

# Kalyan calls for 'forceful' revival of Hindutva

96:3 BJP's Mumbai conclave: Former UP chief minister's remarks make rift with Rajnath evident

MANINI CHATTERJEE  
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 29

**F**ORMER Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh created a flutter at the BJP National Council session today not only because of his strong advocacy of the Ram temple and Hindutva, but also his indirect jibes at the soon-to-be anointed BJP chief Rajnath Singh.

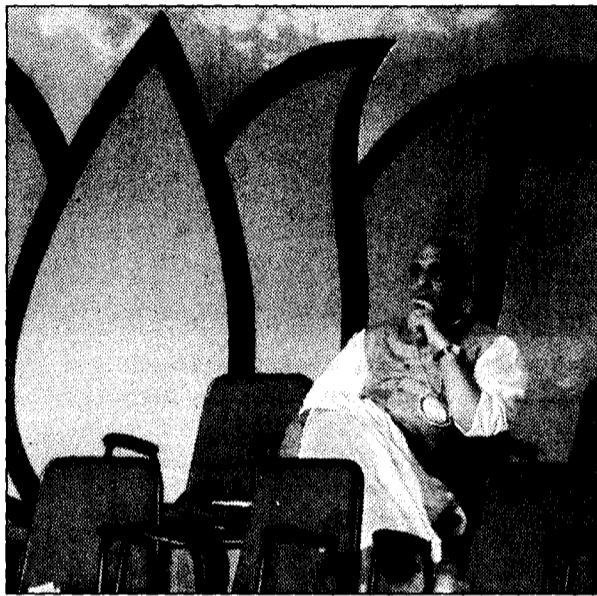
Seconding the political resolution at the session, Kalyan—who was UP chief minister when the Babri Masjid was demolished in 1992—asked the party leadership not to be apologetic about its Hindutva ideology because of the compulsions of coalition politics.

Reiterating the Sangh Parishad's pet theme that Hindutva was not a narrow doctrine but a way of life, Singh demanded that it be "forcefully" espoused by taking up dormant issues such as the Uniform Civil Code and the building of the Ram temple.

If his comments were embarrassing to the BJP leadership given that the political resolution made absolutely no mention of Hindutva or the Ram temple, his subsequent remarks on criminalisation of politics appeared to be directed at Rajnath Singh.

Referring to the Rajnath-led 25-day-long "nyaya yatra" in Uttar Pradesh recently, Kalyan said when leaders ask people to raise their hands and vow not to support criminals in politics, "leaders also must raise their hands and vow not to give (party) ticket to criminals".

It was a remark, many felt, aimed at Rajnath's alleged closeness to Samajwadi Party



MLA Raja Bhaiyya who has a long criminal record. When Mayawati had put him in jail, the UP don had evoked a lot of support from his Thakur community—to which Rajnath Singh also belongs.

Rajnath, who is slated to formally take over as BJP President on January 2, was at one time a close associate of Kalyan, but the two UP leaders became bitter rivals later. A rapprochement of sorts took place recently, but once Rajnath takes over as party boss, the equations could change again.

That apart, Kalyan—a key OBC leader whose expulsion from the party contributed to the BJP's decline in UP—is also said to be unhappy with the manner Uma Bharati was expelled from the party.

Kalyan's pro-Hindutva remarks, party circles feel, could end up bolstering Uma's "Ram-roti" campaign. The expelled sanyasin has always sought to combine her OBC

and saffron concerns, and Kalyan represented the same "mandal-kamandal" combination in the heyday of the BJP in UP.

While talk of any Kalyan-Uma alliance at this juncture would be too premature, the demand for reviving the Ram temple agitation could have adverse implications on the BJP's future course under the leadership of Rajnath.

With Assembly elections on the anvil in several southern and eastern states in 2006 (and in Uttar Pradesh in 2007), the BJP leadership does not want to revive a strident Hindutva plank at the risk of losing present or potential allies. But the party rank and file, fed up with the ideological flip-flops at the top, are keen on returning to the comforting certainties of the Hindutva past, as was evident from the enthusiastic applause Kalyan's Ram temple talk received from the national council delegates today.

30 DEC 2005

INDIAN EXPRESS

# Court upholds headscarf ban

**Stephen Castle in Brussels**

Nov. 11. — The European Court of Human Rights has upheld Turkey's headscarf ban in public buildings, ending a lengthy legal battle with a victory for Ankara's secularists.

The Court in Strasbourg yesterday confirmed an earlier ruling against 32-year old Leyla Sahin who was barred from sitting for a university examination in 1998 because she wore a headscarf.

The decision was a legal vindication of the policies of a country whose population is overwhelmingly Muslim but which imposes the ban in universities and public buildings to prevent any religion being favoured.

The court ruled that the Turkish law is consistent with the European Convention on Human Rights and with the protection of womens' rights in general.

It argued: "When examining the question of the Islamic headscarf in the Turkish context, there had to be borne in mind the impact which wearing such a symbol, which was presented or perceived as a compulsory religious duty, may have on those who chose not to wear it."

Limitations on the right to wear a headscarf could be "regarded as meeting a pressing social need", the court ruled.

The ban is highly sensitive in Turkey, and the daughters of the Prime Minister, Mr Recep Tayyip Erdogan, have been edu-

cated abroad in part to avoid controversy on the issue.

Yesterday's decision has implications for a host of other legal cases, and for other countries with headscarf bans, including France.

Meanwhile the Turkish government yesterday promised to tackle shortcomings in its political and legal reforms after the European Commission said its preparations to join the EU had lost momentum.

The country's foreign minister, Mr Abdullah Gul, said: "Our government is determined to implement the reforms, to deepen and strengthen democracy. We know our own deficiencies and we are determined to overcome them in the coming process."

— The Independent

THE STATESMAN

12 NOV 2005

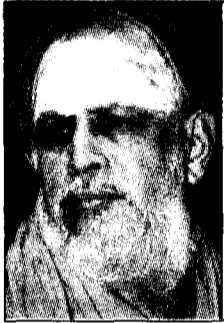
# Religious SC shifts Kanchi Seer's trial to Pandy

**New Delhi:** In a major relief to Kanchi Sankaracharyas and a slap on the wrist of the Tamil Nadu government and police, the supreme court on Wednesday shifted the Sankararaman murder case to Pondicherry, holding that there was a case for "reasonable apprehension" that the accused will not get justice in the state.

(Tamil) in which all the witnesses would depose."

The court criticised the prosecuting agencies for showing "extra interest" in the case only on the ground that Sankaracharya, who has been chargesheeted in the case for allegedly entering into conspiracy to murder, is the head of the Mutt.

"It leads to an inference that state



It leads to an inference that state machinery is not only interested in securing conviction of the petitioner (Seer) and other co-accused but also bringing to a complete halt the entire religious and other activities of the Mutt—Supreme Court

Just short of a year after Jayendra Saraswati's arrest on Diwali night in Andhra Pradesh, a bench comprising chief justice R C Lahoti and Justice G P Mathur also felt that the Tamil Nadu government was showing "interest in securing the conviction of the seer and halting the religious activities of the mutt."

The trial will now be shifted from the principal sessions judge, Chinglepet, to principal sessions judge, Pondicherry, a Union territory, where too Tamil is the language of court proceedings.

In a virtual balancing act, the court conceded the seer's plea for transfer of the case outside Tamil Nadu, but also yielded to the state's request that if at all it should be shifted, the trial should be held in Pondicherry. The seer had sought transfer of the case to Chitoor or nearby areas in Andhra Pradesh.

Transferring the case, the bench said "We are of the opinion to transfer the case to Pondicherry as there will be no difficulty in recording the evidence in the same language

machinery is not only interested in securing conviction of the petitioner (Seer) and other co-accused but also bringing to a complete halt the entire religious and other activities of the various trusts and endowments and the performance of 'pooja' and other rituals in the temples and religious places in accordance with the customs and traditions and thereby create a fear psychosis in the minds of the people," the court said.

The court said the action of freezing the accounts of the Mutt demonstrates as to what extent the state machinery can go while prosecuting the seer in the Sankararaman murder case. "The freezing of all the accounts (183) of the Mutt and its associated trusts and endowments is a clear pointer to the fact that the state machinery anyhow wants to paralyse the entire working of the Mutt and the associates trusts and endowments in order to put pressure upon the Seer and other co-accused who are in the manner connected with the Mutt so that they may not be able to defend themselves," it said. Agencies

27 OCT 2005

# UK govt faces row on religious hatred bill

Ben Russell in London

Oct. 26. — Peers inflicted a heavy defeat over government plans to create a new offence of inciting religious hatred yesterday despite strong hints of a climb-down.

They voted by more than two to one to back Opposition attempts to redraw the plans, amid claims that it was bad law that would stifle freedom of speech. Conservative and Liberal Democrat peers joined crossbenchers and Labour rebels to vote against the Government despite a clear suggestion that the Home Office was planning a compromise.

Peers watered down the Bill to remove plans for an offence of using abusive or offensive language about religion and focus on attempts to outlaw threatening behaviour. They also backed moves promoted by Conservative Lord Hunt of the Wirral, Liberal Democrat Lord Lester of Herne Hill QC, Lord Plant of Highfield (Labour) and former Archbishop of Canterbury Lord Carey of Clifton to strengthen freedom of speech, by inserting safeguards into the Bill. Baroness Scotland, the Home Office minister, said told peers she was prepared to consider a compromise after peers of all parties criticised the Government plans. They warned the Bill would force journalists, artists and comedians to censor themselves to prevent their comments offending members of minority religions. She said she was not able to bridge the gap between the Government and its critics.

— The Independent



# Headscarves for non-Muslims in Malaysia

The Star/ANN

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct. 26. — The Malaysian government has okayed a ruling by International Islamic University (IIU) which compels non-Muslim students to wear the tudung, saying the rule was not religious in nature.

Government lawmaker Dr Maximus Ongkili, the minister in the Prime Minister's Department in charge of national unity, said the headscarf was part of the International Islamic University's uniform and not "religious in nature," *The Star* reported.

"In a multi-racial country, each community must respect one another. But at the same time we must respect the laws of the country, institutions and organisations to ensure there is no disturbance to the community. As the rule was approved by the university senate, it is not religious in nature but a matter of uniforms that must be fol-



Malaysian government has consented to a ruling by International Islamic University to compel non-Muslim students to wear the headscarf. — File photograph

lowed. It does not breach basic human rights," he was quoted as saying. "We must respect the laws of the country, institutions and organisations to ensure there is no disturbance in the community." Dr Ongkili was replying to Mr Lim Kit Siang (DAP — Ipoh Timur), who read out an e-mail by a IIU undergraduate who was forced to wear the headscarf for her

convocation. "It does not breach basic human rights," he was quoted as saying. "We must respect the laws of the country, institutions and organisations to ensure there is no disturbance in the community." Dr Ongkili was replying to Mr Lim Kit Siang (DAP — Ipoh Timur), who read out an e-mail by a IIU undergraduate who was forced to wear the headscarf for her

plained that she was forced to wear a headscarf to her graduation ceremony. Opposition MPs were dissatisfied with the minister's reply.

If this was allowed, they said non-Muslims might be made to wear the tudung elsewhere such as to Parliament House.

Mr Lim pointed out that the issue was raised in Parliament on 3 April, 2003 and Datuk Mahadzir Mohd Khir, then education ministry's parliamentary secretary, had stated that non-Muslims were not compelled but "encouraged" to wear the tudung in IIU.

"So why the change now? Is this not disrespectful of a plural society?" Mr Lim asked, adding that the university should adhere by what Mahadzir had said.

Dr Ongkili said he would follow up on the matter with the ministry, adding that it would not come to a stage where all non-Muslims would be forced to wear the tudung.

Ongkili's answer sparked an outcry among opposition lawmakers, who said the move could set a precedent for non-Muslim women being compelled to wear headscarves in other establishments, such as Parliament.

Mostly Muslim ethnic Malays comprise about 60 per cent of Malaysia's 26 million people, while ethnic Chinese and Indians — most of them Buddhists, Hindus and Christians — make up about 35 per cent. The rest indigenous people and Eurasians.

Most Muslim women voluntarily wear headscarves, in keeping with Islamic tenets, while non-Muslim women do not.

The International Islamic University's dress code for women, which includes barring tight or revealing clothes and requiring them to cover their hair, has existed since the school was opened in 1983, univ spokesman Shamsul Azahar.

## Bangla militants threat to cops

DHAKA, Oct. 26. — The banned Islamic militant group Jamaatul Mujaheddin has threatened to blow up police stations in north-western Bangladesh, leading authorities to sound a high alert in the area, a media report said here today.

In a letter sent to the Rajshahi Metropolitan Police and police commissioners of the district as well as nearby Chapainawabganj district, the JMB threatened to bomb

the police stations if the government failed to establish "Islam in every government and non-government office with immediate effect". The letter was signed by Maolana Hafiz Uddin Biswas, the secretary of the JMB, the reports said. A probe into the threat is underway. — PTI

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# Population transfer

By Suhas Chakma

The proposed population transfer of an estimated 65,000 mainstream Muslim families or about 400,000 people — each family comprising at least six people — to the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh has the potential to alter the demographic balance of the area and exacerbate the long-running tension and confrontation between indigents and settlers living there since the 1970s as official policy.

The area to be affected by this population transfer — which seeks to open up the lightly populated areas of the CHT to “mainstream” Bangladesh, the most crowded place on earth in terms of population density — is the Sajek Union (equivalent of a sub-division) in the Rangamati district.

This has serious implications for India’s North-east since Sajek borders Mizoram which has so far been not significantly affected by illegal migration from Bangladesh.

That the Mizos claim that there is an unnatural rise in the Chakma population in the Chakma autonomous district council area of the state and blame it on in-migration from Bangladesh is a different point.

The Mizos appear to be more rattled about the presence of a large number of Chins in their state, who unlike the Buddhist Chakmas are ethnically linked by kinship, share the same faith (Christianity) and are also connected by social and family ties with the Mizos.

The Government of India, too, has woken up to the presence of the Chins, a number of whom are political refugees (Delhi is not too worried by that) but for the sake of better military and political cooperation with Myanmar, New Delhi has insisted on pushing out the Chin National Army from the remote tri-junction of Mizoram, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

But now, Mizoram is unlikely to escape the pressure of illegal immigration from Bangladesh, a phenomenon of survival and cheap labour flows which has spread across the North-east and many parts of urban India, including New Delhi.

If the present population transfer goes through, it will be the first one undertaken by the current government in Dhaka under Begum Khaleda Zia and her Bangladesh Nationalist Party after the military regime of President HM Ershad ended the practice in 1983.

Although not many details are available, it is clear that the proposed population transfer to the Sajek Union has been planned over some time. The government first allowed the

Bangladesh Army Engineer Construction Battalion to construct the Baghaihat-Sajek Road in the dense Kassalong reserve forest in violation of the Forest Act of 1927 and Bangladesh Forest (Amendment) Act of 2000. Some plain settler families began building houses beside the Baghaihat-Sajek Road but the army did not allow them on grounds of “safety” or security. The government has now increased its militarisation programme. The government placed a proposal in June to provide free rations to “new settlers” to settle 65,000 families in Sajek. Since 1978, the Bangladesh government has

MP from Khagrachari district in October 2001, the settlement of plain settlers in Khagrachari has expanded exponentially. The first plains person to win the elections, Mr Bhuyan has transplanted thousands of settlers to ensure that he wins the next parliamentary election. Many villages in Khagrachari have been christened “Wadud Palli” — literally meaning “Wadud villages”.

At the UN, the Bangladesh government has consistently and appropriately sponsored resolutions against the settlement of Israelis in Palestinian territories as violations of international humanitarian law, especially Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Conventions. But, back home in the CHT, it has implemented similar population transfer programmes.

The present government-sponsored settlement has thrown the CHT Accord of 1997 out of the window. The Awami League refused to implement the accord, while the BNP government never accepted it. The Jana Samhati Samiti, a major tribal political organisation, caught in a vicious cycle of fratricidal killings with the United People’s Democratic Front, has been clinging to power with government backing.

Yet, if such massive population transfers are implemented, the dimensions of the present democratic movement for implementation of the 1997 Accord may change and indigenous tribals may once again be

forced to resort to violence.

The proposed population transfer also puts the idea of a Greater Muslim Bangladesh in focus. Right-wing Bangladeshi nationalists and the Jammati-Islami have been propagating such a concept by saying that this would embrace Muslim populations from Assam to the Arakan in Myanmar.

Although the United Liberation Front of Asom has some nuisance value in Assam and has changed its tune with regard to the foreigners in Assam, the anti-foreigner movement, as shown by the celebration over the Supreme Court’s tossing out of the discriminatory and Illegal Migrants Determination by Tribunal Act (IMDT), will remain strong in the Brahmaputra Valley.

As the CHT gradually falls to the forces of state and the policy of population transfers, the North-east becomes more vulnerable. Few parts of the world have seen massive migration. Yet, despite the blistering edict of the Supreme Court on the security threat posed by illegal aliens, the Government of India is still groping for a strategy.

(The author is Director, Asian Centre for Human Rights, New Delhi.)

## Open Forum



been providing free rations to about 28,000 Muslim settler families. They were part of the 500,000 plain settlers who were brought to the CHT through state-sponsored population transfer between 1978 and 1983.

After having approved the budget for the plain settlers in the recently concluded session of Parliament, the Bangladesh government has started military “operations”. But unlike the past, the army is not burning down tribal houses but destroying them. On 23 June, the Bangladesh Rifles evicted about 300 indigenous Jumma families after destroying their homes in Devachari, New Lonkor, Old Lonkor, Halimbari and Chizhok villages in the Sajek Union to facilitate the new settlement.

The present population transfer at Sajek is increasing the present population of the CHT by about 25 per cent. Since they are being settled in Rangamati, the political implications are clear: it is now unlikely that any Jumma (tribal) candidate can win or be given the seat of the Rangamati parliamentary constituency in the 2006 parliamentary election. The lone tribal MP, Mani Swapan Dewan, has been muted in his opposition to the settlement projects.

After the election of Wadud Bhuyan as

22 AUG 2005

THE STATESMAN

# 640 Shiite pilgrims die in stampede near Iraq shrine

**Baghdad:** At least 640 Shiite pilgrims were killed on Wednesday when a railing on a bridge collapsed during a religious procession, sending scores into the Tigris river, Iraqi deputy interior minister Hussein Ali Kamal said.

There was confusion over what caused the railing to collapse on the bridge to the city's heavily Shiite Kazamiyah district, but police also said there were unconfirmed reports that the stampede might have been caused when someone in the crowd shouted there was a suicide bomber among them.

After the collapse, thousands of people rushed to both banks of the river to search for survivors. Hundreds of men stripped down and waded into the muddy water downstream from the bridge, trying to extract bodies floating in the water.

Tensions had been running high after a mortar and rocket attack some two hours earlier killed at least seven people and injured at least 40 near the Imam Mousa al-Kadim shrine, the destination of the worshippers.

The shrine is about a mile from the bridge. US Apache helicopters fired on the attackers, a US statement said. A medical worker said that he rushed in to help those hurt in the attack.

"We saw the dead scattered on the ground and the injured were taken to al-Kadimiyah hospital for treatment. There are more injured children than the men and women", the medical worker said.

Television reports said about one million pilgrims from Baghdad and outlying provinces had gathered near the Imam Mousa al-Kadim shrine in the capital's Kazimiyah district for the annual commemoration of the Shiite saint's death. Survivors were rushed in ambulances and private cars to numerous hospitals and officials were scrambling to compile an accurate crowd. "We were on the bridge. It was so crowded. Thousands of people were surrounding me," said survivor Fadhel Ali, 28, as he stood bare-footed and soaking wet after swimming from the river. "We heard that a suicide attacker was among the crowd. Everybody was yelling so I jumped from the bridge into the river, swam and reached the bank. I saw women, children and old men falling after me into the water."

Health Minister Abdul-Mutalib Mohammed told state-run Iraqiya television that there were "huge crowds on the bridge and the disaster happened when someone shouted that there is a suicide bomber on the bridge. This led to a state of panic among the pilgrims and they started to push each other and there was many cases of suffocation," he said.

Shiite religious festivals have often been targeted for attack by Sunni extremists



Iraqis walk over shoes lost during a stampede on a bridge in Baghdad on Wednesday

seeking to trigger civil war among the rival communities. In March 2004, suicide attackers struck worshippers at the Imam Kadhim shrine and a holy site in Karbala, killing at least 181 people.

The head of the country's major Sunni clerical group, the Association of Muslim Scholars, told Al-Jazeera television that the

disaster on Wednesday was "another catastrophe and something else that could be added to the list of ongoing Iraqi tragedies."

"On this occasion we want to express our condolences to all the Iraqis and the parents of the martyrs, who fell today in Kazimiyah and all over Iraq," the cleric, Haith al-Dhari, said. Agencies

# Now, Vajpayee calls Jinnah secular *Religion*

**HT Correspondent**  
New Delhi, August 21

IT WAS former Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee's turn on Sunday to say Pakistan's founder Mohammed Ali Jinnah was a secular man. Significantly, he said this in the presence of RSS chief K.S. Sudershan, who recently led the Sangh's offensive against BJP chief L.K. Advani for his Jinnah eulogy in Pakistan.

Unlike Advani, Vajpayee was careful to add that Jinnah was later responsible for the country's partition. He was speaking at a function to pay tributes to deceased RSS leader H.V. Seshadri.

Quoting from Seshadri's book *The Tragic Story of Partition*, Vajpayee said many nationalists later became communal and religious fanatics.

*21/2/18* What happened to such people? Why did Jinnah change? He had nothing to do with communalism or Islam. It was wrong to call him religious and when he became associated with the Home Rule Movement, he used to say he belonged to the sect which believed in Dashavataras and practised Hindu social customs and laws of succession," he said.

Vajpayee read out an anecdote from Seshadri's book wherein Jinnah tells Motilal Nehru that "he does not believe in the *bak-waas* (nonsense) of mullahs..." "It is regrettable that he had to go with the fools," Vajpayee said. Yet, the former Prime Minister

added, "We have to see him (Jinnah) in totality and he was responsible for the Muslim League, the country's partition and religious fanaticism."

■ L.K. Advani is all praise for Narendra Modi, but also pays a visit to Keshubhai, the Gujarat CM's chief detractor

■ For Madan Lal Khurana, a parting seems imminent

**See Page 2**

2 AUG 2008

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

# Plea against Muslim Personal Law Board setting up parallel system

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## Notice issued to Centre, Board on petition citing Imrana rape case

Legal Correspondent

**NEW DELHI:** The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued notice to the Centre, the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board and others on a petition seeking to refrain the Board from establishing a parallel Muslim judicial system (Nizam-e-Qaza) in the wake of a fatwa issued by the seminary Darul-Uloom against a Muslim woman allegedly raped by her father-in-law.

A Bench of Justice Y.K. Sabharwal and Justice A.K. Mathur also issued notice to the States of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Delhi, and West Bengal. Notice was also sent to the Darul-Uloom at Deoband in Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh, and Muslim for Secular Democracy, Mumbai.

Advocate, Vishwa Lochan Ma-

dan, in his public interest petition, submitted that a Muslim woman, Imrana, was allegedly raped by her father-in-law and the village panchayat passed a fatwa asking her to treat him as her husband.

The Darul-Uloom also declared that Imrana became ineligible to live with her husband. This was endorsed by the Board.

Mr. Madan contended that matters relating to Imrana's status of marriage and dissolution of marriage were squarely covered by Sec. 2 of the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937. A parallel judicial system (Nizam-e-Qaza) was sought to be introduced by setting up Dar-ul-Qaza (courts) at various places, and these had actually started functioning as courts of justice.

Gullible and illiterate Muslims were being forced to obey and

submit to the same, using the name of Allah and the Holy Quran, he stated.

The petitioner submitted that the various activities being indulged in by the AIMPLB and other Muslim bodies, amounted to an open, blatant and flagrant affront on the sovereign concept of the Constitution and deserved to be curbed and trampled, once and for all.

He sought that the activities of the Board and similar organisations for establishment of Nizam-e-Qaza and setting up of Dar-ul-Qazas and Shariat Court be declared absolutely illegal and unconstitutional.

It was also demanded that the fatwas of various authorities be made unenforceable, and the Centre and the States concerned be directed to take steps to disband the Dar-ul-Qazas forthwith.

17 AUG 2005

THE HINDU

11 AUG 2005

MAHARAJA UNIVERSITY

# ধর্মের ভিত্তিতে সংখ্যালঘু তকমা চায় না সুপ্রিম কোর্ট

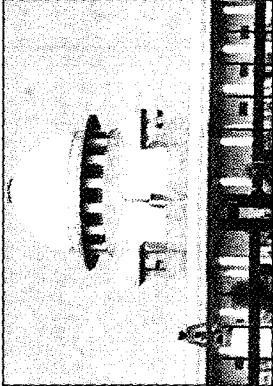
স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ১০ অগস্ট: ধর্মের ভিত্তিতে কোনও সম্প্রদায়কে সংখ্যালঘু হিসাবে স্বীকৃতি দেওয়ার প্রথা তুলে দেওয়ার পক্ষে মত দিল সুপ্রিম কোর্ট। ভারতের মতো গণতান্ত্রিক দেশে সংখ্যালঘু সম্প্রদায়ের তালিকার প্রয়োজন নেই বলে সর্বোচ্চ আদালত মনে করে। এই তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ মন্তব্য করতে গিয়ে আদালত সংখ্যালঘু কমিশনকে শ্রবণ করিয়ে দিয়েছে যে, এমন সামাজিক পরিস্থিতি সৃষ্টি করার দিকেই নজর দেওয়া উচিত, যেখানে সংখ্যালঘু বা সংখ্যাগুরু বলে আলাদা করে কারও অধিকার রক্ষার প্রয়োজন হবে না।

সুপ্রিম কোর্টের প্রধান বিচারপতি আর সি লাহোটি, বিচারপতি ডি এম ধর্মাদিকারী এবং পি কে বালসুরক্যামের বেঞ্চ বলেছে, ধর্মীয় গোষ্ঠীকে সংখ্যালঘু সম্প্রদায় হিসাবে স্বীকৃতি দিলে দেশ তথা জাতিই দুর্বল হয়ে পড়ে। জাতপাতের সমস্যায় এমনিতেই জর্জরিত ভারতীয় সমাজে এই ভাবে ধর্মীয় সংখ্যালঘুর তকমা বিভেদকামী মানসিকতাকেই উস্কে দেয়। এই প্রসঙ্গে কেন্দ্রীয় ও রাজ্য সরকারের তৈরি সংখ্যালঘু কমিশনের ভূমিকা সম্পর্কে মত জানিয়েছে সর্বোচ্চ আদালত। তাদের মতে, নথিভুক্ত সংখ্যালঘু সম্প্রদায় হিসাবে স্বীকৃতি পেতে বিভিন্ন সম্প্রদায় মাঝেমাঝেই আবেদন করে থাকে। কিন্তু সংখ্যালঘু কমিশনের এই সব আবেদনে উৎসাহ দেওয়া উচিত নয়। বরং কমিশনের উচিত, তেমন সামাজিক পরিস্থিতি সৃষ্টির পথ ও উপায় বাতলে দেওয়া, যেখানে নথিভুক্ত সংখ্যালঘু তালিকা বলে কোনও কিছুই অস্তিত্বই থাকবে না।

সুপ্রিম কোর্টের এই অভিমতের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে সংখ্যালঘু কমিশন কী মনে করছে, তা জানা যায়নি। কেন্দ্রীয় আইন মন্ত্রকও কমিশনের বক্তব্যের অপেক্ষায় রয়েছে। ইতিমধ্যেই নথিভুক্ত হয়ে থাকা সংখ্যালঘু সম্প্রদায়গুলির সংখ্যা ধীরে ধীরে কমিয়ে আনার ব্যাপারেও কমিশনকে আনুষ্ঠানিক বক্তব্য জানাতে হবে

আইন মন্ত্রকের কাছে এবং তার পরেই সরকারি ভাবে কোনও তৎপরতা দেখানোর কথা ভাবা হবে। সংখ্যালঘুর স্বীকৃতি চেয়ে আবেদন করা হয়েছিল জৈন সম্প্রদায়ের পক্ষে থেকে। কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার এই প্রসঙ্গে জানায়, বিভিন্ন রাজ্যে জৈন সম্প্রদায়ের অবস্থা কী রকম, তা দেখে রাজ্য সরকারগুলিরই এই ব্যাপারে সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া উচিত। কেন্দ্রের মুক্তি মেনে নিলেও জৈনদের আজি খারিজ করে দিয়েছে সুপ্রিম কোর্ট। আদালতের মত, হিন্দু সম্প্রদায়ের মধ্যে সকলেই সংখ্যালঘু। সংখ্যার বিচারে পিছিয়ে থাকার কথা বলে সংবিধানে স্বীকৃত বিশেষ সুবিধা নেওয়ার জন্য অনেকে এমন করে থাকে। সংখ্যালঘু সম্প্রদায়গুলি যদি একে অপরের থেকে বিপদের আশঙ্কায় ভোগে, তা হলে ভয় এবং অস্থিষ্কারের পরিকল্পনা তৈরি হবে, আর তাতে দেশের একাই বিপন্ন হবে বলে আদালত মতপ্রকাশ করেছে।

ধীরে ধীরে সংখ্যাগুরু ও সংখ্যালঘু বলে পৃথক শ্রেণির অস্তিত্ব তুলে দেওয়ার লক্ষ্য মাথায় রেখেই সংখ্যালঘু কমিশন তৈরি করা হয়েছিল বলে সুপ্রিম কোর্ট পরিষ্কার জানিয়েছে। দেশের ঐক্য ও সংহতি অটুট রাখার স্বার্থেই কমিশনের এই ভূমিকা নেওয়া উচিত বলে আদালতের বক্তব্য। বিচারপতি জাতীয়তাবাদের ধারণা যাতে জন্মাত না-পারে, সে দিকে লক্ষ্য রেখেই সংখ্যালঘু কমিশনের কাজ করা উচিত। "ভারতের বিভিন্ন শ্রেণির মানুষের মধ্যে বহু-ধর্মাদিকারীর ভাষায়, "ভারতের বিভিন্ন শ্রেণির মানুষের মধ্যে বহু-জাতীয়তাবাদের ধারণা যাতে জন্মাত না-পারে, সে দিকে লক্ষ্য রেখেই সংখ্যালঘু কমিশনের কাজ করা উচিত।" ভারতের বিচারে রাজ্যগুলির সম্পর্কে অবশ্য কড়া মন্তব্য করেনি আদালত। সুপ্রিম কোর্ট মনে করে, রাজ্যের মধ্যেও ভাষাগত সংখ্যালঘুদের বিচারে কোনও সম্প্রদায়ের প্রতি পৃথক আচরণের পিছনে তা-ও একটা মুক্তি আছে। কিন্তু ধর্মের বিচারে সংখ্যালঘু হিসাবে চিহ্নিত হওয়া বা করার প্রবণতায় উৎসাহ দিলে তা ভারতের সাংবিধানিক গণতন্ত্রের ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ কাঠামোয় বড়সড় আঘাত হানবে।



# বিজেপিতে

## ফের হাওয়া

হিন্দুত্বের

নয়াদিিলি, ২৩ জুলাই: সজ্জ পরিবারের সঙ্গে শান্তি চুক্তির পরে বিজেপির মুখে এখন শুধুই হিন্দুত্ব। আজ দলের কেন্দ্রীয় পদাধিকারীদের বৈঠকে যে প্রস্তাব গৃহীত হয়েছে, তাতে অযোধ্যা থেকে শুরু করে অনুপ্রবেশ, সজ্জের যা যা পছন্দ সব কিছুই রয়েছে। বৈঠকে সভাপতিত্ব করেন বিজেপি সভাপতি লালকৃষ্ণ আডবানী। হাজির ছিলেন দলের সব কেন্দ্রীয় পদাধিকারীই। বৈঠক শেষে যশোবন্ত সিংহ সাংবাদিকদের বলেন, অনুপ্রবেশের ফলে সীমান্ত এলাকার জনবিন্যাসই পাল্টে যাবে। স্বার্থ বিয়িত হচ্ছে হিন্দুদের। সীমান্তে 'ব্যাঙের ছাতার মতো গজিয়ে ওঠা' মাদ্রাসা নিয়ন্ত্রণের পাশাপাশি ধর্মান্তকরণ বন্ধের দাবি জানিয়েছে বিজেপি।

অযোধ্যা হানাকে কেবল নিরাপত্তা ব্যবস্থার ঘাটতি বলে মনে করছে না আডবানীর দল। "হিন্দুদের হয়ে মুখ খোলাকে সাম্প্রদায়িকতা বলে আখ্যা দেওয়ার যে প্রবণতা তৈরি হয়েছে, এটা তারই ফল।" বিজেপির মতে, অযোধ্যা কোটি কোটি হিন্দুর বিশ্বাসের প্রতীক। সেখানে হামলার ব্যাপারে অবিলম্বে দৃষ্টান্তমূলক ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া উচিত।

আইএমডিটি অ্যাক্ট নিয়ে সুপ্রিম কোর্টের রায় কার্যকর করার দাবি জানিয়ে বিজেপি বলেছে, রায় খতিয়ে দেখতে মন্ত্রীদের যে কমিটি গড়া হয়েছে, তা বাতিল করা হোক। মনিপুরে তিন সদস্যের প্রতিনিধি দলও পাঠানো হচ্ছে। বিজেপির বিরুদ্ধে আদর্শগত বিচ্যুতির অভিযোগ তুলেছিল আরএসএস। সেই সমালোচনায় নড়েচড়ে বসে বিজেপি আজ সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে, আগামী দিনে নেতাদের বক্তৃতা, দলের বিবৃতি, প্রস্তাবে আদর্শই প্রাধান্য পাবে। এ দিনের বৈঠকে গৃহীত প্রস্তাব অনুমোদিত হবে চেম্বাই অধিবেশনে। সজ্জের চাপে যে অধিবেশন ২১ জুলাই থেকে পিছিয়ে সেপ্টেম্বরে হচ্ছে।

# Veil ban boom in France



Associated Press

PARIS, July 14. — Nearly four in five of the French support laws barring Muslim head scarves in public places including schools, and a narrow majority of people in Germany and the Netherlands view such regulations as a good idea, international polling found.

Since this Fall, French public school students have been barred from wearing head scarves or other highly visible religious attire to class. A survey by the Pew Research Center showed strong French backing for such laws — 78 per cent — as the school year wrapped up.

In Britain, where individual schools decide what

form of dress is appropriate, 62 per cent of people surveyed this spring said laws to restrict Muslim dress were a bad idea. About 57 per cent of people in the USA and Canada opposed such measures.

The surveys, conducted well before the 7 July terror attacks on London, polled people in 17 countries on various topics relating to Muslims.

Europe has been divided on whether regulating students' clothing can help clamp down on Muslim fundamentalism and encourage integration — as French President Jacques Chirac suggested when he pushed through the law last year. Just over half, 54 per cent of Germans, support such measures.

15 JUL 2004

THE STATESMAN



# Push Hindutva for poll support: RSS to Uma

After 3-hr meeting, message clear: Tell NDA partners to keep off till elections are won

VIVEK DESHPANDE  
NAGPUR, JULY 14

TWO days after NDA convenor George Fernandes rattled RSS top brass by asking it to keep away from BJP affairs, the Parivar today delivered a clear message to the party through firebrand leader Uma Bharati: push Hindutva, our cadre will back you in Bihar.

"She has been told that as party in-charge of Bihar elections, she must push the Hindutva agenda," sources told *The Indian Express* after Bharati met top leaders at the Sangh headquarters here. The Parivar would, in return, rally around the party with strong cadre support, they said.

The RSS-Uma meeting assumes significance coming as it does against the backdrop of the ongoing tussle between the RSS and BJP president L K Advani over the latter's "ideological deviations", and NDA convenor George Fernandes' advice to the RSS to confine itself to socio-cultural activities.

Bharati was quick to object to George's statement yesterday, reiterating the party's faith

in the RSS' agenda of Ram temple, abrogation of Article 370 and common civil code.

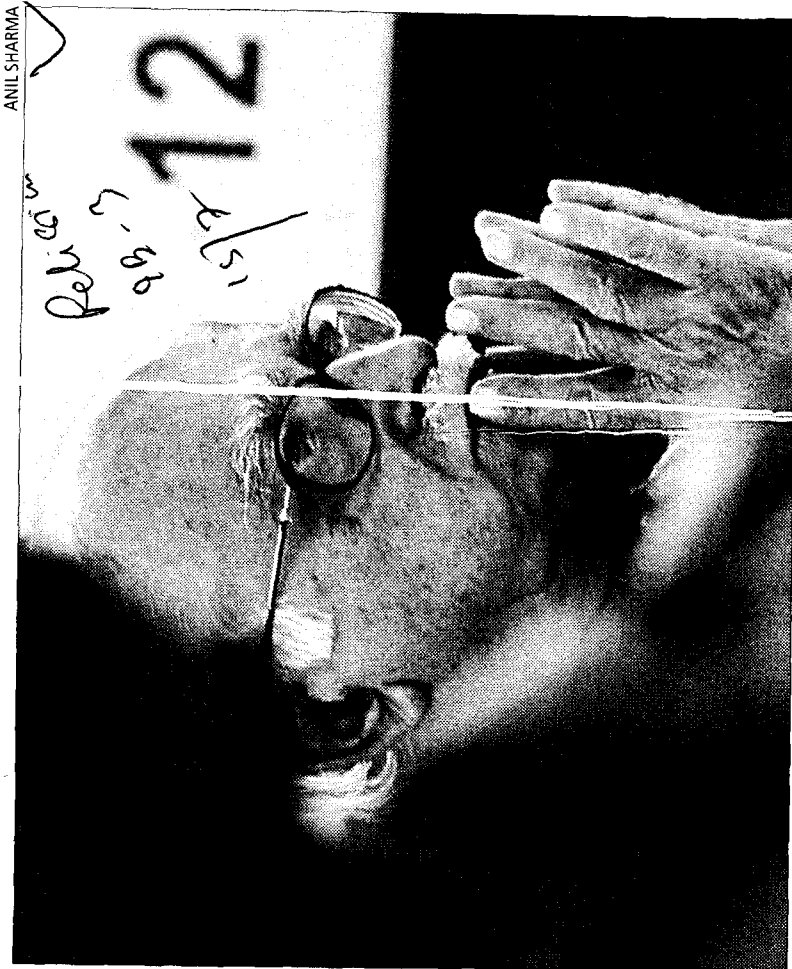
Sources said Sangh leaders K S Sudershan and Mohan Bhagwat were closetted with Uma for three hours today. She was told to make it clear to NDA partners that the BJP would follow its ideological agenda till the need was felt for a common programme if the alliance won Bihar.

This, they said, would also ensure that others from the NDA don't take "Fernandes-like liberties"; with the RSS.

Uma was also told that she must lobby hard for the Hindutva agenda at the forthcoming Chennai National Executive of the BJP, sources added.

The RSS is believed to have decided to support Bharati and Sushma Swaraj as their favourites for re-establishing Hindutva agenda in the party. This was evident recently in the two women leaders becoming vocal over Fernandes statement.

After the meeting here today, Uma, however, refused to speak to the mediapersons waiting for her outside the Sangh Building, RSS head-



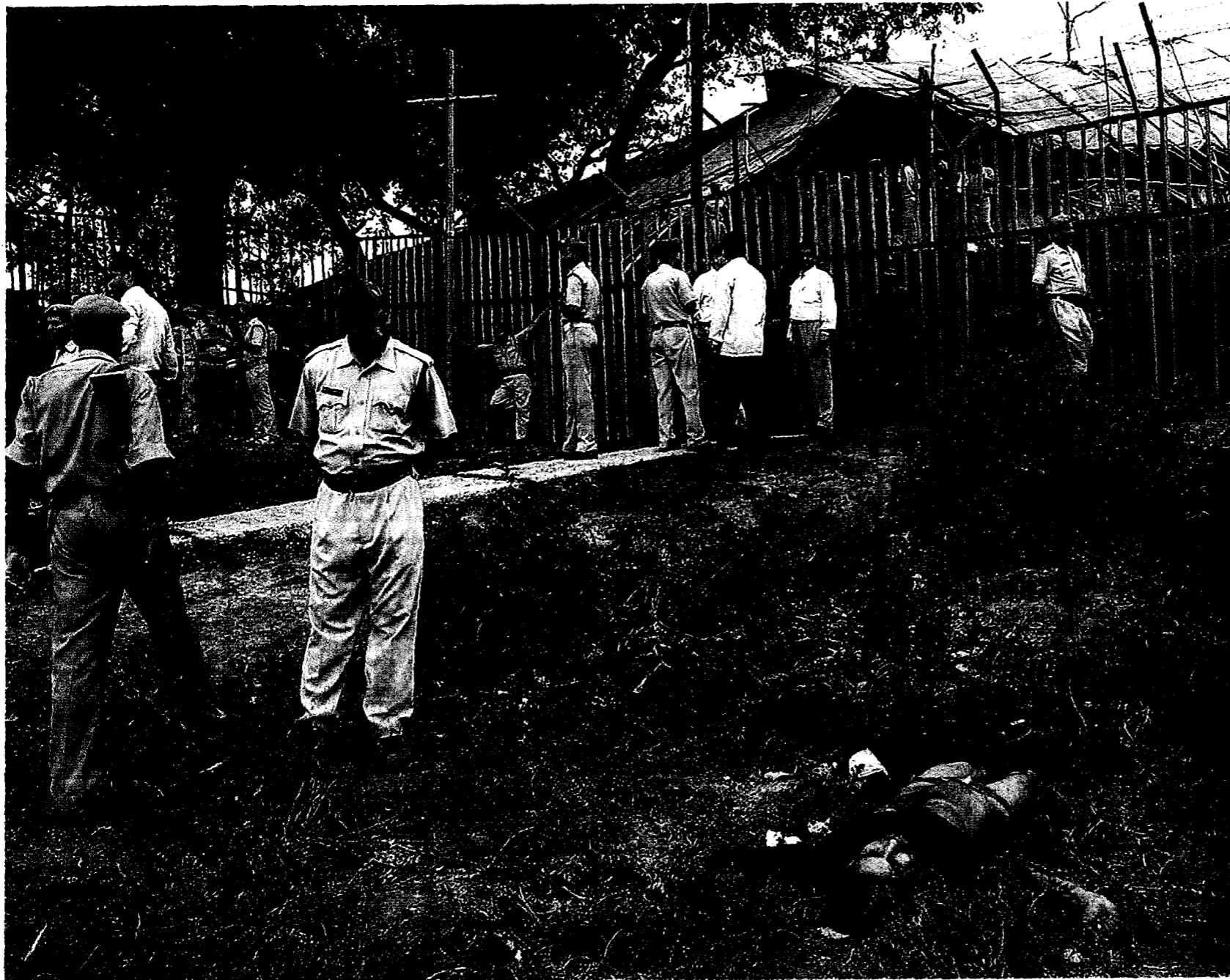
BJP president L K Advani pays homage on Thursday to RSS veteran Sunder Singh Bhandari, who passed away last week

quarter in the city's Mahal area. "I will not make any political statements here. We haven't discussed politics. I had come to invite Sudarshanji for a wedding ceremony in (my) family. I keep coming to Nagpur whenever I find time and make it a point to meet Sunder Singh Bhandari," she said.

# Terrorists storm Ayodhya complex

Religious  
+ 121  
67

Explosives-laden jeep blown up to breach fence; security forces kill all six; BJP calls for protest



**PLOT FOILED:** One of the six militants killed when they attempted to storm the Ramjanmabhoomi complex at Ayodhya on Tuesday. The militants used an explosives-laden jeep to ram the fence around the complex and then engaged the security forces in a 90-minute gun battle.

-PHOTO: SUBIR ROY

**AYODHYA:** Six heavily-armed terrorists on Tuesday made an attempt to storm the high-security makeshift Ram temple here and were killed by the security forces before they could strike at the shrine. The makeshift temple had come up the day the disputed Babri mosque was demolished 13 years ago.

Four CRPF personnel and two civilians, including a woman, were injured in the attack which occurred at around 8.15 a.m. and the intense gun-battle with the terrorists that followed.

#### Disguised as devotees

The attackers, in the guise of devotees, came in a hired jeep bearing registration number UP-42-T-0618 and stunned the security forces deployed at the first barricade by blasting the explosive-laden vehicle in which one of them was blown to pieces.

His other accomplices, who had got down from the vehicle earlier, hurled grenades and fired indiscriminately with sophisticated weapons, including AK-47 and carbine rifles, while entering the premises of the disputed area.

They were challenged by the personnel of the Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) and the CRPF near the 'Sita Rasoi' temple, part of the disputed area, and were gunned down nearly 70 metres short of the temple in an operation lasting about 90 minutes.

The driver of the taxi, Rehan Alam, a resident of Ayodhya, who also got down along with five terrorists a short distance away from the barricade, was arrested and is being questioned.

Rehan said the attackers had hired his vehicle telling him that they wanted to pay obeisance at the makeshift temple and some other shrines in Ayodhya before being dropped in Lucknow.

Another militant killed in the encounter was later found with

#### Reactions

- A blatant effort to disturb peace: Congress
- The response should be equally fitting: Advani
- Left asks Government to ward off attempts to disturb communal harmony
- Mulayam denies there was any security lapse

explosives strapped to his body.

#### BJP blames Centre, U.P.

Blaming the Centre and the Uttar Pradesh Government for the attack, the Bharatiya Janata Party said Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil and Uttar Pradesh Home Minister must resign owning responsibility for the failure to protect the "declared security site."

The BJP has called for a nationwide protest on Wednesday against the attack. Condemning the attack, BJP president L.K. Advani said the "response to the attack should also be equally fitting."

Mr. Advani and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Ministers Kalyan Singh and Rajnath Singh would visit the troubled spot on Wednesday.

Union Home Secretary Vinod Kumar Duggal told newsmen in New Delhi on Tuesday that the Centre had "intelligence information" about the possibility of a militant attack at religious places and claimed that the swift action in Ayodhya was a result of this.

#### Pilgrims, temple safe

Uttar Pradesh Principal Secretary Alok Sinha said in Lucknow that all the pilgrims were safe and no damage was done to the temple area. — PTI, UNI

# Advani was right, scholars agree

Press Trust of India

Religion

5-7

Sinha in atonement mode

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NEW DELHI, July 3. — Several scholars today justified BJP president Mr LK Advani's remarks on Pakistan founder MA Jinnah and stressed the need for a meaningful debate on the role of the man widely perceived as responsible for the Partition, saying it would lead to a better understanding of history and permanent peace in South Asia.

Speaking at a seminar — "Guilty Men of India's Partition" — here today, speakers, including scholars and JD-U leaders Mr Nitish Kumar and Mr Sharad Yadav, said Mr Advani had merely quoted from Jinnah's 11 August, 1947, speech which was very much secular in tone. They said that they hoped the debate generated by Mr Advani's remarks during his Pakistan visit would result in the improvement of Hindu-Muslim relations in India.

Journalists Kuldeep Nayar, MJ Akbar, JNU's Prof. Anand Kumar and Prof. Ved Pratap Vaidik described Jinnah as a secular man

New Delhi, July 3. — In an apparent bid to tone down his attack against the BJP president Mr LK Advani, senior BJP leader and former finance minister in the NDA government, Mr Yashwant Sinha, today said that his remarks on Mohammad Ali Jinnah could have been put differently and ruled out joining any other party.

Referring to the Jinnah controversy, Mr Sinha told a TV channel that "it could have been put differently... so that all the hullabaloo that was created about Advaniji giving a certificate to Jinnah could have been avoided," he said. Mr Sinha added: "I personally felt that it diverted attention from more important issues of developments in the (India-Pakistan) peace process." The senior BJP leader said that former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao had wanted him to join the Congress at one point of time. "(But) I deliberately made a choice of joining the BJP and not the Congress." — PTI

who was opposed to mixing of religion with politics, but who ultimately joined the Muslim League after being sidelined and humiliated in the Congress.

Maintaining that Jinnah's contribution to the freedom struggle cannot be ignored, Akbar said few people knew that when Agha Khan demanded a separate electorate for Muslims, Jinnah had opposed it on the ground that it could lead to the partition of the country.

It was due to Jinnah that the Lucknow Pact was reached at between

the Congress and the Muslim League in 1916 and it was he who had the guts to oppose Gandhi in the 1920 Nagpur session of the Congress when Gandhi asked Congressmen to join the Khilafat Movement. Jinnah, however, became adamant on Pakistan after Nehru backed out on the Congress' commitment to a constitutional guarantee for Muslims in power sharing, Akbar said. Most of the speakers agreed that Partition could not be attributed to any individual leader and that it was the result of a combination of historical factors.

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THE STATESMAN

# জিন্মা খলনায়ক না মহানায়ক?

আদবানি জিন্মাকে জাতীয়তাবাদী, ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ বলাতে এখন চারিদিকে রে-রে পড়ে গেছে। দেশ ভাগের অন্যতম হোতা যে জিন্মা, এ বিষয়ে সন্দেহের অবকাশ নেই। 'পাকিস্তান' আদায়ের জন্য তাঁর উগ্র সাম্প্রদায়িক রাজনীতির কথাও কারও অজানা নয়। যেহেতু দেশভাগ হয়ে পাকিস্তান হয়েছে, সেহেতু সেখানে জিন্মাকে ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ হিসেবে তুলে ধরাটা গৌণ ব্যাপার। কিন্তু গবেষণা তথা ইতিহাসের স্বার্থে সাম্প্রতিক বিতর্কের জেরে এককালের ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ জিন্মাকে জেনে নিতে অসুবিধা

কোথায়। তাঁর জীবনযাত্রা বরাবরই ছিল অসাম্প্রদায়িক। পাশ্চাত্য আদব কায়দায় লালিত। কখনও নামাজ পড়তেন না। গোঁড়া মুসলিমদের অপছন্দ করতেন। ছিলেন হিন্দু ও মুসলমানের 'মিলনের দূত',



প্রকৃতই ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ আদর্শে বিশ্বাসী এক সাহসী ও চতুর ভারতীয়। ১৯২৪ সালে দিল্লিতে একবার জিন্মা সাহেব কথা প্রসঙ্গে স্যার তেজবাহাদুর সাকরকে এ মর্মে বলেছিলেন যে, হিন্দু গোঁড়া পুরোহিত শ্রেণীকে উৎখাত এবং গোঁড়া মোল্লাদের ধ্বংস করতে পারলে হিন্দু-মুসলিম মিলন সম্ভব। জিন্মার স্বজন-বন্ধু মাহামুদাবাদের রাজা সাহেব তাঁর 'Some Memories' (অক্সফোর্ড ইউনিভার্সিটি প্রেস, নিউইয়র্ক, ১৯৮৪) গ্রন্থের ৭৯ পৃষ্ঠায় এ মর্মে ১৯২৫ সালের একটি ঘটনা প্রসঙ্গে লিখেছেন যে, জিন্মা মনে করতেন তিনি প্রথমে ভারতবাসী ও পরে মুসলমান। গোলটেবিল বৈঠকগুলির পরে প্রকাশিত শ্বেতপত্রের প্রতিক্রিয়াতে তিনি নিজের পরিচয় দিলেন এই বলে 'I am an Indian first and Muslim afterward' (দ্রঃ 'গান্ধী ভার্সেস জিন্মা', এ এইচ মরিয়াম)। উল্লেখ্য ১৯২৫ এ গান্ধী যখন লিখছেন যে তিনি প্রথমে হিন্দু, তারপর ভারতীয়— ঠিক তখনই জিন্মা জনৈক মুসলিম লিগ কর্মীকে ভর্তসনা করে বলছেন: তিনি প্রথমে ভারতীয়, তারপর মুসলমান (ভারতীয় উপ-মহাদেশে সাম্প্রদায়িক রাজনীতির পটভূমিকা এবং দেশবিভাগ (প্রবন্ধ), তরুণ রায়, অনীক, ফেব্রুয়ারী-মার্চ, ১৯৯৩)। শুধু তাই নয় ১৯৪৭-এর ১১ আগস্টে পাকিস্তান পরিষদ কক্ষে তিনি যে বক্তৃতা দিয়েছিলেন তাতেও অসাম্প্রদায়িকতার ছাপ সুস্পষ্ট। তিনি বলেছিলেন— 'You are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or any other place of worship in this state... you may belong to any religion, caste or creed—that has nothing to do with the fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one state...' (Gandhi vases Jinnah, A.H.Mariam)। আরও বলেন, 'এমন একটা যুগ আসবে যখন হিন্দুরা নিজেদের হিন্দু ও মুসলমানেরা নিজেদের মুসলমান বলে ভুলতে শিখবেন। ধর্মের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গিতে নয়, কারণ ওটা হল ব্যক্তিগত বিচার এবং ন্যায়ের দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি নিয়ে এবং দেশের নাগরিক হিসেবে তাঁরা বসবাস করবেন' (Jinnah, Wolpert p. 339)। জিন্মা প্রসঙ্গে তাঁর এক কালের প্রবল সমালোচক জওহরলালের ১৯৪৪-এ লিখিত অভিমত বিবেচ্য— 'তিনি ছিলেন যোগ্য ও দুর্ধর্ষ। পদের প্রলোভন দ্বারা তাঁকে বশীভূত করা সম্ভব নয় যা-কিনা এত জনের এত বড় দুর্বলতা' (ডিসক্ভারি অফ ইন্ডিয়া, পৃঃ ৩৮৬)। জিন্মা সম্পর্কে আশ্চর্যকর বলেছিলেন তিনি ছিলেন 'দূর্নীতির উর্ধ্বে' (এ জি নূরানি, ইন্ডিয়ান এক্সপ্রেস, ২৭ নভেম্বর ১৯৮৮, পৃঃ ৫) কিন্তু এই জিন্মাই হয়েছিলেন পাকিস্তান নির্মাণের মুখ্য কারিগর। ডি পি মেনন তাঁর Transfer of Power in India (ওরিয়েন্ট লংম্যান ১৯৫৭)- গ্রন্থে তাঁকে অভিহিত করেছেন— 'আমার প্রজন্মের যথার্থ নায়ক' রূপে। গান্ধীর সঙ্গে তাঁর মতান্তরের প্রাথমিক কারণ এই যে, তাঁর প্রতীতি জন্মেছিল যে, গান্ধী কংগ্রেসে ধর্মীয়তার অনুপ্রবেশ

ঘটাতে চাইছেন। ১৯২৪-এর মুসলিম লিগ অধিবেশনে জিন্মা ঘোষণা করেছিলেন যে, তিনি চান, 'মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়কে সংগঠিত করতে, হিন্দুদের সঙ্গে ঝগড়া বিবাদ করতে নয়, মাতৃভূমির স্বার্থে তাদের সঙ্গে একতাবদ্ধ হতে, সহযোগিতা করতে।' একটি চমৎকার প্রবন্ধে — ('Jinnah the Liberal', Sunday, October 1983) মধু লিমায়ে লিখেছিলেন, 'জিন্মা ছিলেন এমন এক নিষ্ঠাবান জাতীয়তাবাদী, যার নিষ্ঠা যথার্থ অর্থেই অপরিমেয়'। ১৯১৯-এ পার্লামেন্টের সিলেক্ট কমিটিতে

সাক্ষ্যদান কালে জিন্মাকে প্রশ্ন করা হয়েছিল, মুসলিম ও হিন্দুদের মধ্যে রাজনৈতিক বৈষম্যের সম্পূর্ণ উৎখাত তাঁর কাম্য কিনা। উত্তরে তিনি বলেছিলেন, 'অবশ্যই সেদিন যদি সত্যিই আসে, অ্যান্ড হব সবচেয়ে সুখী'।

তবে যখন রাজনীতি থেকে স্বেচ্ছা অবসর নিয়ে ইংল্যান্ডে ছিলেন, তখনও কিন্তু 'পাকিস্তান' প্রতিষ্ঠার বিলিক তাঁর মাথায় খেলেনি। ১৯৩৪ সালে কেমব্রিজ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্র রহমত আলি লভনের ওয়ালডর্ফ হোটেলে নৈশভোজের আয়োজন করেন। সেখানে নিমন্ত্রিত জিন্মাকে অনুরোধ করা হয় পাকিস্তানের উদ্যোক্তা হতে। জিন্মা বলেন ওটা একটা অবাঞ্ছনীয় স্বপ্ন। তিনি তার পক্ষপাতী নন। আন্তরিকভাবে জিন্মা সব সময় চাইতেন, ভারতকে এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়ার জন্য হিন্দু-মুসলমান সমস্যার সমাধান হওয়া উচিত এবং এমন একটা পরিবেশ সৃষ্টি করতে হবে, যেন দেশের সব সম্প্রদায় সুখে শান্তিতে বসবাস করতে পারে। সর্বদলীয় অধিবেশনে লিগের তরফ থেকে ১৯২৭-এর ডিসেম্বরে জিন্মা একবার বলেছিলেন: 'আজ আমি আপনাদের কাছে একজন মুসলমান নাগরিক হিসাবে নয়, একজন ভারতীয় নাগরিক হিসাবে বলছি, আপনারা কি সামান্য কয়েকজনের কাছ থেকে সাহায্য পেলেই সন্তুষ্ট হবেন? আপনারা কি চান না, মুসলিম ভারত আপনাদের সঙ্গে এগিয়ে যাক? সংখ্যালঘুদের কি সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠদের দেওয়ার মত কিছুই নেই? ... আমরা সবাই এই দেশের সন্তান, অতএব আমাদের একসঙ্গে বসবাস করতে হবে, কাজ করতে হবে। আমাদের মধ্যে যতই বিভেদ থাক না কেন, ঝগড়া বিবাদ বাড়িয়ে কোনও ফল হবে না। আমরা যদি এই বিষয়ে একমত না হতে পারি, অন্তত আমাদের মধ্যে যে পার্থক্য আছে এই কথাটি স্বীকার করতে পারি, বন্ধু হিসাবে আমরা একে অন্যের কাছ থেকে বিদায় নিতে চাই। বিশ্বাস করুন, যত দিন ভারতের হিন্দু-মুসলমান এক না হবে, ততদিন দেশের কোনও উন্নতি হবে না...'। (মহম্মদ আলি জিন্মা, এম এইচ সৈয়দ, পৃঃ ৪৩২-৩৫; স্বাধীনতার অজানা কথা, বিক্রমাদিত্য, পৃঃ ১০৩)। জিন্মার বক্তৃতার সবচেয়ে উল্লেখযোগ্য অংশ হল, 'বন্ধু হিসাবে আমরা একে অন্যের কাছ থেকে বিদায় নিতে চাই'— এই কথাটি বলার সময় তাঁর চোখ দিয়ে জল গড়িয়ে পড়েছিল ('নেহরু', মাইকেল এডওয়ার্ডস, পৃঃ ৭৩)। তবে পূর্বের প্রসঙ্গে ফিরে এসে বলি, এ হেন অসাম্প্রদায়িক জিন্মা কেন পরবর্তীকালে মুসলিম সাম্প্রদায়িকতার জালে নিজেকে জড়াতে গেলেন, আর কেনই বা একদা কংগ্রেসের ছত্রছায়ায় যাঁর রাজনৈতিক জীবনের হাতে খড়ি, যিনি জাতীয় কংগ্রেসের প্রধান নেতাদের একজন ছিলেন, সেই জিন্মা কংগ্রেসের ওপর বীতশ্রদ্ধ হয়ে শেষ পর্যন্ত দ্বিজাতিতন্ত্রের ভিত্তিতে পাকিস্তান সৃষ্টি করতে দৃঢ়প্রতিজ্ঞ হয়ে উঠলেন? এ প্রশ্নের উত্তর পাওয়া যাবে যদি আমরা প্রকৃত সত্যকে আড়াল না করে কংগ্রেস ও তার নেতৃবর্গের কাজের প্রকৃত মূল্যায়ন করতে পারি। জিন্মাকে আলাদা ভাবে খলনায়ক বানাতে গেলে ভুল করা হবে। শেষে বলি, জিন্মা সম্পর্কে আদবানির বিতর্কিত মন্তব্যের জেরে দেশভাগের আসল কারণ উন্মোচিত হোক — এটা আমরা চাই।

আমিনুল ইসলাম। ঢেকুয়া। সুতাহাটা। পূর্ব মেদিনীপুর

# Differing rulings in American Ten Commandments cases

U.S. Supreme Court split on setting boundaries between church and state

Bob Dart

**WASHINGTON:** A bitterly divided Supreme Court split on Monday on setting boundaries between church and state — ruling that the Ten Commandments can be displayed on the grounds of the Texas State Capitol but not in the halls of two Kentucky courthouses.

The rulings indicated that the Supreme Court is still unsettled about the place that religious displays can occupy on public property and that future legal disputes will be settled case by case.

“Whether a particular Ten Commandments display is constitutional will depend on its history, purpose and context,” predicted Erwin Chemerinsky, the Duke University law professor who unsuccessfully argued the Texas case.

The two 5-4 decisions illustrate how President George Bush’s selections to fill any upcoming vacancies on the Court could sway rulings on many issues that divide the nation as well as the current nine justices.

## Interpretations

“What we have is a titanic clash between two radically different interpretations of the Constitution,” said Ralph Neas, president of People for the American Way, a liberal advocacy group. The vast majority of key constitutional questions — on abortion rights, environmental issues, religious liberty and other issues — are being settled on 5-4 or 6-3 votes, he said.

“The next few months, the next few years, will determine what the law of the land is for the next several decades,” said Mr. Neas.

The swing vote in the Ten Commandment decisions was Justice Stephen Breyer — an appointee of the former President, Bill Clinton, who provided the margin of victory in the changing majorities. The other justices voted either for or against the



**CLOSE DECISION:** Reverend Rob Schenck (centre), President of Faith and Action, speaks alongside other members of his group and the press outside the Supreme Court in Washington DC on Monday. — PHOTO: REUTERS

displays in both cases. The close decision in the Kentucky case “showed once again that the nation’s top court is completely out of step with the American people,” said Roberta Combs, president of the Christian Coalition of America. The ruling “makes the confirmation of strict constructionists of the Court more important than ever.”

If the Court’s strict constructionists — Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas — get a reliable majority, Mr. Neas said, more than 100 rulings going back to the 1930s would be overturned.

In the Texas case, a homeless Austin attorney named Thomas Van Orden had sued the state to remove a granite monument displaying the Ten Commandments, charging that it was an unconstitutional promotion of religion by the state.

In an opinion written by Chief Justice William Rehnquist, the slim majority said that the six-foot monument was among 17 sculptures on the grounds and “has a dual significance” of “both religion and government”.

## Religious content

“Of course, the Ten Commandments are religious — they were so viewed at their inception and so remain. The monument therefore has religious significance,” wrote Mr. Rehnquist, who has been rumoured to be considering stepping down.

“Simply having religious content or promoting a message consistent with a religious doctrine does not run afoul of the Establishment Clause” of the First Amendment.

But dissenters said that the monument does, indeed, violate the First Amendment clause that

says: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

In dissent, Justice John Paul Stevens pointed out that the Texas monument opens with the First Commandment, in which the Bible says God told Moses: “I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” “The message transmitted by Texas’ chosen display is quite plain: This State endorses the divine code of the ‘Judeo-Christian’ God,” wrote Mr. Stevens.

Joining Mr. Rehnquist in the majority were Justices Scalia, Anthony M. Kennedy, Thomas and Breyer. Besides Mr. Stevens, the dissenters were Justices Sandra Day O’Connor, Stevens, David Souter and Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

A bare majority went the other way in the Kentucky case —

ruling that the boundary between church and state was breached in displays of the Ten Commandments in courthouses of McCreary and Pulaski Couacted wrongly to “ratchet up the Court’s hostility to religion,” Mr. Scalia wrote.

He noted that from the presidential oath of office ending with “So Help Me God” to coins that say “In God We Trust” to the Supreme Court’s own opening prayer that “God Save the United States and this Honorable Court,” religious references permeate government institutions.

“How can the Court possibly assert “the First Amendment mandates government neutrality between ... religion in itself and not allow them any local courthouses. ... Hopefully the Texas decision will set the precedent.” —New York Times News Service

# Sri Lankan Muslims express concern over joint mechanism

Religion  
HD-12  
19/6

V.S. Sambandan

**COLOMBO:** The Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) on Saturday said a "variety of concerns" of the community would have to be addressed in the proposed joint mechanism for tsunami relief, failing which it would not be able to extend support to the move.

Though the Muslim community was "quite dissatisfied" with the "process and substance" of the proposed move, Rauf Hakeem, the leader of the SLMC however, said, the differences "could be easily resolved" if the various Muslim political groupings evolved a common position on the proposed mechanism.

At a press conference in Colombo Mr. Hakeem called upon all the Muslim political factions to work together and evolve a common po-

• Community has "variety of concerns"

• Muslim parties urged to evolve common platform

• "Elected representatives not involved"

• Full disclosure of mechanism sought

sition. The main concerns of the Muslim community, he said was that they were not involved in the formulation of the mechanism and apprehensions over the effectiveness of the community's representatives in the proposed mechanism.

"Not to involve elected Muslim representatives is a serious flaw," Mr. Hakeem said. Moreover, the

Muslims were required to be "an active party in the process and sign the document," he said. The SLMC leader also said: "We have fears as to the ability of the community's representatives to decide the projects."

The proposed joint mechanism envisages a three-tier structure with equal representation of the Government, the LTTE and the Muslims at the apex level. The regional 10-member body would comprise five LTTE nominees, three from the Muslim parties and two Sinhalese. Recalling that the Muslim community had been expressing its position in the past as well, Mr. Hakeem said "we do not want to be an obstacle to any progressive step." "There is no clarity" on the proposed mechanism, he said, calling for a "full disclosure" of the planned move.

9 JUN 2005

THE HINDU

# No Hindutva, no ties: Thackeray to BJP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI | JUNE 18

**S**HIV Sena chief Balasaheb Thackeray today said his party's alliance with the BJP would become "history" if the latter ditches Hindutva.

"We entered into an alliance with the BJP for the sake of Hindutva and not just elections. It would be unfortunate if the alliance becomes history," Thackeray said in an interview to party mouthpiece *Saamna*.

Riduculing BJP chief L.K. Advani's recent remarks about Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, Thackeray said the BJP was confused. "Jinnah cannot be termed secular as he did not even protest the bloodshed

during Partition," he said.

Referring to the BJP's ideological confusion, he said, "One Advani does not mean the entire BJP. You cannot hold the party responsible for the fault of a person. When a policeman commits a rape, you cannot defame the entire police force."

Thackeray also justified the demolition of the Babri Mosque saying he was happy it took place.

The Sena chief has hinted he has given up hopes of allying with Sharad Pawar's NCP. "He (Pawar) is a very



**RSS is our mother, says Mahajan**

**NEW DELHI:** Describing RSS as "our mother", BJP general secretary Pramod Mahajan has said it should give the party "freedom to work" and "not scold us publicly". Disturbed by its onslaught after BJP President L.K. Advani's controversial comments on Mohd Ali Jinnah, he said "misunderstanding should be cleared in a decent way". "Sangh is our mother and we will never break our relationship with it," Mahajan told a television channel. "But execution of ideology is the duty of BJP and they should leave this to BJP. They should give us freedom to work and BJP should maintain its culture," he said. "Such type of comments harm our organisation and anti-Hindu forces gain from these actions." — PTI

selfish person. He is using his position in power at the Centre to expand his party," he said.

NCP has been aggressively expanding its network in various parts of the state, especially the traditional Sena stronghold of Konkan and Mumbai. Elsewhere, Marathi weekly *Vivek*, which draws inspiration from the RSS, has called for Advani's advisor Sudheendra Kulkarni to be sacked. In an issue slated to hit the stands today, the weekly has said Kulkarni is

entirely to blame for Advani's "discovery" that Jinnah was secular. "I don't understand why Advani, who's been witness to (the) bloody history of unified India's partition, has dared to call Jinnah a secular person," it said. "Advani's misadventure in Pakistan has virtually split the Parivar."

The weekly says Advani has "lost himself" over the last few years while trying to transform himself into a moderate leader.

"And to hasten the process of Advani's new discovery, Sudheendra Kulkarni has acted as a potent catalyst." The magazine wonders how a Marxist journalist who used to edit a leftist weekly *Blitz* managed to find a place in the BJP's inner circle 10 years ago.

19 JUN 2005

INDIAN EXPRESS



# A Fine Balance

## Bill aims to ban religious hate in Britain

**T**HE proposed Racial and Religious Hatred Bill in Britain is a sign of changed times. Not too long ago, it was assumed that religion and religious faith were on the decline in industrialised societies and confined to the privacy of one's home. But now we know that the predictions about the death of religion were premature. The new Bill recognises the resurgence of religion and the importance of protecting all religious faiths. Religious hatred is defined in the Bill as "hatred against a group of persons defined by reference to religious belief or lack of religious belief", which means it will also cover atheists. In granting protection to all religious faiths, Britain is coming to terms with the fact that it is a nation where different religious communities jostle for space. In this regard, India holds important lessons for Britain. India has traditionally followed the policy of sarva dharma sambhava where religions are allowed to coexist and flourish. At the same time, there are institutional safeguards to prevent religious hatred or intolerance. The Indian Penal Code has provisions to punish anyone who promotes enmity between different groups on grounds of religion or race. There are also laws that prohibit election candidates from propagating religious hatred in their campaign speeches.

While religious leaders have welcomed the new Bill in Britain, human rights organisations have slammed it. Critics have labelled the Bill as a new blasphemy law, which would undermine freedom of expression and pave the way for censorship. Some of the criticism is justified as the line between protecting religious sentiments and censorship is fuzzy. This is especially true of books, plays or films that are critical of religious practices. A few months ago, a Birmingham theatre was forced to cancel showing Behzti after violent protests by Sikh groups who claimed that the play portrayed their faith negatively. In India, too, the film Jo Bole So Nihaal was pulled out of cinema halls after Sikh leaders took exception to it. This goes to show that religious intolerance can be the flip side of protecting religious faiths. Britain as well as India will have to strike an acceptable balance between safeguarding religious sentiments and freedom of speech.





GUEST COLUMN | Patrick French

✓ H 6 12/6 ✓

# Jinnah and his secularism

*Advani's comments provoked Praveen Togadia to stand on his hind legs and proclaim "Jinnah was a traitor" — but was he? And did Advani not anticipate the response?*

**M**R ADVANI, I know the feeling. Say that Mohammad Ali Jinnah was a secularist and you get your head bitten off. Whether or not it is true is irrelevant. Say that Jinnah's conception of Pakistan and the way the country has turned out are at odds, and the same thing happens. Say that Pakistan was intended as a homeland for Indian Muslims and not as a theocratic Islamic state and people get angry.

When *Liberty or Death* was serialised in a weekly magazine in 1997 under the headline 'Jinnah's Secularism and Gandhi's Fads', the letter-writers of India went mad. I was found to be "blatantly biased", "Pak-sponsored" and "a shallow-minded attention-mongering [sic] idiot". My favourite letter came from a Mr P. Govindrajan of Bangalore who deduced on the basis of the extracts he had read that, "The book, by all standards, is trash."

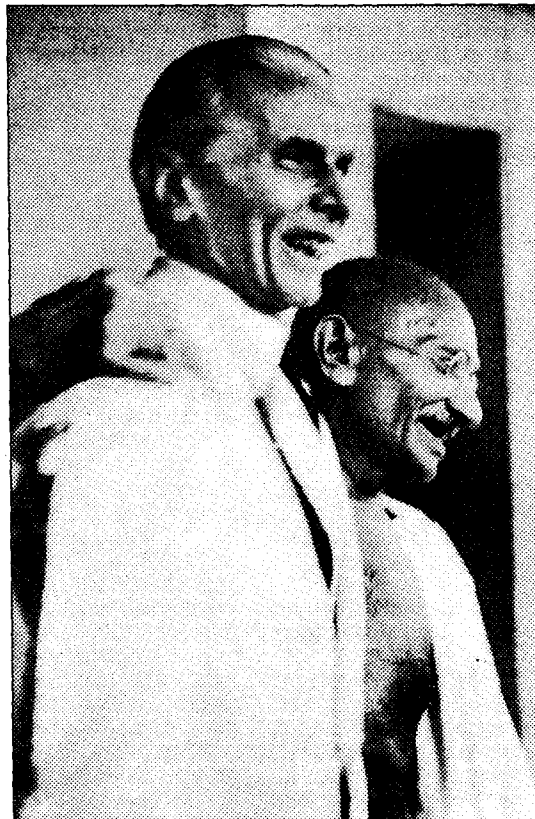
Was Jinnah secular? Sort of. He used communal antagonism as a political bargaining tool in the Forties, and he failed to foresee the bloodshed and migration that might follow from it. But his essential nature was secular. He was a nationalist and a constitutionalist; he ate pork, drank alcohol and played the stock market. Motilal Nehru famously said he was "showing the way to Hindu-Muslim

unity". As late as 1946, Jinnah was willing to accept an undivided India, and his founding vision of Pakistan — quoted by L.K. Advani in his recent speech in Karachi — as a land where "you may belong to any religion or caste or creed" was exemplary.

Jinnah's demand for a separate Muslim State was provoked by the failure of the Congress to accommodate the reasonable demands of India's Muslim community in the Thirties, and by its misjudgments during the negotiations leading up to 1947. Since Independence, dodgy history has flourished, and Jinnah has been cast as little more than a malevolent bogeyman who was determined to destroy the unity of India.

Advani, being a bogeyman himself, knew that he was risking trouble when he returned to his birthplace to make conciliatory remarks. His comments provoked Praveen Togadia of the VHP to stand up on his hind legs and proclaim, "Jinnah was a traitor, is a traitor and will remain a traitor and a person glorifying him is also a traitor". Inevitably, a spokesman for the Congress followed a similar script.

What had Advani done though? First he went to the Quaid-i-Azam Mausoleum in Karachi (a curious shrine to Jinnah where his golf clubs, monogrammed silk handkerchiefs, dandyish Hanover Square suits and even his Cadillac are on display) and wrote in the visitor's book that Mohammad Ali Jinnah was one of those rare individuals "who actually create history". This is no more than a statement of fact: Jinnah



WAS HE SECULAR? Mohammad Ali Jinnah with Mahatma Gandhi before partition

redrew the map of the world and created what was at the time the fifth largest nation State on Earth.

Advani compounded his crime by going on to make a thoughtful speech in which he quoted Jinnah's founding ideal for Pakistan and said that while Partition could not be undone, some of the follies of Partition could be. He said, "I dream of the day when divided hearts can be united; when divided families can be reunited; when pilgrims from one country — Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs — can freely go to holy sites located in the other country, and when people can travel and trade freely,

while continuing to remain proud and loyal citizens of their respective countries."

For his enemies, of whom there are many, nothing that Advani says about waging peace in Pakistan will alter their image of him as a mosque-smasher. He is, however, a shrewd politician with a long memory. When I interviewed him some months ago, I was struck by the range and quality of the history books lining his shelves: Martin Gilbert's *Never Despair*, Arnold Toynbee's *A Study of History*. His remarks in Pakistan look like a calculated attempt to reposition himself and the BJP, and for good reason.

Advani knows that the killings in Gujarat in 2002 did incalculable damage to the party's international reputation, and that the Modi-fied version of Hindutva is electorally a busted flush. If the BJP and its allies are to return to government, they have to do more than wave sabres and saffron flags. The Sangh parivar alone can never deliver enough votes. Whether the destruction of the Babri Masjid was really the saddest or the happiest day of Advani's life is of passing relevance.

Behind this manoeuvring lies the running debate about what India is, or should be. Sanjay Subrahmanyam recently pointed out that the term 'secularism' "has become almost as Indian a word as 'preponed' or 'denting' (for removing a dent in a car)". In most countries, the issue of 'secularism' is rarely discussed. In India, it means little because its meaning varies depending on who is

using it. The word has become a term of abuse and a badge of honour. 'Fascists' denounce 'secularists' as 'pseudo-secularists,' and nobody is much the wiser.

Is a 'communal' political party being 'secular' when it pays a minority leader to deliver votes at an election? Is it secular to let Muslim men divorce their wives with the triple *talaq* when this is outlawed in most Islamic countries as outmoded, and even regarded as contrary to the teaching of the Quran? Is Atal Bihari Vajpayee more secular than Advani? Are proponents of secularism cleverer than everyone else?

Amartya Sen, writing in 1993 and sounding like an India Office official of a century earlier, deduced that the destruction in Ayodhya was caused by "the extreme gullibility of the uneducated". In short, the Hindu masses of UP were too stupid: "While illiteracy may not be a central feature of communal fascism or of sectarian nationalism in general, its role in sustaining militant obscurantism can be very strong indeed."

Jinnah believed in a Pakistan which was secular in a post-religious sense. He offered, ironically, a vision of modernity that was more realistic in the Forties than it is today, in this age of developing religious nationalism. "You will find that in course of time Hindus will cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State," he said.

Whether Jinnah's vision can be realised in the short term is doubtful, but it would do both Indians and Pakistanis no harm to look again at what he was proposing for his country.

—The writer is the author of *Liberty or Death: India's Journey to Independence and Division* (Flamingo)

12 JUN 2004

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

# Advani, Jinnah and the secularism debate

Anil Nauriya

The wreath L.K. Advani laid at M.A. Jinnah's grave in Karachi would ordinarily have been a protocol formality. It did not remain so because he went on to attest to Jinnah's "secularism," inviting an assessment that must involve also a review of his own record.

Jinnah made three important pronouncements on the subject of state and nation in Pakistan. First, he spoke in August 1947, some 72 hours before the formation of Pakistan, of equal rights for all. Second, in mid-December 1947 he addressed the Muslim League Council. Here he spoke of Pakistan as being a "Muslim state based on Islamic ideals" though not an "ecclesiastical state." [Pirzada, Syed Sharifuddin (ed.), *Foundations of Pakistan: All India Muslim League Documents: 1906-1947*, Vol 2, p.571]. Finally, Jinnah said on March 28, 1948, in Dhaka that "Pakistan is the embodiment of the unity of the Muslim nation and so it must remain." (*Jinnah's Speeches and Statements as Governor General 1947-48*, pp 211-212).

If the three pronouncements are taken together these are close to the Savarkar/Advani positions. Both Savarkar and Mr. Advani have had, as a transitional position *en route* to Hindutva, the idea that while the state need not recognise religious distinctions, the nation is to be defined as Hindu. With this narrow understanding of nation, Mr. Advani had on January 4, 2003, speaking then as Deputy Prime Minister, expressed some resentment at the Ashoka Chakra, with its Buddhist association, being depicted on the nation's flag.

Jinnah's threefold position, if translated into Hindu terms in India, would yield not merely the transitional position but the complete Hindutva position as both state and nation would be defined in Hindu terms. It so happens that for some years, especially since the 1980s, Anglocentric scholarship has been seeking to project Jinnah's

To define the nation on the basis of religion and then to say that the state would be non-religious is an oxymoron.

position as secular. It would suit Mr. Advani to legitimise Hindutva objectives and pass them off as secular as well.

There is an impression in some circles that the early Jinnah was non-religious in his political attitude. Jinnah's stand on the Khilafat issue, which arose in and after World War I, is sometimes cited in support of this view. However, Jinnah was not opposed to the Khilafat issue as such. On August 27, 1919, Jinnah and three others, sent to Lloyd George, the then British Prime Minister, a representation on behalf of the All-India Muslim League on the Khilafat question. The representation was concerned with the position of the Sultan of Turkey as the Khalifa. The penultimate paragraph of the representation is: "We need not add that if Great Britain becomes a party in reducing H.I.M. the Sultan of Turkey and the Khalifa of the Muslim world to the status of a petty sovereign, the reaction in India will be colossal and abiding."

The representation was signed by M.A. Jinnah, Hasan Imam, Bhurgari and Yaqub Hasan. (See Pirzada, Syed Sharifuddin, (ed.) *Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah's Correspondence*, Revised edition, Karachi, 1977, pp 71-73.)

In his presidential speech at the Calcutta session of the Muslim League in September 1920, Jinnah described the Khilafat issue as one "which we consider, from a purely Musalman point of view, a matter of life and death." (Pirzada, Syed Sharifuddin (ed.), *Foundations of Pakistan: All India Muslim League Documents: 1906-1947*, Vol 1, p.544). What Jinnah was opposed to was not the Khilafat cause but mass action. It is the statements expressing that re-

luctance that are generally cited by some scholars under the mistaken belief that he was opposed to the Khilafat demand itself.

It may be a mistake to take Jinnah's support for Khilafat as evidence of lack of secularism. The Khilafat demands were fortified by promises made by the British Government in the course of the war and many of those who supported the demands did so because they saw that the Government was renegeing on assurances given.

The two-nation idea came formally to be adopted by the League at Lahore in March 1940. This was after Savarkar had already started defining Hindus as a nation in his speeches to the Hindu Mahasabha. He had said as much in December 1939. Both Savarkar and Jinnah had been acting for sometime before this on a "community-for-itself" basis; that is, they had been judging issues on how these would affect the supposed interests of their respective communities. This comes across in Savarkar's Hindutva thesis propounded in the mid-1920s. Jinnah's letter of March 2, 1932 to Abdul Matin Chowdhury contains an early indication of the community-centred approach. Jinnah wrote that if the British want "our co-operation and support, it can only be on our safeguards plus responsibility at the Centre being agreed to. If Hindus want our co-operation and support it can only be on their agreeing to our safeguards and self-Govt. Within the British Commonwealth of Nations we cannot support one or the other except on these terms." (Pirzada (ed.), *Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah's Correspondence*, pp 21-22).

This approach can be perhaps understood

once its pre-suppositions are accepted. But it suffered from some serious defects. The approach plucked out the "community" from within the common society and secular economy in which it was embedded and sought to set such a "community" up for sale to the highest bidder; and it treated the bulk of India's own people on a par with the alien, colonial rulers. The colonial rulers could always raise the stakes by outbidding what was on offer, particularly as the "terms" were not fixed but had a rolling character.

The "rolling character" has in the last few decades been a feature of Hindutva's demands upon the minorities as well. The communal-sectarian appetite, once whetted, is seldom satisfied and stops at nothing.

Jinnah's continual emphasis on religious community "homelands" also fits in with the Hindutva ideology. On January 10, 1941 Jinnah spoke of a "Monroe Doctrine" for the country, but after the Hindus and Moslems made up their differences and were settled in their 'respective homelands.' (*Indian Annual Register*, 1941, Vol 1, p. 28). It was characteristic of both Hindutva leaders and Jinnah to speak of exchange of population. On April 30, 1947, Jinnah spoke in Delhi saying that "sooner or later exchange of population will have to take place" and suggesting that this ought to be done "wherever it may be necessary and feasible." (*Indian Annual Register*, 1947, Vol 1, p. 246).

## Virtual silence

Significantly, Jinnah maintained virtual silence in the face of murders of and physical attacks on nationalist Muslims opposed to the League. The murder in May 1943 of former Sind Premier Allah Baksh who had been strongly opposed to the two-nation theory, was followed by the murder of the Ahrari leader Sher Gul Khan. The influential Majlis-i-Ahrar passed a resolution in June 1944 condemning Jinnah's silence on both murders. This was not merely a post-1940 phenomenon. The stabbing in October 1937 of Nasiruddin, a leading Congressman of Faizabad, met with a similar response. Nehru was distressed by the silence of the League leadership on Nasiruddin's stabbing. (*Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol 8, pp 192-197).

These murders were part of a trend. Subhas Bose and many others including Ashrafuddin Chaudhury, Secretary of the Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee, were assaulted by League members in Chittagong division on June 15, 1938. Shafaat Ahmed Khan was stabbed in Shimla in 1946 as soon as his name was announced as a member of Nehru's interim government. Around the same time, the eminent Krishak Praja Party leader Nowsher Ali was attacked and injured by Leaguers in Calcutta. Saifuddin Kitchlew, a hero of the ferment that had led to the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in 1919, was dragged in the streets of Multan in March 1947 by supporters of the Pakistan movement.

Mr. Advani's record and that of his political supporters since the late 1980s fits neatly with this as he remained virtually silent on communal killings in the wake of his rath yatra and again on the Gujarat killings (2002).

Clearly, it is not possible to deny humanism and assert secular credentials. Humanism is the precondition on which a secular state can be constructed. This principle would apply to all political parties whoever they may be.

Ultimately, the community-for-itself approach extends to public order itself. Once the nation is defined on the basis of religious community, religion becomes a latent value in the state. So to define the nation on the basis of religion and then to say that the state would be non-religious is an oxymoron. At best this implies that the state though identified with a particular religion would not be ecclesiastical. This is in fact what Jinnah said in December 1947. It is a misnomer to call such a state secular except perhaps in relation to groups further extreme, such as the Taliban or its counterparts elsewhere.

## CARTOONSCAPE



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to [letters@thehindu.co.in](mailto:letters@thehindu.co.in) must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

### BJP & Advani

The controversy arising from L.K. Advani's description of M.A. Jinnah as a secular leader seems to have been amicably resolved by the BJP, at least for now.

If the BJP realises the futility of harping on Jinnah's past, and allows Lord Ram to take His abode in the hearts of millions of Hindus, it could become a true Opposition in Parliament, with a bright future.

**R. Vasudevan,**  
Chennai

Despite knowing the fallout his statements would have in India, Mr. Advani went ahead and made them in Pakistan. Even though he failed to make his partymen back him on his comment on Jinnah, he succeeded in hogging the media limelight and triggered a debate on whether or not Jinnah is secular, at a time when it is not at all necessary.

**M. Jeyaram,**  
Sholavandan, T.N.

It would be interesting to hold a survey among Muslims of British India and ask them what they think of Jinnah today. I think even Jinnah knew the answer. He had wanted to settle down in Bombay after retirement. Would Moses have wanted to return to Egypt?

**A. Rajagopalan,**  
Chennai

Mr. Advani seems to have partitioned the BJP by calling Jinnah secular though he was responsible for the creation of a Muslim state. The Jana Sangh and its new avatar BJP have never accepted Gandhi as the father of the nation.

Mr. Advani has always waxed indignant at the word secularism, saying the Congress and Nehru were all pseudo-secular. But Jinnah was secular?

**Ravi Chandran,**  
Hyderabad

Perhaps Mr. Advani wanted to remind Pakistanis that their founding father had promised a secular state but they have an all-Islamic state instead. His

acknowledgement of secularism as the preferred form is realistic and statesman-like.

**Ashok Malhotra,**  
Saline, Michigan

Mr. Advani's description of Jinnah was not a slip of the tongue or gimmick but a well-thought-out analysis of Jinnah's rather paradoxical plea for an Islamic Pakistan, a promised land for Muslims, and yet a secular one that would coexist with a secular India. Jinnah hoped Pakistan too, once its nationhood was established, would take to the secular path. Mr. Advani tried to bring out this vision and hope of the founding father of Pakistan.

**Jacob George,**  
Changanacherry, Kerala

It is time we reminded ourselves of the adage great minds discuss ideas; average minds discuss events, and small minds discuss persons.

**L.R. Moorthy,**  
Thane, Maharashtra

Jinnah was the darling of the Indian National Congress in his earlier political years. Neither was he a devout Muslim nor did he have knowledge of Urdu. Because of later developments within the Congress, he turned communal. Secular is not the word for Jinnah. Mr. Advani's comment seems to be an attempt at assuaging Pakistan's feelings.

**Rohit Sawhney,**  
New Delhi

Here is a relevant excerpt from Samuel Huntington's book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*: "The process of indigenization need not wait for the second generation. Able, perceptive, and adaptive first generation leaders indigenize themselves. Three notable cases are Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Harry Lee, and Solomon Bandaranaike. They were brilliant graduates of Oxford, Cambridge, and Lincoln's Inn, respectively, superb lawyers, and thoroughly Westernized members of the elites of their societies... Yet to lead their nations to and after independence they had to indigenize..."

The secularist Jinnah became the fervent apostle of Islam as the basis for the Pakistani state. The Anglofied Lee learned Mandarin and became an articulate promoter of Confucianism. The Christian Bandaranaike converted to Buddhism and appealed to Sinhalese nationalism."

**Shankar Prasad,**  
Bangalore

The *Dawn* editorial reproduced in *The Hindu* (June 10) stands out for its refreshingly objective assessment of the contemporaneous events. It is hoped the views are shared by a substantive number of people on the other side of the border. This would augur well for peace and prosperity in the subcontinent.

**N.S. Ramachandran,**  
Hyderabad

### The maha rally

This refers to the Bahujan Samaj Party's "Brahmin maha rally" in Lucknow. Party chief Mayawati is trying to upstage the Congress in its attempt to wean away the 'upper' caste votes from the BJP. But the real issues concerning Dalits in Uttar Pradesh have not been addressed yet. For instance, land reforms, which are a must for the Dalits uplift, have never been seriously pursued by the BSP.

**Hari Bharathi,**  
Virudhunagar, T.N.

Mr. Advani's and Ms. Mayawati's newfound love for Jinnah and Brahmins respectively is interesting. While the former has suddenly discovered Jinnah's secular credentials, the leader of Dalits has proclaimed that her party has never been against the 'upper' castes.

Politicians are masters of the old art of shifting their stand on any subject. It is the people who are left wondering which avatar of theirs is genuine.

**P.V. Arieel,**  
Secunderabad

Politicians change at the drop of a hat. Only recently, the Congress willingly took Sanjay Nirupam into its fold and

Mr. Advani paid homage to Jinnah. Today, Mayawati is on a 'Brahmin jodo' spree. One need not take them seriously or get agitated over their stance.

**Udita Agrawal,**  
New Delhi

First, the Left supported the Congress in forming a government. Then, Mr. Advani hailed Jinnah as a secular leader. Now, Ms. Mayawati says Brahmins are dear to her heart! What is happening?

**K.V. Rajasekhar,**  
Neyveli, T.N.

### Hurriyat visit

The visit of the Hurriyat leaders to Pakistan (editorial "The Hurriyat visit and beyond," June 10) is a significant milestone in the ongoing peace process. That there is a perceptible change in their attitude was evident from their tone during their interaction with members of the PoK Assembly and Council. They, in fact, even appealed to the militants to come into mainstream politics. New Delhi did well to permit them to travel to Pakistan. Their visit will create a sense of belonging and confidence in the minds of the people in the Valley. More such people-to-people contacts should be encouraged between the countries.

**K. Murlidar,**  
Chennai

### Smoking in films

The Government's proposal to ban smoking in films is uncalled for. The film fraternity is right when it says that the ban will not make any difference to people who smoke. The best way to discourage smoking is to do so by requesting popular film stars to campaign against it. They can also impress upon the youngsters what they do on screen is only make-believe and not real.

**Brajesh Kumar,**  
New Delhi

Movies are largely a reflection of human behaviour. But then what is de-

icted in a make-believe world is also realistic. At the same time, a more practical approach to combating smoking, especially among the young, should come from parents and educational institutions. Popular stars can set an example by refraining from smoking in public.

**Sutirtha Sahariah,**  
New Delhi

The ban will serve no purpose if the Government continues to encourage sponsorship of cricket matches by tobacco barons.

**A.K. Parthasarathy,**  
Chennai

The ban on smoking cannot be questioned by drawing a comparison with depiction of crime and violence. Crime and violence are not glamourised in the manner smoking is. Youth tend blindly to emulate their favourite heroes puffing away.

**T.S. Rao,**  
Visakhapatnam, A.P.

Land, water, electricity, and labour are used for the cultivation of tobacco. Factories are allowed to manufacture cigars and beedis. There is no opposition from any quarter to all this because it involves real problems of livelihood. The ban on smoking in movies, it seems, was easier to impose.

**T. Rangaswami,**  
Madurai

As the Government is extremely concerned about the hazards of smoking, it should also consider some other suggestions to discourage smoking. Our political leaders also have a large following and wield tremendous influence. So all members of Parliament and State Assemblies should quit smoking at least till their term comes to an end. Parties should give the ticket only to non-smokers to contest elections. Will any party even venture to have such rules? Politicians only want others to follow the laws enacted by them; they are above everything.

**K. Viswanathan,**  
Coimbatore

# জিন্না কতটা ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ, ইতিহাসবিদদের মধ্যে বিতর্ক

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার: পাকিস্তানের জনক মহম্মদ আলি জিন্নাকে 'ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ' আখ্যা দিয়ে দলে ও সঙ্ঘ পরিবারে কোণঠাসা লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী। কিন্তু ইতিহাসবিদরা এই ব্যাপারে কী বলেন? ইতিহাসের তথ্য কি সত্যিই জিন্নাকে 'ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ' বলার অনুমোদন দেয়?

অক্সফোর্ড বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধ্যাপক জুডিথ ব্রাউনের মতে—জিন্না যদিও এমন এক পাকিস্তান চেয়েছিলেন, যেখানে মুসলিমদের অধিকার ও নিরাপত্তা সুনিশ্চিত হবে, তিনি কিন্তু ইসলামি রাষ্ট্র গড়ার পক্ষপাতী ছিলেন না। জিন্না ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ ছিলেন কি না, সেই বিতর্কের অবসান না হলেও এ নিয়ে দ্বিমত নেই যে, পাকিস্তান মুসলিম রাষ্ট্র হিসেবে তৈরি না হলেও মুসলিমদের স্বার্থরক্ষাই জিন্নার কাছে সবচেয়ে বেশি গুরুত্ব পেয়েছিল।

ইতিহাসবিদ ইরফান হাবিবও মনে করেন, জিন্না 'সেকুলার' ছিলেন কি না, এ প্রশ্নের উত্তর দেওয়া কঠিন। তবে তিনি বলেন, "পাকিস্তানের স্লোগান অবশ্যই সাম্প্রদায়িক (কমিউনাল)। কিন্তু এটাও মনে রাখতে হবে, জিন্না কংগ্রেসে ছিলেন, গোথলে ছিলেন তাঁর গুরু। সাইমন কমিশন বিরোধী আন্দোলনে তাঁর বড় ভূমিকা ছিল। তবে শুরুতে জিন্না যা ছিলেন, পরে তা বদলে যায়। আর লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী ও তাঁর দলের যে স্লোগান: হিন্দু, হিন্দু, হিন্দুস্থান, তা পাকিস্তানের স্লোগানের মতোই সাম্প্রদায়িক।"

কলকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের অধ্যাপক বাসুদেব চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের অবশ্য স্পষ্ট মত, জিন্নাকে মোটেই ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ বলা চলে না। জিন্না সম্পর্কে আডবাণীর

মন্তব্যও তাই তাঁর মতে ইতিহাসের কষ্টিপাথরে টেকে না। বাসুদেববাবু বলেন, "ব্যক্তিগত বিশ্বাস ও জনজীবনে নিজের ভূমিকার মধ্যে স্পষ্ট ব্যবধান রাখাকেই ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতা মনে করি। জিন্না ব্যক্তিগত জীবনে গোঁড়া মুসলিম না হলেও পাকিস্তান দাবি করেছেন পরিষ্কার ধর্মের ভিত্তিতে। ধর্মকে সচেতন ভাবে রাজনৈতিক উদ্দেশ্যে ব্যবহার করেছেন। গান্ধী ব্যক্তিগতভাবে অনেক বেশি ধর্মপ্রাণ ছিলেন। মৃত্যুর সময়েও রাম-নাম উচ্চারণ করেছেন। কিন্তু ওই বিশ্বাসকে তিনি রাজনীতির সঙ্গে গুলিয়ে ফেলেননি, রাজনৈতিক



প্রয়োজনে ব্যবহারও করেননি।

দিল্লি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ইতিহাসের অধ্যাপক সুমিত সরকার প্রসঙ্গের গোড়া ধরেই টান মেরেছেন। তাঁর প্রশ্ন, "আডবাণী হঠাৎ এমন কথা বলছেন কেন? তিনি বা তাঁর সঙ্গীরা কেউই তো ইতিহাসবিদ নন। সুতরাং তাঁদের এই বিতর্ক তৈরি করতে চাওয়াটা বেশ মজার ব্যাপার।"

এ বিষয়ে সুমিতবাবুর মত: এ ক্ষেত্রে সেকুলারিজম কী, তাও বুঝতে হবে। জিন্নার যে বিবৃতির কথা এখানে বলা হয়েছে সেটা বেশ ভাল।

পাকিস্তানকে ধর্মীয় রাষ্ট্র করতে উনি চাননি। ধার্মিক লোকও তিনি ছিলেন না। কিন্তু সেকুলারিজম তো শুধু ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতা নয়, সাম্প্রদায়িকতার বিরোধিতা করাও বটে।

সুমিতবাবু বলেন, "একই ভাবে, আডবাণী বা তাঁর গুরু সভারকরেরা ধার্মিক ছিলেন না ঠিকই। কিন্তু তাঁদের সাম্প্রদায়িকতা-বিরোধী বলা যায় না। আর দেশভাগ তো হিন্দু মহাসভাও চেয়েছিল।" ইরফানের মতো তিনিও বলেন, "জিন্নার একটি দিক ভুললে চলবে না। তিনি বহু দিন কংগ্রেসে ছিলেন, দাদাভাই নওরোজির সচিব ছিলেন। পরে তা বদলে যায়। ঠিকই, জিন্না এক সময় পাকিস্তান রাষ্ট্রের কথা বলেন। পাকিস্তান রাষ্ট্রের স্লোগান তোলাকেই 'কমিউনাল' হিসেবে দেখা হত। আবার এও মনে রাখতে হবে যে জিন্না যত দিন ছিলেন, পাকিস্তান কিন্তু মুসলিম রাষ্ট্র হয়নি।"

জিন্নার ব্যক্তিগত জীবনচর্যা ইয়সলামি প্রভাব যে তেমন ছিল না, তা মনে করেন কলকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের সহ-উপাচার্য (শিক্ষা) তথা ইতিহাস বিভাগের শিক্ষক সুরজন দাসও। কিন্তু ধর্মকে অবলম্বন করেই তিনি রাজনৈতিক ক্রিয়াকলাপ চালিয়ে গিয়েছেন। যদি সত্যিই তিনি ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ হতেন, তবে রাজনীতির মূলস্রোত থেকে সরে গেলেন কেন? সুরজনবাবুর মতে, ১৯২০ থেকে ৩০ সালের মধ্যে কংগ্রেসের নিচুতলার বহু ব্যক্তির সঙ্গে হিন্দু মহাসভার যোগাযোগ তৈরি হয়েছিল। জিন্নার রাজনীতিতে এরও প্রভাব পড়ে। জাতীয়তাবাদী পর্যায়ে সাম্প্রদায়িক রাজনীতির যে উত্থান, তার পিছনে এর পর চারের পাতায়

## ইতিহাসবিদদের

প্রথম পাতার পর

স্পষ্টই জিন্নার গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ভূমিকা ছিল।

সেন্টার ফর স্টাডিজ ইন সোশ্যাল সায়েন্সেস-এর শিক্ষক গৌতম ভদ্রের মতে, জিন্নার যে বিশেষ বক্তৃতাটির উল্লেখ করেছেন আডবাণী, আলাদা ভাবে বিচার করলে সেটি এক অসাধারণ বক্তৃতা। সম্ভবত জিন্না ভেবেছিলেন যে, পাকিস্তান যখন হয়ে গিয়েছে, আর কোনও গোলমাল হবে না, এবং নতুন পাকিস্তান রাষ্ট্র পশ্চিমী আদলে পুরোপুরি সেকুলার রাষ্ট্র হয়ে উঠবে। কিন্তু জিন্নার এই বক্তৃতার পরেই পরিস্থিতি পাল্টাতে শুরু করল, উদ্ভাস্ত সীমান্ত পারাপার আর হিংসার তাণ্ডব শুরু হল। আর তার কিছু দিন পরেই সিদ্ধ প্রভিনশিয়াল অ্যাসেম্বলিতে সম্পূর্ণ বিপরীত সুরে কথা বললেন জিন্না। অর্থাৎ— তাঁর নিজের মনে হয়তো পাকিস্তান বিষয়ে সেকুলার ধারণাই ছিল, কিন্তু রাজনৈতিক পরিস্থিতি অনুযায়ী নিজের বাহ্যিক অবস্থান পাল্টাতে জিন্নার দেরি হত না। এইখানেই গান্ধীর সঙ্গে জিন্না কিংবা অন্যদের পার্থক্য: গান্ধী নৈতিকতাকে রাজনীতির উপরে জায়গা দিতেন, আর জিন্না, নেহরুরা রাজনীতিকেই নৈতিকতার উপরে রাখতেন।

সব ইতিহাসবিদই কি তাহলে জিন্নার ব্যক্তিগত বনাম প্রকাশ্য সত্তার এই বৈপরীত্যের দিকে আঙুল তুলে জিন্নার 'ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতা'কে সন্দেহযোগ্য মনে করেন? না। পাক ইতিহাসবিদ আমেরিকার টাফটস ইউনিভার্সিটির শিক্ষক, বিখ্যাত জিন্না-গবেষক আয়েশা জালালের মত আলাদা। তথ্য-যুক্তি দিয়ে তিনি বলেন, জিন্না আদ্যস্ত রাজনৈতিক, রাজনীতির খাতিরে যে কোনও পথ হাটার পক্ষপাতী ছিলেন। ক্ষেত্র: রাজনীতি, ও উদ্দেশ্য: উপমহাদেশের মুসলিমদের স্বার্থ সংরক্ষণ—এই হিসেব নিয়ে এগোতে গিয়ে কংগ্রেসি রাজনীতির সঙ্গে দর কষাকষির জন্যই কেবল তিনি ধর্মকে ব্যবহার করেছিলেন। ফলে তাঁর ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতা সন্দেহাতীত। সম্প্রতি অস্ট্রেলিয়ার তরুণ ইতিহাসবিদ ইয়ান ব্রায়ান্ট ওয়েলসও তাঁর গবেষণা-গ্রন্থে জালালের সুরে সুর মিলিয়ে বলেছেন যে, জিন্না কেবল সেকুলারই ছিলেন না, তিনি ছিলেন সে যুগের 'অ্যামবাসাডর অব হিন্দু-মুসলিম ইউনিটি'।

জিন্নাকে নিয়ে ইতিহাসবিদ-মহলে বিতর্ক চলছে, চলবেও।

VV

Jinnah manipulated religious sentiments for a secular state

# Was Jinnah secular?

Religious 5.16  
Sb

RUDRANGSHU MUKHERJEE

The year was 1923, the month was November. Mohammad Ali Jinnah was a candidate in Bombay for membership to the Legislative Assembly. One afternoon, during the election campaign, as Jinnah and M.C. Chagla were going out for lunch, Mrs Ruttie Jinnah drove up to the Town Hall in Jinnah's limousine and came up the steps with a tiffin basket in her hand. She said, "J [that is how she called him] guess what I have brought you for lunch? I have brought you some lovely ham sandwiches." Utterly startled, Jinnah exclaimed: "My God! What have you done? Do you want me to lose my election? Do you realize I am standing from a Muslim separate electorate seat, and if my voters were to learn that I am going to eat ham sandwiches for lunch, do you think I have a ghost of a chance of being elected?" A downcast Mrs Jinnah retreated quickly, tiffin basket and all. But Jinnah and Chagla went on to have lunch at Cornaglia's, a well-known Bombay restaurant, where Jinnah ordered a plate of pastry, a plate of pork sausages and coffee.

The incident is revealing in many ways. It speaks volumes about the Westernized lifestyle of the Jinnahs. Witness the nickname J, the penchant to have sandwiches for lunch, the choice of restaurant and the food ordered there. It was the lifestyle of a Westernized oriental gentleman closely paralleled by life in the Nehru household where only English was spoken among the siblings who referred to each other with nicknames like Nan and Jo.

Jinnah's Westernization was evident in other ways as well. He was born Mohammad Ali Jinnahbhai. He refashioned this to M.A. Jinnah in London. He gave up his traditional Sindhi long yellow coat for Saville Row suits of which he had about 200. He never wore a silk tie twice and his shoes were two-tone leather or suede. His manners were perfect and he prided himself on the fact that he was a frequent guest in some of England's stately homes and palaces.

His Westernized sensibilities could not have encouraged Islamist tendencies. Yet Jinnah has come to be known as the quintessential Muslim politician who roused Muslim religious sentiments to win for himself the state of Pakistan. Yet this is not how he began his political career. His early heroes were Dadabhai Naoroji and

Pheroze Shah Mehta. Even as late as 1925, Jinnah retained the political attributes that harked back to the early Congress. He remained committed to secular reform and national independence. When the young Raja of Mahmudabad spoke of himself as a "Muslim first", Jinnah chided him: "My boy, no, you are an Indian first and then a Muslim." Jinnah began on the fringes of Muslim politics but he marked out for himself a space in Indian politics by becoming the sole spokes-

this goal. He was helped by British policies of divide and rule and the creation of separate electorate constituencies. Jinnah played up the separate interests and aspirations of Muslims and thus created the basis of communal politics. He believed that politics could be focused around religious blocs. He was a Westernized and secular man who contributed to the making of communal politics in India.

But this contradiction made Jinnah somewhat unique among com-



He was a hard-headed realist who knew what he had to do if he wanted to attain his goal of Pakistan

munal politicians. He was no zealot. He simulated fanaticism and cynically manipulated Muslim religious feelings. He was a hard-headed realist who knew what he had to do if he wanted to attain his goal of Pakistan.

The change in Jinnah's political profile entailed changes in his appearance and lifestyle. He took to

wearing the *sherwani* and *karkul* cap which came to acquire his name. He began speaking more in Urdu, albeit a very anglicized version of it. His contempt for the *ulema* became tempered and subdued. Jinnah accepted and adopted the Islamic idiom. His politics, or rather the goal of his politics, demanded this. But this did not mean for Jinnah a complete surrender to Muslim orthodoxy. He paid no heed to those who wanted the Muslim League to be committed to a Pakistan based on Quranic principles. He resisted demands to oust the Ahmadis from the Muslim community. The wog did not become a *maulavi*.

The Pakistan that Jinnah got was not exactly what he had wanted. He complained to Lord Mountbatten that he had been given a "moth-eaten Pakistan". Neither was Pakistan an Islamic theocratic state that many orthodox Muslims had envisioned. Jinnah spoke of his vision of Pakistan in his address to the Pakistan Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947.

He spoke first of the "cyclonic revolution" which had created two independent sovereign dominions. Then he told the people of Pakistan, "You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed — that has nothing to do with the business of the State. We are starting in the days when there is no discrimination, no distinction between one community and another, no discrimination between one caste or creed and another. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one State...I think we should keep in front of us our ideal and you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State."

The maker of communal politics had thus returned to the first principles of secularism. Did he know in August 1947 that he was dying and had thus returned to his original values, brushing aside in one grand sweep the means that he had adopted to reach the goal of Pakistan? He was amoral. The goal mattered. He sought to create a secular state through communal politics.



# An opportunist and an enigma, say historians

CHARU SUDAN KASTURI

New Delhi, June 7: A majority of historians believe Mohammed Ali Jinnah was a man of contradictions.

He was not communal from the outset. In fact, he was an active participant in the mainstream nationalist movement. What changed his political mindset was the rush of events that took place after the 1937 elections when the Congress formed ministries. The Muslim League leader felt that he was left high and dry.

The consensus among historians seems to be that Jinnah at best was an opportunist — shifting his stance as circumstances changed. "Jinnah was a nationalist for a long time, if one looks at his history.

He was active in the anti-Simon Commission movement. However, his call for a separate state was communal," said Professor Sumit Sarkar, one of the foremost historians of the country.

"I regard him as an extremely enigmatic personality. He was someone who shifted his stance on the most important issues of the day," said Professor Mushirul Hasan, who has done substantial work on the role of Muslim leadership in the Partition. Others like Sarkar and Professor Mridula Mukherjee echoed him.

Mentioning the days when Jinnah was secretary to then Congress president Dadabhai Nauroji, Mukherjee emphasised the need to differentiate between the various phases of

tion. No one can run away from that," said Mukherjee.

But the same man who insisted on the Partition was never in favour of Pakistan being an Islamic state, Mukherjee added. "Jinnah, once he had achieved the leadership of Pakistan, might well have wanted to establish the state of Pakistan on fresh foundations."

Historians feel it is not inconceivable for communal people to go hand in hand with democratic secular politicians and vice versa. They feel V.D. Savarkar and Jinnah were both cut from the same political cloth. Jinnah was not the first to propound the two-nation theory. Lala Lajpat Rai, V.D. Savarkar and Bhai Veer Singh had done so before him. It was not the Muslim League which

invented the two-nation theory, according to historians.

Jinnah, according to some, was more of a wheelchair politician. The British, since the late 1930s, needed to prop up leaders like him. Jinnah constantly bargained hard for as much political clout as he could manage for the Muslims.

"The Partition was not really at the back of his mind," feels Professor Dilip Simeon. "It was only as the circumstances unfolded that he realised that Partition was his best chance for grabbing power."

This, however, does not make Jinnah secular according to the historians. "Though up to 1937 he was regarded as the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity, I fail to understand how a man who was responsi-

ble for the horrible events around Partition can be called secular," said Professor Hasan.

Historians feel it was impossible for events to have panned out any other way. "Once you take a mob out for rioting, you can't very well tell them to go back home and become secular," Mukherjee said.

Historian Purshottam Agarwal also believes Jinnah to be responsible for the way Pakistan developed. "He created Pakistan on the basis of religious segregation. Whatever he wanted from thereon, there was no way Pakistan could have developed into a liberal democratic state. His speech in the Constituent Assembly was like trying to get to the south pole by going to the north pole," Agarwal said.

## SHIFTING STANCE



Jinnah with Mahatma Gandhi. File picture

his life. "When he was young, he was a nationalist and an idealist. We must remember that in those days, he opposed the Muslim League. By 1937-38, however, he had started the new Muslim League that was very different from its earlier form. This was a communal and fascistic kind of organisa-

# Jinnah and Savarkar

Describing Mohammad Ali Jinnah as a secularist partakes of the very same terminology and semantics that the Sangh Parivar ideologues choose to define their own brand of secularism.

Jyotirmaya Sharma

L.K. Advani's statement about Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah's espousal of secularism hangs precariously on a single quote, taken from Jinnah's Presidential speech to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, delivered on August 11, 1947.

In the speech, Jinnah said: "You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in the state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed

— that has nothing to do with the business of the state ... you will find that in course of time Hindus would cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the state."

Jinnah's early discomfort with Islamic orthodoxy is a well-documented fact, and so is his lack of acceptability among the Muslim masses.

But the spiralling demand for Pakistan between 1940 and 1947 had transformed

Jinnah as a staunch advocate of Pakistan and a communalist. It also changed the fortunes of the Muslim League for the better.

While the ire of the sangh parivar against Mr. Advani is understandable, it has more to do with Mr. Advani's apology for the demolition of the Babri Masjid than his remarks on Jinnah.

Describing Jinnah as a secularist partakes of the very same ideological terminology and semantics that the Sangh Parivar ideologues chose to define their own brand of secularism. To understand this, one needs to turn to the writings and speeches of V.D. Savarkar.

In his core text, *Hindutva*, Savarkar was expressing similar sentiments when he argued that "at some future time the word Hindu may come to indicate a citizen of Hindusthan and nothing else; that day can only rise when all cultural and religious bigotry has disbanded its forces pledged to aggressive egoism, and religions cease to be 'isms', and become merely the common fund of eternal principles that lie at the root of all that are common foundation on which the Human State majestically and firmly rests."

Despite "reasonable" digressions like these, Savarkar argues relentlessly for a Hindu Rashtra, and very much in the same vein as Jinnah seeks to make a distinction

between Hindutva or Hinduness, Hindu religion and Hinduism.

The future and foundations of India had to be Hindu, argued Savarkar, and these foundations were non-negotiable. Once that is achieved, then, the effort would be to develop "a sense of attachment to the greater whole, whereby Hindus, Mohammedans, Parsis, Christians and Jews would feel as Indians first and every other thing afterwards." He repeated the same sentiment in the Calcutta session of the Hindu Mahasabha in 1939, while discussing the rights of the non-Hindu minorities.

It is the very stuff of revisionist history of the kind politicians favour that propels Savarkar into being projected by the Sangh Parivar as a nationalist, despite arguing in 1937, three years before Jinnah formally mooted the two-nation theory, that Hindus and Muslims were "two antagonistic nations living side by side in India". A similar fate has befallen Jinnah, once hailed by Gokhale as the "ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity."

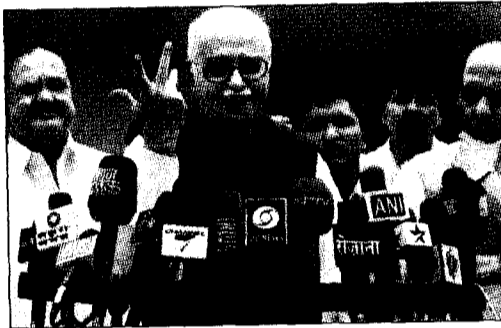
Both sought foundations for their putative states on the basis of a single race, ethnicity and cultural unity. While Jinnah realised his goal of a Muslim state, Savarkar's dream of a Hindu Rashtra remains a pipe dream.

# Advani ready for debate on Jinnah remarks

*Religion*  
*TR-1*

**New Delhi:** Returning from a week-long visit to Pakistan, that raised the hackles of the Sangh Parivar over his remarks on Mohammed Ali Jinnah, an unfazed BJP President L K Advani on Monday stood by his comments and favoured a debate on the issue.

Even as senior party leaders lined up to receive the party president at the airport, Hindu Jagran Manch put up an anti-Advani poster which read "Jinnah Samarthak (supporter), Pakistan Premi (sympathiser) Advani, Vapas Jao (go back Advani)." "I have come to know that my remarks have triggered a debate. I have no objection to it, the matter should be debated," Advani told reporters in the backdrop of the attack by RSS and VHP for his remarks describing the Pakistan founder as a "great man" who espoused the cause of a secular Pakistan.



During the visit he had also regretted the demolition of the Babri mosque and virtually gave up the Sangh Parivar stand on "Akhand Bharat."

Summing up his visit to Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi, he said apart from the sentimental values to the country of his birth, the objective of his tour was to promote the peace initiatives by the NDA government for Indo-Pak peace and his efforts had been "furthered substantially." The BJP leader said that Jinnah in his speech to the Constituent Assembly on Au-

gust 11, 1947 had favoured a secular and non-theocratic state and the Pakistan founder was of the view that there should not be any difference between Hindus and Muslims as all were its citizens.

Advani said that after laying a wreath at the mausoleum of Jinnah in Karachi, he

made a reference to the Pakistani Qaid-e-Azam's address in the course of his comments. "I did not issue any text. It was just a mention about which I have come to know that there has been some debate here and there. I have no objection to it. It is good. There should be a debate," he said.

Describing the first leg of his visit to Islamabad as "essentially political," Advani said he met Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, PM Shaukat Aziz and foreign minister Khurshid Kasuri. PTI

# White House plays down Koran report

## Detainees, too, mishandled 'holy book'

Texas, June 5

A PENTAGON report detailing incidents in which US guards at Guantanamo Bay prison desecrated the Koran is creating another public relations challenge for the country's President George W. Bush.

Two weeks ago, the White House was thrown on the defensive by a now-retracted *Newsweek* report alleging that US interrogators at the detention centre for alleged terrorists in Cuba had flushed a Koran down a toilet. The story stirred a worldwide controversy and the Bush administration blamed it for deadly demonstrations in Afghanistan. Saying America's image abroad had suffered irreparable damage, the White House responded with a verbal offensive against the media.

On Saturday, a day after the Pentagon described a series of cases of US personnel mishandling the Koran, the White House downplayed the issue.

"It is unfortunate that some have chosen to take out of context a few isolated incidents by a few individuals," presidential spokesman Scott McClellan said in a statement. Joe Lockhart, former press secretary for former President Bill Clinton said that when a news organisation — such as *Newsweek* — makes a



A Muslim inmate prays in a New York prison.

factual mistake, White House officials are tempted to try to discredit the entire story.

"I think on this issue, they fell into a trap," Lockhart said. "They saw a way to push back on a damaging story by making it look like it was just out-of-control journalists, and now they've had to admit that it has happened."

McClellan's statements after the *Newsweek* report left an impression that no desecration had occurred at Guantanamo, Lockhart said. "While the news organisation got an example wrong, they got the practice right," he said. "I think certainly the public is within their right, in this case, to believe they were misled."

The Pentagon confirmed on Friday evening — after the net-

works' evening news shows had aired it — that a US soldier had deliberately kicked a prisoner's holy book.

But White House officials said the problems were relatively minor and US commanders had gone to great lengths to enable detainees to practice their religion. They noted that the investigation last month, by brigadier-general Jay Hood, the commander of the detention centre, also found 15 cases of detainees mishandling their own Korans.

"These included using a Koran as a pillow, ripping pages out of it and attempting to flush a Koran down the toilet," Hood's report said. It offered no possible explanation for the detainees' actions.

AP

06 JUN 2005 THE HINDUSTAN TIMES



# US admits Koran was kicked, got wet

**JOSH WHITE & DAN EGGEN**  
WASHINGTON | JUNE 4

**T**HE US released details on Friday about five confirmed cases of US personnel mishandling the Koran at the prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, acknowledging that soldiers kicked the holy book, got copies wet, stood on it during interrogation and inadvertently sprayed urine on a copy.

Brig. Gen. Jay Hood, commander of Joint Task Force Guantanamo, who completed the three-week inquiry this week into alleged mishandling of the Koran, confirmed five cases of intentional or unintentional mishandling of the holy book, from among 19 alleged inci-

dents since the facility opened in January 2002.

His investigation also found 15 incidents of detainees desecrating Korans. In a news release from the US Southern Command late on Friday, Hood expanded on statements he made at a Pentagon news briefing last week, when he characterised the incidents as rare.

Officials said they have issued more than 1,600 Korans at the facility. "Mishandling a Koran at Guantanamo Bay is a rare occurrence," Hood said in the statement. "Mishandling of a Koran here is never condoned. When one considers the many thousands of detainees have been moved and cells have been searched since detention operations first began here in

Reuters



**At a protest in Dhaka**

January 2002, I think one can only conclude that respect for detainee religious beliefs was embedded in the culture of (the task force)."

White House spokesman Scott McClellan said "our men and women in the mili-

## Amnesty defends its chiding of US

**LONDON:** An Amnesty International official said on Friday that the choice of the term 'gulag' in its annual report to describe the US prison camp at Guantanamo was deliberate and shrugged off criticism of the report by the Bush administration. The official, Kate Gilmore, said the response was "typical of a government on the defensive". —NYT

abuse indicate a much broader problem than indicated by the Hood inquiry. "I think there's no question that, especially in the early days of Guantanamo, there was a persistent pattern of physical abuse and religious discrimination... But it hasn't been fully looked at."

Investigators were specifically looking into allegations that a Koran was flushed down a toilet. *Newsweek* reported that such an allegation had been confirmed but then retracted the story. Hood's inquiry determined that no such incident took place. But the report is also contrary to a recent claim by a top Pentagon spokesman that there were no credible accounts of Koran being mishandled.

Tom Wilner, an attorney for 11 Kuwaiti nationals being held there, said the persistence of reports of Koran

IN

JUN 2005

JUN 2005

INDIAN EXPRESS

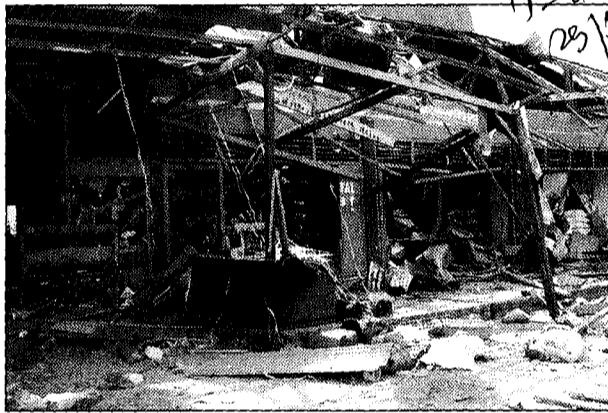
Christian town attacks bring back violent memories

# Indonesia blasts kill 21

**Tentena (Indonesia), May 28** (Reuters): Two bombs ripped through a busy market in a Christian town in eastern Indonesia today, killing up to 21 people in an attack likely to raise fears that sectarian bloodshed could again break out in the region.

The explosions left a trail of blood and destruction in the lakeside town of Tentena, on the eastern island of Sulawesi, part of an area where three years of Muslim-Christian clashes killed 2,000 people until a peace deal was agreed in late 2001.

Periodic unrest has flared since, but this morning's attack was among the worst. Tensions rose after the bombings, with hundreds of residents converging on the local hospital and destroyed an outdoor market, demanding that police find the killers.



A view of the market damaged by bomb blasts in the town of Tentena, on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi. (Reuters)

The official Antara news agency, quoting local government officials, said the death toll was 21. Police earlier said it was 19.

A local hospital official said 32 people were wounded,

many seriously. One toddler was among the dead.

Crowds of people banged their hands on the local police chief's car when he arrived on the scene soon after the attacks, but there was no vio-

lence. <sup>Religion</sup> "The situation is getting tense," Andi Asikin, the mayor of Poso town not far from Tentena, told El Shinta radio station.

"People are upset because their families are victims. Crowds of people who are relatives of the victims are condemning the act. They are demanding officials hunt the perpetrators."

Police on the scene said the bombs comprised high explosives, adding that the blasts could be heard 12 km away. The second explosion came 15 minutes after the first, and was the bigger of the two, residents said.

The roofs of shops near the market were torn off and food and goods scattered over a wide area in Tentena, 1,500 km northeast of Jakarta. Windows in a police station were blown out.

# Blast in Pak shrine kills 19, many hurt

**Islamabad:** At least 19 people were killed and scores were wounded in a suspected suicide bombing at a Muslim shrine in the Pakistani capital on Friday, where thousands had gathered to pay homage to city's patron saint. The blast occurred at the Bari Imam shrine, which is close to Islamabad's main government buildings and the diplomatic enclave, where many embassies and diplomatic residences are located.

"Our initial information suggests it was a suicide attack," Islamabad police chief Talat Mehmood Tariq told Reuters. At least 19 people died and 65 were wounded, said Tariq Mehmood Pirzada, a senior city official. The casualties included women and children.

Thousands of devotees from the majority Sunni Muslim and minority Shi'ite Muslim sects were attending a festival at the time of the explosion. "Many (Shi'ite) mourners have been martyred and many wounded," Qamar Haider Zaidi, a Shi'ite Muslim preacher, told reporters as bloody, limbless bodies were recovered from the scene. "Shi'ites and Sunnis were both there." Another Shi'ite cleric, Syed Guftar Hussain Sadiqi, said the blast appeared to be the work of banned Sunni militant groups or "foreign elements." Some blood-stained bodies were covered with religious banners and Shi'ites beat their chests in grief. It was the latest incident of religious violence to rock Pakistan, which has been a key ally in the US-led war on terror since the Sept 11 attacks in 2001.

It came as US assistant secretary of state Christi-

na Rocca was concluding a visit to the country and as peace talks with Pakistan's nuclear-armed rival India were taking place in the city of Rawalpindi adjoining Islamabad. The blast also occurred hours before hundreds of hardline Islamists staged a pre-planned anti-US rally outside parliament to protest the alleged desecration of



the Koran, the Muslim holy book, at the US military prison at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba.

President Pervez Musharraf said it remained unclear who was responsible, but it could have been sectarian extremists. "If it is sectarian, then I am very saddened. Pakistan needs to show moderation according to Islam," Musharraf, who was on a visit to Karachi, told reporters.

The Bari Imam shrine is dedicated to Shah Abdul Latif Kazmi, a 17th century Sufi teacher who is Islamabad's patron saint. Friday's ceremony was one held annually to pay homage to him. Sufism is an umbrella term for the mystical and ascetic movements within Islam. Reuters

28 MAY 2005

THE TIMES OF INDIA

# US officials confirm Koran abuse

Associated Press

Washington, May 27. — US officials have substantiated five cases in which military guards or interrogators mishandled the Koran of Muslim prisoners at Guantanamo Bay but found "no credible evidence" to confirm a prisoner's report that a holy book was flushed in a toilet, the prison's commander said.

Brig. Gen. Jay W. Hood, who commands the detention center in Cuba, told a Pentagon news conference yesterday that a prisoner who was reported to have complained to an FBI agent in 2002 that a military guard threw a Koran in the toilet has told Hood's investigators that he never witnessed any form of Koran desecration.

The unidentified prisoner, questioned at Guantanamo on 14 May, said he had heard talk of guards mishandling religious articles but did not witness any such acts, Hood said.

The general said he could not speculate on why the prisoner had recanted his earlier statement, which was contained in a 1 August, 2002, summary of an FBI agent's 22 July, 2002, interrogation of the

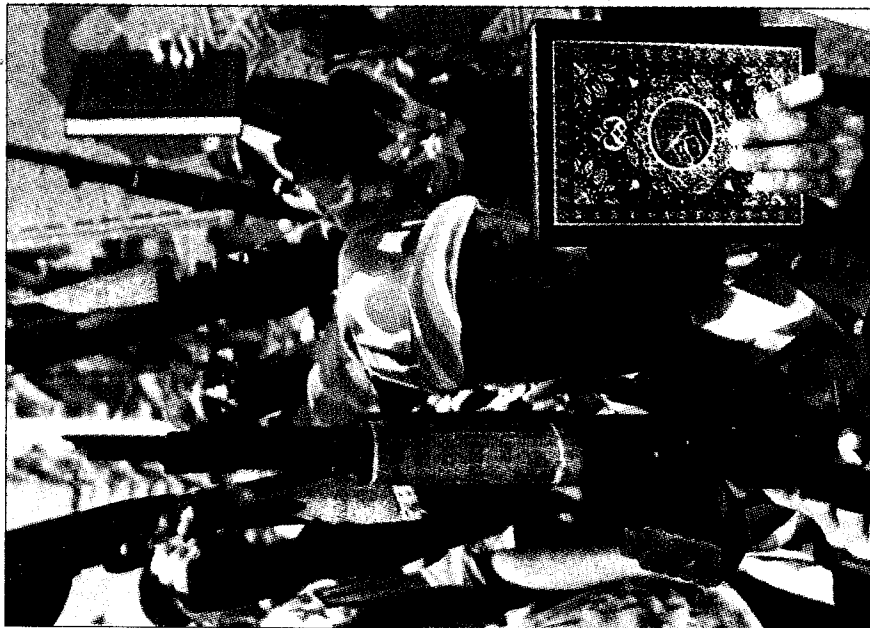
prisoner. The summary was made public this week. "I'd like you to know that we have found no credible evidence that a member of the Joint Task Force at Guantanamo Bay ever flushed a Koran down a toilet," Brig. Gen. Hood said. "We did identify 13 incidents of alleged mishandling of the Koran by Joint Task Force personnel. Ten of those were by a guard and three by interrogators." Of the 13 alleged incidents, five were substantiated, he said. Four were by guards and one was by an interrogator.

Brig. Gen. Hood said the five cases "could be broadly defined as mishandling" of the holy book, but he refused to discuss details.

## Protest across the world

Following the report of Koran desecration in Guantanamo Bay coming to light, several Islamic countries expressed vehement protests against USA.

Several hundred demonstrators gathered today outside the United States embassy in Malaysia to deliver a memorandum protesting the alleged desecration of the Koran by



Lebanese children hold toy rifles and copies of the Koran while protesting the desecration. In Beirut on Friday. — AFP

US military interrogators. Led by the headline opposition Islamic Party (PAS), the crowd of about 500 people chanted Long live Islam and *Allahu Akbar* before handing the letter to the US embassy officials. The memorandum, signed by PAS and three Muslim non-governmental organisations, protested the alleged desecration of the Koran and called for a

## 'Public has right to see pictures'

NEW YORK, May 27. — A federal judge has told the US government that it would have to release additional pictures of detainee abuse at Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison, civil rights lawyers said.

Judge Mr Alvin Hellerstein, finding the public has a right to see the pictures, told the government yesterday

halt to torture and abuse of prisoners by the US.

"We're showing our displeasure for the whole scenario and we want some stern action against those involved in desecrating the Koran," said PAS vice president Mr Hasan Ali.

The protest follows a 2 May report in *Newsweek* magazine that US interrogators had found inter-namo prison in Cuba threw a Quran in a toilet to rattle Muslim inmates. The report, which *Newsweek* later retracted, set off four days of riots in Afghanistan earlier this month which claimed lives of at least 14 people and protests have continued in Muslim countries.

Waving copies of the Koran and shouting anti-US slogans, thousands of angry Muslims across West Asia demanded an official apology from the United States for the alleged desecration of the holy book, while thousands rallied in Dhaka after Friday afternoon prayers and spat on, kicked and burned the US flag and shouted "Death to America" and "Destroy America."

# Koran abuse: New evidence nails US military

## Guantanamo Bay Could Become Bush's Bay Of Pigs As Civil Rights Union Gets Into Act

By Chidanand Rajghatta/TNN

**Washington:** Reports of abuse of the Koran returned to haunt the Bush administration on Wednesday after newly released documents showed Guantanamo Bay detainees complained repeatedly about disrespectful handling of the holy book, including one alleged instance of it being flushed down a toilet.

The charges are contained in more than 300 pages of testimony turned over by the FBI to the American Civil Liberties Union following a lawsuit. The documents indicate that FBI agents themselves did not witness the incident, but merely recorded the allegations made by the prisoners, charges that the administration dismissed as "not credible".

The documents only partially vindicate the story by Newsweek, which had gone on to say that a military investigation was expected to confirm that

the incident had in fact occurred. US officials said on the contrary that the prisoner who had made the flushing charge had not been able to substantiate it.

Some officials have gone as far as to suggest that Al Qaida prisoners are trained to lie about such things to provoke the Muslim population. "We know that members of Al Qaida are trained to mislead and to provide false reports. We know that's one of their tactics that they use," White House spokesman Scott McClellan said in response to the latest reports.

The Newsweek item about the reported desecration of the Koran had

led to widespread unrest in the Islamic world, including rioting in Afghanistan that killed 16 people. The Bush administration blamed Newsweek for the ferment and virtually forced it to retract the story.

But summaries of the prisoner interviews obtained by ACLU are said to contain several charges detailing instances where the Koran was kicked, thrown to the floor and withheld as a punishment. They say guards tried to distract them during prayers by dancing around them, and in one instance, threw the prayer cap of one detainee into a

trash can. The latest disclosures came amid reports of another provocative incident in the U.S. A North Carolina church was reported yesterday to be displaying a sign on its premises saying, "The Koran needs to be flushed." The church pastor initially defended his right to put up the sign but subsequently withdrew it and apologised after a public outcry.

Amid all this, the administration was also pilloried by an Amnesty International report that called Guantanamo Bay "the gulag of our time" and labelled the United States "a leading purveyor and practitioner" of torture and mistreatment of prisoners.

Releasing its annual report on human rights, Amnesty called for an independent investigation into alleged abuses at US detention facilities and called for the prosecution of the "architects of torture policy" at the highest levels of the Bush administration.



## SENSITIVE SOULS

The abuse of the word, "sensitive", has never been more lamentable in India. Religious enthusiasm is perhaps the most powerful factor behind turning one of the gentlest words in the English language into one of the most oppressive. It is certainly a very serious crisis in democracy when books and films bring out the most violent emotions in sensitive people. Such sensitivities place any society on the treacherous foundation of fears, resentments, unfreedoms and unreason. And the dangers are manifest. The two blasts that violently disrupted the screenings of *Jo Bole So Nihaal* in Delhi have spread panic all over the country. Cinema halls have stopped screening the film in most major cities and towns, Mumbai being a notable exception. West Bengal has gone a step further by having the withdrawal of the film from its halls governmentally endorsed. The blasts have been variously linked with Sikh as well as Kashmiri extremism. But the most lasting — and damaging — fallout of these reactions has been the stances taken by the highest body in the community, the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, and by the national commission for minorities.

The former has objected to the use of a line from the Sikh daily prayers for the film's title and to the depiction of a Sikh man smoking. The latter has made the entirely outrageous recommendation to the censor board that any film that might offend religious sentiments should be referred to a panel of "religious leaders". This pre-emptive censorship is inimical to the most fundamental tenets of democracy. A critical spirit that can engage with debate, controversy, complexity and even caricature in a rational, open-minded and balanced and, if need be, humorous manner is essential to the functioning of a healthy and mature society. The power of critique that the arts are granted by any civilized society had been shamefully denied them recently in Britain when Ms Gurpreet Kaur Bhatti's play, *Behzti*, was taken off the boards in a reputed Birmingham theatre. The local Sikh community had demonstrated against it, and there were death threats against Ms Bhatti, for having depicted corruption, murder and rape in a *gurdwara*. Not a single British politician stood by her then. In India, such a reign of fear would be a far more unfortunate and dangerous thing.

# <sup>Religion</sup> **Burkha row** <sup>Sri 2015</sup> **erupts in school**



Statesman News Service

KOLKATA/MURSHID-  
ABAD, May 2. — A new-  
comer to her school, she is  
a teacher who wears a  
*burkha*. But her sari-clad  
colleagues want to see her  
dress like them.

She refuses to replace  
her veiled gown with the  
sari that, she argues,  
reveals too much.  
Moreover, wearing a  
*burkha* is held in high  
esteem by conservative  
Muslims, says the teacher.

The Amtala Anna-  
damoni Balika Vidyalaya  
in Naoda, Murshidabad, is  
reeling under a dress con-  
troversy that's necessitated  
police intervention though  
there's been no violence.

The teacher (name with-  
held) was a Hindu who  
converted to Islam after

marrying a teacher, Mr  
Hasibul Islam, of Dho-  
radaha Rajanikanta High  
School in Karimpur, Nadia.  
An MA in English, she  
joined the school as a teacher  
on 25 April this year after  
being selected by the Sch-  
ool Service Commission.  
But she had to face trouble  
for wearing her *burkha*.

She told The Statesman,  
"I uncover my face when I  
teach. I even showed my  
face to the teachers when  
they asked me to do so. A  
*burkha* is decent... I don't  
find anything wrong with  
it. They abused me when I  
refused to comply. I find it  
very tough to put up with  
them. One of them even  
questioned my academic  
credentials."

The teacher-in-charge,  
Mrs Gouri Bhowmik, said:  
"We only suggested that  
she wear a sari but didn't  
impose our decision. The  
managing committee sec-  
retary, however, instructed  
us not to disturb her..."

A teacher of the school  
and an RSP zilla parishad  
member, Mrs Jyotsna Sen,  
said: "For the sake of uni-  
formity, we told her to wear  
a sari. If she is allowed to  
wear a *burkha*, students  
might press for being  
allowed to wear a similar  
dress. We have nothing  
against the *burkha*."

Most students are  
Muslims.

03 MAY 2005

03 MAY 2005

THE STATESMAN

# Pope's first sermon: Return to God

REUTERS

VATICAN CITY, APRIL 24

2579  
Religion

POPE Benedict XVI took charge of his Church at a majestic inauguration on Sunday and set the tone for his papacy with a plea to humanity to return to God and transform a world he called a desert of pain and poverty.

Three weeks after the death of Pope John Paul II, presidents and pilgrims again packed the cobbled expanse in Front of St. Peter's Basilica to see the new pontiff installed on the papal throne.

Cloaked in golden vestments, Benedict appealed to a crowd estimated at 350,000 for prayers to help him in the "enormous task that truly exceeds human capacity". Applause echoed around the colonnaded square as pilgrims interrupted his sermon more than 40 times,



Inaugural Mass  
at Vatican City.

Reuters

chanting "Benedict, Benedict", at the end of the speech. "My real programme of governance is not to do my own will, not to

pursue my own ideas, but to listen, together with the whole Church, to the word and the will of the Lord," said Benedict, 78, the German former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger.

In his first official sermon as the 265th leader of the Church, Benedict often mentioned his predecessor John Paul, and promised to continue his policy of reaching out to other faiths.

But the main focus of his sermon, delivered entirely in Italian, was on what he called a world of alienation, suffering and death. "There are so many kinds of desert. There is the desert of poverty, the desert of hunger and thirst, the desert of abandonment, of loneliness, of destroyed love," the Pope said. "There is the desert of God's darkness, the emptiness of souls no longer aware of their dignity or the goal of human life..."

25 APR 2005

INDIAN EXPRESS



# New Pope just wants to serve



AP  
Benedict greets Spanish Cardinal Somalo on Friday.

**Reuters**  
*Vatican City, April 22*

POPE BENEDICT wants to serve rather than be honoured during his papacy, he said on Friday, asking cardinals to help him overcome his weaknesses. At his first audience since he was elected on Tuesday, the Pope greeted each of the "princes" of the Church by name, a fatherly smile on his face.

"This is not about being honoured but rather about a service that needs to be carried out with simplicity and dedication," the Pope told cardinals, most of whom took part in the conclave that chose him.

Since his election, the former Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger has called himself a "simple, humble worker in the Lord's vineyard" and made frequent mention of his inadequacy and weak-

ness. On Friday, the 78-year-old again referred to his human frailty; "my limits as a man and in my abilities".

"Your spiritual closeness, your inspired counsel and your physical cooperation will be a gift that I will always recognise and that will spur me on to fulfil my mandate with total faithfulness and dedication," he told cardinals. "I beg you, never deprive me of your support!"

Benedict will celebrate his inaugural Mass in St. Peter's Square on Sunday, delivering his first public homily as Pope from the spot where he presided over the funeral of his predecessor, John Paul, two weeks ago.

Fewer world leaders are due to attend the inauguration, but royalty, presidents and prime ministers are expected, as is the Pope's 81-year-old brother Georg.

# Battle for Muslim vote in Britain takes an ugly turn

Extremist group condemns forum's stand

Hasan Suroor

*Religious*  
*Apr 19*  
**LONDON:** The battle for Britain's one-million strong Muslim vote ahead of next month's general election is facing disruption from an extremist group which claims that it is "un-Islamic" to vote for "kafirs" (non-believers).

Activists of the self-styled "Saviour Sect" caused a mini riot when they stormed a meeting of the pro-Labour Muslim Council of Great Britain in a central London mosque on Tuesday, accusing it of "selling out" to the Government and warning Muslims that they would burn in "hell fire forever" if they took part in the elections.

The protesters, some of whom wore masks, called the Council a "mouthpiece of the British Govern-

ment of Tony Blair and George Bush." As the meeting, which had been called by the Council to "educate" Muslim voters, descended in chaos, police were called in and one man was arrested for allegedly causing criminal damage.

The Council chairman, Iqbal Sacraine, who was abused by protesters, retorted: "This is shame on Islam." A leaflet distributed by demonstrators said: "Voting for any political party ...will take you outside the fold of Islam." Mr. Sacraine said they represented a tiny minority and the vast majority of Muslims were moderate and "determined" to take part in the democratic processes.

"It is important to every member of the Muslim community who is eligible to vote to get out and vote on May 5," he said. The Council issued a

list of 10 questions which Muslim voters must ask candidates before making up their minds.

## Tough fight

In another incident, members of the same group tried to disrupt the election campaign in a predominantly Muslim constituency in East London where the sitting Labour MP, Oona King, is facing a tough fight from her former party colleague George Galloway, contesting on an anti-war platform. Police intervened after Mr. Galloway alleged that he was intimidated by Muslim "fundamentalists." They reportedly "gheraoed" Mr. Galloway saying they were "setting up the gallows" for him. They also warned Muslim voters that they faced a "death sentence" if they voted in the elections.

22 APR 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

# Benedict gets e-mail address

Agencies

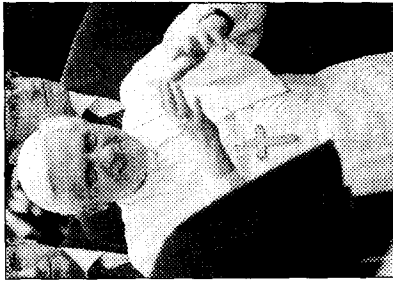
Vatican City, April 21

GOT A prayer or a problem for the new pope? Now you can e-mail him. Showing that Pope Benedict XVI intends to follow in the footsteps of John Paul II's multimedia ministry, the Vatican on Thursday modified its website so that users who click on an icon on the home page automatically activate an e-mail composer with his address. In English, the address is benedictxvi@vatican.va. In Italian: benedictxvi@vatican.va.

Vatican spokesmen could not immediately be reached for comment on how many messages Benedict may have received already.

John Paul, who died April 2, was the first pope to use e-mail, a medium that made its debut during his 26-year papacy. The Vatican said he received tens of thousands of messages in his final weeks as he struggled with illness.

In 2001 John Paul used a laptop to tap out an apology



REUTERS

The Pope greets the crowds outside his Vatican residence.

for Roman Catholic missionary abuses against indigenous peoples of the South Pacific. The Vatican also used e-mail to notify journalists of John Paul's death.

Elsewhere, several websites are offering trinkets with the image of the new pope. For only a couple of dollars, followers of Joseph Ratzinger can proclaim their support with everything from mugs to sweat-shirts and stickers emblazoned with his quotes.

# Kerala church invites Pope

CATHOLICS FROM a Kerala town have extended an invitation to Pope Benedict XVI to visit a church he helped build more than 25 years ago.

Pope Benedict donated around Rs 600,000 in 1978 to build the St. Mary's Malankara Catholic Church in Alappuzha after a friend told him about funding problems faced by the parishioners.

"That was a major contribution, a great gesture, which helped us complete the church building," Father Abraham Kakkannattu, who was the parish priest then, told Reuters. "As and when he comes to India, he should visit the church. It would have been impossible to build it without his help," he said.

Pope Benedict was then the archbishop of Munich and the contribution was made on behalf of the Catholics in his diocese.

The Alappuzha parish, which has about 75 families, has installed a marble plaque with Archbishop Joseph Ratzinger's name inside the church to acknowledge his contribution.

Reuters, Mumbai

# Ratzinger 'acted decisively'

Vatican City, April 21

POPE BENEDICT acted to preserve the legacy of John Paul on Thursday as details emerged of how he swept to an overwhelming victory in a secret conclave.

Benedict — a close doctrinal ally of Pope John Paul — made clear on the third day of his papacy that he would stick to his predecessor's conservative policies when he confirmed top posts at the head of the Vatican government.

The cardinals' vote for German Joseph Ratzinger, John Paul's doctrinal enforcer for 23 years, showed they wanted continuity and rejected a reformist change of course.

As Benedict XVI settled into power as head of the world's 1.1 billion Roman Catholics, interviews and leaks from conclave cardinals made clear that he had built up strong momentum even before the election began, outmanoeuvring moderate opposition.

Ratzinger went into the conclave on Monday as favourite but many Vatican experts felt he was too divisive and too old, at 78, to win. They expected an alter-

native to emerge.

One of the swiftest conclaves in a century suggested he instead decisively consolidated his position in the first three voting sessions before winning in the fourth on Tuesday.

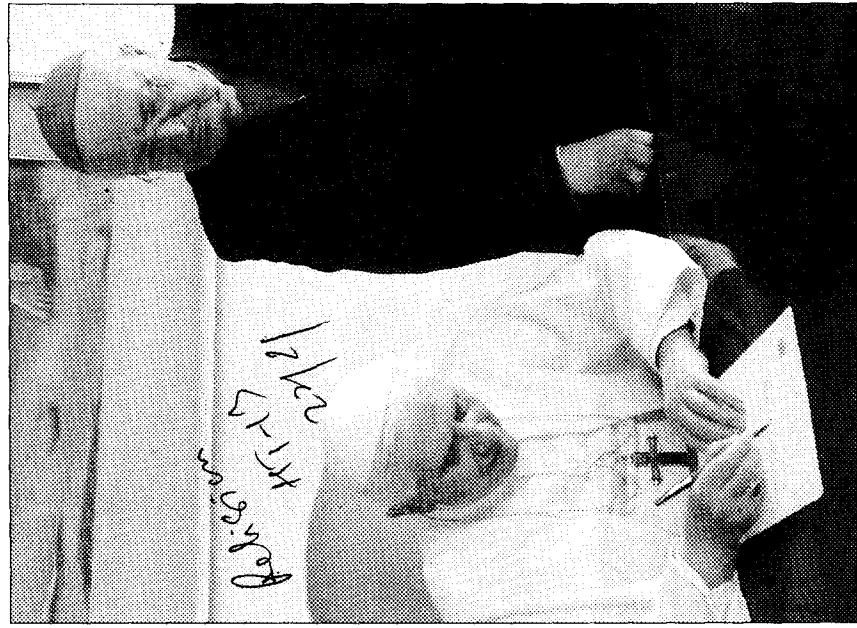
Italian newspapers, considered to have the best inside track on events inside the secret meeting, agreed that Ratzinger garnered well over the two thirds, or 77, votes he needed from the 115 voting cardinals. Some suggested he won more than 100.

The votes reflected the desire by the princes of the Church for an uncompromising and capable leader to face the myriad challenges of the 21st century.

Several cardinals suggested that a key factor in Ratzinger's election was his skilful administration in the period after John Paul died on April 2 and his reputation as a tough and uncompromising defender of traditional doctrine.

Elsewhere, Benedict XVI's biographer John Allen was quoted as telling CNN on Wednesday the new Pope suffered a brain haemorrhage in 1991 but has since recovered.

Reuters



Pope Benedict XVI with Italian Cardinal Angelo Sodano, whom he has chosen as his secretary of state.

AFP

# 'Panzer pope' breeds fear and hope

By Rashmee Roshan Lall/TNN

**London:** Twenty-four hours after the world's 1.1 billion Catholics learnt they had a new spiritual leader in Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the so-called 'Panzer pope', Europe and the new pontiff's native Germany began radiating mixed messages of alarm and hope.

The press in overwhelmingly liberal Catholic Germany has made great play on Ratzinger's roots in the traditional religious Bavarian heartland of Christianity. The newspaper Handelsblatt stressed "Der Deutsche Joseph Ratzinger ist neuer Paps Benedikt XVI (The German Joseph Ratzinger is the new pope Benedict XVI)", while the mass-circulation Bild exclaimed "what an honour" for Germans. Die Welt insisted "there couldn't have been a greater honour for Christians

in Germany" and "Europe could not have been given any greater weight" than Ratzinger's election, while the Hamburger Morgenpost offered a lyrical eight-page special and the Rheinische Post's front page carried just one big word as an emotive headline, "Ratzinger."

The authoritative Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung tried to quiet the growing sense of dismay among liberals in a fast-secularising Europe by drawing on Ratzinger's well-known closeness to the previous Pope, now being called John Paul the Great. "Mit dem Vertrauen Johannes Pauls II. Doch nicht nur das (With the confidence of John Paul II. But not only



that), the paper insisted. Church historians across Europe said the German media's natural focus on Ratzinger's nationality and scant emphasis on his agenda for the

Catholic church underlined the deep sense of dismay that the new pontiff was a man who enforced hardline, fundamentals-driven doctrinal principles in his 23 years of service as the Vatican's chief heresy watchdog.

Even as Catherine Pepinster, editor of the conservative Catholic weekly, The Tablet, insisted a German Pope had been called to duty for the first time since the 11th century in order "to save Europe", the British press overwhelmingly described the new pontiff as "the most controversial, divisive and reactionary of all the plausible candidates".

Pepinster declared that the new

conservative pope, elected by the majority of Europeans in the 115-strong conclave of cardinals, was surely meant to be a divine sign that "Europe, once the Catholic church's heartland, is now its lost continent".

But the overwhelming tone of religious gloom across Europe over the new Pope was set by France's conservative Le Figaro, which reiterated that he is "the champion of the conservative camp".

The left-of-centre Liberation of Paris derisively opted for a photo of the pope looking sideways at an invisible companion on the Vatican balcony. Its headline punned on the phrase "a backwards step", declaring "A backwards pope." The paper mused that the choice of Ratzinger meant "the Catholic Church need not fear being accused of originality".

# খবর

এক নজরে

## নতুন পোপ জার্মানির রাটজিঙ্গার



■ নতুন পোপ  
নির্বাচিত হলেন ৭৮  
বছর বয়সী,  
রক্ষণশীল জার্মান  
কার্ডিনাল জোসেফ  
রাটজিঙ্গার। প্রয়াত

দ্বিতীয় জন পলের স্থলাভিষিক্ত এই পোপ ষোড়শ বেনেডিক্ট হিসাবে পরিচিত হবেন। রোমান ক্যাথলিক চার্চের দু'হাজার বছরের ইতিহাসে ইনি হলেন ২৬৫ তম পোপ। মঙ্গলবার পোপ নির্বাচনের দ্বিতীয় দিনেও প্রথম দফায় সিস্টিন চ্যাপেলের চিমনি ব্যর্থতার কালো ধোঁয়া উগরে দিয়েছিল। সন্ধ্যার মুখে প্রথমে আশা জাগানো সাদা ধোঁয়া বেরোয়, তার পরেই ভ্যাটিকানের সেন্ট পিটার্স ব্যাসিলিকার ঘণ্টা বেজে উঠে জানিয়ে দেয়, ক্যাথলিক চার্চের অনুগত ১১০ কোটি মানুষের নতুন নেতা নির্বাচন হয়ে গিয়েছে। সেন্ট পিটার্স স্কোয়ারে জড়ো হওয়া অসংখ্য ভক্ত আনন্দে উদ্বেলিত হয়ে ওঠেন।

20 APR 2005

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

# Joseph Ratzinger <sup>Religion 10-1</sup> is the new Pope

VATICAN: The successor to John Paul II has been elected, Vatican Radio announced on Tuesday evening. Bells chimed at St. Peter's Basilica and tens of thousands of flag-waving pilgrims filled the square, chanting: *Viva il Papa!* or "Long live the Pope!"

The new Pope is Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger from Germany. He will be known as Benedict XVI. The bells rang after a confusing smoke signal that Vatican Radio initially suggested was black but then declared was too difficult to call. White smoke is used to announce a Pope's election to the world.

"It's only been 24 hours — surprising how fast he was elected," Vatican Radio said, commenting on how the new Pope was elected after just four or five ballots. More pilgrims were



*Joseph Ratzinger, who will be known as Pope Benedict XVI* — AP

pouring into St. Peter's Square, and the bells were still pealing 10 minutes after the original tolling.

The 265th pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church succeeds John Paul II, who gained ex-

<sup>10-1</sup>traordinary popularity over a 26-year pontificate, history's third-longest papacy. Millions mourned him around the world in a tribute to his charisma.

Cardinals had faced a choice over whether to seek an older, skilled administrator who could serve as a "transitional" Pope while the church absorbs John Paul's legacy, or a younger dynamic pastor and communicator — perhaps from Latin America or elsewhere in the developing world where the church is growing. While John Paul, a Pole, was elected to challenge the Communist system in place in eastern Europe in 1978 the new pontiff faces new issues: the need for dialogue with Islam, the divisions between the north and the poor south as well as problems within his church. — AP

20 APR 2005

THE HINDU

# Back to basics

*ESS* *BJP returns to Hindutva* *Feb 2005*

**T**wenty-five years old and yet the party seems to have learnt nothing. The Bharatiya Janata Party just celebrated its silver jubilee with the customary national council meet and decided that the only way forward was to go back. Born as the new avatar of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, the BJP had refused to break ties with the RSS from the very beginning. In the past 25 years, it has, based on the needs of the hour, intermittently emphasised and downplayed its association with the RSS. The same applies to the party's position on Hindutva. In the early years, when the BJP wanted to be seen as a political player like the Janata Party, it set Hindutva aside. Then Ayodhya grabbed LK Advani's imagination and thanks to his rath yatra, Hindutva again emerged as its main plank. Communal politics became the name of the game and the BJP reaped rich dividends. In the words of Advani, it went from a party of 2 to 200 MPs in the Lok Sabha. While the climb to the top was fast, it was not smooth. The party reached a political plateau, and could not form a government without regional coalition partners. Once again, Hindutva was pushed to the back burner.

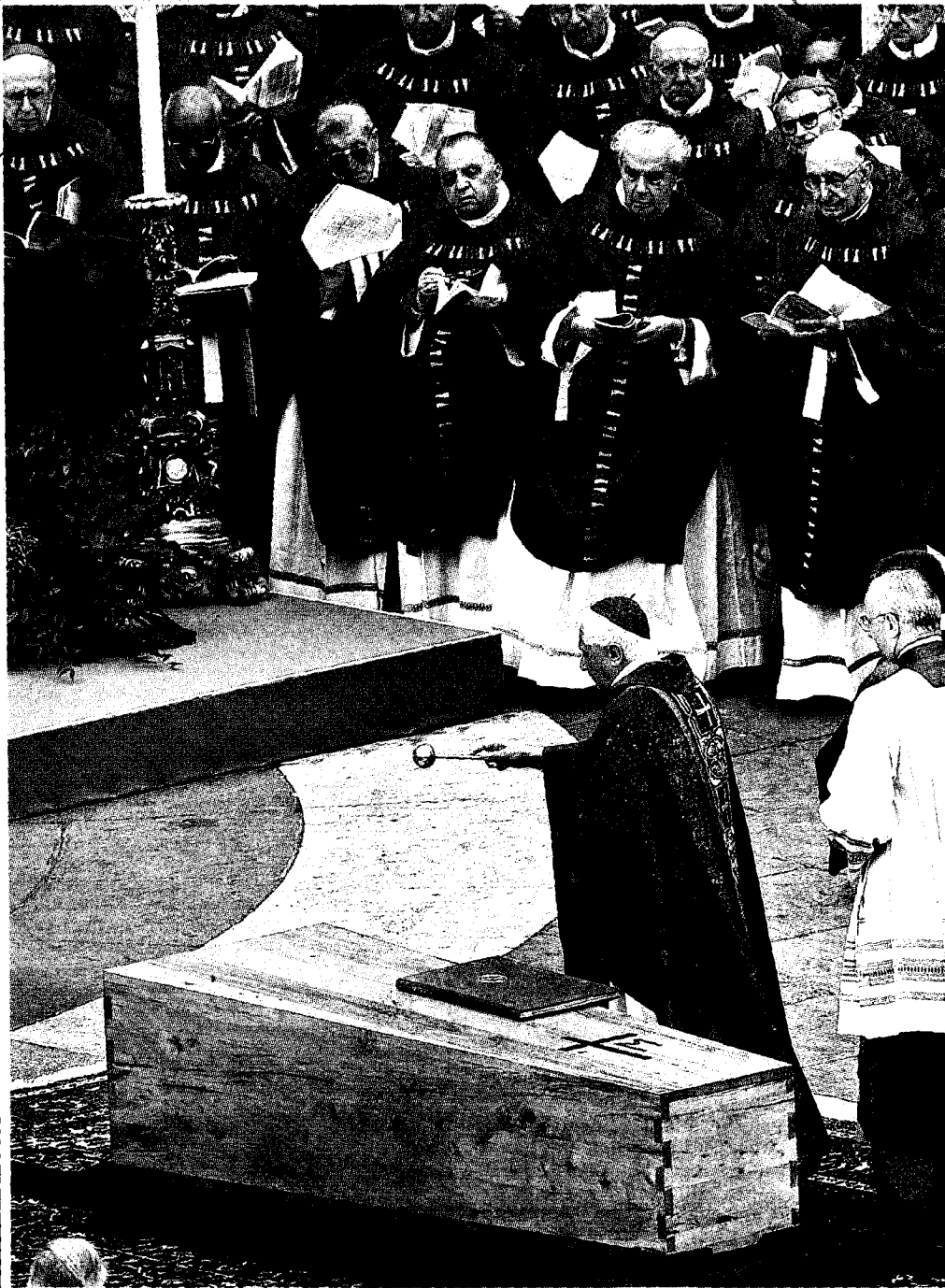
Power corrupts and even the BJP — touted as the party with a difference — was not immune. It too was beset by problems such as infighting, dissidence, criminalisation, corruption and nepotism, and was voted out. To now say that it will return to Hindutva suggests a lack of imagination and political skill; worse, it suggests that each time the BJP is under pressure, it will fan divisive flames. After the electoral reverse last year, the RSS chief had urged the BJP to form its own cadre, because the RSS/VHP cadre would no longer help it win elections. This was an offer the party ought to have taken up, for in a country whose secularism is reinforced at regular intervals, politics must be seen to be free from the shackles of religious dogma. Predictably, though, the BJP has once again taken the easy option and reinforced its dependence on the RSS. Leader after leader at the national council pledged allegiance to the RSS. All of them, including the likes of Pramod Mahajan who faced the Sangh's wrath in the Assembly elections, announced they were swayamsevaks 'first and last'. The BJP has come full circle. Hindutva is back, the Ram Temple has reclaimed centre stage, RSS has regained its pre-eminence, and all is right with the Sangh Parivar. Or, is it?

11 APR 2005

THE STATESMAN

# Millions bid farewell to Pope John Paul II

By Vaiju Naravane <sup>19/9</sup> <sup>19/9</sup>



German Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger waves an incense burner around the coffin of Pope John Paul II during his funeral in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on Friday. — Reuters

**PARIS, APRIL 8.** Millions of people across the world today bid an emotional farewell to Pope John Paul II, one of the most influential and popular Popes of all times, in an elaborate and solemn funeral at the Vatican that was televised live around the globe.

The "People's Pope" or the "Travelling Pope," who died on April 2 at the age of 84, was laid to rest alongside other pontiffs in the crypt of Saint Peter's Basilica.

The U.S. President, George Bush, the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, the French President, Jacques Chirac, the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and royals and leaders from over 80 countries attended the open air mass where the Pope's body lay in a plain cedar wood coffin, stamped with a brown cross and the letter M. The symbols, which represent Christ and Virgin Mary, were also part of his official seal.

An open, red-bound New Testament was placed on top of the coffin, its pages flickering in the wind. In the coffin, prelates had placed special medals minted by the Vatican during Pope John Paul II's reign as well as a scroll recounting his life.

Cardinal Eduardo Martinez Somalo, the official known as the Cardinal Camerlengo and who is in temporary charge of the Vatican until a new Pope is appointed, covered the Pope's face with a white silk veil and sprinkled his body with holy water before the coffin was closed.

## Sea of humanity

St. Peter's Square was crammed with over 3,00,000 people and an estimated 7,00,000 filled the nearby streets to watch the mass on giant video screens. Many of them chanted, clapped and waved their national flags. At one point, the crowd almost interrupted the three-hour-long ceremony when people began chanting "Santo Subito" (Sainthood Now), calling for his immediate canonisation.

An estimated one million Polish people came to Rome by bus, car, train and plane. Poland's delegation included its President, Aleksander Kwasniewski, and his predecessor, Lech Walesa.

After the mass, lasting almost three hours, the coffin was carried inside the basilica to be buried in the crypt close to the spot believed to contain the body of St. Peter, the apostle chosen by Jesus Christ to found his church.

During his homily, the officiating priest, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, said that John Paul II had borne "a burden which transcends merely human abilities."

In a voice trembling with emotion, Cardinal Ratzinger, described by Vatican insiders as "tough and uncompromising," recalled how the Pope had appeared at a window in the Vatican to bless believers on Easter Sunday, six days before his death, when he could no longer speak.

"Our Pope never wanted to spare his own life, but gave himself unreservedly for Christ until his last moment. Now we can be sure that our beloved pope is at the window of God's house, where he sees and blesses us," he said.

World leaders, including the U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, and Mr. Bush, sat on the left-hand side of the esplanade while the other side was occupied by red-robed Cardinals will meet in a secret conclave on April 18 to start the process of electing the next Pope.

Swiss guards in yellow and purple uniforms and scarlet-plumed helmets stood by as Catholic prelates took their seats — bishops in purple and cardinals in red.

**Call for canonisation:**  
Page 14



# Developing nations root for their own

Agence France-Presse  
Paris, April 4

AS EULOGIES flowed in for Pope John Paul II on Monday, the world looked ahead to a new Pope with huge swathes of the Roman Catholic Church hoping for a loosening of the strict doctrine on condoms and another inspirational leader, perhaps from Africa.

John Paul was renowned in the developing world as a champion of the poor, but many followers in developing countries now believe it is time for the next pontiff to come from their ranks.

In Nairobi, the *New Vision* newspaper told the Roman Catholic cardinals to consider choosing a non-Western pontiff. "The Catholic Church has been losing followers in the West since John Paul II became Pope in 1978. Consequently, nearly 65 per cent of the Catholics live in Africa, Asia and Latin America. These shifting demographics should not be ignored when choosing the next Pope," the paper said.

"Africa has not produced a Pope in 1,500 years. Yet today, 75 per cent of Roman Catholic cardinals come from Africa. This is a golden opportunity for Africa," it added. Africa's biggest hope for the job is Cardinal Francis Arinze of Nigeria, though he is unlikely to usher in a new era of liberal theology.

Outside Africa, though, the views were different. "He is likely to be a transitional Pope - possibly an Italian. That would be a way of guaranteeing John Paul II's legacy," said Christian Terras, director of the Catholic magazine *Golias*, which was critical of John Paul's papacy.

But the new Pope will have to bandage the wounds at the heart of the church, notably concerning priests, bishops and theologians who have been repressed. "John Paul II's rigour paralysed the most active and dynamic members of the church. The new Pope must take a more compassionate line on many problems," Terras asserted.

Pressure groups called for the next leader of 1.1 billion Roman Catholics to lift a ban on condoms. "I hope the change will bring it into line with the forces engaged in the struggle against

## PAPAL BETS



Dionigi Tettamanzi

More than 5,000 people have placed bets with Paddy Power PLC, Ireland

### Favourites

- ▶ Dionigi Tettamanzi (Italy): 11-4
- ▶ Francis Arinze (Nigeria): 11-4
- ▶ Oscar Maradiaga (Honduras): 9-2
- ▶ Joseph Ratzinger (Germany): 7-1
- ▶ Claudio Hummes (Brazil): 7-1
- ▶ Jaime Lucas Ortega Alamino (Cuba): 14-1
- ▶ Ennio Antonelli (Italy): 14-1
- ▶ Christoph Schoenborn (Austria): 14-1
- ▶ Giovanni Battista Re (Italy): 16-1
- ▶ Dario Castrillon Hoyos (Colombia): 18-1
- ▶ Crescenzo Sepe (Italy): 18-1
- ▶ Giacomo Biffi (Italy): 18-1

■ BIGGEST BET: \$1,300, on Tettamanzi



Francis Arinze

HIV contamination," said Khalil Elouardighi, of gay rights group *Act-up*.

*The Independent* in London pressed for "a Pope for the 21st century".

"The next pope faces a Herculean task, not only in matching the late Pope's global role but in restoring trust in, and respect for, the clergy which is at an all-time low," the paper said in an editorial.



The faithful pray and sing for their beloved pontiff at St Peter's square in the Vatican on Monday.

## Basilica is Pope's home till burial

Agence France-Presse  
Vatican City, April 4

THE BODY of Pope John Paul II was laid out at the altar of St. Peter's Basilica after a solemn procession on Monday.

Cardinal Eduardo Martinez Somalo, the cardinal camerlengo in charge of the Holy See until a new Pope is named, presided over the procession, which began as he blessed the body.

Twelve pallbearers hoisted the palanquin bearing the John Paul's body onto their shoulders and proceeded out of the vast Clementine Hall where the Pope was viewed by dignitaries on Sunday.

Red-capped cardinals were seen descending the great Stairway of Nobles, followed by

bishops in their purple and white vestments and Vatican officials in dark suits bearing giant candles.

The public got a first glimpse of the procession at St. Peter's Square as it made its way through a massive bronze door of the Vatican. People broke into tears and applause as the body emerged, with many taking photographs.

Before turning into the massive Basilica, the palanquin was turned towards the square where the pontiff had presided on countless occasions during his 26-year-reign.

The body will lie in state for public viewing through Thursday night, ahead of the funeral on Friday. Roads were closed to all traffic, except official cars and taxis, several blocks away from St. Peter's.

Around the clock till Thursday night, several hundred thousand people are expected to file in and out of the Basilica in two parallel queues ending at either side of the foot of the dias bearing the Pope's body.

Hundreds of metal and wooden barriers have been lined up on the square to channel the crowds into the Basilica.

Access to St. Peter's is via the grand Via della Conciliazione, which lies along the central axis of the vast cobblestoned square where massive vigils have been on every night since the Pope fell ill last Thursday.

Mourners paying their respects to John Paul II will not be allowed to pause before turning around and exiting through side portals, and there will be no condolence books to sign, press reports said.

## AT THE FUNERAL



INDIA: Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, Vice-President

SRI LANKA: Mahinda Rajapakse, PM

BANGLADESH: Chowdhury Kamal Ibne Yusuf, minister

ITALY: President and PM

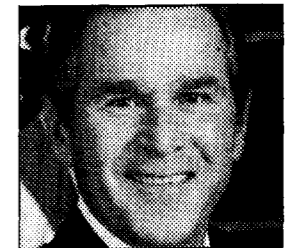
RUSSIA: Mikhail Fradkov, PM

GERMANY: President and Chancellor

CANADA: Paul Martin, PM

SPAIN: King Juan Carlos, Queen Sofia and PM

EU: European Commission president



US: George W. Bush and Laura Bush

PHILIPPINES: President

LATVIA: President

LITHUANIA: President

ESTONIA: President

CYPRUS: President

CROATIA: President and PM

SLOVENIA: President and PM

LEBANON: President, PM and Speaker

CHILE: Ignacio Walker, minister

MALAYSIA: Two ministers



BRITAIN: Prince Charles, Tony Blair

# WORLD MOURNS POPE'S DEATH



REST IN PEACE

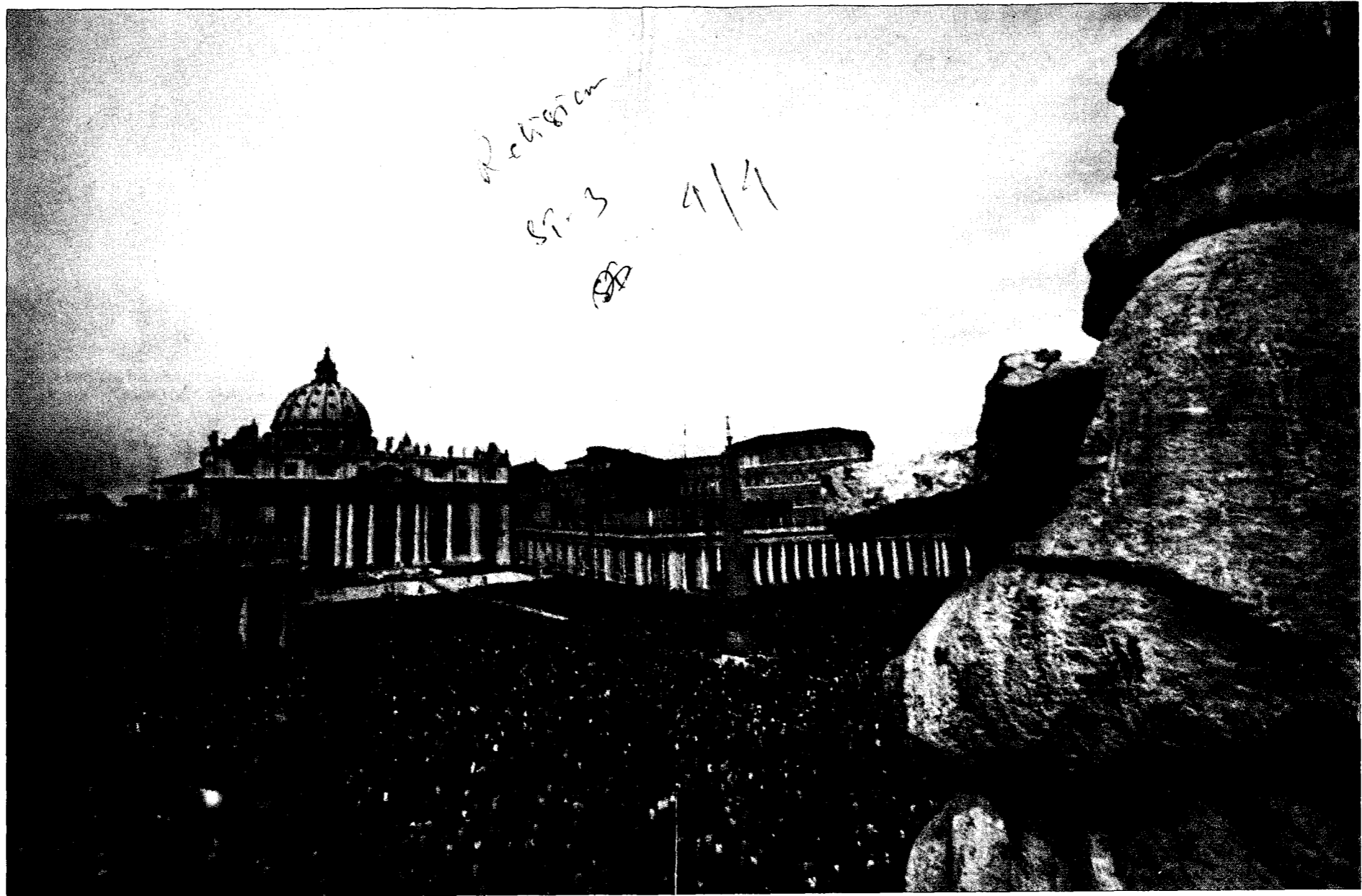
## Death due to septic shock

Associated Press

VATICAN CITY, April 3. — Pope John Paul II died of blood poisoning and the collapse of his blood vessels, the Vatican announced today, releasing the official death certificate a day after the Pontiff's passing.

The certificate listed the ailments the 84-year-old Pope suffered from, including acknowledging officially for the first time that John Paul II had Parkinson's disease. John Paul II, who died last evening, had suffered heart and kidney failure brought on by a urinary tract infection last week.

The official certificate used the medical terminology for blood poisoning and blood vessel collapse, which is septic shock and cardio-circulatory collapse. The other ailments listed were episodes of acute breathing failure, resulting in a throat operation to insert a breathing tube in his windpipe; high blood pressure; lack of blood flow to the tissues and an enlarged prostate gland. The certificate said the urinary tract infection, and resultant deadly spread of that infection to the blood, was a complication of the prostate problem.



Mourners flock to St Peter's Square for a special mass on Sunday. — AFP

## Pontiff's body lies in state at the Vatican

Associated Press

VATICAN CITY, April 3. — Finally at rest after years of debilitating disease, Pope John Paul II's body lay in state today in the frescoed Apostolic Palace as the world mourned his death and the Vatican prepared for the ritual-filled funeral and conclave that will elect his successor.

An estimated 100,000 people turned out for a morning Mass and thousands more — tourists, Romans, young and old — kept coming throughout the day, a sea of humanity filling the broad boulevard leading to St Peter's Basilica. They clutched rosaries and newspaper photos of John Paul as they stood shoulder-to-shoulder in St Peter's Square to pray for the soul of "our beloved

John Paul". "Today, while we weep for the departure of the Pope who left us, we open our hearts to the vision of our eternal destiny," Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Vatican's No. 2 official, said in his homily. "For a quarter century, he brought the Gospel of Christian hope to all the piazzas of the world, teaching all of us that our death is nothing but the passage towards the homeland in the sky."

Bells tolled and pilgrims wept in remembrance of the Polish-born Pope, who reigned for longer than all but two of his predecessors and was credited with helping bring down communism in Europe and spreading a message of peace around the world.

The Vatican said the pontiff died at 9.37 p.m. yesterday of septic shock



United in grief at the Vatican on Sunday. — AFP

and cardio-circulatory collapse. He was 84.

The mourning began with an overnight vigil in St Peter's Square after the world learned of the death of the Pontiff in his studio apartment.

Early today, Cardinal Camillo Ruini, the late Pope's Vicar for Rome, issued a formal announcement of

John Paul II's death to the people of Rome, in keeping with Vatican tradition.

The written text of Cardinal Sodano's homily called the late Pope "John Paul the Great", a title usually designated for Popes worthy of sainthood, such as Gregory the Great and Leo the Great. Cardinal Sodano did not use the title

when he delivered the homily, and there was no explanation. Vatican texts, however, are considered official texts even if they are not pronounced.

Applause rang out when Cardinal Sodano, dressed in golden vestments, prayed for the Pope's soul. "We entrust with confidence to the risen Christ, Lord of life and history, our beloved John Paul II who for 27 years guided the universal church as the successor of Peter," he said.

After the Mass ended, Archbishop Leonardo Sandri, who became the Pope's public "voice" in the final weeks of his life, read the traditional Sunday noon-time prayer, which John Paul II delivered throughout his pontificate.

The crowd applauded when the Archbishop announced that the late Pope

had actually prepared the prayer himself before he died — perhaps one of John Paul II's last written documents — saying he was reading it "with such honour, but also such nostalgia".

Once the Mass ended, Cardinals, Prelates, Italian government officials and diplomats gathered in the frescoed Sala Clementina of the Apostolic Palace, where John Paul II's body lay in state. Images of the ceremony, beamed around the world on television, gave the world its first look at the Pope since he had died.

John Paul II was dressed in crimson vestments and white bishop's miter on his head. His crossed hands clutched a rosary, and his pastoral staff was tucked under his left arm. A Swiss Guard stood on either side of him as the faithful paid their respects at his feet.

## WIDE ANGLE

### India mourning

NEW DELHI, April 3. — India declared a three-day state mourning from today as a mark of respect to Pope John Paul II. The President and Prime Minister sent their letters of condolences to the Vatican, even as bells tolled and candles were lit in churches across India. — SNS

### Castro gesture

HAVANA, April 3. — Cuban President Fidel Castro expressed condolences for the Pope's death, declaring three days of official mourning on the communist-run island beginning today. — AP

### In peace

VATICAN CITY, April 3. — The expression on the late Pope's face appeared peaceful but pained. "Our Holy Father looks very much at peace. It was very satisfying for all of us to see him so serene," a cardinal said. — AP

### Poll delay

LONDON, April 3. — British Prime Minister Mr Tony Blair today delayed the announcement of upcoming elections, expected to take place tomorrow, and will be attending a religious memorial for Pope John Paul II, his office said. — AFP

### Hometown statue

WADOWICE (Poland), April 3. — Pope John Paul II's hometown in Wadowice today placed a bronze statue of its most famous son in front of the church which stands metres away from the house where he was born. — AFP



Italian Prime Minister Mr Silvio Berlusconi at the Vatican on Sunday. — AFP

## The silver hammer and the locked door

Peter Popham in Rome

April 3. — The Catholic Church is as proud of its ancient ceremonies as the British parliament or royal family, and even though some of these fall by the wayside when the needs of the modern world assert themselves, many others remain intact.

It is unlikely for example — we will probably never know for sure — that the Camerlengo (or chamberlain) of the Vatican, Cardinal Leonardo

Martinez Somalo, tapped the Pope three times on the head with a silver hammer and called out his baptismal name to ascertain that he was truly dead; but it is much more likely that he followed tradition in using the same hammer to destroy the Pope's ring and seal of office.

It is also unlikely — again, we may never know — that the next Pope, once elected, will be required to sit on a special chair, like a commode, while the Camerlengo gropes to feel his testicles, to be one hundred per

cent sure that they have not elected a woman by mistake.

But the conclave at which the Pope is elected follows in spirit the conclaves of old. The word means "with keys", and is a Latin pun: they meet to find the next man to carry "the keys of St Peter"; and while they are doing it they will themselves be locked in.

In the past, they were quite literally imprisoned, both to stop them being nobbled by the powerful political interests, and to keep their minds on the job. — *The Independent*

## Steps to succession...



THE PAPABLES: Some of the strong contenders to become the new Pope. (From left) Nigeria's Cardinal Francis Arinze, Brazilian Cardinal Claudio Hummes, Cardinal Oscar Rodriguez Maradiaga from Honduras, Colombian Cardinal Dario Castrillon Hoyos and Italian Archbishop Angelo Scola. — AFP

STEPS in the process of selecting a new Pope under rules laid down by the late Pope John Paul II in 1996:

- The College of Cardinals is to meet at 10 a.m. tomorrow and is expected to set the date for the funeral. The funeral and burial must be held between the fourth and sixth day after death except for unspecified "special reasons"
- Pope's body goes on display for

public viewing at St. Peter's Basilica starting Monday afternoon.

- Appointments of top Vatican officials cease but assistants continue routine business. College of Cardinals temporarily governs the Roman Catholic Church. The chamberlain becomes chief administrator and organises conclave where the cardinals will choose a new Pope.

■ The conclave begins 15 to 20 days after death.

■ Cardinals eligible to vote — those under age 80 — are sequestered within Vatican City and take oath of secrecy.

■ Any baptised Roman Catholic male is eligible for election as pope, but only cardinals have been selected since 1378.

■ Two ballots held each morning and two each afternoon in the

Sistine Chapel. If no one gets required two-thirds majority after about 12 days, cardinals may change procedure and elect pope by simple majority.

■ Ballots burned after each round. Black smoke means no decision; white smoke signals that cardinals have chosen pope and he has accepted. New Pope introduced at St. Peter's Square and imparts his first blessing. — AP

04 APR 2005

THE STATESMAN

Religious

# Preparations on for elaborate rituals POPE IS DEAD

AP-1  
ASSOCIATED PRESS 1999

VATICAN CITY, April 2. — Pope John Paul II, the Polish Pontiff who led the Roman Catholic Church for more than a quarter century died today in his Vatican apartment. He was 84.

"The angels welcome you," Vatican TV said after the announcement came from papal spokesman Mr Joaquin Navarro-Valls.

"The Holy Father died this evening at 9:37 p.m. in his private apartment. All the procedures outlined in the Apostolic Constitution *Universi Dominici Gregis* that was written by John Paul II on 22 February 1996, have been put in motion," his statement said.

It was distributed to journalists via e-mail. John Paul expired as cardinals were leading some 70,000 people at St Peter's Square in prayers for him in his "last journey". Italy's ANSA news agency said Vatican and Italian flags were being lowered to half-staff across Rome and elsewhere.

The Pope died after suffering heart and kidney failure following two hospitalisations in as many months. Just a few hours earlier, the Vatican had said he was in "very serious" condition but responded to members of the papal household.

After the Pontiff's death, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Vatican No. 2 official, immediately led the tearful crowd in St

Peter's Square in prayers.

Immediately after the news was announced to the square by undersecretary of state Archbishop Leonardo Sandri, there was complete silence. The crowd seemed stunned. A few minutes later, some people broke out in applause in appreciation for the Pope — in an Italian tradition in which mourners often clap for important figures. Others wept.

"We all feel like orphans this evening," Sandri said.

A few people started streaming out of the square, but other stayed put and stared at the Pope's windows, where the light still burned.

John Paul was a robust 58-year-old when the cardinals stunned the world and elected the cardinal from Krakow, the first non-Italian Pope in 455 years.

Preparations got under way today for the elaborate rituals marking a Pope's death, with officials gearing up to accommodate the tens of thousands of pilgrims expected to converge in Rome in the wake of the Pope's death.

Workmen in cherry-pickers began dismantling the canopy that normally stands on the steps of St Peter's Basilica to shield the Pope from the sun during outdoor Masses. One workman said the space had to be cleared for John Paul's funeral.

■ More reports, photographs on page 11

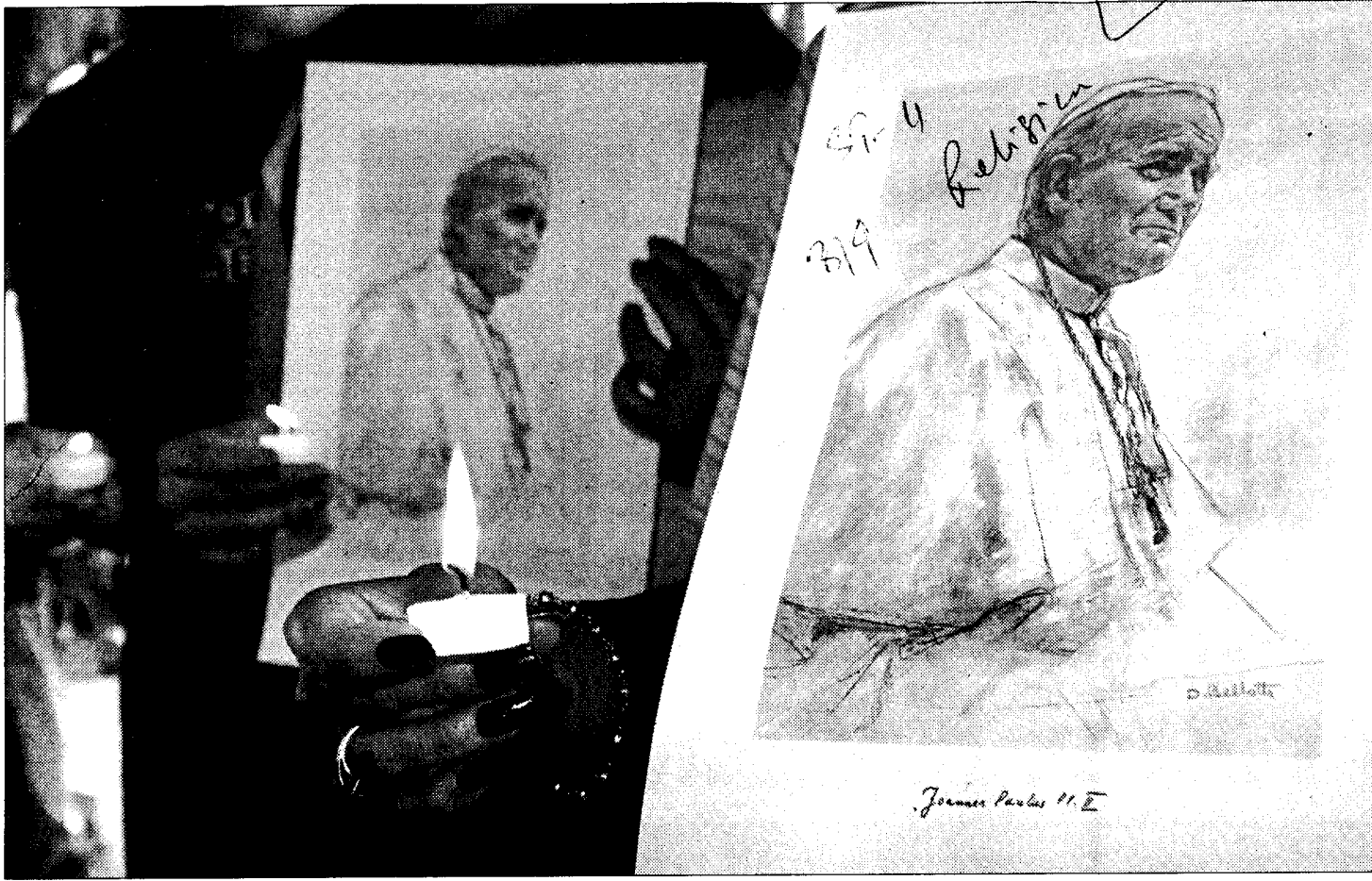


A file photo of the Pope

## AFTER THE DEATH...

- A pronouncement of death is made in Latin and is certified by a physician. The Bronze Door at St Peter's Basilica is closed.
- A nine-day mourning period, the *Novendiales*, follows.
- The funeral and burial must be held between the fourth and sixth day.
- The Pontiff could choose to be interred in Krakow's Wavel Cathedral instead of beneath the Basilica.
- Cardinals under 80 gather to elect the new Pope in the Sistine Chapel. The conclave must begin at least 15 days after the Pope's death and not more than 20.
- A simple majority is sufficient to elect a Pope if none gets two-thirds majority after 30 rounds of voting. — AP





The faithful gathered across the globe to mourn the passing away of the Pope late on Saturday. — AFP

## Dynamism personified

OBITUARY/ POPE JOHN PAUL II (1920 ~ 2005)

THE appointment of Karol Wojtyla as Pope in 1978 was in many ways seen as a groundbreaking move for the Catholic Church.



Picture dated in the 1930s of Karol Wojtyla after receiving first communion in his home in Krakow. — AFP

The first Polish pontiff — and at 58, the youngest Pope of the 20th Century — he had risen swiftly through the ranks of Catholic clergy to become Archbishop of Krakow. His career — although rapid — was not spectacular. Although respected, he was little known outside Vatican circles, and few experts tipped him as successor to Pope John Paul, who died after only 33 days in office.

Karol Wojtyla took the name of John Paul II after being elected in a two-day session of the College of Cardinals sitting in the Sistine Chapel.

### DYNAMIC EARLY LIFE

Born near Krakow in 1920, the young Karol Wojtyla devoted his energies to sports including football and skiing. An avid theatre lover, at one time he also considered becoming an actor.

During the Nazi occupation in World War II he studied theology — in hiding for part of the time — and was eventually ordained a priest in 1946. He was quickly promoted, becoming archbishop in 1964 and cardinal in 1967.

An outside candidate, his approach to the papacy was dynamic. John Paul II has never been a man to remain shrouded behind the walls of the Vatican.

He has travelled constantly. After his appointment, he quickly established himself as an instantly recognisable figurehead to the world's largest Christian

community.

He has visited more than 100 countries and is estimated to have effectively circled the globe 27 times.

However his desire for closeness with people almost led to his death. In 1981 he was shot and seriously wounded by a Mehmet Ali Agca, a Turkish fanatic, in St Peter's square. After a long recovery he visited and forgave his would-be assassin.

### CONSERVATIVE VIEWS

Despite the Pope's progressive, hands-on leadership, he is not without his critics, particularly over his views on contentious issues such as divorce, contraception and abortion. At a Vatican conference in 2001 he spoke out against laws allowing divorce, abortion, homosexual unions and rights for unmarried couples. Critics both inside and outside the church say such views risk alienating many Catholics and are out of touch with a rapidly changing world.

### HEALTH PROBLEMS

In recent years, the Pope has been dogged by ill health and has become increasingly frail. He had a tumour removed from his colon in 1992, dislocated his shoulder in 1993, broke his femur in 1994 and had his appendix removed in 1996.

In 2001 an orthopaedic surgeon confirmed what had been suspected for some time — that the Pope was suffering from Parkinson's disease.

In October 2003, St Peter's square in Rome was filled with pilgrims from around the world as Pope John Paul II celebrated his Silver Jubilee.



John Paul II at the Vatican after being named the Pope on 16 October 1978. — AFP

Just five months later, on 14 March 2004, the remarkable life of the pontiff reached another milestone when his papacy became the third-longest in the history of the Catholic Church.

The Pope marked his 84th birthday in May of that year, but despite deteriorating health has refused to let up his gruelling schedule of appearances and foreign trips. He held a weekly audience on Wednesdays and until his latest bout of ill health led to the cancellation of his engagements, had not missed one since September 2003. — Agencies



Pope Paul VI consecrates Archbishop of Poland Karol Wojtyla after his election as cardinal in the Vatican's Sistine Chapel on 28 June 1967. — AFP

## 'Above all, no fuss please'

DO WE REALLY NEED THIS SPECTACLE OF THE DYING?

CATHERINE PEPINSTER  
THE INDEPENDENT

LONDON, April 2. — A few weeks ago I had the chance to read an early copy of Anthony Howard's forthcoming biography of the late Cardinal Basil Hume, who was a much respected and loved leader of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. The final chapter on Cardinal Hume's death was particularly poignant, but what struck me forcefully was that Cardinal Hume had the kind of death most of us would wish to have.

After being told that he was seriously ill with cancer, and that he had months to live, he had time to prepare for his death, and make his peace with the world and with God. Cardinal Hume, announcing that he was dying, stressed: "Above all, no fuss." He then retreated from public life, finally dying surrounded by family and his closest associates.

If only it had been the case for



The final days of the Pope and Terri Schiavo have been a media circus, bordering on the unseemly.

the American Terri Schiavo, and for Pope John Paul II in these, his final days. The agony of these two people has been a spectacle, a media circus at times bordering on the unseemly, with every gasp, every agonised movement, every moment of struggle monitored by the cameras. Yet the final days of these people's lives tell us much of the nature of dying today. On the one hand there is the Christian

belief that suffering must be borne with faith and patience, and on the other, a humanist view that people should be taken out of their misery.

The tension between these two approaches was clearly apparent in the case of Schiavo. Her husband, with his belief that her life should be actively brought to an end, finally won the day. Her Catholic parents believed that she should not have food and

water withdrawn, but they were forced by the courts to stand aside and watch her die an excruciating death.

But there was a third element in the life and death of Schiavo, and indeed in the story of the Pope's final days. That is the role that medical technology plays today, not so much in saving lives but prolonging them. Doctors using advanced medication and feeding techniques can keep people alive who would never have survived even 10 or 20 years ago. Once this happens, the boundaries between life and death become ever more blurred.

Today, with people's belief in the right to determine their own life paramount, there's a belief that we should determine the time of our deaths too. The Catholic moral tradition, with its roots in the thinking of Aristotle, emphasises the need to do what we can to protect and care for innocent life — for Terri Schiavo, and John Paul II, but not at all costs.

Religion  
AID-1  
2/2

# Pope suffers heart attack, condition serious

By Vaiju Naravane

**PARIS, APRIL 1.** As Pope John Paul II continued to hover between life and death, the world's 1.1 billion Catholics monitored his state of health with mounting anxiety and concern. Prayers were offered and religious ceremonies for his recovery held across the globe.

The 84-year-old pontiff's health took a sudden turn for the worse last night when he suffered a massive heart attack following an acute urinary infection that gave rise to high fever. Despite treatment with antibiotics, the Pope is suffering from septicaemia. Doctors say his condition remains extremely serious.

The Vatican said the Pope remained conscious and serene despite major health setbacks in the past 24 hours. This morning he received several of his aides, including Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Secretary of State, and Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the dean of the College of Cardinals.

"The situation now is station-

ary but conditions of notable seriousness remain. The biological parameters are unsettled. His blood pressure is unstable. The Pope continues to remain lucid, fully aware and, I must say, very serene. Several minutes ago he asked that some passages from Sacred Scriptures be read to him, and he attentively followed this reading," the Vatican spokesman, Joaquin Navarro-Valls, told a news conference a little past noon today.

## Roads to Vatican sealed

Police in Rome sealed off all roads leading into Vatican City. Nevertheless, thousands of pilgrims and followers gathered at the barricades waiting anxiously for news of the Pope's health. Many were crying inconsolably.

Since Pope John Paul II fell seriously ill two months ago, the affairs of the Roman Catholic Church have been conducted by four powerful Vatican Cardinals and the pontiff's private secretary.

However incapacitated, the Pope continued to be the ultimate reference in the Church

hierarchy and the arbiter of doctrine. But lately, because he encounters difficulties speaking and swallowing, the Pope has been reduced to writing messages as his only means of communication, leaving the Vatican's number two, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, 77, at the helm of affairs.

He was assisted by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, 77, who as head of the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith is the Church's doctrinal enforcer; Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, the 71-year-old head of the Congregation for Bishops, and Cardinal Camillo Ruini, 74, the Pope's vicar, or deputy for the diocese of Rome and head of the Italian bishops conference.

According to the Italian daily *Corriere della sera*, the four prelates had concluded a pact to maintain the status quo at the Vatican so long as any uncertainties about the Pope's health persisted.

**Article on Page 10  
Status quo to be  
maintained: Page 13**

02 APR 2005

THE HINDU

# Preparing for the succession

By Vaiju Naravane

**A**S POPE John Paul II continued to fight what could be his final battle for life, the Vatican quietly began preparing the world's 1.1 billion Catholics for the demise of their spiritual leader and the election of his successor. Pope John Paul II has been one of the most pro-active, popular, controversial and long-serving pontiffs who has been a major player in several events of immense global importance, not least the defeat of Soviet-style socialism.

In an openness rarely seen at the Vatican, authorities gave out details about the Pope's illness, announcing he had received the Holy Viaticum, or sacraments for the dying, and described his condition as "very serious." Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls, not known for being loquacious, said: "Following a urinary tract infection, a septic shock with a cardio-circulatory collapse occurred." In as delicate a way as possible the Vatican gave the faithful to understand that the end was near.

The Pope has displayed unbounded courage, grit and determination, carrying out his pontifical duties even when he has been extremely ill and visibly in pain. The sudden deterioration in his health has put paid to the growing debate about whether he should resign in order to make way for a younger, more vigorous man. It is now clear that the Pope, who has unshakeable faith in his destiny as God's emissary on Earth, intends to die in office. This time around the Pope refused to leave the Vatican for the Gemelli clinic in Rome where he is normally treated.

Although the Holy Father has cheated death several times in the past, surviving an assassination attempt in 1981, colon cancer in 1992, shoulder and hip injuries in 1992 and 1993 and the removal of his appendix in 1996, injury, disease, a relentless seven-days-a-week schedule and old age have taken their toll. Now the death-watch for the 84-year-old bishop of Rome has finally begun and Cardinals have started gathering in Rome for what could be the Pope's last hours.

Theoretically speaking, according to church canon, any male Roman Catholic can be chosen Pope. In reality, however, the world's next Pope will be elected by secret ballot from amongst the members of the Sacred College of Cardinals, a custom observed for centuries. Pope John Paul II was elected Pope when he was barely 58 and has been at the helm of the Catholic Church since 1978, making him the third longest serving pontiff in history. The Pope holds ultra-conservative views on subjects such as abortion, birth control, euthanasia and the ordination of women. By appointing 106 of the 122 Cardinals eligible to vote, he has made certain there will be a continuity in papal doctrine and that his successor will uphold his conservative views.

Vatican watchers say there are three factors that will be important in the selection of the next Pope, and the first is age. The current Pope reigned for over 26 years, too long a period for many cardinals who this time around are likely to select an older candidate.

The second major requisite for the next Pope will be the ability to speak several languages. The influence and following of the Roman Catholic Church is on the wane in Europe. On the other hand, it is growing exponentially in other parts of the world such as Asia, Africa and Latin America. The next pontiff should be able to carry the Church's message to all parts of the globe and to do this should be adept at using the mass media. The new Pope will be required to speak Italian of course, since that is the language of the Vatican, but he will also be expected to speak English.

So will the Church return to the old tradition of electing an Italian pope or will the Cardinals take into account the fact that most Church followers now come from outside

**While electing a successor to Pope John Paul II, will the Church return to the old tradition of electing an Italian pope or will the Cardinals take into account the fact that most Church followers now come from outside Europe and opt for an African, Asian or Latin American pontiff?**



Europe and opt for an African, Asian or Latin American pontiff?

The biggest difference between the papal selection process now and 25 years ago is demographic. Of the five countries with the biggest Catholic populations, only one (Italy) is European. Forty-six per cent of the world's Catholics are in Latin America; there are more Catholics in the Philippines than in Italy. In 1955, there were 16 million Catholics in all of Africa; today there are 120 million. The cardinal-electors' geographical origin still reflects, if less than before, the rich world's control of a Church that increasingly finds its believers in the poor world. There are 66 European and 14 North American Cardinals, against 24 Latin Americans, 18 from Asia and Oceania and 13 Africans. So it will be interesting to note how this dynamics will work itself out.

The Pope can be elected by one of three methods. A unanimous voice-vote is permissible, as is the unanimous selection by the Cardinals of a 9- to 15-member committee, which then must agree on a Pope. The election rules were last changed by Pope John Paul II in 1996 with his Apostolic Constitution, or ruling, called *Universi Dominici Gregis* (All the Lord's Flock).

One of the most significant changes introduced by the constitution — intended to prevent a repetition of some of the interminable conclaves of the past — is that if no one has been elected by a two-thirds majority after 30 ballots, the Cardinals may vote to elect the Pope by an absolute majority of half-plus-one instead.

As soon as the Pope dies, the cardinal camerlengo or chamberlain, Cardinal Eduardo Martinez Somalo, becomes the temporary head of the Church. He is responsible for arranging the funeral and burial of the Pope and organising the electoral conclave.

The Cardinals will be adminis-

tered an oath of secrecy when they enter the conclave knowing that they will be automatically excommunicated if they break it. The conclave cannot be held until two weeks after the Pope's death. This is meant to give all the Cardinals enough time to reach Rome and it must not start later than 20 days after the Pope's passing.

Four ballots are held each day, two in the morning and two in the afternoon as the conclave moves slowly towards a consensus. The ballot papers are burned in an old stove in the Sistine Chapel, and the smoke emerges from chimney stack observable from St. Peter's Square. If no candidate has been elected, the smoke is black. If a new Pope is chosen, a chemical is mixed with the papers and the smoke, hopefully, emerges as white.

In practice, the next Pope will be chosen from among the 119 Princes of the Church attending the conclave. Once a Cardinal has been chosen, he is asked if he agrees to be Pope and by what name he wishes to be known. Once he has done this he becomes, Catholics believe, Christ's vicar on earth. The dean of the College of Cardinals, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, will then step on to the central loggia of St. Peter's basilica to proclaim "*Habemus Papam* (we have a pope)." The new Pope then appears on the balcony to deliver his apostolic blessing.

Many Popes have been formally installed with a coronation, but Pope John Paul II refused a coronation and was installed as the Pope during a Mass in St. Peter's Square.

John Allen, the Vatican correspondent for the *National Catholic Reporter*, cites an old Italian saying: "Always follow a fat Pope with a skinny Pope." But if there is a backlash, many analysts believe it will likely be against this Pope's penchant for centralising authority, not against his ideology. Several names have been put forward as being emi-

nently "papabile" or popeable to use the Italian epithet for suitable candidates. They include:

Cardinal Francis Arinze, 70; Nigerian and black, he is the former head of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue. A Vatican insider, he is considered capable and humane. But he is also black and the Church may not yet be ready to take so dramatic a step as to appoint a black Pope. A large chunk of the donations to the Church comes from Europe and America and it is not evident that a black Pope will be particularly warmly welcomed by the Church's major donors. The selection of a black Pope would alienate some white Catholics. But the biggest strike against him is that the African church, while growing rapidly is still too young, especially compared to the Church in Latin America.

Cardinal Oscar Andres Rodriguez Maradiaga, Honduran, 60, is considered too young for the post. While there is no consensus on a Latin American candidate, the name of Rodriguez, formerly head of the Latin American Bishops group, is most often mentioned. He has been a strong opponent of Third World debt and an advocate for the Church's anti-poverty mission. A polyglot, media-savvy Latin American who knows everyone in the College, he would represent a powerful statement on behalf of the huge and poverty-stricken Latin American Church, as well as the rest of the developing world. Rodriguez is also a supporter of decentralisation, which may be the most important factor of all. His main drawback is that he is seen as being hostile to the press.

Lubomyr Husar, 70, of Ukraine, is considered almost saintly. His age is about right but the main drawback is his nationality. He is American. Husar is head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and has American citizenship. There are three objections to Husar's candidacy. First, he represents Eastern Europe, and after John Paul many believe that region of the world will have to wait a few generations to produce another Pope. Secondly, he is an American citizen, and observers believe it would be diplomatically impossible to elect a superpower pontiff.

One of the strongest candidates is Dionigi Tettamanzi from Italy, conservative and well-liked by the very hardline Opus Dei movement. Only five per cent of the world's Catholics live in Italy but an Italian stands a good chance because 35 per cent of the voting Cardinals either represent an Italian diocese or work for the Vatican administration.

Austrian Christoph Schönborn is only 58, the age at which John Paul II became Pope. Considered an intellectual heavyweight, he is a respected theologian. His big problem is his age.

Jaime Lucas Ortega y Alamino, 66, from Cuba has the advantage of being Hispanic and coming from a land where God is given short shrift.

Godfried Danneels, 70 and from Belgium, is considered witty but too liberal. On the off chance that the cardinals want to go with a liberal, he may be the man.

Finally, there is the intangible "God" factor. There may be a cardinal who is all wrong for the political reasons listed above but who is viewed by his peers as a truly holy individual. Many people believe the Holy Spirit will be guiding the Cardinals' deliberations and as Mr. Allen of the *National Catholic Reporter* says: "As far as the next Pope is concerned, expect the unexpected. In the post-9/11 world, there is an acknowledgement inside the College of Cardinals that very little is going to be more decisive in terms of where the world goes in the future than whether or not Islam and the Christian west can figure out a kind of *modus vivendi*. Both 'tough love' (Hawk) and 'harmonious coexistence' (Dove) approaches to the question of Islam exist within the Vatican."

# The rise of religion in Africa

By Madeleine Bunting

A RECENT survey found that 31 per cent of British people thought Easter was sponsored by Cadbury's while 48 per cent had no idea what the religious festival was about. The 16-24 age group had the lowest level of knowledge. The *Reader's Digest* survey is more evidence of how Britain has been comprehensively de-Christianised in the past 50 years.

What is interesting is how peculiar this phenomenon is in a global context and how blind secular Europeans are to their peculiarity. As they have become increasingly wedded to their faithlessness, the world beyond western Europe has experienced an astonishing increase in religiosity. Secular Europe is losing an ability to speak a language — that of faith. It pretends that faith is simply a personal hobby. When the pretence does not work, it peers, fearfully, at a world all around it that has become profoundly foreign.

Nowhere is that more true than Africa. It is another part of the globe that urgently needs to be mapped in terms of its rapidly intensifying religiosity if we are to begin to understand what is happening there. Some argue that the intensification of religious identity and consciousness — evident from the Pakistani *madrassas* to the Baptist churches of the American south — finds its apogee in Africa. Christianity and Islam are expanding dramatically as they gather new converts, while African traditional religions are experiencing a renaissance.

While Africa may be struggling to integrate into the global economy, its integration into the global religions is gathering apace. The astonishing growth of Pentecostal churches throughout Africa is being driven by U.S. evangelical missionaries and their wallets. Meanwhile, the Saudis

and Kuwaitis are pouring huge sums into Muslim communities across Africa. Known Saudi aid transfers to the continent amount to \$1 billion a year (the real figure could be much higher), which is not far from the British level of aid. Yet this is rarely acknowledged in the West.

Some of the most original and arresting sections of the report by Tony Blair's Commission for Africa deal with religion. It argues that nationalism in Africa is exhausted, and that politicians and state structures have

ria, they have succeeded where the state has failed.

The second strength is that faith organisations deliver the goods — they account for a staggering 50 per cent of all health and education in sub-Saharan Africa. They are far more effective than any state in reaching the most destitute, and their decentralised structures often prove far more resilient in conflict countries, such as in south Sudan.

In rapidly urbanising Africa, faith organisations are sometimes the only

crease the autonomy of women, which is vital to the achievement of a wide range of development goals such as infant mortality. The faiths, which all promote male authority, are so much "part of the problem, they can't be part of the solution," he says.

Last, the aspect of religion in Africa that provokes most fear and ignorance to the secular European is traditional African religion. Mr. Geldof points out that talk of witchcraft, sorcerers and evil spirits is commonplace in Africa. To the rationalist secularist, such things as voodoo and evil spirits are deeply alienating. But Mr. Geldof pleads for greater understanding, arguing that we have to put aside the prejudices of imperialism.

There is a profoundly benign dimension to traditional animism. The emphasis on evil is a recent distortion, as a system of beliefs struggles to interpret a world that has delivered such devastating suffering as Aids and the uncontrollable violence of AK-47s. For us, evil is little more than a metaphor, he says; to many Africans it is terrifyingly real.

Mr. Geldof has astutely blown open a much-needed debate: economists and politicians have dominated the agenda of African development for half a century, and look where it has got us. Economic growth is not just about technical knowledge, but also about human behaviour — and that is rooted in beliefs such as what constitutes progress and development. Indeed, what is wealth?

These questions are spiritual as much as material in Africa; if we appreciated more of the African understandings of these concepts, we might learn as much from Africa as Africa is expected to learn from the West. — ©Guardian Newspapers Limited 2005

## *The answers to Africa's problems increasingly lie with religion rather than politics.*

lost almost all credibility or legitimacy. Into the vacuum left by the failure of the nation state has stepped religion. This analysis in the report is largely Bob Geldof's doing. Without understanding faith, he argues passionately, we cannot begin to find development strategies that are going to work.

Mr. Geldof's position draws heavily on the work of a couple of development thinkers, and his travels in Africa to make a BBC series due to be broadcast in June. "There's not a single part of Africa where the spiritual is not vitally present. For Africans it's as real and tangible as the phone you're holding," he told me. "The spiritual is to be negotiated on a daily basis."

Christianity and Islam have three great strengths over the nation state in Africa. The first is trust. Whereas politics and politicians are synonymous with corruption and lying, faith organisations are trusted; they can gather tithes and build up institutions, investing for the benefit of the community. Whether it is mosques in Sierra Leone or churches in Nige-

cerns on one key issue — how to in-

functioning form of institution and of social capital — which explains something of the appeal of the Pentecostal churches mushrooming in shanty-towns. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Catholic Church even runs the only semblance of a national postal service.

Third, and crucially, Christianity and Islam offer what Ian Linden described in his paper for Mr. Geldof as "a language for change and redress." The issue in Africa often is how to mobilise people to demand and achieve change, and faiths provide the ideology and legitimisation for change in a way that politics no longer can — whether galvanising a community to set up a school or to run a health project.

The million-dollar question is whether the changes championed by faiths coincide with Western development priorities. Often they do. For example, faith groups have a track record of conflict resolution and peace-making across many troubled regions.

But Mr. Linden has serious concerns on one key issue — how to in-



# Church leader blasts cloning 'arrogance'

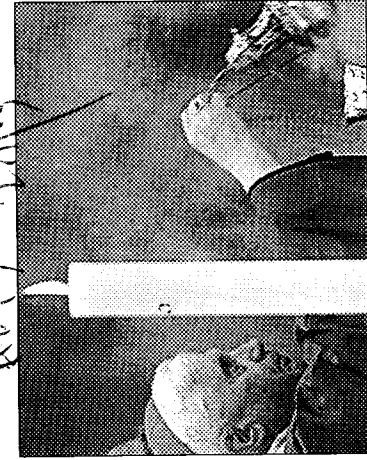
Agence France-Presse  
Rome, March 26

THE ROMAN Catholic Church's chief doctrinal enforcer, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, hit out at human cloning and the "arrogance" of mankind that thought it could conquer death through its own efforts.

Ratzinger, thought of as a possible successor to Pope John Paul II, also lambasted priests who soiled the church's reputation - a reference to paedophile scandals in Austria and the United States in particular.

The 77-year-old cardinal made the comments during a Good Friday ceremony commemorating the crucifixion of Jesus, in which he stood in for the ailing Pope.

"The arrogance that makes us think that we ourselves can create human beings has turned man into a kind of merchandise, to be bought and sold, or stored to provide parts for experimentation," said Ratzinger, head of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith.



An AFP file photograph of Cardinal Ratzinger.

as well as therapeutic cloning, in which embryos are harvested for their tissues and then destroyed.

It has called on Italians to abstain from voting in a forthcoming referendum on changes to Italy's strict new fertility laws in the hopes that the vote will be nullified because of a low turnout. Ratzinger, in the meditations at the Way of the Cross ceremony at Rome's Colosseum, also turned the spotlight on the church itself. "Should we not also think of how much Christ suffers in his own church?" he asked. "How much filth there is in the church, and even among those who, in the priesthood, ought to belong entirely to him. How much pride, how much self-complacency!" The prelate compared the church to a "boat about to sink."

"The soiled garments and face of your church throw us into confusion. Yet it is we ourselves who have soiled them. It is we who betray you time and again," he said.

The cardinal also launched a scathing attack on world leaders for their arrogance.

"In doing this, we hope to conquer death by our own efforts, yet in reality we are profoundly debasing human dignity," he observed. The church has firmly opposed human cloning, arguing for a worldwide ban covering "reproductive" cloning, in which embryos are cloned in fertility treatments.



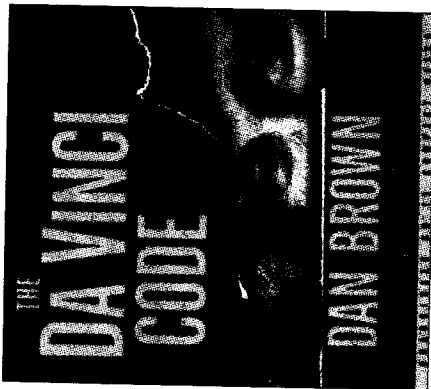
# Vatican 'plots against' Da Vinci Code

Richard Owen in Rome

March 15. — The Vatican has appointed a top cardinal to rebut what it says are the lies, distortions and errors in Dan Brown's best-selling thriller — *The Da Vinci Code*.

Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Archbishop of Genoa and a possible successor to the Pope, immediately took up the fight yesterday by claiming that the novel was a deliberate attempt to discredit the Roman Catholic Church through absurd and vulgar falsifications.

The appointment of Cardinal Bertone (70) is a clear sign that the Vatican has been rattled by the continuing worldwide success of Brown's thriller, which has sold 18 million copies in 44 languages in just two years.



DE-CODIFIED?

It is still among the top ten best-sellers in the USA, France, Brazil and Argentina — all countries with huge Catholic populations. The cardinal said the book reminded

him of the intemperate anti-clerical pamphlets of the 19th century. He will seek to debunk the conspiracy theories that it peddles in a string of public debates beginning in Genoa tomorrow. At the heart of the book is the notion that the Church has for centuries concealed the fact that Jesus married Mary Magdalene, a former prostitute, and that she bore him a child.

The cardinal said he was distressed to discover that even Catholic bookshops were selling the book. "We are clearly facing a formidable distribution strategy here," he said. "The book is everywhere. There is a very, real risk that many people who read it will believe that the fables it contains are true."

A perceived blurring of fact and fiction has caused the Vatican to act. Andrea Tornielli, a papal biog-

rapher, said the Vatican was particularly alarmed at the sight of tourists in Rome using *The Da Vinci Code* as a guide to Christianity.

The cardinal, a one-time football commentator, is noted for his human touch, but he nonetheless wields considerable doctrinal authority within the Church. He has acted as deputy to Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. He insisted that the trial, death and resurrection of Christ were indisputable.

Evidence, he said, came from the accounts of disciples who, as former fishermen, were hard-headed realists. He accused Brown of relying on apocryphal texts which had been excluded from the biblical canon precisely because they were imaginative. — **The Times, London**

# Diversity across religious divide

Statesman News Service

KOLKATA, March 1. — Does religion trigger terrorism and hatred or can it be a potent tool even in this “most secular” of centuries to promote peace and development?

Experts, religious activists and scholars racked their brains over this key question today on the second day of the three-day session of Third Diversity Matters, a Commonwealth forum on religious diversity.

And the organisers — the Australian Multicultural Foundation, the Commonwealth Policy Studies Unit, the Commonwealth Foundation, The Statesman and the Monash Institute for the Study of Global Movements — couldn't have found a better place to deliberate on such weighty issues, as Kolkata was hailed by the delegates as a city that epitomises cultural and religious diversity.

Mr B Hass Dellal, executive director, Australian Multicultural Foundation, said globalisation and technological exchanges need to be accompanied by removal of preju-



Imam Mohammed Nurayn Ashafa, joint executive coordinator, Interfaith Mediation Centre of Muslim-Christian Dialogue Forum (Nigeria), at the Diversity Forum in Kolkata on Tuesday. — The Statesman

dices, misconceptions and intolerance which alone can make development meaningful.

Sir James Gobbo, chairman, Australian Multicultural Foundation, sought to dispel the notion that religion begets terrorism and violence. Condemning the use of religion to justify acts of terror, he said that

young minds should not be poisoned.

Mr Salman Haidar, former foreign secretary of India, laced his arguments on leadership and interfaith with his personal experience as he grew through the uncertain and precarious times of the Partition.

The Muslims who decided to live in India in 1947, Mr Haidar said, were not sure what kind of place the country of their conscious choice would be. But it was the crucial role played by Jawaharlal Nehru and the framers of the Constitution that stabilised the tradition of religious and cultural diversity.

“Of course there were anxious moments when Punjab was in uproar during the Khalistan movement and there were turbulent times in the North-east and Kashmir. But the maturity of political leadership gave the country a solid foundation,” Mr Haidar said.

Mr Ravindra Kumar, Editor, The Statesman, who chaired the first session, summed up to say how liberal leadership eased religious conflicts, while religion can be turned into a major force of peace.

More reports on Kolkata Plus III

# 3 killed in Muharram clash

*Reporter*

*21/2*

Agencies  
Lucknow, February 20

AT LEAST three persons were killed and 11 others injured on Sunday in a clash during a Tazia procession on the tenth day of Muharram in the old city here following which security has been beefed up with PAC and RAF personnel patrolling sensitive areas.

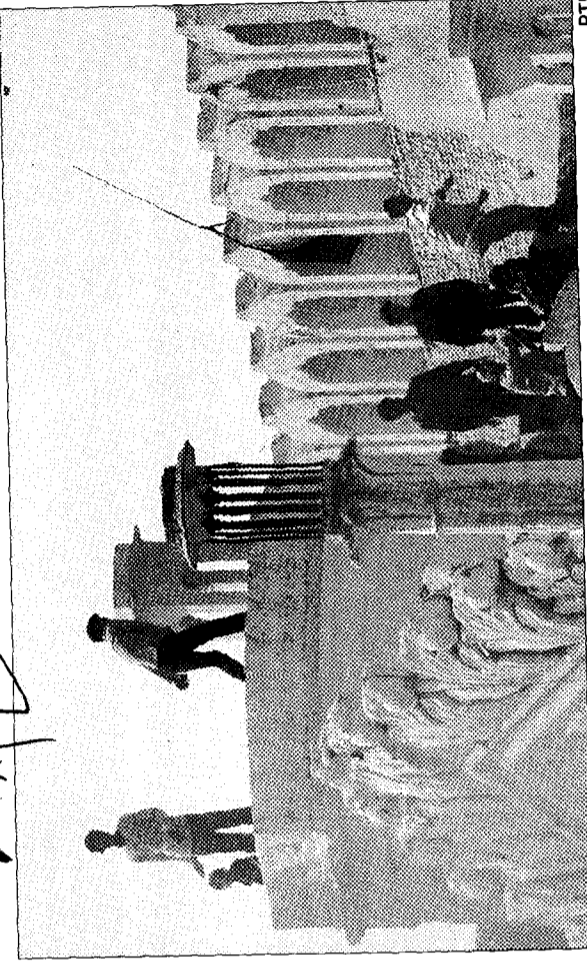
Police fired in the air and lobbed tear gas shells to disperse warring mobs, which also burnt some shops and houses in Hussainabad, the main scene of the clashes. The trouble sparked off when some members of the Sunni sect allegedly objected on the route of the Tazia procession, officials said.

Both the communities indulged in heavy stone pelting, damaged some vehicles and set ablaze some houses and shops, inspector-general of police Sulhan Singh said.

Three persons, who were injured in the stone-pelting between the two groups and also sustained pellet injuries in Hussainabad area, succumbed in a hospital, Singh said. He said 11 others were also injured, two of them seriously, and had been hospitalised.

Uttar Pradesh chief minister Mulayam Singh Yadav, while expressing grief over the incident, announced an ex-gratia relief of Rs five lakh each to the family members of all three deceased. He also urged the people to help maintain peace and order. Senior civil and police officials are camping in the area and religious leaders of both the sects have been asked to persuade the people to maintain peace and harmony.

District magistrate Aradhana Shukla, while claiming the situation was under control, said she had no information whether anyone had



PTI

People pelt stones during a sectarian clash in the Hussainabad area of Lucknow on Sunday. faryab Jilani have appealed to the members of both Shia and Sunni sects to help in the restoration of normalcy and maintain brotherhood and communal amity.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES 21 FEB 2005

## Swaminarayan temple priest, 3 others held in sleaze case

Press Trust of India

AHMEDABAD, Feb. 15. — A priest belonging to Swaminarayan religious sect was today arrested in Gujarat's Junagadh city along with three others following a video expose of sleaze involving sadhus, in a fallout of group rivalry in the sect.

"The priest, Bhaktiswarup and three touts were arrested by the Crime Branch late last night under Prevention of Immoral trafficking Act," Mr DG Vanzara, ACP (Crime), told reporters here today.

"The priest has been arrested for women trafficking, while the three accused — Mansuk Patel alias Mansuk Bhagat, Banubhai

Patel alias Banu Bhagat and Takkarsinh Patel — were arrested for making videos of the sexual act and distributing it in form of CDs," Mr Vanzara said.

"Several books containing nude photographs of women, a copy of Vatsayana's *Kamasutra*, condoms, contraceptive pills and sleazy literature were also recovered during the raid at Bhaktiswarup's residence at Junagadh," he added.

The three Ahmedabad-based accused used to make CDs of different Swaminarayan sadhus involved in sex, Mr Vanzara said. "The CD in possession of the Crime Branch is a compilation of such sexual acts involving different sadhus with dif-

ferent women," he said.

"Before compilation, the CD showing sadhus in compromising positions were shot in different parts at different time and place, including Junagadh, Ahmedabad, Bharuch and Surat," Mr Vanzara said adding that the touts were involved in this act since 2002.

The police officer said the shooting of the video was a result of rivalry between two groups of the Vadtal Swaminarayan sect in Nadiad district of central Gujarat.

The three persons arrested on charge of shooting the videos had masterminded the whole show by bringing women and funding them, Mr Vanzara said.

THE STATESMAN 16 FEB 2006

# Freezing Mutt accounts illegal: High Court

By A. Subramani

**CHENNAI, FEB. 11.** The Madras High Court today termed the freezing of the Kanchi Sankara Mutt's bank accounts illegal. It said, "it is not for the special investigation team (SIT) dealing with a murder and assault case to plunge into the accounts of the Mutt and paralyse its functions by invoking Section 102 of the Code of Criminal Procedure."

In his 48-page order, Justice K.P. Sivasubramaniam set aside the order freezing the 183 accounts. "The reasons to invoke Section 102 in this case are two-fold. First, the Mutt money was paid to killers/hirelings. Secondly, the police have an apprehension that the money could be used for tampering with the witnesses. The first ground relates to the past events and has no relevance to the future functioning of the Mutt. The second one, an apprehension of a future event, can never be a reason for invoking Section 102."

Another perspective that rendered Section 102 inapplicable was that it was the Mutt head, and not the Mutt itself, who was the accused, the judge said. "If there is any personal or individual account of the accused, the police could very well invoke Section 102 against the account. The Mutt or the Trust is an independent body by itself, and can have nothing to do with the commissions and omissions of the head of the Mutt in his personal capacity. His relationship with the Mutt is only in a fiduciary capacity. The property, assets and income of the Mutt belong to the Mutt and not to its head. He has no proprietary or individual rights or interest over

the property."

Any contrary interpretation of Section 102 would lead to "unreasonable and shocking situations," Mr. Justice Sivasubramaniam said. It (freezing of accounts) could happen to any organisation and institutions registered under the Societies Registration Act, clubs, political parties, social organisations, etc. "Once the head of the institution is apprehended, the institution can be brought to a grinding halt and the police can, at the stroke of a pen, freeze bank accounts and paralyse the activities of the institution."

The judge said, "Mutts like Kanchi, Thiruvaduthurai, Thirupanandal, Ahobilam, Madurai Adheenam, etc., were established by great saints. The head of the Mutt today may or may not be involved in a crime. But that is no reason to subject the Mutt to such action which would paralyse the Mutt."

## SIT cautioned

Reiterating that the scope and applicability of Section 102 should not be used to stifle the activities of the Mutt and other institutions unconnected with the offence, he gave a "word of caution" to the SIT. "If you divert and deviate from the direction, it would cast a deep shadow on SIT." He said that in case of misconduct by the Mutt, it was for the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Department to look into it and lodge police complaint.

"Having regard to the apprehensions of the police and the agreeability of the Mutt," the judge said the Mutt must submit account statements to the SIT once a month.

# Conditional bail for junior Acharya

Statesman News Service

CHENNAI, Feb. 10. — Madras High Court today granted conditional bail to the junior Sankaracharya, Vijayendra Saraswathi, in the Sankararaman murder case, finding the “present evidence” linking him to the murder conspiracy “insufficient and weak.”

High Court judge, Mr Justice M Thanickachalam, observed that “prima facie a doubt should arise regarding the participation of this petitioner as a co-conspirator” in the Sankararaman murder case. Vijayendra had been cited by the SI team, probing the case, as the second accused, while Jayendra Saraswathi is the first accused. Even as the SC granted bail to senior pontiff on 10 January, the junior seer was arrested the same day. The judge directed Vijayendra to furnish two sureties each for



A jubilant Vijayendra Saraswathi on Thursday. — AFP

the value of Rs.50,000. Also, the junior Acharya should remain in Chennai until the completion of the trial except when he is required in Kancheepuram or any other court. The HC also directed Vijayendra to file an affidavit before the Chengalpattu chief judicial magistrate stating that he would not tamper with any of the witnesses or the materials collected in connection with the case and surrender his passport.

## Meet breaks ice

KANCHEEPURAM, Feb 10 — As if to counter media reports that their relations had reached an all-time low, Jayendra Saraswathi and Vijayendra Saraswathi were seen talking to each other in the first class judicial magistrate's court here. They were there to receive copies of the chargesheet. But, as the copies of the voluminous chargesheet were not ready yet, they merely marked their presence before the magistrate. On the sidelines, the two pontiffs appeared to break the ice and were seen whispering to each other with their heads close. Earlier as soon as Vijayendra reached the court, he was seen bending down to touch his senior's feet. But Sankaracharya stood stiffly, not making an attempt to bless his junior. He had to accept the olive branch in the form of a lime, that his junior offered him. — SNS

# Police file charge sheet in Sankararaman murder case

Rediff.com Kanchi Acharyas are Accused 1 & 2

By V. Venkatasubramanian

**KANCHEEPURAM, JAN. 21.** The Special Investigation Team of the Tamil Nadu Police today filed the charge sheet in the Kancheepuram Sankararaman murder case listing the Kanchi Sankaracharya, Sri Jayendra Saraswathi, as Accused 1 and the junior Sankaracharya, Sri Vijayendra Saraswathi, as Accused 2. Building contractor Ravi Subramaniam, who turned approver, is not among the 24 accused arraigned in the case.

The Chief Investigation Officer, S.P. Sakthivelu, handed over a copy of the charge sheet to the Judicial Magistrate-I, G. Uthamaraj, in his chamber around 12.30 p.m.

## 1,873 pages

The 1,873-page charge sheet names 370 witnesses and includes 712 documents, the Superintendent of Police, K. Premkumar, told reporters. The Magistrate accepted the charge sheet. Copies to be given to the 24 accused will be ready by Monday or Tuesday.

## Absolved of all charges

To a question, Mr. Premkumar said that Ravi Subramaniam, who was earlier Accused 2 in the case, was being included as Prosecution Witness 1. "He has been absolved of all charges," the SP said.

The Kanchi Mutt manager, N. Sundaresa Iyer, and Sri Vijayen-



**K. Premkumar, Superintendent of Police, talking to reporters in Kancheepuram on Friday after filing the charge sheet in the Sankararaman murder case.** — Photo: A. Muralitharan

dra Saraswathi's brother, R. Raghu, have been listed as Accused 3 and 4. Appu alias Krishnasamy, who was arrested at Puthur in Andhra Pradesh, is Accused 5.

## "Between Lord and Sankaracharya"

Asked whether any new evidence had been included or gathered by the investigation team after the submission made before the Supreme Court during Kanchi Acharya's bail plea hearing, Mr. Premkumar said he could not say anything in this regard now. "It is between the Lord Varadaraja and Kanchi Sankaracharya. The incident took place at His temple. He was an eyewitness to the crime. We

are just 'instruments' who conducted the investigation," he replied when asked whether the SIT was confident that the case would stand judicial scrutiny.

He and the Chief Investigating Officer went to the Varadarajaperumal temple this morning and offered prayers before filing the charge sheet, which was done after *rahukulam*. The SP said the trial would be conducted in a regular court. The Additional Public Prosecutor, K. Sampath, the Koyambedu Police Inspector, R. Srinivasan, and the Vellore (North) Police Inspector, Samudrakani, were present when the charge sheet was filed.

The filing of the charge sheet comes after four months of investigation into the murder of Sankararaman, manager, Varadarajaperumal temple, on September 2, 2004. It was by the end of October when five persons surrendered in a Chennai court owning up the crime that the probe picked up momentum. Investigation proved that these persons, including one who was in jail at the time of the crime, were not actually involved in the murder.

The police then arrested those who they alleged arranged for the proxy surrender. Interrogation of the gang members led by Kathiravan, Accused 6 in the case, led to the arrest of Sri Jayendra Saraswathi on November 11.

See also Page 12

# British Hindus reclaim symbol of life...

Ruth Gledhill in London

Jan. 19. — Hindus in Britain have started a campaign to “redeem” the swastika from its Nazi past and reclaim it as the symbol of life and fortune it once was.

The swastika is a 5,000-year-old symbol that has been used for centuries by Hindus, Buddhists and many others to denote good luck, but because of the Nazis it has come to symbolise hate, anti-Semitism, violence, death and murder. The campaign, announced today, comes after European Parliament members called for a Europe-wide ban on the symbol after Prince Harry wore a swastika armband to a fancy dress party.

Mr Franco Frattini, the European Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security, has said he is willing to consider the possibility of a ban.

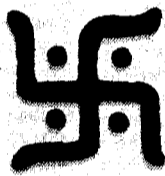
Hindus use the right-facing version of the swastika, meaning “sun”, as jewellery or on doorways and buildings to bring good fortune. This was the version adopted by the Nazi Party in 1920 at Salzburg. Many believe that the wartime propaganda of the Allies is responsible for the false belief that at Hitler’s insistence the swastika was later reversed to the left-facing version, meaning “death” in Hindu mythology.

Mr Ramesh Kallidai, of the Hindu Forum, is planning pro-swastika aware-

ness workshops for every region of Britain and a seminar in London. Every MP will be lobbied by e-mail and an information booklet distributed to faith communities. He said: “A symbol we have used for more than 5,000 years is now on the verge of being banned because of its association with the Nazis. Hindus wish to continue to use it, but risk being labelled a Nazi or, in case of a ban, risk breaking the law...”

Hindus display swastikas around their homes and business premises in Britain. Mr Nitin Mehta, founder of Young Indian Vegetarians, said: “The swastika was a symbol which identified Hindus as peace-loving, cultured, tolerant people. It would be nice if this is highlighted.” Mr Ashok Chudasama, of the Blackburn Hindu Centre, said: “When people in the north (of England) raised concerns about us using the swastika, we educated them and they now know the true meaning.”

Mr Bhupendra Patel, a magistrate, pointed out that “just as many Christians wear crosses, many Hindus wear swastikas. Does this mean they will be ostracised as Nazis?” A spokesman for the Board of Deputies of British Jews said: “It should be remembered that neo-Nazis and racists when daubing it get it wrong more than they get it right. It is a sensitive issue and would require dialogue.” — **The Times**



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H.O-1  
19/11

# 24-hour police custody for junior Sankaracharya

By V. Venkatasubramanian

**KANCHEEPURAM, JAN. 18.** The Kancheepuram Judicial Magistrate-I, G. Uthamaraj, today ordered police custody for Sri Vijayendra Saraswathi, junior Kanchi Acharya, for 24 hours.

In his order on a petition filed by the special investigation team probing the Sankararaman murder case, the Magistrate said there was sufficient ground to order police custody for the accused. The police were allowed to interrogate him from 5 p.m. today to 5 p.m. tomorrow.

On a defence plea, Mr. Uthamaraj gave oral instructions to the Chief Investigation Officer (CIO), S.P. Sakthivelu, that the accused be allowed to meet his advocate, Vaidyanathan, between 2 and 2.30 p.m. tomorrow.

Earlier, in a sworn affidavit, the CIO said Sri Vijayendra Sa-

raswathi was arrested at 5.30 p.m. on January 10 and was immediately remanded to judicial custody. He sought a five-day police custody for the accused as the investigation team wanted to interrogate him about his involvement in a conspiracy and disbursement of money to hirelings. It also wanted to know certain "facts" from the accused before filing the charge sheet.

When the Magistrate asked Sri Vijayendra Saraswathi to respond to the petition, the Acharya said he was already summoned and he replied to the police questions during interrogation. There was not an iota of truth in the 'conspiracy' theory as claimed by the police. The police implicated him in this case at the behest of "others," the Acharya said.

The additional public prosecutor, S. Thiyagarajan, said the commission of offence by Sri Vijayendra Saraswathi was estab-

lished only after the recording of a confessional statement from another accused, Ravi Subramaniam, under Section 164 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Ravi Subramaniam clearly said he had conspired with the accused (Sri Vijayendra Saraswathi) and in disbursement of money through Raghu, another accused. Ravi Subramaniam also said Sri Vijayendra Saraswathi and Raghu wanted him to keep the matter a secret as they did in the Radhakrishnan assault case, Mr. Thiyagarajan informed the court.

The accused did not cooperate with the police when he was summoned to appear before the investigation team, he said.

## 'Bid to stall proceedings'

Appearing for the junior Acharya, senior advocate D. Lakshmana Reddiyar questioned the timing of the police

custody petition. Pointing out that Sri Vijayendra Saraswathi's bail application was coming up for hearing in a Chengalpattu court tomorrow, he said the prosecution's intention was just to stall the proceedings.

His client was summoned and interrogated on December 26 and again on December 28 last. Another summons was served on January 3 for his appearance on January 4 and was subsequently withdrawn. "By which time they would have known all facts about this case since Ravi Subramaniam and Raghu were taken into custody", Mr. Reddiyar said.

The junior Acharya's name was not mentioned by the prosecution, which had apprised the Supreme Court of the Section 164 Cr.PC statement made by Ravi Subramaniam during the hearing of the Sankaracharya, Sri Jayendra Saraswathi's bail plea.

# Religion creates rift in Aceh

## Muslims Angry As Christians Seek To Use Relief Effort To Gain Converts

19/1  
By Chirdeep Bagga  
TIMES INSIGHT GROUP

Relief work in the Aceh province of Sumatra is assuming religious undertones with some aid groups seeking to exploit the tragedy. A number of religious groups have moved in to the region, looking to help tsunami victims — and convert them to their faith — which is creating trouble in the area.

The arrival of evangelical Christian groups with a history of aggressive preaching has led to a confrontation with local Muslim clerics, leading to a possibility of jeopardising the provision of aid to the 600,000 local people made homeless by the disaster. The death toll in Aceh stands in excess of 110,000. Aceh has the highest proportion of Muslims in Indonesia, and is one of the few Indonesian regions that have instituted Islamic law.

The Washington Post reported last week that a US missionary group, WorldHelp, was soliciting urgent donations on the internet help raise 300 children from Aceh in Jakarta in Christian schools. "The Aceh people strongly and even violently oppose other religions. They are unreached with the gospel," the group said on its website. "If we can place the Muslim orphans in a Christian children's home, their faith in Christ could become the foothold to reach the Aceh people." This created a major furore in Indonesia with the country's influential Muslim council warning international aid groups against proselytising and adopting children orphaned by the disaster.

Later, WorldHelp abandoned its operations on learning that the Indonesian government had banned non-Muslims from adopting Acehnese orphans. Many evangelical Christian groups are of the view that relief can be packaged



A girl and her mother inside a refugee camp near Banda Aceh

with religion. For instance, the mission of the Colorado Springs-based International Bible Society is to publish and distribute scripture. So when the tsunami struck, the group prepared the distribution of 100,000 texts, including a book translated into Thai, "When Your Whole World Changes."

Even Muslim groups have not been far behind in combining relief work with religion. Radical groups have been handing out Korans and even veils alongside bags of rice and sugar.

Volunteers from the al-Azhar Foundation in Jakarta said they had distributed 1,993 Korans to refugees from Lokh Nga, one of the worst hit villages.

Members of a militant Islamic group known for attacking bars and nightclubs during Ramadan, the Muslim holy month, also zeroed down on Aceh to undertake religious counseling.

Others like the Church of Scien-

tology are administering their own techniques of grief counseling to tsunami victims, which includes massages. Many survivors of the disaster have been heavily traumatized by their experience and according to experts, are vulnerable to religious groups.

There has been a reported increase in religious sentiment. Many Acehnese liken the tsunami to a punishment from God for immorality and lax Islamic practice. Their belief has been strengthened by the fact that in many villages only the mosque was left standing.

A majority of aid groups are, however, shunning any kind of proselytising and concentrating on purely welfare and humanitarian activities.

There are also instances like the Latter-day Saints Church collaborating with Islamic Relief Services to pack 70 tonnes of food, soap, body bags and other supplies to be sent to Indonesia.

# Stop government interference: Mutt plea in High Court 18/1

By A. Subramani

**CHENNAI, JAN. 17.** The Kanchi Mutt today moved the Madras High Court seeking to forbear the Tamil Nadu Government from interfering with its right to manage and administer its affairs and property, including bank accounts.

The Mutt maintained over 180 accounts in various banks, said a writ petition filed by His Holiness Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetadhipathi Jagadguru Sri Sankaracharya Swamigal Sri matam Samsthanam. Daily collections from devotees were deposited in these accounts, created from endowments. "The sum standing to the credit of the Mutt is a property belonging to a religious denomination and the state has no right to interfere with the administra-

tion and management of the property. It is well settled that the Mutt is a legal entity and will have to be seen as an entity distinct from the pontiffs who preside over the Mutt."

## 'Mala fide action'

Questioning the jurisdiction of the investigation officer to instruct banks to freeze the accounts, the petition said, "it is only a mala fide action of the police to strike terror and to bring the activities of the Mutt to a standstill." It said, "only if there is any direct nexus between the crime and the account can it be frozen. It is done only in cases of misappropriation, corruption, etc., where the proceeds of the crime have been spirited away into the bank accounts. There can be absolutely no connection be-

tween the accounts of the Mutt and the alleged crime."

The freezing of accounts rendered the performance of religious duties impossible, the petition said. The purpose for which the endowments were created was not served because of the "illegal action" of the police.

"It can never be contended that the endowments are the fruits of any illegal activity. So, only with a view to sullying the image of the Mutt, a secret communication has been sent to various banks for freezing of accounts."

Besides pujas, 'annadhanam,' feeding hundreds of cows at a goshala maintained by the Mutt and payment of telephone and electricity charges came to a standstill.

Under Article 26 of the Con-

stitution, a religious denomination was entitled to protection. The police action "smacks of mala fide and vindictiveness, and has been aimed at unleashing a reign of terror in the Mutt." Before getting the accounts frozen, the police ought to have granted an opportunity to the Mutt and understood the nature of the various endowments, the petition said.

It sought an interim injunction on the impugned action of the investigation team and to restrain the Home Secretary or the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Secretary and the investigation officer or "their agents and servants from interfering with the right of the Mutt to operate the accounts in various banks."

**Bail plea posted to  
Wednesday: Page 4**

18 JAN 2005

# Sacred and temporal

When the government takes over temples  
it undermines Indian secularism

TAMIL NADU Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa is silent on *The Sunday Express* report that her government has plans to take over the Kanchi mutt. The Maharashtra government, barely weeks after coming back to power, has busied itself in its old idea of bringing the cash-rich Sai Baba shrine under its control. If things work according to plan, its ministry of law and judiciary will soon get to decide matters relating to the appointment of shrine officials and how temple funds are to be distributed. This is, therefore, as good a moment as any to revisit the perennially controversial issue of temple takeovers by Central and state governments.

No matter how secularism is defined in the Indian context — whether in terms of the strict separation of church and state or in terms of equal respect being accorded to all religions — it clearly disallows state involvement in the administration of temples. If we go by the first principle, administering to the religious affairs of the people is not the business of the state given the clear separation between the sacred and the temporal. If we go by the second principle, why should Hindu temples alone be marked for such interference from the government of the day? We may, in principle, accept this even while we make the distinction between the secular functions involved in the

running of religious institutions — as, for instance, the management of the enormous funds from the public that come their way — and their religious functions. Several court rulings have, in fact, recognised this separation and argued that the state is well within its rights to regulate the functioning of temples. We would, however, argue that this line of separation is far too nebulous to stand scrutiny, that taking over the administration of a religious institution amounts to deciding each and every aspect of its functioning, in both letter and spirit.

It is certainly true that many of these institutions, despite the enormous investment of public faith and resources in them, have failed to conduct themselves in a transparent, accountable and corruption-free manner. But state interference should not and cannot be the answer. Institutions like temples and mutts are located strictly in the sphere of civil society. Ultimately, it is the communities that support these institutions which have both the right and the duty to manage them in a manner that conforms to the general principles and values that govern religion and society. If things reach a point of breakdown, the courts can always step in. As for the state, the message is clear: if the secular principle has to prevail, it must scrupulously keep out of the sacred space.

# Jaya rejects BJP's 'political' demand

HT Correspondent  
Chennai, January 16

TAMIL NADU Chief Minister Jayalithaa today ruled out the withdrawal of cases against Kanchi Sankaracharya Jayendra Saraswati, as demanded by the BJP, saying that such action would be against the law of the land.

In a seven-page statement defending her government's string of actions against the seer she, described the BJP's stand and "certain other vested interests" — that she should "intervene" in the investigation process — as "purely politically motivated and their expectations contrary to the rule of law".

"The BJP is taking up this issue only to rehabilitate itself politically," she added. "No one wished and expected the heads of the Sankara Mutt, established to stray from the path of dharma and doctrines of shastras to be arraigned as an accused in a murder case. At the same time, when all evidences clearly point towards him in the commission of such a crime, it cannot be ignored," she argued.

Jayalithaa said the Sankararaman murder case was being investigated by "the appropriate officers" and, during the investigation, even the judiciary could not intervene in the matter. "Even I am getting only min-

## Cases against seer won't be dropped

imum information from the officers," she added. The AIADMK leader said in the entire episode she had acted without fear or favour.

Pointing out that the Sankararaman murder and the assault on Radhakrishnan and Madhavan posed a severe challenge to the police and the investigations revealed shocking facts, she said: "It points to the involvement of certain persons who could never have been suspected of involvement in such crimes. When these names were brought to my knowledge, it came as a rude shock to me."

"These three cases point to the fact that the victims of the assaults had at some point of time connections with the Kanchi Sankara Mutt. This will raise relevant questions — why they were attacked?" she argued, justifying the action against the seer. In the maintenance of law and order, there could be no discrimination between friend and foe, poor and rich, religious head and atheist, she added.

Sankararaman's murder was no ordinary incident, but "a brutal murder of an

orthodox temple manager, committed by hirelings, in broad daylight within the temple premises," she pointed out. "Shouldn't this be investigated? Is it their view that hired assassins and conspirators should be allowed to go scot-free? Should those involved in the perpetration of this murder be shown mercy and allowed to go without any action taken against them under the law?" she asked.

"There have been crimes committed by people and leaders of various faiths and religious denominations in the past, who have been arraigned in courts of law, but on these occasions, there were no premeditated side-tracking conclusions or tutored or monitored 'public views'," she said. But only in the arrest of the seer, even as the investigation was in progress, she accused various pressure groups of actively manipulating the media to spread "misinformation" about the case.

"Ultimately, the guilt or innocence of those accused in the case can only be established during the trial and, until then, all the previous



Jayalithaa



Jayendra Saraswati

### Saffron agitation

INDIA'S HINDU groups launched a massive agitation on Saturday to show solidarity with Jayendra Saraswati, facing trial on charges of murder.

In New Delhi, former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee led the agitation organised by the BJP. Vajpayee accused the Tamil Nadu government of foisting false cases on the seers.

"Tamil Nadu is trying to mislead the people. There were allegations of contradictory statements being made on the amount and whereabouts of the organisation's money but all of them have fallen flat during the probes," he said. Vajpayee termed the arrests as an affront to Hinduism. "This event is a challenge, not just for Hindus, but also for those who believe in truth."

ANI, New Delhi

for filing bail petitions, Jayalithaa today charged them with taking to such measures for "stalling" the investigations. "Attempts are being made to negate the confessional statements recorded by the court and public meetings are being held to misdirect and delay the process," she said.

stages up to the stage of filing the chargesheet formed part of the investigation. It will be wrong to speculate whether any fact or document established the crime and whether any evidence gathered was enough to prove the crime," she maintained.

Hitting out at the Kanchi seer and the other accused

# ত্রাণ না ধর্মপ্রচার, বিতর্কে মিশনারি সংস্থা

সীমা সিরোহি • ওয়াশিংটন

১৪ জানুয়ারি: সুনামির বিপর্যয়কে ঘিরে কয়েকটি খ্রিস্টান সংগঠন ধর্মীয় ফায়দা লুটতে চাইছে বলে অভিযোগ উঠেছে। ইন্দোনেশিয়া-সহ সুনামিতে ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত বিভিন্ন দেশের দাবি, ত্রাণ সরবরাহের আড়ালে খ্রিস্ট ধর্মের প্রচার চালিয়ে যাচ্ছে এই সংগঠনগুলি। মানবতাবাদের অছিলায় এ ধরনের মিশনারি কাজে প্রবল আপত্তি জানিয়েছে মুসলিম-অধ্যুষিত দেশ ইন্দোনেশিয়া। পশ্চিমি দুনিয়ার যে সব দেশ ও গোষ্ঠীগুলি ত্রাণ কাজ চালাচ্ছে, তাদের মাঠের মধ্যে ইন্দোনেশিয়া থেকে চলে যাওয়ার নির্দেশ দিয়েছে সে দেশের সরকার। তবে মার্কিন প্রতিরক্ষা উপ-সচিব পল উল্ফোউইংজ সে কথা মানে ননি। উল্ফোউইংজ বলেন, “ইন্দোনেশিয়া আমাদের খোলা মনে স্বাগত জানিয়েছে। বিদেশি সেনাদের সে দেশে ত্রাণে নামার ব্যাপারে প্রথমে হয়তো তাদের মনে দ্বিধা ছিল, তবে এখন তারা সেই মানসিকতা সম্পূর্ণ পাশে সরিয়ে রেখেছে।”

ইন্দোনেশিয়ার আচে প্রদেশ থেকে

কাল ৫০টি অনাথ শিশুকে হেলিকপ্টার করে জাকার্তায় নিয়ে এসে একটি খ্রিস্টান অনাথাশ্রমে রাখার পরিকল্পনা করেছিল ‘ওয়ার্ল্ড হেল্প’ নামে একটি মিশনারি সংস্থা। বিদেশীদের দস্তক নেওয়ার বিষয়ে ইন্দোনেশীয় সরকার নিষেধাজ্ঞা জারি করার পরে তা আপাতত স্থগিত। তাদের উদ্দেশ্য সম্বন্ধে ওয়েবসাইটে বলা আছে, “ভারতে কয়েকশো বছর ধরে ব্রাহ্ম ধর্ম ও মূর্তি পূজা চলছে। তাই সে দেশে গিয়ে ধর্ম প্রচার করতে হবে।”

‘অ্যাডভানসিং নেটিভ মিশনস’ নামে আর একটি মিশনারি সংস্থা খাবার ও বাসনপত্র শ্রীলঙ্কা, ভারত ও ইন্দোনেশিয়ায় বিতরণ করছে। কিন্তু ত্রাণ সামগ্রীর সঙ্গে বাইবেল ও অন্যান্য ধর্মীয় গ্রন্থ দিতেও ভুলছে না তারা। বৃশ দ্বিতীয় বার প্রেসিডেন্ট হওয়ার পরে প্রভাবশালী এই মিশনারি সংস্থাগুলি আরও উঁচু গলায় প্রচার চালানোর সুযোগ পেয়েছে। ‘সামারিটান্স পার্স’ নামে এক সংগঠনের প্রধান রেভারেন্ড ফ্রান্সলিন গ্রাহাম তো স্পষ্টই বলেন, “এই সুযোগে আমাদের দৃষ্ণরকে চিনুক সুনামি আক্রান্তেরা।”

ANADABAZAR PATEIKA

15 JAN 2005

# Video clippings doctored: Seer

19/1  
Kancheepuram: Describing the video clippings of his custodial interrogation as "manipulated", Kanchi Sankaracharya Jayendra Saraswathi on Thursday questioned the genuineness of the recording "leaked" to some satellite television channels.

In a letter submitted on behalf of the seer to the special police team which is probing the cases against the seer, Kanchi mutt advocate A Shanmugam said, "The clipping were manipulated as if my client made some admissions, thereby causing damage to his reputation and wounding the feelings of his devotees. The video recordings are manipulated and my client denies the same."

In the clippings, screened by the channels, Jayendra Saraswathi was heard complaining that the junior Sankaracharya Vijayendra Saraswathi was only concerned that he or his brother should not be arrested in the Sankararaman murder case and he had no regard for his guru (himself).

The seer was also heard saying in the excerpts that he had not asked that the temple official Sankararaman be beaten or stabbed and had also expressed anguish over the letters written by Sankararaman.

Meanwhile, the Sankara mutt on Thursday constituted a legal team to take steps to free its bank accounts frozen by the Tamil Nadu police.



## NHRC notice to TN govt

New Delhi: The NHRC on Thursday issued a notice to the Tamil Nadu government on the circumstances of the arrest of junior Sankaracharya Vijayendra Saraswathi and the reported "selective leakage" of video clippings of the police interrogation of Sankaracharya Jayendra Saraswathi to TV channels.

The commission asked the state chief secretary and director general of police to furnish a "factual report" within two weeks. The NHRC noted that various reports had appeared in the media pointing out that the junior seer was arrested within hours of the Supreme Court directing the release on bail of the senior Sankaracharya.

The media reports stated that the junior Sankaracharya was arrested while he was offering puja and the police had entered the mutt, "a place of worship, without any permission", the commission said in a statement. PTI

Shanmugam told reporters here that the team would decide about the course of action to get the frozen accounts freed, besides taking legal steps on the "leak" of video clippings of the senior pontiff's custodial interrogation to some TV channels.

The police orally informed him about the freezing of 183 bank accounts of the mutt and its several trusts, Shanmugam said. The daily activities of the mutt had come to a standstill and its social welfare activities had been paralysed,

he claimed, adding the mutt had not received any written communication on the freezing of the bank accounts.

The Kancheepuram police have "orally" withdrawn the summons issued on the seer to appear before them by 10.30 am on Thursday, Shanmugam said. He said he had pointed out that Kalavai, where the seer is presently staying, was outside the jurisdiction of the Kancheepuram police and the summons issued by the special investigation team was not enforceable. PTI

# Video captures Acharya broadside on junior

Rubins  
5/7/05

Statesman News Service

## Tamil Nadu plea

CHENNAI, Jan. 12. — A private TV channel today showed video clips of Sankaracharya Jayendra Saraswathi's alleged confession during police interrogation in which he is seen accusing his junior Vijayendra Saraswathi of trying to save his skin.

"When I was arrested, instead of being worried about the health and safety of his *guru*, he asked you (the police) if he or his brother too would be arrested. Is this how I am repaid for taking good care of him all these days?" the Acharya is seen asking his interrogators. He is heard asking this at least thrice.

The Acharya is seen lying all the time on a mattress covered with a yellow-checked blanket

The video clip, appar-



13/1  
CHENNAI, Jan. 12. — The Tamil Nadu government today informed a sessions court that it

would not arrest the Sankaracharya in connection with a third case relating to the assault of a priest. And in an appeal to the Supreme Court, the state government has sought a direction to restrain the Acharya from staying in South India — Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala or Andhra Pradesh — and asked that strictures against it be dropped. — SNS/PTI

ently leaked by the police to Sun TV and the private television channel Headlines Today, is being repeatedly shown and is

quite damning as far as relations between the two *swamiji*s are concerned.

The video clip shows the Acharya answering queries and is heard accusing the junior Acharya and his brother of messing up the Mutt affairs.

The Acharya is heard saying that Shankararaman was prepared to end the offensive against him if he sent Vijayendra Saraswathi's brother Raghu out of the Mutt.

The Acharya never directly admitted to being involved in Shankararaman's killing. "I never said he (Shankararaman) should be beaten up or killed. I only expressed my anguish about the letters he was writing. But it brought such an extreme reaction," he is heard saying.

Another report on page 4



## দক্ষিণ থেকে জয়েন্দ্রকে সরাতে আদালতে জয়া

নয়াদিল্লি, ১২ জানুয়ারি: জয়েন্দ্র সরস্বতীকে সহজে ছাড়তে নারাজ জয়ললিতা সরকার। শঙ্কররামন হত্যার তদন্ত শেষ না হওয়া পর্যন্ত কাঞ্চীমঠে যাবেন না বলে সুপ্রিম কোর্টে মুচলেকা দিয়ে জামিন পেয়েছেন জয়েন্দ্র। কিন্তু আজ সুপ্রিম কোর্টে তামিলনাড়ু সরকার আবেদন করেছে, শুধু কাঞ্চীমঠ নয়, চার্জশিট পেশ না হওয়া পর্যন্ত জয়েন্দ্র যাতে দক্ষিণ ভারতের কোথাও যেতে না পারেন সে ব্যাপারে নির্দেশ দিক সর্বোচ্চ আদালত। ১৭ জানুয়ারি এই আবেদনের শুনানি হবে। অন্য দিকে, জয়েন্দ্রকে তারা ফের জেরা করবে বলে জানিয়েছে তামিলনাড়ু পুলিশ।

তামিলনাড়ু সরকারের বক্তব্য জয়েন্দ্রকে তামিলনাড়ু, কর্ণাটক, কেরল বা অন্ধ্রপ্রদেশের কোথাও থাকার অনুমতি দেওয়া উচিত নয়। কারণ কাঞ্চীমঠের প্রধান হিসেবে তিনি এই মামলার সাক্ষীদের প্রভাবিত করতে পারেন। দক্ষিণ ভারতে থাকলে জয়েন্দ্র মামলার গুরুত্বপূর্ণ প্রমাণ লোপ করতে পারেন বলেও দাবি করেছে তামিলনাড়ু পুলিশ। সরকারের নির্দেশে কাঞ্চীমঠের সব ব্যাঙ্ক অ্যাকাউন্টের লেনদেন বন্ধ করে দেওয়া হয়েছে।

তামিলনাড়ু সরকার তাঁকে তৃতীয় একটি মামলায় ফের গ্রেফতার করতে পারে আঁচ করে জয়েন্দ্র আজ

চেন্নাইয়ের একটি আদালতে আগাম জামিনের আবেদন করেছেন জয়েন্দ্র। গত বছর অগস্টে কাঞ্চী মঠের এক পুরোহিত টি মাধবনের উপর হামলার ঘটনায় পুলিশ তাঁকে গ্রেফতার করতে পারে বলে আশঙ্কা জয়েন্দ্রের। কিন্তু সরকারি আইনজীবী কে দোরাইস্বামীর এক মুচলেকার ভিত্তিতে এই আবেদনের শুনানি ২০ জানুয়ারি পর্যন্ত স্থগিত রেখেছেন বিচারক। সুপ্রিম কোর্টে জয়েন্দ্রের জামিনের শর্ত পুনর্বিবেচনা করার আবেদন করেছে তামিলনাড়ু সরকার। ২০ তারিখ পর্যন্ত তামিলনাড়ু পুলিশ জয়েন্দ্রকে গ্রেফতার করবে না বলে চেন্নাইয়ের আদালতে মুচলেকা দিয়েছেন দোরাইস্বামী। ভেলোর জেল থেকে মুক্তি পেয়ে আজ কেরলের কালাভাই মঠে ত্রিকাল পূজা করেন জয়েন্দ্র। কাঞ্চীমঠের ২৫০০ বছরের ঐতিহ্য ভেঙে এই প্রথম মঠের বাইরে ধনুর্মাস্য পূজা হয়।

প্রশাসনে রদবদল: তামিলনাড়ু সরকারের স্বরাষ্ট্রসচিব ও পুলিশের ডিজিপি কে বদলি করা হয়েছে। এই রদবদলকে সরকার 'কটিন বদলি' বললেও অনেকেই এই ব্যাখ্যায় সন্তুষ্ট নন। পুলিশ পর্যাপ্ত প্রমাণ দাখিল না করায় জয়েন্দ্র জামিন পান। পুলিশ কর্তাদের সরিয়ে জয়ললিতা তাঁদের শাস্তি দিলেন বলে ধারণা। - পি টি আই

# Kanchi Acharya out on bail, to stay in Kalavai

By P.V.V. Murthi

VELLORE, JAN. 11. A full two months after his arrest and a day after the Supreme Court granted him bail in the Sankararaman murder case, the Kanchi Sankaracharya, Sri Jayendra Saraswathi, walked out of the Vellore Central Prison at 4.30 p.m. today. He was arrested at Mahbubnagar in Andhra Pradesh on November 11 last and remanded to custody the next day.

## Intense activity

There was intense activity here from the morning as the Acharya's devotees and followers of the Sankara Mutt started assembling near the central prison, expecting his release. As the Acharya's lawyers had to complete the legal processes and secure the release order from the Chief Judicial Magistrate in Chengalpattu after producing the sureties and surrendering his passport, it was 2.50 p.m. when they arrived here.

## BJP, VHP leaders welcome Acharya

The Acharya emerged from the prison to chants of "Hara Hara Sankara, Jaya Jaya Sankara" and cheers from his devotees and well-wishers. A Bharatiya Janata Party delegation, led by the former Union Ministers, Sushma Swaraj and S. Thirunavukkarsar, the international president of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Ashok Singhal, its vice-president, S. Vedantham, and the State president of the Janata Party, Chandralekha, were among those who received Sri Jayendra Saraswathi and sought his blessings.

After spending a few minutes with them and acknowledging the greetings of devotees, the Acharya boarded the yellow van of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam and left for Kalavai, about 50 km from Vellore.

At Kalavai, he was given a warm and reverential reception as he entered the 'Brindavanam' of the 66th and 67th Acharyas. Many women devotees performed 'aarti.'

## Performs puja

Later, Sri Jayendra Saraswathi performed the Chandra-mouleeswara puja; the deity was brought to Kalavai earlier in the day from Kancheepuram. The junior Acharya, Sri Vijayen-



The Kanchi Sankaracharya, Sri Jayendra Saraswathi, arrives at Kalavai village on Tuesday, after his release from the Vellore Central Prison. — Photo: A. Muralitharan

dra Saraswathi, had performed the puja till his arrest on Monday evening.

There was some tension in the afternoon after rumours of a possible third case being slapped on the senior Acharya and his imminent re-arrest. But his advocates informed the Mutt functionaries that an anticipatory bail petition had been moved and would be taken up for hearing on Wednesday.

## Sushma's charge

Ms. Swaraj said the arrest of Sri Vijayendra Saraswathi was the "height of persecution."

Talking to newsmen in the foreground of the Central Prison where she had come to receive the blessings of the Kan-

chi Sankaracharya, she said that only six days ago the Tamil Nadu police had said that there was no need to summon the junior Acharya for investigation. "What has changed since the..." she asked.

She said the only change was that the highest court of the land had granted bail to the elder swamiji and this hurt the prestige of the Tamil Nadu police.

Ms. Swaraj said she would like to tell those who said that the law would take its course, to witness for themselves how "the law does not take its own course but take Jayalalithaa's course."

Editorial on Page 12  
More reports on Page 14

## Incorrect to link arrests and puja: Jayalalithaa

By Our Special Correspondent

CHENNAI, JAN. 11. The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Jayalalithaa, today informed the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, that it was "part of the process of law" that the junior Sankaracharya of the Kanchi Mutt, Sri Vijayendra Saraswathi, was arrested in the Sankararaman murder case on Monday. She said it was "incorrect and unfounded" to connect the arrests of the two Sankaracharyas with the tradition of daily puja at the Mutt.

An official release said that Ms. Jayalalithaa had replied to Dr. Singh's letter dated January 6 "drawing attention to the apprehension" that if the junior Acharya was also taken into custody, it might lead to disruption of the daily puja.

The Prime Minister's Office had also indicated that Dr. Singh brought up the issue when he met Ms. Jayalalithaa here on January 7.

The Chief Minister said today that there had been innumerable occasions when both the Sankaracharyas were away from the Mutt. On such occasions, arrangements were made for the conduct of the daily puja.

Referring to the apprehensions that Sri Jayendra Saraswathi's arrest would hurt the people's sentiments, she said the public appreciated the Government's principled stand that all were equal before law.

Text of letter: Page 14

## Court to hear Acharya's anticipatory bail plea today

By Our Staff Reporter

CHENNAI, JAN. 11. A sessions court here today asked the police investigating the 'Thirukottiyur Madhavan assault case to "obey strictly" the Madras High Court orders against arresting the accused during pendency of their anticipatory bail applications and posted the Kanchi Acharya, Sri Jayendra Saraswathi's anticipatory plea for tomorrow.

The Acharya's bail plea came up for hearing this afternoon before the Principal Sessions Judge, P. Murugesan.

In his petition, the Acharya

said that he had been falsely implicated in the case and the police had been "assassinating his character in a routine manner and carried out a mudslinging operation with an ulterior motive." He further apprehended that he "would be maliciously arrested in the case, and falsely involved with an ulterior motive, especially after he had obtained bail" in an assault case and a murder case.

During arguments, M. Sathyanarayanan submitted that the Acharya would not flee justice as he had given an undertaking before the Supreme Court to

cooperate with the investigation. When the City Public Prosecutor, T.V. Ganesh, insisted on an adjournment on the ground that no prior intimation was given to him and that he required time to get instruction from the investigating officer, Mr. Sathyanarayanan said adjournment was acceptable only if the prosecutor gave an undertaking that the Acharya would not be arrested in the meantime.

He then furnished a copy of a circular issued by the Director-General of Police directing all Superintendents of Police and Commissioners of Police not to

arrest any accused when their anticipatory bail petition was pending in the High Court. Mr. Sathyanarayanan said the circular was issued pursuant to a specific direction of the High Court in that regard. Mr. Ganesh argued that the July 1997 circular was applicable only in cases pending before the High Court and that he needed time to verify whether it was amended or not during these seven years.

In his order, the judge said, "the High Court order must be obeyed strictly," and directed the matter to be posted as the first item tomorrow.

# Bail for Kanchi Acharya, Sri Vijayendra arrested

I have done no wrong: junior Acharya

By V. Venkatasubramanian

**KANCHEEPURAM, JAN. 10.** Just hours after the Supreme Court granted bail to the Kanchi Sankaracharya, Sri Jayendra Saraswathi, in the Sankararaman murder case today, the Tamil Nadu police took into custody the junior Acharya, Sri Vijayendra Saraswathi, in connection with the same case.

Sri Vijayendra Saraswathi, charged with criminal conspiracy and murder, was remanded to 15 days' judicial custody by



The junior Kanchi Sankaracharya, Sri Vijayendra Saraswathi, coming out of the Kanchi Mutt after his arrest on Monday. — Photo: A. Muralitharan

the Judicial Magistrate, Kancheepuram, G. Uthamaraj, and lodged in the Chennai Central Prison late in the evening.

"All charges framed against me are false. I have not done anything wrong," the junior Acharya told the Magistrate. The Acharya wanted to be allowed to complete the 'dhanur masya puja', but the request was turned down. He is charged under Section 120 (b) (criminal conspiracy) read with Section 302 (murder), and Section 201 (suppression of evidence) read with Section 34 (commission of acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) of the Indian Penal Code.

As the advocates of the Mutt were busy preparing for the release of Sri Jayendra Saraswathi, a team of about 70 policemen,

led by the Superintendent of Police, K. Premkumar, entered the Mutt at 5 p.m. and informed the junior Acharya that he was being arrested.

Sri Vijayendra Saraswathi came out of the Mutt around 5.50 p.m. and boarded the Kanchi Mutt van to proceed to the investigation bungalow as hundreds of Sankara Mutt followers crowded around him. He was taken to the bungalow of the Special Investigation Team for questioning prior to being produced before the Magistrate.

tion with Sankararaman murder case on December 26 and again on December 28. Fresh summons were served on him on the evening of January 3 asking him to appear before the Special Investigation Team on the morning of January 4. But the police withdrew the summons the same night.

## Strong case made out for bail: Supreme Court

By J. Venkatesan

**NEW DELHI, JAN. 10.** The Supreme Court today granted bail to the Kanchi Sankaracharya, Sri Jayendra Saraswathi, 60 days after the Tamil Nadu police arrested him in the Sankararaman murder case on November 11, 2004.

A three-Judge Bench, comprising the Chief Justice R.C. Lahoti, Justice G.P. Mathur and Justice P.P. Naolekar, said: "We are of the opinion that *prima facie* a strong case has been made out for grant of bail to the petitioner. The appeal [by the Sankaracharya] is allowed and the impugned order of the High Court is set aside."

Concurring with "a very fair statement" by F.S. Nariman, senior counsel for the petitioner, the Bench imposed the condition that the Acharya should not visit the Kanchi Mutt till the investigation was completed and the chargesheet was filed in the case.

It ordered that "the petitioner shall be released on bail on his furnishing a personal bond and two sureties to the satisfaction of the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Chengalput, and that he should surrender his passport before the CJM."

Writing the judgment for the Bench, Mr. Justice Mathur did not accept the prosecution claim that the 39 letters said to have been written by the deceased Sankararaman formed the motive for the Sankaracharya to kill him. "There is absolutely no evidence or material collected so far in the investigation which may indicate that the petitioner had ever shown any resentment against the deceased for having made allegations against either his personal character or the discharge of his duties as Sankaracharya of the Mutt. The petitioner having kept absolutely quiet for over three years, it does not appeal to reason that he suddenly decided to have Sankararaman murdered and entered into a

conspiracy for the said purpose."

On the aspect of the Sankaracharya's participation in the conspiracy, the Bench said: "No worthwhile *prima facie* evidence apart from the alleged confessions have been brought to our notice to show that the petitioner along with other accused was party to a conspiracy."

## Not Mutt employees

On the statements of independent witnesses about the Sankaracharya's alleged participation in the conspiracy, the Bench said "these persons are not employees of the Mutt and are strangers. It looks highly improbable that the petitioner would talk about the commission of murder at such a time and place where his talks could be heard by total strangers."

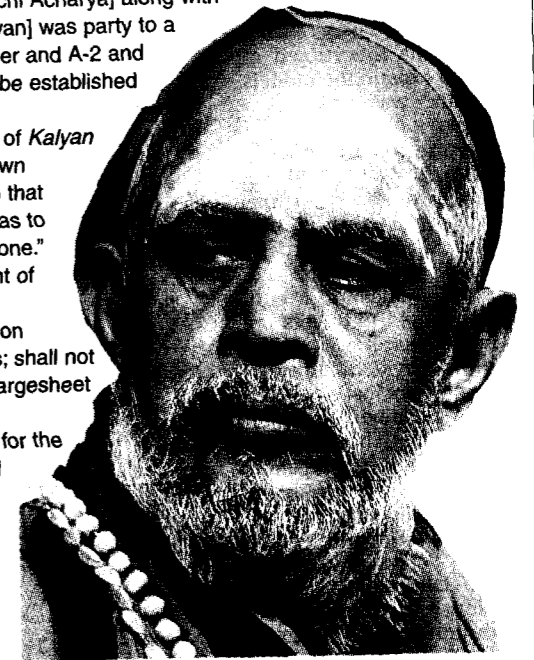
Referring to the alleged dying declaration of Sankararaman, the Bench said the witness in his 164 Cr.P.C. statement before a Magistrate had merely stated that Sankararaman spoke to him on September 3, 2004. "Since the telephonic conversation which Sankararaman had with this witness did not relate to the cause of his death or as to any of the circumstances of the transaction which resulted in his death, the same does not come within the purview of Section 32 (1) of the Evidence Act and is not admissible in evidence," the Bench held.

On the judgment of the apex court in the Pappu Yadav case relied on by the Madras High Court to reject bail to the petitioner, the Bench said "the observations made therein cannot have general application so as to apply in every case including the present one wherein the court is hearing the matter for the first time."

On the allegation that the Sankaracharya had kept Rs. 50 lakhs, received from the sale of Jan Kalyan property, in his room from April 30, 2004 and that this amount was utilised to pay the assailants, the Bench noted that the statement of accounts from the bank clearly showed the amount was depos-

## HIGHLIGHTS OF SUPREME COURT JUDGMENT

- Recovery of Sankararaman letters not proof they were received by Kanchi Acharya or brought to his notice.
- No evidence collected in investigation that Acharya protested or acted against Sankararaman.
- No documents of account in ICICI bank produced.
- Statement of account in Indian Bank shows Rs. 50 lakh received in cash on 30.04.2004 was deposited in Bank on 7.5.2004. This belies prosecution case that cash was retained by petitioner to pay hirelings.
- There should first be *prima facie* evidence that a person was party to a conspiracy before his acts or statements can be used against his conspirators.
- "No worthwhile *prima facie* evidence apart from the alleged confessions have been brought to our notice to show that the petitioner [Kanchi Acharya] along with A-2 [Ravi Subramaniam] and A-4 [Kathiravan] was party to a conspiracy. The involvement of the petitioner and A-2 and A-4 in the alleged conspiracy is sought to be established by the confessions themselves."
- Supreme Court recently decided the case of *Kalyan Chandra Sarkar vs. Pappu Yadav* "on its own peculiar facts" and Court's observations in that case "cannot have general application so as to apply in every case including the present one."
- Strong case made out *prima facie* for grant of bail to petitioner.
- Kanchi Acharya shall be released on bail on furnishing personal bond and two sureties; shall not visit Mutt premises until submission of chargesheet in court; and shall surrender passport.
- Whatever is said in this judgment is "only for the purpose of disposing of the prayer for bail made by the petitioner" and "nothing contained in this order shall be construed as expression of a final opinion on any of the issues of fact or law arising for decision in the case which shall naturally have to be done by the trial court seized of the trial."



## THE HINDU

The Hindu Group of Publications invites its readers to join hands in the humanitarian task of raising funds in aid of the tsunami victims.

A relief fund has specially been set up to receive contributions, which are fully deductible under the Income Tax Act, and will be made over to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund/Chief Ministers' Relief Fund.

Readers may send their cheques or drafts payable to "The Hindu Relief Fund" Kasturi Buildings, 859, Anna Salai, Chennai 600002.

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All contributions above Rs. 2,500 will be acknowledged in the newspaper. The list of contributors appears on Page 12.

ited in the bank on May 7, 2004.

The court allowed the Sankaracharya's appeal against the High Court judgment dated December 8, 2004.

Our Vellore Staff Reporter writes:

A large number of devotees and mediapersons converged in front of the Central Prison here on hearing the news that Sri Jayendra Saraswathi had been granted bail.

But the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in Chengalpattu was yet to act on the judgment and forward the release order to the Vellore jail.

BJP's reaction: Page 13

# SECULAR PRINCIPLES-II

Religion  
5/8

## Need To Remove Distortions And Contradictions

By DIPAK BASU

In Germany the state collects taxes for two Christian groups, while other religious or atheist groups have to collect their membership fees without the help of the state. Furthermore, there are religious lessons at school given by the state, but only for those two Christian groups. Communists are not allowed to teach in school or a university. A large number of teachers and professors of the former East Germany were fired after the unification of Germany in 1989. Thus, there is neither secularism, nor non-discrimination.

Since the sixth century until 1934, Buddhism was the state religion of Japan. In 1934, after a military coup in which the elected Prime Minister of Japan was killed, Buddhism was banned and Shinto, the original Japanese religion, became the state religion. After 1945, in the new constitution of Japan, religion and the affairs of the state were separated.

### Anti-Hindu discrimination

However, Shinto priests still preside over all inaugurations of public ceremonies, even the inaugurations of an industrial plant or a new machine. Buddhists have their own political party, New Komentai, which collaborates with the ruling Jiminto party. Thus the Japanese state system is not secular or religion neutral.

Turkey is supposed to be the only secular Muslim country, but it is a specific kind of secularism, which excludes all non-Muslims. During 1915 to 1925, the Ottoman Empire and particularly Kamal Ataturk have committed genocide against the non-Muslim Armenians and Greeks, in which about 2.5 million Armenians were killed and the rest escaped to the Soviet Union. As a result, there are hardly any non-Muslims today in Turkey. After getting rid of non-Muslims, Turkey has started persecutions of the ethnic minority Kurdish people, although they are Muslims.

In so-called secular Turkey, all religious affairs are carried out by a central government organisation called the Department of Religious Affairs established in 1924. The function of this organisation is to carry out tasks related to the beliefs, divine services and moral principles of Islam, and to enlighten citizens on religious matters. This is hardly a great example of secularism.

Muslims in India are the most vocal supporters of secularism. Even members of religious groups like the Babari Masjid

Action Committee, Syed Sahabuddin, and Prof Irfan Habib, claim to be secular and Marxist. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) even justifies the existence of Sharia laws in India as the basic ingredient of secularism. However, secularism has no support in Islam.

India is not secular if we ac-

cept the true meaning of the term. The existence of different legal systems for different communities and reservation systems based on caste make India non-neutral towards religions. India also discriminates against the Hindu religion and Hindu ideals.



cept the true meaning of the term. The existence of different legal systems for different communities and reservation systems based on caste make India non-neutral towards religions. India also discriminates against the Hindu religion and Hindu ideals.

What should be done to remove these gross distortions and contradictions is the fundamental question. The basic motive of the founding fathers of the Indian Constitution was to create a liberal nation tolerant towards all regions and all ideas. They wanted to remove all discriminations based on religions, castes, tribes, colour, or racial origins. However, the effects of the so-called secularism on Indian society are quite different.

### Highly immoral society

Absence of religious learning in the schools in India in the name of secularism has the effect of creating a new generation who are without any moral values, as they see the politicians and the business community are prospering because they have no moral values at all. The judicial system in India has ceased to function in any practical sense. Even the government officers and politicians ignore the directive of the court and the court is powerless. The law of the jungle is already prevailing in vast area

This is the result of lack of any moral and religious teaching in schools and lack of proper censorship of the popular media, films and television.

Moral education was an essential part in the USSR through a number of organisations like Young Pioneers, Youth Komsomol, and Youth Communist League. In Japan, in both in its school system and in industrial management moral education is maintained through the learning of Bushido, the code of conduct of the Samurai warriors and the "Japanese culture of the rice fields", which puts emphasis on social interests. In India, after Independence there was an opportunity to maintain the idealism of the freedom movement. However, that opportunity was wasted. As a result, we now have a highly immoral society in India.

India should, like the UK or Russia, accept religions originating in India as state religions. The state should promote and look after these religions and promote religious and moral education. As religious tolerance is the part of the Indian tradition or Sanatan Dharma, people following other religions will not be discriminated, if India is going to have official religions.

In *Bhagwat Gita*, Sri Krishna said very clearly, "Even those

who in faith worship other gods, because of their love they worship me, although not in the right way". That is the reason Swami Vivekananda has declared that Hinduism is the only religion that respects other religions. To ensure that there would not be any religious persecutions or differentiations, just like in Britain, there should be very strict laws against discrimination. That would automatically demand a number of significant changes in the legal and political system.

Just like in UK, USA, Germany, and France and indeed in other developed countries, the legal system in India should have uniform criminal and civil laws for all religions, tribes, castes, and races. When millions of Muslims in the USA, UK, France and Germany can live under unified legal systems, Muslims in India cannot raise any objection.

### No more special status

All system of positive discriminations or reservations based on caste, languages, tribes, must be removed. Positive discrimination for the disadvantaged groups should be based on poverty and physical disability only, irrespective of religion, caste, tribe, or language. This would benefit both Christians and Muslims, as they can, if poor or disabled, take advantage of these positive discriminations as well. Similarly, all citizens must be allowed to take up employment or to live anywhere in India. Special status of Jammu and Kashmir, Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh must be removed as well so that every citizen can move freely within the domain of India.

Communal political parties with past crimes against humanity and parties with direct links with the anti-Indian terrorists, violent tribal organisations in Tripura, Mizoram, Nagaland, Assam, and violent Hindu organisations must all be banned, no matter what the reaction.

Secularism itself is not superior to any alternative system that exist in various countries of the world. There is hardly any country which is really secular. It would be absurd for India to claim to be morally superior just because it is supposedly secular, when all kinds of discrimination and social evils exist in India at the same time. The time has arrived to get rid of false secularism, and make Indian society and the political system free of any discrimination.

(Concluded)

# SC wants proof in acharya case

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 6 JANUARY

**T**HE Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Tamil Nadu police to "pinpoint" evidence linking the Kanchi seer to the murder of Sankararaman. The direction from the apex court came when the counsel for Kanchi Shankaracharya sought to point out contradictions in the evidence cited against the seer by the police.

A Bench comprising Chief Justice R.C. Lahoti, Justice G.P. Mathur and P.P. Naolekar, after hearing Shankaracharya's counsel Fali S. Nariman, asked the prosecution counsel K.T.S. Tulsi to "pinpoint" the evidence against the accused "without dwelling too much into the motive behind the crime".

This observation came after Mr Nariman punched holes into the prosecution theory by saying the much-touted evidence about

a huge amount of money being withdrawn from the ICICI Bank at Kancheepuram by the Mutt at the behest of the seer for payment to the assailants was nothing but a figment of imagination of the police.

Mr Nariman said no money was ever withdrawn from the bank and, realising this, the prosecution was now saying the money amounting to Rs 50 lakh was obtained from the sale of a land. He added this money could not have been paid to assailants in September as a Mutt manager has stated before a court that the money received from the sale of the land was deposited in a bank in May last year, much before the murder of Sankararaman.

Tamil Nadu police's counsel cited 39 letters written by Sankararaman "exposing the maladministration at the Mutt and the illegal activity of Shankaracharya.

*The Economic Times*

7 JAN 2005



# SYMBOLS OF FAITH

## France's Short-Sighted Policy Of Secular Fanaticism

By HARPREET SINGH

57-6  
6/1  
Whatever one may say about the legitimacy of America's war in the Gulf, the American government, media and the courts of law have displayed wisdom in tackling the irrational acts of hate crimes. With America being the melting pot of races, religions and cultures, awareness campaigns launched by ethnic minorities in their own interest would have undoubtedly played a role in reducing such crimes. At the same time, the American government's gestures in the form of words of comfort and assurance of safety for the affected communities and the death sentence for the killer of a Sikh in Arizona are steps which are worthy of emulation.

It is strange that a nation, otherwise known to be progressive, overreacts to the presence of some fanatics among the members of a community and starts feeling insecure on account of the presence of these people who merely wear external symbols of their faith.

### Network of terror

Another nation, rocked by the fury of the global network of terror, takes everything in its stride, rebuilds its shattered symbols of prosperity with pride and nips any effort at ethnic cleansing, even if few and far between, in the bud. A comparison leads to a couple of conclusions: first, that there is something called the American spirit and second, that the French have failed to differentiate between fanaticism, which breeds terror, and harmless observance of the rules of one's religion.

The French government's legislation bans Muslims from wearing head scarves, Jews from wearing their religious caps, Sikhs from wearing turbans and of course Christians from wearing big crosses in public schools and places of work.

Firstly, there is no difference whatsoever between law abiding and peace loving followers of different religions whether the symbols they wear are externally visible or not or even if they choose to wear no symbols at all. It is just a matter of chance that a Christian generally wears no symbols at all or just has a small cross dangling by his neck, hidden beneath the shirt, whe-

*The author is a freelance writer*

rears a Sikh male is bound by his faith to become conspicuous by sporting long hair and a turban. By being free of any distinct identity, the former does not become any more of an asset to society just as the latter, by following the rules laid down by

reveal their ethnic identity and help witnesses add to the clues would be a big liability, which they would gladly do without.

Thirdly, France has been free of separatist struggles which have plagued India and has, unlike India, Israel and the USA



his tenth master, does not become a threat to a nation or its inhabitants. There is, for instance, no dearth of Sikhs in Canada, the USA and the UK who continue to proudly maintain their external identity. Can the French champions of secularism cite any instance of these individuals becoming a threat to the lives of the other citizens of their adopted lands or of their launching any movements to call for the formation of a separate homeland in those countries?

### Fanatics

Secondly, when separatists and fanatics go about implementing their plan of action, their choice of the key persons would be, especially after 11 September, those who do not sport any external symbols and thus do not stand out in a crowd. Their army of followers who carry out routine operational tasks as well as those who strike on "D-day" would comprise, clean-shaven individuals bereft of anything which can make them draw attention to themselves. A head scarf, religious cap or a turban, which would

not been at the receiving end of terrorist violence. Islamic fundamentalists who spew venom against these nations have not had France on their hit list either. Further, by opposing the war on Iraq, it has steered clear of a decision that could irk any section of the Islamic world. The only French concern is regarding the growing fundamentalism among its Muslim population, which even led to some incidents of rioting in the recent past.

Considering the destruction faced by countries which allowed fundamentalists of any religion to thrive on their soil, its apprehensions are justified. Not only should France stamp out any activity or propaganda, which gives vent to communal feelings and encourages violence. It should also ensure that not an inch of its land is used for carrying out activities which provide any support or aid to separatism in any other country. Canada and the USA permitted Khalistani and Kashmiri separatists to use their territory for propaganda and funding of their illegitimate wars in the name of religion in the last two decades

of the last millennium. Now that the Americans have tasted the product of Osama Inc, one hopes they can empathise with India, which has been fighting its war against terrorism for two decades. So if France acts in any way to weed out fundamentalism, it would win plenty of international support without asking for it. Instead of taking such rational steps, it has decided to set the whole body afire to destroy a few cancerous cells.

Chirac's short-sighted government is practising what can aptly be described as secular fanaticism. Secularism is defined as the belief that religion should have no place in civil affairs. This simply means that the state shall not adhere to any religion. That the policies, rules and methods of the state shall not be influenced by the beliefs of any religion.

### Antidote

It certainly does not mean that individuals sporting religious symbols should be hounded out of state-owned institutions. Just as religious fanaticism abuses religion to divide mankind, secular fundamentalism abuses secularism and would lead to similar consequences. Though the followers of the latter consider their concept to be an antidote to the venom of religious fundamentalism, their path ironically leads to the same destination: the division of mankind.

Unnecessary mess can be avoided if the French give up their ego, take a leaf from America's book and learn to co-exist. It is their government's responsibility to spread awareness about the history, culture and significance of the identity of those who maintain a distinct external form. They need to learn that the symbol sported by an individual of another religion, even if it be a large one, is a symbol of his or her reverence for the prophets of his religion just as a small cross, hidden from the view, which a Christian may be wearing, signifies his or her reverence for Jesus. Lastly, they need to learn, that they are also living in times which are kind to those who believe in mutual respect and tolerance and not to followers of a modified form of Nazism, which distrusts and targets those who are different by virtue of their birth.