahore and Hafiz Yassir from Attock in Pakistan. Highly placed sources in the home ministry told TNN on Thursday that they suspected the two to be operatives of the Lashkar-e-Toiba.

"The reason for this suspicion is the style of operation of the two terrorists, which is similar to the one used in the attack on parliament house, the Jammu and Kashmir assembly and similar such strikes elsewhere in J&K," the sources said. They pointed out that even the weapons used in the Akshardham attack were similar to the ones used by the Lashkar militants.

Taxi driver Raju Thakore and taxi owner Mansukh Acharya walked up to the ATS on Thursday evening to disclose that the two terrorists who attacked Akshardham on Tuesday had hired their car (GJ 1-U 2234). The taxi was subjected to close scrutiny for leads on Friday.

According to their confession, the terrorists arrived by a train at Ahmedabad railway station in Kalupur and hired their taxi to get to Akshardham around 3 p.m. While earlier reports suggested that they arrived by the Howrah Express, which comes in at 3.15 p.m., later reports said they alighted from the Jammu Tawi Express, which arrives at Ahmedabad at 2.05 p.m. on Tuesdays.

- Accomplices may have fled, Page 7
- Related reports on Page 9

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: Some persons may have been killed inside the Akshardham temple complex on Tuesday in cross-fire among confused security personnel before the National Security Guards (NSG) arrived at midnight and took over the operation.

As a number of security agencies—CRPF, BSF, State Commando Force (SCF), State Reserve Police (SRP), Rapid Action Force (RAF), the Anti-Terrorist Squad of the state police—tried to take on the two terrorists, there were messages received on the police wireless system indicating that not everything was going according to plan.

"Don't shoot this way, it's us," said a desperate message received by a police jeep parked outside the complex at about 8.45 p.m. that day. There were murmurs at 11.30 p.m., when a Swaminarayan sadhu was killed, that he could have fallen to a bullet from one of the security agencies.

Even senior SCF officials have voiced their suspicion, though in private, that one of their commandos killed in the operation may not have died in the shower of AK-47 fire coming from the terrorists.

In all, the SCF, SRP and the NSG lost one member each while 11 SRP men and an NSG commando were injured in the firing.

CRPF DIG M.M. Sharma, who was perhaps the first officer to enter the complex with his 'quick reaction team', ruled out the possibility of cross-fire among the security agencies. "There was perfect coordination. We were carrying wireless sets of the state police and there was constant communication," he said.

Inspector S.R. Yadav of the SCF also ruled out the possibility that his colleague dying of a .303 bullet. "It was definitely AK-47 fire, I saw it myself," he said.

- Source of bullets not documented, Page 7



28 SEP 2003

Sukhois to give IAF decisive edge

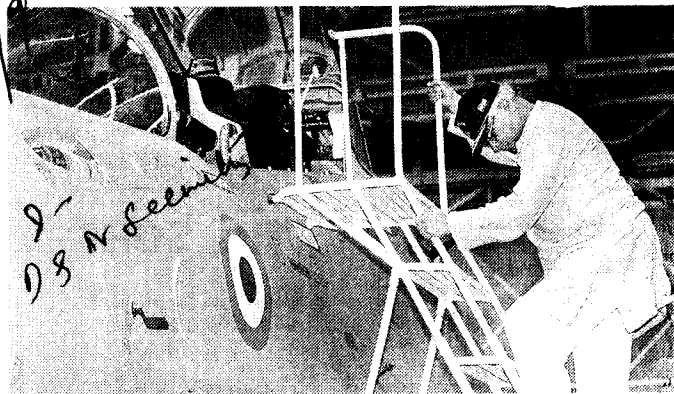
By Sandeep Dikshit

PUNE, SEPT. 27. Indian security planners expect the 'rules of engagement' to radically change with the induction of one of the world's most sophisticated fighter aircraft here today.

The 10-strong fleet of "made-for-India" Sukhoi-30 MKI put on display at the Lohegaon air base here has a much more sophisticated system than any of its variants available in the region. This would allow the aircraft to realise India's security requirements or 'rules of engagement' in a much more optimal manner, said the Chief of Air Staff, S. Krishnaswamy, at the induction ceremony, which also saw the aircraft display its awesome speed and prowess.

"In terms of sophistication, I believe, ours are better," maintained Air Chief Marshal Krishnaswamy when asked to compare the current crop with the Sukhoi variants acquired by China. "The accuracy of the weapons delivery systems is phenomenal. The aircraft is very special. No other country has such a formidable aircraft," he said.

The Sukhoi-30 MKI has the ability to accomplish standoff firing on ground targets from a



The Defence Minister, George Fernandes, climbs down from the cockpit of a Sukhoi Su-30MKI fighter jet in Pune on Friday. —AFP

distance of 100 km. refuel in mid-air, precision-guided capability to avoid collateral damage and target acquisition with advanced sensors in "day and night, fog and rain".

The IAF chief as well as the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, took the "so-called defence analysts" to task for attempting to "scotch" the deal in its infancy.

While the Air Chief Marshal preferred a mild rebuke, Mr. Fernandes was more direct in his criticism of the doubters and praise for Russia.

"The journey for Sukhoi's in-

duction was long. Sustained harassment of people associated with its development was carried out. Questions were raised about its appropriateness, cost, type of weaponry and even service life. This plane will subsequently be manufactured in India and then the country will be a leading air power in the world," he said.

"I want to state without hesitation that the acquisition of the plane is because of our close ties with Russia. No country has been able to match Russia's edge in areas related to security," he added.

28 SEP 2001

THE HINDU

LAW CATCHES UP WITH CRIME ON TWO CONTINENTS

Delhi fiat to Lisbon

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Sept. 27. — New Delhi is hammering home a message to Lisbon: if you are against terrorism, deport Abu Salem to India. In effect, India is telling Portugal that an Indian national — as Salem undoubtedly is — accused of an act of terror, i.e. the Bombay blasts, should not and need not be put through the complicated, time-consuming and uncertain process of Portuguese extradition. For, Lisbon should take a “political and moral decision” on this.

The message has been agreed upon, sources said, at the “highest levels of Cabinet and law enforcement”. The pitch is that in the current context of “global cooperation against terror”, Lisbon should look favourably at India’s position. India is also bolstering its case by citing “cases” where fugitives have been sent back by foreign countries, including Western nations.

CBI coordinated efforts to successfully get back Cihan Karangi and Tunkay Alankus, accused in the urea scam case, from Switzerland in October 1997. Ranjit

Sharma gives up

CHANDIGARH, Sept. 27. — Mr RK Sharma, prime suspect in the Shivani case, surrendered at an Ambala court today. He was given a nine-day judicial remand. The IPS officer, accompanied by his wife, surrendered before the CJM Ambala. Later he was transferred to Ambala Jail. — SNS

Details on page 4

Singh Gill and Sukmindhe R Singh, both wanted in terrorism cases, were handed over by the US in May 2001. So was Daya Singh Lahoria and Kamaljit Kaur in January 1997. Currently, the CBI is processing three cases with the US authorities: two on economic offences — Narender Rastogi and JBS Bakshi — and one on terrorism — Harjit Singh.

Senior officials said India has asked for and received US assurance that Washington “will help Delhi in obtaining a speedy resolution of the case”. That Salem is believed to have Al-Qaida links is also “helping India”.

Officials are of the view that though the Portuguese Constitution, by provisions of Article 33 Clause 2, requires that even deportation decisions be referred to judicial authorities, “ways can be worked out that the procedures for deportation become simple”. The CBI team in Lisbon is “working on these issues”, sources said, and will meet Portuguese authorities tomorrow. One option being examined is a presidential commuting of sentence since the government “cannot tell the courts what to do when hearing cases against Salem”.

Temple clues point to Pak

Sanjay Singh in New Delhi

Sept. 27. — An intercepted message and an undergarment brand were the unusual combination of clues that provided the first indications that the Swaminarayan Temple assailants were “from across the border”.

Sources said soon after the news of NSG commandos killing the two militants — identified as Md Amzad Bhai of Lahore and Hafiz Yasir of Attock — broke, intelligence agencies intercepted a brief message sent by an associate to their Pakistan-based commanders that “the mission was accomplished as expected”. The two militants were found to be wearing a brand of underwear, Gulmarg, not known in India.

Turn to page 4

28 SEP 2003

THE STATESMAN

India may have to fight its own war: Vajpayee

M 27/9 I.D.N. Selu
TIMES NEWS NETWORK AND AGENCIES

New Delhi: Union minister of state for home I.D. Swami hinted on Thursday that war with Pakistan to end cross-border terrorism was an option while Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee said it appeared that US pressure on Pakistan was not working and India would have to fight its own war against terrorism.



A.B. Vajpayee

At the same time, foreign minister Yashwant Sinha declared that India's patience had been "sorely tested" by the temple massacre.

Speaking to reporters in New Delhi, Mr Vajpayee referred to the attack on the Akshardham temple in Gandhinagar and said, "Our soldiers have shown that militants will not succeed in their demands."

On the other hand, Mr Swami told reporters in Srinagar, "We have stated it earlier also to the world community and we still maintain that all options for us are still open." Asked whether war was a possibility, he said, "When I say all options are open, don't you think that this is an option too?"

"We are not entirely dependent on the international coalition. We are capable of solving our problems ourselves," Mr Swami said. He said India had been highlighting to the international coalition the proxy war waged from across the border for the last decade. "We have been using diplomatic channels to end the menace and we still have faith that the international coalition will rise to the occasion and make this world a place for civilised people," he said.

Speaking at Kuala Lumpur's Institute of Strategic and International Studies on 'Indian foreign policy in the new millennium', the minister said that ever since the Agra summit, "India has been subject to the worst form of cross-border terrorism. It has gone on and on and on, and we have continued to act with restraint." He also indicated that the temple attackers could have been backed by Pakistan.

However, an external affairs ministry spokesperson said in New Delhi the identity of the temple attackers was still to be established. She said that Pakistan's involvement in Tuesday's attack was indicated because of the "history of Pakistan's involvement" and the "pattern to these attacks". These were the reasons which had made India suspicious (of Pakistan's involvement), she said.

THE SILIGURI CORRIDOR

The Most Important Geo-strategic Feature In India

Cyril Radcliffe perhaps had little notion at the time when he was demarcating the India-Pakistan boundary that he would create an apriorism in the eastern segment of the subcontinent that would one day lead to a tinder box of huge concern to India. A tract of land measuring some 80 km by 40 km situated in the northern part of West Bengal has today become the hub of terrorist traffic flowing through a wide regional arc, a hub that begets the involvement of as many as four nations namely, India, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal, with a fifth one China, viewing the scene from a vantage point.

Calamity waiting to happen

This tract is commonly known as the Siliguri Corridor. This corridor can claim to be the most important geo-strategic feature in the whole of India. Typically, we have only been paying lip service to this feature year after year, concentrating our mite on Kashmir instead. Consequently, the Siliguri Corridor has now erupted in all its vitriolic form to the detriment of West Bengal in particular and North East India in general.

Geographically speaking, this 3,200 square-kilometre tract is heavily wooded, leans on the Terai, has a riverine terrain, adjoins a Nepal-Bihar-West Bengal-Bhutan-Sikkim circuit, and possesses the unique characteristic of being able to cut off the land link between the north eastern states and the rest of India.

All that is to be done is to engineer road-blocks and rail dislocations within this tract which is quite easy due to its inherent ground conditions. There is considerable apprehension in many quarters that a calamity like this is just waiting to happen in the near future unless we take prompt measures to address the problems that have caused this consternation. The problems that plague this no-man's-land are the ULFA, the Bodo issue, Maoists from Nepal, and of late the Kamtapur

The author is Lt. Col. (retd.), Indian Army.

518 By JK DUTT 27/9
agitation. These marauding insurgent groups have established a chain with one another and the ISI of Pakistan with its secure bases in Bangladesh and Nepal is giving them a ready hand in their destabilising activities. India is getting into a tighter spot every day.

In fact, India's predicament is somewhat like Bhutan's. Bodo insurgents strike their targets at will and making full use of the

trying to talk with the ULFA and the Bodos but is no closer to any settlement. These two insurgent groups enjoy a prime advantage in that their operating radius is concentrated along the northern channels of the Brahmaputra River, conveniently adjacent to Bhutan's southern border with Assam.

Nepal's Maoists find it expedient to use the Siliguri Corridor



geography, flee across to Bhutan where they have set up well-organised camps.

Union Territory status

Thimpu finds it difficult to take strong military action against these camps lest the insurgent groups react by destroying the Himalayan kingdom's physical communication system — primarily roads — and cause Bhutan's trans country movement to come to a grinding halt. Roadways, through which Bhutan verily survives, have a built in high-risk ingredient in the absence of any alternative mode like railways. Hence no government wants to jeopardise its national lifeline. Thimpu has been stoically negotiating with the insurgents, asking them time and again to vacate Bhutan's soil but to little avail. On a parallel, India too has been

for trans border movement. If as reported they are getting help from China, suggested by their penchant for Mao Ze Dong and his ideology, then such help can be very easily infiltrated through the strategic Chumbi Valley which lies between Nepal and Bhutan. Actually, a threat perception exercise has deduced that a direct threat does exist to the corridor via this valley.

The Maoists have of late started supporting the Kamtapur dissidents, pushing West Bengal into an extremely precarious situation. It is beyond Kolkata's pale to go it alone hence central intervention has become imperative.

It would be advisable for New Delhi to declare the Siliguri Corridor as a Union Territory in view of the heightened geo-politically disturbing curriculum that is increasing its sway in this part of

the country. Jalpaiguri can be its capital. Such a central arrangement will give us an immediate opportunity to carry out two tasks: first, totally sanitise the corridor with our security forces making alien transgression very costly and second — following on from the first — coerce the insurgent groups that rule the roost to come to the negotiating table. India can certainly count on a backing in its venture by Nepal and Bhutan but in all probability Bangladesh will not commit for reasons that have become obvious after the change of government in Dhaka.

Beacon for development

The new Union Territory will have to go flat out for the economic revival of its domain. There is unlimited scope for industrial development, waiting to be tapped. Agriculture, horticulture, sericulture, hydroelectricity, tea, fishery, forestry, fruit processing, dairy produce, and tourism comprise the main items in this regard. Development of industry will generate a much necessary panacea, employment.

As an adjunct, there has to be a quantum increase in means of physical communication. A much larger network of road, rail, ropeway, river transport, and air service must be built up. Multifaceted infrastructure will be the right incentive for outside investors to come in. If appropriate action on these lines is taken by us, the corridor will become sacrosanct to all people living there and its current status as a terrorist transit haven will change to one of a socio-economically productive rostrum.

Simultaneously, educational, cultural and social development will also have to be undertaken. West Bengal should have no objection to the formation of this new Union Territory: on the contrary, it should contribute whatever it can to make the objective successful.

The transformation of the Siliguri Corridor into a developmental engine can be a beacon for the other states of the region afflicted by insurgency, including Nepal.

TEMPLE ATTACK: *Pre-planned, says Fernandes*

(Continued from page 1)

According to agency reports, ever since the Agra Summit "India has been subject to the worst form of cross-border terrorism," Mr Sinha told the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS).

"It has gone on and on and on, and we have continued to act with restraint," he said, adding that Pakistan had also failed in its commitment earlier this year to halt infiltration.

Referring to Tuesday's attack at the temple, Mr Sinha said India's "patience has been sorely tested" by the massacre and that it bore all the hallmarks of the earlier assaults carried on the



Mr Yashwant Sinha and Mr George Fernandes

Parliament and Jammu and Kashmir Assembly building.

The defence minister, Mr George Fernandes, said much the same in Ahmedabad, adding that the attack was "pre-planned" and similar to the one on Parliament House.

According to foreign ministry officials, the Americans have their own compulsions, and Pakistan is cooperating in their war against Al-Qaida on the Afghan border, allowing them crucial intelligence-gathering facilities.

The Americans, though agreeing that far from ending, infiltration across the line of control has actually risen in August and September (compared to June and July), prefer to give the benefit of the doubt to General Musharraf, suggesting that he is taking harsh and internally unpopular measures to curb terrorist activity.

But given the tenor of reactions from the government after Tuesday's temple outrage, the Centre is not rising to American bait, choosing to focus Indo-US relations on bilateral matters and not through the prism of Pakistan. On how to deal with the root causes of terror, they differ.

27 SEP 2003

THE STATESMAN

PAK. WAS PLANNING SOMETHING LIKE THIS: ADVANI

Temple siege ends

By Manas Dasgupta

GANDHINAGAR, SEPT. 25. The siege of the Akshardham temple complex of the Swaminarayan sect here ended during the small hours of today after a night-long commando operation. The two terrorists who stormed it on Tuesday evening were killed.

A total of 29 devotees, including 16 women and four children, were killed in the terrorist attack and 74 were injured, a few of them seriously.

A National Security Group commando was also killed and one critically wounded in the operation.

And two State police commandos lost their lives while rescuing the people trapped in the complex before the NSG men took position.

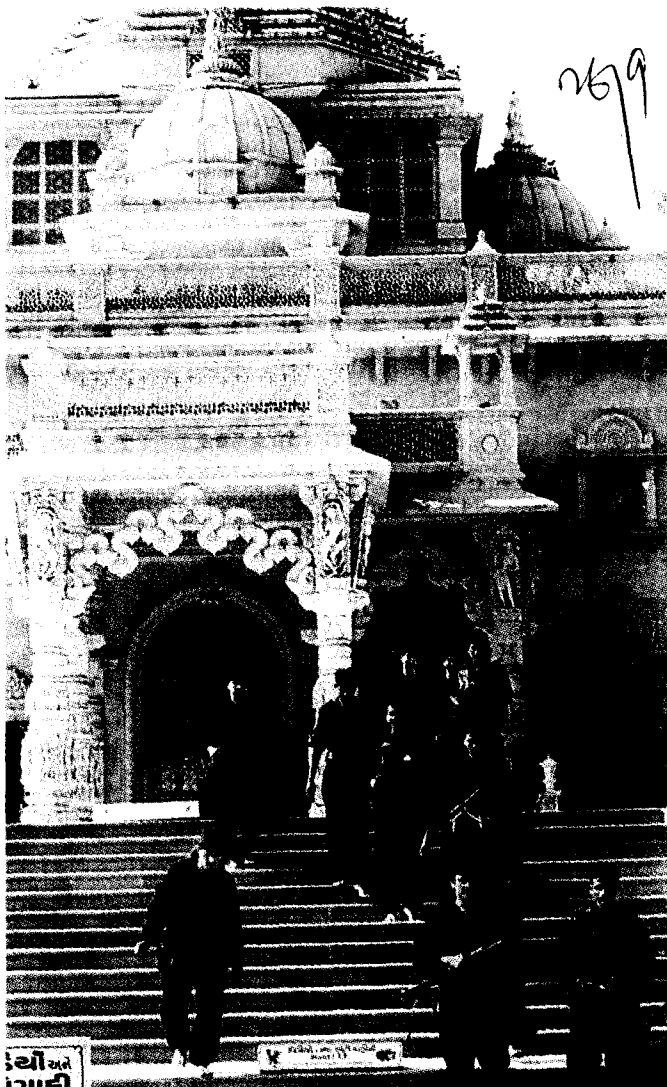
Though the identity of the terrorists is still not known, it is believed that they were members of an unknown and possibly newly-floated organisation, Tehrik-e-Kasas (Movement for Revenge), Gujarat. This was revealed from two unsigned letters found on their bodies.

They were written in Urdu, using red, blue and black ink, and said they wanted "revenge" for the violence against Muslims in the recent Gujarat riots.

They also warned of "serious consequences" if Muslims were attacked again.

The Deputy Prime Minister, L. K. Advani, who arrived in Gandhinagar last night, visited the Akshardham complex after the operation. He was accompanied by the Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi.

Speaking to mediapersons,



Commandos coming out of the Akshardham temple after a 'darshan' at the end of their operation on Wednesday. — Photo: Paras Shah

he, however, gave little credence to the letters and indicated that he believed the attack was Pakistan's handiwork. The Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf's "unnecessary"

reference to Gujarat in his address to the United Nations General Assembly had shown that Pakistan was planning "something like this," Mr. Advani said, adding that nothing was known about the antecedents of the Tehrik but a thorough inquiry would be held.

Congratulating the Gujarat Police and the commando forces for another "successful operation" against terrorism, Mr. Advani, however, advised caution, saying that the killing of the two terrorists might not mean an end to the problem. There could be more terrorists connected to the organisation who might strike "anywhere, anytime."

Gaurav rath yatra postponed

By Our Special Correspondent

AHMEDABAD, SEPT. 25. The fourth leg of the Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi's Gaurav Rath Yatra, scheduled to start on Saturday, has been postponed in view of Tuesday's terrorist attack on the Akshardham temple complex in Gandhinagar.

The chief convener of the yatra, Jayantibhai Barot, said the decision had been taken in deference to the wishes of the workers of the Bharatiya Janata Party as a mark of respect to those killed in the attack.

The rath yatra was scheduled to start from the pilgrim town of Ambaji and move through some of the north Gujarat districts. It is the second time that the yatra from Ambaji is being postponed.

The inaugural run of the yatra from the same place on July 4 had to be cancelled at the behest of the BJP high command following apprehension of violence. Mr. Barot said that the new dates for starting the yatra would be announced later.

Will present evidence, says Sinha: Page 11
A botched-up job?: Page 12

PM, Sonia visit Akshardham

By Our Special Correspondent

GANDHINAGAR, SEPT. 25. The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, the Deputy Prime Minister, L. K. Advani, and the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Sonia Gandhi, visited the Akshardham temple complex here today and called for an end to terrorism.

Mr. Vajpayee, who cut short

his visit to the Maldives and flew in directly to pay his tributes to the victims of Tuesday's terrorist attack on the complex, said terrorism the world over was on its "death bed," and reiterated the country's resolve to end the menace.

Ms. Gandhi visited the complex minutes before Mr. Vajpayee did. She said the Congress was with the Govern-

ment in its fight against terrorism. Terming the good voter turnout in Jammu and Kashmir Assembly elections as a "stunning slap on the face of Pakistan and the world of terrorism," Mr. Vajpayee said the attack on the Akshardham complex was a "well-planned conspiracy" borne out of "frustration." Intelligence agencies had been ordered to go into the attack in detail to unearth the powers behind the terrorists.

A visibly-moved Mr. Vajpayee, who went around the blood-stained temple complex and called on the patients in the civil hospital here, declared a special Central assistance of Rs. 50,000 to the victims in addition to that of the State Government.

Without referring to the post-Godhra violence, the Prime Minister expressed concern over violence and counter-violence in Gujarat and made an impassioned plea to the people to break the vicious cycle. "The blood stains will dry but this will ever remain a challenge to us," he said.

Mr. Vajpayee, Ms. Gandhi and Mr. Advani appreciated the action of the commando forces and the Gujarat Police in bringing a quick end to the temple siege. Ms. Gandhi went around the complex and visited the hospital before calling on the family of Sukhadiya, a Gandhinagar district Congress leader, three members of whose family were among those killed by the terrorists.



The Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, at the Akshardham temple in Gandhinagar on Wednesday. — Photo: Paras Shah

44 die in Gujarat temple terror

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NSG commandos begin operation flush-out

EYEWITNESS

'One bullet hit my hand, the other got stuck in my wallet'

Rathin Das and Vinay Menon
Gandhinagar/New Delhi, Sept 24

ARMED TO the teeth, desperados stormed Gandhinagar's Akshardham temple, owned by Gujarat's prosperous Swaminarayan sect, this evening. They had killed 44 people and injured at least 70 by the time of going to press. The National Security Guards (NSG) had taken charge of the temple complex and had launched a final assault to flush out the two — maybe more — *fidayeen*. At least 25 pilgrims were still being held hostage inside the shrine, locked up in a room.

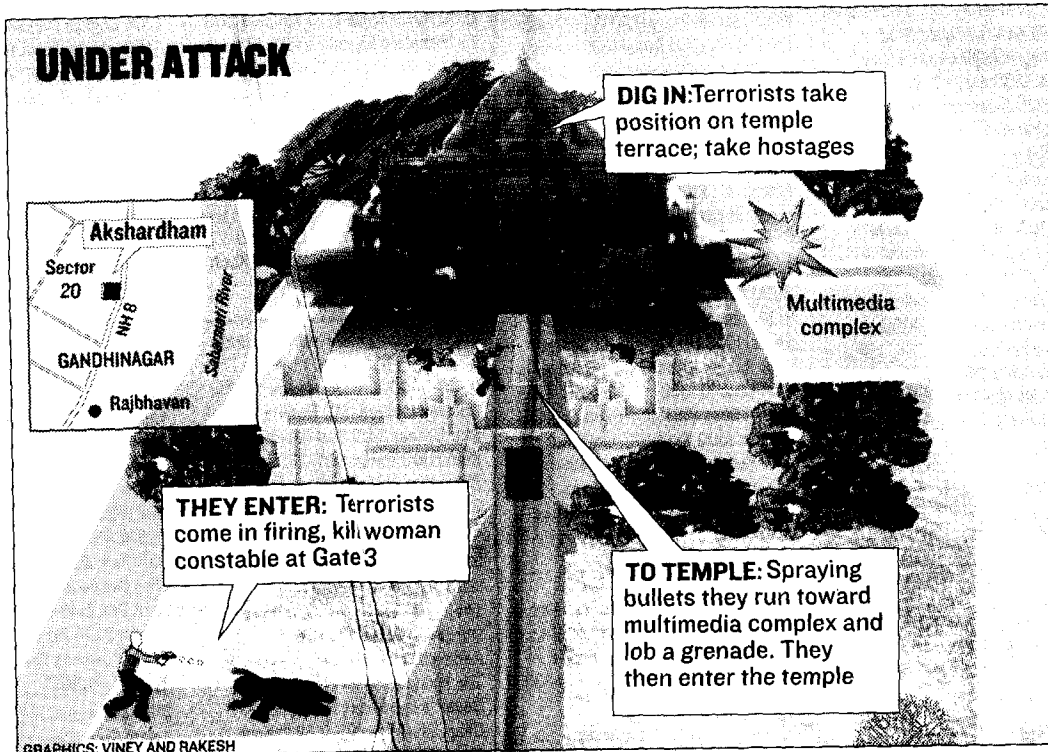
Past 3 am, the militants, whose identity was not known, were moving from room to room, trying to duck the NSG.

Siege begins

IT WAS about 15 minutes to five when the first deafening boom rang through the sprawling 23-acre temple complex, followed by a thunderous rattle of assault rifle fire.

Two terrorists, wearing monkey caps, had burst through gate No. 3 next to the amusement park to the right of the sanctum, cut across a 500-metre stretch of the lawn and lobbed a grenade at the packed hall where a multimedia show was on. At the gate lay the body of the woman constable they had blown out of their way.

For the next 10 minutes or so, the guns seemed to clack in the garden behind the temple. Indiscriminate fire that managed to find several of those trying to get away as fast as they could. At least four children couldn't.



Ripples spread

IN THE city, there was panic. The area had been sealed, but nobody seemed to know who they were battling, not even the number of the desperados. As day slid into dusk and 500-odd policemen swarmed around the complex, the first blood-soaked bodies were carried out.

The police made cars stand around the complex in a ring, headlamps turned on the grounds, lighting them up. Then they closed in on the temple, in a slow pincer movement, returning the fire they got.

On the other side, the guns had now shifted to the temple itself. The terrorists had positioned themselves on the second and third floor terraces. All the temple's doors had been locked from the inside.

Tension time

IN DELHI, LK Advani promptly got on the line to Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Male and conferred with Narendra Modi. "The country's enemies want to divert attention from the successful elections in Jammu and Kashmir," he told reporters just before emplaning

for Gandhinagar. The NSG commandos had left already.

Finger on trigger

AT 11.30 pm, the NSG had taken charge of the temple complex. The terrorised hostages cowered inside the shrine, frozen at the tip of Kalashnikovs wielded by the *fidayeen*.

On the streets of Gandhinagar lurked a new fear. In a State still recovering from the riots, cries of "Bharat Mata ki jai" couldn't have sounded too comfortable.

More reports on Pages 3 & 7

Rathin Das
Gandhinagar, September 24

SANJAY SINGH Rajput works at the Akshardham Swaminarayan temple and was near the multimedia centre inside the complex when the terrorists struck.

"I saw one of the terrorists hurtling down towards me. I noticed he was wearing a monkey cap and a grey shirt. He was firing indiscriminately and aimed a couple of rounds at me. One bullet hit me in the right hand. The other hit my wallet, which was in my back pocket. The bullet got stuck in the wallet," he said.

Rajput's presence of mind saved him. As soon as the bullets struck him, he hit the ground. "I saw him run past me into the multimedia complex, firing all the time. I seized the opportunity and ran out. The last time I looked back I saw the terrorist rushing towards the main temple."

Jitender Shah, a visitor at the temple, had it like this: "I saw the terrorists enter the complex from the recreation side and run towards the main temple. They were firing indiscriminately and a bullet caught me in the leg."

Among other eyewitnesses was a Sikh family from Rajasthan on a holiday in Gujarat. While most members of the family are still being held inside the temple, four-year-old Sebi Kaur took a bullet in the hip. She was rescued by the police.

25 SEP 2002

Home ministry is confident of Abu Salem's deportation

2/19
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Even as the country's top law enforcement authorities were busy knitting together the evidence against underworld don Abu Salem, senior home ministry officials on Monday exuded confidence that there would be no hiccups in getting Salem back from Lisbon to face the law here.

"The whole process will, however, take some time since the Portuguese authorities will have to be assured that Abu Salem will not be given the death sentence for the offences for which he is sought to be brought back to face trial in India," an official said.

In a related development, CBI director P.C. Sharma met external affairs minister Yashwant Sinha on Monday to discuss the strategy to get the fugitive home. "We are trying for his deportation as it will be easier. Moreover, extradition is usually done in the case of foreign nationals. In this case, Salem's identity has been established as an Indian," Mr Sharma told reporters.

The CBI director said the deportation of Salem, who is a "global terrorist", would be a "test-case" for the international community in the ongoing fight

against terrorism.

A high-level team will leave for Lisbon this week to get Salem, who was arrested on September 18 along with his wife Monica Bedi and associate Syed Haider, back to India.

Portugal's strict laws barring extradition in capital punishment cases can be obviated by Section 34-C of the Indian Extradition Act, 1962, said home ministry sources.

The section states, "Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law for the time being in force, where a fugitive criminal, who has committed an extradition offence punishable with death in India, is surrendered or returned by a foreign state on the request of the central government and the laws of that foreign state do not provide for a death penalty for such an offence, such fugitive criminal shall be liable for punishment of imprisonment for life only for that offence."

According to Portugal's Lusa news agency, "India on Friday asked for the suspect's extradition, but in the absence of an extradition treaty between the two countries, the Tribunal of Criminal Instruction of Lisbon on Friday maintained the detenu's preventive detention situation."

20 SEP 2002

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Govt. evolving plan to get Abu Salem

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, SEPT. 22. The Government today claimed to be evolving a strategy to claim the detained underworld don, Abu Salem, after a Portugal court reportedly ruled out his deportation to India. Deportation from Lisbon as compared to extradition is stated to be an easier alternative to get Salem to stand trial in India.

The CBI Director, P.C. Sharma, said notwithstanding the Lisbon court's ruling, a team of the agency would leave for Portugal next week in an attempt to persuade the authorities there to hand over Salem to the Indian law enforcing authorities. He, however, did not elaborate on the strategy that the CBI intended to employ to get Salem

extradited. India had requested Portugal to detain Salem till it forwarded the documents containing a request seeking him. The CBI would have to frame a strategy jointly with the Union Home and Law Ministries because of the complexities involved. In Lisbon, discussions are being held between the Indian Ambassador and the local police.

Portugal has no extradition treaty with India. Besides, as a member of the European Union, it is a signatory to a treaty forbidding it from sending back criminals to countries that have death penalty. Salem, who allegedly masterminded several extortion-related killing, besides having a hand in the 1993 Bombay blasts, could receive the death penalty if convicted

by an Indian court. The Interpol, whose active assistance was instrumental in getting Salem detained in Portugal, has reportedly advised the CBI to take steps to seek his extradition even though it is a relatively time-consuming process as compared to deportation.

Salem has been sent to a Lisbon jail for 90 days along with his companions, Monica Bedi and Sayed Haider, for having flawed travel documents.

The CBI is wary of linking Salem with the Al-Qaeda because of the absence of incontrovertible evidence in this regard. It favours putting up documents to the Lisbon authorities that only link him with several cases of murder, extortion, in-
fundation and the Bombay blasts. In an effort to get Salem

sent to India, the CBI is prepared to give an undertaking to the Lisbon court that he would not be executed even if an Indian court gave a ruling to that effect. Death penalty is handed out in the "rarest of rare" cases in India but there is a large body of legal opinion which believes that Salem's crimes are serious enough to warrant a death penalty.

According to the case being put together by the CBI, Abu Salem Qayyum Ansari, originally from an eastern Uttar Pradesh district, was a close associate of Dawood Ibrahim and is the prime absconding accused in the Bombay blasts. Several prominent film personalities have also reportedly received extortion threats from his gang members.

'Deal with terrorism on war-footing'

ROME, SEPT. 21. Islamabad should not mistake New Delhi's restraint as a sign of "weakness or indecision," the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, has said and called for greater international cooperation, especially among "threatened democracies," to combat terrorism on a war-footing.

Addressing a seminar on 'The Security Scenario' here, Mr. Fernandes said "the attempts by terrorists to disrupt the Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir illustrated the fear that democracy generated among them."

The Minister, on a five-day official visit to Italy, said Indians had been facing international terrorism for the last several decades. "Over the last decades, we have faced a particular pernicious mutation of this phenomenon — that of state-supported, cross-border terrorism. A proxy war or low intensity conflict has been waged against the Indian State and society. The resilience of our democratic polity and

strong secular structure, besides the professionalism of our armed forces, have helped us withstand these challenges," he said.

In an apparent reference to the United States treating Pakistan as a "stalwart ally" in the fight against global terrorism, Mr. Fernandes regretted that the distinction made between terrorists by the international community had dampened the war against terrorism. "It is foolish to believe that there are good terrorists. Those that use terror as a means to achieve their political ends and states that support them should be ostracised, not rewarded."

On regional security, Mr. Fernandes said Pakistan's "implacable hostility" towards India and its unwillingness to rein in cross-border terrorism was fraught with danger. "We continue to hope that Pakistan will see the damage that terrorism is doing to its own society, but we also remain prepared to deal with any further aggression." India had taken several initia-

tives to convince Pakistan about its hope for a common and peaceful future only to be rewarded each time with new forms of aggression. "We also believe that a non-hegemonic regional Asian order is essential for all countries in Asia to achieve their full potential. We would consider attempts by any power to seek hegemony over the continent a serious challenge to our security," he said.

The impressive turnout in the first phase of elections in Kashmir had falsified the Pakistani claims that Muslims of the State were Pakistanis by definition, and therefore, Kashmir was a Pakistani territory.

Giving a major boost to bilateral cooperation, India and Italy decided to hold joint defence exercises and identified many areas of defence collaboration, including joint ventures. The decision was taken at a meeting between Mr. Fernandes and his Italian counterpart, Antonio Martino.

"We have identified many ar-

reas of defence collaboration, including setting up of joint enterprises. We have also decided to hold joint exercises by the Army and by the ships of our respective Navies and Coast Guards," Mr. Fernandes said. Joint exercises in high altitude warfare would also be conducted in the Alpine region and the mountain ranges in the Himalayas by the Army of both the countries. The two Ministers also agreed to conclude a Collaboration Agreement, presently being examined by the two Defence General Staff, that would pave the way for fresh initiatives like staff training, exchange of experiences and joint exercises.

"There is a shared interest to intensify the existing collaborations and to find further forms of participation of Italian industries in the modernisation plans of the Indian Armed Forces, as also through proper synergetic modalities with interested Indian firms," a statement released by the Indian Embassy in Rome said. — UNI

22 SEP 2001

THE HINDU

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ANOTHER MILESTONE FOR ISRO ✓

THE SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH of the Metsat on a Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle from the newly-named Satish Dhawan Space Centre is yet another landmark achievement for the Indian Space Research Organisation. Once the satellite with its high resolution camera is moved to its geostationary orbit, it should provide substantial additional meteorological information on South Asia and its environs. With Metsat, a satellite that will be used exclusively to generate images for meteorological analysis, the ability of the Indian Meteorological Department to successfully keep track of rapidly developing weather patterns is likely to be considerably enhanced. The absence of a weather satellite in geostationary orbit was cited as one reason why the IMD could not estimate with any degree of accuracy the path or intensity of the devastating cyclone which struck Orissa in 1999.

There are two special features of the latest ISRO launch. The first is, of course, the launch of India's first exclusive meteorological satellite. Until now, weather-related information was obtained from the ISRO satellites in the Insat series, which have all been multipurpose satellites where the main focus has been on providing communication capacity. While such multipurpose satellites made sense in the early years of ISRO's satellite programme — when the need for such services was itself debated — it appears that it is now in the organisation's interests to launch satellites devoted solely to providing communication capacity. These satellites would contain many more communications transponders, which ISRO could offer at more competitive rates to potential users than if it had to also carry a camera for meteorological purposes. The Metsat will not fetch ISRO any revenue though a stand-alone weather satellite provides priceless non-commercial information. But by separating the meteorological from the communications services, ISRO has the chance of realising the considerable commercial potential in the growing demand for

communications capacity on satellites. The second unique feature of the launch that has sent up the Metsat is the adaptation of the PSLV, which is normally used to put satellites in a polar orbit, to send the 1,060 kg satellite into a geostationary transfer orbit. Launches for geostationary transfer orbits, the intermediate stage to the geostationary position when the satellite matches the Earth's rotation and is therefore at a fixed relative point in the sky, are usually conducted by a Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle. But the GSLV is more economical for heavier satellites, not for relatively lightweight ones like the Metsat. ISRO's successful adaptation of the PSLV (whose launch costs are considerably less than the GSLV) for sending the weather satellite into the geostationary transfer orbit is an indication of its ability to innovate according to the demands of the situation. The organisation's involvement in the launch of weather satellites does not end with the successful send-up of the Metsat. In a couple of years, ISRO plans to launch a two-tonne exclusive weather satellite, the Insat-3D, which will then add substantially to the IMD's information gathering capacity.

An additional advantage of having Metsat in the sky is that the IMD will no longer have to use information gathered by other satellites like Europe's Meteosat-5. While the earlier Very High Resolution Radiometers, the cameras that generate images, on the Insat satellites did not function perfectly, the improvements that have since been made make it likely that the IMD will now get the best possible information. The Metsat has an improved VHRR that will beam a stream of images from its geostationary orbit. The range of successful launches that ISRO has conducted in recent years means that it is now ready to actively solicit contracts in the satellite launch business. ISRO has already launched a couple of satellites on commercial considerations, but given its increasingly enviable record these can only be the first of many more contracts.

14 SEP 2002

PSLV with satellite launched

Statesman News Service

SRIHARIKOTA, Sept. 12. — Isro's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C4) lifted off from here at 3.55 p.m. today, carrying a unique meteorological satellite, which it released 20 minutes later. Signaling an important milestone in the history of the country's space programme, the launch would now enable India to undertake a lunar mission.

"The mission is related to taking a satellite weighing 1,050 kg (including 520 kg of fuel) to the Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit... It would enable us to put an exclusive meteorological satellite (METSAT) into a lunar orbit of 100 km above the moon. So, you can see the tremendous capability we have now demonstrated in today's mission," Dr K

Kasturirangan, Isro chairman, told reporters soon after the launch from the Shar launchpad, about 110 km north of Chennai. The PSLV-C4-METSAT mission cost Isro Rs 180 crore, he said.

The METSAT carries a high resolution radiometer capable of imaging the earth in the visible, thermal infrared and water vapour bands. It also carries a data relay transponder for collecting data from unattended meteorological platforms. METSAT would relay the data sent by these platforms to the meteorological data utilisation centre in New Delhi. It would provide scientists with weather images every half-an-hour.

The METSAT is now orbiting the earth in GTO with a perigee (nearest point to earth) of 218 km and an apogee (farthest point to

earth) of 34,700 kms with an orbital inclination of 17.7 degrees with respect to the equator. This is the first time that PSLV is being used to launch a satellite into GTO. In all its previous flights, PSLV was used to place Indian remote sensing satellites and other auxiliary payloads in polar orbits.

Isro will now explore the global market for PSLV. About "80 customers" are going to make satellites in the next 10 years and this would mean a "lush PSLV market" for India, Dr Kasturirangan said. "With today's success, we are closer to potential customers."

Soon after METSAT separated from the launch vehicle, the Isro chairman complimented the team of scientists from the various space research organisations for their contribution to the mission's success.

Maligned MiGs

51-A
21/8
The Russians are "hurting"

There would be some truth to the defence ministry's contention that "commercial considerations" were at play when the head of the Russian arms industry's export house charged India with buying sub-standard spares for its MiG aircraft. Which, he opined, could have contributed to the IAF's unenviable accident rate. Now that the Russian industry is on the mend it would seek to re-establish itself as the sole supplier and eliminate rivals from other erstwhile Soviet states. It would be equally true that the designers and producers of the many varieties of combat aircraft that bear the MiG label are worried that the reputation of their products is being tarnished by the frequent crashes. Particularly of the MiG-21, universally recognised as a thoroughbred, but which is often dubbed a flying coffin in India. That description may be both inaccurate and exaggerated, but some of the dirt always sticks. Low quality spares, however, would not be the prime cause for accidents because those mishaps occurred even before the Soviet Union and its military-industry complex collapsed, and India was hard-pressed for spares to keep its MiGs airworthy.

India should feel relieved if the Russian industry acquires a commercial outlook. Few question the quality and durability of Russian military hardware but almost all those who are involved in the defence maintenance effort complain bitterly of the difficulties involved in obtaining after-sales service and support. The defence ministry has been working hard to ensure that all fresh contracts are executed only after product support is guaranteed. Now that it is paying in hard currency it can strike a harder bargain than in the era of the rupee-rouble barter. India will remain one of Russian industry's major patrons, hopefully the military supplies will shift from being politically-driven to genuinely commercial transactions. If the Russians are unhappy about India buying spares from other CIS suppliers they should seek to improve on their competitors commercially. Market forces now call the shots.

Srinjoy Chowdhury's report, "Atomic energy department to be consulted on nuclear use" in *The Statesman* of 22 August revealed some unrealistic mindsets of India's establishment on the subject of nuclear warfare. The sore feature in the report is, the department of atomic energy will have a major say in the employment of nuclear weapons including arming and activating these, with the National Command Authority in overall control, assisted by a plethora of advisories. No attention seems to have been devoted to the most vital aspect in the conduct of nuclear warfare namely, the time factor.

A parallel comparison would be interesting. At the height of the Nato-Warsaw Pact nuclear eyeballing during the 1970s and the 1980s, there was a move to add time as a new principle of war to the existing 10. Such was the importance of this factor.

The nuclear configured battlefield warranted so and the universal revolution in military affairs exercise that has been current for some years now acknowledges this as a requisite. Let us check a wargame of an expected nuclear battle between India and Pakistan. Assuming that Pakistan's activities in disrupting the Jammu and Kashmir polls cause an irrepressible fallout, both countries go to war. Though the entire Indo-Pak front will come alive, only tactical thrust-and-parry operations will prevail in the Jammu and Kashmir and the Punjab sectors.

Strategic offensives will be played out in the Rajasthan sector. A conventionally armed, more powerful India as obtaining, launches a two-corps offensive under its Southern Army Command in Rajasthan across the international border, heading for Bawalpur. How will Pakistan respond to this threat?

Pakistan will find that with its purely conventional forces it is in no position to stop this prestigious town from falling into India's hands. Loss of Bawalpur will mean a huge humiliation, besides offering India's forces an avenue for deeper penetration into (West) Punjab. Islamabad, therefore, decides to bring down a nuclear strike on our forces while they are trying to invest Bawalpur. In accordance with nuclear battle procedures, Pakistan will first issue a strikewarning message to its troops.

This is a coded radio transmission which contains such specifics as the time of strike (known as N Hour), the approximate point of strike (known as Ground Zero), the yield of the warhead(s), and connected instructions for the Pakistani troops at the frontline to take preventive steps to minimise the effect of the strike on them.

The Southern Command, on its part, is also aware of this battle procedure and its special signals surveillance unit has been monitoring the electronic spectrum assiduously, finally picking

Time India's biggest enemy in N-warfare

During the Nato-Warsaw Pact nuclear eyeballing in the 1970s and the 1980s, there was a move to add time as a new principle of war to the existing 10. The nuclear configured battlefield warranted so, explains JK DUTT, while corroborating the point with a wargame of a nuclear battle between India and Pakistan

up the coded strikewarning message.

The time factor thereafter notches up its predominance. A realistic time disposition is *sine qua non*, so let us proceed accordingly. The Southern Command takes 20 minutes to crack the code and decipher the text of the strikewarning message, to find that Pakistan's N Hour will materialise in 90 minutes from the moment of the strikewarning transmission. Removing 20 minutes from this which was used up by the Southern Command to decode, 70 minutes remain.

The GOC-in-C, Southern Command does an assessment, known in military parlance as an appreciation of the situation, and comes to the



A Pakistani Brigadier zooms in on Indian positions along the Line of Control at Chakoti, 58 km south-east of Muzaffarabad, capital of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

verdict that the only way to safeguard his two corps from total decimation is by resorting to a pre-emptive first strike on Pakistan's nuclear launch systems deployed opposite him; he takes another 20 minutes to carry out this appreciation. Thus we have 50 minutes at hand now.

The GOC-in-C then gets on to his hotline and talks directly to our Prime Minister, requesting his sanction for a pre-emptive first strike. This naturally will override our declared no-first-use policy. The GOC-in-C further informs the Prime Minister that the flight of our pre-emptive salvo will take 10 minutes. Keeping a reserve of another 10 minutes for exigencies, the Prime Minister has 30 minutes to take a command

decision. These 30 minutes include multiple channel video discussion that the Prime Minister is likely to undertake with various personae and the final orders that he will give to the GOC-in-C, Southern Command.

The greater the number of interlocutors in the Prime Minister's discussion, the more precious time will be consumed. Hence "extras" must go!

Frankly, this time plot is an optimistic one. In view of the proximity of the forces of both adversaries, it would be prudent for us to reckon on Pakistan's N Hour coming on 60 minutes - not 90 - after its strikewarning transmission. An examination of the time plot shows that there is just no question of following the nuclear

engagement procedure as stated in *The Statesman's* report, should we wish to defeat Pakistan.

The Southern Command will get wiped out if we even think on the lines of such a ponderous and idealistic procedure. Objectively speaking, our biggest enemy is not Pakistan but time. Truth to tell, what we are facing was met equally by Nato in its initial stages of nuclear warfare planning. General Sir John Hackett, one-time commander of Nato's crucial northern army group, highlighted these difficulties in his special summaries after a series of nuclear-oriented manoeuvres.

Nato concluded that unless it pared the time factor down to the barest minimum, the Warsaw Pact would have captured (then) West Germany well before Nato could react. Some pessimists even feared a second Dunkirk if the Warsaw Pact did not stop at the Belgium-Luxembourg border!

Hence, it was agreed that though the US President had the last word in ordering nukes, the field commander at army group level would actuate the nuclear lever based on his judgment, in a highly streamlined N-SOP (nuclear standing operating procedure). Moralistic postures were brushed aside. It is similarly imperative for us to streamline our own N-SOP to a very fine measure. Whatever inputs are considered essential should be absorbed now in our N-SOP, after having evaluated them threadbare. We must not induct cumbrousness.

The stricture to be stringently adopted must be, other than the Chief of Defence Staff, none else should be on the hotline. The firing matrix of nuclear arms must be pegged with the GOC-in-C and his prerogative will be final. There cannot be any substitute or modification over a one-to-one between the Prime Minister and the GOC-in-C.

This is the principal difference in respect of the higher operational command link in a nuclear war and a non nuclear one. In the latter case, the GOC-in-C will communicate with no higher authority than his Army chief.

There is no gainsaying the decisive weightage of the time factor on the nuclear battlefield. Atmospheric can never hold the striker to ransom; equipping our troops with the proper gear is the answer, not waiting for our department of atomic energy to clear a strike after checking imponderables like wind direction.

We must incorporate an uncomplicated methodology with the accent on time management encompassing the span from the green light to the red button because what is at stake is survival. New Delhi's guideline should be that well-tutored acronym, KISS — Keep It Simple, Stupid!

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

Pakistan has told militants to disrupt J&K polls: George

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Even as defence minister George Fernandes held that the government had "innumerable" radio intercepts to show that militants had



G. Fernandes

been instructed from across the border to disrupt the coming Jammu and Kashmir assembly elections, the army said it had foiled three major infiltration bids in the last 24 hours.

"Eight terrorists were killed in the infiltration bids. Two of these encounters took place in the Machal sector and the third in the Tangdhar sector. A large quantity of arms, ammunition, bombs, rockets and explosives were recovered from them," said an army officer.

These infiltration bids come soon after another major one was foiled in the Kupwara sector on Saturday night, in which seven militants were killed by the army. "This shows that ISI-backed

militant outfits in Pakistan are desperate to infiltrate a large number of terrorists into J&K to step up violence in the run-up to the polls," said the officer.

There was a 20 to 30 per cent drop in infiltration across the Line of Control (LoC) over the last few months. But with the electoral process now being set in motion in J&K, Pakistan has once again stepped up efforts to push in mercenaries. "With an estimated 3,000 militants already inside Indian territory, pushing in more would hardly make any difference," Mr Fernandes said in a television interview.

He said that though some violence was inevitable, the army would take adequate steps and act decisively to foil any attempt to derail the elections. "Elections will be free and fair. The government is determined to ensure that these polls are violence free," said Mr Fernandes.

Mr Fernandes said that it was very difficult to come to any definitive conclusion about whether Islamabad would stick to its words and keep off the election process in J&K.

21 AUG 2002

Kashmir to Assam, hear your cell beep

OUR BUREAU

Aug. 17: The Centre today threw open the militancy-ravaged Northeast and Jammu and Kashmir to mobile phone services, discarding the defence establishment's argument that it will lead to a spurt in insurgency.

Till now, mobile services were available only in Guwahati and Shillong in the Northeast while there was a blanket ban in Jammu and Kashmir.

Minister for communications Pramod Mahajan announced the Centre's decision here today and said the services would be available in Jammu and Kashmir after the Assembly polls.

But there is a seven-step process before a cellular service can be launched.

■ Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) has to sign a licence agreement with the department of telecommunications. (BSNL is the only operator in Jammu and Kashmir.)

■ Project planning: At this stage, it is determined where the network can be established within the circle.

■ Site identification: This will pick the sites where the base stations can be established. A large cellular network like Airtel in Delhi has over 300 base stations.

■ Obtaining microwave access frequency from Wireless Planning Commission at 15 gigahertz. The commission allocates the frequency spectrum to all private players.

■ Frequency Planning: This will determine the frequency band that the cellular operator will use. The frequency band allocation is strictly monitored by the government and a large number of bands are allocated for defence purposes and civil aviation.

■ Application to the Standing Advisory Committee on Frequency Allocation that has to be cleared by the ministry of communications and the Wireless Planning Commission.

■ The home ministry and the internal se-

curity committee, which comprises representatives from the three armed forces, will have to give their approval.

A senior telecom ministry official said: "This takes a minimum of a year's time, sometimes two years."

"Even if the licences are given and the service is launched, it can be taken away the next day," he added.

The licence conditions for cellular operators stipulate: "The licensee shall ensure that the cellsite or radio transmitters, wherever located, shall be at a distance of 10 km from international border of India. The transmitters and cellsite will work in a fashion that any signal or signals emanating therefrom, fade out when nearing or about to cross international borders and also become unusable with a reasonable distance across such border."

"The authority (government) will have an absolute right to take over the entire services and networks of the licensee

with or without revoking, terminating, suspending the licence in the interest of national security..."

But Mahajan brushed aside the security concerns over allowing cellular services in the regions. "If the need arises, we can always monitor cellphone calls. We have an effective monitoring system," he said.

The minister had made a case for the Northeast and Jammu and Kashmir in meetings of the Cabinet Committee on Security. "I made it clear that security concerns cannot be the reason for depriving the people," Mahajan said.

The Northeastern states had been crying foul over the defence establishment's opposition to the introduction of mobile phone services.

The Mizoram government had questioned the logic behind the security concerns when the state was being looked upon as a role model for peace after a period of turmoil.

Nedumaran held under POTA

By Our Special Correspondent

J-D & N deems

CHENNAI, AUG. 1. Tamil Nadu police today detained another key LTTE supporter and Tamil Nationalist Movement leader, P. Nedumaran, under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA).

According to Mr. Nedumaran's family members, a 'Q' branch police team came to their Mylapore residence at 9.50 p.m. and informed him about his arrest under the POTA.

The arrest is purportedly for organising a pro-LTTE meeting in the city on April 13 to urge the Centre to provide medical aid for the LTTE's political adviser, Balasingam.

2 AUG 2002

Advani rules out international observers for Kashmir polls

11-2-28
TIMES NEWS NETWORK 9-08 N Delhi

New Delhi: Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani on Thursday ruled out the role of international observers for the Jammu and Kashmir elections, as suggested by US Secretary of State Colin Powell. However, he insisted that all steps would be taken to ensure free and fair elections in the state.

Replying to questions posed by Rajya Sabha members at the end of a short duration discussion on J&K, Mr Advani said, "We do not need any certificate from outsiders. J&K is an inseparable part of India. The Election Commission has been requested to see that the polls are not only free and fair, but also seen to be free and fair." He said that state chief minister Farooq Abdullah had promised to give permission to citizens, NGOs or even ambassadors to come and see the elections.

Refuting the opposition charge that the government was excessively depending on the US and the international community in Kashmir affairs, Mr Advani said, "Matters relating to elections, devolution of more powers or the proposed administrative set-up in Kashmir are exclusively our concern. Only the area of cross-border terrorism has an international dimension." He said this was still continuing.

On terrorism too, he said perceptions differed. He said most foreigners saw cross-border terrorism as infiltration from across the border and that the problem

would be over if it stopped. "Cross-border terrorism is an instrument of state policy adopted by Pakistan for the past 30 years against India. And it cannot be done away with until the whole infrastructure built by Pakistan is dismantled," Mr Advani said. Just like the three open wars in the past, India would emerge victorious against Pakistan even in this covert war, he said.

Mr Advani's remarks echoed those made by Congress's Ashwani Kumar, who had said in his maiden speech to the House on Wednesday that "national security cannot be a matter of partisan politics". He had warned Pakistan that India would face the challenge.

Mr Advani tried to dispel the opposition fears over J&K's trifurcation, as demanded by the RSS. The government, he said, was "totally opposed to such a policy. This would go against the basic principles of secularism".

J&K has been a "symbol of India's secular" dimension, Mr Advani said, quoting Jawaharlal Nehru.

However, Mr Advani added that there was need for giving more powers to the Jammu and Ladakh regions by the state government.

He appreciated the initiatives taken by former law minister Ram Jethmalani in talking to separatist groups in J&K in order to resolve the issue. "If the Marxists were to take such an initiative, I would welcome it," Mr Advani said in reply to questions raised by CPM leader Nilotpal Basu who wanted to know Mr Jethmalani's locus standi in taking up such a task. /

No risk from lost camera: Scientist

FROM OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

Chennai, July 20: Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) chairman Anil Kakodkar today allayed fears of a missing radioactive device encased in a gamma ray radiography camera causing "skin burns". The Iridium-192 device was misplaced when it was being transported by employees of a Calcutta-based company from Lakhimpur to Digboi in Assam a few days ago.

"It (the radioactive device) is a very small source and it is not of any significance. We will retrieve it as early as possible," Kakodkar told reporters after a function at the M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation here. The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) had promptly got in touch with the local authorities and the police to trace the radioactive substance, he added.

Kakodkar said several industries, including those in refining and petrochemicals, used the device for "industrial radiography". It was a "small pencil-like substance" placed inside a shielded camera and "as long as no one fiddles with it, there is no problem", Kakodkar said.

Stating that the AERB had the tools to detect radioactive devices even from a distance, Kakodkar assured that the nuclear establishment would try its best to prevent the recurrence of such incidents in future.

Nearly nine years ago, a US drilling company sub-contracting for ONGC was caught in a similar quandary in Chennai when a disgruntled employee stole some radioactive devices from the firm and dumped them into the Cooum river snaking through the city.

The AERB retrieved the devices from the shallow river after a massive search operation. Kakodkar assured that there was no cause for alarm in this case too.

The AERB kept a full inventory of all the radioactive devices in use within and outside the department, including for commercial and medical purposes. Hence, there was no risk of any such device being "misused", he said.

The AEC chief today released a unique study on land resources of Kudankulam, Vijayapatti and Erukkandurai villages in Radhapuram taluk of Tirunelveli district, where a nuclear power plant is coming up with Russian assistance. The first copy of the report, released in the presence of eminent agriculture scientist M.S. Swaminathan, was received by agriculture minister R. Jeevanantham.

Denying a report originating

from London that accused India of making a "dirty bomb" with nuclear wastes stored in its power plants, Kakodkar said "the report was wrong". The "general statement" issued by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) had referred to some 100 countries pursuing radioactive activities and India had not been singled out, he added.

On the contrary, he pointed out, the radioactive protection infrastructure in India was well developed and one of the best in the world with extensive regulatory mechanisms and rules besides advisory mechanisms. "It simply cannot happen," he shot back when questioned on fears of nuclear waste falling into the hands of any terrorist group.

Asked if international pressure had been piled on India after Pokhran II to subject its nuclear facilities to more safeguards and inspections, Kakodkar said the process "has nothing to do with Pokhran". "There is a World Association of Nuclear Operators and they review our nuclear plants."

But there were constraints on technology, he said. "If someone wants to look at the safety of our nuclear power plants, we have no problem interacting with anybody. But those who insist on safety should also give us access to new technology," Kakodkar said.

THE TELEGRAPH

21 JUL 2002

It's misuse of POTA: Fernandes

By Our Tamil Nadu Bureau

CHENNAI, JULY 19. Defending the provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) and the actions of the MDMK general secretary, Vaiko, at the same time, the Defence Minister and NDA convenor, George Fernandes, today claimed that POTA was misused in the case of Mr. Vaiko.

The pro-LTTE speech in Madurai did not attract the provisions of POTA and, therefore, this arrest was a violation, Mr. Fernandes said after calling on Mr. Vaiko at the Vellore jail.

"I do not think what has happened to Mr. Vaiko falls within the ambit of POTA. He should not have been here (in the jail). POTA has been violated in this case (the arrest of Mr. Vaiko). The NDA has already made its stand very clear that this was not the purpose of POTA," he told mediapersons in Vellore.

For now, the Centre had no plans to intervene in the issue. Nor was any action being contemplated against the Tamil Nadu Government, which, according to him, had misused POTA.

"Mr. Vaiko is a revolutionary. He does not need our support or anyone's help."

Asked about corrective measures to prevent "misuse" of POTA, he said "I am of the opinion that at some point of time, the courts will have to decide on this."

Cancels appointments with CM, DMK chief

On his return to Chennai, Mr. Fernandes did not keep two appointments, one with the Chief



The Defence Minister, George Fernandes, coming out of the Vellore Central Jail after meeting the MDMK leader, Vaiko, on Friday. — Photo: A. Muralidharan

Minister, Jayalalithaa, and another, with the DMK president and long-time friend, M. Karunanidhi.

The "official explanation" for the cancellation of the meeting with Ms. Jayalalithaa, was that Mr. Fernandes was "summoned" by the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, immediately to Delhi. Ms. Jayalalithaa said that Mr. Fernandes had sought the meeting, which was later called off on his receiving the summons from the Prime Minister.

Mr. Fernandes had close to two hours of free time at Vellore, and one hour in Chennai, before he left for Delhi. MDMK sources say Mr. Vaiko would have been uncomfortable with a meeting between the two as it would have given the impres-

sion that Mr. Fernandes was pleading his case with Ms. Jayalalithaa.

The "summons" was also cited as the explanation for cancelling the meeting with Mr. Karunanidhi.

In a related development, the MDMK has written to the Madras High Court Registrar stating that Mr. Vaiko and the party had "nothing to do" with the public interest litigations filed against his POTA detention. "It appears that these PILs could have been filed for seeking publicity," the MDMK's legal wing secretary, Devadas, said in a statement here. Apparently, Mr. Vaiko is sticking to his stand that he would not seek bail, and that he was against any political intervention on his behalf by the NDA.

20 JUL 2002

THE HINDU

ATOMIC BOARD SOUNDS 'DISASTER' ALERT AFTER ASSAM FRIGHT

Iridium camera missing

Statesman News Service

MUMBAI/GUWAHATI, July 19. — A gama radiography camera containing a radioactive source went missing on 17 July while in transit from Lakimpur and Digboi in Assam. The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board today sounded an alert on the missing camera, owned by a Kolkata-based company Radiographic Inspection Services.

The AERB secretary, Dr KS Parthasarathy, told **The Statesman** that the camera (Amertest-660, serial number 5857) contains Iridium-192 of strength 19.7 Curie. It is used for detecting cracks or deformities in sensitive instruments invisible to the naked eye.

The Radiographic Inspection

Services has filed a complaint with police at Jorhat-I. Mr Gautam Dev of the Radiographics Inspection Service, who was carrying the camera, told police he was travelling from Lakhimpur to Digboi on a Lakhimpur-Tinsukia bus on the night of 16 July.

The rear wheels of the bus had come off at Jamuguri in Sonitpur, and passengers were shifted to another bus. Mr Dev had dinner at Jakkhalabanda in Nagaon before boarding the second bus. On reaching Jorhat, he discovered the bag with the camera was missing. He told police that he was certain that he had brought the bag along with him to the second bus and put it in the luggage hold with the knowledge of one of the bus staff.

Mr Dev was being interrogated at the time of this report. He

told police the bag had to be found as otherwise there could be a "disaster" if someone mishandled the camera. The camera was, however, in the "lock" position when the bag was lost.

The AERB secretary accused the Kolkata-based firm of being callous. Dr Parthasarathy said AERB this afternoon decided not to assign any sensitive job to Radiographic Inspection Services.

The camera is a shielded container made of depleted uranium, weighing about 24 kg. It is sturdy, cannot be easily tampered with and will not cause significant hazard to persons so long as the radioactive source is inside. It also does not pose any radiological danger, Dr Parthasarathy said. A "danger" sign and the radiation symbol is displayed on it.

Prof. Jyotsna Chatterjee, nuclear physicist at Saha Institute of Nuclear Physics, said: "19.7 Curie is a pretty strong radiation and can cause skin cancer if a human body remains exposed to the radiation for a considerable period of time," SNS adds from Kolkata. She, however, said exposure for a few minutes was unlikely to cause any long-term harm to those exposed.

"The extent of damage also depends upon the energy level of the radioactive source. An exposure outside two to three metres would normally not cause harm because the air-shield would dissipate emitting rays." Asked for what other purposes the gama radiography camera can be used, she said, "radiation from gamma sources is used for cancer therapy".

Oppn parties cry foul over arrest of Vaiko

Our Political Bureau

NEW DELHI 17 JULY

THE non-Congress Opposition on Wednesday demanded the immediate repeal of Pota for ensuring the release of MDMK leader Vaiko.

In an impromptu debate on Mr Vaiko's arrest in Tamil Nadu under Pota, during the Zero Hour in the Lok Sabha, the Opposition, barring Congress and AIADMK, said the law was being misused against political parties and its activists. They, however, disapproved of the speeches made by Vaiko in his public meetings in support of the banned LTTE.

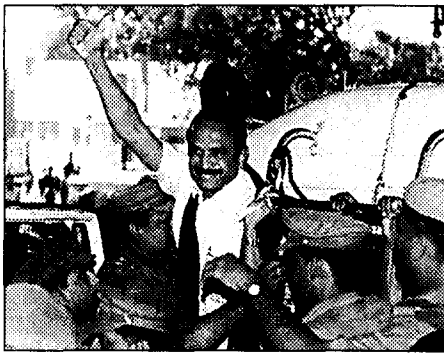
Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav, who cautioned Tamil Nadu chief minister Jayalalithaa

against "misusing" the law to book political adversaries, said the NDA should re-consider provisions of the new anti-terror law. Demanding the scrapping of Pota, Mr Yadav said the Congress had still not recovered from using stringent laws against politicians during the emergency. "Indira Gandhi, the most powerful leader, had to suffer in the aftermath of the Emergency and Jayalalithaa is not more powerful than her," he said.

Congress member Mani Shankar Aiyer said Mr Vaiko came out in defence of the Tamil Nadu government's decision and

said the state administration had violated provisions under Pota. "Mr Vaiko violated law by supporting the LTTE. It was now for Mr Vaiko to plead his innocence before the judiciary," he said. Asserting that his party had bitterly opposed the legislation, Mr Aiyer said the statute could not be amended just to save one person who chose a forum outside the House to vent his views on LTTE.

Initiating the debate, MDMK member C. Krishnam said



VAIKO: IN THE DOCK

Vaiko's arrest was politically-motivated and demanded his immediate release. NDA constituent Samata Party member Prabhunath Singh said the state government's action smacked of political vengeance and sought Centre's intervention in securing the release of Mr Vaiko.

Defending the arrest of MDMK leader Vaiko, AIADMK leader P.H. Pandian said Vaiko had violated section 21 (3) of Pota which barred anyone from addressing a public meeting in support of a banned organisation and maintained he should now undergo the judicial process.

7 0 JUL 2002

Poll Bill silent on candidates' assets

Anil Anand
New Delhi, July 15

THE GOVERNMENT'S draft Bill on poll reforms has ignored the Election Commission's directive that candidates must declare their assets when they file nomination.

The first version of the Law Ministry's draft Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, 2002, hadn't completely rejected the poll panel demand. It had merely watered it down, saying only elected representatives needed to reveal their assets — before the Speaker or chairman of their House.

Now the Ministry has had a

rethink and decided to put on hold the clause on politicians' movable and immovable assets. A comprehensive Bill on this will be separately introduced after wider consultations among political parties. "The Bill dealing with the personal and family assets of contestants is also under process," a Ministry source said.

The draft Bill, though, lists certain "heinous" crimes which would disqualify a candidate from contesting, but there are three conditions to that.

One, the "heinous" crimes do not include an attempt to murder to avoid political victimisation. Two, there should be at

least two such charges against the candidate, framed in two courts. Three, the charges should have been framed at least six months before the candidate files nomination.

The whittling down of the poll panel's conditions means the candidates now need to fill in a two-page form instead of signing the 40-page affidavit envisaged by the Election Commission.

Some concession has been made to the voter's right to know a candidate's antecedents. The proposed law requires the candidate to submit an affidavit at the time of filing nomination, stating whether he/she is ac-

cused of any offence punishable with a two-year jail term or more in a case where charges have been framed against him/her by a court. The Returning Officer will display the affidavit at a conspicuous place in his office for the information of the electorate.

The Bill lists the "heinous" crimes: Offences committed under sections of the IPC, Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, and Pota which relate to murder, abduction, rape, dacoity, possession of banned substances or unauthorised weapons and involvement in terrorist activities or waging war against the State.

Any candidate furnishing false information or concealing facts relating to such cases while filing nomination is liable to be disqualified from the membership of the House he/she has been elected to.

Political parties are expected to voice their objections, if any, to the draft Bill by next Sunday. Later, an all-party meeting will be called to ratify the legislation. It will then be placed for the Cabinet's approval.

Minister of State for Law Ravi Shanker Prasad, who drew up the legislation with Law Minister Jana Krishnamurthi, said the Government's goal is to check criminalisation of politics.

ALL GUM, NO TEETH

- Candidates need not declare their moveable and immovable assets under the draft poll Bill
- Those who have committed certain 'heinous crimes' will not qualify, but 'attempt to murder' has been excluded from the list
- Candidates will have to fill only a two-page form on their criminal background; EC had asked for a 40-page affidavit

16 JUL 2002

CCS condemns Jammu massacre

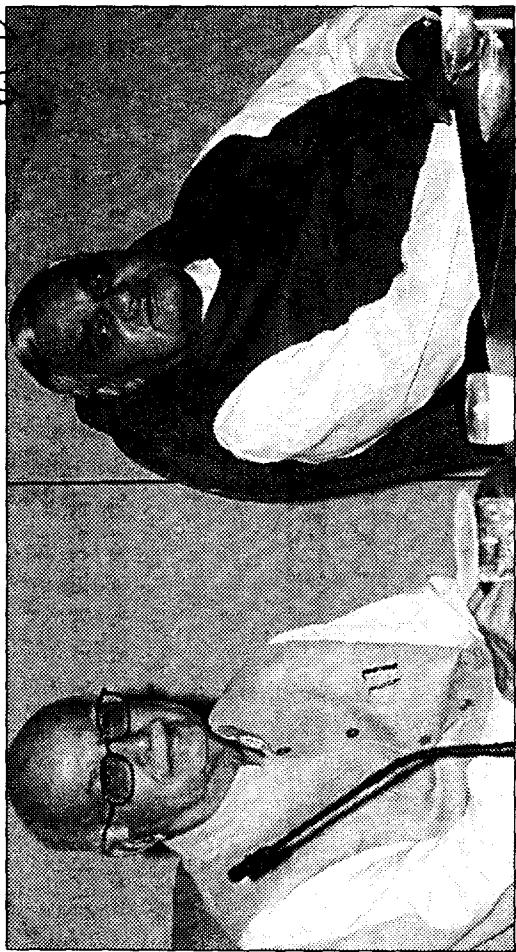
New Delhi
14 JULY

OUTRAGED over the Jammu massacre by terrorists that left at least 27 dead, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee on Sunday convened an emergency meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), which strongly condemned the "horrendous" incident.

"The government will take a view of the situation after making a detailed assessment and take Parliament, the monsoon session of which is beginning tomorrow (Monday), into confidence," deputy prime minister L.K. Advani told reporters after a two-hour meeting of the CCS.

Mr Advani, who left for Jammu along with Jammu & Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah shortly after the meeting, said he would make an on-the-spot assessment of the situation and discuss the issue with the Prime Minister and defence minister George Fernandes on his return late on Sunday.

Asked who was behind the killings, Mr Advani said he would be able to comment on this only



PLANNING THE NEXT MOVE: Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee and deputy prime minister L.K. Advani at the emergency meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security in New Delhi on Sunday. — AP

after the facts were ascertained. He said according to information available so far among the 27 innocents killed, 13 were women and one child, all belonging to the poorer sections of the society. Investigations were underway into all aspects of the incident.

The Jammu incident was dis-

cussed at length at the CCS meeting, which was attended by Mr Fernandes, external affairs minister Yashwant Sinha, finance minister Jaswant Singh, defence secretary Subir Dutta, IB chief K.P. Singh, RAW head V Sud and other top officials.

Asked if the government stuck

to the view that infiltration from across the border had gone down, Mr Advani said the government would be able to give its opinion only after a thorough assessment. Official sources indicated that Mr Advani would make a statement in Parliament on the issue.

— PTI

US, Britain denounce J&K attack

London
14 JULY

THE United States and Britain, whose top leaders are to visit India later this month, on Sunday condemned the killing of 27 innocent people in Kasminagar in Jammu by militants, terming it as "horrific." Meanwhile, Russia asked Pakistan to stop infiltration into Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan also condemned the killing as a "terrorist attack" and said it was aimed at escalating Indo-Pak tension.

British foreign secretary Jack Straw, who will arrive in New Delhi on July 19 as part of international efforts to de-escalate Indo-Pak tension, said: "I am horrified at this attack on innocent civilians."

Expressing deep concern, the United States said: "We strongly condemn any acts of terrorism and any terrorist attacks." — PTI

Advani to brief Parliament today

By Our New Delhi Bureau

NEW DELHI, JULY 14. As India pointed the finger at Pakistan for the latest terrorist carnage in Jammu last evening, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) met here to review the situation.

The Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, who flew to Jammu this afternoon for an "on-the-spot" assessment after the CCS meeting, said the Government would inform Parliament tomorrow of its view on the killings and its implications. Both in New Delhi and in Jammu, the Deputy Prime Minister said the Government would assess the situation after his visit to Jammu and take Parliament into confidence.

On his return to New Delhi from Jammu, Mr. Advani briefed the Prime Minister, A.B. Vajpayee, about his findings on the situation and the mood of the people.

Speaking to correspondents after a two-hour meeting of the CCS at the Prime Minister's official residence, Mr. Advani said the Cabinet Committee had strongly condemned last evening's incident. He described the latest killings as the second "bhayanak (horrendous)" attack after the May 14 Kaluchak massacre.

Mr. Advani said that as per information available here, among the 27 killed in the attack were 13 women and a child and most

of them were poor labourers. An investigation into the incident was on.

Among those who attended the meeting were the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, the Finance Minister, Jaswant Singh, the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, K.C. Pant, the Cabinet Secretary, T.R. Prasad, intelligence chiefs and senior bureaucrats. The Minister of State for Home, I.D. Swami, said separately that the Lashkar-e-Taiba or the Jaish-i-Muhammad could be behind the incident.

Straw expresses shock

Going by the pattern of the killings, the sources pointed the finger at Pakistan, though Mr. Sinha, in a conversation with the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, said investigations into the incident were on.

Mr. Straw, who will be in New Delhi on July 19, telephoned Mr. Sinha and "conveyed his deep shock and outrage" on the terrorist attack. The British Minister inquired about the identity of the attackers.

Mr. Sinha, in turn, informed his British counterpart that nobody had taken responsibility for the terrorist attack — a pattern seen in the latest killings as well.

In a separate statement issued in London, Mr. Straw said he was "horrified by this attack on innocent civilians. Terrorism — be it in Jammu & Kashmir, or anywhere else —

only serves to renew the determination of the free world to defeat this evil my thoughts are with the families and friends of those who suffered".

Meantime, official sources said the latest terrorist attack had dealt a "body blow" to any process of rapprochement between India and Pakistan in the near future. The relative lull in India-Pakistan relations, they said, had been shattered. The sources said the killings only confirmed the statement of Mr. Sinha on Saturday that Pakistan had not taken any tangible steps to end infiltration.

If Pakistan was expecting that India would announce any fresh initiative to resume a possible dialogue, then the latest killings could prove to be a major disincentive to such a process.

New Delhi, the sources said, would use the visits of both Mr. Straw and the U.S. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, to pressure Pakistan to end the scourge of terrorism.

Both the Straw and Powell visits would provide an occasion for New Delhi to renew its concerns about law and order in Jammu & Kashmir and Pakistan's role in fomenting trouble there.

The issue of "verification" of infiltration across the Line of Control (LoC) remained a live issue and may well figure in the discussions with the high-profile visitors from London and Washington.

THE HINDU

15 JUL 2002

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SATURDAY, JULY 13, 2002

SIGNAL AGAINST TERROR 1877

THE ARREST OF the MDMK chief, Vaiko, under the newly-enacted Prevention of Terrorism Act for his manifestly defiant and provocative pro-LTTE speeches has shown that the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Jayalalithaa, meant business when she wrote to the Prime Minister about her Government's intention, after clearly spelling out the rationale for moving against him. The buildup to Mr. Vaiko's arrest and the manner in which it was effected, as he landed at the Chennai airport after a trip abroad, presented a striking contrast to the way a similar task was executed against the DMK chief and former Chief Minister, M. Karunanidhi, just over a year ago; it was a nocturnal operation carried out in an obnoxiously crude and unconscionably intrusive manner. In Mr. Vaiko's case, the action has been extraordinarily transparent and procedurally meticulous. No Chief Minister is obliged to tell the Prime Minister about an intended legal action in what lies in the State Government's exclusive constitutional domain. Not only did Ms. Jayalalithaa resort to this unusual, and presumably well considered course but ensured that everything — the proposed action under POTA, the grounds for it and so on — became public knowledge by publicising her letter to Atal Behari Vajpayee. Whatever the reason, the fact remained that this time around, the action taken by the Jayalalithaa administration is virtually free from the sort of infirmities that rendered it vulnerable to Central intervention on the earlier occasion.

As for the invoking of POTA, there can be little doubt that the tone and substance of Mr. Vaiko's speech in question (the one made at a public meeting to mark his party's anniversary) does attract the special anti-terror law's provisions. In fact, Mr. Vaiko has been an inveterate supporter of the LTTE — not just the cause of the Sri Lankan Tamils' struggle for 'nationhood' — long before he broke away from the DMK to start his own outfit, MDMK. Neither he nor his organisation

has ever fought shy of proclaiming their hero-worship of the LTTE's terrorist chief, Velupillai Prabhakaran, the main accused in the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, India's former Prime Minister. If the LTTE remains outlawed since its involvement in Rajiv Gandhi's murder (first under the erstwhile TADA, now under POTA), it is because the outfit continues to be a serious threat to India's stability and security. Given this context, there can be absolutely no question of allowing anyone to indulge in anything that seeks to support or promote the LTTE's cause or project its image. It is imperative that powerful and unambiguous signals from both the State Government and the Centre go out to the backers and campaigners of the LTTE that the law of the land would be invoked unsparingly — and this goes as well for the various Tamil chauvinist and sub-nationalist groups operating in Tamil Nadu. In this sense, the spirit behind the State Government's determined action against Mr. Vaiko (along with some of his party men) and a couple of Tamil extremist outfits should be sustained and carried forward so that the rest of the breed of subversives are also brought to book.

In the wake of Mr. Vaiko's arrest under POTA — something the ruling coalition did not perhaps bargain for when it pushed the law through Parliament despite genuine reservations about some of its provisions — the Vajpayee regime can no longer maintain its hollow pretensions that it is determined to root out terrorism of all hues and, at the same time, continue to have proclaimed LTTE-backers (such as the MDMK and the PMK) as partners in the ruling establishment. As long as the National Democratic Alliance has on board these outfits, the impression that when the BJP-headed coalition regime talks of fighting terrorism it means only 'Islamic terrorism' is bound to be reinforced. Indeed, the track record of the Government so far does lend credence to such a construction.

THE HINDU

13 JULY 2002

Bio-terror antidote on the cards

Vishal Thapar
New Delhi, July 12

INDIA'S DEFENCE Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is close to developing the world's first antidote to sulphur-mustard, perhaps the most malevolent agent of chemical warfare.

Mustard attacks inflict slow, painful death by causing injuries that induce malignant blisters. In the absence of an antidote, the victim dies a terrible death in about 10 days, in a manner akin to someone who's suffered third-degree burns.

"It (the antidote) is a sulphur-containing compound in the form of an oral drug, which will offer protection against mustard attacks. It will increase survivability by three-to-four times," the DRDO Chief Controller (R&D), Dr RV Swamy said.

An international patent has been secured for this compound, tentatively called the DRDE-07. "We've completed toxicology and efficacy tests. The current stage is that of clinical trial on human beings," Dr Swamy said.

Although both India and Pakistan are signatories to the Chemical Weapons Convention banning such weapons, the DRDO research betrays India's lack of faith in Pakistani assurances. Pakistan claims it doesn't have any chemical weapons, while India, in 1997, declared its stockpile that it is committed to destroying by 2007.

There are reports that Pakistan used chemical weapons against Indian troops in Siachen in 1987.

Jawan held for ISI links

FROM OUR
CORRESPONDENT

Shillong, July 11: Meghalaya police yesterday arrested a lance naik of the Assam Rifles for selling "classified information" to the ISI.

The police produced 34-year-old S. Joe Haokip before newsmen here today after he confessed to passing on information to an ISI agent in Kathmandu for Rs 5,000 every month.

"I used to send information about the movements of army and paramilitary forces to Chiranjeev Shreshta, alias David, who is based in Kathmandu," Haokip, who hails from Saprmaina, said.

The tainted Assam Rifles jawan said his name was added to the roster of ISI conduits

about three years ago. He said the frequency of his interaction with agents of the Pakistani intelligence agency increased following the recent military build-up on the western border.

Sources said officials at the Assam Rifles headquarters were the first to get wind of the lance naik's clandestine activities.

On being asked if he knew anything about the ISI's strategy.

Haokip said the intelligence agency planned to target vital installations and top political leaders of Northeast. "I have heard David

and some other agents say a number of times that the ISI's goal is to separate the Northeast from the rest of India."

The arrested lance naik said he had met David several times in Kathmandu and Shillong.

The ISI agent from Nepal last visited the Meghalaya capital in September, he added. On his modus operandi, Haokip said he used to send coded messages

over the phone.

"My job was to keep them informed about the movements of

security forces. I know that David and a few more agents send money from Kathmandu to the Northeast. But I don't know where the money goes. I was told several times not to meddle in their affairs."

Haokip, who was remanded to 14 days in judicial custody, denied having links with any militant outfit.

Director-general of police L. Sailo told a news conference later that Haokip's confession and the documents seized from his house were enough to establish his crime.

He said the lance naik, who was attached to the Laitkor-based 1 Construction Company of the Assam Rifles, had been booked under the Official Secrets Act and Section 120 B of the Indian Penal Code.



Haokip in custody on Thursday

11 JUL 2002

Vaiko victory lap in Jaya's captivity

FROM M.R. VENKATESH

Chennai, July 11: Vaiko flashed the "thumbs up" sign and his characteristic smile as he was arrested on arrival at Chennai airport and driven away to Madurai for judicial remand.

The detention of the staunch NDA ally brought to a dramatic finale the first crackdown under the Prevention of Terrorism Act by the Jayalalithaa regime.

As he was escorted into a huge Eicher police van parked near the exit gate of the Chennai domestic airport at 5.20 pm, Vaiko appeared to be lapping up the national attention his arrest has drawn. He is the first MP to be booked under the anti-terror law.

Returning to Chennai from the US via Mumbai, the MDMK leader was informed by Madurai district superintendent Ayush Mani Tiwari and Thirumangalam DSP, Karnan, of the non-bailable arrest warrant issued against him and shown the paper just as he stepped out of the terminal around 5.15 pm.

Vaiko, who had to skip the connecting Air-India flight from Mumbai to Chennai earlier this



Vaiko in Mumbai. (PTI)

afternoon due to an "engineering snag", arrived here by a Jet Airways domestic flight and was closeted with wife Renuka Devi and son Durai Vaiyapuri for some time in the VIP lounge. His mother was not allowed in.

After the meeting with family members and in the presence of two Central MDMK ministers, G. Ramachandran and M. Kannappan, the police formally informed the MDMK leader of his arrest. Home ministry officials in New Delhi were relieved that the ministers did not create a fuss during the arrest, thus saving the Centre a confronta-

tion with the Jayalalitha regime.

Vaiko is the last of the nine accused in the case, all of them MDMK functionaries, to be arrested for openly supporting the LTTE. He had delivered a speech at a public meeting in Thirumangalam near Madurai on June 29, parts of which "posed a threat to national sovereignty".

Vaiko will be remanded either at Thirumangalam or at Madurai well past midnight tonight, as it would take at least seven hours by road to reach the temple city from Chennai.

Jayalalithaa denied the MP a hero's welcome by taking nearly 3,000 of his partymen into preventive custody. But as lensmen and television crew whirred around for a photo-op, Vaiko vowed to "continue with his party's struggle against the fascist Jayalalithaa regime without seeking the help of the Centre". "We will not rest until we dislodge the Jayalalitha regime with people's power," he thundered. Vaiko described his arrest as a classic case of "misuse of the anti-terror law" for political ends.

The BJP condemned Vaiko's arrest, calling it unwarranted.

THE TELEGRAPH

12 JUL 2002

Spectre at sea

The coast is vulnerable

55-4
11/9

Dead men tell no tales, ghost ships do. Frightening ones at that. The Coast Guards's detection of an abandoned vessel some 170 kms off Ratnagiri raises a tide of queries pertaining to the potential for trouble that could be washed up on our long and relatively little-policed shores. The recovery of two Kalashnikov assault rifles would suggest that either the Lebanese vessel and its unidentified crew were up to no good, or that the ship itself had been taken over by pirates and stripped clean before being allowed to drift. The former is more likely, pirates would have probably scuttled the boat so that no evidence would be found. The Director General of the Coast Guard was right in declaring that abandoning a vessel in mysterious circumstances was not a "clean game" and that it could have been used for ferrying terrorists, gun-running, or even narcotics smuggling. The least of the dangers is a hazard to shipping and a threat to the environment. Such apprehensions are legitimate, not merely because of the threat of terrorists using sea routes, and arise from a background of increasing piracy in regional waters, suspicions that pirated goods are being off-loaded at small harbours that dot our coastline, or transferred to fishing boats out at sea are well-founded.

The question that survives is how effective are our maritime security arrangements? The Navy is probably capable of countering enemy activity and protecting off-shore assets and the Coast Guard has proven its worth in detecting smuggling, poaching and conducting search and rescue missions. But given the length of the coastline and the fleet strength of both those agencies it is obvious that no real security net can be cast, and that there are gaps through which contraband — or worse — could be landed. The force levels of both the Navy and the Coast Guard are being progressively built up, but a third line of defence is required. One that is virtually non-existent at present: none of our state police forces have marine capabilities worth mentioning. That capability will have to be created, a combination of small, fast craft and an information/intelligence gathering apparatus in fishing harbours and other areas of maritime activity. While a certain pride is taken over the Indian Navy being internationally accepted as a key player in regional waters, there can be no neglecting the protection of the home shores.

THE STRATEGIAN

1 1 101 372

Terror link to mystery ship

FROM SUJAN DUTTA

New Delhi, July 9: The mystery ship boarded by the Coast Guard in the Arabian Sea and brought to Indian shores over the weekend continues to spook security agencies, but the suspicion that it was used by militants was heightened today after its owner claimed it was "captured".

The owner of the vessel, Assem Nidal Beani, today telephoned the Indian Coast Guard and said his ship was "captured" by Somalia-based militants in January this year. When Beani was asked if he had lodged a formal complaint and for documents, he reportedly said he will call again. Beani is a Lebanese national based in Khadeh, Lebanon.

The famine-struck African nation, Somalia, is in the throes of civil war with rival gangs of militia fighting among themselves. The Research and Analysis Wing and the Intelligence Bureau have now got involved more deeply in the investigations following the ship-owner's claim.

Adding to the mystery, the International Maritime Bureau also told the Coast Guard that there were two ships registered under the same name — *MV Al-Murtada*. The ship now in the custody of the Coast Guard is a 500-tonner. The other *MV Al-Murtada* is a bigger vessel of 2,178 tonnes. The Coast Guard is trying to learn of its whereabouts.

Coast Guard sources said the bureau had also reported that the ship left Port Sultan Qaboos (in Oman) on September 8 last year. Since then there has been no record of its movements. The bureau also asked the Coast Guard to "thoroughly rummage" the ship to trace what was the last cargo it carried. Sources said the search was tardy because the weather in the Arabian Sea did not

permit an intensive operation.

The Coast Guard director general, Vice Admiral O.P. Bansal, had said yesterday that the vessel had been abandoned some time ago. He said it might have taken two months to reach the spot where it was found — about 155 km west of Maharashtra's Ratnagiri coast. It could have come from waters closer to Africa's east coast. "At the moment, everything is conjecture. There is no report of a missing vessel matching the *Al-Murtada*'s description. Since the owner and agent is known, however, we expect to learn more about a ship shortly," Bansal had said.

It is of some concern that the ship was found after it had been in Indian waters for weeks. The sea lanes in the Arabian Sea are particularly busy now with the traffic of not only merchant vessels but also the navies of nations engaged in the US' Operation Enduring Freedom.

THE TELEGRAPH

10 JUL 2002

MDMK men held under Pota

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

11/1 10/3

J. D. & N. Secmelis

Chennai: The Tamil Nadu government, invoking the Prevention of Terrorism Act (Pota) for the first time, on Tuesday arrested eight MDMK functionaries for making pro-LTTE speeches. The eight were picked up from Madurai, Sivaganga and Erode after the Thirumangalam town police obtained non-bailable warrants for the eight from Thirumangalam magistrate S. Venkatchalapathy on Monday night.

Among those arrested were former party MP Ganesamurthy and former MLA P.S. Manian. However, the magistrate declined to issue an arrest warrant against party general secretary Vaiko, who is in Chicago at the moment. Mr Vaiko and his eight colleagues were accused of making speeches supporting the Lankan terrorist group at a public meeting in Thirumangalam near Madurai on June 29.

In a statement from Chicago, Mr Vaiko lashed out at the AIADMK government led by chief minister J.



Vaiko

Jayalalithaa and labelled the arrest of his colleagues as fascist, even as he appealed to his party workers to remain calm and face the crisis boldly.

Mr Vaiko said that Ms Jayalalithaa was trying

to exact revenge on her political rivals by letting loose a reign of terror and invoking the provisions of Pota against leading functionaries of his party.

"It is nothing but an attempt to stifle the voice of democracy in the state," he said in the statement. He said that he would return to Chennai on July 11.

Cases had been filed last week against Mr Vaiko and the eight arrested under Pota, the Unlawful Activities Act and the IPC.

Those arrested from Madurai included A. Sundaram, Nagarajan,

Pulavar Sivandhi Appan, Bhominathan, Madurai Ganesan and Manian. Veera Elavarasan was arrested from Sivaganga and Ganesamurthy from Erode. All of them were taken to Thirumangalam and presented before the magistrate.

MDMK presidium chairman L. Ganesan claimed in Chennai that a conspiracy was being hatched by the government to arrest Mr Vaiko on his return to Chennai on July 11. He said the party would hold statewide agitations on July 12.

Mr Ganesan charged Ms Jayalalithaa with portraying LTTE chief V. Prabhakaran and the Sri Lankan Tamils who are fighting for their rights as terrorists and those supporting them as anti-nationals.

Meanwhile, police sources here have not ruled out the possibility of arresting Mr Vaiko without a warrant—not a necessity under Pota. A decision about arresting Mr Vaiko has to be taken by the government, they added.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

10 JUL 2002

Ghost ship on the high seas

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, July 8. — Heightened surveillance along the west coast has resulted in the Coast Guard's most recent catch: A ghost-ship probably used by gun-runners.

Al Murtada (the ship is also called *Said*) was found floating off the coast of Maharashtra on 3 July. It was first spotted by a passing merchant ship, the *Meridian Navigator*. The *Al Murtada* did not respond to the *Meridian*'s messages. The Coast Guard was informed. The *Al Murtada* did not respond to signals by a CG *Dornier*. The Coast Guard then sent the *Vijay* which found the *Al Murtada*.

Officials boarded it on Saturday and dropped anchor. They found two AK-47 rifles with "Yusuf" written on the butts and some empty magazines. The ship, owned by Lebanese Mr Assem Nidal Beaini, was clearly abandoned several weeks ago, and may have been used for gun-running or transporting Al-Qaida and Taliban activists.

There was no crew on the ship. There were no bunks for the crew but the ship had modern equipment. There were no life-boats on the ship, suggesting that the crew had probably abandoned the ship and fled.

Officials have contacted international Intelligence agencies. They are trying to gather more details about the ship, which is registered in Beirut. Officials spoke to Mr Talat Abdul, the ship's agent, but he refused comment.

9 JUL 2002

CONG. SUPPORTS JAYALALITHAA'S VIEWS

Invoking POTA against Vaiko ^{HD 1} unwarranted: BJP

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JULY 5. Reacting to the FIR registered against the MDMK general secretary, Vaiko, the BJP said today that considering the totality of the facts and circumstances invoking the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) against him was "unwarranted." On the other hand, while remaining silent on the applicability of POTA, the Congress supported the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Jayalalithaa's views on the issue.

The BJP spokesman, Arun Jaitley, said he did not wish to go into the details but added that the due process of law would be followed. "As the Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister, L.K. Advani, has already said, the issue is in the domain of the State Government. Mr. Advani has sought a report from the Home Ministry but the Centre can only express its opinion. The State Government is looking into the case," he said.

Mr. Jaitley, who was the Union Law Minister till the latest Cabinet reshuffle, told reporters at the party headquarters that the NDA Government had extended the ban on the LTTE and its views on the activities of the LTTE were "unambiguous."

Clarifying that he was reacting after going through Mr. Vaiko's statement in the electronic media, Mr. Jaitley said the BJP would like to speak to the MDMK leader first before saying anything more on the subject.

Asked how the NDA could justify the inclusion in its fold, a party like the MDMK which nursed sympathies for a banned terrorist organisation, Mr. Jaitley said the NDA was bound by a common minimum agenda. "There are certain issues which are not part of the NDA agenda. If anybody is supporting a terrorist organisation, there has to be evidence to substantiate the charge and invoke the provisions of POTA. The quantum of evidence has to be seen and assessed."

Asked if it was not a case of "misuse of POTA", Mr. Jaitley said no penal law had been drafted till date which was not capable of being misused. There were enough safeguards in POTA to ensure that it was not misused, he said.

Mr. Jaitley said the MDMK leader had made certain statements in the context of the Ta-

mils' cause in Sri Lanka but had not supported the LTTE in the context of Tamil Nadu.

Carefully sidestepping the applicability of POTA to Mr. Vaiko, the Congress spokesman, S. Jaipal Reddy, said his party's view on the MDMK leader's statement vis-a-vis the LTTE was no different from that of Ms. Jayalalithaa. All that he would say to persistent questioning on the use of POTA against Mr. Vaiko was that it was a decision to be taken by the State on the basis of the evidence gathered. As for the Congress opposition to POTA, he said: "We opposed it right through, but now it is the law of the land."

'A wrong signal'

TIRUPATI, JULY 5. The Bharatiya Janata Party will not approve the pro-LTTE stand of the

MDMK leader, Vaiko, but is against the Tamil Nadu Government's decision to arrest him by invoking POTA for a recent speech in support of the outlawed Tigers, the BJP president, M. Venkaiah Naidu, said here today.

Addressing newsmen on his maiden visit to the temple town after becoming the party president, Mr. Naidu said POTA should not be misused as it would give a wrong signal to the nation.

Referring to the proposal on trifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir, he said the BJP wanted the border State to remain united. Mr. Naidu said his aim now was to improve the BJP's strength by including all sections of the people in the country. The party cadre should work as a bridge between the Government and the people, he added. — UNI

T.N. 'not in a hurry'

By Our Tamil Nadu Bureau

CHENNAI, JULY 5. With the Centre's nod for the move to arrest the MDMK general secretary, Vaiko, not forthcoming, the Tamil Nadu Government, in a tactical shift, is adopting a "wait and watch" policy in the POTA case.

According to Government sources, dropping of charges is not a viable option after taking a tough stand, but the administration is "not in a hurry" to decide if and when to arrest Mr. Vaiko.

Having registered the case after Mr. Vaiko left the country, the State Government might use the period until his return to Tamil Nadu on July 12 to keep in touch with the Centre on the sensitive issue. The BJP-led NDA, of which the MDMK is a constituent, is supportive of Mr. Vaiko.

The sources explain that if the intention had been to directly proceed against Mr. Vaiko, the Chief Minister, Jayalalithaa, would not have felt the need to first write to the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani. Being the first case under POTA, the Government wanted to proceed with caution.

Meanwhile, the MDMK clarified that it would not support any organisation, including the LTTE, which indulged in violence on Indian soil.

The MDMK supported the LTTE only because it was fighting for the legitimate rights and honour of the Sri Lankan Tamils. The party presidium chairman, L. Ganesan, who chaired a meeting of senior functionaries including Union Ministers M. Kannappan and Gingee Ramachandran, here, said they were happy with the stand taken by parties in the NDA on the issue.

While continuing to support POTA, the party hoped that the Union Government would take note "of the manner in which it was being misused by the State Government".

MDMK functionaries in Madurai, who were booked under POTA along with Mr. Vaiko, are reported to have gone underground fearing arrest, hours after the cases were registered against them at the Tirumangalam taluk police station on Thursday. The police are still awaiting the "green signal" from the Government to effect the arrests though the Madurai district police and 'Q' branch sleuths tried to keep a tab on the accused.

Jaya govt slaps Pota on Vaiko

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

FIR SPZ
J-D G N S cements

Madurai: In what is being described as a crackdown on leaders who make "pro-LTTE statements", the police on Thursday filed a first information report (FIR) under Pota and the Unlawful Activities Act against MDMK leader and MP, Vaiko, and eight others.

The action comes close on the heels of chief minister J. Jayalalithaa declaring her government's intention to arrest Mr Vaiko for his pro-LTTE utterances at a meeting in Thirumangalam in Madurai district on June 29.

The police said that a special team had been formed to nab Mr Vaiko when he returns to India from the US, indicating that they were "serious" about arresting him. Party sources said Mr Vaiko was cutting short his trip and was expected to reach Chennai by the end of next week.

This is the first time that an FIR is being filed in the state under Pota. The police registered a case on a complaint filed by the Thirumangalam town inspector Thangavelu, who said that Mr Vaiko had stated in a meeting on June 29 that he "supported the LTTE yesterday, today and would support it tomorrow".

Earlier, a Coimbatore report, quoting MDMK party



J. Jayalalithaa

Vaiko

treasurer and Union minister M. Kannappan, said the MDMK would hold a meeting in Chennai on Friday to discuss the party's strategy in the wake of the FIR being registered, but later said that it had been postponed as Union minister Gingee Ramachandran and senior party member L. Ganeshan were unable to attend.

Mr Kannappan said that the MDMK had, since its formation, supported the cause of the Eelam Tamils and the party was not aware of the reason behind the "sudden action" of the government.

S. Gurunathan, headquarters secretary of the MDMK, said that the state government's move to arrest Mr Vaiko only exposed its "autocratic behaviour and its intention to wreak vengeance on opposition parties".

Earlier, DMK president M. Karunanidhi said he would not interfere in the Vaiko case, but maintained that his party was against the use of Pota for political purposes.

5 JUL 2002

Infiltration has resumed in Kashmir, says Army

Vishal Thapar
New Delhi, July 1

INFILTRATION OF terrorists into Jammu and Kashmir has resumed after a brief lull. Three infiltration bids in rapid succession have been foiled by the Indian Army during the last one week alone, suggesting that the Pakistani promise of stopping infiltration is wearing thin. Nine infiltrators have been killed in these encounters.

"Pakistani troops have been engaging the Indian Army in continuous cross-Line of Control (LoC) firing as militants sneak in," Army sources said.

Pakistani fire assaults last week scorched the entire J&K front from Samba to Siachen. "There is no de-escalation along the LoC. The nation should not be lulled into a false sense of complacency," a senior officer warns. Reports indicate that In-

dia is suffering about three troop casualties daily in Pak shelling, an aid to infiltration.

The Army reckons that for every infiltration bid, which is foiled, three or four succeed. By this reckoning, an estimated 12 batches comprising 30-40 militants have infiltrated undetected over the last week itself.

The spectrum of infiltration straddles both sides of the Pir Panjal Range, covering most of the LoC (see graphic).

There was a brief lull after General Musharraf's May 27 speech and his famous direction to the Pak Army's 10 Corps to stop infiltration. The Army's Situation Reports indicate that LoC skirmishes did come to a virtual halt around May 30.

But infiltrations and firing resumed in the first week of June increasing in a "graded manner".

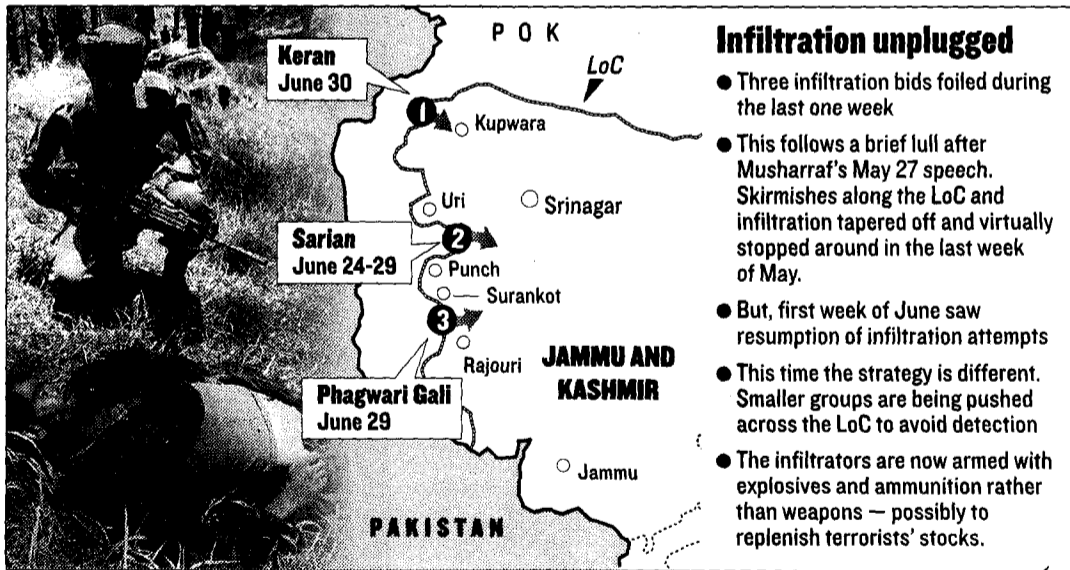
The first infiltration bid was

detected at Mendhar on June 9.

The interceptions reveal a new trend to the resumed infiltration. "Smaller groups of about three militants each are now being pushed in. This makes detection more difficult," a senior officer said.

"Also, these groups are carrying more ammunition and explosives than weapons. This is to replenish the stocks of terrorists already there in J&K. At the Phagwari Gali encounter on June 29, 500 RDX sticks were recovered from the infiltrators. In a group of three, two are invariably armed with only pistols or revolvers, but loaded with ammunition," he said.

Militant activity in J&K has also picked up. In June, 117 militants have been killed in clashes with security forces. The Army says this is indication that the supply of militants has not been plugged.



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AJT deal clears defence body hurdle

Srinjoy Chowdhury
in New Delhi

July 1. — With the defence acquisition council clearing the deal for the purchase of the Hawk advanced jet trainer, only a go-ahead from the finance ministry and then the Cabinet Committee of Security (CCS), is necessary.

The defence acquisition council is the apex body of the ministry — headed by the defence minister, Mr George Fernandes, and including the minister of state of defence, the chief of defence staff when there is one, the three service chiefs, the defence and defence production secretaries and other top officials.

With the price negotiation over,

the deal, roughly for 66 aircraft worth around Rs 900 crore was placed before the newly-created DAC. The Air Force has been asking for the aircraft for years. After discussion, British Aerospace's Hawk had been chosen.

Now that the DAC has cleared the deal, it has gone to the department of expenditure (DoE) of the finance ministry. Only after the DoE accepts the proposal, it will be placed before the Cabinet. No time

is involved, but the DoE's decision should come this month. The presence of Mr Jaswant Singh as the finance minister could theoretically speed up things. For, Mr Singh, a former defence minister, has a strong idea of national security issues.

Defence ministry approval is a "preliminary clearance" for the AJT, which has been hanging in the balance for 15 years. Now, after the

finance ministry's "view is obtained", the Centre would have to decide on it. Two planes — British Aerospace's Hawk and Dassault's Alpha — were in the reckoning for years, though the Russians had offered the MiG-AT trainer.

Eventually, the fact that the Alpha is not produced any more among other issues, played a part in choosing the Hawk. With Alpha being struck out, it created a single-vendor situation, creating more delays.

The British defence secretary, Mr Geoffrey Hoon, is likely to be visiting the Capital soon. The dates for his visit may be linked with the visit of the defence minister, Mr George Fernandes, who is going to Japan in the next few days.

With the defence acquisition council okaying the purchase of advance jet trainers, the deal now awaits the nod of the finance ministry and the CCS

5 2 111 2002