

India, US sign 10-year defence agreement

By Chidanand Rajghatta/TNN

Washington: India and the United States have signed a ten-year defence relationship agreement that gives credence to the Bush administration's pledge to help India become a major world power in the 21st century.

Hugely ambitious in its size and scope, the agreement envisages a broad range of joint activities, including collaborating in multinational operations "when it is in their common interest," (outside the peacekeeping domain), strengthening the capabilities of the two militaries to promote security and defeat terrorism, and enhancing capabilities to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Titled the "New Framework for the US-India Defense Relationship," and signed on Monday by defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld and defence minister Pranab Mukherjee, the agreement is vastly more expansive than the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership, which both sides concluded is too limited in its scope.

The NFDR builds on the Agreed Minute on Defense Relations signed between the two countries in January 1995 which had also run its course and needed an infusion of energy and political will, officials said.

"Since then, changes in the international security environment have challenged our countries in ways unforeseen ten years ago. Today, we agree on a new framework that builds on past successes, seizes new opportunities, and charts a course for the US-India defence relationship for the next ten years," the signed document said.

Some modest results flowing from the agreement will be apparent in the next few weeks and months, while other ambitious projections, which are more in the nature of statement of intent, will take longer to fructify. In the immediate context, the two sides will sign an agreement on "Research, Development, Testing and Evaluation," that will result in closer cooperation in defence R&D.

They will also sign a Letter of Acceptance on naval pilot training to ready Indian pilots to use the new aircraft carrier New



Defence minister Pranab Mukherjee inside Pentagon on Tuesday

Delhi is acquiring. Indian military officers will be stationed in the Pacific Command and Central Command for coordination.

The US side has offered to advance the briefing on Patriot PAC-III system, pointing to its readiness to bring India up to speed on the latest technology (it had earlier offered the Patriot II system).

But it is the long list of intent

laid out in the agreement that is staggering in its scope and latitude. It talks of increasing opportunities for technology transfer, collaboration, co-production, R&D, including collaboration relating to missile defence, with the implicit understanding that tech sanctions against India will be withdrawn. There is a pledge to "increase exchanges of intelligence."

'RELATIONS ENTERING A NEW ERA'

India, USA ink defence pact

Press Trust of India

WASHINGTON, June 29. — Upgrading their defence ties, India and the United States have signed a ten-year agreement that envisages stepped up military cooperation in various fields, including joint weapons production, technology transfer and collaboration on missile defence.

Three weeks before Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's visit to the USA, the "new framework for the US-India defence relationship" was signed by the visiting defence minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee and his American counterpart, Mr Donald Rumsfeld, after detailed discussions yesterday.

In recognition of the growing breadth and depth of the US-India strategic defence relationship, the two countries also established a Defence Procurement and Production Group and agreed to institute a Joint Working Group for mid-year reviews of the functioning of the already-existing Defence Policy Group that guides Indo-US defence ties.

The framework statement said the relations between India and the USA were entering a new era and agreed that their defence relations are an "important pillar of their transforming bilateral relationship".

The framework for the next 10 years calls for cooperation for maintaining security and stability, defeating terrorism, preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction and protecting the free flow of commerce via land, air and sea lanes.

In the context of the "strategic relationship", both the sides agreed to expand two-way defence trade, increase

opportunities for technology transfer, collaboration, co-production, and research and development.

India and the USA also agreed to expand collaboration relating to missile defence.

The agreement said the two countries "will work to conclude defence transactions, not solely as ends in and of themselves, but as a means to strengthen our countries' security, reinforce our strategic partnership, achieve greater interaction between our armed forces, and build greater understanding between our defence establishments". It envisaged joint exercises and exchanges between both the sides, increased cooperation in the areas of worldwide peacekeeping operations and expansion of interaction with other nations in ways that promote regional and global peace and stability.

Acknowledging that defence ties between the two countries have advanced to "unprecedented levels of cooperation unimaginable since 1985", they agreed to conduct exchanges on defence strategy and defence transformation. They resolved to increase Intelligence exchanges and strengthen abilities of the two sides to respond quickly to disaster situations and continue strategic-level discussions by the senior leadership from the defence ministries.

Mr Mukherjee later told reporters that Indo-US defence cooperation should not be viewed as being at the expense of Russia. He said there should not be any restriction on the transfer of technology to India because its performance with respect to maintaining credibility (of safeguards) is very high.

Missile defence pact on the cards

PRESS Trust of India
New Delhi, June 26

AHEAD OF Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Washington, the US has indicated its interest in cooperation with India in advanced weaponry and missile defence.

This was reinforced during talks visiting US under secretary of state for political affairs Nicholas Burns held with foreign secretary Shyam Saran and senior officials this week.

Bilateral security cooperation is likely to be one of the key areas for discussions de-

fence minister Pranab Mukherjee will have with his American counterpart, Donald Rumsfeld, during his ongoing visit to the US. He is also meeting vice president Dick Cheney and national security adviser Stephen Hadley.

Before leaving for Washington, Mukherjee made it clear that he was not carrying any shopping list of defence hardware and his visit, the first by an Indian defence minister to the US after a long gap, was exploratory in nature.

The US offer to supply F-16 warplanes to India is being debated in the government here.

The defence ministry is carrying out technical evaluation of the fighter aircraft but no decision has been taken so far to buy it.

While UN Security Council reforms is one of the important issues that will undoubtedly figure during the parleys Singh will have with President George W. Bush, both American and Indian officials have contended that Indo-US relationship should not be viewed on the basis of any single issue.

Burns struck a positive chord, saying India met the criteria for permanent mem-

bership of the Security Council — being a large country with significant population, democratic, giving substantial resources to the UN system, adhering to non-proliferation and counter-terrorism.

He said any decision on the issue of which country the US will back for permanent membership has to be taken by President Bush.

Indian officials contended that it was a "long and complicated process" with numerous hurdles and that New Delhi was pursuing a step-by-step approach hinging on "cautious optimism".

27 JUN 2005

THE HINDU

India, Nepal Maoists bleed Bihar town

First such joint raid leaves 21 dead

9-08 N. K. K. H. 25/6

SANJAY Singh and HTC
Patna/New Delhi, June 24

IN A daring daylight attack on Thursday, about 300 armed Naxalites — including Nepalese Maoists — struck Madhuban town in Bihar's East Champaran district that borders Nepal. Twenty-one people — two constables, a bank guard and 18 Naxalites — were killed in the chaos and government crackdown that followed.

The attack began around 1.30 p.m. with the Naxals setting the town's police station on fire and snatching arms and ammunition from the cops. The rebels then turned to branches of the State Bank of India and Central Bank of India and robbed them of Rs 11 lakh. They shot dead Central Bank guard Dhruv Singh and also attacked the home of RJD MP Sitaram Singh.

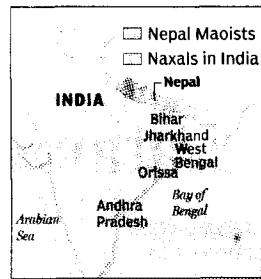
Sources said that at least 100 Maoists from Nepal were among the 300 attackers. Union home ministry officials confirmed that they had received reports that Nepalese Maoists were involved in the attack. After the incident, the ministry on Friday rushed additional reinforcements of the Sashastra Seema Bal — responsible for guarding the Indo-Nepal border — to "virtually seal" the border in Bihar.

The decision came even as the Bihar administration asked the Centre for 10 additional companies of CRPF for an intensive anti-Naxalite operation in Motihari and Champaran regions of the state where Naxalites have a strong network. Three companies of the CRPF and four of the Bihar Military Police launched a major combing operation in the area on Friday.

DGP Ashish Ranjan Sinha said dozens of

Reds have come

NEXUS: Nepal claims Maoists have close links with Indian leftwing extremists



NETWORK: Nepalese Maoists

have reportedly networked with Indian extremists such as Maoist Coordination Committee and People's War

MISSION: Carve out "compact revolutionary zone" stretching from Nepal to parts of UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Bengal, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh

DELHI'S RESPONSE: India calls Nepal rebels insurgents and has been providing arms to the Nepal Army

SANJAY KAPOOR

countrymade weapons, around 100 rounds of ammunition, a landmine device and 17 kg of explosives had been recovered during the combing operation. He also announced that Mainuddin Mia, a top Bihar Naxalite leader, was among those killed in an encounter.

An Intelligence Bureau team has been sent to the state to prepare a detailed report on the incident. The home ministry is concerned how the Naxalites entered the area unnoticed.

প্রতিরক্ষা সমঝোতায় ভারতকে বিশেষ চুক্তির প্রস্তাব আমেরিকার

সীমা সিরোহি • ওয়াশিংটন

২৩ জুন: কৌশলগত সমঝোতাকে আরও এগিয়ে নিয়ে ভারতের সঙ্গে দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্কে মজবুত ভিতের উপরে দাঁড় করাতে চায় আমেরিকা। সেই লক্ষ্য সামনে রেখেই ভারতের সঙ্গে প্রতিরক্ষা সমঝোতা সংক্রান্ত বিশেষ চুক্তি করতে চায় পেন্টাগন। প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়ের আসন্ন মার্কিন সফরেই এই প্রস্তাব নিয়ে আলোচনা হতে চলছে।

প্রস্তাবিত এই প্রতিরক্ষা সমঝোতা দু'দেশের প্রতিরক্ষা সম্পর্কের বিভিন্ন খুঁটিনাটি বিষয়কে একত্রে আনবে এবং ভবিষ্যতে অনেক সুপারিকল্পিত যৌথ অভিযানের পথ পরিষ্কার করবে। ন্যাটোর মতো অতটা আনুষ্ঠানিক চুক্তি এটা নয়। কিন্তু সহযোগিতার বিভিন্ন প্রসঙ্গ নিয়ে খাপছাড়া ভাবে এসোনার অধ্যায়ে ইতি টানতে পারবে এই সমঝোতা। তাতে জটিলতাও কমবে।

দিল্লিতে প্রস্তাবটি নিয়ে প্রাথমিক আলোচনা সেরে সবুজ সঙ্কেতই দিয়েছে কেন্দ্রীয় মন্ত্রিসভার নিরাপত্তা বিষয়ক কমিটি। ভারতের জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা এম কে নারায়ণনের সাম্প্রতিক মার্কিন সফরে এই নিয়ে কথা হয়েছে, প্রধানমন্ত্রীর আসন্ন সফরে

তা আরও স্পষ্ট রূপ নেবে।

মার্কিন প্রতিরক্ষাসচিব ডোনাল্ড রামসফেল্ডের সঙ্গে আগামী রবিবারের বৈঠকে প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় এই প্রস্তাব প্রসঙ্গে কথা বলবেন। সরকারি ভাবে প্রণবের সফর শুরু হচ্ছে সোমবার এবং সেই সফরের খুঁটিনাটি নিয়ে নীরব রয়েছেন ভারতীয় কূটনীতিকেরা। রামসফেল্ড অবশ্য সরকারি সফর শুরুর আগের রাতেই প্রণবকে নৈশভোজে আমন্ত্রণ জানিয়েছেন।



রামসফেল্ড ও প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়

ভারত ও আমেরিকার সামরিক বাহিনীর তিন শাখাই ইতিমধ্যে বেশ কয়েক বার যৌথ মহড়ায় অংশ নিয়েছে। সুনামি-কবলিত এলাকায় ত্রাণ পৌঁছে দেওয়ার সময়েও দু'দেশের সেনা পরস্পরকে সহযোগিতা করেছে। এর পরে পেন্টাগন এখন চায়, দু'তরফের সম্পর্ক আরও আনুষ্ঠানিক চেহারা পাক। এর আগে ৯/১১-এর

পরে পরে মার্কিন পণ্যবাহী জাহাজকে মালাক্কা প্রণালী পার করে দিয়েছিল ভারতীয় নৌ-বাহিনী। তার জন্য পেন্টাগন বিশেষ কৃতজ্ঞ।

দুই সেনাবাহিনীর মধ্যে সম্পর্ক, প্রতিরক্ষা বাণিজ্য ও উৎপাদন, যৌথ গবেষণা, যৌথ অভিযান— দু'দেশের সাধারণ স্বার্থের সঙ্গে জড়িত এই সব বিষয়ে একটি মাত্র নথি তৈরি রাখলেই চলবে, প্রস্তাবিত চুক্তি তেমনই বলছে। কৌশলগত সমঝোতা তাতে বাড়তি মাত্রা পাবে। প্রতিরক্ষা সূত্রের বক্তব্য, বাণিজ্য, পরমাণু বা মহাকাশ সহযোগিতার মতো ক্ষেত্রগুলির চেয়ে প্রতিরক্ষায় ভারত-মার্কিন সম্পর্ক অনেকটা এগিয়ে গিয়েছে। এই অগ্রগতি ধরে রাখতে ভাবনাচিন্তায় আরও উদ্ভাবনী শক্তি দেখানোর কথা বলছেন প্রতিরক্ষা বিশেষজ্ঞেরা।

চুক্তির অঙ্গ হিসাবে ভারত মহাসাগরে সহযোগিতামূলক সামরিক অভিযান চালাতে সমঝোতাপত্র সেই হতে পারে। এই চুক্তি বাস্তবায়িত হলে প্রযুক্তিগত সহযোগিতা বাড়বে। সেই সুবাদে ক্ষেপণাস্ত্র প্রতিরক্ষার মতো জটিল বিষয়ে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ তথ্য হাতে পাবে দিল্লি। তথ্য না-থাকার জন্যই দিল্লি সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়ে উঠতে পারেনি, ক্ষেপণাস্ত্র-ধ্বংসী প্যাট্রিয়ট কেনা উচিত কি না।

24 JUN.

ANADABAZAR PATINA

থানায় আগুন, ব্যাঙ্ক লুট, অফিস ভাঙচুর

নেপালি ঠাঁচে উত্তর বিহারে মাওবাদী তাণ্ডব, নিহত ৩৫

মতিহারি, ২৪ জুন (সংবাদ সংস্থা)— ভারতে নকশালপন্থার ইতিহাসে বড় রকম আঘাত হানল মাওবাদীরা। নেপাল সীমান্তবর্তী বিহারের পূর্ব চম্পারণ জেলার মধুবন শহরে গতকাল দুপুর থেকে রাত পর্যন্ত নকশালপন্থীদের ঘোরতর তাণ্ডবে দুই পুলিশ কর্মী সহ অন্তত ২১ জনের মৃত্যু হয়েছে। বেসরকারি মতে মৃত্যু ৩৫-এর বেশি। ঘটনাস্থল পাটনা থেকে ১৫০ কিমি উত্তরে। পুলিশ জানিয়েছে, নিষিদ্ধ সি পি আই (মাওবাদী) দলের সঙ্গে নেপালের মাওবাদীরা মিলে প্রায় ৩০০ গেরিলা ছোট্ট শহরটিতে ঝাঁপিয়ে পড়ে। সামরিক সাজে সাজা সশস্ত্র এই নকশালপন্থী বাহিনীতে ছিল নারী গেরিলারাও। মাওবাদীরা প্রথমে তাণ্ডব চালায় মধুবন বাজারে। এক পুলিশ কর্মী, এক সি আর পি জওয়ানকে হত্যা করে আগুন লাগিয়ে দেয় মধুবন থানায়। লুট করে ৬টি রাইফেল, দুটি কারবাইন, প্রচুর কার্তুজ। স্টেট ব্যাঙ্ক অফ ইন্ডিয়ার মধুবন শাখাতেও হানা দেয় তারা। ব্যাঙ্কের রক্ষীকে খুন করে লুট করে ১২ লাখ টাকা। এরপর তারা বি ডি ও অফিসে ভাঙচুর চালায়। সেওহরের রাষ্ট্রীয় জনতা দল সাংসদ সীতারাম সিংয়ের পেট্রোল পাম্পও তারা বোমা মেরে উড়িয়ে দেয়। সীতারাম ও তাঁর প্রতিবেশীদের বাড়িতে লুটপাট চালায়। লুটপাট চালায় এক মোটর সাইকেল ডিলারের শো-রুমও। পথে পথে ছড়িয়ে পড়ে পুলিশ-মাওবাদী যুদ্ধ। কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার এ ঘটনায় স্তম্ভিত। নেপালে যেভাবে মাওবাদীরা তাণ্ডব চালায়, একেবারে সেই রীতিতে এই হামলা। রাষ্ট্রপতির শাসন জারি হওয়া বিহারে এ ঘটনার জন্য কেন্দ্র উচ্চ পর্যায়ের তদন্তেরও নির্দেশ দিয়েছে। কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রক

বিহার প্রশাসনকে বলেছে কী করে এত বেশি সংখ্যক নকশালপন্থী প্রকাশ্যে একটি শহরে এই হামলা চালান, তার বিস্তৃত রিপোর্ট দিতে। এ ঘটনার পর ওই অঞ্চলে ভারত-নেপাল সীমান্ত বন্ধ করে চলছে তুমুল তল্লাশি। তল্লাশির জন্য জেহানাবাদ জেলা থেকে আরও সি আর পি আনা হয়েছে। জেলা প্রশাসনের এক অফিসার জানিয়েছেন, বৃহস্পতিবার দুপুর দেড়টায় মধুবন বাজারে হামলা শুরু করে প্রায় দেড় ঘণ্টা ধরে নকশালপন্থীরা অবাধে থানা, ব্যাঙ্ক, বি ডি ও অফিস ও আর জে ডি সাংসদের বাড়িতে হামলা চালায়। স্তম্ভিত দশা কাটিয়ে পুলিশ-সি আর পি রাস্তায় নামতে বেধে যায় যুদ্ধ। বিহার পুলিশের ডি জি আশিসরঞ্জন সিনহা বলেছেন, এক ডজনের বেশি মাওবাদী এ ঘটনায় নিহত হয়েছে। তাদের ৭ জনের দেহ পাওয়া গেছে। দু'পক্ষের গুলি চালাচালির সময় দুই সাধারণ মহিলাও মারা গেছেন। সিনহা জানিয়েছেন, এ দেশের মাওবাদীদের সঙ্গে নেপালের মাওবাদীদের একসঙ্গে হামলায় নামার ঘটনা এই প্রথম। পুলিশের চম্পারণ রেঞ্জের ডি আই জি এস কে ভরদ্বাজ কিস্ত দাবি করেছেন অন্তত ২৯ জন মাওবাদী এ ঘটনায় নিহত হয়েছে। এদের মধ্যে অন্তত ৩ জন নেপালি মাওবাদী। বহু সঙ্গীর মৃতদেহ মাওবাদীরাই নিয়ে গেছে। নিহতদের কাছ থেকে পাওয়া গেছে দুটি এস এল আর, একটি বন্দুক, ২৫০ কার্তুজ। ভরদ্বাজ জানিয়েছেন, সন্ধ্যার সময় সি পি আই (মাওবাদী) দলের পূর্ব চম্পারণের আঞ্চলিক কমান্ডার মৈনুদ্দিন নিহত হয়েছেন। সেওহরের আঞ্চলিক কমান্ডার শিউপূজন বৈঠা ধরা পড়েছেন।

Siachen: solutions for the taking

The only guarantee that the glacier will remain demilitarised once India and Pakistan withdraw is a political one. And only Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and President Musharraf have the capacity to effect it.

Siddharth Varadarajan

IN DECLARING that it was time to convert the world's highest battleground in Siachen into a "mountain of peace," Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has sent a clear signal that demilitarisation of the glacier is a political objective he is personally committed to achieving.

But sending a signal down the line is one thing. Getting the civil and military establishments to develop creative approaches to a problem that has defied resolution for more than two decades is another. Defence Secretary-led negotiating teams will never produce an outcome that will satisfy the concerns of all stakeholders in Siachen. The core challenge is to ensure the glacier remains demilitarised once India and Pakistan withdraw. This guarantee must necessarily be political rather than military. And this can only be achieved by the Prime Minister directly discussing the terms of a settlement with General Pervez Musharraf.

Whatever the soldiers deployed at a height of more than 18,000 feet may feel, the Army as an institution, in fact, sees no pressing need to disengage from the glacier. More than 770 soldiers are believed to have lost their lives atop the glacier since Operation Meghdoot, the April 1984 operation that led to India acquiring a commanding position atop the three principal passes along the Saltoro range. Today, however, a ceasefire is in place along the Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL), the Army's 102 Infantry Brigade has a much better knowledge of the terrain, including crevasses, and the equipment available to kit soldiers, though still inadequate, is better than before. Staying on costs the exchequer anywhere from Rs.3 crore to Rs.5 crore a day. But from the calculus of human cost, the Army feels it can continue to sustain its Siachen presence more or less indefinitely.

Army's objections

Whatever the arguments put forward in the wake of Operation Meghdoot, there is a broad consensus amongst military men that Siachen *qua* glacier has little or no strategic value. "Siachen does not have any strategic significance," Lt. Gen. M.L. Chibber (retd.) told *Force* magazine last December. "The strategic significance being talked about is all invention." As GOC-in-C of the Northern Army Command, he had planned and launched the 1984 operation. But if Siachen lacks strategic significance, this does not mean withdrawing from the glacier is free of collateral costs: The Army fears any pullback from Siachen, even if part of a bilateral agreement to redeploy forces, would be presented in Pakistan as a "victory" over an Indian side that did not have the "stomach" to stick it out.

There is also the problem of trust. Historians will always argue over the evidence but the Army is convinced it moved into Siachen to pre-empt Pakistan's entry into the undemarcated Saltoro range north of NJ 9842, the northernmost mutually agreed map coordinate on the ceasefire line/Line of Con-

trol in Kashmir. Though the ceasefire agreement spoke of the ceasefire line going "North" to the glaciers from NJ 9842, Pakistani maps drew a straight line in a northeasterly direction up to the Karakoram Pass. So long as Islamabad sticks to that claim line, senior Indian officers say, there will always be the danger that Pakistani forces might eventually move up the Saltoro range to posts vacated by India.

By insisting on "authentication" of the location of present posts held by both sides, the Army leadership wants to provide a grid-by-grid answer to Pakistan's "cartographic aggression." It also feels authentication will help India build an international case for support if ever Pakistan reneges on the terms of a withdrawal agreement.

The way out

If the Prime Minister is to realise his dream of demilitarising Siachen, he will have to come up with convincing answers to all these reservations.

First, Dr. Singh has to make it clear that he is not looking at Siachen as a standalone problem. If Siachen were the only outstanding issue between India and Pakistan, the Army's arguments would have considerable traction. But the reality is that Siachen is only one component of a larger problem. Maintaining a military presence on the glacier is not a core interest in the way that the Prime Minister has said India's borders with Pakistan are. Short of redrawing those bor-

ders or partitioning any territory on a religious basis, he has said, the sky is the limit. Compromising on Siachen in order to allow its demilitarisation will, in fact, help India push along the peace process in the current beneficial direction.

Secondly, on the question of authentication, the Prime Minister needs to stress that there is more than one way of securing a cartographic commitment from Pakistan. The purpose of authentication is to ensure that after a withdrawal has been effected, Pakistan will not move back to its old positions or up Gyong La, Bilafond La and Sia La — the three passes along the Saltoro range — to positions currently held by India. But the same purpose can be served by marking out a zone of disengagement within which, after a pre-determined date, any Pakistani or Indian military presence would be considered illegitimate. This would be regardless of where India and Pakistan had their posts (or claimed to have their posts) prior to the pre-determined date, and without prejudice to the claims either side has to the region as a whole. Such a plan could be launched in stages, around smaller zones, and verified by joint helicopter patrols. Eventually, the entire glacier would be covered.

Indeed, in 1992, Indian and Pakistani negotiators virtually drew up such a zone, a mis-shaped rectangle with the Saltoro range in the middle, with India agreeing to remain well east of there and Pakistan well west. Such a formula would produce a grid-refer-

enced map that would be as effective as a map authenticating the AGPL in mobilising international support in the event of any Pakistani transgression. Slightly less effective than a bilateral agreement would be the suggestion unilaterally to pull out after taking the military attaches of key countries based in New Delhi up to see for themselves the principal posts occupied by India.

Thirdly, the issue of trust is absolutely fundamental to the continuation of the peace process. If Pakistan cannot be trusted to keep an agreement on the demilitarisation of Siachen, then authenticating the AGPL will serve no purpose other than lulling the Indian Army into a false sense of security. But trust is the only basis for any headway to be made. Trust not so much in any "change of heart" on Gen. Musharraf's part but in the rationality of Pakistan's decision-makers.

If Islamabad reneges on any Siachen deal, it will end up pushing bilateral relations into a deep, deep freeze. Given the regional and international realities of our time, Pakistan is unlikely to believe its core interests will be served by such an outcome. In diplomacy as in war, countries must choose their battles wisely. Siachen is not a winnable proposition for either side but a withdrawal will provide benefits to both. Since he inherited the peace process from the previous government, Dr. Singh has led from the front. He owes it to the people of India and Pakistan to find a way down from Siachen.



LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Army Chief General J.J. Singh at the Siachen base camp on June 12. — PHOTO: REUTERS/PTI

শান্তির হিমবাহ

বিশ্বের সর্বোচ্চ রণাঙ্গন সিয়াচেন হিমবাহে ভারতীয় প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহের সফর এক চমকপ্রদ ঘটনা।

তিয়ান্তর বছরের এক প্রবীণ রাজনীতিক, যাঁহার হৃদয়স্ত্রে অস্ত্রোপচার হইয়া গিয়াছে, তাঁহার পক্ষে ওই সুউচ্চ হিমশীতল মৃত্যু-উপত্যকায় সফরে যাওয়ার মধ্যে যথেষ্ট দুঃসাহস প্রয়োজন। বিশেষ প্রশিক্ষণপ্রাপ্ত ভারতীয় ফৌজের জওয়ানরাই ওই প্রতিকূল আবহাওয়ায় সীমান্ত পাহারা দিতে হিমসিম খাইয়া যান। কেবল আবহাওয়ার প্রতিকূলতার কারণেই সিয়াচেনে বহু জওয়ানের মৃত্যু হইয়াছে। মনমোহন সিংহ তথাপি যখন সিয়াচেন সফরে যাওয়ার সিদ্ধান্ত লন, তখন সীমান্তরক্ষীদের মনোবল বৃদ্ধি করার তাগিদ নিশ্চয় ছিল। তবে সেটাকেই একমাত্র তাগিদ বলিয়া ধরিয়া লওয়া সমীচীন নয়। সেই সঙ্গে তিনি নিশ্চয় সরেজমিনে এই দুর্গম, দুঃসহ, ঈশ্বর-পরিত্যক্ত ভূখণ্ডে ফৌজি নজরদারি ও প্রহরার প্রাসঙ্গিকতার দিকটিও খতাইয়া দেখিতে চাহিয়াছিলেন। এই হিমবাহের দখল রাখিতে গিয়া কেবল যে ভারতীয় সৈন্যদের প্রাণহানি ঘটিতেছে, তাহা তো নয়, একই সঙ্গে জওয়ানদের চাঙা রাখিতে, তাঁহাদের প্রয়োজনীয় রসদ জোগাইতে, তাহার পরিকাঠামো সদাপ্রস্তুত রাখিতে সরকারি কোষাগার হইতে যে বিপুল সম্পদ অপচয়িত হইতেছে, তাহাও বিবেচ্য। এই সূত্রেই প্রস্তাব উঠিয়াছে, রণাঙ্গন হিসাবে সিয়াচেনের গুরুত্ব হ্রাস করিয়া তাহাকে একটি 'শান্তি-উদ্যান, বা প্রকৃতি-পার্ক হিসাবে গড়িয়া তোলার।

মনমোহন সিংহ বাঁধা ছকের বাহিরে গিয়া চিন্তা করিতে ভালবাসেন। সিয়াচেন লইয়া তাঁহার প্রস্তাবেও তাহার লক্ষণ স্পষ্ট। সিয়াচেনের পশ্চিমে পাকিস্তান ও চিনের সীমান্তে এ ধরনেরই একটি কেন্দ্রীয় কারাকোরাম জাতীয় উদ্যান গড়িয়া উঠিয়াছে। কিন্তু চিন-পাকিস্তান সম্পর্ক আর ভারত-পাকিস্তান সম্পর্ক এক নয়। ভারত-পাক সম্পর্কে আগের তুলনায় অনেক উন্নতি হইলেও সীমান্তের নিয়ন্ত্রণ-রেখা লইয়া নমনীয়তার প্রশ্নে কেহই এখনও বিশেষ উদার নয়। থাকিয়া-থাকিয়াই পাকিস্তানের প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফ বলিতেছেন বটে নিয়ন্ত্রণ-রেখা তুলিয়া দিবার, সীমান্তকে অবাস্তর করিয়া দেওয়ার কথা। তবে তাহার কতটা কথার কথা, আর কতটা আন্তরিক অবস্থান, সে বিষয়ে সংশয় আছে। সিয়াচেন হিমবাহকে 'শান্তির হিমবাহে' রূপান্তরিত করার মনমোহন সিংহের প্রস্তাবে পাকিস্তান যে ভাবে ভারতীয় ফৌজকে সিয়াচেন ছাড়িয়া ১৯৭২ সনের আগের অবস্থানে ফিরিবার দাবি তুলিয়াছে, তাহাতেও ওই সংশয় জাগ্রত হয়। এমন নয় যে ভারত সিয়াচেন ছাড়িয়া আসিতে অসম্মত। কিন্তু যদি সেখানে কার্গিলের মতো পরিস্থিতির উদ্ভব হয়, ভারতীয় ফৌজ নামিয়া আসা মাত্র পাক ফৌজ হিমবাহের দখল লইয়া লয়, তখন প্রতিরক্ষার দৃষ্টিতে পাকিস্তান সুবিধাজনক অবস্থায় চলিয়া যাইবে, আর ভারত অসুবিধাজনক অবস্থায়। অথচ, আগেই বলা হইয়াছে, সিয়াচেন দখলে রাখিতে গিয়া অর্থ ও মানব সম্পদে ভারতের প্রভূত অপচয় হইতেছে। এ জন্যই সিয়াচেনকে দুই দেশেরই সেনামুক্ত একটি প্রকৃতি-উদ্যানে পরিণত করার প্রস্তাব।

পাকিস্তান যদি ভারতীয় ফৌজের একতরফা পশ্চাদপসরণের প্রশ্নে জিদ ধরিয়া থাকে, তবে সিয়াচেনকে শান্তির হিমবাহে পরিণত করা কঠিন হইবে। ভারত সিয়াচেনের দখল রাখিতে ব্যগ্র নয়। কিন্তু পাকিস্তান তাহা দখলে লইতেছে কি না, সে ব্যাপারে উদাসীন থাকার বিলাসিতাও ভারতকে শোভা পায় না। কেননা সিয়াচেনে পাক ফৌজের উপস্থিতি ভারতের জাতীয় নিরাপত্তার পক্ষে রণনৈতিকভাবে বিপজ্জনক, এমনকী বিপর্যয়কর হইয়া উঠিতে পারে। অথচ প্রকৃতি-উদ্যানে পরিণত হইলে সিয়াচেন প্রকৃতি-বিজ্ঞানের অনেক গুরুত্বপূর্ণ গবেষণার অনুকূল পরীক্ষাকেন্দ্র হইয়া উঠিতে পারে। সে জন্য অবশ্য গোটা হিমবাহকে আগে দূষণমুক্ত করিতে হইবে। গত কয়েক বছরের নিরন্তর গোলাগুলি, বারুদ, সামরিক বিভিন্ন যন্ত্রাংশের অপ্রয়োজনীয় বা ব্যবহৃত খোল ও অবশেষ বিশ্বের সর্বোচ্চ রণাঙ্গনকে দূষিত করিয়াছে। এ সবই পরিষ্কার করা দরকার। সিয়াচেনে দুই দেশের ফৌজ মুখোমুখি দাঁড়াইয়া আছে। গোলাবর্ষণ আপাতত বন্ধ আছে বটে, তবে প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী বাহিনীর এই মুখোমুখি অবস্থান যে-কোনও সময়েই এমন প্ররোচনা বা অজুহাত সৃষ্টি করিতে পারে, যাহা নূতন করিয়া গোলাবর্ষণের উপলক্ষ হইয়া উঠিবে। তাই হিমবাহটির বে-সামরিকীকরণ জরুরি। দুই দেশের সহযোগিতা ও অংশগ্রহণের মাধ্যমেই তাহা অর্জিত হইতে পারে। মনমোহন সিংহের সিয়াচেন সফর সেই পথেই একটি পদক্ষেপ।

Military not sole voice on Siachen

PM sets out for peak of peace

BUREAU AND AGENCIES

Siachen/New Delhi, June 12: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today declared it was his political intent to create a zone of peace in the Siachen Glacier even if talks on disengaging the armies of India and Pakistan were repeatedly hitting hurdles on the path to de-militarising the hardship frontier.

The first Prime Minister to visit the Siachen base camp and to make an aerial survey of the glacier and the Salto Ridge, Singh told troops that he wanted to convert the highest battlefield in the world into a "peace mountain".

The Prime Minister is 73 years old and has undergone a cardiac bypass surgery. In the rarefied air of Siachen breathing can become difficult. Last year President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was given a tour of the glacier.

"Siachen is called the highest battlefield in the world and living here is very difficult... (however) now the time has come to make efforts to convert this battlefield into a peace mountain," the Prime Minister said.

Singh's visit to Siachen comes within three weeks of the last (ninth) round of defence secretary-level talks that ended, like past discussions, on a promising note but with little progress on the ground.

But the two sides assessed the ceasefire since 2003 positively and committed to keeping the guns silent and talking



The time has come to make efforts to convert this battlefield into a peace mountain

— Manmohan Singh

more. The talks are deadlocked on the question of delineating the military positions. The Indian government, on the insistence of the army, wants Pakistan to authenticate positions. Islamabad is asking for a pullback.

Singh, who had made it clear early in his tenure that durable peace in Siachen ranks high on his list of priorities with Pakistan, has used his Prime Ministerial visit to emphasise that military compulsions would be kept in mind but would not be the sole consideration in freezing the war.

His intention, he said, was to convert the Siachen Glacier — which is a symbol of India-Pakistan rivalry — into "an example of peaceful environment".

The Prime Minister restated that there could be "no redrawing of boundaries" — a position he has held consistently on the Kashmir question.

"In the pursuit of peace we

cannot accept any changes in the established boundaries. We feel these boundaries are important not only for our security but it relates to the country's prestige also. For this prestige, Indian soldiers are happily bearing difficulties here. Our efforts should be that such an environment of peace is created wherein nobody feels any threats and there is no scope for conflicts and this place becomes an example of peace," the Prime Minister said.

New Delhi is engaged with Islamabad to achieve durable peace in Siachen.

An international boundary does not exist in the glacier but the battleline is the actual ground position line that runs along the forbidding Salto Ridge for a hundred-plus kilometres. This week a senior army officer, who was in the Indian defence secretary's delegation to Islamabad, said even if map-making in Siachen was dispensed with in the rhetoric, the Indian army would like the positions of the troops marked on a recognised document, such as a map and/or satellite imagery.

The Prime Minister was briefed by senior army officers on the current situation and was taken on an aerial survey. He told troops that the government would extend more facilities to them in the inhospitable sector.

"I wanted to see for myself as to what your living conditions and arrangements are and what are your problems and what the government can do to address those," he said.

Pota court acquits all 8 accused in Ghatkopar bus blast case

Special Judge Rules Prosecution Failed to Prove Charges

Mumbai: A special court on Saturday acquitted eight people who were accused of conspiring and planting a bomb in a bus in Ghatkopar on December 2, 2002, when two persons were killed and 49 injured.

Special judge of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (Pota) court, A P Bhargale, acquitted all the accused saying the prosecution had failed to prove the charges against them. The prosecution had alleged that the accused hatched the conspiracy from March 2002 to December 2002 to avenge the deaths of Muslims in the post-Godhra riots.

Those acquitted were Dr Abdul Mateen (29), Shaikh Mohammed Muzammil (28), Imran Rehman Khan (33), Mohammed Altaf (28), Toufiq Hamid (27), Aarif Hussain alias Aarif Paanwala (32), Haroon Rashid Lohar (33) and Rashid Ansari (37).

The prosecution had received a setback when Dattatraya Shelkar—the conductor of the BEST bus (Route 416) in which the blast occurred—turned hostile in March this year. Shelkar was also the complainant.

During an identification parade, the conductor had identified three of the eight accused who had allegedly planted the bomb in the bus. They were Paanwala, Lohar and Ansari.

Apart from Shelkar, 10 more witnesses turned hostile during the trial. They included inmates of the Sir J J Hospital hostel, where Mateen, a forensics expert, was staying before being picked up by police.

Sanjay Hadkar



Dr Abdul Mateen, prime accused in the Ghatkopar blast case, leaves the court after he and seven others were acquitted

Last year, nine accused—Saqib Nachan, Haseeb Zuber Mullah, Aatif Mullah, Ghulam Sattar, Farhan Khot, Mohammed Kamil, Noor Mohammed Ansari, Anwar Ali and Nadeem Paloba—were discharged by the prosecution for lack of evidence.

According to the prosecution, Paanwala planted the bomb in the bus while the other accused were part of the conspiracy. The conspiracy was hatched in Dubai by Lashkar-e-Toiba operative Abu Hamsa to

avenge the Gujarat riots.

Another accused, software engineer Khwaja Younus, who according to police escaped while being taken to Ahmednagar, has been charged with joining the conspiracy hatched in Dubai, while Mateen allegedly gave shelter to two conspirators in his hostel room.

The witnesses subsequently did not confirm the police claim that some people stayed with Mateen in his hostel room. Police claimed that after quitting his job, Mateen went to Hyderabad where he met co-conspirator Muzammil.

However, Mateen told the court that after he quit the job, he left to perform Haj. Muzammil and others produced CDs depicting the Gujarat riots to instigate Muslim youth to help them avenge the deaths of the riot victims, police alleged.

Of the eight accused who were acquitted, Paanwala, Lohar and Ansari will continue to be in jail as they face charges for engineering other blasts in Mulund, Vile Parle and Mumbai Central.

The Ghatkopar explosion was the first in a series of bomb blasts that rocked the city in 2002 and 2003.

This is the first Pota case in which the judgment has been delivered. The police had invoked Pota earlier against Mohammed Afroze of Trombay, for allegedly being an Al Qaida operative, but the anti-terrorism charge was later dropped.

PTI

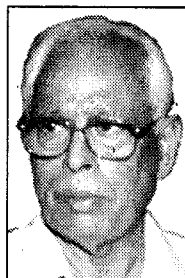
Buying arms: a fool-proof guide

THE Vijay Kelkar Committee, set up to "modernise the government's defence procurement policy" has reportedly tendered the first part of its report to the defence minister. If made public, it would engender a productive debate.

From the mid-'80s, this writer has worked in the defence ministry for a considerable period and also served as secretary, defence production and supplies, at a time when the defence budget was subjected to severe cuts and defence production units faced closure because there were no funds to place orders! However, since the early '90s, there has been a progressive increase in the defence budget and the challenge is how best to manage spending.

Efforts towards diversification and greater private sector participation did not succeed in the past on account of systemic hurdles. First, irrespective of the source of procurement, no change is possible unless there is certainty about the defence budget in the ensuing 10-15 years, considering the time involved in developing/productionising new equipment. Second, once there is assurance of allocations within a 15-year perspective, the defence services — based on validated threat assessments — must evolve a fully integrated procurement plan which cannot be subjected to any subsequent modification by successive chiefs of staff or defence ministry echelons. Third, there must be a clear definition of the specifications/qualitative requirements of every weapon system, platform, equipment, etc., required.

Four, once there is full clarity about the specifications and time frame within which a given item must be supplied, there must be a techno-economic task force to decide whether it may be purchased from within the country; imported from a reliable supplier abroad with or without transfer of technology, a co-production arrangement, etc; developed by DRDO and productionised by a defence or private sector unit to



There's been a ⁹⁶⁻⁸ progressive increase in the defence budget. How do we use it?

■ N. N. VOHRA

whom technology and detailed drawings will be transferred; developed by DRDO in collaboration with a foreign party and productionised, with or without collaboration with the latter, in a defence or private sector unit; or any other arrangement which is technically and financially viable and assures delivery to the concerned service within the committed time frame.

Briefly, decisions regarding "make or buy" would require to be arrived at by the aforesaid task force after most careful deliberation of all aspects. It is relevant to reiterate that such decisions cannot be taken by processing proposals on files to be examined by defence and finance officials, in-

with regard to export of defence equipment and materials must be reviewed and pragmatically rationalised, keeping in view the changing world situation. The so-called "negative list" of items/countries would need to be pruned, remembering that the indigenous development/production of any major weapon system would become far more economically viable if it is permissible to also export it.

Alongside the reforms to be suggested by the Kelkar Committee it would be useful to review the capacities of the 40 ordnance factories and 8 defence PSUs and objectively decide to wind up at least those factories whose products can be safely

No private sector partner will agree to make investments in establishing capacities unless there is assurance of an uninterrupted flow of orders

variably leading to long delays, notwithstanding the cost escalation and denial of supplies that may have grave operational consequences. Fifth, the procurement agency must not be headed or manned by functionaries who are tenure-bound. This vital wing of the defence ministry would require to evolve negotiating skills and build up expertise which must not be fractured by shifting officers every now and again, as in the past.

Sixth, it would be necessary to have a foreign economic relations wing, that would enable securing the fullest possible advantage of the set-off approach before concluding any import agreement. Seventh, the policy

procured from the private sector, like garments, boots, transport, vehicles, and so on. Further, it may be useful to merge certain factories and upgrade their viability. All the factories and defence PSUs which require to be retained must be modernised on a time-bound basis and their staffing patterns critically reviewed to reduce production costs. If the defence ministry succeeds in establishing statutorily mandated 5-10-15 year defence plans, it would be necessary for each production unit to have a validated annual production plan and a mandate to reduce the unit cost of every item produced. Both the factories and defence PSUs can benefit greatly if

they are made active partners in promoting exports.

If the intended reform is to be achieved, another closely-related area that must be simultaneously reviewed is the Directorate General of Quality Assurance (DGQA). If the private sector is expected to play a larger role many valuable entrepreneurs may not be able to survive the rigours of DGQA, whose philosophy would need to be harmonised with the self certification systems which are reliably enforced by all the better known private sector entrepreneurs. Reducing the existing role and size of the DGQA would also engender significant budgetary savings.

Yet another factor, a virulent systemic hurdle, is the antediluvian prescription that any purchase decision must be based on bids/quotations procured from at least three possible vendors. In my past experience I have seen some rare opportunities being lost because we could not find even a second bidder!

In earlier years, the defence ministry received excellent support from leading private sector entrepreneurs, particularly L&T, in times of duress. These linkages were not sustained and built upon because of budgetary constraints. In this context I would reiterate that no worthwhile private sector partner would be willing to make large investments in establishing capacities unless there is adequate assurance that there would be an uninterrupted flow of orders for supplies at a given minimum scale. And this will not happen, unless there is near certainty about allocations for defence within a 5-10-15 year cycle and, further, there is corresponding clarity and certainty about the items needed within the aforesaid cycle.

Finally, the envisaged reforms would materialise if corresponding change is brought about in the organisation and work culture of existing echelons involved in the process.

The writer was secretary, defence production; defence secretary and home secretary

Big shopper Delhi fuels arms race

SUJAN DUTTA

New Delhi, June 9: India's dramatic hike in defence allocations has made South Asia the region where military expenditure increased most in 2004, according to data compiled by a respected watchdog of arms transfers and conflicts.

New Delhi today signalled it was buying more. Defence minister Pranab Mukherjee released a manual that revises the policy to procure big-ticket items and said he was going to ask for supplementary grants to cover defence expenditure.

The cornerstone of the new policy — drafted in the wake of allegations of corruption in defence deals — is that it will require defence contractors entering into negotiations with India to sign an "integrity pact", an oath that they will not employ unfair trade practices.

"South Asia, where India strongly increased its defence budget, was the region where military expenditure increased most in 2004," the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri) has said in its just released year-book for 2005.

Finance minister P. Chidambaram granted a hike of more than Rs 11,000 crore, taking defence allocations in 2004-2005 to Rs 77,000 crore. For the current year, the allocation is Rs 6,000 crore more. In the first quarter of the year itself, the defence minister said, he was toying with the idea of asking for a supplementary grant.

The huge military expenditure through last year and this year is accompanied at the same time with talks for peace with Pakistan and China, from whom India has threat perceptions. The confi-

dence that such peace talks should inspire is not reflected in the military expenditure that New Delhi is incurring.

Sipri is pointing out that India's military expenditure was contributing to an arms race in South Asia.

Major conventional weapons under delivery to Pakistan include, for instance, 150 JF-17 fighter aircraft from China, Agosta 90B submarines from France, helicopters worth \$82 million from Russia and air surveillance radars worth \$255 million from the US.

Multi-billion-dollar deals that India has contracted or is negotiating are 66 Advanced Jet Trainers from the UK, six Scorpene submarines from a Franco-Spanish concern, 126 multi-role combat aircraft, and an aircraft carrier from Russia.

Mukherjee said the government was still deciding if the "integrity pact" that has been prescribed in the new policy will apply to all these deals.

Even if the arms race in South Asia makes it the most militarised region in the world, in value terms military expenditure is still a fraction of the US's. The Sipri report says world military expenditure exceeded \$1 trillion in 2004 and the US alone accounted for 47 per cent of this spending. The \$1-trillion-plus figure is slightly lower than the 1987-1988 cold war peak.

China's spending had slowed in 2004 and was lower in real terms than its average spending in 1995-2003.

Central America and western Europe were the only regions where regional military expenditure reduced in 2004. Combined sales of the top 100 manufacturers in 2003 were 25 per cent higher than in 2002.

10 JUN 2005

THE TELEGRAPH

কল্পরাষ্ট্রের কল্পমায়া

বড়ো জঙ্গিদের সহিত আলফার যোগাযোগ ঘনিষ্ঠ, অথচ তাহাদের কাছ হইতে আলফা নেতৃত্ব কিছুই শিখে নাই। বড়ো লিবারেশন টাইগাররা অস্ত্র সমর্পণ করার পর বড়োল্যান্ড আঞ্চলিক পরিষদের নির্বাচনে অংশ লয়। এখন অন্য জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠী এন ডি এফ বিও সংঘর্ষবিরতি ঘোষণা করিয়া ওই পরিষদে शामिल হইতে আগ্রহী। আলফা এখনও কেন্দ্রের আলোচনার আহ্বানেও সাড়া দেয় নাই। দ্বিধা কাটাইয়া কয় দিন আগে কেন্দ্র মধ্যস্থতাকারী মামনি রায়সম মারফত অসমের সার্বভৌমত্ব সহ যাবতীয় বিতর্কিত বিষয়ে আলফার সহিত আলোচনার ইচ্ছা ব্যক্ত করিয়া চিঠি দিয়াছে। অথচ আলফা নেতা অরবিন্দ রাজখোয়া মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রকে এই বিরোধে মধ্যস্থতা করার আহ্বান জানাইয়াছেন। কিছু কাল আগেই মার্কিন প্রশাসন আন্তর্জাতিক সন্ত্রাসবাদী সংগঠনের তালিকায় আলফাকে আনিয়াছে। এই অবস্থায় আমেরিকা কী ভাবে আলফার সহিত ভারত সরকারের বিরোধ মীমাংসায় মধ্যস্থতা করিবে? আলফা নেতাদের কি মাথা খারাপ হইয়া গিয়াছে?

হয়তো সে রকম কিছু নয়। হয়তো এই সব বলিয়া আলফা আন্তর্জাতিক মঞ্চে আপন গুরুত্ব বাড়াইতে চাহিতেছে। নাগা বিদ্রোহীদের দেখিয়া হয়তো তাহাদের মনে হইয়াছে, কেন্দ্রের কাছে বাড়তি সমীহ আদায় করিতে হইলে অসমের সার্বভৌমত্বের প্রশ্ন কিংবা তাহার মীমাংসায় মার্কিন মধ্যস্থতার দাবি লাগসই হইবে। কিন্তু নাগা বিচ্ছিন্নতাবাদের ইতিহাস, নাগা জঙ্গিদের সংগ্রামের ধরন, কেবল সামরিক লক্ষ্যবস্তুতে আঘাত হানিয়া সাধারণ জনজীবনকে নিরুপদ্রব রাখার মহৎ উদ্দেশ্য আলফা জঙ্গিরা কখনওই অনুসরণ করে নাই। বরং যত্রতত্র সম্পূর্ণ অসামরিক, নিরস্ত্র ও নিরীহ মানুষদের হত্যা করিয়া, অপহরণ করিয়া গুমখুন এবং মুক্তিপণ আদায় করিয়া, এমনকী স্বেচ্ছাসেবী সমাজকর্মীদের পর্যন্ত হত্যা করিয়া আলফা প্রথমাধি এক নিছক সন্ত্রাসবাদী গোষ্ঠী রূপে নিজেকে পরিচিত করাইয়াছে। তবু কেন্দ্র যে তাহার সহিত নিঃশর্ত আলোচনায় সম্মতি দিয়াছে, এটাই তাহাদের পক্ষে বড় পাওনা। নির্বিচার বিস্ফোরণ ও অন্তর্ঘাত সত্ত্বেও আলফা এখনও অসমের বৃহত্তর জনজীবনে কোনও ইতিবাচক প্রভাব ফেলিতে পারে নাই। উজানি অসমেও সার্বভৌম আহোম রাষ্ট্র গঠনের খোয়াব আজ আর বাস্তব জনবিন্যাস চিত্রের প্রতিনিধিত্ব করে না, বড় জোর তাহা একটি ঐতিহাসিক উপন্যাসের উপজীব্য হইতে পারে। নাগা জঙ্গিরা যে-অর্থে নাগাল্যান্ডের ভিতরে, এমনকী বাহির্ষেও সমগ্র নাগা জনগোষ্ঠীর প্রতিনিধি, আলফা অসমের ক্ষেত্রে সেই প্রতিনিধিত্ব দাবি করিতে পারে না। তৎসত্ত্বেও মনমোহন সিংহ সরকারের বদান্যতায় আলফা নেতৃত্ব কেন্দ্রের সহিত আলোচনার সুযোগ পাইয়াছে, যাহার আশু সদ্যবহার করা উচিত।

ইতিমধ্যে বাংলাদেশ হইতে ভারতীয় সন্ত্রাসবাদী গোষ্ঠীগুলির প্রশিক্ষণ শিবিরে আক্রমণের খবর আসিয়াছে। ভারত ঢাকাকে বারংবারই এই শিবিরগুলির কথা জানাইয়া সেগুলি উচ্ছেদ করার এবং জঙ্গিদের নয়াদিল্লির হাতে তুলিয়া দিবার অনুরোধ করিয়াছে। কিন্তু সেখানকার বর্তমান শাসক দল বেগম জিয়ার বি এন পি বিরোধী পক্ষে থাকা কালে এই সন্ত্রাসবাদীদের 'স্বাধীনতা-সংগ্রামী' আখ্যা দিয়াছিল। তাই বি এন পি সরকার প্রতিবার জঙ্গি প্রশ্রয়ের অভিযোগকে ভিত্তিহীন এবং অভিসন্ধিমূলক বলিয়া উড়াইয়া দিয়াছে এবং কখনওই তাহাদের উপর কোনও চাপ সৃষ্টি করে নাই। আলফার শীর্ষ নেতা পরেশ বড়ুয়া তো বাংলাদেশের 'কারাগারে' পরম সমাদরে আতিথ্য গ্রহণ করিয়াছেন। অতি সম্প্রতি ভারতীয় সীমান্ত রক্ষী বাহিনী বাংলাদেশের বিভিন্ন জেলায় আলফার চালানো পাঁচতারা হোটেল ও ব্যাংক আমানতের হৃদিশও দিয়াছে। কিন্তু এই প্রতিবেশী রাষ্ট্রের সরকার সে সবেবের অস্তিত্ব পর্যন্ত স্বীকার করে নাই। তাই শেষ পর্যন্ত ভারতীয় জঙ্গিদের বিরুদ্ধে অভিযানের খবরের সত্যতা লইয়াও সংশয় থাকিয়াই যায়। হয়তো এ মাসেই অনুষ্ঠায় বিদেশ সচিব পর্যায়ের দ্বিপাক্ষিক বৈঠকের অনুকূল প্রেক্ষাপট তৈয়ার করিতেই এমন খবর ভাসানো। তবে আলফা নেতৃত্ব যদি ভূটান ও বাংলাদেশের ঘাঁটি হইতেই ক্রমাগত অসমের জনজীবনে নাশকতা ঘটাইয়া চলে, তবে অনন্ত কাল ওই সব দেশের অনুগ্রহ ও কায়মি স্বার্থেই তাহাদের ব্যবহৃত হইতে হইবে। হয়তো তাহাতে আলফার আত্মমর্যাদা আহত হইবে না। তবে কোনও কালে 'সার্বভৌম অসম'-এর কল্পরাষ্ট্রও হাসিল হইবে না।

06 JUN 2005

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ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

Delhi HC gives Bofors case a quiet burial



The Hinduja brothers

Case file

1986: Deal signed between India and Bofors for supply of 400 155-mm Howitzer field guns

1987: Controversy over payment of commissions breaks out after a Swedish Radio broadcast

1990: CBI registers FIR in case

2004: HC judge J.D. Kapoor orders framing of cheating charges against Hindujas, forgery charges against Bofors

2005: Justice Sodhi quashes all charges against Hindujas & Bofors



Ottavio Quattrocchi

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, May 31

THE DELHI High Court on Tuesday quashed all charges against the Hinduja brothers in the Bofors payoff case. In its 36-page order, the court also gave a clean chit to the Swedish arms manufacturer AB Bofors and came down heavily on the CBI for its handling of the case.

The CBI had, during the hearing of the case, failed to produce the original documents on the basis of which it was prosecuting the Hindujas. Justice R.S. Sodhi, while questioning the veracity of the xerox documents, said: "Based on this dubious material, to allow the prosecution to go on for many more years is sheer persecution."

The judge criticised the CBI for the winding nature of investigations into the alleged payoff of Rs 64 crore that cost the exchequer Rs 250 crore.

In February 2004, Justice J.D. Kapoor had directed the chief metropolitan magistrate to frame charges in the case. While recalling this order, Justice Sodhi, however, said the prosecution created a deliberate misconception about the documents received from the Swedish ministry of justice. Further, since no authentication of these documents could be provided, these cannot be treated as evidence, the court said.

The quashing of charges against the three Hinduja brothers and AB Bofors leaves only one accused, Italian businessman Ottavio Quattrocchi. The CBI has failed to secure his extradition.

The Hindujas have welcomed the judgement.

Ayub son's claim to be probed

Statesman News Service 11/6

KARWAR, May 31. — Defence minister Mr Pranab Mukherjee said here today that the government would initiate an investigation into the allegation that an Indian Brigadier had sold the country's plans to attack Pakistan in 1965 for a mere Rs 20,000.

Charges to this effect were made by Mr Gohar Ayub, son of former Pakistan President Ayub Khan, in a daily yesterday.

According to Mr Gohar, his father had bought India's secret plan to attack Pakistan in 1965 from a Brigadier for a mere Rs 20,000.

Responding to newsmen's queries during a press meet, immediately after commissioning the naval base INS Kadamba, the defence minister said that such a situation was virtually impossible.

This was because no Brigadier would have such detailed plans with him. "It is difficult to believe that an Indian Brigadier or anyone else would give away our country's secrets even though the incident is said to have taken place over 40 years ago. But how can I pass any judgement without investigations," he said. Accordingly, he said his government would indeed conduct an investigation into the charges.

F-16: No pressure from USA

On India's proposal to buy 126 fighter aircraft, the defence minister asserted that the USA had not exerted any

Army launches its own 'internal inquiry'

NEW DELHI, May 31. — The Army today launched "internal inquiry" into the claims of former Pakistan President Ayub Khan's son Gohar Ayub that an Indian Brigadier had sold 1965 war plans to Pakistan for Rs 20,000.

Though senior defence officers said the claims appeared "far-fetched" as Mr Gohar Ayub is a known "hawk" in Pakistan, investigations were being carried out on the directions of the defence minister to check the veracity of the claim and, if true, to identify the officer.

Army Chief Gen. JJ Singh chaired a high-level meeting at the Army headquarters here, along with Director General Military Operations Lt-Gen. Madan Gopal and Director General Military Intelligence Lt-Gen. Deepak Summenwar.

"If the allegations are correct, it would not take much time to identify the officer as there were only a handful of Brigadiers at Army Headquarters during 1965," a senior office said. — PTI

pressure to purchase F-16s from it. Therefore, the question of succumbing to pressure did not arise, Mr Mukherjee added.

On the proposal to buy F-16s, he said the practice was to place a request for information from the producing countries concerned.

Till now, he said the USA had not sold any military hardware to India. This policy was undergoing a change now as it had allowed private companies to sell military hardware to India.

01 JUN 2005 THE STATESMAN

Ayub Khan's son claims Indian officer sold war plan for Rs 20,000 to fund wife's hobby

Bribe brigadier: bomb or bestseller bait?



Ayub Khan (right) with Lal Bahadur Shastri

What happened in 1965?

High point: India's capture of Haji Pir Pass in Pakistan-held Kashmir

Low point: Pak tanks waded through the Chenab and the Beas and were on the doorsteps of Akhnoor town in Jammu

Balance sheet: Most of India's territorial gains were given away in the Tashkent Agreement

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, May 30: Military historians are delving into war records to discover the identity of a brigadier after a former Pakistan foreign minister told a newspaper that his father, General Ayub Khan, had bought India's 1965 war plan for Rs 20,000.

Gohar Ayub Khan told Pakistani daily *The News* that his father bought the war plan by bribing the brigadier who wanted the money to fund his wife's hobby of canning fruit and vegetables.

Gohar Ayub, 68, said he was giving details in his autobiography that is due to be published in December. The brigadier, Gohar Ayub claimed in the interview to the newspaper, is still alive and went on to rise high in the Indian Army before retiring "honorably".

But sources in army headquarters are dismissive of the claim and reel out accounts of the battles to show that Pakistan lost the initiative after a major thrust because General Ayub Khan changed the command structure of his army

during its offensive on Jammu.

Whatever the authenticity of Gohar Ayub's account, his claim has ensured his book a readership in India's strategic community even before it is released. The 1965 war has spawned several accounts by its participants on both sides of the border and is one of the most researched conventional wars in South Asia.

The Indian ministry of defence's official history of the 1965 war does not mention the alleged treachery but, despite presenting the government version of events, it notes that generals of the Indian Army — mainly the then chief, General Joyanto Nath Chaudhuri, and the then western army commander, the highly-decorated Lt General Harbaksh Singh — did not see eye to eye.

More than a dozen brigadiers of the Indian Army were in crucial positions from army headquarters to formations on the western front. Gohar Ayub's needle of suspicion points at each of them.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

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THE TELEGRAPH

3/5 Bribe brigadier: bestseller bait?

▶ FROM PAGE 1

He has claimed that his father used Pakistani intelligence agents in New Delhi to penetrate India's Directorate of Military Operations and bribe the brigadier who delivered the war plans to the Pakistani military attache in London, Brigadier Said Ghaus.

Typically, since World War II, tactical plans for major military operations were known only to a handful of the politico-military leadership.

A brigadier in the Directorate of Military Operations, who would most likely have been holding the office of a deputy director or equivalent, would not be expected to have full knowledge of plans but would be privy to tactical moves of certain formations.

But the Indian Army suf-

fered one of its biggest reverses in the 1965 war—in which it also recorded some of its biggest gains—when a combined Pakistani artillery-armor-infantry thrust waded through the Chenab and the Beas and were on the doorstep of strategically located Akhnoor town in Jammu. The thrust, codenamed "Operation Grand Slam", took the Indian Army by complete surprise.

The then commander of the western army, Lt General Harbaksh Singh, had left the defence of Akhnoor weak with only one brigade (191 independent infantry brigade) led by Brigadier Manmohan Singh deployed at the front.

The Pakistani thrust, led by its 12 division, was aimed at cutting off the Indian Army's line to Rajouri and Poonch

and threaten its hold on Kashmir. It made a deep incursion through Chhamb-Jaurian.

But General Ayub Khan failed to grasp the extent of the Pakistani Army's threat to the Indian Army.

The assault had begun on September 1, 1965, planned and coordinated by Major General Akhtar Malik who headed the division. On September 2, for no apparently explicable reason in the middle of the assault, General Ayub Khan replaced Malik with Major General Yahya Khan.

This break in the Pakistani command structure gave the Indian Army 24 hours in which to regroup. The 191 brigade that had been asked to fall back to defend Akhnoor was reinforced with deployments and the Pakistani thrust was stalled.



Gohar Ayub Khan and Union home minister Shivraj Patil greet each other in New Delhi last year.

'৬৫-র যুদ্ধে নথি বেচেন ভারতীয় ব্রিগেডিয়ার, দাবি আয়ুব-পুত্রের

ইসলামাবাদ, ৩০ মে: কুড়ি হাজার টাকার বিনিময়ে প্রাক্তন পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট আয়ুব খানকে সেনাবাহিনীর একটি গোপন নথি বেচে দিয়েছিলেন এক ভারতীয় ব্রিগেডিয়ার। আয়ুব খানের ছেলে গহর আয়ুব খান পাক সংবাদমাধ্যমে অভিযোগ করেছেন, ১৯৬৫ সালের ভারত-পাক যুদ্ধের সময়ে এই ঘটনা ঘটেছিল। গহরের দাবি, স্ত্রীর শখ পুরণের জন্যই ওই টাকা নিয়েছিলেন ব্রিগেডিয়ার।

ভারতের হাত থেকে কাশ্মীরের দখল নেওয়ার জন্য দিল্লিতে গোয়েন্দাদের পাঠিয়েছিলেন জেনারেল আয়ুব খান নিজেই। পাক গোয়েন্দাদের দায়িত্ব ছিল, ভারতীয় সেনার গোপন নথি হস্তগত করা। সেই উদ্দেশ্যেই ব্রিগেডিয়ারকে খুঁজে বার করেন গোয়েন্দারা। ব্রিগেডিয়ারের স্ত্রীর শখ ছিল ফল প্রক্রিয়াকরণ। সেই কাজেই অর্ধ দেওয়ার লোভ দেখানোয় গোপন নথি পাচারে রাজি হয়ে যান ওই সেনা অফিসার। ব্রিগেডিয়ারের শর্ত মেনেই দিল্লি থেকে ভারতীয় সেনার গোপন পরিকল্পনা পাক গোয়েন্দারা হস্তগত

করেন। লন্ডনে ব্রিগেডিয়ারের কাছে টাকা পৌঁছে দেন পাক সেনাবাহিনীর ব্রিগেডিয়ার সৈয়দ ঘাউস।

গহরের দাবি, ব্রিগেডিয়ারের দেওয়া গোপন নথিতে খুঁটিনাটি তথ্য দেখে চমকে গিয়েছিলেন স্বয়ং পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট। সেটিই আসল পরিকল্পনা কি না, তা যাচাই করতে দিল্লিতে ফের গোয়েন্দা পাঠান জেনারেল। যাচাই করে নিশ্চিত হওয়ার পরে পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট তাঁর সেনা কর্তাদের সতর্ক করে দেন যে, ভারতের মতো এ রকম খুঁটিনাটি পরিকল্পনা যেন না করা হয়।

গোপন নথি অনুযায়ী, ভারতীয় সেনার অরক্ষিত ছাম এলাকা দিয়েই হামলা চালায় পাক সেনা। হামলায় দিশাহারা ভারতীয় সেনাপ্রধান জেনারেল জয়গুনাথ চৌধুরী পাক সেনার হাতে কচুকাটা হওয়ার ভয়ে সেনা সরিয়ে নেওয়ার কথাও বলেছিলেন। তবে গহর জানান, এতো কিছু করার পরেও তাঁরা পাক সেনাকে ব্যর্থ হতে হয়েছিল। ট্যাঙ্ক বিশ্ফারণে বিপাশা নদীর উপরের সেতু ভেঙে পড়ায় ভারতীয় ভূখণ্ডের দখল নেওয়ার

সুবর্ণ সুযোগ হাতছাড়া হয় পাকিস্তানের।

ভারতের ওই সেনা অফিসারের নাম না-করলেও গহর জানান, ওই ব্রিগেডিয়ার এখনও জীবিত। ১৯৬৭ সালে লন্ডনে তাঁর সঙ্গে গহরের প্রথম সাক্ষাৎ হয়। যুদ্ধের পরে ওই অফিসারের পদোন্নতিও হয় এবং সম্মানের সঙ্গেই তিনি অবসর নেন বলে দাবি করেছেন গহর।

আয়ুব-তনয়ের এই অভিযোগ বড় ধরনের বিতর্কের জন্ম দেবে বলেই মনে করা হচ্ছে। গহর শুধু প্রাক্তন পাক প্রেসিডেন্টের ছেলেই নন, ৬৮ বছরের প্রবীণ এই রাজনীতিবিদ পাকিস্তানের ন্যাশনাল অ্যাসেম্বলির প্রাক্তন স্পিকার এবং বিদেশমন্ত্রীও বটে। আয়ুব খানের বহু গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ও গোপন বৈঠকের সাক্ষীও তিনি। ডিসেম্বরের মধ্যের বেলায় গহরের আত্মজীবনী বইয়ে এই রকম অনেক ঘটনার সবিস্তার বর্ণনা থাকবে। গহরের দাবি, আত্মজীবনীতে যা তথ্য তিনি দিয়েছেন, তার ভিত্তিতে ওই ব্রিগেডিয়ারকে সহজেই চিহ্নিত করা যাবে।

— পি টি আই

31 MAI 2005

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

Subtle softening as talks begin

Army melts Siachen ice

SUJAN DUTTA

New Delhi, May 26: The army wants its hold over the Siachen Glacier to be recognised publicly before a path to peace with Pakistan on the hardship frontier is charted out.

But far from being a volley of fire as the defence secretaries of India and Pakistan began talks this morning, the army has actually signalled it is game for conditional peace.

India's army headquarters is signalling that in line with the Prime Minister's political directive, it is pursuing a peace agenda with a rider: India should not fritter away on the negotiating table the military advantage it holds on the ground.

Of all the issues governing India-Pakistan talks, it is on Siachen that the army has the biggest say. This is because on the ground in Siachen, it is the only Indian agency that is capable of making a judgement.

"We basically want the Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) to be authenticated some way or the other," army chief General J.J. Singh said just as the defence secretaries of India and Pakistan began talks in Islamabad. The talks through today and tomorrow will focus on Siachen before moving on to the disputed boundary in Sir Creek on the west coast on Saturday.

An agreement on the AGPL "in some way or the

WHAT'S NEW?

India has been insisting that its hold on a key ridge be authenticated on maps. The army now says authentication "some way or the other" will do



IF NOT ON MAPS, HOW?

Through satellite images, aerial surveillance, sensors or physical inspections

WHY IS AUTHENTICATION CRUCIAL?

If there is a transgression later, the authentication can be used to prove the violation before the international community

other" will immediately lead to a thinning of military presence and reduce the pressure on the armies, the soldiers and their families.

India has a brigade-level (about 3,000-plus troops) presence in Siachen that is rotated every three to six months at a huge cost to the army, not as much from combat as from the weather. The toll on the Pakistani army is also comparable.

The army chief's articulation of the military standpoint signals a shift of emphasis in India's position. New Delhi has consistently demanded that the Indian army's hold over the Saltoro Ridge be authenticated on maps.

The army is now opening options for other ways of authentication — not necessarily on maps. The rugged Saltoro is the ridgeline above 18,000 feet that abuts the glacier.

The 110-km-long AGPL — an extension of the Line of Control in Kashmir — runs along the Saltoro over which the Indian army maintains posts and denies access to the glacier to Pakistani forces.

Authentication of military positions, as a former top officer has suggested, can be with satellite images, aerial surveillance, use of ground and aerial sensors and/or periodic physical verification.

The Indian army's reason for seeking authentication of held positions is simple: should there be a transgression of any agreement to disengage militarily, there should be international acknowledgement that it was India that was in possession of the Saltoro Ridge and the Siachen Glacier.

General J.J. Singh said the army had made its recommendation to the government before the defence secretary left for Islamabad.

In the context of the ceasefire along the Line of Control and in Siachen that has held since November 2003 and also in the backdrop of talks between Manmohan Singh and Pervez Musharraf in New Delhi last month, the prospects of peace in Siachen have never been brighter.

27 MAY 2005

THE TELEGRAPH

পাক উস্কানিতেই সন্ত্রাস শিখ জঙ্গিদের, ইঙ্গিত দিল কেন্দ্র

পার্থসারথি সেনগুপ্ত
ও অগ্নি রায় ● নয়াদিল্লি

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২৩ মে:
'যো বোলে সো নিহাল'-কাণ্ড পর্দার
আড়ালে থাকা ক্ষতটাকে একেবারে
সামনে নিয়ে এল।

কালকের জোড়া বিশ্লেষণে
হতাহতের সংখ্যা হয়তো তেমন বড় নয়।
কিন্তু এর পিছনে সুদূরপ্রসারী ষড়যন্ত্রের
সম্ভাবনায় জ্ঞ যথেষ্টই কুচকেছে দিল্লির।
কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রক 'পঞ্জাব পরিস্থিতি'
নিয়ে সম্প্রতি যে অভ্যন্তরীণ রিপোর্ট
তৈরি করেছে তাতে বলা হয়েছে, "শিখ
জঙ্গিগোষ্ঠীর সঙ্গে কাশ্মীরি ইসলামি
সন্ত্রাসবাদীদের সংযোগ তৈরির প্রয়াস
আইএসআই।" আর তার পরেই এই ঘটনা।

স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রকের সমীক্ষা বলাছে, পাকিস্তানে ঘাঁটি গাড়া
শিখ জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠীগুলিকে ভারতে সন্ত্রাসবাদী কার্যকলাপ
চালিয়ে যাওয়ার জন্য চাপ দেওয়া হচ্ছে। এই গোষ্ঠীগুলির
মধ্যে আছে খালিস্তানি কম্যান্ডো ফোর্স (কেসিএফ-
পাঞ্জওয়ার), বিকেআই, কেজেএফ এবং আইএসওয়াইএফ
(ভিস্তানওয়ালে গোষ্ঠী)। গতকালের ঘটনায় এই শিখ-
মুসলিম জঙ্গি সংযোগ কাজ করেছে বলেই মনে করা হচ্ছে।

আজ আরও দু'টি ঘটনায় আতঙ্ক ছড়িয়েছে রাজধানীতে।
ভোর পৌনে ছ'টায় ওয়াজিরাবাদ রোডের নন্দাগিরি এলাকায়
একটি বিশ্লেষণে এক ব্যক্তি গুরুতর ভাবে আহত হয়েছেন।
আর সকাল সাড়ে ন'টায় সফদরজং হাসপাতালের সামনে
থেকে সাড়ে পাঁচ কিলোগ্রাম আরডিএক্স-সহ গ্রেফতার করা
হয়েছে এক লস্কর-ই-তইবা জঙ্গিকে। বিশ্লেষণের পরিমাণ
এক যোগে সাউথ, ব্লক, নর্থ ব্লক, রাষ্ট্রপতিভবন ও সংসদ
উড়িয়ে দেওয়ার পক্ষে যথেষ্ট! তবে মহম্মদ ইশাক ইটো



খৃত লস্কর জঙ্গি ইশাক। - পিটিআই

(২৩) নামে ওই জঙ্গি কালকের ঘটনার
সঙ্গে জড়িত নয় বলেই প্রাথমিক
জিজ্ঞাসাবাদের পরে পুলিশের ধারণা।

এই সব ঘটনায় উদ্বিগ্ন প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী
প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় জানানেন, "কোনও
জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠী পুরোপুরি নিশ্চিহ্ন হয়ে
গিয়েছে, এমন মনে করার কোনও কারণ
নেই। কখনও কখনও তারা চূপ করে
থাকে। আসলে এটাও ফের মাথাচাড়া
দিয়ে ওঠার একটা কৌশল।"

ঠিক কী কারণে এই ধরনের সন্ত্রাস
ফের মাথাচাড়া দিচ্ছে? স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রক সূত্রে
জানানো হচ্ছে, মনমোহন সরকারের
বর্ষপূর্তিতে দেশে যে নিরাপত্তাবোধ এবং
স্থায়িত্বের বাতাবরণ তৈরি হয়েছে, তাকে

নাড়িয়ে দেওয়াই জঙ্গিদের উদ্দেশ্য। অবশ্য খুব বড় ধরনের
প্রস্তুতি নিয়ে ব্যাপক ভাবে হিংসার ঘটনা ঘটানোর লক্ষ্য
আইএসআই-এর সমর্থনপুষ্ট এই সব জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠীর আপাতত
নেই। তারা চায়, দেশের বিভিন্ন জায়গায় 'লো ইনটেনসিটি
ব্লাস্ট' বা কম শক্তির একাধিক বিশ্লেষণ ঘটিয়ে ধারাবাহিক
ভাবে চাপ বজায় রাখতে। এই কৌশল কার্যকর হলে
সরকারের মনোবলও অনেকটা ধাক্কা খাবে।

পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে সম্পর্কের উন্নতি সত্ত্বেও আইএসআই-
এর ভারত-বিরোধী কার্যকলাপ বেড়েই চলেছে। সম্প্রতি
মন্ত্রিসভার নিরাপত্তা বিষয়ক কমিটির বৈঠকে এ কথা
জানিয়েছেন খোদ জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা এম কে
নারায়ণন। এই প্রাক্তন গোয়েন্দার বক্তব্য, আইএসআই একটি
পৃথক সংগঠন, ভারত-পাক শান্তি প্রক্রিয়ার গতিপ্রকৃতির
উপরে যার কাজকর্ম নির্ভর করে না। দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্কের
অভিমুখ যা-ই হোক না কেন, তারা প্রথামাফিক নাসকতা
চালিয়ে যাচ্ছে। এবং গত এক বছরে তা বেড়েছে বৈ কমেনি।

এর পর সাতের পাতায়

পাক উস্কানিতেই সন্ত্রাস শিখ জঙ্গিদের

প্রথম পাতার পর

সরকারও তাই কোনও ফাঁক
রাখছে না। কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী শিবরাজ
পাটিল দিল্লি পুলিশকে নির্দেশ
দিয়েছেন, 'আরও বেশি সতর্কতা নিয়ে
অতিরিক্ত নজরদারি' করতে। স্বরাষ্ট্র
প্রতিমন্ত্রী শ্রীপ্রকাশ জয়সওয়াল জানান,
প্রাথমিক তদন্ত শিখ সংগঠনের জড়িত
থাকার সম্ভাবনার দিকেই ইঙ্গিত
করছে। সব রাজ্যের পুলিশকে তেলে
সাজতে কেন্দ্র নির্দেশ দিয়েছে।

প্রণববাবুর বক্তব্য, "শিখ জঙ্গি
গোষ্ঠীর তালিকায় যাদের নাম রয়েছে

তাদের সুলুকসন্ধান নেওয়া, নজরদারি
যতটা সম্ভব বাড়ানোর সঙ্গে সঙ্গে
ভারতীয় দূতাবাসগুলিকেও এই
ব্যাপারে খোঁজখবর নিতে বলা হবে।"

স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রকের রিপোর্ট থেকে
স্পষ্ট, ভারতের উদ্দেশ্যের উৎস কী।
রিপোর্টে বলা হয়েছে, "পাকিস্তান
ক্রমাগত কুখ্যাত সন্ত্রাসবাদীদের আশ্রয়
জুগিয়ে আসছে, যাদের মধ্যে রয়েছে
ওয়াধা সিংহ (বিকেআই), পরমজিৎ
সিংহ পাঞ্জওয়ার (খালসা কম্যান্ডো
ফোর্স), লখবির সংহ রোডে, রঞ্জিত
সিংহ নিতারা প্রমুখ। শিরোমণি গুরুদ্বার

প্রবন্ধক কমিটিকে নিয়ন্ত্রণের মাধ্যমে
পাকিস্তান নিবাসী শিখ বংশধরদের
ভারত-বিমুখ করার চেষ্টাও চালানো
হচ্ছে। পাক জেহাদিদের সঙ্গে শিখ
জঙ্গিদের যোগাযোগ করানো হচ্ছে।"

স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রকের সমীক্ষা, "কটরপন্থী
শিখেরা নিজেদের প্রাসঙ্গিকতা প্রমাণ
করতে শতক্র-যমুনা সংযুক্তিকরণ
বিতর্ক ইত্যাদির মাধ্যমে সাধারণ
মানুষকে জড়ো করার চেষ্টা করছেন।
এঁদের মধ্যে কেউ কেউ নির্বাচনী
রাজনীতিতে যোগ দিয়েছেন, নতুন
নতুন সংগঠন তৈরি করেছেন।

24 MAY 2005

ANADABAZAR PATEIKA

অত্যাচার হবে না, এই শূতে দেশে ফিরতে চায় দাউদ

জয়ন্ত ঘোষাল • নয়াদিল্লি

১৩ মে: বিপদে পড়ে দেশে ফিরতে চায় দাউদ ইব্রাহিম।

খোদ মার্কিন গোয়েন্দারা দাউদকে ধরার ব্যাপারে প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফের সঙ্গে কথাবার্তা শুরু করেছেন। বেগতিক দেখে দাউদ এখন ফেরার জন্য কেন্দ্রের কাছে আর্জি জানিয়েছে, এক শাগরোদ মারফত। গত সপ্তাহেই রাজধানীর ডিকেম্পস কলোনি থেকে দাউদের ওই শাগরোদ কমল চাড্ডাকে দিল্লি পুলিশ গ্রেফতার করে। চাড্ডা পুলিশকে জানায়, দাউদ ভারতে ফিরে আসতে চায়। তবে তার উপর কোনও রকম পুলিশি অত্যাচার চলবে না, এই প্রতিশ্রুতি চায় সে। ভারত অবশ্য এই প্রস্তাবের বিষয়ে বেশ সতর্ক হয়েই পা ফেলবে।

দাউদ হঠাৎ এই প্রস্তাব দিচ্ছে কেন? কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রকের বক্তব্য, মার্কিন প্রশাসনের তৈরি করা সন্ত্রাসবাদীদের তালিকায় সন্নিবিষ্ট দাউদের নাম তুচ্ছে। দাউদকে আশ্রয় না দেওয়ার জন্য পাকিস্তানের উপরে মার্কিন চাপও বাড়ছে। তা ছাড়া, পারভেজ মুশারফ যে ভাবে ভারত সরকারের সঙ্গে শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়া শুরু করেছেন, তাতেও প্রমাদ গুণছে এই কুখ্যাত অপরাধী। সে বুঝতে পারছে এ ভাবে করাচি-দুবাই করে আর বেশি দিন কেহাই মিলবে না। সেই কারণেই বেশ কয়েক জন শাগরোদের মাধ্যমে মুম্বই এবং দিল্লি পুলিশের কাছে এই অনুরোধ রাখছে দাউদ।

দিল্লির পুলিশ কমিশনার কৃষ্ণকান্ত পল আজ বলেন, “মনে হচ্ছে এ বার দাউদের পালি সাল হওয়ার সময় আসছে। সুদানে কয়েক জন আল কায়দা জঙ্গি ধরা পড়েছে। তাদের কাছ থেকে মার্কিন গোয়েন্দারা জানতে পেরেছেন, দাউদের টাকা আল কায়দার তহবিলে গিয়েছে। আমেরিকা এই কারণেই সন্ত্রাসবাদীদের তালিকায় তাঁর নাম যুক্ত করেছে। শুধুই মুম্বই বিস্ফোরণের জন্য নয়।”

তবে ভারত সরকার কী করবে, তা এখনও চূড়ান্ত নয়। সরকারের চিন্তা, মার্কিন গোয়েন্দারা এবং পাকিস্তান সরকার যখন দাউদকে ধরে দিতে উৎসাহী বলে প্রাথমিক ইঙ্গিত পাওয়া যাচ্ছে, তখন তাকে ফিরিয়ে আনার প্রস্তাবে সাজা দিয়ে সরকার ফাঁদে জড়িয়ে পড়বে না তো!

বাজপেয়ীর জমানায় দাউদকে ধরার প্রচেষ্টা বার্থ হয়। প্রাক্তন উপ-প্রধানমন্ত্রী লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাবী সংযুক্ত আরব আমিরশাহির সঙ্গে বন্দি প্রতারণা চুক্তি করলে দাউদ দুবাই থেকে পালিয়ে যায় সুদানে। সেখানে কিছু দিন থাকার পরে ফের থাকতে শুরু করে করাচিতে। এখন দাউদ সপরিবারে সেখানে থাকলেও সমস্যা বাড়ছে। প্রথমত, দাউদের ঘনিষ্ঠ



আবু সালাম এখন পর্তুগালের জেলে। তাকেও ভারতে আনার চেষ্টা চলছে। দ্বিতীয়ত, ছোট্ট রাজন গোষ্ঠী দাউদের বিরুদ্ধে বেশ সক্রিয়। এই গোষ্ঠী দীর্ঘদিন ধরে ভারতীয় গোয়েন্দাদের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ রাখছে। তৃতীয়ত, মুম্বই ও অন্য শহরে দাউদের সম্পত্তি বাজেয়াপ্ত হয়েছে, তার অনেক সঙ্গীও গ্রেফতার হয়েছে। চতুর্থত, গুটখা-কেলেঙ্কারির তদন্ত করতে গিয়ে ডি-কোম্পানি সম্পর্কে আরও তথ্য পুলিশের কাছে এসেছে। এই পরিস্থিতিতে দাউদের সব থেকে বড় রক্ষাকর্তা পাকিস্তান। কিন্তু এখন আমেরিকা এবং ভারতের চাপে সেই বরাভয় অনেকটাই সরে যাচ্ছে বলেই ইঙ্গিত। কৃষ্ণকান্ত পল বলেন, “সন্ত্রাসবাদী হিসাবে চিহ্নিত দাউদকে এখন আমেরিকাও পাকিস্তানের

কাছ থেকে চাইতে পারে। সে ক্ষেত্রে দাউদকে ওয়াশিংটন নিয়ে যাওয়া হতে পারে। তা হলে পরে ওয়াশিংটন থেকে তাকে ভারতে আনার চেষ্টা হবে। এ ক্ষেত্রে আমেরিকার ভূমিকা অত্যন্ত গুরুত্বপূর্ণ।”

দাউদের প্রাক্তন আইনজীবী রাম জেঠমালানি তাকে দেশে ফিরতে দেওয়ার পক্ষে। তিনি বলেন, “মুম্বই বিস্ফোরণের পরেও যখন মামলা

চলছিল, দাউদ আমাকে বলেছিল সে ভারতে ফিরতে চায়। শর্ত ছিল, তাকে জামিন দিতে হবে। খার্ড ভিগ্নি প্রয়োগ করা হবে না। তার পরিবারকে নিরাপত্তা দিতে হবে। আদালতের বিচারে যা শাস্তি হবে তা সে মেনে নেবে।” জেঠমালানির দাবি, তিনি দাউদের প্রস্তাব জানালেও তৎকালীন সরকার তা গ্রাহ্য করেনি।

আগরী শীর্ষ বৈঠকের সময় পারভেজ মুশারফের কাছে দাউদকে আশ্রয় দেওয়া নিয়ে প্রশ্ন তুলেছিলেন আডবাবী। অসন্তুষ্ট পারভেজ বলেন, “এ আপনার ক্ষুদ্র রাজনীতি। দাউদ পাকিস্তানে নেই।” আডবাবী তৎকালীন গোয়েন্দা প্রধানকে নির্দেশ দেন, দাউদ কোথায় জানার জন্য। জানা গিয়েছিল, মুশারফের ভারত সফরের আগেই দাউদ করাচি থেকে দুবাই চলে যায়। পরে অবশ্য সে ফিরে যায় করাচিতে। কিন্তু এর পরে আমেরিকার পরামর্শে ভারত পাকিস্তানের কাছে বিষয়টি তোলা বন্ধ করে। আমেরিকার যুক্তি ছিল, শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়া এগোলে দাউদের বিষয়ে আলোচনা ফলপ্রসূ হবে। তার আগে এই দাবি তুললে শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়াই শুরু করা যাবে না।

এত দিন পরে, ভারত-পাকিস্তান মৈত্রীর পরিবেশে দাউদকে পাওয়ার সম্ভাবনা আবার উকিঝুঁকি মারছে। তবে সরকার ‘না আঁচালে বিশ্বাস নেই’ ভূঁয়ে বিশ্বাসী। তাই এই ব্যাপারে প্রকাশ্যে কিছু বলতে রাজি নন শিবরাজ পালি।

PROBE PANEL CLEARS FERNANDES

14/5

Centre rejects Phukan report

108 M. del. news (12/6/84)

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, May 13. — The Centre today rejected the report of the Phukan Commission probing the Tehelka expose into fictitious defence deals, describing it as incomplete and bereft of reason. It also said the commission had not gone into the allegation of corruption.

The commission cleared Mr George Fernandes, former defence minister, of all wrong-doing and yet pulled up the defence ministry for some misdeed in virtually all the 15 deals it examined.

In a strong accompanying note with the commission's interim report tabled in the House today, the Centre said: "The government does not consider this a satisfactory way of dealing with such serious issues. (The) government, has, therefore, not found it possible to accept its findings

in the absence of any inquiry into the allegations of corruption." It regretted the commission could not finish its work in more than three years and, therefore, it was justified to have entrusted the inquiry into 15 transactions to the CBI for a thorough probe. Action will be taken after the investigation is complete.

The government had noted that the commission repeatedly arrived at a similar conclusion in all the 15 cases. Each time, "Mr George Fernandes has no role to play in the transaction." Or, "there is nothing adverse on record" or that he is "in no way involved." Sometimes, it says "the files were (not) placed before him and that he "did not commit any illegality or irregularity." "Sometimes, the commission merely changes the language to break the monotony" and says he "hasn't done anything contrary to the requirements" or is "in no way co-

nected to the lapses." One of the deals has nothing to do with defence and in another case, the report says it was not brought to the defence minister's notice.

Mr Fernandes today called the tabling of the report as "one in a series of continuous attempts" by the Congress and its allies to "subvert" the Commission of Inquiry.

CPI-M demands action

The CPI-M today said that there would be no let up in its demand for action against Mr Fernandes

Congress allegation

The Congress dismissed the report outright, describing it as "non-credible, partisan and meaningless".

Unprecedented: BJP

The BJP said the government's stand was "unprecedented".

India capable of exporting missiles

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, May 12

DEFENCE MINISTER Pranab Mukherjee affirmed in Parliament on Thursday India's capability to export missiles. "India's in a position to export certain categories of missiles", he stated in a written response to a question in the Lok Sabha.

But he declined to specify India's marketing efforts or the countries that have shown interest in its missiles. "It may not be in the national interests to disclose the details of such countries", Mukherjee stated. Earlier reports have indicated that some West Asian and African countries have made inquiries about the availability of Indian missiles.

India and Russia have a declared objective of jointly marketing globally the 290-km Brahmos supersonic cruise missile that they are together developing.

The Brahmos is the world's only supersonic cruise missiles. The development process for the ship-to-ship and land-to-ship versions is almost complete and ready for induction. It is a solid-fuelled missile.

India has been displaying models of the Brahmos at

various international defence exhibitions. Its range of 290 km enables it to be exempt from the missile technology control regime (MTCR), which imposes restrictions on transfers of missiles with a range in excess of 300 km.

French missile manufacturer MBDA has also offered to jointly market shoulder-fired missiles with India. India has also indigenously developed the Agni series of intermediate-range ballistic missiles, variants of which have ranges between 700 and 2,500 km.

The Prithvi missile, variants of which have a proven range between 150 and 250 km, has also been inducted into the Indian armed forces besides the Prithvi.

The Government of India has already made it clear that it will not violate the provisions of MTCR, even though India is not a signatory.

Other missiles still under development under the 22-year-old Integrated guided missile development programme are the Akash (surface-to-air), Trishul (anti-missile missile) and Nag (anti-tank). The development of the Astra, a beyond-visual-range air-to-air missile, has also been added to the portfolio.

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To strike the right balance

While India should grab the opportunities offered by the United States of America for transfer of high technologies, cooperation in space and nuclear energy, and joint missile defence under the ambit of "Next steps in the strategic partnership with India", the US offers on F-18 and F-16 aircraft do not appear to be particularly attractive.

Most Indian defence experts think that the fourth generation Boeing F-18 Hornets and Lockheed Martin F-16 Falcons are not as capable as the Swedish SAAB JAS-39C Gripen, the Russian RSK MiG-29M/M2, and the French Dassault Mirage 2000-5 Mk2. India's strategic planners are also apprehensive about transfer of technologies, training of personnel, supplies of spare parts, and logistical support from the US, especially in view of India's negative experiences with US equipment suppliers.

Besides, for India to deter China's growing influence in Asia, and exert its own hegemony in the region, it would require at least 60 squadrons of aircraft performing multi-role combat, deep penetration strike and electronic warfare tasks. India can afford only 40 squadrons at present. But the Indian air force's fleet strength is currently down to 30-odd squadrons, due to its MiG-21s and MiG-23s having reached the end of their useful lives. Further, the IAF's current fleet suffers from qualitative imbalances. Its Jaguars are specialized for deep penetration strikes and cannot easily protect themselves from enemy fighter aircraft — they need to be escorted by MiG-29s. And the MiG-29s are not geared for strike roles.

Moreover, the indigenously designed light combat aircraft, Tejas, is years behind schedule, mainly due to US sanctions and construction delays. It was in February 2005 that the IAF placed orders for the manufacture of 20 Tejas LCAs, which would take at least five years to be delivered. While the 140 Sukhoi Su-30MKIs, to be built by Hindustan Aeronautics over the next 12 years, will partially fill the deficiency in air dominance and long-range strike requirements, the shortage in multi-role and combat-role requirements need to be filled urgently.

In 2002, the IAF had asked for 200 medium-range lightweight multi-role or tactical "swing-role" fighters

Ravi Visvesvaraya Sharada Prasad explains why the US offers of F-18 and F-16 aircraft may not be particularly attractive to India



At what cost?

for immediate induction in order to restore the power balance prevailing in south Asia in the Seventies. But the government cut the request down to 126, on financial considerations, and sent "requests for information" to four manufacturers — Dassault of France for the Mirage 2000-5 Mk2; RSK MiG of Russia for the MiG-29M/M2; SAAB of Sweden for the JAS-39C Gripen; and Lockheed Martin of USA for the F-16 Fighting Falcon.

At this stage, the frontrunners for the contract appear to be Mirage and MiG. Dassault and MiG have historically been reliable suppliers in terms of transfers of technology, licensed production in India, personnel training, supplies of spare parts and maintenance and upgradation. India's negative experiences with US sanctions should make it wary of the offers from Lockheed Martin and Boeing. Also, IAF's pilots and technicians are familiar with aircraft from Dassault and MiG, and would need minimal retraining. Infrastructural and logistical support for maintenance and spares would also be much easier.

The JAS 39 Gripen — which can be used for interception, ground-attack, and reconnaissance — was jointly developed by Saab Military Aircraft, Ericsson Microwave Systems, Volvo

Aero Corporation and Celsius Aerotech, with the specific intention of outdoing the F-16s and F-18s. Currently, the Gripens used by the Swedish air force are armed with AIM-120 AMRAAM, AIM-9 Sidewinder, Saab Dynamics RBS 15 for ship targets, and the Maverick ground attack missiles. The Czech government recently cancelled an order to purchase 24 JAS-39 Gripens, and so these may be available relatively cheaply for India.

The only advantage of the F-16 compared to Sukhoi Su-30MKI, MiG-29M/M2, and Mirage 2000-5 Mk2 is its superior cockpit ergonomics and comfortable pilot seat. The F-16 provides its pilots a much better field-view. The choice between Mirage and MiG would depend on the fundamental decision of whether the IAF should go in for single-engined or twin-engined aircraft for the future. The Mirage has an airframe life of 7,500 hours versus 6,000 hours for the MiG-29M/M2. The modular construction of the Mirage's Snecma M53 engines make them much easier to maintain than the RD-33 engines of the MiGs. Further, the Mirage 2000-5 can carry 6,300 kg of ordnance compared to 5,500 kg for the MiG-29M/M2.

However, the fuel consumption of

the MiG-29 is much less than that of the Mirage. Since the Indian navy is also purchasing MiG-29Ks, purchasing the closely similar MiG-29M/M2 could potentially lower procurement, infrastructural and logistical operations and maintenance costs.

Lockheed Martin, in its turn, offered to upgrade F-16s to "India's specifications with complete transfer of technology. We are ready to develop a new Block 70 for the IAF." Boeing then offered India its latest F/A-18E/F Super Hornets, which have not been sold to any other country, even to Nato allies.

A faction in the IAF favour twin-engined aircraft although the capital costs as well as operations and maintenance costs are far higher. These officers feel that even generation 4.5 fighters would not be able to come up to the IAF's increasingly complex battle requirements in the future. The choice, they think, should be from twin-engined fifth generation aircraft such as Dassault's Rafale, RSK MiG's MiG-29 and the Eurofighter Typhoon. No airforce has much operational experience with Eurofighters or Rafales. Greece recently cancelled an order for 60 Eurofighters, and so these should be available comparatively cheaply. But the MiG-29 has the advanced Phazotron-NIIR's Kopyo radar.

While the US would probably not win the IAF contract, there is a strong possibility of US aircraft manufacturers bagging orders from the Indian navy. For the last four years, India has been negotiating the purchase of 10 Lockheed Martin P-3C Orion long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft through US's foreign military sales programme. In February 2005, HAL signed a technical assistance agreement related to the P-3 Orion with Lockheed Martin.

The Indian navy is also considering Northrop Grumman's E-2C HawkEye 2000 airborne early-warning and battle-management/command-and-control system. But integrating a US AEW&C aircraft with a Russian aircraft carrier with Indian procedures would be a formidable task. Also, experts on information and electronic warfare have cautioned that the E-2C HawkEye 2000's software could very well contain Trojan Horses and may either lead to sensitive information flowing back to the US or immobilize the systems, if needed.

It's official: India to send arms to Nepal

Siddharth Varadarajan

NEW DELHI: The on-again, off-again status of arms supplies to Nepal has finally been resolved with the Manmohan Singh Government clearing the immediate dispatch of materiel "already in the pipeline." This means supplies approved when India suspended military assistance following King Gyanendra's seizure of power on February 1.

The Hindu has learnt that the decision was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Security at a meeting on Friday.

According to well-placed sources, the CCS also resolved to place the question of future arms shipments to Nepal "under

constant review."

An understanding on the resumption of arms supplies — and a "road-map" for the restoration of political processes in Nepal — was reached between Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and King Gyanendra in the Indonesian capital on April 23. But a question mark hung over the issue with the arrest soon thereafter of Sher Bahadur Deuba and other senior Nepali leaders on charges of "corruption."

When King Gyanendra lifted the state of emergency on April 30, India welcomed the decision. Privately, however, senior officials here saw it as an example of the King making a virtue

out of necessity: under the 1990 Constitution of Nepal he could not have prolonged the Emergency without the endorsement of Parliament. Reports reaching the South Block subsequently also made it clear that emergency-like conditions continue to prevail in Nepal with the King now placing travel restrictions on politicians, journalists and other critics of the coup.

If this negative assessment of the King's commitment to the restoration of democracy forced a eleventh-hour rethink, the Indian armed forces' strong representations in favour of sending weapons to the Royal Nepal Army appear to have eventually carried the day.

10 MAY 2005

THE HINDU

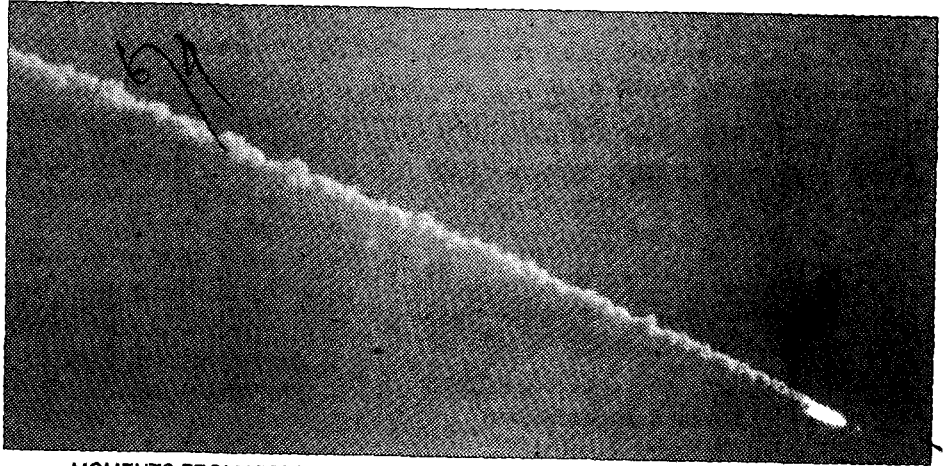
PSLV-C6 accomplishes mission

Jaya Menon in Sriharikota
(Andhra Pradesh)

May 5. — Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV-C6, today successfully blasted off into a clear sky from the new second launch pad here at 10.15 a.m. to place two Indian satellites — the CARTOSAT-1 and the 42.5 kg HAMSAT into a high polar orbit.

This is the 20th satellite launch and ninth flight of the country's foremost space organisation, conducted from the Satish

1.5 TON SATELLITE IN ORBIT



MOMENTS FROM HISTORY: The rocket carrying the two satellites on Thursday. — PTI

Dhawan Space Centre SHAR (Sriharikota High Altitude Range), around 100 km from Chennai. Today's feat marked yet another giant leap in space technology for India. "The ejection (of the satellites into orbit) was excellent. The country is proud of you," President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, who watched the launch from

the SHAR Mission Control Centre, told the team of scientists, led by Mr G Madhavan Nair, chairman, Indian Space Research Organisation, who had "worked day and night" on the mission. "In July 1980, we launched a 40 kg (Rohini) satellite. Today, 25 years later, we have launched a 1.6 ton equivalent," Dr Kalam said, con-

veying his "hearty congratulations" to the scientists.

"The PSLV-C6 took off precisely on dot at 10:15 a.m., the designated launch time," a jubilant Mr Nair said. As nervous scientists watched, "the cut-off of all stages went off precisely". Dr Kalam could be seen giving Mr Nair a warm hug as all present cheered happily.

06 MAY 2005

THE STATESMAN

CCS okays LCA, satellite moves

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, May 5. — The Cabinet Committee on Security today gave clearances to ensure better satellite surveillance capability for the armed forces and also, for improved development of the Light Combat Aircraft.

The Defence Research and Development Organisation is working on both projects. A senior official said the Centre cleared the full-scale engineering development of the LCA, known as *Tejas*. The plane is ready though it has taken much longer than originally planned. There has also been cost overruns. Some more funds are necessary before full-scale production of the plane for the IAF can begin.

The DRDO is readying another project for Satellite-based surveilla-

Price of politics!

NEW DELHI, May 5. — The defence ministry's 'fast-track' purchases, that avoid some delaying procedures, continued after the Kargil war in 1999, but what is not said is that weapons were urgently necessary in 2002, during Operation Parakram, when India was about to go to war. India mobilised its entire Army, moving it towards the western borders facing Pakistan after the attack on Parliament on 13 December, 2001. As the war plans were being made ready, the forces realised they were short of certain much-needed weapons. And then there was a change in plan to go to war only in January 2002. — SNS

nce and reconnaissance. At present, Isro has a defence satellite in space. It has the ability to ensure 1m resolution photographs and less if necessary.

Otherwise, Defence had had to buy pictures at high cost from private organisations that own satellites like Ikonos.

The defence minister today said the finance ministry has agreed in principle to give Rs 418,101 crore for defence in the 10th five-year plan. This includes both capital and revenue expenditure.

The finance ministry has, however, not said it would definitely grant the money. Of the money allotted for the plan, about Rs 220,000 crore has been allotted for the first three years. It is difficult to see the finance ministry allotting nearly Rs 100,000 crore for the next two years. Speaking about the defence modernisation fund, he said the issue of assured availability is rather limited and hence, the proposal is not being pursued further.

06 MAY 2005

THE STATESMAN

Fencing in phases: MHA

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, May 4

TAKING SERIOUS note of recent activities of the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) along the Indo-Bangla border, home minister Shivraj Patil on Wednesday "decided in principle" to go ahead with the fencing between the zero line and 150 yards in a phased manner. However, the issue will be discussed by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) before a final decision is taken.

The "sensitive matter" was discussed at a meeting chaired by Patil and attended by national security advisor M.K. Narayanan and senior ministry officials.

Sources said the NSA strongly advocated the need to go ahead with the fencing between the zero line and 150 yards — a contentious issue in wake of strong resistance from the BDR.

05 MAY 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Patil for cautious approach to Bangla border fencing

Press Trust of India

'Jawan's killing isolated incident'

NEW DELHI, May 4. — The Centre is understood to have decided to suspend fencing within 150 yards of the international border with Bangladesh and would try to arrive at a solution through diplomatic channels even as Bangladeshi troops have been sighted mobilising at certain places.

The erection of fence, which started in February this year, was discussed at a high-level meeting chaired by the Union home minister, Mr Shivraj Patil along with representatives from the Prime Ministers Office, MEA and security agencies today.

Sources said India would not like to escalate tension with any neighbour and would use diplomatic channels to find a solution to the problem.

"Everything will be okay and there is no need to be

AGARTALA, May 4. — Bangladesh Rifles Director-General Major M Jahangir Alam Chaudhuri today visited the Agartala border check-post where he met local officers and jawans of the BSF. Later, talking to newsmen, the BDR chief said the 16 April clash between the BDR and the BSF at Lankamura near here — resulting in the death of a BSF Assistant Commandant, Jivan Kumar — was "an isolated development" that would in no way hamper relations between the frontier forces of the two countries. — SNS

worried," a smiling Mr Patil told reporters while evading the main question as to whether the fencing work had been suspended.

The sources said the decision was taken after Mr Patil articulated that New Delhi should not allow fencing in the controversial 212 patches of the 4,097-km of the Indo-Bangla border to act as an irritant in relations between the two countries. Even in today's meeting, he is understood to have asked for a "very cautious" approach.

During the meeting, Mr Patil and other senior officials were briefed about the border situation and the

movement of troops, men and material from across the border by Bangladesh.

The BSF and some other officials had advocated a harder stand but were told that New Delhi's response would have to be measured and mature, sources said. The issue might also be taken to the Cabinet Committee on Security when it meets next, they said.

Dhaka has opposed fencing within 150 yards of the Indo-Bangla border, citing the guidelines of 1975 agreed to by the BSF and the Bangladesh Rifles that prohibits either country from erecting "defensive structures" within 150 yards.

05 MAY 2005

THE STATESMAN

IAF PLANE, ARMY VEHICLES USED: PRANAB

Phukan junket under scanner

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, May 4. — Mr Justice SN Phukan, the Tehelka judge investigating 14 important defence deals worth thousands of crores of rupees, and his wife went on a Christmas Day junket to the Ajanta and Ellora caves at the defence ministry's expense.

After Mr Pranab Mukherjee clarified in Parliament today that Mr Justice Phukan had taken defence aircraft to visit Pune, Ahmednagar and Mumbai to inspect military equipment, he said the judge and his wife had also visited the Ajanta and Ellora caves and Shirdi, a holy place. A defence official added that the Ajanta trip was made on Christmas and the Shirdi visit the day before. In both cases, the couple used Army vehicles.

Mr Mukherjee said his predecessor, Mr George

Fernandes, cleared the visit by Air Force service aircraft. This was at a time when the judge was investigating the Tehelka case, including the possibility of misdemeanours in 14 important defence deals.

"How could he be using defence aircraft when he was investigating the defence ministry," he asked.

"Either the commission asked for the tour or the defence minister arranged it," Mr Mukherjee said.

Dump report: Congress

Describing the use of IAF aircraft by Mr Justice SN Phukan, as an act of "impropriety and gross misuse" of public fund, Congress spokesman Mr Anand Sharma today demanded that the commission's report should be "outrightly" rejected. It also sought tabling of the Justice Venkataswami Report, adds PTI.

I was unaware of rules: Phukan

GUWAHATI, May 4. — Mr Justice Phukan claimed he was unaware that he was not entitled to use an IAF aircraft. "I was never informed that I am not entitled to use an IAF aircraft when heading a commission," he said today. "My report, when published, will only prove that I am unbiased although one is not allowed to comment on a statement made in Parliament which will amount to breach of privilege." He said he had not given a clean chit to Mr Fernandes and accused the media of creating it. "I had merely said there was no major irregularities in the defence deals." — PTI

CBI quizzes Jaya Jaitley

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI, May 4. — The anti-corruption unit of the CBI today questioned former Samata Party president Ms Jaya Jaitley in connection with the Tehelka expose. She is understood to have acknowledged that money was accepted from "some people" for "party funds".

Ms Jaitley, questioned for three hours, is understood to have told CBI that she vaguely remembered someone approaching her for party donations, CBI sources said.

She claimed she had referred her to Samata Party leader Mr Srinivas Prasad and after that she had no knowledge as to what happened to the money or whether any receipt was given for the donations. She said she had never given any assurance to the two under-cover reporters who were posing as arms dealers, for clinching a defence deal, they said.

She said she had told the representatives of the defence company that if there product was good, they would definitely get the contract.

REMEMBERING A WAR HERO



File photo of Lt-gen J. S. Aurora (left) and Pakistani Lt-gen A.A.K. Niazi during the surrender ceremony.

Bangladesh liberator dead

HT Correspondent
Kolkata, May 3

THE 1971 war between India and Pakistan is widely regarded as a template of brilliance. The man who crafted the 13-day blitzkrieg, one of the swiftest military campaigns in history, died in New Delhi on Tuesday.

Lieutenant-general J.S. Aurora played a critical role in the war as general officer commanding-in-chief of Eastern Command. His peers and juniors, many of whom are top-ranking army officers today, regard his death as the passing of an era where army officers commanded unequivocal respect and were above any suspicion. A tactician, a disciplinarian, a compassionate soul, scrupulously honest, chivalrous and morally upright is how officers who served under Aurora 34 years ago would describe him.

The strategy scripted by Aurora, along with his chief of staff, lieutenant-general J.F.R. Jacob, is studied at military academies all over the world as a textbook example of brilliant planning. "We did not have the advantage of surprise, and we had to contend with the US that sent its naval fleet

to the Bay of Bengal in a gesture of support to Pakistan. Yet our forces crushed the Pakistani forces and took over Dhaka in just 13 days," said Brigadier S.N. Singh, one of Aurora's aides.

Aurora, recipient of the Padma Bhushan and the Param Vishist Sewa Medal, was also instrumental in giving a concrete shape to military ties between India and Bhutan. In May 1961, Aurora, then a brigadier, led a military reconnaissance team to Bhutan and oversaw the development of close liaisons between the two armies. In fact, he's credited with setting up the mechanism — the Indian Military Training Team — to train and equip the Royal Bhutan Army.

"Aurora was a great soldier and a distinguished statesman. Under his leadership, the army achieved a decisive victory in the eastern theatre in the 1971 war, which is written in golden letters in the annals of the army," said lieutenant-general Arvind Sharma, the present GOC-in-C of Eastern Command. Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee described Aurora as the "principal architect" of the 1971 victory. Even Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, the army chief at that time, had credited the victory to Aurora.

0 1 MAY 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Defence ministry report goes soft on China, Pak

By Rajat Pandit/TNN

New Delhi: The ongoing bonhomie with China has spread even to the normally hawkish environs of the defence ministry. And after Gen Pervez Musharraf's visit here last month, even the criticism against Pakistan is a tad muted.

But the defence ministry (MoD), in its latest annual report, has blasted Bangladesh for being "insensitive and unresponsive" to concerns about the operations of North-East insurgent groups and Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence from its soil.

Dhaka has also consistently ignored New Delhi's worries about "large-scale illegal immigration and the criminalisation of the border". There is still no explanation, for instance, for the large cache of arms and ammunition bound for the North-East, which was detected in Chittagong in April 2004. And India is still livid about the recent killing of a BSF assistant commandant on the Tripura border by Bangladesh Rifles personnel. Bangladesh has remained "indifferent" to the rising influence of political parties and organisations of "fundamentalist and radical Islamist orientation" in its society and government, says the MoD report.

As for Nepal, it feels King Gyanendra's takeover on February 1 has resulted in "a further deterioration" in the political and se-

curity situation in the Himalayan kingdom.

India wants the two pillars of multi-party democracy and constitutional monarchy to come together in Nepal to resolve the Maoist problem, which cannot be solved through purely military means.

MoD believes the "principal threats" to peace and stability in the region remain the combination of fundamentalism and terrorism "nurtured in madarasas and training camps", along with the danger of proliferation of WMDs and "access to them by fundamental-



ists and terrorists".

While expressing hope at the ongoing composite dialogue process, military confidence-building measures and people-to-people contacts with Pakistan, MoD holds "it cannot be said that there was an end to cross-border terrorism in J&K".

"There was no evidence of any significant Pakistani effort to dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism such as communication, launching pads and training camps on its eastern borders with India," it says.

Pakistan's proposed acquisition F-16s and P3C Orion maritime surveillance aircraft, which have "nothing to do with the war against terrorism", cast "doubts" on Islamabad's real intentions". This could "complicate prospects for lasting peace in the region".

OVERSHOOT!

Panels have limits

OBSERVATIONS and recommendations notwithstanding, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence has clearly overreached itself in advocating an increase in the number of Arjun tanks ordered. Generally, motivation may be laudable but the difficulty arises in getting involved in specifics. A parliamentary panel of non-experts has no business suggesting one piece of equipment over another. Particularly in the case of the MBT Arjun. Had the present committee studied the reports of their predecessors, they would have realised that to design and produce a main battle tank domestically is not an option. In fact the order for 124 units was motivated by a sense of prestige rather than a pragmatic appreciation of the tank's capability. Even the army chief who pushed the order through, has subsequently, expressed reservations. Surely a group of Honourable Members cannot arrogate to themselves the authority to question the import of the vastly superior T-90. The army has yet to work out a productive operational role for the Arjun, regiments equipped with them can deem themselves unfortunate. Their dismay should not be exacerbated by the wishes of some MPs.

The issue is not confined to the tank, it pertains to the scope of a parliamentary committee's functioning. The Standing Committees were set up to ensure more scrutiny of the executive than the House can undertake for want of time. This does not mean arrogating to themselves a monitoring role, including technical evaluation, price analyses, and other areas requiring expertise. In transgressing inherent limits, members of the Defence Standing Committee have done themselves a disservice — they have helped their recommendations to be ignored. This has larger implications: a parliamentary committee is the legislature in miniature, its recommendations are equated to the opinion of the House. By coming up with suggestions that have no hope of being accepted, the committee has only further downgraded parliament at large.

01 MAY 2005

THE STATESMAN

DEATH FOR DON

Statesman News Service

KOLKATA, April 27. — Aftab Ansari and six others were today sentenced to death after being convicted yesterday for firing on and killing five policemen guarding the American Center on 22 January, 2002.

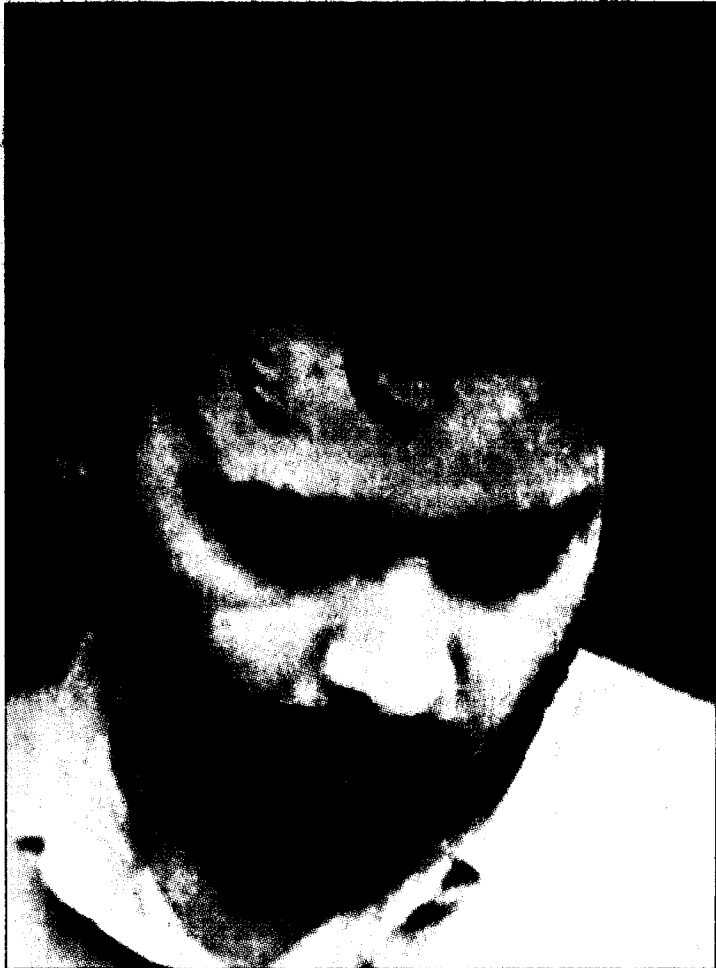
They were sentenced by Mr Basudeb Majumdar, chief judge in-charge, City Sessions Court, on charges of possessing and using prohibited arms such as AK-47 and trying to wage war against the state.

For security reasons, the trial was conducted at Presidency Jail. The seven were also awarded prison terms ranging from three to five years and a fine. Murder, forgery, and trying to "overawe the state by criminal force" are the other charges. The terms of the sentence are to run concurrently.

"The judgment has been written in red ink from the Writers' Buildings to please the American masters," said Mr S Imam, defence counsel, on instructions from Ansari. "There was no pressure from any quarter," countered Mr Ashok Bakshi, public prosecutor. The seven remained stoic when the 300-page judgment was read out, Mr Imam said. They didn't plead for mercy.

"If you think I am guilty give me appropriate punishment but the others are innocent," Ansari told the judge. The others said they were innocent.

While possession of an AK-47 was one of the charges, it was not produced before this court,



Aftab Ansari: "If you think I am guilty give me appropriate punishment."

Mr Imam said. It was seized by the city police in Hazaribagh.

The production of the weapon was not material to the trial, Mr Bakshi said. "Ballistic tests have proved that the cartridges were fired from AK-47 rifles."

Defence counsel took exception to the magistrate leaving before pronouncement of the

sentence. He went to the City Sessions Court to make sure that copies of the judgment were promptly handed over to defence and prosecution as the facilities of a regular court are lacking in the special court inside the prison complex, Mr Bakshi said.

Another report on
Kolkata Plus I

THE STATESMAN

DEATH FOR AFTAB



HT (1)
28/4/05 2899

Don smiles at sentence, cronies shiver

HT Correspondent
Kolkata, April 27

JUDGE BASUDEB Mazumdar said Aftab Ansari and six others must die. And Aftab smiled.

It was not as if he was welcoming the sentence awarded to him for the attack on the American Center three years ago. It was just that he had expected it and was already planning his next move.

"We have to appeal in the High Court against the order," he told his lawyer Syed Shahid Imam. "He was unflappable as ever," Imam said.

Clad in a white T-shirt and black trousers, Aftab looked calm even as the judge heard him out before delivering the sentence. "If I am guilty, give me the maximum sentence. I leave it to you," Aftab said.

The six others followed and made the same plea. When the judgment came, they reacted differently. "Jamiluddin Nasir, Mussarrat Hussain, Hasrat Alam, Rehan Alam, Adil Hassan and Shakir Akhtar were visibly shocked.

Their eyes kept darting towards their lawyer and their relatives," said a police officer.

Mussarrat's wife Sahana Begam broke down. "My husband is innocent. He is not a terrorist," she said.

It was the first time in Indian legal history that seven persons were being awarded death at one time. The judge described the case as "rarest of rare" and sentenced them to death on two counts — waging war against the country and possessing arms. For the other offences, he awarded them various jail terms, including life for conspiracy to wage war and conspiracy to murder.

Even if the convicts don't appeal, the sentence is subject to confirmation by the High Court. The trial judge will have to send the matter within 30 days to the High Court, which may uphold, commute or quash the sentence.

For all his calm, Aftab did treat the day as significant. He woke up at 4 am and offered *namaz* inside cell 9, a jail official said. Usually,

SEVEN FOR THE NOOSE

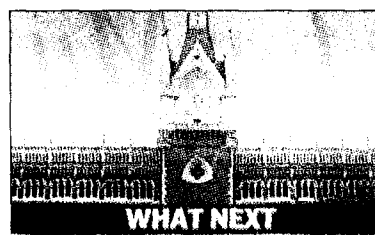
Death row line-up Aftab Ansari, Jamiluddin Nasir, Mussarrat Hussain, Hasrat Alam, Rehan Alam, Adil Hassan and Shakir Akhtar

Death awarded for Waging war against country (Section 121, IPC) and possession of arms (Section 27[3], Arms Act)

Other sentences Life on two counts — conspiracy to murder and conspiracy to wage war — and different jail terms for various other charges

he wakes up at 5.30 am, offers *namaz* and reads books and newspapers. Today, he ignored the books but read the Quran.

Even in the court, Aftab offered *namaz* four times, once before the hearing, once during the hearing, once immediately after the sentence and finally at *maghrib*, the



Trial court will send the matter to High Court within 30 days for confirmation of death sentence

- **WHAT HIGH COURT CAN DO** It can confirm the death sentence, commute it to a life term, or quash it
- **TIME FOR APPEAL** 90 days

time for the customary evening prayer. "He ate nothing all day except for biscuits and water at the lunch break," Imam said.

The judge entered the courtroom at 11 am and wrapped up the proceedings by 11.30 am. He went back to his chambers and dictated the order, but then left the court

premises twice before returning at 5 pm to pass the order. The Aftab camp complained about the delay, but public prosecutor Ashok Bakshi said the judge had gone out to get his order typed. He also had pending work at a city sessions court, the prosecutor explained.

The USIS has welcomed the sentence. Director Susan Shultz said: "The USA commends the Indian government for its efforts in the case for apprehending and trying the perpetrators of the attack."

The Khadim kidnapping case, in which the accused is again Aftab, remains pending. His lawyer said: "Since Aftab has been awarded death, he cannot be produced before a court in another case. This trial must remain suspended till the High Court disposes of the death reference."

In Kolkata Live

- **Three years on, six other wanted men continue to elude police**
- **City security beefed up against possible revenge attacks**

28 APR 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

GUILTY

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9-8-03
9-8-03

ANSARI, SIX OTHERS CONVICTED IN AMERICAN CENTER ATTACK CASE

Statesman News Service

KOLKATA, April 26. — Aftab Ansari and six others were today found guilty of murder and waging war against the state among other charges by Mr Basudeb Majumdar, chief judge in charge, City Sessions Court, in the American Center attack case.

While Dilip Patel and Shakil Mallik were acquitted owing to a lack of evidence, the quantum of punishment for the rest of the convicted would be announced tomorrow. The trial began in September 2003. Death sentence is an option.

The case relates to the armed attack on policemen guarding the American Center on 22 January, 2002. Five policemen were shot dead.

A total of 124 witnesses, including the home secretary, Mr Amit Kiran Deb, and the then Commissioner of Police, Mr Sujoy Chakraborty, deposed in the trial held in Presidency Jail. Calcutta High Court had appointed Mr Majumdar to judge the matter after the retirement of his predecessor, Mr PL Dutta.

A senior BSNL official also deposed in the case to prove the authenticity of the e-mails exchanged between Ansari and Jamaluddin Nasir, another accused. Nasir, Mussharat Hussain and Shakir Akhtar, all convicted, had made con-

fessional statements before the magistrate at Bankshall Court.

The others convicted are Rehan Alam, Adil Hossain, and Hasrat Alam. While six suspects are absconding, Zahid and Selim were killed in an encounter with the police in Hazaribagh. Police investigation began after Zahid's dying declaration that they had been involved in the American Center attack.

The charges include a conspiracy for waging war against the state, collecting arms with that objective, murder, attempt to murder, forgery, and possessing unlicensed and prohibited arms such as an AK-47.

The state government can appeal against the acquittal of the two persons in Calcutta High Court after assessing the papers and documents, Mr Nabakumar Ghosh, who has appeared for the state, said. Those convicted will appeal against the sentence, Mr S Imam appearing for the defence, said.

"The USA commends the Indian government for arresting and trying the criminals," was the reaction of Ms Susan Schultz, director, American Center.

"The attack on Kolkata Police was a reprehensible act of terrorism. Our sympathies remain with the families of the policemen who died in the attack."

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DEATH FOR THE DON? Sentence to be pronounced today, capital punishment an option

‘অর্জুন’ ফেলে বিদেশি ট্যাক কেন, প্রশ্ন সংসদীয় কমিটির

পার্শ্বসারথি সেনগুপ্ত •
নয়াদিগ্লি

২৬ এপ্রিল: কামান-রাইফেলের
পরে এ বার ট্যাক।

দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকার অস্ত্রপ্রস্তুতকারী সংস্থা ডেনেল-এর আর্টি মোর্টারগুলি রাইফেল কেনা নিয়ে নানা প্রশ্ন উঠেছিল। ওই সংস্থার কামানও নাকি ভাল করে পরীক্ষা না করেই ভারত কিনাছে। এ বার সন্দেহ দানা বেঁধেছে বিদেশ থেকে ট্যাক কেনার সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়ে। সংসদের প্রতিরক্ষা বিষয়ক স্যাক্টিং কমিটির রিপোর্টে প্রশ্ন তোলা হয়েছে, দেশীয় প্রযুক্তিতে তৈরি ‘অর্জুন’-কে বাদ দিয়ে কেন বিদেশ থেকে ট্যাক কেনার বরাত দেওয়া হয়েছে। কমিটির প্রশ্ন, প্রায় সাড়ে তিন হাজার কোটি টাকা খরচ করে ‘অর্জুন’ তৈরি করার পরেও ভারত বিদেশের মুখাপেক্ষী হয়ে থাকবে কেন।

সংসদ বাবাসাহেব ভকিল পর্টেলের নেতৃত্বে সংসদীয় স্থায়ী কমিটি তার রিপোর্টে প্রতিরক্ষা প্রস্তুতিতে

‘অসঙ্গতির’ যে তালিকা পেশ করেছে, তা বেশ দীর্ঘ। তার দু’চারটি উল্লেখ্যই বুঝিয়ে দেয় কত বড় ধরনের গলপ রয়েছে দেশের প্রতিরক্ষা ব্যবস্থায়। যেমন, এনডিএ সরকারের আমলে দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকার সমরাস্ত্র প্রস্তুতকারী সংস্থা ডেনেল-এর কাছ থেকে যে ‘সেনাক প্রপেলড’ কামান কেনার সিদ্ধান্ত হয়েছিল, তার কার্যকারিতা যথাযথ ভাবে খতিয়েই দেখা হয়নি। আবার, সেনাবাহিনীতে নিয়োগের হার কমানোর প্রতিরক্ষা ক্ষেত্রে মানবসম্পদেও টান পড়েছে।

এই রিপোর্ট সম্পর্কে আজ সরকার সংসদে যে অ্যাকশন টেকেন রিপোর্ট দাখিল করেছে, তাতে বলা হয়েছে, অভিযোগের ক্ষেত্রগুলি খতিয়ে দেখে ‘ইতিবাচক’ ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া হবে।

সংসদীয় কমিটির রিপোর্টের অনেকটা জুড়েই রয়েছে ‘অর্জুন’ ট্যাকের প্রসঙ্গ। ১৯৭৪ সালের মে মাসে দেশেই ট্যাক তৈরির এই প্রকল্পের সূচনা হয়। তখন বরাদ্দ ছিল সাড়ে পনেরো কোটি টাকা। প্রথমে মনে করা

হয়েছিল, দশ বছরের মধ্যেই পুরোনো প্রায় ১৯৮৭ ও ২০০০ সাল) এই প্রকল্পের সময়সীমা ও ব্যয় বরাদ্দ বাড়াতে হয়। যার কারণ, যন্ত্রাংশ আমদানিতে বিলম্ব, সময়ের সঙ্গে সেনাবাহিনীর চাহিদা বৃদ্ধি, দীর্ঘ সময় ধরে ট্যাকের কার্যকারিতা পরীক্ষা, মুদ্রাস্ফীতি, টাকার অবমূল্যায়ন ইত্যাদি।

শেষ পর্যন্ত দেশীয় ট্যাকের কর্মক্ষমতা ‘খুশি’ সেনাবাহিনী ২০০০ সালের মার্চে আভিদির অস্ত্র কারখানায় মোট ১২৪টি ‘অর্জুন’ তৈরির বরাত দেয়। চুক্তি অনুযায়ী, ২০০৪-৫ সালে ১৪টি, ২০০৫-৬-এ ২৫টি, ২০০৬-৭-এ ৪০টি ও ২০০৭-৮ সালে ৪৫টি ট্যাক সরবরাহ করার কথা। সেনাবাহিনীর আধুনিকীকরণ সম্পর্কে প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রকের প্রতিনিধি কমিটিকে বলেন, “সাধারণ ভাবে ‘সেকানাইজড ফোর্স’-এর নানা উপকরণের ক্ষেত্রে যে অনুপাতটা আমরা রাখতে চাই, তাতে

৩০ শতাংশ হবে আত্মপ্রাধানিক, ৪০ শতাংশ চলতি সময়ের সঙ্গে তুলি মিলিয়ে। এই কারণেই পুরনো টি-৭২ ট্যাকের আধুনিকীকরণ করা হবে। আবার, অর্জুন এবং টি-৯০ দেওয়া হবে সেনাবাহিনীকে।”

এইখানেই প্রশ্ন তুলেছে সংসদীয় কমিটি। কমিটির বক্তৃতা, “আমরা বিস্মিত যে, দেশীয় প্রযুক্তিতে উৎপাদিত অর্জুন ট্যাকের বরাত দেওয়া হয়েছে রীতিমতো কম সংখ্যায়। সরকার সেনাবাহিনীর চাহিদা মেটাতে বিদেশ থেকে ট্যাক আনছে। অর্জুন-এর গবেষণা ও উৎপাদন খাতে এ যাবৎ সরকারের প্রায় ৩ হাজার ৩০০ কোটি টাকা খরচ হয়েছে। এখনই ৫০টি ট্যাক বানানোর বরাত দেওয়া হোক। পাশাপাশি, ডিআরডিও (গবেষণা ও উন্নয়ন) এবং অর্ডন্যান্স ফ্যাক্টরি বোর্ডকে নজর দিতে হবে সেনা অর্জুন ট্যাকের মডেল সেনাবাহিনীর প্রতিনিধি চাহিদা মেটাতে।”

দীর্ঘ পরীক্ষা-নিরীক্ষার পরে অর্জুন সম্পর্কে সেনাবাহিনী সন্তোষ প্রকাশ

করলেও, সংসদীয় স্থায়ী কমিটি অবশ্য গুণগত মানের ব্যাপারে আরও সতর্ক থাকতে বলেছে। অর্জুন, ডেনেলের কাছ থেকে সেলফ প্রপেলড কামান কেনার ক্ষেত্রে তার কার্যকারিতা আদৌ যাচাই করা হয়নি। রিপোর্টে বলা হয়েছে, “সাধারণ ভাবে যে নিয়ম সব ক্ষেত্রে মেনে চলা হয়, অর্থাৎ সমরাস্ত্র পরীক্ষা করে দেখা, তা এখানে হয়নি।”

পাশাপাশি, সরকারকে প্রতিরক্ষা বরাদ্দে ‘কটিছটি’-এর প্রবণতাও কমাতে বলেছে কমিটি। রিপোর্ট মোতাবেক, এই ক্ষেত্রে অর্ধমস্তক ৪৪ হাজার কোটি টাকার বদলে যে ৩৪ হাজার ৩৭৫ কোটি টাকা বরাদ্দ করেছে, তাতে সব দিক কুলোয় না। ফলে, ভারতীয় সেনার প্রস্তুতি ও আধুনিকীকরণ তো বটেই, কর্মী নিয়োগেও টান পড়েছে। কমিটির কাছে শোচনীয় প্রতিরক্ষা সচিব বলেছেন, “আর পাঁচটা সরকারি দফতরের সঙ্গে প্রতিরক্ষাকে এক করে দেখালে হবে না। কিন্তু, সেটা আমরা সরকারকে বোঝাতে পারিনি।”

মার্কিন তথ্যকেন্দ্রের সামনে হামলায় দোষী সাব্যস্ত আফতাব, দণ্ডাদেশ আজ

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার: যেন সে জেনেই এসেছিল, কী নির্দেশ দিতে চলেছে আদালত। এজলাসে ঢোকানোর সময় সে যে-ভাবে আইনজীবীদের সঙ্গে গল্পে মশগুল ছিল, রায় শোনার পরেও তাতে কোনও পরিবর্তন চোখে পড়ল না। কী ভাবে রায়কে চ্যালেঞ্জ জানিয়ে হাইকোর্টে মামলা করা যায়, সেই পরামর্শই নিচ্ছিল লোকটি। সাজগোজে খামতি ছিল না। কালো গোল গলা গেঞ্জি আর কালো প্যান্ট। আফতাব আনসারি মঙ্গলবারেই জেনে গিয়েছে, ফাঁসি না-হোক, মার্কিন তথ্যকেন্দ্রের সামনে পুলিশকর্মীদের উপরে প্রাণঘাতী হামলা চালানোর অপরাধে তার যাবজ্জীবন কারাদণ্ড হবেই।

আফতাবের মতো ভাবলেশহীন দেখিয়েছে সাদা প্যান্ট ও গেঞ্জি পরা জামালুদ্দিন নাসিরকেও। শুনানির সময় প্রেসিডেন্সি জেলের বিশেষ আদালতে নিয়মিত আসতেন নাসিরের বাবা। এ দিন তিনিও আসেননি। আসেননি আফতাবের পরিবারের কেউ। আসলে ওই দু'জনের যে কঠোর সাজা হবেই, তা বুঝে গিয়েছিলেন আফতাবদের আইনজীবী, পরিবারের লোক এবং অন্য সবাই। রায় ঘোষণার পরে আইনজীবীদের সঙ্গে আলোচনা সেরে কমান্ডো পরিবৃত হয়ে নিজের সেলে চলে গেল আফতাব। পিছনে পিছনে নাসির। ওই রায়ের বিরুদ্ধে তাঁরা হাইকোর্টে আপিল করবেন বলে জানিয়েছেন অভিযুক্তদের আইনজীবী শাহিদ ইমাম ও আবু বক্কর ঢালি।

রাষ্ট্রের বিরুদ্ধে যুদ্ধ ঘোষণা, সেই উদ্দেশ্যে অস্ত্রশস্ত্র মজুত করা, ষড়যন্ত্র করে পুলিশের উপরে হামলা, সরকারি কর্মীদের কাজে বাধাদান, খুন ও খুনের



- ২২ জানুয়ারি, ২০০২। ভোর সাড়ে ৬টা। বাইক এসে ধামল।
- পুলিশকর্মীদের লক্ষ করে একে-৪৭ এবং পিস্তল থেকে গুলি ছোড়ে বাইক-আরোহীরা।
- পাঁচ পুলিশকর্মীর মৃত্যু হয়। আহত হন ন'জন।
- হামলাকারীদের এক জন জাহিদ পুলিশের সঙ্গে সংঘর্ষে মারা যায়। অন্য হামলাকারী সাদাকাত ধরা পড়েনি এখনও।

গ্রাফিক্স: স্বরূপ দণ্ডপাট

চেষ্টার অভিযোগে প্রেসিডেন্সি জেলের বিশেষ আদালত মঙ্গলবার দোষী সাব্যস্ত করেছে আফতাব, নাসির-সহ সাত জনকে। আজ, বুধবার দোষীদের সাজা শোনাবেন বিচারক বাসুদেব

মজুমদার। আসামিদের আইনজীবীরা অবশ্য এ দিনই তাঁদের মক্কেলদের জানিয়েছেন, যে-সব আইনে দোষী সাব্যস্ত করা হয়েছে, তাতে সর্বোচ্চ শাস্তি ফাঁসি। ন্যূনতম শাস্তি যাবজ্জীবন

কারাদণ্ড। তবে আমেরিকান সেন্টারে জঙ্গি-হানায় তাদের যোগাযোগের প্রমাণ না-মেলায় রাজস্থান থেকে ধৃত কুরিয়ার সংস্থার কর্মী দিলীপ পটেল ও

এর পর ছয়ের পাতায়

দোষী সাব্যস্ত আফতাব

প্রথম পাতার পর

২০০২ সালের ২২ জানুয়ারি সকালে জওহরলাল নেহরু রোডের মার্কিন তথ্যকেন্দ্রের সামনে নির্বিচারে গুলি চালিয়ে পাঁচ পুলিশকর্মী খুন এবং অন্য ন'জনকে আহত করার ঘটনায় ১৫ জনের বিরুদ্ধে চার্জশিট দিয়েছিল কলকাতা গোয়েন্দা পুলিশ। ছ'জনকে ফেরার দেখানো হয়। মোট ন'জন গ্রেফতার হলেও যে-দু'জন বাইকে চেপে এসে ওই হামলা চালিয়েছিল, পুলিশ তাদের ধরতে পারেনি। তাদের মধ্যে জাহিদ হাজারিবাগে ঝাড়খণ্ড পুলিশের সঙ্গে সংঘর্ষে মারা গিয়েছে বলে পুলিশ আদালতে জানায়। অন্য জন, সাদাকাত হোসেনকে পুলিশ গত তিন বছরেও ধরতে পারেনি। চার্জশিটে তাকে ফেরার দেখানো হয়েছে।

এ দিন বিচারক জানান, দিলীপ ও সাকিলের বিরুদ্ধে অভিযোগ প্রমাণ হয়নি। তাই তাদের অব্যাহতি দেওয়া হয়। রায় শুনে বিশেষ আদালতের হাজতের লোহার জাল ধরে দাঁড়িয়ে থাকা থাকা দিলীপ ও সাকিলের মধ্যে কোনও প্রতিক্রিয়াই দেখা যায়নি। তবে দিলীপের শ্যালক মুকেশ ভাই পটেল আনন্দ গোপন করেননি। গুজরাতের ওই হিরে ব্যবসায়ী বলেন, “আমরা প্রথম থেকেই জানতাম, মিথ্যা মামলায় জামাইবাবুকে জড়িয়েছে পুলিশ। শেষ পর্যন্ত আমাদেরই জয় হল। ১৪০০ কিলোমিটার দূর থেকে এসে মামলা স্তন্যতাম। পরিশ্রম সার্থক হল।”

রায় শুনে লক-আপেই ভেঙে পড়ে বিশাল চেহারার ববি ওরফে মুসারাত হোসেন। এজলাসে বসে থাকার স্ত্রী ঘনঘন চোখ মুছছিলেন। জেলের গেটের বাইরে এসেই গর্জে উঠলেন বোরখায় শরীর ঢাকা ওই মহিলা, “যারা আমেরিকান সেন্টারের সামনে হামলা চালাল, তাদের এক জন ঘুরে বেড়াচ্ছে। পুলিশ তাকে ধরতে পারেনি। পুলিশ তাকে ধরুক না! জিজ্ঞাসাবাদের জন্য ডেকে নিয়ে গিয়ে ওরা নির্দোষ লোকটাকে গ্রেফতার করল।” তপসিয়া

এলাকায় প্রেস ছিল ববিরা সেখান থেকে নাসিরেরা সি বি আই-এর প্যাড, ভিজিটিং কার্ড ছাপিয়েছিল বলে পুলিশের অভিযোগ। ববিও ওই হামলার ষড়যন্ত্রের সঙ্গে যুক্ত বলে চার্জশিটে জানিয়েছে পুলিশ।

হাসরাত আলমের স্ত্রী ও শ্যালক এ দিন অনেক আশা নিয়ে এসেছিলেন বিশেষ আদালতে। এক কোণে মুখ কালো করে দাঁড়িয়ে ছিলেন ওঁরা। স্ত্রী কিছুই বলতে পারলেন না। শ্যালক বললেন, “সবাইকে কি এরা আফতাব আনসারি ভাবল নাকি? বিনা দোষে সাজা হচ্ছে হাসরাতের।” এসেছিলেন সাকিল আখতারের দাদা। রায়ে অসন্তোষ প্রকাশ করে তিনি বললেন, “সবটাই তো সাজানো। কী সাজা হয় দেখি। তার পরে যা বলার বলব।” হাজারিবাগ থেকে এসেছিলেন রেহান আলমের বাবা পারভেজ আলম। পারভেজ আমেরিকান সেন্টারে হানার অন্যতম ষড়যন্ত্রকারী ফেরার হাসান ইমামের ভায়রা ভাই। তিনি বলেন, “হাসানের শ্যালক আদিল হাসান আর আমার ছেলে রেহানকে পুলিশ ধরল। পুলিশ আমাদের বলল, হাসানকে খুঁজে দিন। বহু জায়গায় খুঁজলাম। পাওয়া গেল না। আদিল আর রেহানকেই অভিযুক্ত করে দিল পুলিশ।”

তিন মূল অভিযুক্ত সাদাকাত, খৈয়াম খুররম ও হাসান ইমামকে তাঁরা ধরতে পারেননি। দুই অভিযুক্ত বেকসুর খালাস পেয়েছে। তবু এই রায়ে তদন্তকারীরা, খুশি। কলকাতা পুলিশের ও সি (হোমিসাইড) সুজিত মিত্র বলেন, “আফতাবদের বিরুদ্ধে আমরা যে-সব অভিযোগ এনেছিলাম, তা প্রমাণিত হয়েছে। যাবজ্জীবন কারাদণ্ডের কম সাজা তো ওদের হবে না!”

অন্য দিকে, এই মামলায় তিন সরকারি আইনজীবীর অন্যতম নবকুমার ঘোষের বাবা শ্যামসুন্দর ঘোষ (৮০) মঙ্গলবার সকাল থেকে নিখোঁজ ছিলেন। রাতের দিকে তিনি নিজেই বাড়িতে ফিরে আসেন। পুলিশ জানায়, সম্ভবত বয়সজনিত কারণে তিনি বাড়ি ফেরার পথ হারিয়ে ফেলেছিলেন।

DELAY AFFECTS MODERNISATION

Rules violated in arms trial

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, April 25. — After reports of illegal payoffs by Denel, the South African arms manufacturer keen on selling big guns to India, to a Channel Islands firm, the Defence Standing Committee of Parliament, in its recent report expressed surprise that no field-trials of major weapons systems were conducted.

India needs wheeled self-propelled guns and the defence ministry told the committee that it asked 11 vendors for RFPs, but only five bids were received and only one, from Denel, was considered acceptable.

The report said: "The committee is, however, surprised to note that no field trials were held to decide the suitability or otherwise of the bids received which is the normal procedure. The committee also noted that trials are still continuing for the procurement of tracked SP guns and towed guns. The delay in the procurement of such crucial weaponry has adversely affected the modernisation of schemes of the defence sources resulting in wastage of a lot of time."

India is looking for three kinds of artillery. They are:

■ The towed version, for which trials have been concluded and Celsius (once Bofors) has come out on top. India wants 1,580 of them, including 400 to be bought soon. Each one costs Rs 10-11 crore.

■ The wheeled version of the self-propelled gun. India wanted to buy this from Denel, but the acquisition of 9 regiments (180 guns) was a single-vendor situation, which the defence ministry is backing out of. Each one would cost Rs 24 crore.

■ For the tracked gun, the DRDO and Denel were working on an agreement to jointly produce it. Five regiments or 100 guns would be readied and each one would cost Rs 26 crore.

Committee wants CDS

The committee also called for the appointment of a Chief of Defence Staff. It noted that it is several years since there was talk of a CDS and one was necessary as it would lead to better coordination between the three Services.

26 APR 2005

THE STATESMAN

GEORGE CRIES VENDETTA

CBI to probe Denel deal

9-10-05 *SFI 28/9*



**I will not allow this country
to be looted. I have only
one country. Others may
have other countries**

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, April 22. — The Centre today asked the Central Bureau of Investigation to probe the alleged payoffs by South African firm Denel to a British agent to secure a rifles contract when the NDA was in power and Mr George Fernandes, defence minister.

There have been reports in the South African media regarding how Denel paid money to a Channel Islands firm to influence the Indian Army to buy the rifles. Apparently, Denel also gave the papers of the Price Negotiation Committee to the firm.

Reacting sharply to the charges of corruption levelled against him, Mr Fernandes, while addressing BJP leaders and mediapersons at the party's Ashoka Road headquarters today, said the Congress pursued a political vendetta. He asserted that he would fight it out till the end.

"People who have no love for India are behind the conspiracy to demoralise the forces. I will not allow this country to be looted. I have only one country. Others may have other countries," he said in an apparent reference to the Congress president, Mrs Sonia Gandhi's foreign origin.

He said he had been targeted for his anti-Congress stand. "The Congress went to the extent of publishing a White Paper against me, accusing me of receiving money from China and the USA. The same trend continues today and will continue."

The government, he said, had so far sought CBI probe into 37 charges against him; the figure might go up to 100. "At the time of negotiations the representatives of the seller, buyer and the user were present. So all of them have the PNC report," he explained. Mr Fernandes said the way the Tehelka operation had been carried out indicated that it had the backing of the Congress. Without naming the Gandhi family, he said "this *khandaan*" posed a serious threat to the country. "The seeds of corruption are sown here," he said.

Hawk will fly

BANGALORE, April 22. — Britain today said the supply to India of the British Hawk Advanced Jet Trainer, equipped with components of Denel, would not be affected by the current controversy involving the South African defence firm over an alleged pay-off by it to secure an Indian defence deal.

"No, it won't affect the Hawk programme. The Hawks are being made as we speak," the British High Commissioner to India, Sir Michael Arthur, told reporters here. He said a similar controversy had erupted three years ago, but was eventually resolved. The first 22 Hawk AJT's will be made in Britain. — SNS & PTI

23 APR 2005

THE STATESMAN

None will be spared: Pranab

Kargil deal: 'No clean chit was given to anyone in the first affidavit'

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Government assured Parliament on Wednesday that it was committed to taking strict action against officers and authorities, including the former Defence Minister, if it was found that the "excuse of Kargil" was taken to make purchases with the motive of personal benefit in violation of rules and regulations.

Making a statement in both Houses on the filing of the second affidavit in the Supreme Court, the Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, said that a reading of the two affidavits made it clear that "no clean chit" had been given to anyone in the first affidavit filed by the Centre on March 10 nor had there been any "U-turn" between the first and the second affidavits.

"While the first affidavit explains the procedure of procurement and details the action taken by the Government, the second affidavit charts out the future course of action contemplated by the Government," the statement said. The Government has decided to hand over 23 cases, included in the Comptroller and Auditor-General's (CAG) report, to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

The first affidavit had two parts. The first dealing with the procedures clarified that the modified procedure on June 21, 1999 was meant to shorten the time-frame, particularly for im-



CAUGHT IN CONTROVERSY: Former Defence Minister and JD(U) leader George Fernandes arriving at the Parliament House on Wednesday.

ports of items specifically required for the Kargil war. "This modified procedure was issued without relaxing the requirements of the Defence Procurement Procedure, 1992. This is also reflected in the comments of the CAG. However, this part of the affidavit did not comment on whether this procedure was correctly followed while affecting

procurement." The second part dealt with the action taken by the Government on the CAG and the Central Vigilance Commission report and held thermal imager and terminally guided munition formed part of the CAG report, had been referred to the CBI.

The second part of the first affidavit also said that the CAG report were vetted, and the re-

maining were at various stages of examination; after the expiry of the term of the Tehelka Commission, transactions of hand held thermal imager and terminally guided munition formed part of the CAG report, had been referred to the CBI.

The second part of the first affidavit also said that the CAG observations on involvement of

middlemen and the need to make the procurement procedures more transparent were being addressed.

As regards individual cases examined by the CVC, administrative action has been taken against the guilty officials in three cases, 12 cases were closed by the CVC and 21 cases were still under examination.

Three cases referred to in the CVC report, which also found mention in the Tehelka tapes (T-90S tanks, the Armoured recovery vehicle and up-gunning of 130 mm M-46 field gun to 155 mm calibre) were now referred to the CBI.

Mr. Mukherjee said that in compliance of the Supreme Court order of March 14, the additional affidavit was filed on April 13. This stressed the future course of action to be taken on the CAG report.

"The affidavit points out that five cases of procurement were again scrutinised in detail with a view to fix responsibility."

It also stated that since the CAG report had brought out that the "excuse of Kargil" was cited to push through defence procurements that would otherwise have been scrutinised more closely, thereby suggesting a serious misconduct on the part of officials/authorities in the Government including the then Defence Minister, the Government had decided to refer 23 cases included in the CAG report to the CBI.

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দৌষী হলে জর্জকেও ছেড়ে

কথা নয়, বললেন প্রণব

২০ এপ্রিল: কার্গিল যুদ্ধের 'অজুহাত দেখিয়ে' কেউ 'ব্যক্তিগত মুনাফা' করে থাকলে ইউপিএ সরকার তাঁর বিরুদ্ধে 'কঠোর ব্যবস্থা' নেবে। এমনকী তিনি যদি তদানীন্তন প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রীও হন, তবু সরকার ছেড়ে কথা বলবে না। আজ লোকসভায় এ কথা জানিয়ে দিলেন প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়।

তহলকা কাণ্ডে আদালতে দু'টি হলফনামা দাখিল করা নিয়ে কাল থেকে সংসদে শাসক এবং বিরোধী পক্ষের মধ্যে যে দ্বৈরথ শুরু হয়েছিল, আজ প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রীর এই বিবৃতিতে তার আপাত-সমাপ্তি ঘটল। আপাত, কারণ, শুধু ফুকন কমিশন নয়, সেন্ট্রাল ভিজিল্যান্স কমিশনের (সিভিসি) রিপোর্টও সংসদে পেশের দাবিতে অনড় প্রাজ্ঞন প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী জর্জ ফার্নান্দেজ ও বিজেপি নেতারা। সকালে এনডিএ-র বৈঠকে স্থির হয়, স্পিকার যখন সরকারকে ফুকন কমিশনের রিপোর্ট পেশের নির্দেশ দিয়েছেন, প্রধানমন্ত্রীও বিষয়টি নিয়ে সুর নরম করেছেন, তখন সংসদ অচল করার নীতি আর নয়। কিন্তু সিভিসি রিপোর্ট পেশের দাবিতে আন্দোলন চালিয়ে যাওয়া হবে।

আজ লোকসভায় প্রশ্নোত্তর পর্ব নির্বিঘ্নেই শেষ হয়। তার পর প্রধানমন্ত্রীর চিন এবং পাকিস্তান বিষয়ক বিবৃতিও। এর পরেই বিরোধী দলনেতা লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী উঠে দাঁড়িয়ে বলেন, "দু'টি হলফনামা নিয়ে আলোচনা তখনই সার্থক হবে যখন ফুকন কমিশনের পাশাপাশি সিভিসি রিপোর্টও সংসদে রাখা হবে। রিপোর্ট দু'টি পেশের পর প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী বক্তব্য পেশ করলে ভাল হয়। আর সে দিনই বিষয়টি নিয়ে আলোচনা হোক।" প্রণববাবু জবাবে আডবাণীকে আক্রমণ করে বলেন, "এক অদ্ভুত পরিস্থিতির সৃষ্টি হয়েছে। সংসদের পাবলিক অ্যাকাউন্টস কমিটি (পিএসি) যখন এনডিএ সরকারের কাছে সিভিসি রিপোর্ট চেয়েছিল তখন তারা তা দেয়নি। সংসদীয় কমিটিকেই তাঁরা যা এতকাল দিতে চাননি, আজ তা সংসদে পেশের দাবি জানাচ্ছেন! ক্ষমতা হারিয়ে উল্টো দিকের আসনে বসে সিভিসি, ভ্যাট, পেটেন্ট— সব বিষয়েই মত বদলে গেল? ...আমি আজ একটি বিবৃতি দিতে চাই। পরে তার উপরে যে আলোচনাই হোক, আমি তৈরি।"

এ পারে ধীরে ধীরে উত্তপ্ত হতে শুরু করে লোকসভা। দু'তরফ থেকেই শোরগোল শুরু হয়। জর্জের আমলে দক্ষিণ আফ্রিকার সংস্থা ডেনেলের কাছ থেকে বেআইনি ভাবে অস্ত্র কেনার বিষয়ে প্রকাশিত সংবাদ নিয়ে কংগ্রেস সাংসদেরা চিৎকার শুরু করেন। এরই মধ্যে খানিকটা নাটকীয় ভাবে উঠে দাঁড়িয়ে বলতে চান জর্জ। স্পিকার সোমনাথ চট্টোপাধ্যায় তখন তাঁকে সে সুযোগ দেননি।

পরে জর্জ বলেন, "আমি যখন প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী ছিলাম তখন থেকেই সিভিসি রিপোর্ট প্রকাশ করা, গোপন রাখা নিয়ে নানা রকম কথা উঠেছে। এটা সর্বসমক্ষে প্রকাশ করার রিপোর্ট নয়। অথচ এরা তখন এত হাঙ্গামা করেছিল যার কোনও সীমা নেই।" বলতে বলতে গলা রীতিমতো কেঁপে যায় জর্জের। সমবেত চিৎকারের মধ্যেই তিনি বলে যান, "আমাকে চোর বলা হয়েছিল, ডাকাত বলা হয়েছিল। যে ব্যবহার করা হয়েছিল তা বলে বোঝাতে পারছি না। এই

জন্যই এখন বলছি, ওই রিপোর্টে কী আছে আমি জানি, আপনারাও জানেন। দেশের সুরক্ষা সম্পর্কে যাঁদের সামান্য ধারণাও নেই তাঁদের কী করে বোঝাব যে, কেন এটা প্রকাশ করা উচিত নয়। তবু আমি চাই এটা প্রকাশিত হোক।"

এর পর আর চিৎকারে কথা চালানো অসম্ভব হয়ে পড়ে।

প্রণববাবুও বিবৃতি পেশ করেন। পরে তিনি বলেন, "ওই সিভিসি রিপোর্টে কী রয়েছে তা জর্জ কী ভাবে জানলেন, বা এখনও মনে রেখেছেন?" সরকারি সূত্রে বলা হয়েছে, জর্জের বিরুদ্ধে 'অফিসিয়াল সিক্রেসি অ্যাক্ট' আনা যায় কি না, তা খতিয়ে দেখা হচ্ছে।

সংবাদ সংস্থা জানাচ্ছে, ডেনেলের সিইও ভিক্টর মোশেকে বরখাস্ত করা হয়েছে। ২০০৩ সালে ভারতকে অস্ত্র সরবরাহের সময় দুর্নীতির আশ্রয় নেওয়ার অভিযোগের প্রেক্ষিতেই তাঁর বিরুদ্ধে এই ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া হল। প্রায় ২১ কোটি টাকার অস্ত্র বিক্রির বরাত পেতে ডেনেল 'ভরস' নামে একটি ব্রিটিশ এজেন্টিকে বিপুল অর্থ ঘুষ দেন বলে খবর। এর বদলে ভারতের প্রতিরক্ষা দফতরের মূল্য নির্ধারণ কমিটি এবং একটি বিশেষ রাইফেলের টেন্ডার সম্পর্কে নানা গোপন তথ্য ডেনেলের হস্তগত হয় বলে অভিযোগ।



তহলকা-কাণ্ডে সংসদ অচল, আজ বিবৃতি দেবেন প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ১৯ এপ্রিল: তহলকা কেলেঙ্কারিতে জর্জ ফার্নান্ডেজ সম্পর্কে দু'টি হলফনামা জমা দেওয়াকে ঘিরে উত্তাল হল সংসদে বাজেট অধিবেশনের দ্বিতীয় পর্বের প্রথম দিন। আজ রেলের স্ট্যাভিং কমিটির রিপোর্ট পেশ করার কথা ছিল, কিন্তু দিনটি ভেঙে গেল গত চার বছর ধরে বহু-আলোচিত দু'টি রিপোর্ট (সি এ জি এবং ফুকন কমিশন) পেশের দাবি, জর্জকে পাল্টা কামান দাগার মতো চাপান-উতোর। এন ডি এ নেতাদের দাবি, সনিয়া গাঁধীর 'চাপে' দ্বিতীয় হলফনামাটি জমা দিয়েছেন প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী। তাঁর পদত্যাগ করা উচিত। অন্য দিকে সরকার পক্ষের বক্তব্য, তহলকা সংক্রান্ত যে কোনও বিষয় নিয়েই আলোচনা হতে পারে। এ নিয়ে অযথা বিভ্রান্তি তৈরি করা হচ্ছে।

রাত্রে রাষ্ট্রপতিভবনে এক অনুষ্ঠানে প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ বলেছেন, "আমরা যে কোনও ধরণের আলোচনার জন্য রাজি। আমাদের কিছুই লুকোনোর নেই।" তিনি আশ্বাস দিয়েছেন, "প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী আগামিকাল সংসদে বিষয়টি নিয়ে বিবৃতি দেবেন।" প্রধানমন্ত্রীর আরও মন্তব্য, এই হলফনামা প্রসঙ্গে তাঁর মন্ত্রিসভার মধ্যে কোনও ভুল বোঝাবুঝি নেই। কাল কী বিবৃতি দেওয়া হবে, তার একটা খসড়া ইতিমধ্যেই সনিয়া গাঁধী, গুলাম নবী আজাদের সঙ্গে বসে তৈরি করেছেন প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়।

গতকাল রাত থেকেই তহলকা নিয়ে রণকৌশল ছকতে দফায় দফায় বৈঠকে বসে এন ডি এ। আজ বি জে পি সংসদীয় দলের বৈঠকে লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী বলেন, এই আক্রমণ শুধু জর্জের উপর নয়, সমস্ত বিরোধী দলনেতাই এর লক্ষ্য। যে কোনও ভাবে এর মোকাবিলা করতে হবে।

এর প্রতিফলন দেখা যায় অধিবেশন শুরু সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই। পোপের মৃত্যুতে শোক-প্রস্তাবের সময়টুকু শুধু বাদ। তারপরই বি জে পি বেঞ্চ থেকে বিষয়টির উত্থাপন করা হয়। লোকসভা পনোরো মিনিটের জন্য মূলতুবি করেন স্পিকার সোমনাথ চট্টোপাধ্যায়। অধিবেশন শুরু হতেই বিজেপি নেতা



সভা মূলতুবি নয়, দৃঢ়প্রতিজ্ঞ সোমনাথ

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ১৯ এপ্রিল: অশান্ত লোকসভাকে বাগে আনতে আজ কড়া দাওয়াইয়ের পথে হটলেন স্পিকার সোমনাথ চট্টোপাধ্যায়। তহলকা-কাণ্ডে দু'টি হলফনামা দেওয়া নিয়ে তুমুল হইহট্টগোল ও স্লোগানের মধ্যে বেশ কিছুক্ষণ সভা চালান তিনি। তার পর অধিবেশন মূলতুবি করে দেওয়ার সময় বলেন, "আমি কোনও বিশেষ রাজনৈতিক দল বা ব্যক্তিকে দোষ দিতে চাইছি না। দয়া করে আমার মুখে কোনও শব্দ বসাবেন না। কিন্তু আমি আপনাদের একটি পাবলিক

এর পর পাঁচের পাতায়

বিজয়কুমার মলহোত্র বলেন, "দু'টি হলফনামা নিয়ে গোটা দেশে সংশয়ের সৃষ্টি হয়েছে। এই নিয়ে বিস্তারিত আলোচনা হোক। প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রথম হলফনামা জমা দিয়ে ফার্নান্ডেজকে ছাড়পত্র দিয়ে দিলে গভঙ্গোল হয়, এবং দ্বিতীয় হলফনামা জমা দেওয়া হয়। আমরা জানতে চাই যে পদাধিকারী ব্যক্তি প্রথম হলফনামা জমা দিয়েছিল, সে প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রীকে জানিয়ে কাজটি করেছিল কি না? না জানিয়ে থাকলে সে বিষয়ে তদন্ত হোক। না হলে কার চাপে এই হলফনামা জমা দেওয়া হয়েছে তা জানানো।" এরপরেই উত্তপ্ত হয়ে উঠতে থাকে সভা। স্পিকার বলেন, "বিষয়টি নিয়ে পুরোদস্তুর আলোচনা হতে পারে। তার দিন তারিখ স্থির করতে হবে। আপনারা অন্যের কথা ধৈর্য ধরে শুনুন।"

কিন্তু তখন কে বা কার কথা শুনছে! প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রীর পদত্যাগের দাবিতে এন ডি এ-র সাংসদেরা সোচ্চার। অন্যদিকে পাল্টা জবাব আসছে কংগ্রেস বেঞ্চ থেকেও। সাংসদ পবন বনশল দাঁড়িয়ে উঠে বলেন, "ওরা জানে যে ওরাই দোষী। ওরা আলোচনা চায় না। তাই এমন চিৎকার করছে।" বেশ কিছুক্ষণ চেষ্টামেচির পর স্পিকার সভা মূলতুবি করেন।

বি জে পি'র মূল দাবি, ফুকন কমিশনের রিপোর্ট সংসদে পেশ করতে হবে। মলহোত্রের বক্তব্য, 'কমিশন অব এনকেয়ারি'র নিয়ম অনুযায়ী সরকারের কাছে রিপোর্টটি জমা পড়ার ছ'মাসের মধ্যে তা সংসদে পেশ করতে হবে। এক্ষেত্রে প্রায় এক বছর হতে চলল। আগামিকাল সকালে এন ডি এ আবার বৈঠকে বসে স্থির করবে সংসদ চলতে দেওয়া হবে কি না। মলহোত্র আজ জানিয়েছেন, "সরকার যদি

এর পর পাঁচের পাতায়

সোমনাথ

প্রথম পাতার পর

নোটিস দিতে চাই। কাল থেকে যা-ই যটুক না কেন, আমি সভা মূলতুবি করব না।"

রাজনৈতিক সূত্রের খবর, সোমনাথবাবুর এই সিদ্ধান্ত বিজেপি-কে যথেষ্ট চাপের মধ্যে রেখেছে। ফুকন কমিশনের রিপোর্ট পেশ করা না হলে সংসদ অচল করতে চায় এনডিএ। সরকার বলছে, জাতীয় নিরাপত্তার কারণে প্রতিরক্ষা সংক্রান্ত নথি সব সময় সংসদে পেশ করা হয় না। সোমনাথের কড়া মন্তব্যের পরে সরকার অনড় থাকলেও কাল আর হট্টগোল করা হবে কি না, সে ব্যাপারে সিদ্ধান্ত পারছে না বিজেপি। কাল এনডিএ-র বৈঠকে বিষয়টি স্থির হবে বলে দলীয় সূত্রের খবর।

সোমনাথবাবু বলেন, "আজ আমার জীবনের আরও একটি অত্যন্ত যত্নগর দিন।" বিরোধীদের জন্য সংসদ চলতে না-পারা নিয়ে নিজের হতাশার কথা বহুবার বলেছেন তিনি। আজ রীতিমতো কড়া সিদ্ধান্ত নিলেন। তবে বিরোধী দাবি মেনে ফুকন কমিশনের রিপোর্ট পেশ করা নিয়ে সরকারের মতামত চান সোমনাথবাবু।

তহলকা-কাণ্ডে

প্রথম পাতার পর

নিশ্চয়তা দেয় যে তারা আগামি কয়েক দিনের মধ্যে রিপোর্ট পেশ করবে, তা হলে আমরা আর আর আন্দোলনে যাব না।" যাঁকে কেন্দ্র করে এত কাণ্ড সেই জর্জ বলেন, "হলফনামা জমা দেওয়াটাই একমাত্র বিষয় নয়। আমরা ফুকন কমিশন এবং সি এ জি রিপোর্ট সম্পর্কে জানতে চাই। তা না হলে কীসের ভিত্তিতে আলোচনা হবে?"

সরকারপক্ষ অবশ্য গোটা বিষয়টি নিয়ে এককাট্টা। প্রণববাবু নিজে বলেছেন, "ফুকন কমিশনের রিপোর্টের কথা জানি না। কিন্তু হলফনামা জমা দেওয়ার বিষয়টি নিয়ে যে কোনও মঞ্চে, যে কোনও সময়ে, যে কোনও ধরনের আলোচনার জন্য প্রস্তুত আমি।" তাঁর বক্তব্য, দু'টি হলফনামার মধ্যে পরস্পরবিরোধিতা নেই।

Phukan report: Government seeks some more time

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Union Law Minister, H.R. Bhardwaj, on Wednesday assured the Rajya Sabha that the Government would have a "full debate including the report" on the Justice Phukan Commission Report on Tehelka before the conclusion of the budget session.

Asked by the Chairman, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat, to give a time-frame, Mr. Bhardwaj said: "Give us some time as the report is lying in a sealed cover and the action taken report (ATR) is not ready."

The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, was present in the House.

Intervening during zero hour to the demand of the Opposition leader, Jaswant Singh, for tabling the Phukan report along with the ATR and the Central Vigilance Commission Report on defence procurements, Mr. Bhardwaj said there was a legal controversy on the Phukan report: "[One was that] because he had left half-way, this cannot be treated as a report. [And, that] since this is a public report, there should be an ATR. The Government was willing for a

full debate including [the] report."

He said: "About the affidavits there is so much confusion. The Supreme Court had a Public Interest Litigation petition. Affidavits were filed...."

Interrupting, Mr. Shekhawat stood up and said he was acting within the rules. The Commission of Inquiry Act said that a report under this Act must be tabled in Parliament within six months of its submission.

Earlier, the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Suresh Pachauri, said that Mr. Justice Phukan had said that he

would do the inquiry in three parts. He submitted part I of his report on February 4, 2004 during the National Democratic Alliance tenure. Part II and III were handed over to the CBI. These parts pertained to the "extent of offences, misconduct, impropriety of individuals and so on."

The Government would take the opinion of the Law Ministry and, if so advised, would place the report in Parliament. Legal opinion would also be sought on whether the report alone should be placed or would have to be placed along with the ATR.

20 APR 2005

THE HINDU

George arms deal under scrutiny

**MICHAEL SCHMIDT
IN JOHANNESBURG
AND SUJAN DUTTA
IN NEW DELHI**

April 19: Defence minister Pranab Mukherjee has sought information on a deal struck under his predecessor George Fernandes with the South African firm, Denel, after investigators in Johannesburg began a probe into whether the company paid a British agent to influence a decision to buy weapons for Indian infantry units.

Mukherjee said he had sought details of the contract and the negotiations to buy

anti-materiel guns from Denel even as the National Democratic Alliance rallied to Fernandes's defence in Parliament on an affidavit filed by the government on Kargil purchases.

"I am aware of reports that there is an investigation. I have asked for more information. We will decide what action to take after receiving that information," he said.

The Indian defence establishment has had warm ties with Denel, which rushed supplies of 155mm shells for the army's Bofors guns during the Kargil war. It is also in the race to bag a multi-million dollar contract to transfer knowhow

and jointly produce artillery shells at an ordnance factory Fernandes was keen on establishing at Nalanda.

In September 2003, the cabinet committee on security cleared a nearly Rs 3,500-crore infantry modernisation programme. Among the equipment cleared were 1,500 anti-materiel guns with more than four lakh rounds of ammunition worth Rs 300 crore. The government was also negotiating anti-materiel guns — to be used for busting bunkers in which militants in Kashmir took shelter — with Israel.

Mukherjee said he had sought information on the deal after a South African anti-



George Fernandes

corruption unit, nicknamed the Scorpions, began an investigation into why the weapons company had paid a British firm of agents, Varas Associates Inc, registered on the Isle of Man, \$36,59,395.

A source speaking to the Scorpions alleged that Varas traded on its influence with

the Indian price negotiating committee that was recommending the contract.

The *Saturday Star* newspaper in South Africa was given a document purporting to be the secret minutes of a price negotiation committee meeting on May 23, 2003 "to procure 200 anti-materiel rifles & 1 lakh (100,000) rounds of ammunition with TOT (transfer of technology)".

The minutes, the Denel source claimed, had been provided by Varas to Denel, as part of its "consulting and technical services" for Denel's rifle project.

The source claimed that the provision of the minutes

by Varas to Denel in exchange for payment was corrupt because it enabled Denel to know what deal the committee would settle for and gave the South Africans an unfair advantage.

The minutes could not have passed into Varas's hands had someone on the committee not leaked them.

The representative of Denel in India, John Peltz, dismissed the allegation that Denel hired an agent to win the Indian deal. "Why would we deal with Varas? That is not how the system works. It is ridiculous. The Indian procurement system is very clear. It was a government-to-government deal."

This source alleged that Varas was paid a 12.75 per cent commission on all deals it secured for Denel.

Peltz also said that since the panel had met the Denel representative, the company was aware of the contract.

But signed documents from the Denel treasury purport to show that Denel paid Varas \$2,408,373 and \$1,099,672 on January 27 in 2003 and \$151,350 on June 19 of the same year.

One of the invoices dated December 8, 2002, allegedly relates to the arms deal with India, giving as a reference "project - AM2 & AM3", which an insider said was the contract for the Denel-produced rifle.

This source alleged that Varas was paid a 12.75 per cent commission on all deals it secured for Denel.

9-9-8 IV 6 2004



Brahmos testfire successful

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, April 15

THE SUPERSONIC cruise missile, Brahmos, was successfully testfired in a naval exercise off the Western coast on Friday, demonstrating that the missile jointly developed by India with Russia is ready for induction as a weapons system.

This was the 10th testfiring of the Brahmos and the first in a naval exercise. "The missile, armed with a live warhead, impacted on the target ship accurately, destroying it completely", a spokesman of the Ministry of Defence said.

Friday's testfiring of the cruise missile in a ship-to-ship role in a combined fleet exercise off the Western coast was witnessed by the Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Arun Prakash and the chief executive officer of Brahmos, Dr A. Pillai.

The Brahmos has a stated range of 290 km and is the only supersonic cruise missile in the world. The development process of the missile is complete.

The next phase of development involves the land-to-land, air-to-ground and the submarine-launched versions. The ship-to-land capability of the missile also has to be validated.

6 APR 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

No political compromise with terror: Manmohan

'Security for bus is responsibility of India and Pakistan'

Vinay Kumar

NEW DELHI: It is the joint responsibility of the Governments of India and Pakistan and of the local authorities on both sides of the Line of Control to work together and provide full security cover to the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service, the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, said on Friday.

Addressing a day-long conference of Chief Ministers on "Internal Security and Law and Order" here, Dr. Singh said: "Notwithstanding the recent dastardly attempt to disrupt the bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad by terrorist elements, the people of Jammu and Kashmir came out on the streets as one to welcome this gesture of reconciliation. I hope the terrorists and extremists in the region have grasped the mood of the people and will not try to disrupt this bus service again."

Highly-placed government officials told *The Hindu* that the proposal of joint security cover is likely to be formalised during talks between Dr. Singh and the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, over the weekend.

The Prime Minister, who flagged off the bus service from Srinagar on April 7, described it as a service for "peace and promotion of reconciliation."

"Ready for dialogue"

Dr. Singh asserted that violence and use of force could not win the rewards that insurgents and extremists were seeking. The Government would deal firmly with insurgency.

"However, we are willing to conduct an honest and meaningful dialogue with any group that abjures the path of violence and is willing to engage in a dialogue."

In a frank but firm tone, Dr. Singh said the challenge of terrorism must be faced squarely and resolutely by all shades of political opinion. "There can be no political compromise with terror. No inch conceded. No compassion shown. The people of India have suffered a great deal at the hands of terrorists and our Government is resolute

• Haryana wants security network reinforced

• Rajasthan wants norms for adequate police force for various States

• ISI activities worry West Bengal

• Naxalite menace: Madhya Pradesh seeks Centre's help

• Modi wants White Paper on security situation in States

in its determination to wipe out this threat to a civilised and democratic way of life. There is no cause, root or branch, that can justify the killing of innocent people."

In his 30-minute address, he dwelt on two key themes: there was no place for violence and extremism of any kind in a democratic, rule-based society; and disaffection and alienation were a result of pent up grievances against economic and social deprivation.

The Prime also referred to infiltration by extremists in Jammu and Kashmir, insurgency in North East and the naxalite threat in a dozen States.

Tackling extremism

Dr. Singh said inadequate employment opportunities, lack of access to resources, under developed agriculture, artificially depressed wages, geographical isolation, lack of land reforms could all impinge on growth of extremism.

"There may be other more complex issues like language, ethnicity, caste or religion or cultural rights. When genuine dissent becomes extremism, there can be no ambivalence about tackling it, even if it be only symptomatic," he told the Chief Ministers and top police officials.

For the first time, the Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, also addressed the conference, organised by the Home Ministry.

16 APR 2005

THE HINDU

Improved ties have not reduced militant activity, says Pranab

'Infiltration attempts still occurring, militants being trained across border'

Staff Correspondent

CHANDIGARH: The Union Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, said here on Thursday that much needed to be done between India and Pakistan in the area of terrorism as the militant infrastructure in Pakistan was still intact despite the recent thaw in bilateral ties.

Delivering the V.N. Tewari Memorial Oration on 'Peace Perspectives on South And South-East Asia: Prospects and Challenge' at the Punjab University here, he said that infiltration attempts still occurred and the militants received special training across the border.

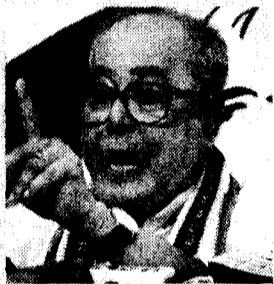
Though infiltration had decreased over the last four months, due to patrolling by the Indian forces, militants were still present at "launching pads" waiting for an opportunity to sneak in.

Despite this, as a confidence building measure, India ordered the withdrawal of troops from Jammu and Kashmir in mid-November last year, he said.

The launch of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service despite violent attempts to sabotage it, illustrated that "peace is the only way."

Foreign relations

Emphasising that India's for-



• Relations with all Asian countries improving

• Pragmatism, cautious idealism in foreign policy

eign and defence policies were characterised by pragmatism and cautious idealism, he said it had made commendable progress in improving its relations with major world powers. Relations with the United States were moving towards greater cooperation on strategic and security issues. Economic relations with China were now on a much larger scale than ever before.

The European Union countries had positively oriented their policies towards India and defence relations with Russia retained their strategic character and efforts were on to reinvigorate the economic relationship.

He said India's relations with the South Asian and South East Asian countries merited special attention, as the developments in these regions would have a significant impact on its emergence as a regional power and eventually a player on the world stage.

"India cannot fulfil its aspirations for a larger international profile without addressing the challenges in its neighbourhood. If tensions continue to persist in India's relations with its neighbours, these will act as a dampening factor. There is no alternative available to Indian diplomacy other than a substantive and patient engagement of its neighbours."

Mr. Mukherjee said that India needed to practice comprehensive security — many traditional non-military challenges — and convert these into opportunities.

However, with deep divisions and security problems within the Indian sub-continent, collective security did not seem to be attainable in the foreseeable future.

Economic progress

India's rapid economic development could be sustained only if it continued to promote economic integration and political

stability in the region.

While stating that Sri Lanka had shown a forward-looking vision for economic cooperation, he said that Bangladesh seemed reluctant and Pakistan was holding back on beneficial economic regionalism, citing settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir issue. South Asia could emerge as a peaceful region only through strong and firm Indian policies.

Advocating a "multi-faceted, multi-directional engagement with all major power centres, he said that forging issue-based alignments might prove to be the most effective strategy for India in both the short and long term.

He also called for evolving a technology policy for the energy sector, making use of the immense potential for the production of bio-diesel and development of solar energy. Diplomatic breakthroughs and political initiatives involving countries in the region could ensure large-scale supplies of clean and natural gas through pipelines.

The rise of fundamental activities and growing network of international terrorist groups in South East Asia demanded closer cooperation between India and South-East Asia to counter this menace.

15 APR 2005 THE HINDU

PRANAB, PRIYA DIFFER OVER LEGAL STEP

Govt goes for George: Second affidavit in SC

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, April 13. — While the defence ministry today filed an affidavit — its second — in the Supreme Court saying it had referred 20 more arms deals struck during the NDA regime to the CBI for renewed investigation, there seem to be differences within the government over the issue.

The affidavit said: "The government is committed to taking strict action against officials/authorities, including the former defence minister (NDA convener Mr George Fernandes) if it is found that the excuse of Kargil war was taken to make the purchases with a motive of personal benefit in violation of rules and regulations."

While defence minister Mr Pranab Mukherjee today said there was nothing to be embarrassed about as the second affidavit merely supplemented the first one, water resources minister Mr Priya Ranjan Das Munshi said checking and cross-checking were necessary. While he seemed to be against targeting anyone, he said the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs should have dealt with it.

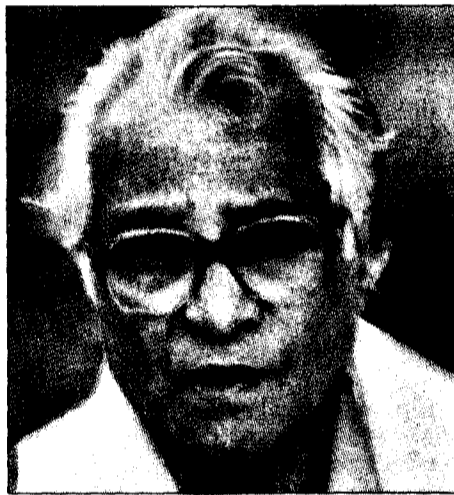
The ministry spoke of the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General, which probed 123 purchases during and after the Kargil war and found irregularities in 35 of them resulting in an alleged loss of Rs 2,000 crore to the exchequer. The government said of these 35 purchases, 20 were being referred to CBI for a detailed probe.

"The CAG report has brought out that modified procurement procedure was used to push through deals in the name of Kargil long after the hostilities had ceased and if the deals were to be scrutinised in normal circumstances, these would not have been entered into, thereby, suggesting serious misconduct on the part of officials/authorities, including the then defence minister," said the affidavit.

Ms Jaya Jaitley said: "It is a personalised issue. At no point has the CAG questioned Mr Fernandes."

The ministry has referred 20 cases which

'I am prepared to face the challenge'



AHMEDABAD, April 13.— Mr Fernandes today said he was prepared to face the fresh affidavit filed by the Centre. "I have not read what they (Centre) have filed. But I am prepared for it," he said in Sarangpur on the outskirts of the city. "Let them do anything against me. For me political vindictiveness is not new. Those against me have always tried to suppress me since the Emergency. It doesn't affect me." — PTI

were yet to be vetted by CAG to CBI for investigation. They include bullet-proof jackets for Rs 51.65 crore, illuminating ammunition for 155mm gun for Rs 52.47 crore, special ammunition for 40mm L-70 gun for Rs 166.44 crore, automatic grenade launchers Rs 52.13 crore, spares for 155mm gun for Rs 97.65 crore.

Congress spokesman Mr Anand Sharma said the supplementary affidavit echoed the first one and went beyond to cover the remaining 23 cases of defence procurement of the period, against which, the party said, the CAG had raised objections in its 2001 report.

The BJP said it would demand the tabling of the Phukan Commission report.

14 APR 2005

THE STATESMAN

CMS' meet on internal security

NAXALITE & TERRORISM IN 12 STATES TO FIGURE IN FRIDAY'S DISCUSSIONS

Rajnish Sharma
New Delhi, April 12

THE IMPROVED security scenario in J&K - along with a drop of 19 per cent in terrorist violence and 21 per cent in civilian killings in the North-East - will be some of the key issues to be discussed at the crucial daylong conference on internal security with state chief ministers here on April 15.

The meeting is being organised by the Union home ministry on the initiative of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

There has been a whopping 61 per cent drop in infiltration in Jammu and Kashmir in 2004, compared with that in the previous year. Home ministry sources said the sharp dip in infiltration in J&K had largely happened because of in-

creased interception by the security forces along the border and the LoC - even as attempts are being made to launch militants from across the border.

Another critical issue where the Centre wants the states to crack down is the "terrorist and organised crime syndicate nexus". This, sources said, was helping terrorist outfits in getting funds through hawala transactions and money from drug-trafficking was being routed to militancy and the network was being used to pump in fake currency notes into the country.

The Naxalite problem in 12 states, particularly links of the Indian Naxalite outfits with CPN (Maoists) of Nepal, too, will be discussed at length.

The Centre wants to know the view of the chief ministers of

states affected by Naxalite activities on the progress of talks with Naxalite outfits in the backdrop of the experiment of the Andhra Pradesh government. The home ministry's view on the contentious issue is that the states, after considering the ground realities, should talk to the Naxalite groups without compromising on security.

Infiltration across the borders had drastically reduced mainly because of the fencing along the border and a three-layer security cordoned off the army, paramilitary forces and the state police, too, have proved to be extremely effective in J&K. In fact, ministry officials said, in February and March this year, the infiltration was virtually negligible.

"We want this to be a permanent phenomenon and will work out a strategy for this at the meeting", a

senior ministry official said.

The Centre will also prevail on the states to go in for drastic police reforms to help improve law and order. The recommendations of a committee, headed by former home secretary Dhirendra Singh, which studied the reports of various police commissions, will also be tabled at the meeting.

The states will be advised to further strengthen their intelligence organisations. An important announcement at the conference will be the Centre's decision to increase the allocation, from 60 to 75 per cent, to the states for police modernisation.

The recommendations of the Malimath Committee for changes in the criminal justice system, too, will come up for discussion during the conference.

'CONG CHIEF BEHIND TEHELKA OPERATION'

George sees Sonia hand

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, April 10. — The Janata Dal (United) president, Mr George Fernandes, today said the Tehelka sting operation was an effort "masterminded" by Congress president Mrs Sonia Gandhi and named Mr Priya Ranjan Das Munshi and Mr Oscar Fernandes for their role in aiding the conspiracy.

At the two-day national executive of the JD-U which got off to a start today, the former defence minister demanded that the reports of Justice Phukan Commission and Central Vigilance Commission on the multi-million dollar defence purchases during the Kargil conflict be made public.

When the defence forces want certain equipment during a conflict, the ministry procures it and the minister has no role in the purchases, Mr Fernandes said. The sting operations had adopted questionable means like using "money, liquor and prostitutes" and had extracted statements in "inebriated condition".

He said Mrs Gandhi without understanding the difference between "casket and coffin" was creating confusion to give an impression that corruption had taken place. A casket was a reusable box to carry bodies of the dead while Mrs Gandhi went on saying that the defence forces had purchased coffins that are meant to bury the dead. The price confusion had arisen because of the "mix-up" between the gauge and the weight, Mr Fernandes said.

The Congress dismissed as "irresponsible" Mr Fernandes' allegations. Party spokesman, Mr Abhishek Singhvi, said it was a case of "ulta chor kotwal ko datte." Mr Singhvi said Mr Fernandes had never levelled this allegation until the CBI initiated investigations into the Tehelka scam. The JD-U will soon hold a protest rally in New Delhi to "expose" Mrs Gandhi.



'Nothing against Fernandes'

NEW DELHI/KOLKATA April 10. — Mr Justice SN Phukan, who probed the Tehelka expose into defence deals, has said he "did not find anything" against Mr Fernandes. "I only gave a report containing 600 pages regarding past defence transactions. So far as I remember, I did not find anything against George," he told a TV news channel. In Kolkata defence minister Mr Pranab Mukherjee said he had never given a clean chit to Mr Fernandes in the procurement of defence equipment during the Kargil war. He said in the affidavit filed in the Supreme Court, his department had clearly stated that the arms procurement had neither violated the financial rules of central government nor the Defence Equipment Procurement Procedure 1992. "Hence the question of giving a clean chit to any individual does not arise as no name of any individual has been mentioned in the affidavit," he said. — SNS & PTI

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MiG-21 turnaround

9/4 Coffin to respirator? 51-8

It could be premature to roundly applaud the IAF's contention that it has put the worst of its MiG-21 problems behind it, yet there is no reason to doubt the statistics revealed recently by the Director General (Inspection & Safety) confirming an appreciable decline in the accident rate for that particular aeroplane which forms the bulk of the fleet, and therefore does most of the flying. There would be little purpose served in re-opening old wounds that had caused the MiG-21 to be dubbed a "flying coffin", too many lives have been lost and planes written off. Yet if some major technical shortcomings have been rectified (why did it take three decades to achieve that success?) it can only be good news for the young pilots who will cut their operational teeth on the fighter. That the remedies were worked out in association with the manufacturer would confirm the view that the turbulence that the jet had run into was essentially the result of the collapse of the erstwhile Soviet Union's military-industry complex, the breakdown in product support that forced the procurement of spares from uncertified sources. Some suspicion still persists that the jets built in India were not quite up to scratch.

Technical shortcomings, however, were just one of the major difficulties and only when the advanced jet trainer is inducted will a critical gap in the training profile be bridged and the mismatch between young pilot and demanding plane cease to exist. But make no mistake about it, a "zero" accident rate is not even fantasy. Military aviation requires that man and machine are pushed to the extreme and mishaps are something which every air force learns to live with. Yet the most significant aspect of the purported turnaround of the MiG-21 is that the IAF now intends to double the number of jets it is converting to the Bison — which it says is a contemporary frontline fighting unit. The initial plan to modernize 125 jets was formulated to compensate for the delay in the indigenous LCA (Tejas) entering squadron service. But 250 Bisons, with a ten-year life span, will serve as a respirator to give the IAF considerable breathing space as it sets about identifying and procuring another 126 state-of-the-art jets for which four aircraft types are under consideration. The Bisons will serve as base upon which the force can be built without decisions having to be rushed through. Hopefully that is not mere wishful thinking, for caution reminds that "the proof of the pudding..."

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ARMS AND THE MAN

TWO BROAD QUESTIONS were raised by the still relevant controversy over the Kargil arms purchases. First, were the rules that governed defence procurements flouted when the Defence Ministry, headed by George Fernandes, placed orders to "quickly secure supplies" for Operation Vijay? Secondly, were there financial irregularities in some of the 123 contracts comprising the Kargil-related purchases? The United Progressive Alliance Government's affidavit, filed recently in the Supreme Court in connection with a writ petition, has clearly answered the first question: the Kargil acquisitions were made in line with the Defence Procurement Procedures, 1992 and without violating any financial rule of the Government. The Government has acknowledged, with commendable objectivity and fairness, that the procurement procedures were modified in mid-1999 to telescope the time frame for the imports in the context of Operation Vijay.

The unhappiness that has surfaced in Congress circles over the Government's position is quite unwarranted. It is true that the affidavit falls short of giving a clean chit to Mr. Fernandes. But it does wash away a good part of the stain attached to his tenure. Already under a cloud of suspicion following the Tehelka exposé, 'Operation West End', Mr. Fernandes was accused of circumventing rules and using the conflict as a smokescreen to push through emergency purchases of arms, ammunition, clothing, and other war-related material. What the affidavit tacitly acknowledges is that war situations often require extraordinary measures and that the former Government cannot be faulted for seeking emergency supplies of such things as hand-held thermal imagers, terminally guided munitions, flame throwers, and bullet proof jackets. It is true that a lot of this equipment arrived only after the cessation of hostilities. But wars do not

have set time frames and it would have been impossible to tailor orders on the basis of predictions on when this one would end. The affidavit has also refuted the charge that the telescoped procurement procedure was unjustifiably extended beyond the Kargil war by pointing out that the Army continued to be fully deployed after the end of hostilities and that the threat from across the border had not yet completely receded.

Mr. Fernandes, who was boycotted by the Opposition when he was Defence Minister, may permit himself a small smile at the recent development. However, there is no cause for a self-satisfied smirk as the affidavit cannot be construed as a full exoneration of Kargil-related transactions and actions. The question whether there were irregularities in specific contracts is still open. The Defence Ministry points to the referral of some cases — for example, the case pertaining to the T-90S tanks and armoured recovery vehicles — to the Central Bureau of Investigation. It has also suggested that efforts to address the issues raised by the Comptroller and Auditor General are continuing. The CAG's special audit on Operation Vijay, which strongly suggested that the Kargil purchases were marked by grave financial irregularities, was a severe indictment of the Defence Ministry. Among the issues it raised were: why were Rs. 700 crore worth of orders placed with inexperienced first-time vendors? Did this contribute to a delay in the supply of equipment? Were some items unnecessary? Were others overvalued? The significance of these questions went far beyond the so-called coffin scam, an emotive issue the Opposition focussed on, but essentially a small contract worth Rs. 6.5 crore in a package of Kargil-related deals totalling over Rs. 2,000 crore. It is unfortunate that they still remain largely forgotten and undressed.

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THE HINDU

Pranab sounds China caution

Vishal Thapar
New Delhi, April 4

DEFENCE MINISTER Pranab Mukherjee on Monday sounded a note of caution ahead of Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao's visit to New Delhi, drawing the army leadership's attention to Beijing's military infrastructure in Tibet and the implications of China's rapid modernisation of its armed forces.

Addressing the top brass of the Indian Army in New Delhi, Mukherjee indicated that India wasn't being unrealistic about China's military might while acknowledging the import of defence-related confidence building measures between the two sides.

"A watch has to be kept on Chinese infrastructure in Tibet and its technological and military modernisation programme, and the growth of its Navy," the defence minister said at the army commanders' conference.

Patil's diary

Nathula: Shivraj Patil on Monday visited Nathula, through which border trade with China is to start

Security: Asked if trade through the pass is to start soon, he said 'I did not go there to start trade. I was there to see the internal security situation'

Road ahead: He said only after discussions with the defence ministry and MeA 'we can see about reopening of trade'

Like other major players in the region, India has been keenly observing the rapid growth of the Chinese Navy. Its expected advent into the Indian Ocean Region within a decade will introduce a new military factor in the Indian neighbourhood.

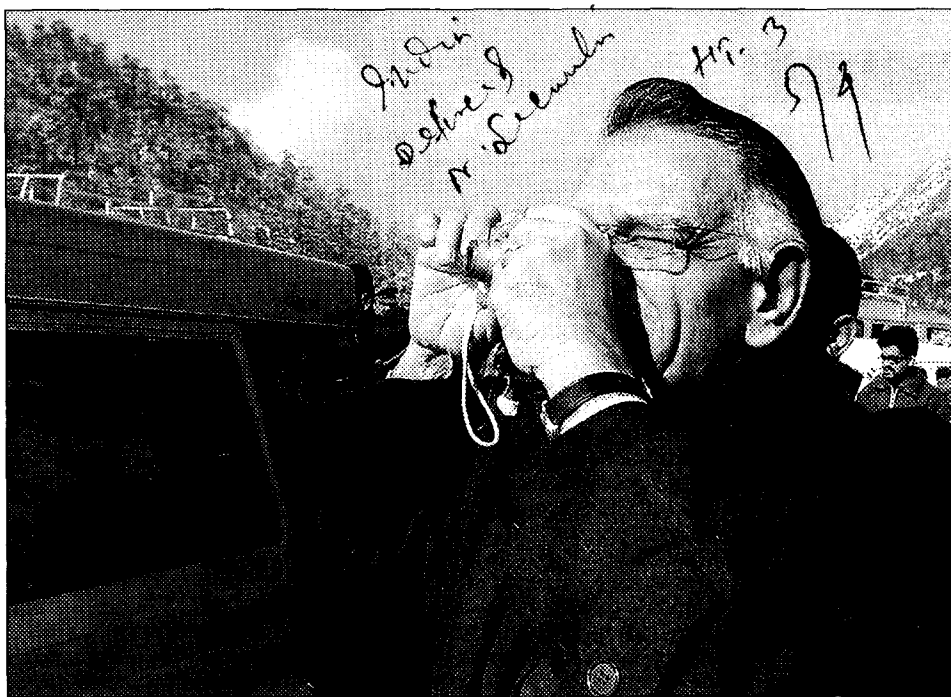
"The Chinese growth is being watched by various powers who are reassessing their own positions vis-à-vis that country. We must be alive to these changes and their implications on our strategy," the defence minister said.

While he was extremely guarded and circumspect on China, Mukherjee was upbeat on the US.

"With the US, we have made progress in expanding the space for understanding of our security concerns and for defence cooperation. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's recent visit has opened new perspectives," the minister said.

Mukherjee expressed worry over the rise of religious fundamentalism in Bangladesh, the stalemate in Sri Lanka and the recent developments in Nepal.

While reiterating India's policy of engaging Pakistan in a composite dialogue, Mukherjee warned the forces against any complacency.



PTI

AS CLOSE AS IT GETS: Home minister Shivraj Patil zooms in on the beauty of Nathula Pass during a visit to Sikkim on Monday.

Free trade inevitable: China

Agencies
Beijing, April 4

RESOLUTION OF the vexed Sino-Indian border issue stays high on his agenda as Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao embarks on a four-nation South Asian tour on Tuesday.

Wen will visit Pakistan on Tuesday, spend a day each in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and then head for a four-day stay in New Delhi from April 9, during which he will hold talks with Manmohan Singh.

"The Chinese Premier's visit to the South Asian countries, as an important diplomatic activity of Chinese leaders in the neighbouring area this year, aims to enhance mutual trust with South Asian countries, deepen friendship, expand cooperation and

Frigates for Pak

Pakistan's navy signed contracts on Monday to have four frigates built in China, the defence ministry said. The F-22P frigates would have helicopters for anti-submarine warfare and with surface-to-surface and surface-to-air missiles, a ministry statement said

Reuters, Islamabad

plan the future in the spirit of 'being a good neighbour and good partner'," foreign ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said. Wen will hold talks with leaders of the four countries and have an in-depth exchange of views on how to

strengthen friendly cooperation with them as well as on issues of common interests, Liu said of the visit.

Wen, a Politburo Standing Committee member of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) noted that he would be visiting Delhi at a time when China and India are celebrating the 55th anniversary of their diplomatic ties.

Special representatives on the India-China boundary question have had four meetings, where the two sides conducted useful discussions on the political guiding principles with "sound progress," Wen noted. "I believe the two sides will be able to find a mutually acceptable solution to the boundary questions through negotiations on an equal footing," Wen said.

অস্ত্র সংগ্রহে আর আমেরিকার মুখাপেক্ষী নই, বুঝিয়ে দিল দিল্লি

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ১ এপ্রিল: ওয়াশিংটন ২৬ মার্চ পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬ যুদ্ধবিমান দেওয়ার ঘোষণা করে। তার তিন দিন পরেই মনমোহন সিংহ সরকারের ৩৮২০ কোটি টাকার যুদ্ধ-সরঞ্জাম কেনার সিদ্ধান্ত। ফ্রান্স, রাশিয়া তো বটেই এমনকী কাতার থেকেও অস্ত্র কিনছে ভারত, কিন্তু কোনও মার্কিন সংস্থার নাম নেই।

পেট্রিয়ট ক্ষেপণাস্রের বিবরণ দিতে ২১ ফেব্রুয়ারি দিল্লি আসে মার্কিন 'সিকিউরিটি কো-অপারেশন গ্রুপ'। সেই দিনই জমি থেকে শূন্যে আঘাত করার 'আকাশ' ক্ষেপণাস্র পরীক্ষা করে সাউথ ব্লক। আমেরিকা চায় পি এ সি ২ সংস্করণটি দিতে। ভারত অনড় পি এ সি ৩-এর নীচে কিছু নেবে না।

পরপর দুটি ঘটনা কেবল প্রতিরক্ষার প্রয়োজনীয় আধুনিকীকরণের পদক্ষেপই নয়, 'বিক্রেতা' আমেরিকার কাছে 'ক্রেতা' দিল্লির স্পষ্ট সংকেতও! কেন্দ্র পেট্রাগনকে বুঝিয়ে দিতে চায়, কেনাবেচার ক্ষেত্রে দিল্লির সামনে এখন অনেক বিকল্প খোলা। তারা একেবারেই মার্কিন মুখাপেক্ষী হয়ে বসে থাকবে না। এবং সামরিক সরঞ্জাম ক্রয়ের ক্ষেত্রে দিল্লি কড়া শর্ত রেখেই এগোবে।

এফ-১৬ ছাড়াও আরও উন্নত এফ-১৮ ভারতকে দেওয়ার কথা বলেছে বৃশ প্রশাসন। তা-ও আবার যৌথ উৎপাদনে। কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার এখনও এই বিষয়ে মনস্তির করেনি। ভারত যে তড়িঘড়ি কোনও সিদ্ধান্ত নেবে না, তা বোঝা গিয়েছে প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়ের কথায়। তিনি বলেছেন, "এটা ইতিবাচক বিষয় যে আমেরিকা এই প্রথম আমাদের এত উন্নত সরঞ্জাম দিতে চাইছে। কিন্তু প্রতিরক্ষা প্রস্তুতির কথা বিচার করে তিন সার্ভিসের কি প্রয়োজন, তার প্রেক্ষিতেই আমরা মার্কিন প্রস্তাব বিবেচনা করে দেখব।"

২৯ মার্চ মন্ত্রিসভার নিরাপত্তা বিষয়ক কমিটি 'স্মার্ট' রকেট লঞ্চার, মিরাজ ২০০০ কে, ডর্নিয়ার প্রভৃতি বিমান কেনার সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে। নতুন সরকারের এটাই এযাবৎ বৃহত্তম সামরিক ক্রয়ের সিদ্ধান্ত। শুধু তাই নয়, এই প্রতিটি বিষয় দীর্ঘ দিন যাবৎ পড়ে ছিল সাউথ ব্লকে। বাজপেয়ী সরকারের আমল থেকেই স্মার্ট বা কাতার থেকে মিরাজ কেনার কথা হচ্ছিল। কিন্তু পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬ দেওয়ার মার্কিন ঘোষণার তিন দিন পরেই কেন্দ্র এই সব চুক্তি করে ফেলতে তৎপর হল। প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রক সূত্রে বলা হচ্ছে, 'এটা অবশ্যই আমেরিকার জন্য একটি বার্তা।

দিল্লি বুঝিয়ে দিতে চায়, প্রতিরক্ষা খাতে আমাদের হাতে বড় ফর্দ রয়েছে। এবং সেখানে আমেরিকা দোকান না খুললেও চলবে।

আমেরিকা যে যৌথ উৎপাদনের প্রস্তাব দিয়েছে, সেই রকম প্রস্তাব অনেক আগেই রাশিয়ার কাছ থেকে কেন্দ্র পেয়েছে। এখন যে মিগ-২৯ কেনা হচ্ছে মস্কো থেকে, গর্বাচভের আমলে তার যৌথ উৎপাদনের প্রস্তাব ছিল। ভারত তখন রাজি হয়নি। কারণ, বিমানবাহিনীর বক্তব্য ছিল, এত বেশি মিগ ২৯-এর প্রয়োজন নেই যে যৌথ উৎপাদন করতে হবে। পরবর্তীকালে অবশ্য দেশের সেরা যুদ্ধবিমান সুখই ৩০ এম কে আইয়ের ক্ষেত্রে যৌথ উৎপাদনের পথে হেঁটেছে দিল্লি।

দিল্লি ১২৬টি মাল্টিরোল কন্সট্রাক্ট এয়ারক্রাফট কেনার তোড়জোর করছে। কিন্তু সেখানেও মার্কিন এফ ১৬-এর পাশাপাশি 'রিকোয়েস্ট ফর ইনফরমেশন' পাঠানো হয়েছে আরও তিনটি দেশে। সুইডেনে গ্রিপিণ বিমানের জন্য, রাশিয়ার কাছে মিগ ২৯-এর উন্নত সংস্করণের জন্য, ফ্রান্সের কাছে মিরাজ ২০০০-এর জন্য। এফ ১৬-র প্রস্তাব থাকলেও বিমানবাহিনী কিন্তু প্রাথমিক ভাবে জানিয়েছে, তারা মিরাজ ২০০০ পেতেই বেশি আগ্রহী।

02 APR 2000

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

মার্কিন আধিপত্যর কাছে আত্মসমর্পণ না করে মনে হচ্ছে প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় চ্যালেঞ্জটাই গ্রহণ করেছেন

রাজার প্রিয়পাত্র হওয়ার জন্য পারিষদদের মধ্যে প্রতিযোগিতার ইতিহাস অতি প্রাচীন। রাজতন্ত্রের নিয়ম মানলে এই প্রতিযোগিতা অনিবার্য। গত সপ্তাহে মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্র পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬ যুদ্ধবিমান বিক্রির সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়ার পর ভারতের বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের প্রতিক্রিয়া থেকে মনে হচ্ছে, ওই প্রতিযোগিতায় হেরে যাওয়ার লজ্জা ঢাকতে সাফাই গাওয়া হচ্ছে। মধ্যরাতে ডাকা সাংবাদিক সম্মেলনে বিদেশ মন্ত্রক জানায় যে আরও বেশি সংখ্যক এফ-১৬, উন্নততর এফ-১৮ যুদ্ধবিমান, মহাকাশ এবং পারমাণবিক গবেষণা প্রযুক্তি ইত্যাদি ভারতকে দেওয়ার প্রস্তাব দিয়েছে মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্র। লঘু করে দেখানোর চেষ্টা হচ্ছে এই তথ্যটি যে পাকিস্তানকে আপাতত দেওয়া হল যুদ্ধবিমান, ভারতকে দেওয়া হল যুদ্ধবিমান কেনার প্রস্তাব। অন্য দিকে প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রকের সংযত সতর্ক প্রতিক্রিয়া সবাইকে স্মরণ করিয়ে দিচ্ছে যে আজকের দিনেও মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের পায়ে সার্বভৌমত্ব বিসর্জন না দিয়ে আন্তর্জাতিক বিশ্বে বেঁচে থাকার একটা বিকল্প আছে। প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় বলেছেন, ভারত মার্কিন প্রস্তাব বিবেচনা করে দেখবে যে তাতে দীর্ঘস্থায়ী নির্ভরযোগ্য লাভ আছে কিনা। গত বছরই মার্কিন প্রতিরক্ষা সচিব এবং ইরাক-সহ বিশ্বের নানা প্রান্তে মার্কিন দাঙ্গাগিরিতে প্রেসিডেন্ট বুশের ঘনিষ্ঠ সহযোগী ডোনাল্ড রামসফেল্ডের দিল্লি সফরের সময় প্রণববাবু তাঁকে মুখের ওপর বলে দিয়েছিলেন যে ভারত আমেরিকাকে এ ব্যাপারে নির্ভরযোগ্য সহযোগী মনে করে

না। বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ রাজনীতিতে আসার আগে পেশাদার কূটনীতিক ছিলেন এবং ওই পেশায় মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের মতো বৃহৎ শক্তির কাছ থেকে আদায়ের প্রতিযোগিতায় প্রতিপক্ষের (পাকিস্তান) কাছে হেরে যাওয়া লজ্জার বিষয়। অন্য দিকে সোভিয়েত-মার্কিন ঠাণ্ডা যুদ্ধের আমল থেকে মন্ত্রিত্ব করা প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় সেই কংগ্রেসি ধারার উত্তরসূরি, যেখানে অস্তুত আন্তর্জাতিক আসরে ভারত প্রবলভাবে নিজস্ব পথে

চলায় বিশ্বাসী। প্রতিরক্ষা এবং বিদেশ মন্ত্রকের দুই ধরনের প্রতিক্রিয়ার মধ্যে দুই মন্ত্রীর মানসিক গঠনের কোনও ছায়াপাত ঘটেছে কিনা তা মনোপ্রাঙ্গী আলোচনার বিষয় হতে পারে। অবশ্যই সব মিলিয়ে ভারতের প্রতিক্রিয়া বিদেশ মন্ত্রকেরও নয়, প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রকেরও নয়। সেটা প্রেসিডেন্ট বুশকে জানিয়েছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিং, বলেছেন দারুণভাবে আশাহত হওয়ার কথা। বৃহৎ শক্তির প্রয়োজন হয় বৃহৎ শক্তির। অতি বৃহৎ শক্তির অতি বৃহৎ শক্তির। বিশ্বব্যাপী কমিউনিজমের পতনের পর মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্র কিছুকাল এই অতি বৃহৎ শক্তির সন্ধানে হাতড়াচ্ছিল। ২০০১ সালের ১১ সেপ্টেম্বরের পর সেই খোঁজ শেষ হয়েছে। এখন সন্ত্রাসবাদ, বিশেষ করে ইসলামি সন্ত্রাসবাদ হল তাদের সেই শত্রু। অতীতে পাকিস্তানকে একতরফাভাবে যুদ্ধান্ত এবং আর্থিক সাহায্য করার মার্কিন যুক্তিটা ছিল কমিউনিস্ট চীনকে দমিয়ে রাখা। আজকের চীনকে দমিয়ে রাখার জন্য কিন্তু গোলাবারুদের উপযোগিতা কমে এসেছে। চীনকে দমাতে হলে এখন তার পণ্যকে আটকাতে হবে। শিল্প উৎপাদনে শ্রম আইন মানা হচ্ছে কিনা, পরিবেশ দূষণ মাত্রাতিরিক্ত হচ্ছে কিনা, আমদানি শুল্কের হার পশ্চিমি দুনিয়ার তুলনায় হচ্ছে কিনা— ইত্যাদি বিষয় উত্থাপন করে বরং চীনকে দমানোর কথা ভাবলেও ভাবা যেতে পারে। অতএব চীনের জুর্জ'নেই' এবং 'এই অবস্থায় পাকিস্তানকে মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্র সন্ত্রাসবাদের বিরুদ্ধে লড়াইয়ে তাঁদের ঘাঁটি হিসাবে দেখছে। মার্কিন বিদেশ সচিব কন্ডোলিজা রাইস সম্প্রতি আবিষ্কার করেছেন যে, 'পাকিস্তান এখন ঠিক পথে হাঁটছে।' তারই পুরস্কার, বহু দিনের দাবি মেনে পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬ দেওয়া।

এফ-১৬ গোত্রের যুদ্ধবিমান ভারতীয় উপমহাদেশে ভারত-সহ কারও নেই। বিশেষজ্ঞদের মতে, এফ-১৬ হল সবরকম আবহাওয়ায় দিনে-রাত্রে সক্রিয়, অতি দ্রুতগামী, তীব্র আঘাত হানার ক্ষমতাসম্পন্ন আকাশযুদ্ধের বিমান। প্রথাগত যুদ্ধেই এর ব্যবহার। আফগানিস্তানের আফিং চাষের জমি ডিঙিয়ে হিন্দুকুশ পাহাড়ের গুহাকন্দর ঘেঁটে ওসামা বিন লাদেনকে সাড়ে তিন

বছরেও বার করতে পারেনি আমেরিকা। সন্ত্রাসবাদের বিরুদ্ধে লড়াইটা যদি এমনই বিস্তীর্ণ কিন্তু কম তীব্রতাসম্পন্ন দীর্ঘস্থায়ী যুদ্ধ হয়, তবে তাতে এফ-১৬-র কোনও ব্যবহার দেখছেন না বিশেষজ্ঞরা। পাকিস্তান তার ইতিহাসে চার-চারবার ভারতের সঙ্গে যুদ্ধে লিপ্ত হয়েছে এবং একমাত্র ভারতের সঙ্গেই যুদ্ধ করেছে। অতএব যতই ক্রিকেট দু'দেশের মানুষকে এক সূত্রে বাঁধুক, বলিউডের সিনেমায় পাক নাট্যকার আবির্ভাবে ফিল্মি ম্যাগাজিনে প্রেমের বন্যা বয়ে যাক এবং প্রেসিডেন্ট মুশারফের মায়ের পুরনো দিল্লিতে তাঁদের প্রাচীন বাসভবনে এসে আবেগাপ্লুত হয়ে যাওয়ার কাহিনী মিডিয়ায় প্রচারিত হোক, পাকিস্তানের দিক থেকে ভারতের জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা বিঘ্নিত হওয়ার আশঙ্কা রয়েছে। কূটনীতি, আন্তর্জাতিক সম্পর্ক এবং পাকিস্তানের অভ্যন্তরীণ রাজনীতি সম্পর্কে সম্পূর্ণ অনভিজ্ঞ ভারতীয় শিল্পী, সাহিত্যিক, বুদ্ধিজীবীদের ইদানীং একটা রেওয়াজ হয়েছে, একবার পাকিস্তান ঘুরে এসেই বলতে শুরু করা, দু'দেশের সাধারণ মানুষ শান্তিতে থাকতে চায়, পরস্পরের কাছে আসতে চায়, সেটা যত দূর সম্ভব বাড়তে পারলেই শান্তি আসবে। দু'দেশের সাধারণ মানুষের মধ্যে যাতায়াত-সহ আদানপ্রদান বাড়ানোতে কারও আপত্তি থাকতে পারে না। কিন্তু ওই বুদ্ধিজীবীদের সব সময়ে হয়ত স্মরণ থাকে না যে, যুদ্ধ করার সিদ্ধান্ত সাধারণ মানুষ নেয় না, নেন দেশের শাসকরা। যুদ্ধটা সাধারণ মানুষ করেও না, করে দেশের সেনাবাহিনী। গণতান্ত্রিক

দেশ বলে ভারতে সরকারের কাছে তাও সাধারণ মানুষের ইচ্ছা-অনিচ্ছার একটা প্রতিফলন ঘটে। পাকিস্তানে তার বালাই নেই। পাকিস্তানে কত সহজে উর্দি পরা সেনানায়ক রাষ্ট্রের সর্বময় ক্ষমতা দখল করতে পারেন তার ইতিহাসটা আয়ুব খান থেকে ইয়াহিয়া খান, জিয়াউল হক হয়ে পরভেজ মুশারফ পর্যন্ত একটু স্মরণ করলে ভাল করবেন ওই বুদ্ধিজীবীরা। এই ধরনের সামরিক একনায়কদের নিজস্ব বদ্ধমূল ধারণাই যে ইতিহাসের পথ নির্দেশ করে,

তার প্রমাণ রয়েছে মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট রিচার্ড নিক্সনের নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা হেনরি কিসিঞ্জারের আত্মকথায়। 'হোয়াইট হাউস ইয়ার্স' নামক ওই গ্রন্থে ১৯৭১ সালের পাক-ভারত যুদ্ধের কূটনৈতিক প্রাক-পর্বের বর্ণনায় কিসিঞ্জার জানাচ্ছেন, জেনারেল ইয়াহিয়া খানের দৃঢ় বিশ্বাস ছিল যে সংখ্যা এবং ওজনের বিচারে ভারতীয় সেনাবাহিনীর ক্ষমতা বেশি হলেও যুদ্ধে পাকিস্তান জিতবে, কারণ মুসলিমরা হিন্দুদের থেকে যুদ্ধে বেশি দক্ষ। কিসিঞ্জার কিন্তু মোটেই পাকিস্তানবিরোধী ছিলেন না এবং ওই যুদ্ধের জন্য তিনি মোটের ওপর ভারতকেই দায়ী করেছেন। ১৯৭১ থেকে ২০০৫-এর মধ্যে রাষ্ট্রগতভাবে পাকিস্তানের কোনও মৌলিক চরিত্রগত পরিবর্তন হয়নি। তাই পাকিস্তান এফ-১৬ পেলে ভারতকে দ্রুত পাল্টা ব্যবস্থা নিতেই হবে, যদিও অতীতে চারবার পাক-ভারত যুদ্ধ-সহ ইতিহাসে নানা দেশে নানা কালে বারবারই প্রমাণিত হয়েছে যে, উন্নততর যুদ্ধান্তই যুদ্ধের ভাগ্য নির্ধারণে একমাত্র শেষ কথা বলে না। কিন্তু দেশের প্রতিরক্ষার দায়িত্ব যাঁদের হাতে ন্যস্ত তাঁরা এ ব্যাপারে কোনও বুঁকি নিতে পারেন না। সেই দায়িত্ব নেই এবং কোনও দিন বহন করতে হয়নি বলেই সি পি আই এম এবারও অতি দ্রুত বিবৃতি দিয়ে অস্ত্র প্রতিযোগিতার বিপদ সম্পর্কে সতর্কতা উচ্চারণ করেছে।

১৯৭১ সালে পূর্ব পাকিস্তানকে কেন্দ্র করে মার্কিন সাহায্যপুষ্ট পাকিস্তানের সামরিক প্রশাসনের সঙ্গে ভারতের কূটনৈতিক লড়াইয়ে ভারতের পক্ষে বিশাল আশীর্বাদ ছিল ওই বছর ৯ আগস্ট স্বাক্ষরিত ভারত-সোভিয়েত ২০ বছরের মৈত্রী চুক্তি (কিসিঞ্জারের বর্ণনায়, তাঁদের পক্ষে 'বিশাল বোমার আঘাত')। আজকের বিশ্ব একক বৃহৎ শক্তিশাসিত। সুতরাং ইন্দিরা গান্ধী, জগজীবন রাম, স্বরণ সিংহের তুলনায় উত্তরসূরি মনমোহন সিং, প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়, নটবর সিংহের কাজটা বেশি কঠিন। মার্কিন আধিপত্যের কাছে আত্মসমর্পণ না করেও মর্যাদার সঙ্গে জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা নিশ্চিত করার চ্যালেঞ্জ তাঁদের সামনে। প্রণববাবু প্রতিক্রিয়া থেকে মনে হচ্ছে, চ্যালেঞ্জটা তাঁরা গ্রহণ করছেন।



সুদীপ্ত সেনগুপ্ত

DEFENCE BONANZA

■ UPGRADATION WORTH
RS 3,820 CR ■ CCS CLEARS
DORNIER, MIRAGE DEALS

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, March 29. — Within days of US making offer to sell warplanes, India today announced a number of defence acquisitions and upgradations worth Rs 3,820 crores and decided to hold negotiations for purchase of 12 French-made Mirage 2005 fighters from Qatar.

The Cabinet Committee on Security today cleared the decision to buy 12 Mirage-2000 fighter aircraft from Qatar. Several other decisions were taken to acquire new planes and ships, all of which will cost several thousand crores of rupees.

Just how much the planes would

cost is not clear, which is why the defence ministry price negotiations are on. The planes are not brand new, but virtually so as an air force assessment team has said they are about 85 per cent new. The initial decision to buy them was taken by the NDA government. For, the estimated price of the planes will be less than buying new ones.

Not only is the defence ministry buying the planes — it is also looking at additional equipment and ground infrastructure to go with the planes. The CCS on 3 September, 2003 had asked the defence ministry for discussions with Qatar. An Indian delegation had gone to Doha for discussions in April last year. Now, that the decision to buy the planes has been taken, the possibility of buying the additional equipment will be looked at.

Speaking to reporters today, the defence minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee, who did not make any statement on the Baglihar hydroelectric project that Pakistan has raised questions about, made several other announcements after the Qatar deal. They include:

■ The upgradation of 14 Sea Harrier naval carrier based fighters with new radars and missiles for Rs 476 crore. These will be done with Israeli help.

Hindustan Aeronautics will be involved in the upgrading process.

■ Development of the Intermediate Jet Trainer will take more time and money. The cost has risen from Rs 180 crore to Rs 467 crore while the time taken to get it ready will go up from 92 months to 104 months. About Rs 159 crore is being kept aside for the plane's Russian engine.

■ India will also acquire 11 Dornier-228 aircraft along with spare engines for the Navy. This will cost Rs 726 crore,

including a forex component of Rs 435 crore.

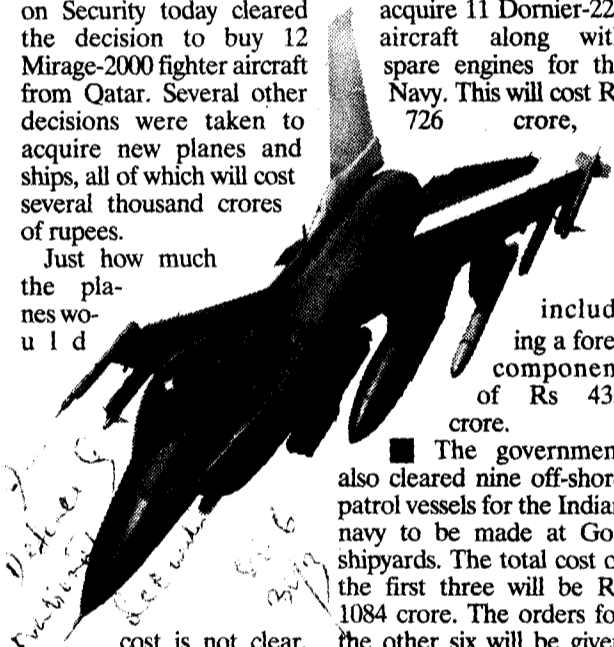
■ The government also cleared nine off-shore patrol vessels for the Indian navy to be made at Goa shipyards. The total cost of the first three will be Rs 1084 crore. The orders for the other six will be given later.

■ The CCS also cleared a composite propellant facility at the cost of Rs 324 crore. It will make 100 tons of propellant for India's missile programme at Nasik. This is a programme of the Defence Research and Development Organisation. The include the nuclear Agni and Prithvi.

■ To ensure that more Indian army officials get to analyse satellite photographs taken from satellites with 1 metre resolution cameras, the CCS set up the Imagery Interpretation Teams at divisional headquarters all over the country. This will allow quicker reaction to enemy action in wartime. Currently, they were installed only at the Army HQ, the six commands and the 12 corps.

■ The CCS also cleared the purchase of a submarine fired torpedo decoy system. The transfer of technology with an Italian firm, Wass, is over and the total cost of the purchase will be Rs 355 crore.

More troops for borders
Mr Pranab Mukherjee today announced the raising of 20 additional battalions of SSB units mainly for the defence of the Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan border. This would mean an addition of about 15,000 troops.



MAP 2005

Cabinet panel clears defence purchases

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MARCH 29. The Cabinet Committee on Security has cleared a number of defence purchases, including the acquisition of 11 Dornier 228 aircraft at a cost of Rs. 726 crores for maritime surveillance purposes, the Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, told presspersons this evening.

Mr. Mukherjee said the CCS approved a Defence Ministry proposal to set up a Rs. 324-crore composite propellant facility under the auspices of the Defence Research and Development Organisation at Na-

sik. The panel also authorised the Defence Ministry to continue price negotiations for the purchase of 12 "used" Mirage 2005 aircraft from the Government of Qatar. According to the Minister, the aircraft had some "85 per cent" life left in them.

Mr. Mukherjee revealed that imagery interpretation teams would be set up at the Army division headquarters at a cost of Rs. 393 crores. At present, these teams exist at Corps and Division level. The CCS also sanctioned the construction of three offshore patrol vehicles at a cost of Rs. 1,089 crores by Goa Shipyards Ltd., while ap-

proval had been given in principle for producing another six OPVs.

A sum of Rs. 476.69 crores was sanctioned for the upgradation of 14 Sea Harrier aircraft by the Cabinet panel. The upgradation would include new-generation radars and missiles.

The purchase of a complete C-303 submarine fire torpedo decoy system from an Italian firm, involving the transfer of technology as well, was cleared at a total cost of Rs. 355 crores. Bharat Dynamics Ltd. would construct another eight systems under licence.

According to Mr. Mukherjee,

the CCS revised upwards the project cost of the Intermediate Jet Trainer project being executed by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. As against the original cost of Rs. 180 crores, the project would now cost Rs. 467 crores. This includes the purchase of a new Russian-made engine for the aircraft — AL-551 — at a cost of Rs. 159 crores.

A Home Ministry proposal to raise 20 new battalions for the Seema Suraksha Bal for deployment along the Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders was also approved by the Cabinet panel, the Defence Minister added.

Pranab reiterates concern over F-16 sale to Pakistan

KOLKATA, MARCH 28. The Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, today reiterated India's concern over the U.S. offering the F-16s to Pakistan.

"The F-16s and other lethal weapons are not required for fighting terrorism and are used in full-fledged wars. Given Pakistan's track record, we fear that such weapons will be directed towards India," Mr. Mukherjee told reporters on the sidelines of the 77th annual general meeting of the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) here.

Mr. Mukherjee said time and again India has expressed its reservations against giving the F-16s and other 'lethal' weapons to Pakistan.

"We have let known our displeasure to the U.S. Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, and the Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, when she visited India. Even the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, had spoken to the U.S. President, George Bush, over the issue. The move may upset the ongoing progressive dialogue between the two countries," he said.

The Defence Minister also made it clear that India will not compromise with its defence preparedness under any circumstances although the country does not have any intention to start an arms race in the region.

To a specific question on whether India will accept U.S.' offer of military hardware, he said, "this is the first time the U.S. is offering military hardware to India."

He, however, did not elaborate on the issue. — UNI

প্রণবকে আমন্ত্রণ, এফ-১৬ নিয়ে ক্ষোভ কমাতে ব্যগ্র আমেরিকা

জয়ন্ত ঘোষাল • নয়াদিল্লি

২৮ মার্চ: খুব অল্প সময়েই ইতিহাসের পুনরাবৃত্তি হয়।

মার্কিন বিরোধী অসন্তোষ লঘু করার কৌশল হিসাবে কয়েক বছর আগে বাজপেয়ী সরকারের উপ-প্রধানমন্ত্রী লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণীকে ওয়াশিংটনে রাজকীয় সংবর্ধনা দেওয়া হয়েছিল। এ বার পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬ দেওয়ার পরে সেই একই কায়দায় মনমোহন সিংহ সরকারে দু'নম্বর স্থানটি যার, সেই প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়কে আমেরিকায় নিয়ে যেতে ব্যগ্র প্রশাসন।

পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬ দেওয়ার ঘটনাটি অপ্রত্যাশিত ছিল না মনমোহন-সরকারের কাছে। মার্কিন প্রতিরক্ষাসচিব ডোনাল্ড রামসফেল্ড চার মাস আগেই প্রণববাবুকে বলেছিলেন, পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬ দেওয়া হবে। প্রণববাবু তখনই তাঁকে জানিয়ে দেন, “এমনটা হলে আমাদেরও তার প্রতিবাদে সরব হতে হবে।” এর পর মার্কিন বিদেশসচিব কন্ডোলিজা রাইসের দিল্লি আগমন। তিনিও প্রধানমন্ত্রীকে এফ-১৬ নিয়ে ইঙ্গিত দিয়ে যান।

সুতরাং পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬ দেওয়া নিয়ে ভারত যা প্রতিক্রিয়া জানিয়েছে, আমেরিকার কাছে তা অপ্রত্যাশিত নয়। দিল্লির ক্ষোভ কমাতে প্রণববাবুকে তড়িঘড়ি করে আমেরিকায় নিয়ে যাওয়ার চেষ্টা শুরু হয়েছে। জুলাই মাসের প্রথম সপ্তাহেই আমেরিকায় যাওয়ার জন্য আমন্ত্রণ জানানো হয়েছে তাঁকে। শুধু আমন্ত্রণই নয়, ‘স্কুট’ প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রীকে ঠান্ডা করতে ব্যাপক আয়োজন শুরু করেছে বুশ প্রশাসন। ভারতকে এফ-১৬-এর চেয়েও উন্নত এবং শক্তিশালী যুদ্ধবিমান দিতে তারা প্রস্তুত বলে জানিয়েছে আমেরিকা। এফ-১৬ না হলেও এফ-১৮ এ বার পেতেই পারে ভারত।

বুশ প্রশাসনের ডাকে সাড়া দিয়ে প্রণববাবু আমেরিকায় যাবেন, কিন্তু অস্ত্র কী কেনা হবে, না-হবে সে ব্যাপারে এখনই তাদের কোনও প্রতিশ্রুতি দিতে তিনি রাজি নন। রাশিয়ার কাছ থেকেও বেশ কিছু অস্ত্র কেনার কথাবার্তা চলছে। এ ছাড়া সুইডেন, ফ্রান্স, ইজরায়েল-সহ বিভিন্ন দেশের সঙ্গেও অস্ত্র কেনা নিয়ে আলাপ আলোচনা হচ্ছে। প্রণববাবু সব দেখবেন, শুনবেন। কিন্তু সিদ্ধান্ত নেবে মন্ত্রিসভার নিরাপত্তা বিষয়ক কমিটি। জুলাই মাসে আমেরিকা যাওয়ার কথা ছিল খোদ প্রধানমন্ত্রীর। কন্ডোলিজা রাইস দ্বিপাক্ষিক বৈঠকের জন্য এই আমন্ত্রণ জানিয়েছিলেন। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সচিবালয় সূত্রে বলা হচ্ছে, সেপ্টেম্বর মাসে রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের সাধারণ অধিবেশনে যোগ দিতে তাঁকে নিউইয়র্ক যেতে হবে। তার আগে মে মাসে মস্কোতে এবং স্কটল্যান্ডে প্রেসিডেন্ট বুশের সঙ্গে মনমোহনের দ্বিপাক্ষিক বৈঠক হওয়ার কথা। তাই এখন তড়িঘড়ি করে যাওয়ার কোনও মানে হয় না। ৯মে মস্কোতে দ্বিতীয় বিশ্বযুদ্ধে মিত্রপক্ষের জয়ের ৬০ বছর পূর্তি অনুষ্ঠানে যোগ দিতে যাবেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। আর জুলাই মাসে স্কটল্যান্ডে জি-৮ শীর্ষ সম্মেলন হবে।

বাজপেয়ী যখন প্রধানমন্ত্রী ছিলেন, তখন জাতীয় নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা ব্রজেশ মিশ্র এবং বিদেশমন্ত্রী যশোবন্ত সিংহের সঙ্গে মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্রের ঘনিষ্ঠ সম্পর্ক গড়ে উঠেছিল। সেই সময় পাকিস্তানের প্রতি আমেরিকার পক্ষপাতমূলক আচরণের অভিযোগ তুলতেন উপ-প্রধানমন্ত্রী লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী আর প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী জর্জ ফার্নান্ডেজ। দ্বিধাবিভক্ত মন্ত্রিসভা সামলাতে সে সময় হিমসিম খেয়েছে আমেরিকাও। তৎকালীন মার্কিন রাষ্ট্রদূত রবার্ট ব্ল্যাকউইল এর পর আটের পাতায়

● পাক নিন্দায় নটবর, কেব্রকে জোপ বিজেপির...পৃঃ ৫

এফ-১৬ নিয়ে

ক্ষোভ কমাতে

প্রথম পালার পর
আডবানীর ঘনিষ্ঠ হয়ে ওঠেন। অল্প
দেওয়ার ব্যাপারে জর্জকে প্রতিশ্রুতি
দেন তিনি। ব্ল্যাকউইলের কাছে জর্জ
অস্ত্রের তালিকাও দিয়েছিলেন। যে
তালিকাটি জর্জ ফার্নান্ডেজ
আমেরিকাকে দিয়েছিলেন সেই
তালিকাটি ইতিমধ্যে সংশোধিত হয়ে
কলেবরে আরও সমৃদ্ধ।

জুলাই মাসে বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর
সিংহেরও আমেরিকা যাওয়ার কথা।
সবচেয়ে বড় কথা এই বছরের শেষে
খোদ প্রেসিডেন্ট বুশের ভারত
সফরেরও সম্ভাবনা খতিয়ে দেখা
হচ্ছে। পাকিস্তানকে যে এফ-১৬
দেওয়া হবে সেটা জানতে পেরে বেশ
কয়েক সপ্তাহ আগেই মন্ত্রিসভার
নিরাপত্তা বিষয়ক বৈঠকে বিষয়টি
আলোচিত হয়। তখনও প্রণববাবু
বলেছিলেন এফ-১৬-এর চেয়ে আরও
অনেক উন্নত অস্ত্র এ দেশে আসছে।
কিন্তু প্রেসলার সংশোধনীর এককালীন
ব্যতিক্রম ঘটিয়ে পাকিস্তানকে এফ-১৬
দেওয়া হলে তার প্রতীকী প্রভাব
দেশের অভ্যন্তরীণ রাজনীতিতে
পড়বে। সেই কারণে এই মার্কিন
সিদ্ধান্তের প্রতিবাদ জানানোর
রাজনৈতিক অবস্থান সে দিনই গ্রহণ
করেছিল সরকার।

বাজপেয়ী জমানায় কংগ্রেসের
অভিযোগ ছিল, কূটনৈতিক ব্যর্থতার
কারণে মার্কিন শক্তির কাছে সরকার
অনেক বেশি নতজানু হয়ে পড়েছে।
সেই নির্ভরশীলতার বিদেশনীতি থেকে
বেরনোর চেষ্টা প্রথম দিন থেকেই
করছে মনমোহন সরকার। গত বছর
সেপ্টেম্বর মাসে রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের তাঁর
বক্তৃতায় প্রধানমন্ত্রী এই নিরপেক্ষ
বিদেশনীতির কথা ঘোষণা করেছেন।
সরকারের অন্যতম রাজনৈতিক
নির্ণায়ক শক্তি বামদলগুলিও
সরকারের কাছ থেকে এই অবস্থান
প্রত্যাশা করে। আর তাই এফ-১৬-এর
বদলে নানান অস্ত্রের বন্যা বইয়ে
দিলেও ভারত এ ব্যাপারে আমেরিকার
সমালোচনা থেকে সরে আসবে না।
ইতিমধ্যেই মার্কিন বিমান নির্মাণ
সংস্থা বলতে শুরু করেছে আরও
অত্যাধুনিক এফ-১৬ দিতে তারা
প্রস্তুত। মনমোহন সরকার এটাও
বুঝতে পারছে যে, পাকিস্তানকে এফ-
১৬ দিয়ে দক্ষিণ-পূর্ব এশিয়ার অস্ত্র
প্রতিযোগিতা আরও উষ্ণে দিল
আমেরিকা। তাই খুব সতর্কতার সঙ্গে
পা ফেলতে চাইছে তারা। প্রণববাবু
বলেছেন, অস্ত্র প্রতিযোগিতায় আমরা
যোগ দিতে চাই না।

ঠান্ডা লড়াই তুঙ্গে থাকাকালীন
১৯৭১-এ প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী জগজীবন রাম
মাত্র পনেরো মিনিটে বৈঠক শেষ করে
দিয়ে তৎকালীন মার্কিন জাতীয়
নিরাপত্তা উপদেষ্টা হেনরি কিসিঙ্গারকে
বুঝিয়ে দিয়েছিলেন, ভারত সরকার
মার্কিন কর্তাদের জো-হুজুরবৃত্তি করতে
রাজি নয়। মার্কিন-আধিপত্যের এই
জমানাতেও প্রণববাবুরা মনোস্তর্ভাব
বদলাতে রাজি নন।

Air Force Can Do With Reliable, User-Friendly Sukhois

Pranab says India's ready to look into US package

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 27 MARCH

TWO days after expressing disappointment over the US' sale of F-16s to Pakistan, India on Sunday signalled its readiness to take a hard look at Washington's compensation package for New Delhi, which includes F-18s, Patriot anti-missile systems as well as systems for management of nuclear weapons. In a clear indication that India might be interested in looking at what the US has put on the table as part of its "South Asian match-up", Union defence minister Pranab Mukherjee said India will "actively consider" Washington's offer.

"This is the first time we have received an offer of the kind from the US. Naturally, when the offer is there, it will have to be actively considered by the government of India keeping in view the requirements of our armed forces. Though earlier we used to have sometimes some equipment of high technology, never before an offer of such sophisticated equipment including planes and others were made which have been made now," the minister said in Kolkata.

The remarks are significant for two reasons. The Indian Air Force has no component from the US. It is built on planes from the Soviet Union and France — MiGs, Sukhois and Mirages. There is a strong view within the

Air Force that India can do with Sukhois as they have proved to be reliable and user-friendly for Indian pilots.

At the same time, there is also a view that defence purchases are becoming diverse after the previous NDA government took the decision to introduce Israeli weapons system. The proposed Phalcon AWACS purchase is part of this diversification.

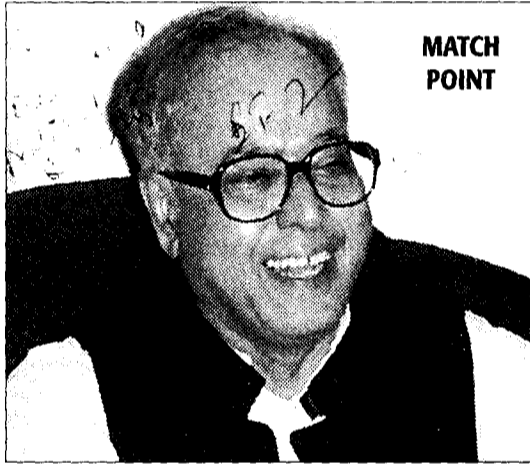
Meanwhile, Lockheed Martin,

Lockheed Martin is currently manufacturing F-16s in two versions. While Block 50-52 was being supplied to US and European air forces, Block 60 was developed exclusively for United Arab Emirates. "We are ready to develop new Block 70 for the IAF," the official said.

Besides Lockheed, the US announcement has also cleared the ground for the other American aviation giant Boeing to bid for India's plans to acquire

126 multi-role combat aircraft. The other big competitors are the Dassault, the makers of French Mirage fighters, Swedish Grippen and Russians. The F-16s carry a broad range of weapons of American, European and Israeli make and, under the sales option, it would be up to New Delhi to go in for any choice. The Falcons in their air-to-air combat role carry

MATCH POINT



the manufacturers of F-16, confirmed that the company has offered to build "exclusive" and Indi-compatible F-16 fighters for the Indian Air Force, much superior to any existing fighters in service world over. "If India's requirements are beyond any existing fighters, we are prepared to make upgraded F-16s to India's specifications with complete transfer of technology," Mike Kelly, senior executive of Lockheed Martin told a news agency.

The proposed deal envisages supply of 18 aircraft in fly-away conditions and the rest 108 assembled in India under technolo-

America-made Mamram AIM-120 Beyond Visual Range missiles as well as French Mica BVRs.

Mr Kelly said the total US package would include provisions for product support and training of personnel and under the programme being worked out. 24 Indian pilots would be trained in the US on F-16s and 50-60 personnel for maintenance purpose. On the sale of P3C Orion long-range maritime reconnaissance aircraft to the navy, the Lockheed officials said negotiations were continuing and the deal could be signed by the end of the year.

F-16s for Pak, India keeps hope airborne

OUR BUREAU

March 26: Before the arms race, the credit race.

President George W. Bush's all-clear to the sale of F-16 fighters to Pakistan has ignited a scramble in Delhi and Washington to establish that India has not lost out in the dash to be in the good books of the world's sole superpower.

Keen to balance the sale scales, the Bush administration has offered Delhi a larger number of F-16s and possibly the advanced F-18s in addition to access to America's nuclear and space technology. India has been denied access to US nuclear and dual-use technology since the mid-1970s.

Bush had called Manmohan Singh on Friday evening — the eve of Holi in Delhi — to convey the sale to Pakistan, drawing an expression of "deep disappointment" from the Prime Minister.

However, a few hours later, a bleary-eyed damage-control bid had stirred off the ground. The foreign ministry spokesperson held an unusual midnight briefing, explaining how America has offered to sell India F-16s or F-18s.

By this evening, unnamed US officials in Washington were also talking of "upgrading and broadening" the strategic partnership with India by exploring the possibility of cooperation in early-warning and missile-defence systems.

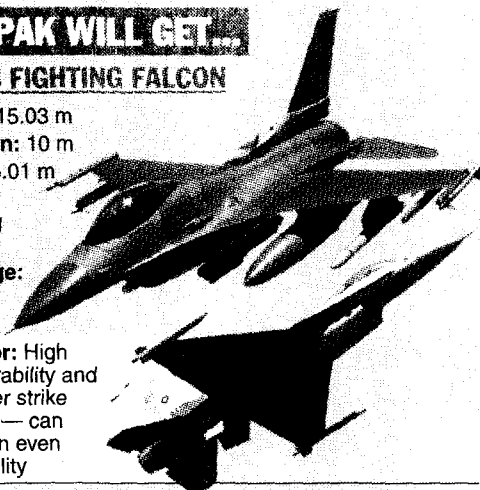
The officials also hinted at cooperation in civil nuclear energy and nuclear safety and co-production of certain defe-

WHAT PAK WILL GET...

F-16 A/B FIGHTING FALCON

- Length: 15.03 m
- Wingspan: 10 m
- Height: 5.01 m
- Weight: 14,968 kg (loaded)
- Max range: 545 km

Feared for: High manoeuvrability and all-weather strike capability — can be lethal in even zero visibility



...AND INDIA MAY GET

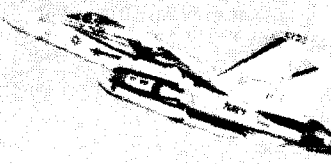
F/A-18 HORNET

- Length: 18.5 m
- Wingspan: 13.68 m
- Height: 4.87 m
- Weight: 29,932 kg (loaded)
- Max range: 2,346 km

PLUS

- Access to nuclear and space technology
- Cooperation in missile defence
- Co-production of some defence items

Feared for: Versatility — can switch between attack and bombing modes with ease — and raw power



nce items but they refused to go into "specific terms".

A US team is expected to be in India soon.

Defence minister Pranab Mukherjee said if the American proposal matches India's requirements, it would be considered.

That is a big if because the perception in the Indian defence establishment is that America is an "erratic and unreliable" arms merchant that can choke supply at will. Bes-

ides, the IAF's inventory does not have US-made combat aircraft, a factor that makes compatibility difficult.

But what nobody would admit in public was the inevitability of a fresh arms race in the subcontinent. India, which is ready with a multi-billion-dollar defence shopping list, will have to pump in more resources to maintain the current level of asymmetry with Pakistan once the new F-16s land in Islamabad.

Pakistan welcomed the news of the F-16 sale with glee. Not only Pakistan, Bush's home state Texas, too, is happy. Lockheed Martin Corp, the builder of the planes, had warned that it would have to close the production line that employs about 5,000 workers in Fort Worth, Texas, if it did not get new orders.

However, officials in Delhi hope that Pakistan will be less happy when the full impact of the Indian package sinks in.

Hours after clearing the deal, the US renewed a warning against travel to Pakistan.

The gains and losses should not be judged by F-16s alone, the officials added, hastening to point out that US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice took the trouble of tracking down foreign minister Natwar Singh in Yangon.

Rice told Mukherjee that Washington had decided to offer India not only a much more robust defence partnership but also access to America's nuclear and space technology.

The US offer of access to its nuclear and space technology also holds out the hope that Delhi will not have to worry about supply of fuel for Tarapur or getting new reactors.

The telephone calls by Bush and Rice show that Washington wanted India on board before announcing the decision, the Indian officials said.

Rice's predecessor, Colin Powell, during a visit to the region last year, had sprung a surprise on Indian leaders when he announced the US decision to grant non-Nato ally status to Pakistan. (See P 6)

জঙ্গি দমনে কেন্দ্রে আজ ফের বৈঠক

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার: জঙ্গি দমনের লক্ষ্যে আজ, মঙ্গলবার নয়াদিল্লিতে আবার বৈঠক ডেকেছে কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রক। ওই বৈঠকের মূল আলোচ্য ভারত-বাংলাদেশ সীমান্তে অপরাধ ও অনুপ্রবেশ। পশ্চিমবঙ্গ থেকে বৈঠকে যোগ দিতে যাচ্ছেন ইনটেলিজেন্স ব্রাঞ্চার অতিরিক্ত ডিরেক্টর জেনারেল। গত শনিবারেই পশ্চিমবঙ্গ-সহ নকশাল-অধ্যুষিত সাত রাজ্যের পদস্থ প্রতিনিধিদের সঙ্গে বৈঠকে বসেছিলেন কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্রসচিব।

স্বরাষ্ট্র দফতর সূত্রের খবর, সীমান্তের বিভিন্ন জায়গা দিয়ে আই এস আইয়ের চর এবং নোট জালিয়াতেরা বাংলাদেশ থেকে ভারতে ঢুকছে। অনুপ্রবেশ ঠেকাতে গুলিও চালাতে হচ্ছে বি এস এফ-কে। বি এস এফের নির্দিষ্ট প্রস্তাব কার্যকর করতে পারেনি রাজ্য। এ ডি জি (আই বি) সুজিত সরকার সোমবার বলেন, “সীমান্তে কাঁটাতারের বেড়া দেওয়ার কাজ কতটা এগিয়েছে, কোথায়, কী ধরনের সমস্যা হচ্ছে, কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রক সবই খতিয়ে দেখবে।” অসম, ত্রিপুরা ও মেঘালয়ের পুলিশকর্তাদের ওই বৈঠকে ডাকা হয়েছে কি না, সুজিতবাবু তা জানাতে পারেননি।

ভারত-বাংলাদেশের সীমান্তের মোট দৈর্ঘ্য ৪,০৯৭ কিলোমিটার। বি এস এফের অতিরিক্ত ডিরেক্টর জেনারেল এস আই এস আহমেদ বলেন, “কিছু দিন আগে ২,২০০ কিমি অংশে সমীক্ষা চালিয়ে দেখা গিয়েছে, ‘জিরো লাইন’ বা সীমান্তরেখার উপরেই আছে প্রায় ৩০০ গ্রাম। এর মধ্যে ৭০টি গ্রামকে আরও ভিতরে সরিয়ে নিতে বলা হয়েছে রাজ্য সরকারকে। ওই সব অঞ্চলের বহু জায়গায় দুকুতী বা অনুপ্রবেশকারীরা গ্রামবাসীদের ঘরে লুকিয়ে পড়ছে। তাদের ধরতে গিয়ে আক্রান্ত হচ্ছেন সীমান্তরক্ষীরা।” বি এস এফের অভিযোগ, এই ব্যাপারে রাজ্য বিন্দুমাত্র উদ্যোগী হয়নি। এ ডি জি (আই বি) বলেন, “ওই গ্রামগুলি বহু বছর ধরে ওই জায়গায় রয়েছে। গ্রামগুলি সরিয়ে আনা অতি জটিল কাজ।”

বি এস এফ-এর ডি জি রঞ্জিতশেখর মুসাহারি জানান, সীমান্তে প্রায় ৩০০ কিলোমিটার অংশে কাঁটাতারের বেড়া দেওয়ার কাজ হয়েছে। কাজ চলছে আরও প্রায় ১৫০ কিমি অংশে। কাঁটাতারের বেড়া দেওয়ার কাজ হবে ৪৯২ কিলোমিটারে।

এ দিকে, রাজ্যের স্বরাষ্ট্রসচিব অমিতকরণ দেবের সঙ্গে পুলিশের ডি জি এবং এ ডি জি (আই বি) শনিবার নয়াদিল্লিতে কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্রসচিবের সঙ্গে আলোচনায় অংশ নেন। বৈঠকে ছিলেন নকশাল অধ্যুষিত আরও ছ’টি রাজ্যের প্রতিনিধিরা। পশ্চিমবঙ্গ, বিহার, ঝাড়খণ্ড ও ওড়িশার পুলিশকর্মীদের নিয়ে যে-টাঙ্ক ফোর্স তৈরি হয়েছে, তার কার্যকারিতা বাড়ানো, পুরুলিয়া, বাঁকুড়া, পশ্চিম মেদিনীপুরের উপক্রমত অঞ্চলে মোতায়েন করেও প্রত্যাহার করে নেওয়া এক ব্যাটালিয়ন সি আর পি-কে ফের মোতায়েন করা, সেই সঙ্গে আরও এক ব্যাটালিয়ন বি এস এফ দেওয়ার আর্জি জানিয়েছেন পশ্চিমবঙ্গের স্বরাষ্ট্রসচিব।

কলকাতায় ঘাঁটি গেড়ে দুই জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠীর নাশকতার ছক

পীযুষ সাহা ● কালিয়াচক

মালদহের সঙ্গেই কলকাতাতেও আল-বদর এবং লস্কর-ই-তেবা জঙ্গিরা ঘাঁটি গেড়ে নাশকতার ছক কষছে। মালদহের কালিয়াচকে ধৃত লস্করের জঙ্গি নাজির আহমেদ খানকে জেরা করে পুলিশ এই তথ্য জানতে পেরেছে। মালদহের পুলিশ সুপার শশীকান্ত পূজারী বলেন, “আল-বদর জঙ্গি সংগঠন বেশ কিছু দিন ধরেই মালদহের পাশাপাশি কলকাতায় ঘাঁটি গেড়েছে। পশ্চিমবঙ্গে বড় কিছু ঘটতে আল-বদর সম্ভব হতে পারে।”

নাজিরকে জেরা করে পুলিশ সন্দেহ করছে আল-বদরের সঙ্গেও তার সম্পর্ক ঘনিষ্ঠ। পুলিশ সূত্রে জানা গিয়েছে, কুপওয়ারা এলাকায় আল-বদরের ‘স্বঘোষিত’ কমান্ডার-ইন-চিফ হিসাবেই নাজির পরিচিত। ধৃত জঙ্গি স্থানীয় বেকার যুবকদের কাজের লোভ দেখিয়ে কাশ্মীরে নিয়ে যেতে একাধিকবার কালিয়াচকে এসেছে বলে প্রমাণ মিলেছে। কিন্তু কত জনকে নাজির জঙ্গি দলে সামিল করতে পেরেছে তা পুলিশের কাছে স্পষ্ট নয়।

শনিবার কালিয়াচকের যদুপুর গ্রাম পঞ্চায়েতের সোলেপুর গ্রাম থেকে নাজির ধরা পড়ে। মালদহ পুলিশের সঙ্গে জম্মু-কাশ্মীর পুলিশের টাস্ক ফোর্সও ওই অভিযানে সামিল হয়। ধৃতকে আশ্রয় দেওয়ার অভিযোগে নিজামুদ্দিন ও সোনা শেখ নামে দু’জনকে ধরা হয়। নিজামুদ্দিন কাশ্মীরে ইটভাটায় কাজ করতে গেলে তার সঙ্গে নাজিরের পরিচয় হয়।

নাজিরের অন্য শাগরেদদের খোঁজে রবিবারে চিক্রনি তল্লাশি চালিয়েও পুলিশ কাউকে ধরতে পারেনি। ধৃত জঙ্গিকে সোমবার মহকুমা বিচারবিভাগীয় ম্যাজিস্ট্রেটের আদালতে হাজির করানো হয়। তদন্তের স্বার্থে জম্মু-কাশ্মীর পুলিশ তাকে নিয়ে যাওয়ার আবেদন জানায়। আদালতের নির্দেশে কড়া নিরাপত্তায় নাজিরকে নিয়ে রওনা হয় জম্মু-কাশ্মীর পুলিশ।

নাজিরকে কাশ্মীরে নিয়ে যাওয়া হলেও তার ছায়া যেন তাড়া করছে সোলেপুরের বাসিন্দাদের। মিশুক স্বভাবের যে যুবক বেড়াতে গিয়েও গাঁয়ের কচিকাঁচাদের পড়াতে ব্যস্ত হয়ে পড়ত, সেই নাজির আহমেদ খান জঙ্গি

সংগঠনের প্রথম সারির নেতা তা ভাবতেই শিউরে উঠেছে সোলেপুর। পুলিশের কাছ থেকে এ কথা জানার পর স্তম্ভিত হয়ে গিয়েছেন বাসিন্দারা। কারও মুখে কথা সরছে না।

ধৃত সোনার মা হাসিনা বিবি ও স্ত্রী আরেফা বিবি বলেন, “মাঝে-মাঝেই নাজির আসত। বলত, ‘কাশ্মীরে থাকি। বাংলাটা কেমন তা দেখতে এসেছি।’ ৫ মাস আগে কয়েক জন বন্ধুকে এনে কয়েক দিন থেকে চলে যায়। ভাল লোক ভেবে বাড়িতে রেখেছিলাম। আমাদের যে এমন সর্বনাশ হবে ভাবতে পারিনি।” বাড়ির সামনে ভিড় করে থাকা বাসিন্দাদের অনেকেই দাবি করেন, নাজির যে জঙ্গি তা তাঁরাও জানতেন না। সোনাও জানতেন না। তবে নিজামুদ্দিন ‘সব কিছুই’ জানত বলে বাসিন্দাদের অনেকেই সন্দেহ।

এলাকার আসরাফুল হক, ওবেদুর রহমান, হাফিজুদ্দিন শেখদের সঙ্গে কথা বলে জানা গিয়েছে, দিনে পাঁচ বার নমাজ পড়ত নাজির। সকালে গিয়ে মোড়ের চায়ের দোকানে ঘণ্টাখানেক চুটিয়ে আড্ডা মারত। কাশ্মীরের নানা গল্পও শোনাত।

J&K bus no threat to security: PM

Central agencies cleared entry permit scheme

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, March 17

PRIME MINISTER Manmohan Singh gave the assurance that India's position on Jammu and Kashmir and its security was in no way compromised by allowing the special entry permit for the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus, which is to be flagged off on April 7.

The issue dominated Question Hour in the Rajya Sabha as the NDA members described as a "security threat" the move to replace passport and visa by special entry permits, since these would have no check on the antecedents of people from Pakistan.

The Prime Minister, however, said, "This, in no way, poses any danger to our security. In fact, the issue was discussed at length with the security agencies before the government took this decision. We have to understand that we're dealing with a human problem. The problem of divided families".

While referring to the missing Pakistan cricket fans, Opposition leader Jaswant Singh said that, when such incidents were happening, the government should not have discontinued the use of passport and visa. The Rajya Sabha Chairman said there would be a detailed discussion on the issue later in the House. However, this failed to pacify the agitated NDA members.



Army Chief J.J. Singh and his wife at the Kaman bridge near Uri on the LoC.

In fact, foreign minister Natwar Singh said the move had been widely appreciated by the people of J&K. "I can categorically assure the House that the decision will in no way compromise our security, sovereignty and our political stand", he added.

However, Jaswant Singh maintained that he failed to understand how India would gain politically, or diplomatically, by doing away with the visa and passport system. "Our government had initiated the move to start the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service, but we were very clear that this wouldn't be without passport and visa", he remarked.

Former J&K chief minister Farooq Abdullah said Pakistan should not be allowed to dictate terms on this issue.

Dawood takes Bangla route to Mumbai

Rajnish Sharma
New Delhi, March 14

CONCERNED OVER intelligence reports suggesting that underworld don Dawood Ibrahim was making fresh attempts to consolidate his base in Mumbai, the Union home ministry has issued an advisory to the Maharashtra government asking it to put its police force on high alert.

There's worrying news for West Bengal and all north-eastern states that share a border with Bangladesh as well. Home ministry sources said Dawood is trying to use the porous India-Bangladesh border to "push his operatives into India".

Members of the D-Company gang, sources added, have been specifically asked to focus on strengthening Dawood's operations in Mumbai. "We have been receiving these inputs for sometime now and have alerted the state government," a senior home ministry official said.

Using Bangladesh as a staging point makes sense, argued intelligence officials. Indian sleuths say that ISI bosses have advised Dawood gang members to infiltrate the counterfeit currency, construction and narcotics businesses in Mumbai.

For a brief period, India had succeeded in getting Pakistan to put pressure on Dawood and the don was on the run. In the UAE, too, Dawood found the going tough after New Delhi managed to convince the Dubai authorities to crack down on D-Company. In the last two years, UAE has arrested and deported several key members of the gang. Cornered, Dawood fled to Saudi Arabia. Here too, the don soon found the place inhospitable especially after the US launched a war against terror.

Now, Dawood is reportedly feeling unsafe even in Pakistan and has been lying low in a safehouse at a hill station near Islamabad. Sleuths say he is now trying to regroup and is determined to build his network in India.

✽ **Related report on Page 2**

The Armed Forces deployed on Counter Insurgency operations, Armed Forces Special Powers Act, in the North-east region with special reference to Manipur

By JR MUKHERJEE

THE Armed Forces (the Army, Navy, Air Force and their auxiliaries) are an instrument of the State. Their primary role is to defend the nation's territorial integrity and vital interests. This implies defence against external armed aggression. The Armed Forces have a secondary role, which is to aid civil power to maintain and restore law and order, as also in case of natural calamities and catastrophes. Assistance in natural calamities is beyond the purview of this article and is not addressed further. The Armed Forces are to be called upon to maintain and restore law and order, only when the situation is beyond control of the police, Armed Police and Paramilitary Forces/Central Police Organisations.

Public order

When called upon, the Armed Forces operate in cooperation with the civil administration, so that the situation affecting the maintenance of public order is effectively dealt with. In situations wherein employment is to bring rioting, communal riots and so on under control, the Armed Forces are employed under the provisions of CrPC 130-131.

This implies their requisition by a magistrate, wherein police are present but have lost control; employment, only after the Magistrate has handed them over the situation, whilst adhering to the principle of use of minimum force; thereby implying, doing as little injury to person and property as may be considered necessary.

Armed insurrection

However, when there is a state of armed insurrection, and the civil machinery has broken down, due to coercion and subversion and the Armed Forces are called upon to restore normalcy, the provisions of the CrPC are inadequate. It is to cater for such situations that

Parliament has conferred the Armed Forces with certain special powers. These powers are exercised only after the Governor of a State has declared the area "Disturbed" through notification, under Sec 3 of the AFSPA; State Government has requested for employment of Armed Forces to restore normalcy; Central Government has approved the same; and the Armed Forces deployed – the Armed Forces so employed, are in "Aid" of Civil Power.

Provisions

The main provisions of AFSPA are that, any commissioned officer, warrant officer or non commissioned officer in the Armed Forces may in a "Disturbed Area", for maintenance of public order, after giving due warning, fire upon – even causing death to any person acting against any law/order in force, prohibiting the assembly of five or more persons or carrying of weapons, or ammunition or explosive substances; if necessary, destroy any arms dump, prepared/fortified position/shelter from which armed attacks may be made or any structure used as a training camp/hideout for armed volunteers; arrest without warrant any person who has committed/is likely to commit a cognisable offence, and may use such force as may be necessary to affect the arrest; enter and search without warrant any premises to make the arrest or to recover any person believed to be wrongfully confined, or any property suspected to be stolen, or any arms ammunition or explosive substances unlawfully kept, and may for that purpose use such force as may be necessary.

Under the AFSPA, all persons arrested are to be handed over to the nearest police station with minimum delay, together with a report on the circumstances of arrest. The AFSPA provides protection to persons operating under the AFSPA for immunity from prosecution, without prior

sanction of the Central Government.

Minimum force

The Supreme Court have clarified that use of minimum force must dictate all actions; if fire is to be opened it must first be ascertained that it is essential for maintenance of public order and that due warning is given; no harassment of innocent people, or destruction of property of the public, or unnecessarily enter into the dwellings of people not connected with unlawful activities; as far as possible co-opt civil police during execution of operations; as far as possible do not arrest/search women without the presence of a woman police officer; hand over arrested persons to the police with minimum possible delay preferably within 24 hours, along with a detailed report of the same and all items seized in the operation. The Armed Forces have issued comprehensive "Dos and Don'ts" to all personnel deployed on CI operations and takes stringent disciplinary action against all those who fail to comply with the provisions of the law.

"Disturbed" areas

The areas which have been declared "Disturbed", wherein the Army/Assam Rifles/BSF/CRPF/State Armed Police are deployed and conferred with special powers are most of Assam, part of Tripura, part of Arunachal, Nagaland, Manipur and a 20 km belt bordering Assam in Meghalaya, Arunachal, Mizoram. Issues being agitated against are that sweeping powers have been given and there are no/inadequate checks and balances; even Non Commissioned Officers have these powers – limit them to Commissioned Officers; civil police be co-opted for operations; No arrest or searches without warrant – immediate handing over apprehended to police; too many innocent people killed/harassed; women arrested without presence of woman police, raped and even

killed in fake encounters; many alleged encounters are fake; human rights being blatantly violated; those guilty must be brought to book.

Unpleasant duty

It should be noted that we have no desire to be operating against our brethren and have been directed to perform an unpleasant duty. Insurgency occurs due to poor governance – and then spirals into a situation wherein the State machinery has lost control and been coerced and subverted into doing the insurgents' bidding. Restoring such situations should be the task of Central Paramilitary/Police Organisations; though they have been so chartered and raised in very large numbers for this task, they are relatively ineffective due to poor leadership, ethos and training for such tasks. Ultimately it is the Army that gets deployed into an extraordinary situation, for which it has NO legal powers. Of course it is desirable to have local police totally involved – but what does the Army do when at least part of the police and administration is subverted and liable to leak out plans? How does one ferret out insurgents in a void of intelligence from the police – it has to create its own intelligence and act on it – obviously in a few cases there may be some mistakes – an attempt to obtain a warrant would mean a leak and escape of insurgents – attempts to get the police to accompany are invariably met with a reply of inadequate resources, or in some cases non-cooperation for fear of retaliation by insurgents.

Warning

When insurgents feel they are cornered, they open fire first – in our case we must first satisfy ourselves that public order is at stake, issue a warning and then only retaliatory fire – consequently many of our comrades die – where are our human rights? We have only a limited number of commissioned officers – the Army therefore relies

on efficient Non-Commissioned Officers with years of experience – we have no option but to employ them to lead some teams/patrols – failing which operations would come to a grinding halt and the situation would deteriorate. We try to avoid arresting women in the absence of woman police – in the case of Manorama Devi in Manipur – there was confirmed intelligence of her being a PLA cadre, an IED expert, who was responsible for many IED deaths – no women police were immediately available – she was arrested along with incriminating evidence and explosive, with witnesses and an arrest memo as required by law – she then attempted to escape – she was adequately warned and fire opened as a last resort – there have been allegations of rape and fake encounters.

Ramifications

Notwithstanding all these issues, the effort is always to use minimum force. The situation in Manipur is particularly acute with about 6000-8000 armed insurgents violating public order, committing murder and widespread extortion – the Army and other forces are deployed to try and restore normalcy – how do they do so without the legal powers conferred by AFSPA. Also, any dilution in AFSPA will impinge on the ability to deal with such situations and therefore have serious ramifications at the national level. It is interesting that after the AFSPA was withdrawn from Imphal, there has been a major increase in insurgent violence. Notwithstanding the necessity of AFSPA, undoubtedly with a large number of troops committed, there are bound to be mistakes and the odd black sheep – those guilty of violating orders are brought to book – some perhaps quietly to avoid embarrassment.

(The author is a retired Lieutenant-General, PVSM, AVSM, VSM of the Indian Army.)

Ulfa arms power Naxals in 11 states

Agencies
New Delhi, March 13

THE WEAPONS supplied by Pakistan's ISI to Assam's insurgent outfit Ulfa are finding their way to Naxal groups spread across 11 states, according to Central security agencies.

A report prepared by the agencies said the Naxal outfits were depending on arms from the Ulfa — which, in turn, are supplied by the ISI through certain agencies of Bangladesh, informed sources said. They said there were inputs suggesting that the Ulfa was supplying weapons to Maoist groups that were earlier equipped with traditional weapons. The AK series rifles and SLRs were now common with the Naxal groups and even the landmine blasts carried out by these groups in Andhra Pradesh and parts of Bihar and Jharkhand showed a considerable advancement of technology in their armory.

Recently, the police recovered AK-47 and SLRs from the Naxal leaders killed in an encounter with the police in Andhra Pradesh.

The ISI had, in the late-1990s, attempted to woo Naxal groups by meeting some of its top brass in Bangladesh, but it was turned down then because of ideological differences, the report submitted to the Union home ministry said.

The ISI — with the help of the Director-General of Foreign Intelligence (DGFI) of Bangladesh — has roped in the Ulfa, making it a frontal organisation for supply of arms, which the Maoist organisations are in dire need of, following a massive crackdown by police, it said. The report also indicated a growing nexus between the Rohingyas of Myanmar, certain Naga insurgent groups, the Ulfa and Left-wing extremists. It may be mentioned that the Rohingyas formed a major force of the al-Qaida and Taliban and were brought to Afghanistan by the ISI.

The sources said the nexus was helping in smuggling of arms from Myanmar to India and, subsequently, to Bangladesh through the dense forests. The security agencies have expressed fears that the sea route may be used by the Maoists to bring

After crackdown, Gogoi's helping hand

Agencies
Morigaon (Assam), March 13

AN ULFA transit camp sheltering six militants has been busted by the police and CRPF at Tipilabasti, along the Assam-Meghalaya border, dealing a major blow to the banned insurgent outfit.

Meanwhile, Assam chief minister Tarun Gogoi said on Sunday that the state government would extend all possible help to further negotiations between the Centre and the Ulfa. "We'll extend all possible help to eminent litterateur Indira (Mamoni) Raisom Goswami, who has taken the initiative to bring the Ulfa to the negotiating table", he said in an interview to Doordarshan here.

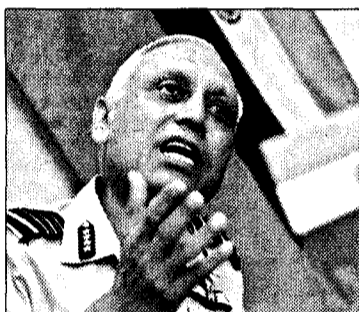
Morigaon DSP said the transit camp at Tipilabasti was sheltering about six dreaded militants

of the Ulfa's 27th battalion. Based on information provided by Ulfa militant Jitumoni Mahanta, who was arrested here on Thursday, security forces on Saturday rushed to Tipilabasti where an encounter took place with holed-up Ulfa 27th battalion adviser Biju Deka and five others, including a woman cadre. Though one of the insurgents was injured in the encounter, he said, the rebels escaped taking the injured with them, Bhuyan said.

Stating that the rebels were in their camp to execute their subversive activities in Assam, Bhuyan said 15 rounds of AK-47 ammunition, huge quantities of medicine, a TV set, tape-recorders, clothes, Pakistani razors and scissors, blankets, diaries and documents were recovered from the camp. A linkman, Somla Rampai, whose vehicle was being used by the extremists, was arrested, the SP said.

in arms, since it was practically impossible to screen all fishermen who ventured out into the deep seas to earn their livelihood, the sources said. Further complicating the problem, several states have already expressed fears about Maoist strikes because of the failure to prevent Nepalese Maoists from entering the country. The CPN cadres had slipped through the porous Indo-Nepalese border.

Air exercises at Car Nicobar from April Space command likely to network assets: IAF chief



**Air Chief Marshal SP Tyagi
in Kolkata. — SNS**

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, March 12. — The Indian Air Force is planning to establish a strategic aerospace command to network its assets in space for defence purposes, Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal SP Tyagi, said here today.

He announced that the Indian Air Force would commence air exercises at Car Nicobar air base from the first week of April. The air base was severely damaged in the 26 December earthquake and tsunami.

"Space is just another altitude for us to operate in. We need to network our assets in space. A separate aerospace command is under consideration," he said.

Calling it "just a natural progression" of the conventional strategic use of airspace, he said there were a lot of weapons that could not be used in space and the command was being envisaged to take care of all such issues of defence interest.

"It doesn't matter from what height we operate as long as we stick to international regulations on use of space," he said at Fort William.

On the Car Nicobar air base, the Chief of Air Staff said air ex-

ercises will commence with Jaguars and Sukhoi-30 aircraft. He said that the base will be made ready for landing, refueling and aircraft maintenance. But, he maintained that no aircraft station will come up at the base and it would not be converted into a permanent combat ground.

Air Chief Marshal Tyagi said the graph of accidents and casualties in the IAF has, of late, declined. "We are constantly working towards bringing it down because even one accident is an accident too many," he said.

He said the IAF should always be prepared for the "war of tomorrow" and India had signed a contract to procure 24 Advanced Jet Trainers from the UK and the first AJT will arrive in 2007.

"We will assemble 42 more AJTs at the Hindustan Aeronautics India Limited by 2010," he said. He said: "We have requested the government to procure 126 multi-role aircraft. Requests for Information (RFI) have been placed with the USA, Sweden, France and Russia for aircraft like F-16s, Griffin, Mirage and MiG 29s."

He said: "We will have to consider not only the performance but also the commercial viability of an aircraft before going in for a \$2 billion deal."

The first lot of 20 Light Combat Aircraft would be bought immediately and these would begin operations by 2008.

"I want our LCA to fly with indigenous Kaveri engines. The combat potential of the aircraft is of immense importance to us." Asked how he was rating the IAF, he said the Air Force was reasonably well-placed and in a position to meet the strategic demands of the country.

আকাশ-ঘাঁটির জন্য গড়া হতে পারে পৃথক বাহিনী

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার: আকাশে গোয়েন্দাগিরি আর আকাশ-ঘাঁটির জন্য পৃথক বাহিনী গড়া হতে পারে বলে ইঙ্গিত দিলেন ভারতীয় বিমানবাহিনীর প্রধান শশী ত্যাগী। তিনি জানান, ভবিষ্যতের যুদ্ধের কথা ভেবে সব রকম প্রস্তুতি নেওয়া হচ্ছে। “বিজ্ঞান ও প্রযুক্তির অগ্রগতি যুদ্ধকে যে উচ্চতায় পৌঁছিয়ে দিয়েছে, তাতে মাঝ আকাশে আমাদের দক্ষতা বাড়তেই হবে।”

দায়িত্ব নেওয়ার পর এয়ার চিফ মার্শাল ত্যাগী এই প্রথম কলকাতায় এলেন। তিনি জানান, প্রথম মহাযুদ্ধে ৫ হাজার ফুট উচ্চতা থেকে আক্রমণ চলেছিল। এখন অতি আধুনিক যুদ্ধবিমান ৮০ হাজার ফুট কিংবা তারও উপর থেকে আক্রমণ হানছে। আকাশে যুদ্ধের আশঙ্কা রুখতে এমনিতে আন্তর্জাতিক চুক্তি রয়েছে। তবে আকাশ থেকে নানা কৌশলে নজরদারি হয়ে উঠছে বাহিনীর তুরূপের তাস। ব্যবহৃত হচ্ছে নানা ধরনের ‘সেপার’।

ভারতের যুদ্ধবিমানকে আরও কার্যকর করে তুলতে এক দিকে পর্যায়ক্রমে ৪০টি লাইট কমব্যাট এয়ারক্রাফট আনার পরিকল্পনা হয়েছে, অন্য দিকে, অপেক্ষাকৃত পুরনো বিমানগুলির জায়গায় ১২৬টি বিমান কেনার সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া হয়েছে।

বিমানবাহিনীর প্রধান জানান, খরচ হবে ২০ লক্ষ মার্কিন ডলার। মার্কিন যুক্তরাষ্ট্র, সুইডেন, ফ্রান্স এবং রাশিয়ার চার নামী প্রস্তুতকারক সংস্থার কাছ থেকে বিস্তারিত তথ্য চাওয়া হয়েছে। তাগী বলেন, “আমি চাই, এই সব এল সি এ-তে দেশীয় ‘কাবেরি’ ইঞ্জিন ব্যবহার করা হোক। এ ছাড়া, ব্রিটেন থেকে ২৪টি ‘আডভান্সড জেট ট্রেনার’ কেনার সিদ্ধান্ত হয়েছে। ২০০৭ সাল থেকে মাসে ৪টি করে, ছয় মাসে পাওয়া যাবে সেগুলি।”

সম্প্রতি জম্মু ও কাশ্মীরে প্রায় ৪০ হাজার বাসিন্দাকে বরফের স্তূপ থেকে উদ্ধার করেন বিমান সেনারা। মলদ্বীপ ও শ্রীলঙ্কার সুনামি-বিধ্বস্ত অঞ্চলে বিশেষ কৃতিত্বের জন্য ভারতীয় বিমানবাহিনীকে লিখিত ভাবে স্বীকৃতি জানিয়েছে এই দুই দেশের সরকার।

‘সুনামি’র জেরে আন্দামানে সেনাবাহিনীর বিমান নামানোর ব্যবস্থা এবং সেনা ছাউনির অনেকটাই নষ্ট হয়ে গিয়েছে। নতুন করে সে সব তৈরির পর এপ্রিলের গোড়ায় ‘জাওয়ান’ ও ‘সুখয়’ বিমানের মহড়ার পরিকল্পনা রয়েছে। আন্দামান বসে যাওয়ায় জোয়ারের সময়ে নিচু অঞ্চল জলমগ্ন হয়ে যাচ্ছে। তাই নতুন এবং নিরাপদ জায়গা চিহ্নিত করা হচ্ছে।

Dhariwal agrees to appear before CBI on April 4

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Gutka major



Rasiklal Manikchand Dhariwal, currently in Dubai, though wanted by the CBI in a

sensational gutka-underworld nexus case, has agreed to appear before the investigating agency on April 4, as solicitor-general Goolam E Vahanvati said the probe team would not execute the non-bailable warrant (NBW) against Dhariwal till then.

As the court raised a question mark on the NBW issued against a witness in the case, Vahanvati revealed that the warrant was issued against Manikchand for the purpose of his production in a court as there were several documents which indicate his involvement in the case.

Dhariwal's son Prakash Rasiklal Dhariwal moved the apex court through senior advocate Harish Salve, challenging a Bombay high court order refusing to stay the execution of a NBW against his father.

A bench of Justices K G Balakrishnan and Tarun Chatterjee recorded

Prakash's undertaking that his father would appear before the CBI on April 4.

The bench also questioned as to how a NBW could be issued against Dhariwal, who till date has been shown as a witness in the case. "The warrant was issued under what provision of Criminal Procedure Code?" asked the bench, adding "Police has no power to issue warrants against a witness".

"This means warrants can be issued against anybody," the bench observed and added it could only be issued if he was an accused in a case. Vahanvati said there were certain documents which point to Manikchand's involvement in the case.

Dhariwal and Jagdish Joshi, owners of "Manikchand gutka" and "Goa gutka" respectively, had pleaded before the court that the Mumbai crime branch had summoned them for questioning, but they had informed the police about their inability to come to India from foreign countries at this juncture as their NRI status would be disturbed.

Joshi later returned to India and agreed to face the investigation. The Bombay high court has fixed March 16 for hearing Joshi's plea for quashing the warrant

against him.

Dawood Ibrahim's brothers Anees, Mohammed Farooque Mansuri, Jamrudin alias Jambo Kaliya Ansari and Rajesh Laxminarayan

Pancharia's names also figure in the chargesheet. While Ansari and Pancharia were arrested under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act, Anees and Farooque are shown as wanted accused.

Dhariwal and Joshi, too, figure in the chargesheet, but as those needed for interrogation. After receiving documents from the CBI, Interpol had put Dhariwal and Joshi on the wanted list.

Mumbai MCOCA court designated judge A P Bhangale had observed that police had enough evidence against Dhariwal and Joshi and it apprehended that the duo may not return to India for interrogation.

He had also stated that as the case was under MCOCA, the offences were serious in nature. The police alleged that Dhariwal and Joshi had gone to Pakistan to meet Dawood to settle business disputes. It was also alleged that Anees Ibrahim had imported gutkha-manufacturing machines from India and the equipment had been sent to Pakistan via Dubai.

Indo-Nepal border the new den of militants

By Devesh K. Pandey

NEW DELHI, MARCH 8. Interrogation of two alleged Lashkar-e-Taiba operatives who were arrested with a huge RDX consignment this past Saturday, coupled with fresh intelligence inputs, has revealed that while militants are very much active in Nepal, there has also been a substantial increase in their activities in areas along the Indo-Nepal border in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

Indian intelligence agencies believe that several groups, clandestinely operating from Nepal, provide logistics support to the militants taking shelter there. Some of these or-

ganisations have been identified as Nepal Islamic Yuva Sangh, Kashmir Jama Masjid Democratic Muslim Association and Nepal World Islamic Council. In certain cases, such groups have been found receiving funds from their sympathisers based in Jeddah and other Central Asian cities. One of these outfits is believed to have links with Islamic Youth Organisation based in Jakarta.

Among others in the watch list of Indian intelligence are Jamat-e-Ahal-e-Hadis, Millat-e-Islamic (which has links with Jamat-e-Islami) and Jam Seraj-e-ul-Alam, which is based in Kapilvastu.

On the issue of infiltration,

reports indicate that militants have been coming into and going out of the country through the porous Indo-Nepal border via Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. For their part, those based in Bangladesh go to Nepal through the same route by crossing into the country from West Bengal. "Young men from Kashmir Valley, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and other places, who are initiated into terrorism, often use the same route to reach the training camps apparently being run in the neighbouring countries," said a police officer.

The revelation by the police that the two Lashkar militants, Shahnawaz, an alleged Pakistani national, and Shams, who

were killed in the encounter on Saturday, had based themselves in Patna for the past two years has also laid credence to inputs that extremist outfits have penetrated deep in Bihar and have been spreading their "message" in places like Purnea, Champaran, Muzzaffarpur, Darbhanga and Saharsa districts for roping in more and more young blood. All these districts are along the Indo-Nepal border.

Further, sources said that since Purnea shares borders with two districts of West Bengal, Murshidabad and Malda, it was being used as transit point for the militants shuttling between Nepal and Bangladesh.

Bangalore IT firms on Lashkar radar

Syed Asim Ali in New Delhi

March 6. — Lashkar-e-Tajyaba had planned to attack software firms' headquarters in Bangalore. A day after the death of three suspected Lashkar militants in an encounter here, the special cell of Delhi Police claimed that the LeT had planned a series of attacks in India, probably the outfit's biggest operation after the attack on Akshardham Temple in Gujarat.

JCP, special cell, Mr Karnail Singh said the LeT plans took shape in July 2004. One of the arrested ultras, Hamid Hussain, claimed that Salim alias Doctor, an LeT sleeper agent, contacted him in September 2004 and introduced him to Shams alias Parvez, a militant killed in yesterday's encounter. "The three went to Kathmandu and spent 10 days," the ICP special cell, said. Salim is a resident of Meerut. Sleuths are trying to track him.

In Nepal, the trio met Abdul Aziz, a commander of LeT in Kathmandu. Several targets in India were discussed and satellite phones given to Salim. Aziz gave money to both Salim and Shams. Targets selected included Indian Military Academy in Dehra Dun, Shooting Range in Delhi Cantonment and software firms in Bangalore. Sources said the LeT wanted to target economic and military headquarters across India. Hamid and Shams went to Dehra Dun for reconnaissance in November. A month later, they went to Bangalore to identify their targets.

Photograph on page 3

THE STATESMAN

07 MAR 2005

DEFENCE EXPENDITURE

Chidambaram's Signal To The Forces

By KEITH FLORY

The military community is counting its blessings that the medals and honours it cherishes so dearly are not awarded in accordance with a Chidambaram formula. When presenting his Budget for 2005-06 in the Lok Sabha, the finance minister declared: "I am happy to inform the House that, after a gap, defence expenditure in 2004-05 matched the Budget Estimates". Then, as if to give expression to that happiness, he said: "I propose to increase the allocation for defence in 2005-06 to Rs 83,000 crore, which will include an allocation of Rs 34,375 crore for capital expenditure".

Capital outlays

The largesse of Rs 83,000 crore was a mere Rs 6,000 crore than the previous year's outlay — a hike of 7.6 per cent — and the critical capital component was up by all of Rs 892 crore. Given that it is officially accepted that inflation is running at five per cent, and that exchange rates fluctuate (the bulk of military hardware is imported), there is virtually no increase in real terms. The armed forces, clearly, find little cause for happiness.

This ministerial mismatch of word and deed is no stray aberration. When substantially raising capital outlays in his Interim Budget last July the finance minister stated that "as promised in the NCMP, government is determined to eliminate all delays in modernisation of the defence forces. Having regard to the trend of defence capital expenditure in recent years, it makes sense to make a high allocation this year". Surely he would not have the nation believe that in one allocation he had not only reversed a trend but catered to all accumulated shortcomings?

Yet there is need to be grateful that Chidambaram did not repeat the stock promise of almost all finance ministers — additional funds being made available when required. True, there have been years when extra monies were provided, but crash purchases meant acquiring equipment of dubious quality at inflated prices. Yet if the forces are disheartened,

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spare a thought for the defence minister. In July, when the capital outlay was raised by some Rs 12,000 crore, Pranab Mukherjee opined that it was about Rs 8,000 crore short of what was required. This time he has offered little comment.

Despite having hardly put a foot wrong and bringing to the



ministry some welcome maturity and experience, he has wielded precious little clout in loosening purse strings. That is not an automatic sign of failure, but it heavily erodes credibility in the eyes of defence personnel.

Modernisation

After all, they rate their minister according to his capacity to fight their battle with bureaucrats and other politicians. There is something telling about Mukherjee's silence. It appears that the UPA's Left allies, who always bark about their capacity to bite, have proved effective — they wanted a cut in defence spending.

Fortunately the nation's security is not entrusted to the Left, hopefully it will never be, for, they are not merely ideologically blinkered, they are blinded. Prior to presentation of the Budget, the Congress party

spokesman officially rejected the Left's demand to curtail defence expenditure. His words were ignored by North Block, and maybe also by other power centre adjacent to the AICC Headquarters.

It would be pointless to assess Pranab Babu's money-garnering prowess against that of the

defence outlay, as a proportion of GDP, is rising while here it is declining, our military thinking and planning must be liberated from obsolete mental shackles. For it can be nobody's case that the 15-month-long cease-fire along the LoC is a way to suspend recruitment to the army. Remember the theory about the best army being the one so good that it never had to be used. Only sustained, programmed modernisation and re-equipment will attain that.

Procurement

Back to the Budget and Chidambaram's cause for happiness. It was inevitable that in 2004-05, there would be no gap between the original and revised estimate (in terms of capital expenditure) because prior to demitting office the previous government had concluded a host of big-ticket deals, there was no way in which the money could not have been spent. It is not as though a revamped procurement process has suddenly struck gold. We will have to await negotiations and closure of fresh deals — for 126 frontline fighters, for example — to test the government's efficiency on that score. And make no mistake about it, the defence ministry "returned" money in the early years of the new millennium because it received go-slow orders from the finance ministry, struggling to keep deficits within manageable proportions. A certain sophistry is germane to North Block.

Yet, to be fair to Chidambaram and all finance ministers, defence outlays are not open-ended. There is a crying need for structural reform, in terms of finances and of forces in a larger, overall context. The process has to begin in the Service Headquarters which must look to a pooling of assets and making common cause for the sake of economy.

There has to be an end to the puerile practice of submitting long and rival (if not conflicting) lists and then an undignified scrap for the limited resources. But that would call for genuine integration. Funny, when did we last hear a highly-decorated officer talk about a Chief of Defence Staff? Talking positively, that is!

সাড়ে ২২ লাখ টাকার জাল নোট সহ ধৃত ১, যুক্ত বিদেশি চাইরাও

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার: খালি চোখে ওই নোটের তাড়া দেখে ধক্কে পড়ে গিয়েছিলেন রিজার্ভ ব্যাঙ্কের আধিকারিকেরাও। ১০০০ ও ৫০০ টাকার নোটগুলো জাল বলে চিহ্নিত করতে তাদেরও বেশ কয়েক ঘণ্টা সময় লাগল। বাংলাদেশ থেকে কলকাতায় আসা সাড়ে ২২ লক্ষ টাকার ওই জাল নোট রাজ্য গোয়েন্দা পুলিশ উদ্ধার করেছে। শুক্রবার রাতে লেক ভিউ রোডের একটি বাড়ি থেকে তা পাওয়া যায়। কলকাতার বাসিন্দা এক ব্যক্তিকে এই ঘটনায় গ্রেফতার করা হলেও তাঁর পরিচিত এক পাকিস্তানি ও বাংলাদেশি নাগরিক-সহ কয়েকজনকে এখনও খুঁজছেন গোয়েন্দারা।

সাম্প্রতিক কালে এক সঙ্গে এত টাকার জাল নোট যেমন কলকাতায় উদ্ধার হয়নি, তেমনই নোট জাল করার কৌশলেও এতটা দক্ষতা দেখা যায়নি বলে মনে করছেন সি আই ডি কর্মীরা। পাক গুপ্তচর সংস্থা আই এস আই-এর মদতে পাকিস্তান থেকে বাংলাদেশ হয়ে কলকাতা তথা পশ্চিমবঙ্গ জাল নোট পাচারের প্রধান কেন্দ্র হয়ে উঠেছে, তা আগেও জানে গিয়েছিল গোয়েন্দারা। বেশ কয়েকজনকে গ্রেপ্তার হয়েছে। কিন্তু ধৃতদের বিভিন্ন চক্রের মধ্যে যোগসূত্র এখনও স্পষ্ট হয়নি। তুলনায় জাল নোট পাচারকারীরা যে অনেক বেশি সংগঠিত তা ফের প্রমাণ হল বলেই কার্যত মনে নিয়েছেন গোয়েন্দা-কর্তারা। এ বারের ঘটনাটিতে আই এস আই-এর ড্রামক সাড়ে ক'না খতিয়ে দেখছেন তারা।

ডি আই জি, সি আই ডি (অপারেশন) রাজীব কুমার বলেন,

“আটক নোট যাচাই করে দেখা যাচ্ছে, বিশেষ সতর্কতামূলক চিহ্ন বা রিজার্ভ ব্যাঙ্কের ‘সিকিউরিটি প্রেড’গুলির বেশ কয়েকটিই জাল কারবারিরা নিখুঁত ভাবে নকল করেছে।” গোয়েন্দারা জানান, খালি চোখে পাঁচশো বা হাজার টাকার নোটগুলি জাল বলে চেনার একটাই উপায়, নোটের গায়ে সাদা চকচকে দাগ-টানা লাইন বা ‘ওয়াটার-মার্ক’ ভাল ভাবে খতিয়ে দেখা। আসল নোটের গায়ে ‘ওয়াটার-মার্ক’ ছ’টি চকচকে দাগ ছাড়া ছাড়া ভাবে টানা থাকে। জাল নোটে ওই দাগের সংখ্যা সাতটি বা আটটি। এ ছাড়া, উদ্ধার-হওয়া জাল নোটের কাগজ আসলের থেকে সামান্য ভারী, কিন্তু তা-ও সাধারণ লোকের পক্ষে বোঝা কঠিন।

এ বছরের গোড়ায় শিলিগুড়িতে জাল নোট সমেত দু’জনকে গ্রেফতার করা হয়। তাঁর সূত্র ধরেই তাকে তাকে ছিল সি আই ডি। শুক্রবার রাতে লেক ভিউ রোডের বাসিন্দা শঙ্কর আচার্যের বাড়িতে হানা দেয় পুলিশ। ওই বাড়িতে একটি টাউস খালি স্যুটকেস নাড়াচাড়া করতে গিয়েই একটা কোন ভারী ঠেকে গোয়েন্দাদের। দেখা যায়, ব্যাঙ্কের অভ্যন্তরে সাটিনের মসৃণ জমির নীচে খাপের মধ্যে তাড়া তাড়া নোট রাখা।

৪৩ বছরের শঙ্করবাবু ব্লাড ব্যাঙ্কের চাকরি থেকে স্বেচ্ছাবসর নিয়েছেন। আগে বাংলাদেশের খুলনায় থাকতেন। মাঝেমধ্যেই সেখানে যেতেন। ওই দিনই পেট্রাপোল সীমান্ত দিয়ে সড়কপথে তিনি ফিরেছিলেন। গোয়েন্দারা জানান, শঙ্করবাবু কার কাছ থেকে কাকে দেওয়ার জন্য টাকা নিয়েছিলেন, তা দেখা হচ্ছে।

Marginal hike for silent frontiers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28

WITH no threat emanating from the western or northern borders, the Defence establishment had to contend with an overall eight per cent increase in its annual outlay though it wanted a 40 per cent hike from the past year.

Finance Minister P. Chidambaram today allocated Rs 83,000 crore to the Defence Ministry, noting that for the first time in five years the armed forces had utilised the Rs 77,000 crore allocation for the past fiscal.

The Capital outlay that is used for acquisition of weapons and equipment was increased marginally to Rs 34,375 crore, just 2.6 per cent over last year. This is because the Ministry has already made provisions for big ticket deals like Admiral Gorchikov (now called INS Vikramaditya), Hawk AJT, PHALCON AWACS and self-propelled artillery guns.

However, the marginal increase in the Defence Budget is also due to the fact that New Delhi's relations with Islamabad are back on track and peace is in the air. The growing bilateral relations with China that are being driven by multi-billion trade ties are also reflected in the Budget.

The Army has been granted Rs 31,242 crore this year, up 12 per cent from last year, while the Air Force saw a six per cent allocation hike to Rs 9,004.61 crore. The Navy's allocations increased 13 per cent to Rs 6,027.35 crore.

Though the MoD had marked modernisation of IAF's aircraft fleet as critical to regional military balance, capital allocated was scaled down to Rs 9,564.90



crore this year, as against Rs 12,825 crore it was given in the last Budget.

Former Army chief Gen V.P. Malik, an advocate of higher defence spending, said: "It is a disappointment. Modernisation plans will be affected, and so will the country's deterrence capability. There was also no mention this year of the defence modernisation fund. The Ministry may not have adequate funds for new contracts with this Budget."

The Army's requirement for more war helicopters, however, has got it an increase of over 50

per cent to Rs 939.13 crore. The Navy was allocated Rs 5,417.70 crore for ships and vessels, 21 per cent over last year. The hike indicates that the Scorpene submarine deal with France will be cleared.

The DRDO got a more than 20 per cent allocation this year to Rs 2,814.48 crore, up from last year's Rs 2,343.16 crore. Part of this hike is to push the indigenous airborne early warning system. Budgetary allocations to the MoD alone are up 50 per cent to Rs 1,500 crore.

Defence analyst K. Subrahmanyam said: "The Rs 83,000 crore will cover inflation and growth. But in terms of percentage of GDP, we have not pushed it up. It is at the same level and that is important. The marginal increase in capital outlay is probably for orders already placed on trainer aircraft, Sukhois and the Admiral Gorchikov aircraft carrier."



But SSB gets more to tackle Maoists

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 28

IN A bid to deal more effectively with the Maoist threat from Nepal, the Government has increased the budgetary provisions for the Seema Suraksha Bal (SSB) and enhanced the funds for erection of fences along the Indo-Bangla and Indo-Pak border.

The total budgetary provisions for the Union Home Ministry saw an increase of 30 per cent with the total funds proposed for the ministry this year being pegged at Rs 946.39 crore against Rs 731.51 crore in the last fiscal.

In the budgetary provisions for the ministry this year, the non-plan funds for the SSB, guarding the Indo-Nepal border, has been increased from Rs 360.24 crore to Rs 532.77 crore.

The funds would help the SSB in setting up more checkposts along the border besides acquiring more modern equipment to check the infiltration of Maoists.

The Government also increased non-plan funds for erection of fencing and construction of roads along the Indo-Bangla border from Rs 510.11 crore to Rs 631.65 crore and along Indo-Pak border from Rs 155.36 crore to Rs 233.05 crore.

There was also a whopping increase of Rs 197.27 crore in the budgetary provisions for the civil defence forces in the next fiscal, with the Government proposing to increase the budgetary provisions from a mere Rs 16.11 crore to Rs 213.38 crore.

The budgetary provisions for Home Guards, a voluntary force raised by the state and Union Territories under the policy laid down by the ministry, continued to remain at Rs 44 crore.



Gutka baron Joshi appears before CBI

Mumbai: Gutka baron Jagdish Joshi on Friday appeared before the CBI for questioning in a case of alleged nexus with the underworld. Joshi arrived at the CBI office near Mantralaya in south Mumbai at 12.25 pm. He was accompanied by a group of persons and his lawyer Ganesh Gole. All of them waited outside CBI office, while Joshi went inside with his lawyer. After some time, his lawyer stepped outside

would be arrested by CBI.

Joshi arrived in Delhi from UAE on February 23 and came to Mumbai on Thursday. He moved the Bombay high court urging for extension of stay on non-bailable warrant against him. However, the court rejected his plea and gave CBI a free hand to deal with him in any manner as it deems fit.

Joshi had earlier moved the Bombay high court praying for quashing of non-bail-

another gutka king Rasiklal Manikchand Dhariwal for questioning after an accused in custody Jamiruddin Kalia alias Jumbo in a confessional statement alleged that the duo had links with Pakistan-based Dawood Ibrahim and his brother Anees and had exported pouch making machinery to Pakistan en route to Dubai to help them establish gutka business. The accused also alleged that Joshi and Dhariwal had gone to Pakistan where Dawood settled their business dispute.

Meanwhile, in a blow to the beleaguered pan masala manufacturer Rasiklal Manikchand, the supreme court on Friday upheld a lower court order restraining his Dhariwal Industries Ltd from using the brand name "Manikchand."

A bench comprising Justice B P Singh and Justice P K Balasubramanyan dismissed the plea of Manikchand, who is now marketing its gutkas under the "RMP"

Accused in murder case, P 5

brand, to get back its popular brandname "Manikchand."

One M S S Food Products, which markets its gutkas under the name "Malikchand," had moved the Mandaleswar district judge in Madhya Pradesh seeking to restrain Dhariwal Industries from using the name "Manikchand" as it was deceptively similar to its own brandname "Malikchand." The district judge through an interim order had restrained the Dhariwal Industries from using the name "Manikchand" for its gutkas after M S S Food Products showed that it was using the name "Malikchand" much before the "Manikchand" brand name was registered. Agencies



Gutka baron Jagdish M Joshi on his way to the CBI office in Mumbai on Friday

and Joshi was closetted with CBI officials. Joshi appeared before DIG Loknath Dehra for questioning in keeping with his commitment before the Bombay high court.

Lawyer Gole told reporters that Joshi will be questioned by the CBI on Friday and if need arises he would be called again. Asked if he would appear before MCOCA court, Gole said there was no directive from any quarters for Joshi to appear before MCOCA court. He also said it was not very clear whether Joshi

able warrant issued by the lower court. He also gave an undertaking to appear before the CBI on February 25 and accordingly, the court adjourned his plea to February 28 for final hearing.

A special court had issued non-bailable warrant against him on a plea made by the Mumbai police for his failure to appear before it in a case of alleged nexus with underworld. Later, the case was transferred to the CBI for probe. Police summoned him and

HC dismisses Dhariwal's plea against warrant

Mumbai: The Bombay high court on Tuesday dismissed the plea of gutka baron Rasiklal Manikchand Dhariwal urging for cancellation of non-bailable warrant issued by a lower court against him for failure to appear in a case of alleged nexus with the underworld.

In another development, the court adjourned to February 28 the plea of gutka king Jagdish Joshi



for cancellation of non-bailable warrant on the same charges as he offered to appear before the CBI on February 25. Joshi's lawyer Sirish Gupte told the court that his client would return from UAE on February 24 night and appear before CBI the next day.

Both had challenged an order of a special court which had issued non-bailable warrants against them for their failure to appear before the police in a case of alleged nexus with the underworld.

As regards Dhariwal's plea, the court observed that the investigating agency had the powers to call any person for questioning and if that person avoided interrogation, then it had the right to procure warrants against him. Dhariwal, owner of 'Manikchand Gutka', argued that a court did not have the powers to issue warrants to aid an investigation.

However, the high court observed that the warrant issued by the lower court had asked Dhariwal to present himself before the court and this did not amount to aiding an investigation. The court rejected Dhariwal's plea that he could not come to India from the UAE in order to maintain his NRI status. This argument was not acceptable, judges remarked.

Meanwhile, a special court on Tuesday rejected the bail plea of Rajesh Pancharia, held under MCOCA in the gutka case on the charge of exporting pouch-making machine to Pakistan. Agencies

Missile muscle parade for US eyes

SUJAN DUTTA

New Delhi, Feb. 21: India's military establishment today test-fired an anti-missile missile, signalling to the US that it was willing to play hardball while bargaining for an advanced missile defence system.

A team from Washington is currently in New Delhi and will give the defence establishment a two-day briefing beginning tomorrow on the *Patriot Advanced Capability (PAC)-II* system. New Delhi is keener on the *Patriot III* missile defence system that was used to defend Kuwait successfully in the 2003 war on Iraq.

"The Security Cooperation Group will give a presentation on missile defence. This or earlier meetings and demonstrations is no indicator. What suits you or what does not suit you is your choice," defence secretary Ajai Vikram Singh said.

Indian military officials have at-

tended missile defence demonstrations in the US in the last two years.

The scientific adviser to the defence minister and head of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), M. Natarajan, said an *Akash* surface to air missile test-fired from a mobile launcher at Chandipur in the Orissa coast "met all technical parameters". "I expect the *Akash* missile to go for user-trials by the end of this year," Natarajan said.

The *Akash*, one of the systems being tried under India's Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme, has been in the works for more than eight years. It was initially designed as an anti-aircraft missile but was being re-configured as an anti-missile missile.

It is said to have a range of about 27 km and can carry a 50kg warhead. In the test around 1 pm this afternoon DRDO sources said the missile hit a target towed by a pilotless target

aircraft called the *Lakshya*. The *Akash* is used with a Rajendra radar and is being designed to engage multiple targets simultaneously.

India's security establishment has concluded that a missile defence system is necessary because of the "no-first-use" nuclear doctrine adopted by it. This means that in the event of an attack with nuclear weapons by an adversary, India has to arm defences of its own nuclear capabilities. India's choice of a missile defence system will be determined by efficiency of targeting and reaction time in seconds.

The briefing by US officials tomorrow and the day after will be given by a team led by Edward Ross of the Pentagon's Defence Security Cooperation Agency. Ross leads the US security cooperation group that holds periodic dialogue on military-to-military ties with India. US embassy sources said tomorrow's meeting flows from

the agreement on Next Steps in Strategic Partnership (NSSP) signed between New Delhi and Washington last year.

Under phase 1 of the NSSP, Washington had agreed that it will give New Delhi a "strategic briefing" on the *PAC-II*. Indian military officials have in the past attended at least two missile defence demonstrations in the US.

But Indian defence officials said that the "technical presentation" was no indicator that India had committed to procure the *PAC-II*, a system developed by Raytheon and Lockheed Martin. The *Patriot-II* was partly successful in the 1991 Gulf War and was used to defend Israel from attacks by outdated Scud missiles fired by Saddam Hussein's regime. In 2003, during Operation Iraqi Freedom, the *Patriot III* was performed more efficiently, bringing down tens of Iraqi Scud missiles aimed at Kuwait.

Mafia's Links With City's Rich & Famous Are Back In The Headlines

Dawood's Jumbo sings like a canary

Unravels D-Links With Star, Politician, Businessmen

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The recent controversy in which actress Nagma has been accused of being linked to the Dawood gang is based on a confessional statement made by Jamiruddin Ansari alias Jumbo in the gutka case. In his 18-page confessional, Ansari has made allegations against Nagma, NCP activist Arshad Siddique, Manikchand Gutka owner Rasiklal Dhariwal and Goa Gutka owner J M Joshi.

While the original statement of Ansari was recorded by DCP Amitabh Gupta in Hindi in October 2004, we reproduce a translated version of some extracts from the confession:

"I have been handling the hawala operations for Anees Ibrahim, brother of gangster Dawood Ibrahim, between 1988 and 1998. I was involved in hawala transactions to the tune of Rs 115 crore. I was controlling his hawala business in Mumbai along with a trader, Mulchand Chokshi (a serial blast accused) from M M Bakers in Zaveri Bazar. In fact, one such transaction pertains to actress Nagma. I personally went to Nagma's flat on Carter Road, Bandra, to deliver Rs 10 lakh which was sent by Anees to her. She was his keep.

"After the J J Hospital shootout case in which Dawood gangsters had shot dead a Gawli henchman, I was asked by Anees to handle the air ticketing business for the gang. My job was to arrange for air tickets for gang members and relatives of Dawood in Mumbai.

"In 2000, Anees had a baby boy and he invited me to Dubai for the celebrations. There, I met J M Joshi of Goa gutka in Anees' cabin. He was crying and seeking help from Anees for recovering dues from Rasiklal Dhariwal of Manikchand Gutka. Anees summoned Rasiklal. When the latter turned up in Dubai, I was present at the meeting between him and Anees.

"Rasiklal told Anees that he wanted to settle the issue in the presence of big brother Dawood. Rasiklal, along with one Hamid Antulay, who was also present at the meeting, left for Karachi by the evening flight. Anees and Joshi too went to Karachi by a night flight.

"In Karachi, Dawood acted as a mediator between the two gutka kingpins and settled the issue. Dhariwal was asked to pay Rs 11 crore to

HOW THE STAIN STUCK

2000 J M Joshi of Goa gutka meets Anees Ibrahim in Dubai and seeks his intervention to settle a dispute between him and Rasiklal Dhariwal of Manikchand gutka

- Dhariwal meets Anees and says he will settle the dispute in Dawood's presence
- Dhariwal leaves for Karachi. Joshi and Anees too join him in Karachi
- Dawood settles the dispute and asks Dhariwal to pay Joshi Rs 11 crore
- Joshi arranges the setting up of a gutka factory in Karachi for Anees

2002 Two exporters from Mumbai are threatened by Jamiruddin Ansari, an Anees aide, and asked to export gutka-packing machines to Dubai. The machines are then sent to Karachi by another Anees aide

2004 In June, spares for the machines are smuggled to Karachi by Dawood-aide Salim

Chiplun's niece

- In July, Dawood's father-in-law Salim Ibrahim again smuggles spares to Karachi after being persuaded by Ansari
- In October, Ansari is arrested by the crime branch

► **DAWOOD AIDE HELD:** Salim Sonda, an extortionist of the Dawood gang, was arrested by the police late on Monday from Agripada. Sonda, who is wanted in more than 12 cases of extortion, is very close to Dawood's sister Hasina Parker, who lives in Nagpada. He had attended the lavish wedding of her son Danish at Crawford Market in December. The policemen on surveillance were unable to spot him then. P 3

Joshi and he agreed to give the money. After this, Joshi arranged to set up a gutka plant for Anees in Karachi. Joshi supplied the machinery and even manpower. His key employee in India—Babu alias Biju George—was asked to work at the gutka factory in Karachi.

"In 2001, Anees' daughter Shameem got married in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Anees sent me four lakh rupees by hawala and asked me to contact his agent Arshad Siddique (NCP activist) who arranged for my passport and Saudi visa and tickets. I went to Mecca along with my wife and children to attend Shameem's wedding. There, I met Dawood Ibrahim, his brother Mustaqeen and aide Salim Chiplun. A grand reception was held at a five-star hotel in Dubai, where I met Aftab Batki (a most wanted Dawood aide who is the kingpin of his counterfeit currency racket in India). I returned to Mumbai and handed over my passport to Siddique who kept it at the residence of Hasina Apa, Dawood's sister.

"In 2002, Anees called me from Karachi and said he needed some gutka packing machines for his Karachi

factory. I was asked to contact Rajubhai, the son-in-law of J M Joshi. Rajubhai said he too had a telephonic talk with Anees and was willing to send the gutka packing machines. But he asked me to arrange for an exporter. It was then that I contacted Mustafa Kabir and Arif of Alif International Ex-

'In 2000, Anees Ibrahim had a baby and he invited me to Dubai for the celebrations. There I met J M Joshi of Goa gutka in Anees's cabin'

— Jamiruddin Ansari's confessional statement

porters. When the duo realised that they would be exporting the machinery to Anees Ibrahim, a gangster, they declined to do the job. I then threatened them with a pistol and even said that I would kill them if the machines were not exported. They agreed.

"The machines were sent from Nhava Sheva port to



ANSARI'S QUOTE MARTIAL

In 2000, Anees had a baby boy and he invited me to Dubai for the celebrations. There, I met J M Joshi of Goa Gutka in Anees's cabin. He was crying and seeking help from Anees to recover dues from Rasiklal Dhariwal of Manikchand Gutka.

I was controlling Anees Ibrahim's hawala racket in Mumbai. One such transaction pertains to actress Nagma. I personally went to her flat on Carter Road, Bandra, to deliver Rs 10 lakh sent by Anees. She was his keep.

Nagma's response: The actress who was queried by TOI on Tuesday about the specific statements pertaining to her in Jumbo's confessions, said, "I have been maintaining that it is a case of mistaken identity. The confession is patently false and baseless. Even the lawyer of the accused is saying so."

► **POLITICAL PRESSURE:** A senior state politician is believed to have put pressure on an IPS officer in Mumbai to go slow on the gutka case investigations. Sources said that after being "pressured", this IPS officer not only directed his juniors to "go slow" on the probe, but also asked them not to probe allegations against actress Nagma and Arshad Siddique, who figure in Ansari's confessional statement. P 3

Dubai where Anees aide Farooq Mansuri (an absconder in the gutka case) landed the consignment in the name of 'Ali Asgar company' and arranged for its export to Karachi. In 2004, Babu, Joshi's employee working at the Karachi factory, came down to Mumbai. I arranged for his stay at Hotel Mahim Palace. Along with Babu, I purchased spare parts (for the gutka factory in Karachi) in Chor Bazar in south Mumbai. In June, 2004, the niece of Salim Chiplun, a Dawood aide, was travelling to Karachi and we sent the spares along with her.

"In July 2004, Anees called me up again, saying that he wanted more spare parts for the factory. He also contacted Rajubhai again and asked him to send me the spare parts in Mahim. I had then contacted Dawood's father-in-law Salim Ibrahim, who was to visit Karachi that month. He declined to take the consignment, but I persuaded him to take it to Karachi.

"I was arrested by the crime branch team on October 10, 2004 for threatening the exporters and facilitating the export of machines for Anees Ibrahim."

Court defers hearing of gutka barons' petitions

Mumbai: The Bombay high court on Wednesday deferred till February 21 the hearing on petitions filed by Gutka barons Rasiklal Manikchand Dhariwal and Jagdish Joshi challenging non-bailable warrants issued by a special court against them for their failure to appear in a case of alleged nexus with the underworld.

Adjourning the matter, Justice R M S Khandeparkar and Justice P V Kakade also extended till February 21 their order restraining the police from executing warrants against Dhariwal and Joshi, owners of Manikchand and Goa Gutka respectively.

CBI counsel Raja Thakre and prosecutor Purnima Kantharia, on behalf of Mumbai police, sought time to file their reply to the petitions and urged for an adjournment till February 21. Dhariwal and Joshi pleaded that the Crime Branch had summoned them for questioning but they had informed the police about their inability to come to India at this juncture as their NRI status would be disturbed.

The gutka barons submitted that they were required to stay abroad for a certain number of days in a year to maintain NRI status and coming here would disqualify them. They further said that there was no provision in the CrPC to issue warrants as they were merely required for questioning by the police to help in the investigations.

The tycoons said they were not accused and to brand them as absconding by authorities concerned would not be proper. They argued that a warrant could be issued only if a person was required to appear before a court and not otherwise. Both of them had offered to cooperate in the investigations by appearing at a later date, the court was told.

A special court had on February 1 rejected their plea for cancellation of non-bailable warrant on the ground that police had sufficient evidence against them. Designated judge A P Bhargale of Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) court remarked that the police had reasonable apprehension that the duo may not turn up before it for questioning, and asked them to surrender in the interest of justice to help in the investigations.

The judge also observed that the case was being probed under the stringent MCOCA law, and thus the alleged offences were serious in nature. PTI

SC refuses to hear Geelani plea

5 Feb 1972
Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI, Feb. 15. — In the midst of the hearing on the appeals in the Parliament attack case, the Supreme Court today refused to hear an application filed by SAR Geelani seeking transfer of probe into the case of murderous attack on him from Delhi Police to an independent agency like CBI.

Even as a Bench comprising Mr Justice PV Reddi and Mr Justice PP Naolekar posted Geelani's application for hearing next Tuesday, the police said they would be able to

file a progress report on their investigation into the incident by next week.

Geelani's counsel Ms Kamini Jaiswal sought a hearing on the application and issuance of notice to Delhi Police.

However, the Bench said it would not hear the application mid-way through the hearings on the cross-appeals filed by those convicted and sentenced to death and the appeals filed by the police challenging the acquittal of Geelani and Navjot Sandhu alias Afsan Guru.

Senior advocate Mr Gopal Subramaniam, appearing for the police, said that

Geelani's statement was recorded only yesterday and that a report on the progress of investigation could be filed latest by next week. The Bench asked the police to be ready with their response to Geelani's application when it would be taken up for hearing next week.

Geelani, who was shot at on 8 February evening, has accused Delhi Police of indulging in false propaganda and of harassing him and his lawyers and relatives on the pretext of questioning. He also alleged that the police might try to plant some evidence to implicate him in the case.

THE STATESMAN

16 FEB 2005

Why India should worry about Nepal's Maoists

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Why should Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Chhattisgarh worry about absolute monarchy in Nepal? Well, for one because events in Kathmandu could impact the power of Maoists in the Himalayan kingdom.

And therein lies the rub. For some time now, it has been established that Nepal Maoists have developed linkages — in terms of personnel, fire-power and operations — with Naxalites in India. And therein lies the problem.

As Naxalites strike, seemingly at will in a huge swath between Bihar and the Tamil Nadu border, police are getting jittery about the fallout of Nepal.

Chhattisgarh's director general of police last week convened a conference of the IGs of zonal police, including police chiefs from Bastar and Surgua regions, the two worst-affected areas in the state. Police officials say a crackdown on Maoists in Nepal will send ripples deep into the forests of Bastar and other areas of the state where Nepals Maoists are trained along with Naxalites who operate between Bihar and Andhra Pradesh.

The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoists) cadres have received military training in the training camps of MCC in West Champaran, Bokaro, Giridih, Chatra and Hazarib-

agh, according to government reports. Obviously Nepali-looking armed Naxalites have been seen at Bijapur in Dantewara region and in Rajnandgaon, near the Wagah river on the Maharashtra border, police officers told *TOI*. One such group was sighted recently in the jungles near "Madian" village, 90 kms from district headquarters of Rajnandgaon.

Police officers like IG of Bastar, Girdhari Nayak, say if a crackdown on Maoists in Nepal succeeds, it will weaken the training camps and give security forces in Chhattisgarh and nearby areas a better chance to wipe them out. But the bigger fear is that if the crackdown by the 78,000-strong Royal Nepal Army fails, then more and more recruits are likely to flow into India through Bihar and flock the camps for armed training. Police officers here warn that Maoists cadres could also begin to operate from Uttranchal too.

The concept of compact revolutionary zone floated by Indian left extremists, which earlier constituted Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Orissa, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, now includes Uttarakhand and Nepal. The intelligence bureau has also reported that the prime motive of the Naxalites was to carve out a compact revolutionary zone from Nepal to Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh was a corridor for them.

Flowing out from the Himalayas is a chain of Maoist terror, extending well into the interiors of Andhra Pradesh. The People's War Group (PWG) and the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC) are the two most active naxal groups in India. But they are now actively working with other Maoist outfits in South Asia like the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist)

Bihar: The six affected districts are — Patna, Jehanabad, Gaya, Aurangabad, Nalanda, Nawadah, Bhojpur and Rohtas. The ultra-leftist groups active in Bihar are the Maoist Communist Centre (MCC), CPI (ML), People's War, Mazdoor Kisan Sangram Samiti.

Jharkhand: Palamau, Garhwah, Latehar, Gumla, Chatra, Hazaribag and Koderma are amongst the most affected districts. The MCC and its offshoot 'Jharkhand Liberation Front' are the most active.

Orissa: Naxal activity limited to southern parts of the state including Malkangiri, Koraput and Kalahandi districts.

Chhattisgarh: Almost all of its 16 districts, including the densely forested Bastar, have naxalite presence. PWG is main naxalite outfit active in the state.

Andhra Pradesh: As many as 12 of the 23 districts of the state are infested with naxalism. These include Warangal, Khammam, Nizamabad, Midak, Nalgonda, Mahabubnagar, Adilabad, East Godawari and Karimnagar. About 18 naxal groups are active in the state. PWG is the most feared force and the most skilled in guerrilla and jungle warfare among them.

Flowing out of the Himalayas, a destructive Red Tide!

NEPAL

BIHAR

JHARKHAND

ORISSA

CHHATTISGARH

ANDHRA PRADESH

Missile shield heading for completion

Srinjoy Chowdhury in Bangalore

Feb. 11. — India's missile shield — a 200 sq km area defence system — could be ready in the next five or six years, leading defence scientists said. This system could protect big cities and strategic facilities like nuclear reactors and space launching sites against incoming missiles.

Work began on the project about two years ago, and the system would comprise three parts: a long-range tracking radar that will be able to pick up incoming missiles moving at supersonic speeds about 600 km away.

The second part will be the creation of a C3I system — something that will incorporate command, control, communications and intelligence — that will allow the registering of information and decision-making leading to action.

The third component will be the surface-to-air missile. The missile system could be in layers — the first

missile will probably hope to engage the incoming missile at 80-85 km with the final one, in case earlier ones failed, hoping to hit the incoming missile about 20 km away. A radar to guide the missile to incoming missile will also be necessary. The Akash surface-to-air missile, being developed by the DRDO, is a possible candidate for the SAM, but it yet to be readied though user-trials could begin this year. Meanwhile, the Akash will have some anti-missile system capabilities.

Development of this missile shield means a considerable investment as new technologies like a radar with a long-range tracking system will have to be readied. In the past, India has been offered similar systems by Russia (the S-300) and Israel (the Arrow, which has American components), but neither has been agreed to by India as yet.

Speaking to reporters today, senior DRDO officials said that the anti-ballistic missile shield was

under development. One official spoke of the three stages of radar, command and control system and SAM being under development.

Speaking about the development of India's eye in the sky, the airborne warning and control system, Mr M Natarajan, the DRDO chief and scientific advisor to the defence minister, said the 'eye' or the radar, a phased-array type would be placed on an executive jet, which could be the Brazilian Embreer. A final decision on this is yet to be taken. The study phase on this is continuing. Meanwhile, India is readying an imported system with Israeli help. This involves the Phalcon radar on an aircraft from a former Soviet republic. Mr Natarajan said that the crash of a similar aircraft five years ago was an emotional setback for the DRDO but work continued.

Mr Natarajan also spoke about the development of the Medium Combat Aircraft, the follow-up on the now ready Light Combat Aircraft.

THE STATESMAN

12 FEB 2005

HD-4
10/2

Nepal: India to base response on Maoist factor

9-
D.S. N. Srinivas
W

By Sandeep Dikshit

BANGALORE, FEB. 9. India today said its response to the recent developments in Nepal would be dictated by the clout of the Maoists agitating against the abolition of monarchy in the Himalayan kingdom. "There is extremist activity in a large number of our States. Because of the porous border, there is a threat perception that once they [Maoists] exert more influence in Nepal, there will be an impact here. Our policy will be keeping that in view," said the Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, here today.

Speaking in his capacity as a member of the Cabinet Com-

mittee on Security (CCS), he said: "We recognise that if the security situation [in Nepal] deteriorates due to increased Maoist influence, it will heighten our own internal security threat."

Maintaining that India was concerned about the fall of democracy in Nepal, he said it wanted multi-party democracy along with Constitutional monarchy to continue. "This has been affected. But after that [takeover by the King], we have not said this should be done. But if Maoist activity is not constrained, this may cause problems to us."

Revealing that the Royal Nepal Army (RNA) had sent a

communiqué to the Indian Army seeking continuance of friendly relations, Mr. Mukherjee said India had responded "along the same lines."

The missive did not specifically seek additional arms and equipment to counter the Maoists and India had stated that close bilateral military ties should continue.

"We have a long-standing relationship with the RNA. That relationship stands. The RNA wanted reiteration of the same policy." India had recently supplied helicopters, mine-proof vehicles, guns and ammunition to the RNA to counter the Maoists. A second tranche was in the offing but Mr. Mukherjee

did not specify whether it would go through in the present circumstances.

Defence ties with U.S.

Welcoming the U.S. Ambassador, David Mulford's statement on Tuesday that Washington wanted to intensify defence equipment cooperation with India, Mr. Mukherjee also reiterated New Delhi's reservations about the U.S. administration "sometimes" being compelled to impose sanctions that also include severing of military ties. India would continue to be guided by the twin-pronged policy on imports of big price ticket items.

THE HINDU

10 FEB 2005

Pranab terms for US deal

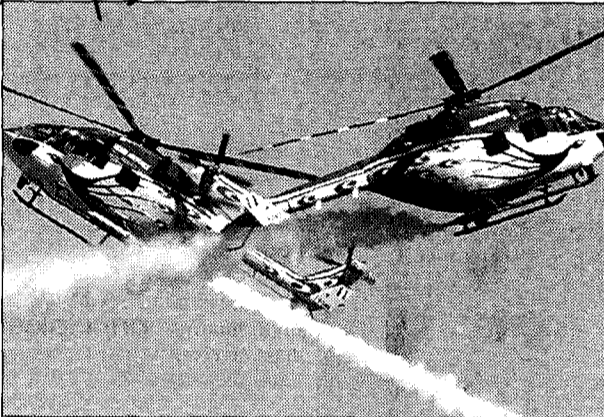
B.R. SRIKANTH (1.8.10/7)

Bangalore, Feb. 9: The US can get a slice of the Indian military market only if it eliminates the prospect of sanctions over Delhi's nuclear policy and ensures uninterrupted supply of technology and spares, defence minister Pranab Mukherjee said today.

"I am happy that the US has shown interest in our defence market. But because of the US laws, the administration is compelled to impose sanctions. Once the sanctions are imposed, no defence cooperation is possible," the minister told a news conference after inaugurating Aero India 2005, an international air show.

"We are also interested in transfer of technology. Dependability as a source of supply and technology transfer are the two most important criteria for defence cooperation," he added.

Mukherjee was answering questions on America's offer to sell a slew of military aircraft, including the P-3 C Orion (maritime surveillance and anti-submarine aircraft) and the E-2C Hawkeye (naval surveillance aircraft). The Indian Air Force has sent a request to Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Company for in-



Advanced light helicopters of the IAF's Sarang aerobatics team perform at the show. (AFP)

formation on F-16 fighter jets before expanding its fleet.

On India's nuclear policy, the minister said the doctrine is clear: no first use of nuclear weapons and they would not be deployed against a non-nuclear state.

The US administration could make an exception to its rules, he said. "No position is irreconcilable. We have seen in the past how the law has been amended with one-time waivers to accommodate certain commitments to one country," Mukherjee said, referring to the scrapping of the Pressler Amendment, according to which the US had stopped military supplies to Pakistan.

India is continuing negotiations with the US to find a common ground so that it can buy military supplies without fear of sanctions, he said. "With the possibility of sanctions, your credibility as a supplier is in question."

The US had imposed sanctions against India after the 1998 nuclear tests in Pokhran and banned sale of military technology. However, since they were removed in several stages from 2001, the two countries have been working towards closer defence links.

At another news conference, Dennys Plessas, the regional vice-president of Lockheed Martin, said the perceived mi-

strust "is something that belongs to the past. I see a new page, I see a new relationship. I see a relationship based on mutual respect and trust. There are common values that are shared between the two countries. These are the two of the largest democracies in the world. There are very strong ties. We ought to be looking at those strong ties and mutual respect and confidence for the future".

Lockheed Martin and Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd have signed a technical assistance agreement related to the P-3 C Orion aircraft. The pact has been approved by the US department of state and allows the two companies to share export-controlled technical data related to the aircraft's design, manufacture and overhaul.

Underlining the "strong and deep relation" between industries of the two countries, Plessas said: "We are willing, we have the desire to work together in addressing mutual interests... Lockheed Martin will be delighted to work in India and satisfy India's military requirement."

At the inauguration of the show, Mukherjee invited aerospace companies to leverage India's low-cost and high-talent workforce and infrastructure for building aircraft and systems for the world market.

Supreme Court seeks police report on Geelani attack

By Our Legal Correspondent

NEW DELHI, FEB. 9. Expressing serious concern over the attack on the Delhi University lecturer, S.A.R. Geelani last night, the Supreme Court today asked the Delhi police to submit a report in one week relating to the assault and the progress of the investigation.

Mr. Geelani was shot at outside his lawyer's residence and rushed to the AIIMS. His condition is said to be 'stable'.
A Bench of Justice P. Venkatarama Reddy and Justice P.P. Naolekar gave this direction after senior counsel, Ram Jethmalani, brought to the notice of the court the attack on Mr. Geelani. The Bench is hearing a batch of appeals filed by the two who

were sentenced to death in the December 13 Parliament attack case and those filed by the Delhi Police challenging the acquittal of Mr. Geelani and Navjot Sandhu by the High Court.

'Expected threat'

Mr. Jethmalani, who is counsel for Mr. Geelani, told the court that the Delhi University lecturer had filed an application in March 2004 apprehending a threat to his life from the Delhi police. He pleaded with the court to entrust the probe to the Central Bureau of Investigation.

When the court enquired about the condition of Mr. Geelani, Mr. Jethmalani said his intestine had ruptured in 10 places but the doctors had not lost hope. He found fault with

the Delhi police for not allowing Mr. Geelani's wife to visit him in hospital last night. He said the police threw a cordon of armed personnel around Mr. Geelani and did not allow his wife to be by his side. Only after the media started reporting the incident, did the police relent, he said.

Appearing for the Delhi police, senior counsel, Gopal Subramaniam, submitted: "The Commissioner of Police is personally monitoring the investigation into the attack and a thorough probe would be conducted."

Police refute charges

Our Staff Reporter writes: Police today refuted allegations by Mr. Geelani's supporters that they were behind the murder-

ous assault. At a press conference, the Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch), Ranjit Narayan, dismissed the charges as "baseless" and "a figment of imagination."

"Mr. Geelani had never approached the police with a request to provide him security because of any threat to his life. There is no truth in the charge that the lecturer had been kept under surveillance," he said.

Earlier, a Crime Branch team headed by the Assistant Commissioner of Police, Ravi Shankar, visited the scene of crime to reconstruct the sequence of events leading to the attack.

The police found five empty cartridges from near Mr. Geelani's silver-grey Maruti car parked a short distance from his

lawyer, Nandita Haksar's house. A forensic squad lifted some fingerprints from Mr. Geelani's car. However, the police are yet to come across an eyewitness.

Mr. Geelani's lawyer told the police that she was working on her computer and her husband, Sebastian Hongray, was in the kitchen when they heard some gunfire. Soon thereafter, someone began banging at their door. When Mr. Hongray opened it, he saw Mr. Geelani, who said that he had been shot at. Mr. Hongray and Ms. Haksar then helped Mr. Geelani to the backseat of their Scorpio and rushed him to hospital. Mr. Geelani was operated upon early this morning and three bullets were removed.

More reports on Page 11

Maoist rebels are smuggling guns into India, says IB

Gr 3
9/2

By Somit Sen/TNN

Mumbai: A steady trickle of firearms is making its way from across the border. According to sources in the Intelligence Bureau, guns manufactured by Maoist rebels in Nepal are being smuggled into India for sale to underworld gangs in Mumbai.

It was this intelligence information that led the anti-terrorist squad (ATS) to intercept two gun-runners at Sion Koliwada on Sunday evening and recover two so-

ferry them across to Uttaranchal or Bihar from where they are brought by road to Mumbai." A senior IPS officer, while confirming the role of Maoist groups in selling firearms to the Mumbai mafiosi, said, "Mumbai has a big market for illegal firearms, and the underworld is willing to pay lakhs of rupees for such consignments."

The police suspect that the Dawood gang has also been procuring firearms from the Maoist groups. The D-compa-

surrender, they sped away, knocking down four pedestrians in the process. The police fired at them, injuring Thala. While three men managed to escape with a bag containing firearms, Thala and Kohari were arrested. Thala has been admitted to the intensive care unit of Sion Hospital, with bullet wounds on his chest and arm.

"The ATS has also recovered several number plates from the car," said ATS chief K P Raghuvanshi, adding that the car was stolen from

Bandra-Kurla Complex some months ago. "Kohari is involved in a few murder and robbery cases in Mumbai."

Sources said that Thala was the brother-in-law of Naresh Singh Thakur, a top henchman of D K Rao. "Thala used to co-ordinate with Rajan inmates in jail. He was also involved in supplying firearms to shooters," an officer stated.

Meanwhile, the four pedestrians

who were hit by the speeding car are out of danger. The car has been seized by the police and is at Antop Hill police station.

Said an officer, "Though many citizens suspect the authenticity of encounter killings, this one was a genuine encounter witnessed by several passers-by." The ATS operation was carried out under the supervision of deputy inspector general of police Subodh Jaiswal and deputy police commissioner Jaijeet Singh.



The broken windscreen of the vehicle in which alleged arms dealers were trying to escape after the police opened fire at Raoli Camp

phisticated guns, a 9 mm pistol and a .38 bore revolver, from them. It is believed that the weapons were manufactured in Nepal and smuggled from across the Indo-Nepal border. Those arrested are believed to have links with the D K Rao faction of the Chhota Rajan gang.

"The Maoist groups in Nepal are trying to raise funds by setting up illegal firearm factories," said a police source. "The weapons are then smuggled out by gun-runners in Nepal who

ny has a strong base in Nepal. According to the Mumbai crime branch, several henchmen of both Dawood Ibrahim and Chhota Rajan are currently ensconced in Nepal.

Manoj Kohari and Raju Thala, the two men arrested on Sunday, have been booked for gun-running and attempt to murder. They were part of a group of five travelling in an Indica car in the Raoli Camp area in Sion-Koliwada on Sunday evening. When the ATS team asked them to

400-1
9/12

Geelani shot at, injured

By Our Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI, FEB. 8. Syed Abdul Rehman Geelani, the Delhi University Professor who was acquitted in the Parliament attack case of December 2001, was shot at and injured near Basant Enclave in South-West Delhi on Tuesday evening. Prof. Geelani sustained at least three gunshot wounds and was rushed to the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), where his condition is reported to be serious.

The incident occurred around 9 p.m. when Prof. Geelani was coming out of his lawyer Nandita Haksar's residence at Basant Lok in Vasant Kunj. The assailants, who were reported to be travelling in a jeep, shot at him at least thrice from close range and fled. The mo-

tive behind the attack is not clear.

Hearing the gunshots, Ms. Haksar rushed out of the house and found Prof. Geelani lying on the ground bleeding. Along



with her family members, she rushed him to the AIIMS where he was immediately operated upon. The incident was reported to the police by the hospital authorities.

Ms. Haksar said Prof. Geelani, teaching in Delhi University's Zakir Hussain College, had earlier in the day attended court proceedings. "He said he wanted to discuss a case with me and came to my house around 8.30 p.m.," she added.

Prof. Geelani was charge-sheeted by the Special Cell of the Delhi Police for his alleged involvement in the Parliament attack case.

He was sentenced to death by the court of Additional Sessions Judge, S.N. Dhingra but the Delhi High Court acquitted him of all the charges due to lack of evidence.

Defence investing in 3 projects

Statesman News Service

BANGALORE, Feb. 7. — Union defence minister Mr Pranab Mukherjee today said that the government is investing over Rs 10,000 crore in Light Combat Aircraft, advance airborne systems and the Kaveri turbine engine to power the LCA.

These investments are being made through the Defence Research Development Organisation for indigenous development.

Addressing a seminar on international aerospace in the city and another function at the Bharat Earth Movers Ltd unit at Kolar later in the day, Mr Mukherjee said that while the government was making massive investments in defence research and development, it had to contend with the inevitable delays in indigenous projects.

The minister, who was responding to queries on the delays in the LCA project told newsmen that "when you start some indig-

enous project, you have to face some problems." The LCA, he said, was no different especially the attempts to make the Kaveri engine for powering it.

He was, however, quick to explain that delays in localising defence equipment and material could be ascribed to the inability of the various governments to make major investments in research and development. Which is precisely why, he said, the government wanted the private sector to get involved in a big way.

THE STATESMAN

08 FEB 2005

Security shored up

Belated but welcome step

That they should have been in place decades ago does not lessen the importance of the decision to establish specialised maritime police units in coastal states. Though the bulk of the Rs 742 crore cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Security will be spent on upgrading the Coast Guard — the fourth of the Defence Services — the setting up of units in the state police organisations to take control of the shore, and immediately off-shore waters, could prove a key factor in a larger security network. A significant gap in the policing apparatus would be plugged once these units come into play. With the Centre providing the funds, a system of intensive patrolling by lightly-armed but fast-moving vessels capable of negotiating shallow creeks could detect clandestine activity that escaped the attention of the navy and coast guard which are mandated to look for “bigger fish”. There should now be limited scope for slipping through the security net.

For decades now maritime security experts have been highlighting how the sea routes are being extensively used by gun-runners and the narcotics trade — both of which have very strong terrorist connections — as well as routine small-time smugglers. Contraband is transferred from dhows and ships to fishing boats far out at sea, the latter find it easy to land at any of the hundreds of fishing harbours that dot the coastline. The policing system currently in place has the navy responsible for the waters beyond 30 kilometres from the shore, the coast guard serving to maintain the inner cordon. But the shoreline/three kilometre belt was neglected. It is for good reason that the maritime police units to be raised now will function under the state government, not merely the Constitutional proviso that law-and-order is a state subject. Those who use the sea as a conduit actually operate extensively on land, so the local police is the best agency to deal with them. That agency would also be in the best position to gather intelligence and monitor suspicious activity. There would, of course, be the inherent drawback of police inefficiency, corruption, underworld links and so on. That's where the Centre would have a major role to play: it must ensure that a three-tier security apparatus functions in unison.

Infiltration down, not out: Pranab

Fidayeen attacks worry minister

Agencies
Kolar (Karnataka), February 7



DEFENCE MINISTER Pranab Mukherjee said on Monday that the number of infiltrators into Jammu and Kashmir from Pakistan had come down, but not the efforts to infiltrate.

"The number of infiltrators has come down, but the efforts to infiltrate haven't come down. Many efforts are being made. Now, we've been preventing that by completing the fencing on the Line of Control. That has acted as a deterrent", Mukher-

jee told reporters. Greater surveillance and vigilance had also helped bring down infiltration, he said, but added that *fidayeen* attacks had increased because the number of infiltrators had come down. Describing *fidayeen* attacks as "a more dangerous weapon", he said nowhere could one fight "those who're willing to kill themselves". He was here on a visit to defence undertaking BEML.

Mukherjee said that, according to the estimates of the Union home ministry, there had been a substantial decrease in infiltration by 60 per cent over the previous year. He, however, stressed that the figures on infiltration from different sources were "some sort of estimate". "You have to understand that the infiltrators are not going to stand in queue and say you count us".

To a query on troops reduction in Jammu and Kashmir, he said it had not affected "our vigilance" and surveillance. "Many people have welcomed it (troop reduction)".

Asked if he would visit Pakistan if invited, he said, "It's a loaded question. Let the invitation come. How can I reply to a hypothetical question? Till now, I haven't received any invitation".

Pak wants to play Big Brother

CONTENDING THAT the reasons given by New Delhi for not attending the Saarc summit were "not cogent and convincing", Pakistan said on Monday that, as chairman of the grouping, it now has the "heavy responsibility" of removing India's "fissures" with Bangladesh, as well as with Nepal, to fix new dates for the summit. The postponement of the summit was a "set-back" and Pakistan was now trying to work out new dates, Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman Masood Khan said.

"The reasons given by India were frankly not cogent and convincing. But we still have to move towards regional cooperation", he said. As a result of the postponement, he said, Pakistan now had the "heavy responsibility of narrowing down the differences between New Delhi and Dhaka and New Delhi and Kathmandu". However, he did not elaborate on how the country planned to achieve that.

Agencies, Islamabad

মাওবাদী রুখতে নেপাল সীমান্তে কেন্দ্রীয় বাহিনী পেতে পারে রাজ্য

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ৭ ফেব্রুয়ারি: নেপালে জরুরি অবস্থা জারি হওয়ায় সীমান্ত সংলগ্ন এলাকা দিয়ে মাওবাদীরা ভারতে প্রবেশ করতে পারে বলে আশঙ্কা করছে পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সরকার। আজ প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহের সঙ্গে দেখা করে মুখ্যমন্ত্রী বুদ্ধদেব ভট্টাচার্য বিষয়টি নিয়ে বিস্তারিত আলোচনা করেন। অবস্থার পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে পশ্চিমবঙ্গ কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের আধা-সামরিক বাহিনী ইন্দো-টিবেটিয়ান বর্ডার পুলিশ (আই টি বি পি) পেতে পারে।

বুদ্ধবাবু বলেন, “প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গে সাধারণ ভাবে বিভিন্ন বিষয় নিয়ে কথা হয়েছে। তার মধ্যে নেপাল সংক্রান্ত বিষয় আছে। আমাদের উপরে চাপ তো পড়ছে।” কেন্দ্রের কাছ থেকে কী ধরনের সহায়তা তিনি চাইছেন বা আশা করছেন, তা নিয়ে প্রশ্ন করলে মুখ্যমন্ত্রী বলেন, “আই টি বি পি পাব বলে মনে হয়।” প্রধানমন্ত্রীর দৃফতর সূত্রেও বলা হয়েছে, আজকের আলোচনায় অন্যতম

মুখ্য বিষয় ছিল নেপাল পরিস্থিতি।

অতীতে বিভিন্ন সময়ে নেপালের মাওবাদীরা শিলিগুড়ি এবং কলকাতায় ভারতের মাওবাদীদের সঙ্গে বৈঠক করেছে। নেপালে গণতান্ত্রিক সরকার বরখাস্ত হয়ে জরুরি অবস্থা জারি হওয়ার পরে সে দেশের সামরিক বাহিনীর সঙ্গে মাওবাদীদের লড়াই আরও জোরদার হবে বলে আশঙ্কা করা হচ্ছে। পি টি আই জানাচ্ছে, আজই আলাদা সংঘর্ষে নেপালে তিন মাওবাদী ও এক সৈনিকের মৃত্যু হয়েছে। রাজ্য ক্ষমতা নেওয়ার পরে এই প্রথম সংঘর্ষের খবর মিলল। মাওবাদীরা মূলত গেরিলা যুদ্ধ চালায়। সেনার চাপ বাড়লে মূলত পশ্চিমবঙ্গ, বিহার এবং উত্তরপ্রদেশ দিয়েই তারা ভারতে চোকে।

সম্প্রতি চার বাম দল নেপালের মাওবাদীদের সম্পর্কে খানিক নরম মনোভাব নিয়েছিল। সিপিএম নেতা সীতারাম ইয়েচুরি বলেছিলেন, “মাওবাদীরা নেপালে গণতন্ত্র ফিরিয়ে

আনতে চাইলে তাদের সমর্থন করতেও আপত্তি নেই।” কিন্তু প্রশাসনিক ক্ষেত্রে অন্তত রাজ্য সরকার যে দলের রাজনৈতিক মনোভাব দ্বারা চালিত হচ্ছে না, তা আজ স্পষ্ট হয়েছে। রাজ্যের উপরে চাপ তৈরির পাশাপাশি কেন্দ্র মাওবাদীদের ভারতে ঢোকার পথ বন্ধ করতে সচেষ্ট হয়েছে। রাজ্য সরকারও পুরোপুরি সেই পথে চলছে।

এর আগে কে এল ও জঙ্গিরা যাতে ভুটানে আশ্রয় নিতে না-পারে, তার জন্য রাজ্য আই টি বি পি চেয়েছিল। সে বার নেপাল সীমান্তের জন্যও কেন্দ্রীয় বাহিনীর অনুরোধ করেন বুদ্ধ।

কলকাতা থেকে স্টাফ রিপোর্টার জানাচ্ছেন, নেপালে ডামাডোলের সুযোগ নিয়ে মাওবাদীরা দার্জিলিঙে গোলমাল পাকাতে পারে বলে আশঙ্কা করছেন জিএনএলএফ নেতা সুবাস ঘিসিং। তিনি বলেন, “দার্জিলিং স্পর্শকাতর জায়গা। এ দিকে নেপালে মাওবাদীদের তৎপরতা রয়েছে। সে দিকটা মাথায় রাখতে হবে।”

ANADARAZAR PATEKA

07 FEB 2005

ITBP on Bengal's border with Nepal

Stateaman News Service

DARJEELING, Feb. 4. — The Indo-Tibetan Border Police will soon be joining the SSB to man the Indo-Nepalese border of the district, fulfilling a long-standing demand of the state government.

They are also to be deployed along the Indo-Bhutanese border. A meeting between senior ITBP officials and IGP, North Bengal, Mr Subroto Narayan Sarkar, was held in Siliguri yesterday to finalise the modalities of deployment. Home secretary Mr Amit Kiran Deb today said the Union home minister

had acceded to the state government's request for ITBP troops on 28 January. "The deployment should be complete in a fortnight," he said. Mr Deb said the SSB personnel deployed along the Indo-Nepalese border will not be withdrawn, but are to be supplemented by ITBP men.

Security meet

A security meeting between officials of Bhutan and India in Guwahati today discussed the threat posed by Maoists taking shelter in Bhutanese refugee camps in Nepal. The meeting, to continue tomorrow, will try to evolve a strategy to counter the threat.

Left demands cut in defence outlay

Deepak Razdan
New Delhi, February 1

THE LEFT parties' "Budget" was out on Tuesday. At North Block, they made a 12-point presentation before the finance minister listing their proposals.

Their demands: Cut defence spending, withdraw corporate tax exemptions, tax forex outflows, and go for a deficit Budget to raise an additional Rs 50,000 crore to fulfil the promises made in the common minimum programme (CMP).

Critical of the government's economic policies, the Left leaders explained their document to P. Chidambaram for two hours since, they said, the coming budget would be the first "full" Budget of the UPA government.

They told reporters: "We expect the government to take due note of our suggestions". The finance minister had promised "to look into" their proposals, they said. If ignored, the govern-

ment could certainly face embarrassing moments in Parliament, sources said.

The Left team included the CPI's A.B. Bardhan and D. Raja, the CPI (M)'s Prakash Karat, the RSP's Abani Roy and the Forward Bloc's Debabrata Biswas.

The Left leaders said the last UPA budget was not for the full year, and could provide only Rs 10,000 crores for the CMP.

The coming budget must provide substantially higher allocations for agriculture (up by Rs 14,000 crores), the national rural employment scheme (Rs 20,000 crores more), education and health (each up by Rs 8,000 crore).

Bardhan said the last year's defence allocation was Rs 66,000 crores and included Rs 12,000 crores for orders placed earlier. This year, there were no such commitments and, therefore, the allocation should be brought down.

The Left parties said the tax-GDP ratio should be in-

creased by 1.5 per cent. "Enough scope for resource mobilisation through taxation exists", they said.

The government's decision to set up a fund from the disinvestment proceeds for investments in the social sector "lacks economic rationale".

Public spending in the social sector, or any other sector, should be financed by raising resources through taxation or by running budget deficit, and the government should not worry about the fiscal responsibility law, they said.

The Left leaders, who will meet the finance minister again to oppose banking sector reforms, said deficit financing was preferable to selling off PSUs, which brought fund receipts just once.

While domestic industry should be protected against cheaper imports, the salaried class should be spared any additional income tax burden", they said.

Normalcy at the border an achievement: Vij

New Delhi: Terming the recent shelling on the Line of Control (LOC) in Jammu and Kashmir as "nothing sinister", outgoing army chief Gen N C Vij on Monday said the country's adversaries would find it hard to push militants across the border.

He said recent ceasefire violations could be "stray cases" either attributable to rogue elements in the Pakistan army, who might be helping to push the militants across, or groups of militants attempting to sneak in.

"There is no cause of concern. Our troops maintained restraint and did not respond to the shelling and it speaks volumes of how seasoned they had become," Vij said after laying down office as the chief of army staff.

While outlining that new structural reforms were being enforced in the army, he said most of these measures had now been cleared by the government.

Asked if the erection of an anti-infiltration fence could be described as the highlight of his two-and-a-half year tenure as the army chief, he said "bringing about near normalcy is a proud achievement of the army with help from paramilitary forces, local police and administration and the state government".

"We have been able to bring down infiltration to a trickle despite best of efforts from the other side," Vij said, maintaining that the adversaries would find it very difficult to push people across if the forces kept up the present security posture.

He said that sustained combined efforts by civil and military authorities had led to people in the state coming forward to show their yearning for peace and this was indicated by the heavy turnout of voters in the local body elections even in separatist

strongholds like Sopore, Baramullah and Kupwara.

Vij said while these areas, which had less than 10% turnout in general elections, had shown over 50% polling with the per-



The new army chief Gen Joginder Jaswant Singh with his father Joginder Singh (middle) and the outgoing army chief Gen N C Vij (right) in New Delhi on Monday

centage in the border areas going as high as 70-80%. Security forces had also been able to eliminate the top leadership of the militants inside J&K, with the number of militants decreasing from 3,500 to 1,600-1,700.

"This number will decrease further as the inflow across the border has become a trickle and the security forces keep up their pressure on them," he said. PTI

1993 blasts: Tada court to try Salem

Agencies
Mumbai, January 30

ABU SALEM, whose extradition has been cleared by the Supreme Court of Portugal, would be tried separately by a Tada court here for his alleged complicity in the 1993 bomb blast case, police sources said here today. Salem will also be tried separately for his alleged role in the Gulshan Kumar murder case, although the trial in this case is over and the court has pronounced its verdict, the sources told.

The 1993 bomb blasts trial is already over and the court is now busy preparing to deliver the verdict, which is expected this year. Salem, allegedly a prime accused, will be tried separately as and when he is extradited. According to CBI, Salem had allegedly distributed arms and ammunition smuggled from Pakistan to the accused in the 1993 bomb blast case. He allegedly went to the Bandra bungalow of actor Sanjay Dutt along with a co-accused to supply arms.

The prosecution's case is that Dutt kept an AK-56 rifle and returned the rest of the arms. However, Dutt has denied the allegation that he received the arms from the accused. Salem's deposition is vital to the case because he has been assigned the role of a key conspirator. CBI is eagerly awaiting his extradition along with his girlfriend and former actress, Monica Bedi.

There are nine cases pending against Salem in India but of these, the 1993 bomb blast case and Gulshan Kumar murder trial would get top priority, CBI sources said. In the Gulshan case, the prosecution has alleged that Salem had taken contract money to kill the Gulshan and hired goons to kill him. The murder was reportedly executed at the instance of Gulshan's business rival.

Police alleged that the conspiracy meeting in this case was held in Dubai where Salem had taken the contract money and asked a co-conspirator to execute the killing. The trial court in Mumbai did not believe the conspiracy angle for want of evidence and acquitted prime accused Ramesh Taurani in this case.

However, considering the evidence on record, the court sentenced co-accused and alleged killer of Gulshan to life imprisonment. According to police, they suffered a setback in this case only because Abu Salem was not available to them for interrogation.

"Now that he is expected to be extradited from Portugal, we shall grill him on his role in the conspiracy and hope to achieve

ROAD AHEAD



■ Abu Salem will also be tried for his alleged role in the Gulshan Kumar murder case. Salem allegedly took contract money and hired goons for Gulshan's murder

■ In the bomb blasts case, the CBI alleges that Salem went to the Bandra home of actor Sanjay Dutt with a co-accused to supply arms

■ Dutt, however, has denied he received arms from the accused



a breakthrough," a police officer said.

Salem, once a close aide of Dawood Ibrahim, hails from Uttar Pradesh. He came to Mumbai in mid-Eighties and started a small time business in a market in suburban Andheri.

He came into contact with Chhota Shakeel and Anees Ibrahim of Dawood gang and got involved in criminal activities.

However, after 1993 bomb blasts, he fled to Dubai and from there operated as extortionist after splitting from Dawood. Salem also targeted several film personalities and sought protection money from them. The police also suspect that he had bought overseas distribution rights from some film producers.

31 JAN 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

"More areas of agreement than differences with China"

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JAN. 29. The Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, said today that India and China shared more common interests and areas of agreement than differences, including a shared commitment to a multipolar world.

Addressing a conference organised by the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), he stressed, "Our security ties have undergone a change, with the resumption of military ties signified by joint exercises, bilateral visits and sharing of information on military matters of joint interest."

"By institutionalising the Sino-Indian dialogue at a political level, with regular exchanges between designated interlocutors [Special Representatives], the territorial and boundary differences between our two countries are being addressed purposefully."

In the aftermath of the tsunami disaster, Mr. Mukherjee said the crisis had proved that cooperative means to anticipate and work towards speedier and more effective pre-disaster warning systems and post-disaster relief operations were essential.

Transparency needed

"The design of such arrangements and political sensitivities need to be given due thought ...

there is a need to carry transparency in intentions and motivations, build common security perceptions, respect religious and cultural differences, reaffirm commitment to democratic and secular values and abide by the principle of non-interference in domestic conflicts.

"These were the broad principles [followed] when India despatched relief material to its neighbouring countries — Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Indonesia, while at the same time confronting the challenges of rescue and relief for the tsunami victims at home."

Pointing to the need for a common front against terrorism, the Defence Minister, who is also president of IDSA, underlined that India did not link terrorism with any single religion and believed it would be a grievous error of understanding to do so.

Referring to non-proliferation efforts such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) launched by the United States for a select group of nations, Mr. Mukherjee maintained, "These need to be examined in greater detail. However, the underlying need for a consensual multilateral effort cannot be denied."

About the security of sea-lanes of communications, the Defence Minister stated that these needed to be protected from both traditional and non-traditional security threats.

"While there is an immediate necessity to institutionalise regional mechanisms aimed at dealing with these threats, the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard with their current resources can play a modest but significant role in cooperation with other regional navies to deal with these threats."

Role of U.S.

On the role of the United States in the Asia-Pacific region, the Defence Minister argued that the two fundamental aspects that would have a significant bearing on East Asian security were the degree of U.S. regional commitment and the "texture of its relations with China".

"India's strategic perspective vis-à-vis East Asia is based on two fundamental principles. First, the maintenance of an equitable strategic balance and prevention of regional rivalries from destabilising the region, which are both economically and strategically vital for Indian security.

"Second and more importantly, India would like to engage all players both bilaterally and collectively through institutions such as the Asean Regional Forum. Towards this end, India has initiated a security dialogue to constructively engage all the major players in the region," the Defence Minister added.

30 JAN 2005

THE HINDU

Portugal apex court allows Salem extradition to India

New Delhi
28 JANUARY

PORTUGAL Supreme Court has allowed extradition of 1993 Mumbai bomb serial blasts accused Abu Salem to India. The Supreme Court of Portugal, while deciding on two petitions filed by Salem and the CBI through Portuguese prosecutor general, ruled that Salem could be extradited to India for his trial in major offences, CBI sources said.

The Portuguese High Court had earlier allowed extradition of Salem to India for trial only in minor offences which included forging of passport. However, the CBI had gone in for appeal against it in the Supreme Court.

Simultaneously, Salem had also moved against the High Court for his extradition. The fresh ver-



dict of the Supreme Court came in response to these two petitions. The Portugal high court had granted extradition of Salem, who is also the main accused in the 1993 Mumbai serial bomb blasts, to India in July last year for facing trial in offences related to forging of passports and cases of extortion.

According to that order, India could try the underworld don only for offences like forging passport, smuggling of arms into Mumbai and not for heinous crimes like causing activities leading to death of civilians in the 1993 Mumbai serial bomb blasts. The CBI had immediately moved a petition against this. Salem's girlfriend Monica Bedi was also ordered to be extradited to India in June last year. India had already given an assurance to the Portuguese government that Salem would not be awarded death sentence paving way for his extradition.

—PTI

The Economic Times

Some Raw Intelligence

With an NSA in place, we need to get down to coherent policy making and intelligence reform

THE interminable buzz of speculation over J.N. Dixit's replacement should now thankfully cease with M.K. Narayanan, special advisor to the prime minister on internal security, being named as the country's new national security advisor. Sensitive appointments of this kind are often the cause of unedifying turf wars and highlight the underlying tensions and disjunctures inherent in the system. These can sometimes have an extremely deleterious effect on the authority of the national leadership, particularly the office of the prime minister. By moving on the issue, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has signalled a desire not just to put an end to the rumours flying around but to take ownership of the country's strategic planning and policy making process. This, of course, demands more than the appointment of one individual and how the prime minister envisages his team of advisors on security should get clearer in the days ahead.

With an NSA in place, attention should now shift to the more substantive issues at hand. The times demand both continuity and change. While on-going initiatives — like the back-channel diplomacy with Pakistan that

Dixit was engaged in — require to be resumed with the necessary vigour, there is also a need to rethink the contours of Indian foreign policy and security framework, keeping in mind the country's profile as an emerging power in the region and the world. Finally, there an obvious need for better coordination between the various ministries and departments on security matters — not just to handle an impending crisis but in terms of smoother day-to-day functioning.

Coherence is needed on the intelligence front, as well, and Narayanan as a former chief of the Intelligence Bureau is possibly the best man to ensure this. The Research and Analyses Wing (RAW), its functioning mired by the curious case of Rabindra Singh who is believed to have leaked information to the CIA and then mysteriously fleeing the country, has just been put on notice. The man who will now head it has, it appears, been deliberately chosen from outside its present ranks in order to facilitate course correction and systemic reform. Both these new appointments should come as a challenge and an opportunity to address the inherent flaws in the system and embark on new beginnings.

27 JAN 2005

INDIAN EXPRESS

Why stop the flow?

No need for curbs on Nepal visits

However relevant a red alert along the Indo-Nepalese border may prove in preventing the movement of Maoists, New Delhi may have to rethink its proposal to restrict those visiting Nepal. There is little reason to believe the Maoists will harm individual Indians, particularly tourists — so far there has been no such instance — though Indian ventures have come under attack. If loads of tourists the two Indian private airlines carry from Delhi to Kathmandu are any indication, there is the least bother about the current government-Maoist confrontation. Indian tourists keep the Nepal hotel industry and casinos alive and there is reason why they should be encouraged. For all practical purposes, the 1950 Indo-Nepalese Treaty of Friendship which allows unrestricted entry to citizens of either country is dead because for the past few years it has become mandatory for Indian citizens landing at Kathmandu international airport to have passports or identity cards, a system not applicable to travelling by road.

North-east states must particularly take precautions against Maoist infiltration. It bears recall that some Nepalese of southern Bhutan known as Lhotsampas, who took up arms against the establishment, encouraged Ulfa and Bodo militants to set up camps there in the early 1990s. There is every possibility of Maoists forging links with Ulfa and the National Liberation Front of Boroland which three months ago declared a unilateral ceasefire, that is formalised because New Delhi doubts its sincerity. On the other hand, recourse to law has done little to stem illegal immigration, so fencing off the Indo-Bangladeshi border, work on which has been painfully slow, must be expedited.

Narayanan made security adviser

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Vinod Sharma and Rajnish Sharma
New Delhi, January 25

THE CENTRE today confirmed former Intelligence Bureau boss M.K. Narayanan as national security adviser (NSA) while elevating veteran Research & Analysis Wing head P.K.H. Tharakan as the external intelligence agency's chief. PMO sources said Narayanan will continue to perform the tasks assigned to him as the Prime

Minister's special adviser on internal security, a post that now stands merged with the office of the NSA.

Since the death of J.N. Dixit, whom Narayanan succeeds, debate has raged on whether the country needs a national security adviser at all. It remains to be seen whether the sensitive office will retain the profile it had under Dixit, a former foreign secretary who played a key role in back-channel diplomacy with Pakistan and bor-

has been under fire following top official Ravinder Singh's defection to the US. A 1968 batch IPS officer, Tharakan had served in the agency for several years without opting for the R&AW cadre.

In preferring Tharakan over J.K. Sinha, special director, R&AW, who moves to the Cabinet secretariat, the government seems to have opted for an officer who would bring a fresh perspective to the agency's thinking without being a rank outsider.

der talks with China, indications, however, are that track II talks with Islamabad would be assigned to the former High Commissioner to Pakistan, S.K. Lambah, who had also functioned as India's special envoy to Afghanistan.

The appointment of Tharakan — currently the director-general of Kerala police — as secretary, R&AW, is being seen in police and intelligence circles here as a precursor to major changes in the secret agency, which



M.K. Narayanan

Take it on face value: Pranab on LoC firing

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 21

LESS than 24 hours before the scheduled arrival of Army Chief Gen N.C. Vij at the Bhimber Gali sector, mortar shells were fired from across the Line of Control at nearby Mendhar on Thursday evening. It was the second such incident in the last three days.

General Vij, however, cancelled his trip today due to bad weather.

Pakistan has suggested that the Indian side investigate yesterday's firing on its own as it "took place on India's territory". The DGMOs of both countries talked for a third time over the phone last night.

New Delhi is treading cautiously on the LoC firing, keeping in mind the

ongoing peace process. "We should take them on face value," Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said today. He also indicated that it was possible that militants were responsible.

Mukherjee, who has asked Defence Secretary Ajai Vikram Singh to take up the matter with Islamabad, said: "I enquired today and also last night about the shelling from across the border. Our DGMO talked to his Pakistani counterpart. They said that they had no knowledge about it but agreed to look into it."

Sources said the shells landed barely six km from the spot where Gen Vij and J&K Governor Lt Gen (retd) S.K. Sinha were slated to arrive to dedicate fencing along the LoC to the nation. They added the shelling

started at around 6.30 pm and was aimed at Indian positions in Hamirpur area. The shelling lasted for 30 minutes, sources said, adding that Medium Machine Gun rounds were also fired.

Meanwhile, in their phone conversation, Pakistan's Director-General (Military Operations) Maj Gen Mohammed Yusuf told his Indian counterpart Lt Gen A.S. Bahia yesterday there was no evidence to indicate the Pakistan Army had fired the mortars.

The Indian side stuck to Wednesday's statement, saying the firing was in clear violation of the November 2003 ceasefire agreement. An Army spokesperson said today, "We are exercising restraint, as we have since the first incident on Tuesday."

Manmohan assessing role of National Security Adviser

9-
Dg N. Narayanan
H.D-11
By Our Diplomatic Correspondent 6/1/05

NEW DELHI, JAN. 5. The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, is involved in assessing the role and scope of the National Security Adviser (NSA) following the passing away of J.N. Dixit and the assigning of his duties to M. K. Narayanan, Special Adviser to the Prime Minister.

An official press release issued on Tuesday said the Prime Minister had "assigned duties of the National Security Adviser" to Mr. Narayanan, a former Director of the Intelligence Bureau. "Shri Narayanan will discharge the assignment in addition to his existing duties until further orders," the release added.

The word "officiate" does not figure in the text of the brief press release issued yesterday. As the statement makes clear, Mr. Narayanan, an accomplished intelligence officer, would have additional charge of the NSA's duties "until further orders".

Asked to comment on the statement's implications, South Block officials told this correspondent that it was not as if Mr. Narayanan's appointment was for a few days, but neither

was it a permanent affair. Mr. Narayanan himself has been quoted as saying that Tuesday's decision was an "interim measure" taken by the Government.

The current arrangement, the officials said, would allow the Prime Minister to look carefully at how the system had been functioning since he took office in May this year.

In his capacity as Special Adviser, the Intelligence Bureau had been reporting to Mr. Narayanan while the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) was sending its inputs to the National Security Adviser.

With a combination of the

two roles, both intelligence agencies would now be reporting to Mr. Narayanan.

This could make for a smoother functioning, the officials believed. While it is possible that a new NSA might be appointed, it is also possible that Mr. Narayanan's appointment as NSA could be made permanent, the officials said.

There have also been occasions where the functions of the NSA and the External Affairs Minister have overlapped — a feature common to both the National Democratic Alliance and the United Progressive Alliance governments.

J.N. Dixit cremated

By Our Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI, JAN. 5. The mortal remains of the National Security Adviser, J. N. Dixit, were today consigned to the flames at the Brar Square crematorium in Delhi Cantonment. His son, Ashok Dixit, lit the funeral pyre in the presence of the former diplomat's wife, Annapurna, and other two sons and two daughters.

The Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, the Congress president, Sonia Gandhi, the Union Home Minister, Shivraj Patil, and the Defence Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, were among those present at the funeral.

Several diplomats and Mr. Dixit's close friends and relatives were also present. The 68-year-old diplomat died on Monday after suffering a massive heart attack.

Turf war over RAW chief irritates govt

By Mahendra Ved
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: When Prime Minister Manmohan Singh decided on the appointment of Ajit Doval as the new chief of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), he placed the seniority criteria upper-most, ignoring a whisper campaign that the officer had been one of the main advisors on intelligence matters to former deputy PM L K Advani.

Now, however, he is confronted by a virtual turf war among the country's top sleuths, in time for the appointment of a new chief of the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) of the cabinet secretariat.

The PM is seized of the matter and is understood to have directed his secretariat to prepare a detailed report tracing the sources of media leaks that, reliable sources say, reflect badly on the government's credibility.

The new twist is in the form of a cadre war. While the RAW has regular cadre, having been established in 1968 and come of age, media reports indicate that it is under attack from quarters close to the IB.

RAW's present chief, C D Sahay, retires later this month after a 22-month tenure and a race is on for the 16th chief. If the UPA government follows the policy of promoting from within the RAW cadre, two "natural" candidates are Ambar Sen and G K Sinha, both having good record and being highly rated.

However, this is just the time, sources in the government note, when details about defection, allegedly to the US, of a senior RAW functionary, Ravinder Singh, are being talked about.

Neither the turf war is new to the government, nor the media reports that appear from time to time, especially when skeletons from the intelligence cupboards fall out, causing scandals.

But raking up the Ravinder Singh issue that occurred several months ago is embarrassing the government that is continuing with the previous government's policy of closer collaboration with the US in the intelligence matters. Sources say it would like to move on without escaping into the recent past and tighten the controls, as it generally happens, to prevent a recurrence.

Nobody is condoning Singh's disappearance. But there is evidence available now that explains why he was not prevented, and why he was not taken to court. There was no hard evidence at that time that could stand scrutiny in a court. He was supposed to be living lavishly, as per reports that appeared after his disappearance.

The counter intelligence section within the RAW has concluded that this was because Ravinder Singh had inherited a lot of property from his parents and his in-laws and a part of his family had already migrated to the US.



Nepal Maoists court KLO, GOC-in-C worried

903N 516 41103

Statesman News Service

KOLKATA, Jan. 3. — Nepal's Maoists are closely interacting with the KLO and this may pose a major threat to India, Lt-Gen Arvind Sharma, the new GOC-in-C of Eastern Command, said.

Lt-Gen Sharma, who took over as the Army commander on New Year's Day, addressing a press conference at the Press Club today, said: "Royal Nepal Army is flushing out ultra forces and though the number of KLO activists is dwindling, their leadership remains intact." He said

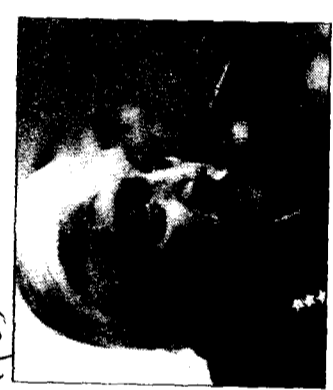
the Indian Army was always interacting with state government agencies to keep a tab on them. The Army commander also said disgruntled forces of South Bhutan were in touch with Nepalese Maoists and KLO activists.

He said: "West Bengal is not a disturbed area but our Intelligence agencies are closely monitoring subversive activities in the state." Asked whether militants from Myanmar were infiltrating into Manipur, Lt-Gen Sharma said: "Unless we know for certain who these militants are, it is very difficult to

dering Manipur and Nagaland and we cracking down on insurgents on our side." Lt. Gen. Sharma said: "During the Bhutan flush-out, the Indian and Bhutan armies jointly planned it considering the rugged terrain. But in Myanmar, their army is operating independent of us."

Asked about the sporadic incidents in Nagaland, even after cease-fire has been announced, the Army commander said: "We have referred the incident to the cease-fire committee and discussions shall be started with the NSCN(IM) leaders in Delhi. Asked about his opinion on

repealing the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, the Army commander said: "Without this special power, it would be impossible to counter insurgency in several North-eastern states — Assam, parts of Tripura, two districts in Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur." He said: "Resolving the problem of insurgency is not the charter of the Army and I maintain that all organs of the state should come forward to combat this menace." Asked whether there would be troop reduction once Nathu la is opened to trade, Lt-Gen Sharma said it was premature to comment.



Lt-Gen Arvind Sharma at the Press Club on Monday. — SNS comment." He said: "The Myanmar Army is launching a flush-out drive in some districts bor-

J.N. Dixit passes away

By Amit Baruah

NEW DELHI, JAN. 3. The National Security Adviser, J.N. Dixit, passed away this morning following a massive cardiac arrest at his Safdarjang Lane residence.

Mr. Dixit, who would have turned 69 on January 8, was well known in the region — having been envoy to Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Afghanistan — as well as being responsible for opening India's first mission to Bangladesh. He was the Foreign Secretary from November 1991 to February 1994.

Mr. Dixit's aide said he collapsed in the bathroom. He was rushed to the All-India Institute of Medical Sciences where efforts to revive him failed. The funeral will take place on Wednesday.

The President, A.P.J. Abdul



Kalam, said that Mr. Dixit served the country with distinction in a four-decade-long diplomatic career.

In his message, the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, said: "I have lost a close friend, a valued colleague and a great source of support and advice. The nation has lost a great dip-

lomat and wise strategist. The loss is irreparable."

Mr. Dixit, who joined the Congress after the February 2002 carnage in Gujarat, was in the party's foreign affairs committee, and was appointed National Security Adviser in May last.

Mr. Dixit was also India's Special Representative in the high-level dialogue with China on the boundary issue. He and his Chinese counterpart, Dai Bingguo, have held two rounds of discussions on the border issue.

Mr. Dixit continued the back-channel discussions of his predecessor, Brajesh Mishra, with his Pakistani counterpart, Tariq Aziz. These quiet talks have often set the stage for major meetings in recent months between India and Pakistan.

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THE HINDU

4 JAN 2005

Tyagi new air force chief

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 31 DECEMBER

THE army and the air force on Friday geared up to face the new year under a new crop of leaders at the helm of affairs. While Air Chief Marshal S. Krishnaswamy handed over the baton to Air Chief Marshal S.P. Tyagi, the government on Friday effected a series of top-level changes in the army. The army, which will have a new chief General J.J. Singh in a month from now, will also have a new vice-chief as the previous incumbent, Lt Gen Shantonu Chaudhary retired on Friday. Lt Gen B.S. Thakur, commander-in-chief of the Andaman and Nicobar Command,

will be the new vice-chief of the army staff. He will take up his new assignment on January 5.

An alumni of National Defence Academy and Indian Military Academy, Lt Gen Thakur



KRISHNASWAMY: END OF INNINGS

was commissioned into the Central India Horse (Armoured Corps) in June, 1965 and is the first army officer to head the Tri-Service Command.

In his distinguished military career spanning over 39 years, Lt

Gen Thakur held a number of prestigious instructional, command and staff appointments in India and abroad.

The government simultaneously effected a few changes at the command level. Lt Gen Arvind Sharma has been appointed GOC-in-C of the eastern command, while Lt Gen S. Pattabhiraman will be the new GOC-in-C of the crucial Western Command. He'll take over from Lt Gen J.J. Singh, who'll assume the office of the Chief of Army Staff on January 31 after Gen N.C. Vij's superannua-

tion. Lt Gen Aditya Singh has been made commander-in-chief of the Andaman and Nicobar Command, while Lt Gen Charanjit Singh will be the new director general (artillery) in the army headquarters.