

Social groups, rights activists condemn Kashmir killings

Centre must examine issues of minorities in different parts of the country

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Several social groups and human rights activists have condemned the killings in Jammu and Kashmir late on Sunday night.

Such motivated communal terror acts were aimed at dividing people and societies, besides posing a threat to the secular fabric of the country, a joint statement said.

"We immediately urge that the Government, through the Minorities Commission, conduct public hearings in different parts of the State where minorities and other citizens can depose about their daily conditions. Steps can then be initiated to assist them," it said.

The statement was signed by Communalism Combat, the Citizens for Justice and Peace, SAHMAT, Prashant, SAHEWARU, the People's Union for Human Rights, the All-India Catholic Union, adivasis and Muslims, and the Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation.

"The terrorists' bullets are



Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil addressing the media in Jammu on Tuesday with Union Home Secretary V.K. Duggal (left) and J&K Chief Minister Gulam Nabi Azad. - PHOTO: PTI

aimed at innocents who come in their way and other vulnerable people of the State. But when such communal terrorist acts are committed on the eve of peace talks, special steps need to be taken by the administration,"

the statement said.

"We also urge that the Centre examine the issues of all minorities in different parts of the country, especially in sensitive States such as Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur and Assam, and

Gujarat," it said.

The statement recalled the meeting of a forum of over 15 individuals and representatives of the Hindus in Jammu and Kashmir, Muslims, Christians, and other minority communities, with the Minority Affairs Minister, A.R. Antulay.

A memorandum submitted to him said minorities were vital to a rich and vibrant democracy, and that religion must not be the only basis of categorisation.

Vadodara firing

SAHMAT, in a statement, said the police firing in Vadodara following the demolition of a dargah should be looked into seriously.

"The compromise formula worked out between the community leaders and the administration a day before, appears to have been that a part of the shrine would be sacrificed for development. The next day apparently the police and corporation came up with a sinister motive, and demolished the whole structure.

Curb terrorism further, Pakistan told

"It is an enemy of civilised societies everywhere," says Shivshankar Menon

B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD: Close on the heels of the massacres in Jammu and Kashmir, India on Tuesday told Pakistan that more needed to be done to curb cross-border terrorism.

Addressing the Supreme Court Bar Association in Lahore on "India-Pakistan friendly relations," Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan Shivshankar Menon said, "Despite some variations in infiltration patterns, terrorist training, communications and support continue, waxing and waning with the seasons and the political climate."

Ostensibly influenced by Sunday night's incident, this is the most direct public message by Mr. Menon in recent months on terrorism.

The Pakistan Foreign Office chose to describe the killings as "unfortunate acts of terrorism." Foreign Office spokesperson Tasneem Aslam declined to an-

• **Training, communications for terrorism unabated, says Menon**

• **Pakistan's insistence on primacy of Kashmir issue extreme**

• **"Unfortunate acts of terrorism," says Pakistan**

swer questions on whether Pakistan-based terror outfits were involved.

'Just lines on map'

In his address, Mr. Menon said borders between India and Pakistan cannot be redrawn but the two sides could work towards making them irrelevant, "towards making them just lines on a map" so that people on both sides should be able to move more freely and trade with one another.

"Naturally, this assumes that firm control is kept over terrorism, as has been agreed between President Musharraf and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Terrorism is an enemy of civilised societies everywhere, and this is increasingly recognised in both our societies," Mr. Menon said.

Mr. Menon said the involvement of terrorist organisations in relief work after the October 2005 Kashmir earthquake had resulted in their public rehabilitation.

Mr. Menon said Pakistan's view that the resolution of the Kashmir issue was essential for any other peace measures to have any meaning was an extreme and partial view.

"It wrongly assumes that Pakistan has no interest in a broader relationship with India and pays no cost for hostility to India, and ignores how confidence building measures can reinforce the effort to resolve issues," he said.

Mr. Menon presented a positive prospect for improvement of relations between the two countries. He said there was widely recognised in India and Pakistan that the destiny of the two peoples is interlinked and the goodwill generated by the peace process provided an opportunity to redefine the nature of the relationship, moving away from the zero-sum calculations of the past.

'Ground realities'

On Sir Creek and Siachen, Mr. Menon was confident that "meaningful agreements" could be reached. He said both sides could move forward if they accepted "ground realities" and took a long view of history.

India demonstrated its willingness to find "pragmatic, practical solutions" to the Kashmir issue, as exemplified by the recent suggestion of the Prime Minister in Amritsar for a "step by step approach."

আস্থা বাড়াতে কাশ্মীরে সেই মানবিক মুখের সন্ধানেই মনমোহন

স্মৃতি রায় • শ্রীনগর

২৫ মে: ঠিক দু'বছর আগে আর্থিক সংস্কারে 'মানবিক মুখ' খোঁজার অঙ্গীকার নিয়ে প্রধানমন্ত্রী হিসেবে যাত্রা শুরু করেছিলেন। এ বার কাশ্মীরেও সেই মুখেরই খোঁজ আরম্ভ করলেন মনমোহন সিংহ।

দু'দিনের গোলটেবিল বৈঠকে প্রধানমন্ত্রী এমন একটি দিকে পা বাড়ালেন, যার লক্ষ্য একটাই, কাশ্মীরে সাধারণ মানুষের মধ্যে আস্থা বৃদ্ধি। দু'প্রান্তের মানুষের মধ্যে যোগাযোগ বাড়ানো, কেন্দ্র-রাজ্য সম্পর্কের নিরিখে কাশ্মীরকে বিশেষ সুবিধা, আর্থিক উন্নয়ন থেকে শুরু করে পুলিশের গুলিতে নিহত জঙ্গিদের পরিবার পরিজনের প্রতি সহানুভূতি আর নিয়ন্ত্রণের খা পেরিয়ে ও' প্রান্তে চলে যাওয়া জঙ্গিদের মামলাগুলি খতিয়ে দেখার আশ্বাস দিয়ে সেই লক্ষ্যেরই কাছে পৌঁছতে চাইলেন তিনি।

এবং এই কাজের মাধ্যমে নিয়ন্ত্রণের খাকে গুরুত্বহীন করে দেওয়ার কথা আরও এক বার তুলে চাপ বাড়িয়ে দিলেন ইসলামাবাদের উপরেও।

জঙ্গির অবশ্য মনমোহনের এই বৈঠক আর ঘোষণাকে 'স্বাগত' জানাল সম্পূর্ণ নিজেদের ঢঙে, পরের পর বিক্ষোভের ঘটনায়। এর মধ্যে সব থেকে বড় বিক্ষোভের ঘটনা শ্রীনগর থেকে ১২ কিলোমিটার দূরে জাকুরা এলাকায়। যে পর্যটকদের অসুবিধার কথা মাথায় রেখে নিজের সফর কাটছাট করে আগেই ফিরে গেলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী, এখানে জঙ্গিদের লক্ষ্য তারাই। জাকুরায় গ্রেনেড বিক্ষোভের ক্ষতিগ্রস্ত হয় একটি পর্যটক বোঝাই বাস। এই ঘটনায় প্রাণ হারান চার জন। জখম হয়েছেন ছ'জন।

তবে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর পক্ষে এই ধরনের ঘটনা আর বড় বাধা তৈরি করতে পারবে না। সেটা তাঁর কথাতাই স্পষ্ট হয়ে গেল আজ। তিনি দু'প্রান্তের মানুষের মধ্যে যোগাযোগ বাড়িয়ে যৌথ ভবিষ্যতের ছবি দেখাতে শুরু করেন, যে ভবিষ্যতে "শান্তি রয়েছে, রয়েছে বন্ধুত্বপূর্ণ সম্পর্ক। যেখানে এক দেশের সুফল ভোগ করতে পারবে অন্য দেশের মানুষ।" এর পরই মনমোহন বলেন, "আমি মুশারফ ও পাকিস্তানকে বারবার বলেছি, এই অঞ্চলে শান্তি ও উন্নয়নে আমরা প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ। তাই তাদের

সঙ্গে কাশ্মীর-সহ সব বিষয়ে আলোচনাতেও রাজি আমরা।" এবং বল ঠেলে দেন মুশারফের কোর্টে, "আমরা যে সমস্ত সুসংহত পরামর্শ দিয়েছি, পাকিস্তানের তরফে তার উত্তরের অপেক্ষা করছি।"

এ বারের গোলটেবিল বৈঠক থেকেও দূরেই ছিল ছরিয়ত কনফারেন্স। মনমোহন বলেন, "এটা খুবই দুঃখজনক। কিন্তু আগে গুঁরা আমাকে বৈঠকে যোগ দেওয়ার বিষয়ে স্পষ্ট ইঙ্গিত দিয়েছিলেন।" মিরওয়াইজদের অনুপস্থিতিতেও যাতে বৈঠক বিফলে না-যায়, সে দিকে গোড়া থেকেই বিশেষ নজর ছিল প্রধানমন্ত্রীর। সম্প্রতি ডোডায় গণহত্যা এবং রবিবার শের-ই-কাশ্মীর ময়দানে যুব কংগ্রেসের সম্মেলনের উপরে জঙ্গিহানার পরে এই চ্যালেঞ্জ আরও বড় হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছিল।

রাজ্যের রাজনৈতিক প্রতিনিধিদের সঙ্গে দু'দিনের আলোচনায় তাই পাকিস্তানকে বার্তা পাঠানোর পাশাপাশি প্রধানমন্ত্রী চেয়েছিলেন উপত্যকাকেও চাঙ্গা করে তুলতে। বৈঠকে ঠিক হয়, কাশ্মীর সম্পর্কিত বিভিন্ন বিষয় দেখার জন্য পাঁচটি কমিটি গড়া হবে। শীঘ্রই আর একটি গোলটেবিল বৈঠক হবে। সেখানে রিপোর্ট দেবে কমিটিগুলি। রাজ্যের আর্থিক উন্নয়ন থেকে শুরু করে জঙ্গি বা তাদের পরিবারকে মূল স্রোতে ফিরিয়ে আনার চেষ্টাও বিষয়টিও দেখবে তারা।

কেন্দ্র-রাজ্য সম্পর্কের নিরিখে কাশ্মীরকে বিশেষ সুবিধা দেওয়া যায় কি না, তাও দেখবে একটি কমিটি। অর্থাৎ স্বশাসনের কথা সরাসরি না বলেও সে দিকে কতটা এগোনো সম্ভব, তা খতিয়ে দেখার ইঙ্গিত দিয়েছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। বন্দি-মুক্তির বিষয়েও যথেষ্ট আগ্রহ প্রকাশ করেছেন তিনি। সে ক্ষেত্রে শুধু কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রককে দায়িত্ব দিয়েই ক্ষান্ত হননি, নিজেই সব কিছু দেখার অঙ্গীকারও করেছেন। প্রধানমন্ত্রী স্পষ্ট করে দিয়েছেন, অস্ত্র ত্যাগ করলে যে কেউ স্বাগত। এমনকী, সন্ত্রাস কমলে রাজ্য থেকে সেনা কমানোর কথাও ভাবা যেতে পারে বলে জানিয়েছেন তিনি। এই বার্তা শুধু সন্ত্রাসবাদীদের জন্য নয়, ইসলামাবাদের জন্যও।

এখন অপেক্ষা সীমান্তের ও পার থেকে বার্তার কী জবাব আসে, তার জন্য।

26 MAY 2006

Attack on Sufi mystic: Lashkar man identified

HR-10
25/6
A.S.T.
S.K.

Campaign to stamp out folk religion

Praveen Swami

SOPORE: Eyewitnesses to Thursday's terrorist bombing of a religious congregation in northern Kashmir have identified the attacker as Lashkar-e-Taiba operative Qayoom Nassar. Two persons were killed and nine injured in the attack.

Sources told *The Hindu* that several witnesses to the attack on the prominent Sufi mystic Ahad Sa'ab Sopore recognised Nassar. A resident of the Batpora area here, Nassar joined the Lashkar five years ago, when he was just 16. An eighth-grade dropout, he is believed to have been responsible for the string of recent attacks against both civilians and security force personnel in Sopore.

Nassar's recent terror acts include the murder of two Sopore residents in May for gambling, which the Lashkar says is un-Islamic. Earlier this month, he is believed to have carried out the assassination of two police officers, a street vendor and a phone booth owner. Neither of the last two murders appears to have been motivated by ideological or operational considerations.

Islamists here have long opposed the influence of Ahad Sa'ab Sopore, a one-time policeman who left his job and became a mystic after undergoing what he describes as a spiritual experience three decades ago. As early as 1991, the Hizb ul-Mujahideen carried out a near-successful assassination attempt on the mystic. However, he escaped unhurt.

• **Nassar responsible for recent attacks in Sopore**

• **Islamists oppose influence of Ahad Sa'ab Sopore**

• **Sufi shrines targeted by terrorist groups**

While mystics like Ahad Sa'ab Sopore have enormous religious and temporal power — their followers include several prominent politicians, bureaucrats and police and military officers — Islamists have repeatedly attacked their authority. Ahad Sa'ab Sopore, notably, has been criticised for appearing naked in public, a practice the mystic defends by asserting that the world, not he, needs to feel ashamed for its behaviour.

Battle over faith

At the core of the conflict are ideological disputes between folk religion and Islamist groups, which believe that practices such as veneration of holy relics and belief in intercession between humans and god through mystics are heretical. Both the Jamaat-e-Islami, from which the Hizb ul-Mujahideen emerged, and the Jamaat Ahl-e-Hadith, the Lashkar's patron, have long been locked in battle with Sufis for the best part of a century.

Terrorist groups in Jammu and Kashmir have long targeted Sufi shrines, which they assert are antithetical to Islam. As

early as June 1994, Lashkar terrorists stormed the historic Baba Reshi shrine at Tangmarg and fired on pilgrims. Dozens of similar attacks took place through the Kashmir valley as part of an Islamist campaign to stamp out folk Islam.

Perhaps, the most prominent incident in the campaign was the October 1995 siege of the Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar, which houses a relic claimed to be a hair of Prophet Mohammad. The terrorists threatened to blow up the shrine unless troops, who had surrounded them, were withdrawn.

A similar siege at Charar-e-Sharif in May 1996 led to the destruction of the town's famous 700-year-old shrine.

While the scale of such attacks has diminished in recent years, they none the less continue. In 2000, Lashkar terrorists destroyed sacramental tapestries Bafiaz residents had offered at the shrine of Sayyed Noor, one of the most venerated Sufi saints in the region. Last year, in June, Lashkar operative Bilal Magray threw a grenade at a Sufi congregation in Bijbehara, injuring 15 persons.

Lashkar cadres are also thought to be responsible for a May 2005 arson that led to the destruction of the 14th century shrine of saint Zainuddin Wali at Ashmuqam in south Kashmir. It was set on fire after the armed men chased away guards. Earlier Ashmuqam was subjected to several grenade attacks, leading to disruption of festive days there for several years.

Kashmir: Musharraf lauds Manmohan's efforts

Says Dr. Singh is trying to involve "all groups" in the peace process

Nirupama Subramanian

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has praised Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's efforts to involve "all groups" in Jammu and Kashmir towards finding a solution to the conflict in the State.

In a phone-in interview on CNBC on Friday night, President Musharraf, who took questions from an international audience, said both he and the Dr. Singh were talking to a range of political groups from the State. His proposal of demilitarisation, self-governance and joint management in Kashmir was an idea that could be debated and modified.

"But how to move forward? All elements in Kashmir, including [the] All-Parties' Hurriyat Conference, other elements with whom we were not dealing in the past like Omar Abdullah — he never came to Pakistan and we never interacted with him [before], but we interacted with him and other political elements within Kashmir [when they visited Pakistan in March] — and all groups are talking demilitarisation and self-governance. It is for [the] people of Kashmir now to generate the kind of ideas and pressure on the Indian Govern-



• Claims that Pakistan is not trying to internationalise issue

• "Comfortable" holding two offices of Army chief and President

ment on some form of a resolution.

"I am very glad to say that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has been interacting with all groups of Kashmiris. Obviously he is talking of some kind of resolution. Obviously. What else we are talking?" he said.

The President said he would like to talk about all issues, including Kashmir, with the Prime Minister when he visits Pakistan.

The tone of General Musharraf's remarks was more positive

than those of the recent flurry of statements from him and other leaders, including Foreign Minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, expressing despondency and disappointment at the "slow pace" of the peace process.

President Musharraf said Pakistan realised that the Kashmir issue had to be sorted out bilaterally and was not trying to internationalise the issue. "Yes I do talk about it everywhere because we think this is the core dispute which we need to resolve to improve relations between out two countries and to improve South Asia and make SAARC potent. But by no means am I saying I would like to multilateralise it. I do know that ultimately we have to resolve it bilaterally. However, if we fail to do it bilaterally, I have no doubt that I would like to multilateralise it."

Earlier this week, India said it rejected references at the Baku meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conferences to Jammu and Kashmir.

President Musharraf said in the composite dialogue process with India "we are going forward on confidence-building mechanisms and conflict resolution." In conflict resolution, "Kashmir is [the] key issue and we have to

move forward."

He said he was "comfortable" holding the offices of both Army Chief and President. It was "very much needed at the moment" because of the current international, regional and domestic pressures on Pakistan. "It is in the fitness of things that I retain both offices."

The Constitution permitted him to do this until the end of 2007. "After that I have said I will not violate the Constitution. So we will cross the bridge when we come to it."

To seek re-election

Gen. Musharraf has said he will seek election for another term through the existing electoral college that endorsed his first term, which he won in a controversial referendum.

Opposition parties have rejected the plan. They have asked him to give up his uniform, hold free and fair elections to the National and Provincial Assemblies and face re-election through the new electoral college.

President Musharraf said in the interview that in any step he took he would "follow the dictates of the environment" but it would be in the national interest and "not in my personal interest".

25 JUN 2005

Army captain, 2 Hizb militants killed in Pulwama gunbattle

Schoolboy dies in exchange of fire, Baramulla protesters set fire to police station

Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR: In a fresh wave of violence in Kashmir, five persons including an Army captain, a Hizb ul-Mujahideen commander and a student were killed on Saturday. In north Kashmir, people took to the streets and attacked a police station protesting against the killing of the schoolboy.

One person was killed and 10 others were injured in a grenade attack around noon at Budshah Chowk just outside the Dashnami Akhara, housing the holy mace of Amarnath, in the heart

of Srinagar. The militants hurled the grenade at a CRPF picket but it exploded on a road. Srinagar police chief S.A. Mujtaba said it was not an attack on the Akhara building but "a routine incident targeting security forces."

At Palhalan village on the Srinagar-Baramulla highway, militants opened fire on the cavalcade of a Border Security Force DIG. A schoolboy was killed and a woman injured in an exchange of fire that followed, the police said. However, the locals alleged that the security forces opened fire on civilians after the militant attack.

As news spread, thousands of people in the Palhalan and Pattan area blocked the highway. Demanding action against the security forces, they set a police station afire. The police resorted to a lathicharge and burst tear-gas shells to disperse the mob.

Magisterial inquiry

Baseer Khan, Deputy Commissioner, Baramulla, told *The Hindu* that the station was partially damaged. "We have ordered a magisterial inquiry into the incident."

In a gunbattle at Mirbagh in Pulwama, Hizb "district com-

mander" Mujahideen Nissar Ahmed Sofi alias Tarabi and his deputy Sarfraz Ahmad alias Safi were killed. Police sources said the area was cordoned off on information that militants were hiding in some houses. In the encounter that followed Captain S.B. Singh also died and a jawan was injured.

Two rifles and ammunition were recovered from the slain militants. The gunbattle left many houses damaged.

Photograph on Page 10

J&K MLAs held in sex racket

Cong's Ghulam Ahmad Mir & Independent Raman Mattoo Are Ex-Ministers

M Saleem Pandit | TNN

Srinagar: After police officers and businessmen it is now the turn of politicians to fall into the net cast by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to drag in the big fish of Kashmir valley who were allegedly involved in a sleaze web, which lured young women into having sex with powerful patrons.

On Tuesday, two former Jammu and Kashmir ministers Ghulam Ahmad Mir and Raman Mattoo were detained, taking the count of people behind bars in the case up to 11. Mir, a Congress MLA from Dooru in Anantnag, held the post of works minister during the previous Mufti Mohammad Sayeed government, while Mattoo, an independent MLA from Hab-



Mir (left) and Mattoo

Both the MLAs would be subjected to a test identification parade in front of the minor girl, Yasmeen, who had alleged that she had been raped by police officers, politicians and bureaucrats

rape of a minor. Meanwhile they have been booked under the Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Act for procuring persons for prostitution.

According to sources, the names of the MLAs were not given by Yasmeen but were mentioned by other victims of the racket.

Meanwhile, the J&K high court, once again directed the CBI to question people named by Yasmeen and other girls involved in the racket. The division bench fixed the next

date of hearing on June 23, 2006.

In another development, the chief judicial magistrate's court in Srinagar rejected bail applications of DSP M Ashraf Mir and another accused Mehraj-ud-din. The hearing of BSF DIG K S Pandhi's bail application was deferred till Wednesday

to Srinagar on Tuesday afternoon.

Both the MLAs would be subjected to a test identification parade (TIP) in front of the minor girl, Yasmeen, who had alleged that she was raped by several police officers, politicians and bureaucrats. If identified, both would be arrested for

ba Kadal constituency, was minister of state for industries and commerce.

According to CBI sources, Mir was brought in from Jammu and Kashmir House in Chanakypuri in New Delhi and Mattoo was picked up from his Gupkar road residence in Srinagar. The agency brought Mir

Terror targets Bengal

tourists

9-8 3 BK

577



A child, injured in the grenade attack, is attended to by relatives in a Srinagar hospital. ■ AFP

LIANS & SNS

SRINAGAR/KOLKATA, May 31: At least 30 tourists from West Bengal were wounded in two powerful explosions at Dalgate, the tourist hub in uptown Srinagar, late this afternoon.

Police said separatist guerrillas lobbed two powerful hand grenades at two buses carrying the tourists, which exploded injuring more than 30 people.

"The grenades exploded inside the buses wounding 30 tourists from West Bengal. The injured have been shifted to SMHS Hospital for treatment. The condition of two people is critical," said a police officer.

The buses were on their way to Nehru Park when guerrillas ambushed them at Dalgate.

Panic and tension gripped the area thronged by tourists as passers-by ran for cover. Security forces and police rushed to the spot.

No group has claimed responsibility for the blasts. Five tourists were killed and 10 others wounded this

month in two powerful explosions.

Reacting to the grenade attack on two buses carrying tourists from West Bengal, chief minister Mr Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee said: "I have asked the state home secretary to get in touch with the police administration in Jammu and Kashmir and have also asked the resident commissioner in Delhi to get detail information about each of the persons from the state who were injured in the incident. A total of 30 persons from the state are injured, three of whom are in a critical condition." State tourism minister Mr Manab Mukherjee said that CPI-M MPs, Mr Sudhanshu Sil and Md. Salim are in Srinagar and they are trying to get in touch with the local administration. "We are also trying to get a helpline number going by tonight," Mr Mukherjee said.

Police Helpline numbers in Srinagar:
0194-2453138
0194-2452098
See also page 4

Phase 1 report holds back second J-K urban package

AMITAV RANJAN
NEW DELHI, MAY 31

PRIME Minister Manmohan Singh had planned to announce additional urban development projects worth \$300 million for J-K during his visit to Srinagar last week, but slow progress of the first phase stopped him in his tracks.

The rehabilitation of water supply and drainage systems in Srinagar and Jammu were to be followed with an announcement of their capacity building in the second phase.

But the PMO decided to exclude them after learning of their slow progress. The February progress report, as submitted by J-K Economic Reconstruction Agency, shows no progress in the projects that are estimated at \$123.8 million. The agency is yet to award any of the projects.

Sources said that the slow progress was because the ERA had not been able to provide data and route maps of water

'Slow progress as ERA had not been able to provide data and route maps of water and sewer lines to ADB's Project Preparatory Technical Assistance team'

and sewer lines to Asian Development Bank's Project Preparatory Technical Assistance team for preparing the loan documents. These projects are 70 percent funded by the Asian Development Bank with the state providing the rest of the money.

As per ERA status report, the worst progress is that of the restoration of Sitlee water treatment plant in Jammu which was to take off last November. Its rectification would have brought its installed capacity to 65 million litre per

day from present 39 million.

An associated project to replace the feeder pipelines has also met with the same fate. Both projects are scheduled for completion in December.

A sub-project for provision of water tankers to provide immediate relief to the people not served by pipeline or ground water is also yet to commence. It was scheduled for start last December with completion targeted next January.

A similar timeframe was set for restoring the pump stations and water treatment plants to their original capacity at Rangil in Srinagar. But that project too is waiting to be awarded for implementation.

Improvement of drainage systems at both towns are also lagging and there is no word on their revised time schedule as on date. "Time schedule is under assessment except for drainage for Talab Tillo area. Due diligence requirement of ADB is being carried out," says a government document.

05 JUN 2006

THE STATESMAN

TERROR-TRADER NEXUS REVEALED; Rs 3 CRORE SPENT AS DOLES TO CADRES

Ultra's diary blows lid off militancy

Kavita Suri

SRINAGAR, June 4: A diary recovered from a top Hizbul Mujahideen militant has made sensational revelations on the amount of money being pushed into Jammu and Kashmir for keeping the militancy pot boiling and hints at a nexus between the ultras and traders in explosive materials.

The diary reveals that Hizbul Mujahideen has spent over Rs 38 lakh on buying explosives of various nature. Besides, Rs 3 crore were used as doles to keep the cadres of the ultras going in the terrorism-hit state.

The diary was recovered from the hideout of Hizbul Mujahideen terrorist Sohail Faisal who was in charge of accounts but was arrested a couple of months back after information provided by another arrested militant of the outfit.

Hizbul Mujahideen is the largest indigenous terrorist outfit in Jammu and Kashmir. The diary has revealed that militants have bought over 10 tons of explosives during the past two years in Kashmir Valley alone - a fact that has sent a chill down the spine of security and Intelligence officials.

The explosives, if used successfully, would have been enough to blow up almost all the buildings in Srinagar which has a population of over 10 lakh.

The interesting fact is Army personnel at Arawani that payments were made through various intermediaries just before or after some of the major car bomb attacks in which many civilians and security force personnel were killed.

Hizbul Mujahideen distributes a big amount to its cadres for carrying out successful acts of terrorism. The diary reveals that one Imdad Watchi was given Rs 1 lakh as reward for carrying out an IED explosion targeting a vehicle carrying Army personnel at Arawani

in Anantnag district in December 2004.

Nine Army jawans and a civilian driver were killed in the attack. The militants had distributed nearly 3.9 tons of explosives in Anantnag and Pulwama districts of south Kashmir a month before the attack, the diary says.

An amount of Rs 6.5 lakh was given to one Gowhar in Srinagar on 16 June last year, three days after the

28-18X 517

Turn to page 6

Senior J&K cop held in sex scam

JK TNN & AGENCIES 9/1

Srinagar: The CBI on Sunday arrested a senior Jammu and Kashmir police official in connection with the sex racket in the state, taking the total number of persons nabbed for the scandal to eight, sources said.

Deputy superintendent of police Ashraf Mir, one of 11 persons accused by teenager Yasmeena of raping her, was arrested by CBI soon after he was identified by the girl during two test identification parades here, the sources said.

The 15-year-old girl also gave details of the two instances when Mir allegedly raped her, they said.

The agency may now take action against a deputy inspector general in the BSF and a noted lawyer if they failed to appear for an identification parade.

A meeting of senior CBI officials in New Delhi decided to "get tough" with BSF officer and the lawyer, who is the son of a former judge. The CBI may place them under arrest if they continued their "delaying tactics".

The agency had issued two notices to the BSF officer, the lawyer and Mir to appear for a tip. Mir, currently posted in Baramulla district, initially reported sick and then appeared before the CBI here on

Sunday. The BSF officer informed the agency that he is posted in the northeast while the lawyer last month met CBI officials who asked him to appear for a tip the next day. However, he never returned for the test.

Sabeena, the alleged kingpin of the racket, is among the eight persons arrested so far by police and CBI in connection with the racket.

Yasmeena had named 11 persons for allegedly raping her. Eight of them have appeared in tips during which she identified five of them including Mir.

The teenager, who recently recorded her statement before a judge appointed by the Jammu and Kashmir high court, also named another 20 people who used to visit Sabeena's house.

The tips involving these 20 people led to the identification of only three persons, the sources said.

The sex racket has caused a lot of uproar in the state, with political parties accusing each other about the involvement of their members in the scandal. However, Yasmeena has named no politician in her statement to the CBI, the sources said. About Sabeena's role in the racket, the CBI had approached a local magistrate for an order to record her statement.

Hurriyat and Delhi

Mollycoddling Secessionists Will Keep The Terror Pot Boiling

The Hurriyat conference, which calls itself the true representative of the people of Kashmir, refused to attend the round-table called by the Prime Minister in February. Unfazed by the rebuff, Dr Manmohan Singh invited the Hurriyatists for exclusive bilateral talks, thus further pandering to their foreign-tutored egos. They came, they yapped, and they went back without the slightest change in their secessionist ideology, and with no commitment at all that they will attend the second roundtable conference later this month.

Talking to legitimate mainstream parties of Kashmir on issues concerning or confronting the people of the state is to be welcomed. But how can the Hurriyat which, according to knowledgeable sources, including the National Security Adviser, MK Narayanan, represents only a "minuscule section" qualify to be part of such centre-state parleys?

Dubious dialogue

Why, then, is the Prime Minister wooing the Hurriyat and, equally questionably, doing this with an air of deference that does no good to the prestige and authority of the Government of India? The dubious dialogue, started two years ago, has in no way furthered the cause of peace and normalcy in the terror-ravaged state.

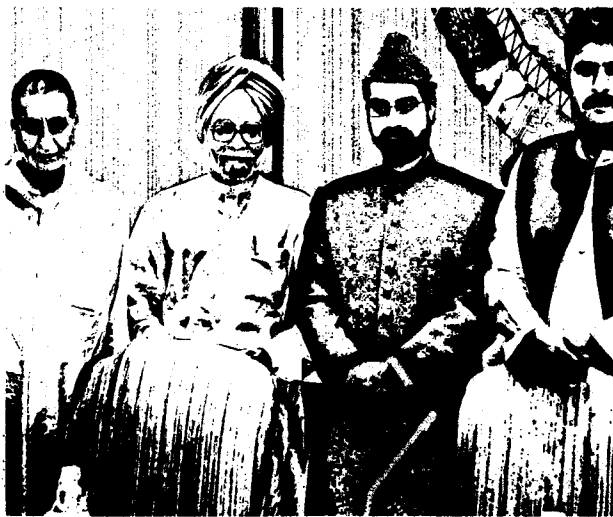
On the other hand, the Centre's misconceived benignity towards the rag-tag amalgam has lent recognition and respectability to the anti-India elements, and thereby served the purpose of their Pakistani mentors of keeping the terror pot boiling. And boiling it certainly is, as the recent massacre in Doda and the unabated killings and bomb blasts elsewhere in the state, including in the capital city itself, abundantly testify.

The Centre does not seem to realise that its attitude to the separatists undermines the state government which was duly voted to power in an election that visiting foreign

Sumer Kaul

media and observers unreservedly termed free and fair. Worse, it has also nonplussed the people who braved the Hurriyat's boycott call and the terrorists' threats and came out in unprecedented multitudes to exercise their franchise as Indian citizens. To see the national government

difficult to comprehend. Presumably there is a belief that a dialogue with them will sooner or later wean them from their anti-India ideology. Such thinking ignores the fact that the Hurriyat is not a bonafide party, albeit of misguided or disgruntled politicians. It is essentially a creature of



One can hear the ISI and their jihadis laughing all the way to the LoC! No, Prime Minister, this won't do

pedestalizing the secessionists sends a wrong message to the people and may even raise in them seriously destabilising thoughts about the future of their state as an inseparable part of India, and thereby imperil India's territorial integrity and consequently its composite secular fabric.

This is not to say that the government should have no truck with the Hurriyat, but they should be seen for what they are. Where is the need to mollycoddle them? After all, what is Hurriyat's locus standi? They say they are the real tribune of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. If there was even a grain of truth in their claim, they would have fought elections. But they resolutely refuse to do this because they know the outcome will nail their boast. Nonetheless, they want to be treated as the paramount voice of Kashmir. In fact, they would not entertain any talks with the Centre except at the highest level. In other words, a summit between Hurriyat and India!

The sinister connotations of this stance are obvious, and yet the Centre goes along, for reasons di-

Pakistan and faithfully takes its orders from the ISI, even on whether and when to meet the Prime Minister.

The Centre knows this but having embarked on a wishful strategy it has convinced itself that the Hurriyat is not monochromatic, that while it does have some Pakistan-manipulated hardliners, it also has moderates who, with patience and pampering, can be won over. Uncritically echoed by the national media, this official view gives the word moderate a meaning that no dictionary gives.

Yes, there are two strands in the Hurriyat, but they are twisted round each other. The difference at best is one of degree, not of kind. There are Messrs Geelani and company who mince no words and want to have nothing to do with India. They want unconditional and complete accession to Pakistan. Period.

And there are Hurriyat chairman Mirwaiz Umer Farooq and supporters, the so-called moderates. And what is their take on Kashmir? Space does not permit a detailed expose. Suffice it to quote some excerpts from his recent

interview with a national daily. The Hurriyat is all for a round table, he said, but the round table has to be triangular! No need to guess what he meant because he spelled it out: involved in the talks should be Kashmiri leadership (meaning the Hurriyat), India and Pakistan. He supported the options put forth by General Musharraf and commended "the spirit of Islamabad's stance". The Hurriyat, he declared, is for "an acceptable and honourable settlement of Kashmir". And what would such a settlement entail? "We", he declared, "are for a solution outside the Indian constitution".

This is the face of the moderates who Dr Manmohan Singh has chosen to indulge. We don't know what all transpired at the New Delhi talks but, judging by what Farooq told the media afterwards, the Hurriyat held on to their stand. The problem, he said, has internal and external dimensions.

Boundary-less J&K

The internal dimensions relate to release of political prisoners (read terrorists), end to human rights violations (read withdrawal of security forces) and repeal of black laws (read unfettered sway to jihadis and anti-India elements). And the external dimension calls for threadbare discussion of "self rule" (read independence from India) and "boundary-less J&K" (read full and free access to and from Pakistan). Musharraf masquerading as Mirwaiz!

It is difficult to imagine any government of a sovereign country entertaining such views. But ours does. In fact, according to his media adviser, the Prime Minister's response to the Hurriyat's views was to ask them to prepare a "mechanism" to carry forward the dialogue. "We have a meeting of minds", he is quoted as saying; "this augurs well for the future of Jammu and Kashmir, for the people of India and the region." This is an amazing statement to put it mildly. One can hear the ISI and their jihadis laughing all the way to the LoC! No, Prime Minister, this won't do. You must abandon this perilous path.

The author is a columnist and former Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the Express.

Explosions rock Jammu bus stand: conductor killed, 35 injured

Luv Puri

JAMMU: Three grenade explosions rocked the main general bus stand here on Monday morning, killing one person and injuring 35 others. The blasts occurred 1.5 km away from the MAM stadium, first base camp for the Amarnath Yatra.

Eyewitness told *The Hindu* that at 7.32 a.m a grenade was lobbed from an overhead bridge on a bus headed for Katra town, main base camp of the Vaishno Devi Shrine. Two explosions fol-

lowed in quick succession. A conductor, Madan Lal of Udhampur, died on the spot

Many of the injured were pilgrims from other parts of the country bound for Vaishno Devi and the Amarnath shrine. Eight buses were damaged.

The police said the impact would have been severe had the buses had been full to capacity.

Soft target

The main bus stand in the heart of the city has often been a soft target of militants. Meh-

• Many of the injured are pilgrims

• Eight buses damaged

• Impact would have been severe had the buses been full

mood Niaz, Jammu-Kathua Deputy Inspector General, said security around the bus stand was tightened and all steps were taken to ensure passenger safety. Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad said the blasts were the handiwork of enemies of the people of the State.

The government would spare no effort to protect the lives of people of the State and visitors during the peak tourist season, coinciding with the Amarnath yatra, which was flagged off on Saturday.

13 JUN 2006

THE HINDU

শান্তি ভাঙতে কাশ্মীরে জঙ্গি তাণ্ডব, চব্বিশ ঘণ্টায় হত ৩৫

জম্মু ও শ্রীনগর, ১ মে: হরিয়ত নেতাদের সঙ্গে প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ বৈঠকে বসার মাত্র দু'দিন আগে রক্তাক্ত হল কাশ্মীর। সোমবার ভোররাতে সংখ্যালঘু হিন্দু অধ্যুষিত ডোডা জেলার দু'টি গ্রামের বাসিন্দাদের উপরে নির্বিচারে গুলি চালিয়ে ২২ জনকে হত্যা করেছে জঙ্গিরা। এর মধ্যে ন'বছরের এক বালিকাও রয়েছে। গুরুতর জখম হয়েছেন ন'জন। জঙ্গিদের হাতে উধমপুরেও মৃত্যু হয়েছে ন'জনের। কাল উধমপুর জেলা থেকে জঙ্গিরা ১৩ জনকে অপহরণ করেছিল। রাতেই তার মধ্যে ৪ জনকে হত্যার খবর মেলে। বাকি ৯ জনকেও জঙ্গিরা আজ হত্যা করেছে বলে জানিয়েছে পুলিশ।

অতর্কিতে জঙ্গি হামলায় ৩৫ জনের মৃত্যুতে কেন্দ্র উদ্দিগ্ন। হরিয়তের সঙ্গে শান্তি আলোচনা পূর্বসূচি অনুযায়ী চলবে বলে জানিয়ে দেওয়ার পাশাপাশি উপত্যকায় নিরাপত্তা বাড়ানোর নির্দেশও দিয়েছে কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রক। প্রধানমন্ত্রী এই ঘটনার নিন্দা করে বলেছেন, “কাশ্মীরের মানুষ বারবারই স্বাভাবিক হামলাকে প্রত্যাখ্যান করেছেন।” জম্মু ও কাশ্মীরের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী গুলাম নবি আজাদ দিল্লিতেই ছিলেন। হামলার খবর শোনামাত্র তিনি জম্মু চলে যান। রাজ্য পুলিশের ডিজি-কে নিয়ে

ডোডা জেলার নিরাপত্তা পরিস্থিতিও খতিয়ে দেখেন আজাদ।

কাশ্মীরে সংখ্যালঘুদের উপরে জঙ্গি হামলা নতুন নয়। কিন্তু ভারত-পাক শান্তির বাতাবরণে গত তিন বছরে সংখ্যালঘুদের উপরে বড়সড় হামলার ঘটনা এই প্রথম। এখনও সরকারি ভাবে কেউ হামলার দায় স্বীকার করেনি। কাশ্মীরের অন্যতম জঙ্গি সংগঠন হিজবুল মুজাহিদিনের তরফে হামলার নিন্দাই করা হয়েছে। এক



ডোডায় আহতদের এক জন। — পি টি আই

বিবৃতিতে তারা জানিয়েছে, “এই হামলা মুজাহিদিন এবং স্বাধীনতা আন্দোলনকে ছোট করতে সম্ভবত ভারতীয় নিরাপত্তা বাহিনীরই কারসাজি।” যদিও জম্মু পুলিশের আই জি এস পি বৈদ স্পষ্ট বলেছেন, “এটা লঙ্কর-ই-তইবার কাজ।”

প্রত্যক্ষদর্শীরা জানিয়েছেন, রাতে

জঙ্গিদের একটি দল ডোডা জেলার পাজ্জোভি এবং থাবা গ্রামে পৌঁছয়। সবাইকে একটি বাড়িতে জড়ো হতে বলে তারা নির্বিচারে গুলি চালাতে শুরু করে। একই কায়দায় জঙ্গিরা হামলা চালায় অন্য গ্রামেও। কয়েক জন গ্রামবাসী পালিয়ে কাছের সেনা ঘাঁটিতে খবর দেওয়ার চেষ্টা করলে হত্যা করা হয় তাঁদেরও। পুলিশ জানিয়েছে, হামলায় আহত ন'জনের মধ্যে আট জনকে সেনা কপ্টারে জম্মু হাসপাতালে নিয়ে যাওয়া হয়। এর মধ্যে পাঁচ জনের অবস্থা আশঙ্কাজনক।

গ্রীষ্মের শুরুতে প্রতি বছরই উপত্যকায় জঙ্গি হামলার তীব্রতা বাড়ে। যদিও পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে আত্মঘাতক প্রক্রিয়া শুরুর পরে হামলা অনেকটা কমেছিল। এ বারে যে ফের জঙ্গিরা বড়সড় হামলা চালানোর ফন্দি আঁটছে, ডোডার প্রতিবেশী জেলা উধমপুর থেকে ১৩ জনকে অপহরণ করার সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই সেই আঁচ

মিলেছিল। কালই তার মধ্যে ৪ জনকে হত্যা করা হয়। আজ উধমপুরের বসন্তগড় এলাকা থেকে বাকি ৯ জনের দেহ পাওয়া গিয়েছে। এর আগে অবশ্য কাশ্মীরে বিশেষত ডোডা জেলায় সংখ্যালঘুদের উপরে একাধিক বার হামলা চালিয়েছে লঙ্কর জঙ্গিরা। শুধু

এর পর ছয়ের পাতায়

কাশ্মীরে হত ৩৫

প্রথম পাতার পর ডোডাতেই লঙ্কর হামলায় এর আগে প্রায় দেড়শো জনের মৃত্যু হয়েছে। শেষ বার সংখ্যালঘুদের উপরে জঙ্গি হামলার ঘটনা ঘটে ২০০৩ সালে। সে বার পুলওয়ামায় ২৪ জন কাশ্মীরি পশুতকে খুন করেছিল জঙ্গিরা। রাজ্যের উপমুখ্যমন্ত্রী মুজফ্ফর বেগ বলেছেন, “শান্তি আলোচনায় বিঘ্ন ঘটতেই জঙ্গিরা বেছে বেছে সংখ্যালঘু হিন্দুদের মারছে।” কাল কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী শিবরাজ পাটিল ও স্বরাষ্ট্রসচিব ডি কে দুগ্গল পরিস্থিতি খতিয়ে দেখতে ডোডা যাচ্ছেন। দুগ্গল বলেছেন, “এ ঘটনাই প্রমাণ করছে শান্তি প্রক্রিয়া ভেঙে দিতে জঙ্গিরা এখন কতটা বেপরোয়া।” এর প্রেক্ষিতে তিনি যে সব জায়গায় কাশ্মীরি পশুতরা থাকেন সেখানে, পর্যটন কেন্দ্রগুলিতে এবং অমরনাথ যাত্রার পথে নিরাপত্তা বাড়ানোর কথা বলেছেন। কাশ্মীরে পর্যটনের মরসুম শুরু হয়ে গিয়েছে। দলে দলে পর্যটক আসছেন, অনেক বাঙালিও আসবেন। পরের মাস থেকে অমরনাথ যাত্রা শুরু। এ সবেের জন্যই নিরাপত্তার ওপর জোর দিতে চায় সরকার।

02 MAY 2006

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

Bid to derail peace process, says Centre

People of Kashmir have rebuffed
terrorists repeatedly: Manmohan

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has condemned Monday's killing of 35 innocent civilians in the Jammu region.

"The People of Kashmir have rejected and rebuffed terrorists repeatedly," he said.

The Centre reiterated that it would not be cowed down by such acts of terror aimed at derailing the peace process in the border State.

"We have advised authorities in Jammu and Kashmir to review security measures for minorities," Union Home Secretary V K Duggal told reporters after a high-level review meeting here. Presided over by Home Minister Shivraj Patil, it was attended by top officials of the Ministry, security and intelligence agencies.

Mr. Duggal said the gunning down of the innocent villagers was clearly aimed at derailing the ongoing peace process.

"All indications point to the fact that there are elements who are opposed to the peace process and democratic rule. In the recent Assembly byelections in four constituencies, a high turnout of 76 per cent was witnessed. Obviously, it was not to the liking of those opposed to the holding of polls."

The incident showed desperation among the terrorists, who wanted to hamper the peace process. Mr. Duggal's reference is to a meeting between the Prime Minister and the moderate faction of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference scheduled here for Wednesday.

Q 8r
2 8r
HD-10
2/5

- High-level meeting asks J & K to review security for minorities

- Manmohan meeting Hurriyat faction tomorrow

He said the second round-table conference, chaired by the Prime Minister, with Kashmiri groups, leading citizens, political parties and others would be held in Srinagar on May 25.

Azad rushes to State

Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, who was in the capital, has returned to the State. Mr. Duggal said contingents of the Army and paramilitary forces reached the places where the killings occurred. A Central team might visit the area to assess the situation.

Union Water Resources Minister Saifuddin Soz said the killing of innocent villagers "reflects the cowardice of those who are bent upon committing heinous crimes against humanity."

"Impose President's rule"

Vishwa Hindu Parishad secretary-general Pravin Togadia demanded that the Indian Constitution be applied in toto to Jammu and Kashmir and that nearly three lakh displaced Kashmiri Pandits be restored in their homes.

He termed the killings "ethnic cleansing" and demanded imposition of President's rule in Jammu and Kashmir.

02 MAI 2006

THE HINDU

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 2006 ✓

End the killings ✓

10-12 2005 ✓
now 9.85 7.57 ✓

Sunday night's carnage in the mountains of Doda and Udhampur has demonstrated how surreal the idea of peace remains for ordinary people in Jammu and Kashmir. Like the welter of bombings and assassinations that preceded last month's Assembly by-elections, the communal massacres were intended to broadcast the contempt Islamist terror groups have for the dialogue process — and demonstrate their ability to disrupt it. Much of the dialogue process so far has focussed on sterile questions of processes, legal arrangements, and representational legitimacy. It must instead prioritise the core concern of the people of J&K: the killing must stop now. Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs across the troubled State have learned that bullets and bombs do not choose their victims on the basis of their religious beliefs. Terrorism in J&K is too often projected as a war by Islamists against Hindus, a depiction amplified by media reports that, for the most part, ignore the large-scale killing of Muslims who were either perceived as enemies by the armies of the jihad, or simply happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. In fact, as data published yesterday by *The Hindu* make clear, J&K's Muslim civilians have been the principal victims of the jihad Islamist groups are waging in their name. In no year, since the jihad began in 1988, have Hindus been more than 20 per cent of civilians killed, a figure considerably lower than their share of the State's population.

When All Parties Hurriyat Conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and his delegation meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi today, the people of J&K will expect a forthright call for an end to the violence in the State and, more important, an unequivocal condemnation of those who perpetrate it. The Prime Minister, for his part, will have to address several persistent problems. Ever since 2001, when a series of three communal massacres prompted the State Government to enforce the Disturbed Areas Act in the province of Jammu, progress on securing remote mountain communities has been slow. Officials, arguing that it is impossible to protect thousands of hamlets scattered across the mountains, have focussed instead on arming local self-defence organisations. However, members of ill-trained and under-equipped Village Defence Committees have often been easy terrorist targets; this experience has made many villages, including two of those targeted on Sunday night, refuse to take up arms. While no simple answer to the problem is in sight, a solution obviously has to be found — so that the killings stop. Prime Minister Singh will also need to find means to pressure Pakistan to act against the most likely perpetrators of the carnage, the *Lashkar-e-Taiba* and *Hizb-ul-Mujahideen*, if the peace process is to survive their depredations. The challenges are enormous, but without demonstrable progress peace will remain five idle letters on paper.

03 MAY 2006

THE HINDU

Patil: peace process will roll on

395 ✓
9 85 282K
RD-1

'Jammu attacks no deterrent'

Staff Reporter

JAMMU: Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil on Tuesday said the terror attacks in Jammu late on Sunday night were carried out to create a communal wedge in the country.

Talking to reporters here after visiting Basantgarh in Udhampur district where 13 shepherds were killed, he said a strategy was being worked out to protect people in remote parts of the State.

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, Union Home Secretary V.K. Duggal and senior officials accompanied him.

Mr. Patil reiterated that the ongoing peace process, involving various political groups, would not be disturbed despite such acts.

"We would not allow the perpetrators of the attack to succeed in their aim to disturb peace and tranquillity. Efforts to find peace in the State would continue and such attacks would not deter us."

He said: "Events in the recent past clearly give a signal and point to the larger designs of the country's enemies. The holy city of Varanasi and then Jama Masjid were attacked with the aim of dividing the brothers. Even the Jammu attacks are part of the same process."

"We have no doubt that a secular country like ours would give a befitting reply to the people who are behind these acts by maintaining peace and tranquillity. People have long understood the designs of the perpetrators of these attacks."

Though the present strength of troops was adequate, it had been decided to increase the number of Village Defence Committees and provide arms to villagers. Even the weaponry provided to the Special Police officers would be improved. He rejected the separatists and mainstream groups' demand of temporary demilitarisation.

Editorial on Page 10

03 MAR 2006

THE HINDU

Fresh migration from Doda



Two migrants in Jammu. ■ A FILE PHOTOGRAPH

Kavita Suri

JAMMU, May 3: After the massacre of 22 Hindus in Doda district day before yesterday, the fresh exodus of the members of minority community has begun from the upper reaches of the district.

Over 2000 villagers from Ghatti and Kulhan villages have shifted from their houses. BJP spokesman Prof. Hari Om confirmed the exodus and told The Statesman that 2000 people had migrated from various villages. "The terrorised villagers started moving from their houses on Tuesday morning," said Prof. Hari

Om. The inspector general of police, Jammu Dr SP Vaid said that the Doda SSP told him the villagers had come down to Doda to meet the BJP president Mr Rajnath Singh. He said he had no information about any fresh migration from Doda.

Already around 2000 migrants from Doda have been residing in Belicharana camps on the outskirts of Jammu. These people had migrated from their villages when Doda witnessed a series of massacres. The government has failed to provide them any security or relief till now. They are not ready to go back to their houses for fear of terrorists.

04 MAY 2005

THE STATESMAN

Srinagar protest against sex scandal turns violent

Police fire in the air as mob attempts to set ablaze the house of the kingpin

Shuja'at Bukhari

SRINAGAR: Srinagar on Friday saw a violent protest by thousands of people demanding stern action against those allegedly involved in a sex scandal. The police fired in the air as the protesters attempted to set ablaze the house of the alleged kingpin, Sabeena, in the Habbakadal locality. Her house was ransacked and pulled down.

"Eleven policemen and three civilians were injured in the clashes," said Munir Khan, Senior Superintendent of Police.

In response to a strike call given by the Traders Federation and the Dukhtaran-e-Millat and supported by others, people came out in large numbers protesting against the scandal, in which top politicians, police officers and businessmen were allegedly involved.

As the mob tried to set fire to Sabeena's house, the police resorted to a lathicharge. As it had little effect, the police fired in the air. This led to clashes. "We had to intervene as the entire locality would have been gutted," said Mr. Khan.

Massive demonstrations

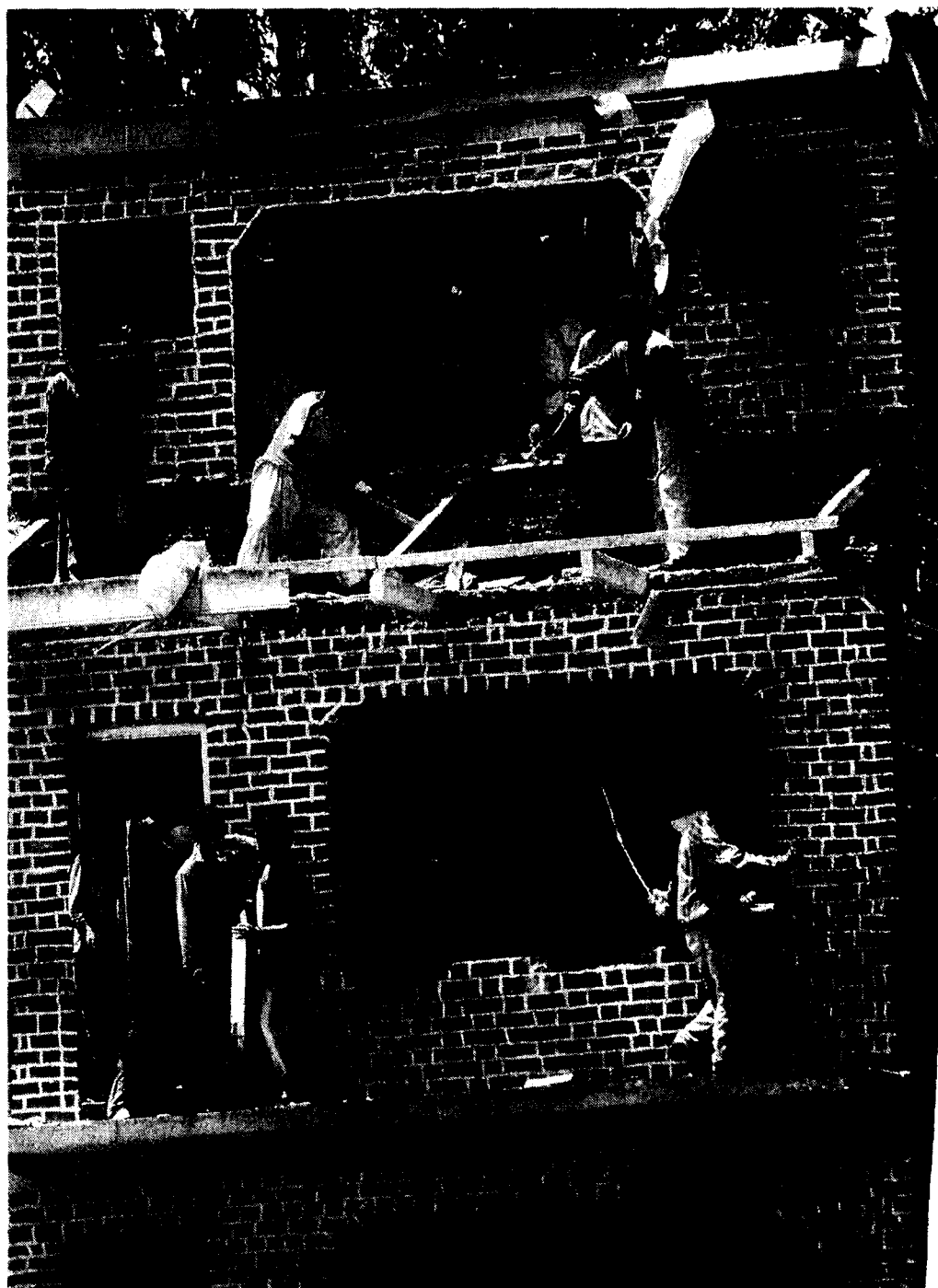
Massive demonstrations were held in other parts of the city as well.

At many places the protests, organised by the Muslim League and the Democratic Liberation Party, ended peacefully. The protesters said that even after about two months since the scandal came to light, the police had not taken any action against the persons named by two girls who alleged that they were lured into the racket by Sabeena and some surrendered militants.

Shops closed in Valley

Reports of peaceful demonstrations were also received from five other districts in the Kashmir Valley, officials said. Almost all shops and business establishments remained closed in Srinagar and other parts of the Valley.

The strike hit work in government offices, while educational institutions, banks, courts and



PROTESTERS' IRE: Angry demonstrators on Friday tried to demolish the house of Sabeena, alleged to be the mastermind in a sex scandal that has rocked Srinagar
PHOTO: NISSAR AHMAD

other establishments remained closed.

Case handed over to CBI

Meanwhile, the case has been

handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation on a Home Ministry order. A local court on Friday extended police remand for Sabeena till May 13.

Mr. Khan said four others were also arrested. A girl who was reportedly blackmailed has been placed under protective custody.

06 MAY 2006

THE HINDU

THE Hurriyat moderates' meeting with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in New Delhi this week was the delayed second round of a dialogue process that began with much fanfare last September — and the prelude to Singh's visit to Srinagar for the next round of talks on May 25.

This round was immediately seen as the Centre's effort to woo Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and his team of Hurriyat doves in preparing them to join the Srinagar roundtable. In fact, the first thing the Prime Minister told the Hurriyat delegation was that he hoped for their participation in the forthcoming roundtable.

This time the Hurriyat moderates had decided not to press — as they had in September — for "side issues" like release of prisoners or the human rights situation and focus only on the solution of the larger Kashmir issue. The Centre couldn't do much but ask the Hurriyat to return with a mechanism.

And as these talks were being held in the backdrop of the massacres at Doda and Udhampur, it was impossible for Centre to make even a symbolic gesture to help the Hurriyat salvage its image back home.

So when the Hurriyat returned to the Valley, they were left with nothing concrete to offer to their constituency.

It's all a long way from the September talks, the first such meeting held by the UPA. It was a renewal of New Delhi's efforts to bring Kashmiri separatists to the table, espe-

cially as an earlier process had completely derailed after the change of guard at the Centre. And the separatists had joined this process, risking both their lives and reputation. Mirwaiz's uncle was killed, his house attacked to halt the Hurriyat participation and they were publicly branded as "traitors".

The first round of Hurriyat-PM dialogue was, at the time, taken as a serious effort as it was being held in the backdrop of a major shift in Pakistan's Kashmir policy. President Musharraf had already shunned Pakistan's traditional position and dumped United Nations resolutions for a discussion on "out of the box" solutions on the principle of consensus between New Delhi, Islamabad and the Kashmiri leadership.

Pakistan had also taken a public position, denouncing violence and even banning Jihadi groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad. The infiltration across the Line of Control too had dropped to its lowest ebb ever since insurgency erupted in Kashmir in 1990.

In this season of flexibility and accommodation on Kashmir, Hurriyat moderates had, in fact, become a consensus partner for a dialogue for both New Delhi and Islamabad. It certainly had provided the Centre with a rare opportunity to push forth

Centre's talks with Hurriyat were run-up to Srinagar roundtable on May 25 but yielded little to work with



once the Hurriyat returned to Srinagar, there was no follow-up as expected; rather, the Centre started expanding the process.

Soon separatist leaders outside the Hurriyat were approached for individual engagements which led to Singh's meeting with Sajjad Lone and, later, JKLF supremo Yasin Malik. This expanded the Kashmir dialogue to include a major chunk of the separatist leadership in Kashmir, leaving out only hardline leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani's Hurriyat and militants from the process.

This was in itself an achievement for the Centre but the government took no measures to help sustain the enthusiasm. The process remained fragmented and while the Centre talked to a few more separatist leaders, the Hurriyat's second round was delayed for months. Lone talked of an institutionalization of the dialogue process while Malik had emphasized that he wants Kashmiris to get a place on the Indo-Pak table and this individual engagement too was not followed up.

Instead, the Centre came up with another process and held a Kashmir roundtable in February, inviting almost everybody from mainstream political groups, Kashmiri pandit organisations and separatists of all hues and colours in February. The separatists, however, stayed away, turning it into a meeting between

the Prime Minister and J&K leaders who do not disagree with the most difficult question: Kashmir's future within the Indian union.

The Centre's announcement of the Srinagar roundtable was an attempt at keeping this new process relevant, and to ensure separatist participation. The separatists especially the Hurriyat moderates had shown little interest to join a roundtable as it only overshadowed their own direct talks with the Prime Minister.

And, as the date for the Srinagar roundtable approached, New Delhi suddenly remembered the second round of the PM's direct talks with Hurriyat moderates and invited them to New Delhi.

Much of the confusion surrounding New Delhi's Kashmir peace process stems from the fact that the Centre is engaging individually with the separatists parallel to the all-party roundtables. A roundtable involving all shades of political opinion in J&K should have been a culmination of a process, not held at this premature stage.

The confusion begs several questions: Why did government rush through so many parallel processes on Kashmir? Why did it not try to talk to militants, especially the indigenous Hizbul Mujahideen, which could help to ensure a ceasefire on the ground? Why the rush to get mainstream parties into the dialogue process when there is not much of a disagreement with them on the basic issue?

Nobody knows.

(muzamil.jaleel@expressindia.com)

Much of the confusion surrounding New Delhi's Kashmir peace process stems from the fact that the Centre is engaging individually with the separatists parallel to the all-party roundtables. A roundtable involving all shades of political opinion in J&K should have been a culmination of a process, not held at this premature stage

a serious peace process, secure an effective ceasefire on ground and bring relief to the people.

Yet when the Hurriyat and the Prime Minister met on Wednesday, it was with the the Centre's Kashmir

process in a total mess. And though the Prime Minister described the talks as a "meeting of minds", it was viewed as nothing more than yet another photo op, having no bearing on the ground situation and bringing no relief to the people.

The reasons are clear: Following the last meeting, there was a lot of expectation that Centre would take at least some immediate measures to start the healing process. But

ing no relief to the people. The reasons are clear: Following the last meeting, there was a lot of expectation that Centre would take at least some immediate measures to start the healing process. But

Blast kills 2 at BJP meet in J&K

*Advani to visit Doda,
Batote today*

HT Correspondent
Doda/New Delhi, May 13

JUST AFTER 13 days of the massacre in Kulhand, extremists struck again on Saturday, killing two persons and injuring 41 others in a grenade explosion amid a BJP rally near a crowded bus stand in Doda. The dead were identified as Bharat Bushan (37) from Doda and Munshi Ram (40) from Batote, both BJP activists. BJP leaders said L.K. Advani would visit Doda and Batote on Sunday.

The bus stand turned into a pool of blood around 11:35 am after the blast in the middle of the rally of more than 400 persons, who were protesting against the April 30 Kulhand massacre of 22 people.

Kaku Ram, who received splinter injuries on his chest, legs and arms, said, "I and my companions were following a speech. Suddenly, I heard a big bang and found myself amid a pool of blood. The scenes of the massacre at the dead of the night (on April 30) were replay-



AP
Army men airlift an injured man for medical treatment in Jammu.

ed today in broad daylight." Local shopkeepers rushed the injured to Doda district hospital. An eyewitness, Kuldeep Kumar of Batote, whose father Thakur Dass is among those seriously injured, said, "We were more than 300 people from Batote here in the rally. I heard the blast from the cross-

ing near the bus stand."

There were protests and clashes with the police immediately after the blast. BJP supporters and relatives of those injured fought a pitched battle with the police that resulted in a lathi-charge.

Party workers in Delhi on Saturday threatened a countrywide agitation on the stepped-up violence in Jammu & Kashmir. They will also raise the matter vociferously in both Houses of Parliament on Monday with the possibility of an adjournment motion in the Lok Sabha.

Shops at the main market closed down after the administration deployed more police personnel in the area fearing communal tension. Deputy commissioner of Doda, Gulzar Qureshi, directed SSP Doda, P.R. Manhas, to take immediate steps after news reached about selective manhandling of hospital staff by BJP activists. The police have been directed to lodge an FIR against district BJP president Dileep Kumar for arousing tension and manhandling hospital staff.

Meanwhile, state BJP vice-president Hari Om termed the attack as a failure of the state government in providing security to the people in Doda.

14 MAY 2006

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Second Kashmir round table on May 24-25



Moderate Hurriyat conference chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq (left) with Abdul Gani Bhat in Srinagar on Thursday. PTI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MAY 18

THE crucial second round table conference, concerning the peace process in Jammu and Kashmir, has been rescheduled to begin on May 24 in Srinagar. This two day conference will be chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Official sources said the conference, which was earlier slated to begin on May 25, will now start on the afternoon of May 24. Before this, the PM for the first time will chair a high-level meeting of the unified command to discuss measures such as troop reduction in the valley for Jammu

and Kashmir.

The conference will have around 25 participants and will be on for two days to accommodate views from a wide section of the society. During the crucial unified head quarters meeting, a presentation will be made by the Army, Central Paramilitary Forces, State Police and the Intelligence Bureau about militancy in the state.

Singh will review the progress made on the release of political detainees against whom there were no serious offences. The conference is considered important because some major separatist outfits like the Hurriyat Conference are expected to join it.

19 MAY 2006

INDIAN EXPRESS

Militants target Srinagar rally, 6 killed

35 injured in the incident that comes amid preparations for roundtable, which begins on Wednesday

Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR: Six people were killed and 35, including the Inspector General of Police (Kashmir zone), injured on Sunday in a terrorist attack on a Congress rally here.

The rally was organised by the Youth Congress to mark the 15th death anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Two militants, in police uniform, entered the Sher-e-Kashmir Park at 1.15 p.m and one of them started firing indiscriminately at the podium.

The attack comes amid preparations for the two-day second roundtable on Jammu and Kashmir that begins here on Wednesday. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is chairing it.

Claim responsibility

Al Mansoorien and Lashkar-e-Taiba have claimed responsibility for the attack. In a statement to a local news agency, they said their men executed it.

Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad was scheduled to arrive at the rally minutes after. A number of Ministers, who were present at the venue, escaped unhurt.

Mr. Azad visited the spot after the operation against militants ended. He said the attack was a desperate bid by militants to show their presence.

Witnesses told *The Hindu* that when the two militants, part of a *fidayeen* (suicide squad), entered the park, a police constable tried to question them and he was shot dead immediately. One of the militants then started firing towards the podium, leaving a number of people in pools of blood. But he could not fire at the Ministers and Congress leaders, as they had taken cover.

"For quiet sometime, the police and para-military men allowed him to continue firing as they thought he was policeman responding to an attack," Deputy Inspector General of CRPF



PANIC-STRICKEN: Congress workers and security personnel duck for cover immediately after the terrorist attack on a party rally in Srinagar on Sunday. - PHOTO: REUTERS

(Operations) S R Ojha said.

IG injured

Soon the security forces realised that he was a militant and started retaliating. When IG Kashmir zone K Rajendra pointed towards him, the militant fired at him. Mr. Rajendra, DSP Faisal Ahmed, SHO Shabir Ahmed and a sub-inspector were injured.

Soon, both the militants were gunned down and Deputy In-

spector General of Police (Kashmir range) Farooq Ahmed said two policemen and three civilians were killed. One person died of his injuries in a hospital.

Confusion

Confusion prevailed for sometime as people ran to save themselves. While securitymen and drivers moved out the Ministers and leaders, the rallyists moved out cautiously. "I do not know anything except that a po-

liceman was firing," said Abdul Majid, a Congress worker from Kokernag. "It was a mayhem," said another worker from Baramulla.

Chaos prevailed in the entire uptown for some time, with the police and para-military forces firing in the air from all the directions.

Journalists trapped

Many journalists were trapped in the park along with

hundreds of people for some time.

It was a brave Ishfaqul Hassan who managed to come out and secure a vehicle for his colleagues.

"We hid ourselves in a corner with firing coming from all round," said a journalist.

The scribes, including this reporter who rushed to the spot immediately, had a tough time to cover the happenings, as all routes were sealed and firing

continued from all directions.

On Saturday, four militant outfits, which attacked the Tourist Reception Centre last year on the eve of opening of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road, threatened to disrupt the roundtable. They are, Al Arifeen, Farzandane-Millat, Save Kashmir Movement and Al Nasreen.

Widespread condemnation: Page 12

Manmohan attending roundtable

MS 9.81
Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will attend the second roundtable on Jammu and Kashmir in Srinagar beginning on Wednesday, despite the terrorist attack on a Congress rally in the city on Sunday.

A statement from the Prime Minister's Office said Dr. Singh condemned the attack, saying such cowardly attacks would not weaken the State people's resolve to seek a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue. "It is only through dialogue that a lasting solution can be found," he said.

Congress president Sonia Gandhi described the attack as an act of cowardice, orchestrated by those opposed to the process of peace and development in the State. The brave people of the State would not succumb to such forces. She condoled the death of those killed.

Home Minister Shivraj Patil said such attacks would not hamper the ongoing peace process. Such attacks on innocent people would only fuel the anger of people against terrorists and hasten the process of their marginalisation.

Situation reviewed

A Home Ministry spokesperson said the Minister was in touch with the State Government and keeping a close watch on the situation. Senior officials of the Ministry, along with top security and Central forces personnel in the State, were reviewing the security scenario there.

Special Secretary (Internal Security) G.S. Rajagopal, Inspector General (Operations), CRPF, and two speciality doctors have been sent to Srinagar.

+ Minister for Water Resources Saifuddin Soz, in a statement, expressed pain and anguish over the killing of innocent persons. He said the attack was a reflection of the frustration in the ranks of those who do not want peace to return to the State.

গোলটেবিলের আগে কাশ্মীরে হানায় হত আট

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা, নয়াদিল্লি ও সংবাদ সংস্থা, শ্রীনগর, ২১ মে: হুমকিটা এসেছিল কালই। চার জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠী একযোগে জানিয়ে দিয়েছিল, কাশ্মীর নিয়ে আসন্ন গোলটেবিল বৈঠক ভেঙে দেবে তারা।

২৪ ঘণ্টাও কাটল না, কঠোরতম নিরাপত্তা বেটনী ভেদ করে শ্রীনগরে শের-ই-কাশ্মীর ময়দানে হামলা চালাল জঙ্গিরা। এবং এমন একটি সমাবেশে, যেটি রাজীব গান্ধীর মৃত্যুবার্ষিকী উপলক্ষে এবং যেখানে সামান্য পরেই আসার কথা ছিল মুখ্যমন্ত্রী গুলাম নবি আজাদের। পুলিশ সেজে নিরাপত্তা বাহিনীকে 'ধোঁকা' দিয়ে সমাবেশে ঢোকে দুই জঙ্গি। হামলার আকস্মিকতায় নিরাপত্তা বাহিনী এতটাই হতচকিত হয়ে পড়ে যে এলোপাথাড়ি গুলি চালাতে থাকা জঙ্গিদের জবাব দিতেও তাদের কিছু ক্ষণ লেগে যায়। এই সময়টায় হাজির যুব কংগ্রেস কর্মী ও সমর্থকেরা নিজেদের বাঁচা-মরার পুরোটাই ছেড়ে দিয়েছিলেন ওই দুই জঙ্গির হাতে। জঙ্গিরা ছ'জনকে খতম করে। তার মধ্যে রয়েছে দুই পুলিশও। কিন্তু এই সংখ্যা আরও অনেক বাড়তে পারত। কয়েক ঘণ্টা লড়াই চালানোর পরে দুই জঙ্গিরই মৃত্যু হয়। সংঘর্ষে জখম হন ২২ জন। তাঁদের মধ্যে আছেন আইজি (কাশ্মীর) কে রাজেন্দ্র কুমার।

ঘটনার দায় স্বীকার করেছে আল মানসুরিয়ান। কাল হুমকি দিয়েছিল যে চার জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠী, সেই আল নাসরিন, ফরজানদান-ই-মহম্মদ, সেভ কাশ্মীর মুভমেন্ট এবং আল আরিফিন-এর সঙ্গে একটি বিষয়ে মিল রয়েছে তাদের। এরা সকলেই লঙ্কর-ই-তইবর ছায়া সংগঠন। যে লঙ্করের এখন প্রধান লক্ষ্য, ভারত-পাকিস্তান শান্তি প্রক্রিয়া বানচাল করে দেওয়া।

এবং এই কাজে তাদের পিছন থেকে মদত জোগাচ্ছে পাক প্রশাসনিক মহলের একাংশ। সেই তালিকায় আছে আইএসআই, সেনাবাহিনীর একাংশ ও মৌলবাদীরা। এমনকী প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়ও আজ বলেছেন, শের-ই-কাশ্মীরে হামলার পিছনে পাক গুপ্তচর সংস্থার হাত থাকতেই পারে। বস্তুত, আইএসআই-এর উপরে পারভেজ মুশারফের প্রভাব যে ক্রমেই কমছে, এর আগেই একাধিক ক্ষেত্রে তার প্রমাণ মিলেছে। কাশ্মীরে সন্ত্রাসবাদী হানা নতুন কিছু নয়। কিন্তু এ বারে আইএসআই মদতে লঙ্কর এমন একটা সময় বেছে নিয়েছে যা সব দিক থেকে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। এক দিকে গোলটেবিল বৈঠক করতে দু'দিন বাদেই কাশ্মীরে আসছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। অন্য দিকে ২৩ তারিখ থেকে দফায় দফায় বিভিন্ন বিষয়ে ভারত-পাক শান্তি আলোচনা শুরু হচ্ছে। তাতে সিয়াচেন ও স্যার ক্রিকের মতো গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বিষয়গুলিও রয়েছে।

আরও এক দিক থেকেও আজকের হামলা তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ। কাশ্মীরের রাজনীতিতে যে দ্বন্দ্ব ও অন্তঃকলহের আবহ তৈরি হয়েছে, তারই সুযোগ নিয়ে জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠীগুলি আরও এক বার বিষিয়ে তুলতে চাইছে উপত্যকার পারিপার্শ্বিক। যে দ্বিপাক্ষিক আস্থা তৈরি করতে সচেষ্ট ভারত-পাকিস্তান, আঘাত করতে চাইছে তার মূলেও।

গোলটেবিল বৈঠক করে কাশ্মীরের মানুষের মনোভাব বুঝতে চাইছে কেন্দ্র। কিন্তু এখনও তারা কাছে টানতে পারেনি হরিয়ত কনফারেন্সের মতো বিচ্ছিন্নতাবাদী সংগঠনগুলিকে। বস্তুত, অন্তঃকলহ এবং সিদ্ধান্তহীনতায় ভুগে হরিয়ত নিজেই কঠিন করে দিয়েছে কেন্দ্রের কাজ। প্রথম বার তারা গরহাজির ছিল। দ্বিতীয় বারেও বৈঠকে যোগ দেবেন না, জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন কট্টরপন্থী নেতা সৈয়দ আলি শাহ গিলানি। আর মধ্যমপন্থী মিরওয়াজ উমর ফারুক সিদ্ধান্ত নিতেই পারছেন না।

এর পর ছয়ের পাতায়

● কে জঙ্গি, কে পুলিশ, বুঝতে পারেননি জওয়ানরাও...পৃঃ ৫

কাশ্মীরে হানা, হত ৮

প্রথম পাতার পর

দ্বিতীয় সমস্যা তৈরি করেছে রাজ্যের শাসক জোট। ক্ষমতা হস্তান্তরের পর থেকেই সম্পর্ক ভাল নেই কংগ্রেসের গুলাম নবি আজাদ এবং পিডিপি প্রধান মেহবুবা মুফতির মধ্যে। আজ মেহবুবা যে বলেছেন, এর আগে সাফল্যের সঙ্গে জঙ্গিদের সামলেছে রাজ্য, তার মধ্যেও ছিল সূক্ষ্ম খোঁচা।

প্রধানমন্ত্রীর দফর এই সমস্যা সামলাতে স্বশাসন এবং বন্দিমুক্তি নিয়ে ঘোষণা করতে বলেছে মনমোহনকে। তবু বাতাবরণ কিছুটা ধোঁয়াশার মধ্যেই। আর সেই সুযোগ নিয়েই নতুন করে সন্ত্রাসের আবহ তৈরি করতে চাইছে জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠীগুলি।

এখন তাই বড় প্রশ্ন, এর ফলে ভারত-পাকিস্তান শান্তি প্রক্রিয়া কি বিঘ্নিত হবে? নয়াদিল্লির উত্তর, না। মনমোহন থেকে সনিয়া গান্ধী, প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় থেকে



গুলাম নবি আজাদ— সকলেই বলেছেন, এর ফলে শান্তি প্রক্রিয়া টোল খাবে না। কিন্তু ঘটনা কি বাস্তবিকই তাই? কূটনৈতিক মহল বরং মনে করছে, এর ধাক্কায় জটিল হয়ে পড়বে শান্তি প্রক্রিয়ার ভবিষ্যৎ। শুধু তাই নয়, কেন্দ্রে সরকারের দ্বিতীয় বছর পূর্তির ঠিক মুখে অস্থিতিতেই পড়লেন মনমোহন সিংহ। কারণ, তাঁদের সাফল্যের খতিয়ানে ভারত-পাক সম্পর্কের উন্নতি যথেষ্ট গুরুত্ব পাচ্ছে। প্রধানমন্ত্রী ২৪ তারিখে গোলটেবিল বৈঠকে যোগ দিতে যাওয়ার ব্যাপারে

নিজের অবস্থানে অনড় থেকে পরিস্থিতি কিছুটা সামলেছেন। কিন্তু চিন্তিত কেন্দ্র বিশেষ সচিব (অভ্যন্তরীণ নিরাপত্তা) জি এস রাজাগোপালের নেতৃত্বে উচ্চপদস্থ গোয়েন্দাদের একটি দল পাঠাচ্ছে কাশ্মীরে। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সফর যাতে ভালয় ভালয় কাটে সে জন্য আগামী দু'দিন রাজ্যে সব রকম রাজনৈতিক সমাবেশ নিষিদ্ধ করেছে আজাদ সরকার। ২৩ মে থেকে ভারত-পাকিস্তানের মধ্যে একাধিক বৈঠক হবে। এর মধ্যে রয়েছে সিয়াচেন, স্যার ক্রিকের মতো গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বিষয়। এ মাসের শেষ দু'দিন ইসলামাবাদে হবে

সন্ত্রাসবাদ ও মাদক পাচার নিয়ে বৈঠক।

এই সব বৈঠকের ফাঁকে আজকের হামলার কথাও তুলবে নয়াদিল্লি। আইএসআই, পাক সেনাবাহিনীর একাংশ এবং মৌলবাদীরা যে লঙ্করের মতো জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠীকে ব্যবহার

করেই চলেছে, সে কথা ইসলামাবাদকে জানানো হবে। এ দিকে, মুশারফ চাইছিলেন, দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্ককে আরও জোরদার করতে অগস্টে ইসলামাবাদ আসুন মনমোহন। কিন্তু পাকিস্তানকে চাপে রাখতে দিল্লি রাজি হয়নি। দিল্লির বক্তব্য, সেপ্টেম্বরেই নিউ ইয়র্কে দুই রাষ্ট্রপ্রধানের দেখা হবে। তা হলে আরও একটি বৈঠকের কেন? এই মনোভাবে কিছুটা ঋণ হয়েছে শান্তি প্রক্রিয়া।

সন্ত্রাসের এই বাতাবরণে সব দিক রক্ষা করে সেই প্রক্রিয়ায় নতুন গতি আনাটাও প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কাছে চ্যালেঞ্জ।

Terror strike at Cong Srinagar rally, 7 die

IGP, 2 DSPs Among 22 Hurt, Terrorists Were Disguised As Policemen

Srinagar: Ahead of the second round-table conference on Kashmir, militants on Sunday carried out a suicide attack on a Youth Congress rally at Sher-e-Kashmir Park here killing five people and wounding 22, including an IGP and two DSPs, while losing two of their men.

A string of deafening explosions rocked the area during the exchange of fire between security forces and militants sparking panic in the entire city. The attack on the rally, organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Youth Congress to remember former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi on his 15th death anniversary, took place at 1.15 pm, official sources said.

An Indian Reserve Police jawan was among the dead, they said, adding IGP (Kashmir) K Rajendra Kumar, who received bullet wounds in legs, was admitted to hospital and was out of danger.

J and K Congress chief and youth services and sports minister Peerzada Mohammad Syed and other party leaders had a providential escape. Two deputy superintendents of police were also wounded in the attack which took place minutes before chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad was scheduled to arrive at the venue.

Eye-witnesses said a number of militants disguised as policemen hurled grenades and fired indiscriminately targeting Congress leaders sitting on the dias. Al Mansoorian, a shadowy outfit of pro-Pakistan Lashkar-e-Taiba, claimed responsibility for the attack. Senior police officials, however, suspected it to be the handiwork of Al-Umar Mujahideen.

Bullet-proof vehicles were pressed into service to evacuate the injured to hospitals, the sources said. People ran helter skelter when the gunshots rang out. Panic soon engulfed the entire area, in-



Inspector general of police, Kashmir range, K Rajendra being shifted to SKIMS hospital after being injured in a gun battle in Srinagar. Another picture on Page 8

cluding Lal Chowk, the summer capital's business hub. The sources said nearly 2,000 people were inside the park when the attack took place.

Condemning the attack, a home ministry spokesman in New Delhi said such incidents would not hamper the on-going peace process in Jammu and Kashmir. "The Union home Ministry is in constant touch with the Jammu and

Kashmir government and is keeping a regular watch on the situation," he said.

The exchange of fire lasted more than an hour in which both the militants were killed. Both the slain ultras were wearing police uniform, the sources said adding a large cache of arms and ammunition were recovered from their possession. AGENCIES

22 MAY 2006

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Hurriyat not to attend conference

W
HD-1
9.87.282K
28/5

One killed, 20 injured in grenade attacks

Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR: The moderate faction of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference on Monday declared that it would not attend the round table, to be chaired by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh here on May 24 and 25.

Amid this development, one person was killed and four were injured as militants hurled a grenade at a mini-bus in Srinagar. In three similar attacks earlier, 20 people were injured.

Hurriyat Chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, after a meeting of the amalgam's executive, said the decision was unanimous.

Reading out a prepared statement, he said: "The Hurriyat, representing as it does the sentiment of the people as well as the dynamics, is a genuinely relevant political form. As such, it chooses to seize the opportunity of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to take forward the process already in place. If the Prime Minister pleases to agree, we will talk to him in Srinagar as well.

"As for participation in the round table, the Hurriyat Conference considers that a crowd comprising political hypocrites and even ikhwanis [former pro-Government militants] with no agenda can hardly produce a result in terms of settlement of the Kashmir problem, which the people of the entire South Asian region so desperately long for. Thus, it had been decided not to attend."

National Conference (NC) president Omar Abdullah, referring to the Mirwaiz wish to meet Dr. Singh on the sidelines of the conference, said, "If there are meetings on the sidelines of the round table between the Hurri-

• National Conference also issues a threat

• Jaish owns responsibility for Monday's grenade attacks

yat and the Prime Minister, we will not participate in the conference. And I think other like-minded political parties should also abstain from the round table."

Mr. Abdullah said in an interview: "We may seek a meeting with the Prime Minister on the sidelines but there is no point in having one rule for one party and one for another."

Grenade attacks

In grenade attacks at Safakadal, Rainawari and Barbarshah in Srinagar that targeted security forces, 20 people, including 10 police and para-military personnel, were injured. The Jaish-e-Mohammad claimed responsibility for the attacks.

In view of the Prime Minister's visit, the entire Srinagar has come under tight security. The round table venue, Sher-e-Kashmir International Conference Centre, on the banks of the Dal Lake, has been sealed. The area wears a deserted look, with almost all hotels and houseboats unoccupied. Secret cameras are monitoring the movement of people and vehicles.

S.M. Sahai took over as Inspector-General of Police, Kashmir zone, replacing K. Rajendra Kumar, who was seriously injured in Sunday's attack.

Editorial on Lashkar's message: Page 10

23 MAY 2006

THE HINDU

Round table, and the road home?

Two families of top Hizb-ul-Mujahideen operatives hope that the second round table on Kashmir will help their loved ones return home.

Praveen Swami

"I LOVE my India," reads the English-language chalk graffiti above the front door of Ghulam Ahmad's home in the small village of Nuss. "The kids wrote that," he says, flustered, "its from some film song or the other. I mean, its not political." Then, pausing, Ahmad adds: "Well, it is our country too, isn't it?"

Four years ago, Ahmad's brother, Ghulam Qadir Ganai, became one of the most wanted men in Jammu and Kashmir. The Hizb-ul-Mujahideen terrorist, who operated under the code-name 'Danish,' organised the assassination of State Power Minister Ghulam Ahmad Bhat near the town of Dooru in May 2000. Ghulam Qadir was reported to have been killed in a September 2003 shootout near the Line of Control, but the Jammu and Kashmir Police discount the claim, believing it to be part of a deception operation.

Ahmad does not want to believe his brother is dead either. Although Hizb-ul-Mujahideen functionaries and the organisation's political patron, the Islamist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, visited Nuss to offer their commiseration, the family members never travelled north to Kupwara, to visit what they were told was Ghulam Qadir's grave. Nor have they ever sought to examine the personal effects recovered from the body. "I cannot help but hope that my only brother is alive," says Ganai, "and that he will one day return home."

Like Ahmad, families of terrorists across Jammu and Kashmir are hoping that the second round table conference on Jammu and Kashmir, which Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will preside over in Srinagar on May 24, will help open the way for their loved ones to return. While terrorist groups have rejected the dialogue process, many of the 2,000 to 3,500 Hizb-ul-Mujahideen cadre believed to be holed out in camps in Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir are desperately seeking a way home.

Journeys into darkness

Sixteen years ago, when the *jihād* in Jammu and Kashmir escalated from being a low-grade conflagration into a full-blown war,

Ganai was an eighth-grade student at a madrasa in the frontier town of Bandipora. His father, a Jamaat-e-Islami cleric who had studied at the great Dar ul-Uloom seminary in Deoband, had hoped Ganai's studies would succeed him as a religious studies teacher. Instead, fired by ideological passion, Ganai chose to join the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and made his way to a training camp in Pakistan.

Ever since the night Ganai chose to become a soldier of the *jihād*, his parents lived under constant fear: fear of his death, and fear of the inevitable military and police raids that would follow their son's occasional visits home.

In 1996, one such raid almost succeeded in trapping Ganai. The intense firefight that followed ended in the destruction of the family home. Soon afterwards, Ganai's father, Ghulam Mohammad, passed away. Zainab Ganai, his mother, passed away just a few months later.

Faced with these tragedies, Ganai responded by renewing his commitment to the *jihād*. Power Minister Bhat's assassination was just one of dozens of operations he commanded after 1998. However, rivals within the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen began to turn on Ganai's family. His uncle, Abdul Rashid Thokar, was shot dead on charges of helping a police recruitment effort in the town of Verinag; another relative, Sanger resident Mohammad Akram, was killed on suspicion of being an informer.

Disgusted, Ganai decided to cross the LoC, hoping that he could build a new life for himself in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. "He knew he could not come back home, because the army would arrest him," says Ahmad, "and that if he surrendered, the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen would not allow him to live in peace." Ahmad chooses to believe that his brother did succeed in making the crossing — that the body found in Kupwara is part of an enterprise designed to evade the ghosts of his past.

Ever since 2003, Ahmad set about rebuilding what could be salvaged of his own life. He sold two of the five *kanals* of land his family owned — 2.5 *kanals* make an acre —

and used the cash to rebuild his family home. Ahmad now has two children, a daughter named Khushboo and a son, Danish, named for his brother's *nom de guerre*. Still, the past refuses to go away. "Just two months ago," he says, "someone I had a dispute with over land complained to the army that I helped terrorists. I was questioned for two days."

Farooq Ahmad Deva, a road-works contractor who lives in the southern Kashmir village of Panzath, is familiar with the sentiment. His brother, Riyaz Ahmad, who operates under the alias 'Tufail,' is the head of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen's operations in the Qazigund area. Riyaz Ahmad's unit is at the core of a well-oiled extortion racket targeting construction contractors in the region — a racket that has, Deva's rivals insist, been designed to benefit the terrorist's family and its business.

Not surprisingly, the truth is opaque. Riyaz Ahmad had an unexceptional life until 2001, running a family-financed bus which operated between Qazigund and the towns of Kulgam and Verinag. "I really do not know why he decided to join the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen," says Deva, "because he never discussed politics with us. Perhaps he saw passengers being harassed by army patrols or was disgusted at having to pay bribes to the police just to run his business. Who knows?"

On the morning he left to join the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen, Riyaz Ahmad met his father and brothers at Qazigund. He had purchased two sacks of coal which were to be shipped home on another bus, and handed over Rs. 200 for the treatment of his ailing sister. "He told us that he would see us at the doctor's office," recalls his younger brother, Shamim Ahmad, "and we later learned that he had stopped to purchase newspapers in Anantnag, as his bus passed through the city. I saw him once, three months later, but he wouldn't talk to me."

Riyaz Ahmad's decision to break contact with his family members was prompted by the desire to protect them from military and police raids: unlike the Ganai home, their house is intact.

Still, the family has paid a huge price for

his decision. Both of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen commander's brothers have repeatedly been detained for questioning by the army, which on one occasion in 2003 led to street protests by their fellow villagers. A cousin, Mohammad Shafi Koka, was jailed, forcing the termination of his undergraduate education.

"Our life is in ruins," says Deva. The family's fruit orchard, he says, has been ruined because no one wishes to lease it, fearing raids or shootouts that might destroy the harvest. And, contrary to the allegation of other contractors, Deva insists his brother's power and influence has done nothing for his construction business. "You have to pay bribes to get contracts," he says wryly, "but no official will take one from me because they are afraid of my brother — and as a result, I have almost no business."

"Ever since my son left home," says Riyaz Ahmad's mother, Jana Bano, "I have spent each evening fearing that his corpse will be returned to us. I do not care about India and Pakistan; all I want is that a way is found for my child to be able to return."

Politicians in agreement

More than a few of the politicians who will be speaking to the Prime Minister agree — the Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader, M.Y. Tarigami, the People's Democratic Party's Mehbooba Mufti, and the National Conference's Omar Abdullah, to name just three.

But turning these wishes into action presents more than a few problems. Even as the parents of its cadre are hoping for an end to the violence, the Hizb leadership has been working to bring about an escalation, knowing that the dialogue process could strip it of what little legitimacy it has. Much of the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen's mid-level command, too, profits from the extortion economy that has flourished in the course of *jihād* — and understands that war pays far larger cash dividends than peace.

As things stand, the paths travelled by Ganai and Riyaz Ahmad appear to be one-way streets. What the dialogue process does offer, though, is hope that a bend in the road may one day appear.

24 MAY 2006

THE HINDU

Talks with Hurriyat unlikely

28 28K H.D. 29/5
Round table begins today; boycott decision is their loss, say officials



TAKING NO CHANCES: A security blanket has been thrown around Srinagar on the eve of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit on Wednesday to attend the two-day second round table on Kashmir. The photograph shows an alert security man near the conference centre, overlooking the Dal Lake.

Vinay Kumar

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is unlikely to meet the leadership of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference on the sidelines of the two-day second round table on Kashmir that begins in Srinagar on Wednesday.

The moderate faction of the Hurriyat at its executive meeting on Monday decided to boycott the conference, saying it was too "crowded."

At a meeting with Dr. Singh on May 3, the faction, led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, agreed to evolve a mechanism for putting in place a structured dialogue

process. It favours a trilateral approach between India, Pakistan and the Kashmiris.

Authoritative sources in the Government said Dr. Singh was unlikely to meet any groups or political parties on the sidelines of the round table.

"Anyone who wishes to be a part of the dialogue process can meet the Prime Minister either on May 24 or 25 when the conference will be on. The Hurriyat's decision to stay away is their loss," officials said.

NC threat

The National Conference (NC) had threatened to pull out

if the Prime Minister agreed to meet the Hurriyat separately.

Despite the terrorist attack on a Congress rally two days ago in Srinagar in which six people were killed, the Government said such attempts to derail the dialogue process would not be allowed to succeed and it remained firm in going ahead with the round table.

The sources said the round table is likely to address issues such as trade across the Line of Control and the plight of political detenus.

The first round table in February, while recognising that the journey to find a consensual so-

lution to the Kashmir problem was long, requiring patience, fortitude and involvement of the State people, marked the Government's readiness to engage various sections and groups across the entire political spectrum and civil society.

Dr. Singh then sought partnerships to construct a "naya" (new) Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, saying that those who did not participate in the meet will join, once they see the obvious merits in sharing ideas.

NC, BJP stand: Page 14

24 MAY 2006

THE HINDU

Terrorists will be fought: Manmohan

Opens round table on Kashmir; says the Government is reviewing cases of detainees J&K



CONTINUING DIALOGUE: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh flanked by Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil (left) and Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad at the second round table on Kashmir in Srinagar on Wednesday. At right, National Conference president Omar Abdullah, People's Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti and State Congress chief Peerzada Syed, three of the participants. — PHOTO: NISSAR AHMAD

Vinay Kumar

SRINAGAR: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday opened the second round table on Jammu and Kashmir here, expressing his Government's resolve to protect "every resident of Jammu and Kashmir from terrorist acts and atrocities."

Dr. Singh acknowledged that there were two dimensions to the State's problems and dwelt upon the Pakistan factor behind them. "One is the relationship between Delhi and Srinagar, and the other between Delhi and Islamabad. These two dimensions are, of course, different but each affects the other. In your exchange of ideas here, I want you to keep this in mind."

In the changing environment, the Government was reviewing the cases of all detainees. The review included the cases of "those who crossed over after violating our laws and who are now anxious to come home," he said.

The Government was resolv-

ed to build a prosperous future for the State but there were some who had the opposite wish.

"Their inhuman acts have cost many lives, destroyed many families. Who these elements are, we all know well. Such activities will only make our resolve even stronger to ensure that every resident of the State is pro-

tected from such terrorist acts and atrocities. We are prepared to take every step towards achieving this objective."

Recalling his opening remarks at the first round table conference in New Delhi in February, he said every resident of Jammu and Kashmir should lead a life of dignity free from oppression,

poverty and fear.

The Prime Minister, speaking in chaste Urdu, hoped that the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, which had met him, would also "join the series of round table conferences so that they can share their views with all of us. In this connection, I have held discussions with leaders of other

organisations also, who had earlier kept away from dialogue."

Interaction with Hurriyat

He recalled that his May 3 interaction with the moderate faction of the Hurriyat was positive. "They are prepared to take this forward and are ready to prepare specific proposals. I hope that at

the appropriate time they will also join the series of round table conferences."

The focus of the round table should be on four key areas. First, what are those political institutions and arrangements that can strengthen the relationship between the State and the Centre? He stressed on security of the people, human rights and good governance. Second, how can the different regions in the State, while recognising their distinct identities, be brought close to each other? Third, what is the economic future of the State? Fourth, what are the steps necessary to restore public self-confidence; how can regional identities be strengthened, that they can blossom. And finally, what are the institutional arrangements that can bring people from both sides of the LoC closer?

AIIMS status

Dr. Singh announced that the Jammu Medical College would be accorded AIIMS status.

Grenade attack injures 8; strike hits normal life

Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR: A general strike and an unprecedented security for the round table threw normal life out of gear in Srinagar and other parts of Kashmir Valley.

Despite tight security, militants hurled a grenade in Qamarwari area, leaving eight people, including four security personnel, injured.

It was a curfew-like situation in Srinagar, particularly near Dal Lake, where Dr. Singh chaired the Unified

Headquarters meeting and the second round table. A three-tier security was in place within a radius of five-km radius of the Sher-e-Kashmir International Conference Centre.

Bulletproof bunkers

The Prime Minister's Special Protection Group took complete control of the venue. Contingents of police and paramilitary forces maintained strict vigil with barricades of bullet-proof bunkers at every

100 metres.

The whole area from Dalgat onwards had been sealed since Sunday, when militants attacked a Youth Congress rally, killing six civilians.

The area adjoining Dal Lake was declared out of bounds.

A CBI team, which was supposed to be present in the High Court in connection with a sex abuse scandal, was stopped at Humhama.

Responding to a strike call by the Syed Ali Geelani-led faction of All Parties Hurriyat

Conference and supported by the Kashmir Bar Association and other separatist organisations, shops and business establishments, schools and government offices remained closed. Vehicles were also off the road.

The police placed Mr. Geelani under house arrest at his Hyderpora residence.

Thanking the people for paying heed to his call, Mr. Geelani told *The Hindu* that it makes it evident "what people of Kashmir want."

PM's 5-point plan to build new Kashmir

Srinagar: Talking tough, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday asserted that attempts by "some elements" within J & K to disrupt peace would be firmly thwarted and proposed focus on a five-point programme to build a new Kashmir.

Addressing the second roundtable conference, the PM said the welfare of J and K "is of top most priority" of the Congress-led UPA government. He said it was the government's endeavour to put behind the tragic memories of the past while working to build a prosperous future for the state.

Singh, who is having the second such meeting in three months, said "There are some elements within the state who do not wish this dream to become a reality. Their inhumane acts have cost many lives, destroyed many families. Who these elements are, we all know," he said without elaborating.

Condemning acts of violence, Singh said government would ensure that every resident of this state was protected from such terrorist acts and atrocities. "We are prepared to take every step towards achieving this objective. We condemn such activities and will ensure that such plans fail," he said.

Describing his meeting



Prime Minister during a conference in Srinagar on Wednesday

with the Hurriyat leaders earlier this month in Delhi as "positive", he said they were prepared to take the dialogue process forward and were "ready to prepare specific proposals."

Suggesting that the leaders representing different shades of opinion focus on five areas, he said these included strengthening security of the people, human rights and good governance, bringing closer different regions of the state while recognising their distinct identities, working on economic future of the state and firming up institutional arrangement to bring people from from both sides

of LoC closer. AGENCIES

25 MAY 2008

THE TIMES OF INDIA

'CASES OF DETAINEES IN PoK BEING REVIEWED'

PM hints at ultra amnesty

Kavita Suri

SRINAGAR, May 24: The Prime Minister today hinted at a general amnesty to Kashmiri militants stranded in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) who want to return home and join the mainstream.

"In the light of changing environment, we are reviewing the cases of all detainees including those who have crossed over after violating our laws and who are now anxious to come home," a statement issued by the Prime Minister at the Sher-e-Kashmir International Convention Centre said.

"It is our effort and desire that there should be prosperity on both sides of the Line of Control. For this, we wish that those highways which are opening up between the two sides should be used not only for travel or tourism but also for trade and commerce," said Dr Manmohan Singh adding that many Kashmiri militants in PoK are desperate to return home and they have openly expressed their desire to unite with their families and shun the path of the gun. Several Kashmiri leaders including Mr Omar Abdullah have advocated



The Prime Minister at the round-table meet. ■ AFP

general amnesty to stranded militants in PoK.

Addressing a second round-table conference, Dr Singh said the welfare of Jammu and Kashmir was of topmost priority of the UPA government. He assured the chief minister that funds will not be a problem. He suggested a five-point programme to build a new Kashmir.

The Prime Minister asked security forces in the terrorism-hit state of Jammu and Kashmir to ensure maximum security and "observe human rights" besides "zero tolerance" for custodial death.

"The forces should be people-friendly and avoid

Siachen talks fail

NEW DELHI, May 24: With Islamabad refusing to agree on authentication of present troop positions on the Siachen glacier, the talks between India and Pakistan on demilitarisation of the world's highest battlefield failed to yield any breakthrough here today, but the two countries decided to continue with the ceasefire there. ■ PTI

any collateral damage during combating militancy", he said adding while taking action against militants, every care must be taken to avoid any damage to the innocents.

"It is possible and desirable that you should be firm but humane, effective and efficient, in control but intrusive," Dr Singh said adding the security forces "must be steadfast in their commitment to human rights."

While condemning acts of violence, the PM also set a motto for the security forces: "maximum security with minimum disturbance to normal life".

■ Another report on page 4

25 MAY 2008

THE STATESMAN

Grenade blast kills 4 tourists

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Srinagar, May 25. Four tourists from Gujarat, including two children, were killed in a militant attack on a day Prime Minister Manmohan Singh concluded his visit to Kashmir.

In the second strike on tourists this week, militants this evening hurled a grenade at a bus carrying tourists from Surat at Batpora on the outskirts of the city.

The grenade exploded inside the bus, injuring 11 passengers, four of whom died in the Soura Medical Institute. Doctors said the others, all tourists, are admitted in the hospital.

The victims were identified as Thinnal and Robin, both 8, Krishna, 15, and Khusboo, 18.

Earlier this week, one tourist and a local driver were killed and four injured when militants hurled a grenade at a bus from Sonamarg at Soura on the outskirts of Srinagar.

Thousands flock to the Valley during summer and the swelling crowd forced even the Prime Minister to cut short his visit as extraordinary security arrangements had been causing inconvenience to tourists and local people.

Because of the tight security, the tourist bus today had to go round the Dal Lake. The round-table conference, which brought Singh to Kashmir, was being held on the other side of the lake.

26 MAY 2006

THE TELEGRAPH

Rehabilitation important: Manmohan

Special Correspondent 265

SRINAGAR: In a significant development, the Prime Minister said that in the context of Thursday's round table and the voices heard "it is important that in our efforts at nation-building, we win back as our own the destitute families of those terrorists who have been killed in police action."

"We have initiated a number of schemes for rehabilitation of orphans who have been victims of terrorism. Such schemes must be extended to all orphans who need help in building for themselves a life free from violence and perceived revenge, as upright citizens of this great State of India," Dr. Singh said. He said this was an area where all can work together and ensure that succour and relief are provided

to the widows and orphans of victims of violence. The Prime Minister said this will be "our surest and immediate contribution to the peace and prosperity that we all crave for."

He said he will direct the Union Home Ministry and the State Government to work out a credible mechanism of support for these families.

Responding to another common demand from Kashmir politicians, he said he will request the Home Ministry to review on a quarterly basis cases of youths from the State which are not of serious nature and set free those that can be released.

"Let this now not be linked to meetings and conferences but an ongoing process. My own office will monitor this every quarter," he added.

The Prime Minister said that

at his instance the Ministry had examined all cases of detention and released in two rounds detenus against whom there were no serious cases.

On economic development, he said various measures would be taken. "In addition to establishing a mechanism, I assure everyone that no efforts will be spared for the economic empowerment of the people of Jammu and Kashmir," he told the conference.

In regard to problems of displaced people of the State, he said it "is a live one." "I do realise that lives have been disrupted, livelihoods have been lost and homes uprooted as a result of this. In addition to efforts at restoring normalcy in the State to facilitate their return, I request the State Government to expedite the issue of identity cards to

migrant families in a time-bound manner in the next six months," Dr. Singh added.

On the peace process with Pakistan, he said he had repeatedly conveyed to President Pervez Musharraf and the people of Pakistan that India was sincerely committed to peace and development in this region.

Committed to peace

He said the Government was sincerely committed to peace and development in the region. "I have said it repeatedly to Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf. Our Government is committed to resolving all outstanding issues with Pakistan, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. There is also realisation that terrorism is an enemy of civilised societies," he said.

26 MAY 2006

THE HINDU

5 working groups for Jammu & Kashmir

They would submit reports to the Government for discussion in the third round table

Shujaat Bukhari
and Vinay Kumar

SRINAGAR: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Thursday announced setting up of five working groups to resolve the issues confronting Jammu and Kashmir.

The groups will deal with improving the Centre's relations with the State, furthering the relations across the Line of Control, giving a boost to the economic development of the State, rehabilitating the destitute families of militants and reviewing cases of detainees and ensuring good governance.

The announcement, made at the end of the two-day round table here, was endorsed by the conference and included in a statement.

To submit reports

Dr. Singh said the groups would submit reports to the Government and they would be discussed in the third round table.

The groups would deal separately with the confidence building measures across the segments of society in the State; strengthening the relations across the Line of Control, developing the economy, ensuring good governance and strengthening the ties between the State and the Centre.

The groups should comprise members from those present or those nominated by parties and groups who could look more closely at the issues and problems.

The measures that would come under the groups include improving the condition of people affected by militancy, evolving schemes to rehabilitate all orphans and widows affected by militancy, relaxing the conditions for persons who have fore-sworn militancy and providing employment for Kashmiri Pan-



GIFT FROM KASHMIR: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh being presented with a Kashmiri samovar by Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad after the round table in Srinagar on Thursday. — PHOTO: NISSAR AHMAD

ditions.

The steps to improve relations across the LoC include simplifying the procedures to facilitate travel, increasing the goods traffic, opening up new routes, such as Kargil-Skardu,

and expanding people-to-people contact, including promotion of pilgrimage and group tourism.

Without mentioning the autonomy demand (by the National Conference) and self-rule (by the PDP), the fifth group will de-

liberate upon matters relating to the special status of Jammu and Kashmir within the Indian union and methods of strengthening democracy, secularism and the rule of law in the State.

It will also deliberate upon ef-

fective devolution of power among different regions

Appointment of conveners

Dr. Singh suggested appointing a suitable convener for each of the working groups. The com-

position of these groups could be decided in consultation with all leaders.

Acknowledging that people were put to inconvenience due to the prevailing situation, Dr. Singh said it must be understood that this scenario was the result of the actions of certain elements.

He had instructed the security forces to be "more mindful" of human rights and be sensitive to the liberties and self-respect of ordinary people.

But "at the same time it is our collective responsibility to create an atmosphere where the people of the State can be free from the fear of oppression and terrorist activities and go about their normal lives like their fellow countrymen."

"If this requires strengthening the State police — both in numbers and materially — the Central Government will be willing to support that."

Cut shorts visit

Prime Minister cut short his visit to Kashmir and decided to give up his plan of spending an evening watching the waters of Dal Lake from Raj Bhavan in view of media reports that his stay was causing inconvenience to visitors due to security reasons.

"The Prime Minister, after going through reports, decided to cut his evening of relaxation and take a flight back to Delhi," his media advisor Sanjay Baru told reporters.

Stringent security measures, which threw life out of gear in Srinagar for three days, had evoked severe criticism in both print and electronic media, with people questioning the timing of the conference at the peak tourist season.

More reports on Page 12

26 MAY 2006

THE HINDU

Round-table II

Palpable lack of direction

9.8.78
4x6 27/5

Evaluation of the Prime Minister's Srinagar foray would be akin to that classic assessment of a half-glass of water - half empty or half full? For whatever positives might have emerged were cancelled by the negatives. Those who argue that by going ahead despite preceding violence the terrorists were snubbed must understand that the extensive security measures were deemed repressive by local communities. Immediately disproved was Manmohan Singh's theory of maximum security, minimum inconvenience. The failure to ensure the Hurriyat's participation, but a willingness to keep talking with them underscores why the group finds it profitable to remain separatist in more senses than one, its stock has risen in the Valley. And the much-hyped working groups were set up to deal with issues raised previously - not what emerged at the more publicised than purposeful meet. Sure the Prime Minister reaffirmed a commitment to the negotiation process, and some of his gestures were appreciated, but gestures (and gimmicks) are no substitute for governance.

As with Round-table I, there was little evidence of a direction to New Delhi's J&K policy, despite much interaction over the years. It cannot be that every change in the political complexion of Raisina Hill means starting afresh - the Government of India is a continuing entity. Surely the time for "checking out" the situation has long passed and a road map, or its contours, is presented. Politically the Prime Minister finds himself caught in a vicious circle by taking the round-table route. To resume the debate at a lower level would create huge ego problems, but the status of the Prime Minister - it is not just a Manmohan Singh matter - is diminished when so little accrues. Prior to Round-table III there is need for effective action at the official, political and Track-II levels. It is unacceptable that a conglomerate with little more than successful "hartals" to its name not only equates itself with those with election-established credentials, but deems itself superior. To use a stock phrase, there is homework to be done. Alas, little can be expected from those unaware that Srinagar's tourist season peaks in May - the excuse trotted out for the PM advancing his return flight to the Capital. Empty handed.

27 MAY 2008

THE STATESMAN

Sign of rift in Hurriyat

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, May 26: The moderate Hurriyat and other separatist groups, which have twice spurned Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's invitation to join the roundtable conference, might find themselves out in the cold when the next phase of the talks is held.

Official sources said the Centre is considering not to invite the Hurriyat and some other separatist leaders for the next roundtable and to accommodate them only if they show their willingness and firm commitment to join the democratic dialogue process.

After sending signals through various unofficial channels about joining the roundtable conference this week, the moderate Hurriyat had backed out at the eleventh hour, causing embarrassment to the Prime Minister and the Jammu and Kashmir government.

However, sources said the Hurriyat's decision to stay away from the roundtable was not unanimous. Fearing that its absence from the talks could cause political damage in the long run, at least two members of the executive committee were keen to join the conference but could not because of the majority decision against them, said a senior home ministry official.

Some Kashmir observers within the government also see this as signal of a split within the moderate Hurriyat. The All-Parties Hurriyat Conference had earlier broken up into the hardline faction led by Syed Ali Shah Geelani and the

moderate faction led by Mirwaiz Omar Farooq.

"If a further break-up takes place in the Hurriyat ranks and gives birth to another faction — a more moderate one, it will definitely demoralise Pakistan's game plan to dictate terms in Kashmir affairs," said a source.

Working groups

The Centre has advised the Jammu and Kashmir government to immediately constitute five working groups in an effort to establish a mechanism to carry the roundtable dialogue forward.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had suggested creation of the working groups to look into issues and problems faced by Jammu and Kashmir.

"To give these groups a wider representation, the convenors and members will be from the mainstream parties of Jammu and Kashmir," said a senior home ministry official.



The Mirwaiz addresses a gathering in Srinagar. (AFP)

27 MAY 2006

THE TELEGRAPH

Geelani rejects invitation

98
784
40-7
285 2

“We consider the round table conference a futile exercise”

Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR: Making scathing attacks on the moderate Hurriyat Conference, Syed Ali Geelani, the head of its hardline faction, on Saturday termed the second round table conference scheduled to be held in Srinagar on from May 24-25 as a “farce and attempt to give legitimacy to the status quo in Kashmir.” He rejected the invitation extended to him by the government.

At a news conference here, Mr. Geelani said, “an invitation signed by Special Secretary G.S. Rajagopal of the

Union Home Ministry was delivered to me at 8.30 am this morning, inviting me to the round table conference. Since we consider the conference a futile exercise we have rejected the invitation,” he said

Maintaining that except the implementation of the United Nations resolutions, there was no other way to solve the Kashmir issue, Mr Geelani said “bilateral negotiations and dramas like round table conferences will not serve any purpose.” The only method to address the Kashmir issue and take concrete steps to resolve it was to

have a trilateral dialogue between India, Pakistan and representatives of the Kashmiri people. “In that dialogue also we will not discuss self-rule or autonomy or making the Line of Control a permanent border but only the implementation of the U.N. resolutions.” He ruled out any reconciliation with New Delhi until “it accepts Kashmir as a disputed territory, withdraws its forces and all Acts giving special powers to the forces and ensures genuine political activity.”

Without naming the moderate Hurriyat Conference, he said, “those who are talk-

ing about working in a risky situation have not even seen the prison for a single day. What risk they are talking about. Ask those who have been languishing in Sangroor and Jodhpur.” Mr. Geelani said those who have been holding talks with Delhi or visiting Pakistan are also “furthering the Indian and U.S. agenda which is to maintain the status quo in Kashmir.” The opening of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad road last year and now starting a truck service are part of the “same game plan” supported by these so-called separatist leaders, he said.

28 MAY 2006

THE HINDU

Kashmiri Pandits accuse Centre of bias

Kavita Suri

SRINAGAR, May 27. — The displaced Kashmiri Pandit community, which has been included in the talks on Kashmir for the first time, has expressed anguish that while the Centre is implementing several confidence-building measures for militants and anti-national elements, nothing has been done for the rehabilitation of the minority community. The Kashmiri Pandit community is into its 16th year of exodus from valley.

Dr Agnishekhar, convenor, Panun Kashmir, who represented the

Kashmiri Pandit community at the second Round Table Conference on Kashmir here at SKICC, told The Statesman that he had asked Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh for a special recruitment drive for Kashmiri Pandit youths until a solution is found to end their plight.

"We asked for a comprehensive economic package for the displaced community until some political solution is arrived at," said Dr Agnishekhar, adding that he also invited the chief minister of J&K to visit all the Kashmiri Pandit camps, particularly the Battal Balia camp of

Udhampur. He said that the camp should immediately be shifted to a safer place in Jammu.

Dr Agnishekhar said the recent Doda massacre should be an eye opener for the Government of India, as it reveals the militants' big game plan to "cleanse" the so-called greater Kashmir across the river Chinab of Hindu minorities, going by Pakistan's "Operation Topac".

"The massacres and violence that have taken place between the first and second Round Table Conferences vindicates our claim that the situa-

tion in Kashmir will never be conducive, particularly to the Kashmiri Pandits and so, the carving out of a separate area for the rehabilitation of the Kashmiri Pandits with full constitutional guarantees is the only solution for their settlement and return to the Valley," he said.

He added that the comprehensive, compact rehabilitation of the Kashmiri Pandits in a secure location in the Valley, with full institutional and constitutional guarantees, was not possible under present conditions. Rejecting the proposals of self-rule and demilitarisation of the PDP, the Panun Kashmir convenor called these "steps to boost the Musharraf doctrine" and appealed to the Prime Minister that priority be given to de-terrorisation instead of to demilitarisation.

Dr Agnishekhar hailed the statement of Dr Farooq Abdullah that the Government of India should not hold talks separately with the Hurriyat and other separatist groups. He said the Centre should send a clear message to the Hurriyat and their masters that they would go ahead "with or without them."

Through the looking glass in J&K

Praveen Swami

"NOW here, you see," said the Queen in Lewis Carroll's masterpiece, *Through the Looking Glass*, "it takes all the running you can do to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that."

Less than two years after the National Democratic Alliance initiated what was marketed as a historic engagement with the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, the dialogue process in Jammu and Kashmir has reached an impasse. New Delhi has let it be known that it no longer intends to continue separate high-level dialogue with the APHC, after the secessionist grouping refused to participate in Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's second round table conference on Jammu and Kashmir.

Just how did this breakdown come about? APHC chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq had said his organisation did not wish to waste its time in what he characterised as "a seminar," and asserted that it saw no purpose in any bilateral process. Mirwaiz Farooq's assertions are mystifying, given the fact that he has participated in bilateral dialogue with both President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Singh in the recent past — not to mention several international seminars on the conflict.

Nor are APHC claims that New Delhi is intransigent plausible. Prior to the second round table, the secessionist coalition had laid down three conditions. It asked that the process include only major parties; that it be preceded by separate negotiations with the Prime Minister; and that formal invitations be delivered by the government itself, rather than the covert services. Each of these demands was met. Notably, just 27 participants were invited to the round-table, down from 75 at the first round held in February.

In March, when General Musharraf acknowl-

New Delhi's dialogue with the All Parties Hurriyat Conference has reached an impasse. What could now lie ahead?

edged the diversity of political forces in Jammu and Kashmir by meeting National Conference president Omar Abdullah, the road to the second round table seemed open. At a seminar in Karachi, the Mirwaiz accepted that "all traditional slogans" had become redundant. Soon afterwards, he proclaimed his willingness to discuss "concepts like self-governance and self-rule." "We need to carry others along," he said, adding that the "state structure has to be kept in mind."

What changed in the days before the second round table? For one, pressure from Islamist terror groups became intense. Soon after General Musharraf's meeting with Mr. Abdullah, the apex organisation of Pakistan-based terrorist groups, the United Jihad Council, staged a protest against what it saw as a betrayal. "The sacrifices offered by the Kashmiris," a UJC statement asserted, "demand that common people and Mujahideen should get united and take the struggle to its logical conclusion."

By mid-May, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen emissaries had made clear to Mirwaiz Farooq that an APHC decision to participate in the second round table — and thus deny their jihad legitimacy — would make its leaders targets for attack. A statement issued by the Hizb-ul-Mujahideen's chief, Mohammad Yusuf Shah, publicly attacked the "pointless moderation" of the secessionist leadership. Mirwaiz Farooq buckled, and called for the "political, diplomatic and military fronts" of the "Kashmiri resistance" to work "in unison."

As things stand, the APHC has retreated into the realm of cliché. At one recent rally, Mirwaiz Farooq characterised its objective as "freedom and freedom alone," not "jobs, subsidies or power." It isn't hard to see the contradictions be-

tween the cleric's position and the vision he articulated in Karachi, or to dismiss his recent actions as fear-driven hypocrisy. However, hard-headed political considerations underpin the APHC's decision to go along with the jihadi fiat, which need careful examination.

Principal amongst these is the realisation that the APHC simply cannot afford to share the table with political competitors. Should the organisation be called on to put its representational claims to the test prior to the resolution of the conflict in Jammu and Kashmir, there is little doubt that it would be obliterated by better organised mass parties like the National Conference and the People's Democratic Party. With no real bases of support outside of Srinagar, the APHC would be fortunate to pick up half-a-dozen Assembly seats.

In 2004, the APHC agreed to talks hoping to position itself as the sole arbiter of the State's political future: as a medium between New Delhi, Islamabad, and the mujahideen, which would be handed power in a deal of the kind that returned Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to office in 1973. "If," Mirwaiz Farooq argued in defence of his decision not to join the round table, "at some point of time we feel that others should also be involved in the process we shall devise the mechanism. Let Delhi not bother about that. Leave that to us."

Prime Minister Vajpayee's regime might have been comfortable with this kind of arrangement — witness its refusal to discuss State autonomy with Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah. Others were not. Prime Minister Singh's National Security Adviser M.K. Narayanan came to believe the keys to peace lie in Islamabad, not Srinagar. N.N.

Vohra, the Government's official interlocutor on Jammu and Kashmir, for his part, argued for an broad-based dialogue, rather than one over which the APHC commanded a veto.

New Delhi's hardening position was driven, in no small part, by the APHC's inability to deliver on its claims that it could influence terrorist groups. Indeed, it even failed to condemn continued violence as the dialogue proceeded ahead. Mirwaiz Farooq, notably, condemned the recent killing of four tourists only on the grounds that it would hurt the State's economy; the murder of three Congress activists in an earlier terrorist attack in Srinagar failed to move his conscience enough to even merit a mention in his speeches.

As Omar Abdullah recently pointed out, this silence is of a piece with the APHC's past practice: "Ask him," he told journalists, "to name the people who killed his father or [the APHC leader] Abdul Gani Lone." Answers to that question are evident in the fact that the APHC chairman, as well as other major secessionist leaders, are protected by Jammu and Kashmir Police and travels in a government-provided bullet-proof vehicle. Now, it is clear, the APHC will have to choose which team it wishes to play for.

Challenges ahead

How might things go from here? One thing is certain: movement will not be rapid. Once the five committees Prime Minister Singh hopes will take the round table process forward are founded, discussions will begin on several complex ideas. These include the National Conference's calls for greater constitutional autonomy, the PDP's demand for an elected Governor, and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader's proposals for the creation of district and province-level elected bodies intended to meet regional aspirations.

To make this dialogue credible, New Delhi will have to find means to compel Pakistan to deliver on its promises to end cross-border support for terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. Despite General Musharraf's public support for the round table, the fact is that he has so far shown no sign of acting against the terrorist groups seeking to sabotage it. Indeed, terrorism serves Pakistan's interests well: continued violence in Jammu and Kashmir, after all, is the sole leverage it has to secure concessions at the negotiating table.

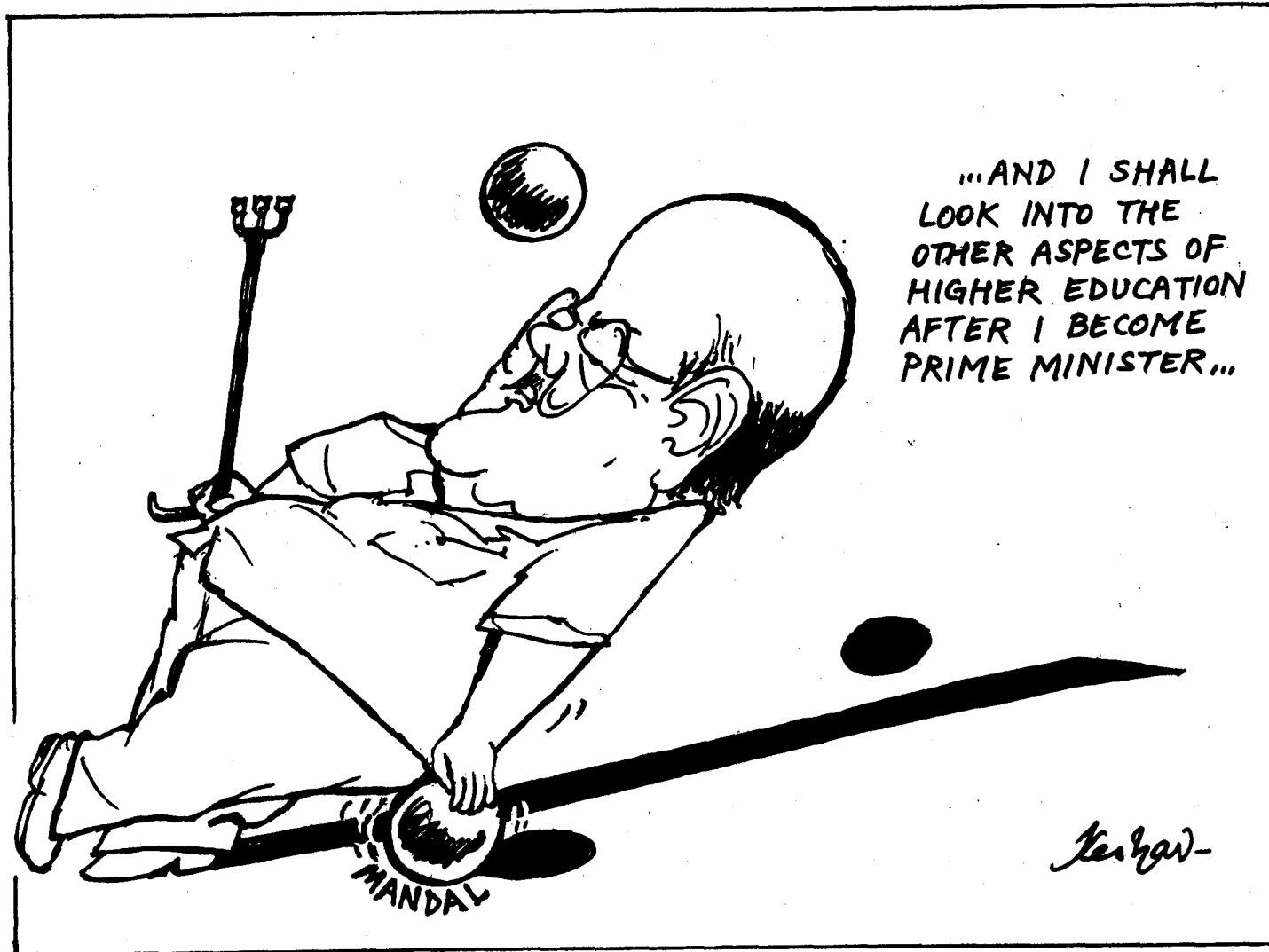
New Delhi might also do well to direct its attention inwards. Introspection is, in particular, needed on the United Progressive Alliance Government's failure to arrive at a coherent vision of what it would like Jammu and Kashmir's political future to look like. Prime Minister Singh has reached out to an extraordinary range of scholars, retired administrators, activists, and even the odd eccentric in his search for new ideas. So far, though, official policy on Jammu and Kashmir is yet to acquire a clear voice.

As a consequence, India's search for peace remains mired in indecision. Prime Minister Singh, unlike his predecessors, is without the services of leaders like former Union Minister Rajesh Pilot, who had the authority and influence to execute hard decisions. Congress president Sonia Gandhi, for her part, has also relied on proxies, notably the PDP, often to the detriment of her own party's interests in Jammu and Kashmir. Both, therefore, remain directly vulnerable to the political costs that peacemaking entails.

Is there an easy way out? Imagining solutions for the conflict in Jammu and Kashmir is not difficult. Dozens of plans, drawing on everything from territorial disputes in Europe to the ideas underpinning the Partition of India, have proliferated in recent years. What the second round table has made clear, though, is that Jammu and Kashmir is not just a problem: it is, instead, a place inhabited by people; people with conflicting concerns for which there is no tidy solution.

"I don't want to belong," said Alice in *Through the Looking Glass*, "to someone else's dream." Somehow, those concerned with Jammu and Kashmir's future are going to have to work to imagine a future they are all willing to wake up to.

CARTOONSCAPE



Hurriyat plans regional round table

Statesman News Service

JAMMU, April 18: The All Party Hurriyat Conference today hinted that it won't participate in the forthcoming Prime Minister's round table conference in Srinagar next month as "New Delhi hadn't done enough on Kashmir."

Instead, the party announced that it would hold a parallel intra-region round table conference in Kashmir in which people from all the five regions of the united state of Jammu and Kashmir would participate.

"Though we are trying to find a common ground with New Delhi, the fact remains that the Indian government has not done

enough in forwarding the Kashmir peace process," said Mr Mirwaiz Umar Farooq. He was addressing a Press conference here this afternoon.

"The peace process itself is very slow and there are many things which can slow it down further. Therefore, we need an atmosphere to build mutual trust and also to accelerate the process," he said.

The government of India need to show more flexibility, adopt more positive attitude towards Kashmir and become more sincere in resolving Kashmir issue, he added.

Advocating a two-tier approach to resolve Kashmir issue, Mr Hussain said that the Centre should

think as to how the situation can be improved on ground.

Besides, it needed to focus on intra-regional dialogue so as to meet the aspirations of all the five regions - Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, PoK and northern areas of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. He said the dialogue process, peace process or talks were mere words until there was no change in ground situation. He called for release of detainees and the revoking of Armed Forces Special Powers Act and Disturbed Area Act.

As part of a confident building measure, he said that India should reduce the strength of troops in

Kashmir.

'Ultra camps thriving'

Union home secretary Mr VK Duggal today said there was proof of active militant training camps in Pakistan and accused the neighbour country of continuing the policy of terror in the valley. "We have proof that the terror infrastructure still exists in Pakistan and there are a number of militants who are infiltrating," he said.

Grenade after grenade ahead of conference

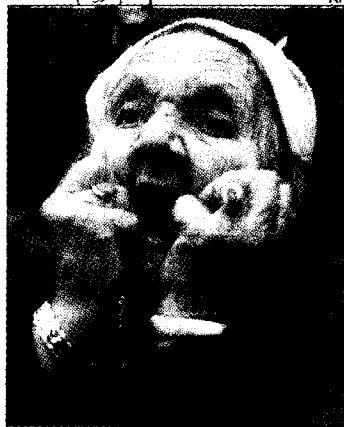
RASHID Ahmad
Srinagar, April 14

28K
15/4
11/1

A SERIES of grenade attacks rocked Srinagar on Friday, killing five persons and injuring at least 30 others including four security personnel. Four militants groups — Islamic Front, Jamiat-ul Mujahideen, al-Mansoorain and Jaish-e-Mohammad — claimed responsibility, prompting IGP K. Rajendra to say a new group appeared to have become active in the city.

Militants first lobbed a hand grenade near Central Telegraph Office at 11.50 am, injuring two BSF soldiers. The later grenades were lobbed at a CRPF post, killing two civilians and injuring eight, a CRPF vehicle (three killed, six injured), a police vehicle (two civilians and two cops including a woman injured), the Qamarwari quarter (no casualty), and a CRPF-police patrol (seven cops and five civilians injured).

The blasts were triggered to



The grandmother of one of the dead.

step up violence ahead of the May 25 roundtable conference on the Kashmir issue in Srinagar. Separatist leaders whose names didn't figure on the invitee list and militants seem to have joined hands to cause the blasts to strike at the second roundtable conference, sources said. Prime Minis-

ter Manmohan Singh will preside over the conference.

A group of over a dozen journalists, intellectuals and politicians from Pakistan are arriving here on Saturday, after a two-day seminar on Kashmir in Jammu.

The series of blasts, coming after a lull of months, has unnerved authorities. A red alert has been sounded in the entire city. IGP K Rajendra termed the blasts as acts of desperation on the militants' part. "They want to sabotage the peace process", he said. The IG said the explosions were triggered to intimidate guests from Pakistan too.

Rajendra said the blasts could be the handiwork of some new militant outfit.

Chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad and deputy chief minister Muzaffar Hussain Baigh have condemned the blasts. Azad said most of the dead and injured were devotees, going to Hazratbal on the Friday-following Prophet Muhammad's birthday.

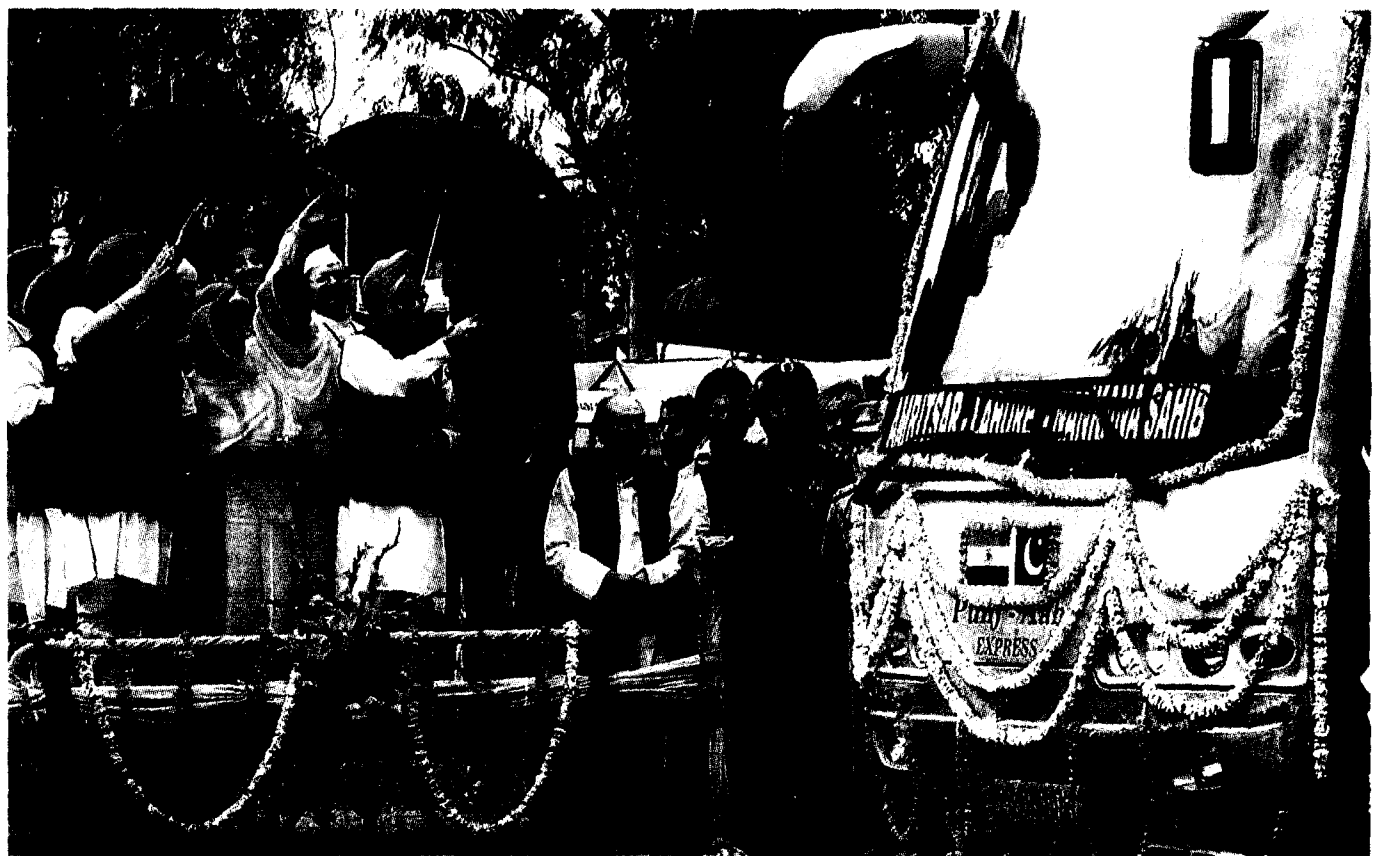
15 APR 2006

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Manmohan: wrong to link normalisation with Kashmir

25/3 HD-1

"Time has come to leave behind animosities, misgivings of the past"



NEW LINK: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh flagging off the bus to Nankana Sahib in Amritsar on Friday. Beside him are Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh (extreme left) and Deputy Chief Minister Rajinder Kaur Bhattal (third from left). - PHOTO: AFP

Amit Baruah

AMRITSAR: The peace process with Pakistan must "ultimately culminate" in a treaty of peace, security and friendship, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said here before flagging off the first Amritsar-Nankana Sahib bus since 1947.

Dr. Singh said Friday was an emotional day for every Sikh since the Golden Temple and Nankana Sahib, two of Sikhism's holiest shrines, had been linked.

"On this historic occasion, I send my greetings to the people of Pakistan and to President Pervez Musharraf," Dr. Singh said.

It was wrong to link the normalisation of relations between India and Pakistan with finding a solution to the Kashmir issue. Suggesting a step-by-step ap-

proach, Dr. Singh said both sides should begin a dialogue with the people "in their areas of control" to improve the quality of governance. Borders, which could not be redrawn, should be seen as "just lines" on the map so that the people on both sides of the Line of Control were able to move freely and trade with each other.

"I also envisage a situation where the two parts of Jammu and Kashmir can, with the active encouragement of the Governments of India and Pakistan, work out cooperative, consultative mechanisms."

"Meaningful agreement"

Speaking in chaste Punjabi to a huge crowd, the Prime Minister said it was possible for India

and Pakistan to come to a "meaningful agreement" on the Siachen, Sir Creek and Baglihar dam issues. "I am convinced we can move forward, if all concerned are willing to accept the ground realities, if all concerned take a long view of history and of our destiny. The time has come to leave behind the animosities and misgivings of the past and to think the unthinkable of moving together."

According to Dr. Singh, New Delhi sincerely believed that a strong, stable, prosperous and "moderate" Pakistan was in the interest of both India and South Asia. "We are sincerely committed to the prosperity, unity, development and well-being of Pakistan."

Advocating "pragmatic, prac-

tical" solutions to the Kashmir issue, he reiterated that India was committed to resolving all matters, including Kashmir, with Pakistan. "For this, I and General Musharraf have agreed that it is necessary to keep firm control over terrorism. There is a growing realisation in both our countries that terrorism is an enemy of civilised societies. General Musharraf has taken bold steps to curb extremism, and I compliment him for that. But more needs to be done in the interest of both India and Pakistan." Dr. Singh announced that India proposed to expand its immigration, customs and security halls at the Attari-Wagah border. An amount of Rs. 240 crore had been allocated for urban renewal in Amritsar alone.

Self-determination only solution: Geelani

No scope for dialogue, he says

Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR: Chairman of the hard-line faction of the Hurriyat Conference Syed Ali Geelani on Thursday made it clear that there was no scope for dialogue "unless and until New Delhi accepts Kashmir as a dispute." He said the "right to self-determination" was the only solution to the vexed problem.

Talks "a farce"

At a seminar 'Is there any substitute to right of self-determination,' organised by the Hurriyat Conference on the eve of Pakistan Day, Mr. Geelani criticised the moderate faction of the Hurriyat Conference for engaging in dialogue with the Centre.

"This is a farce. Such dialogue will not lead us anywhere because New Delhi is not ready to concede our demand of granting right to self-determination," he said, adding that those who engaged in talks with New Delhi had violated the Hurriyat constitution which stressed the right to self-determination in accordance with United Nations resolutions.

Fight to the last

Mr. Geelani said so far there had been 130 meetings between India and Pakistan over Kashmir and "you know what the result is."

Mr. Geelani accused New Delhi of "curbing the aspirations of

• Says 130 meetings between India, Pakistan on the row have been futile

• Accuses India of curbing people's aspirations by deploying troops

• Rejects division of the State on communal and ethnic basis

people through the presence of its troops." He also rejected secularism, socialism and Kashmiriyat and said: "We draw inspiration for our struggle from Islam."

He said there was no question of "surrender" but "we will fight till we achieve our goal."

Assurance to minorities

He also rejected the division of the State on communal and ethnic basis. "We want Jammu and Kashmir to remain united." He assured the minorities that they would be treated in the best and fitting manner in the event of a "free Kashmir."

Boycott call

Mr. Geelani also asked the people to boycott the coming by-elections to three seats in north Kashmir and Bahderwah in Doda district.

"Elections, we have said time and again, are no solution and you have to struggle for freedom," he declared.

24 MAR 2008

THE HINDU

Manmohan should respond positively to Musharraf's proposals

Both J&K and PoK should be given autonomy, says Omar

Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR: Kashmir is purely a political issue that needs a political solution and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh should reciprocate "positively" to Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's proposals, National Conference president Omar Abdullah said on Sunday.

"I found President Musharraf a forthright person. He doesn't say ten things before coming to the point and is keen to resolve Kashmir issue," he said.

Discussions in Pakistan

Addressing partymen after being given a grand reception on his return from Pakistan, he said he discussed the Kashmir issue and possible solutions such as "autonomy," "self-rule" and "self-governance" with Gen. Musharraf.

Mr. Abdullah said when Gen. Musharraf asked him about his party's stand on autonomy he told him: "In our autonomy, In-



ROUSING RECEPTION: National Conference president Omar Abdullah at the party headquarters in Srinagar on Sunday. — PHOTO: NISAAR AHMAD

dia's control will be limited to defence and communications, currency and foreign affairs, and the rest will remain with the

Kashmiris."

"Autonomy best solution"

His party believed that Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan occupied Kashmir should be given autonomy. "I told Pervez Musharraf that our party believes autonomy is the best possible solution to the issue.

He hoped that the leadership of India and Pakistan would exhibit courage and vision to resolve the issue. "I will request Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to reciprocate to proposals of Pakistan President so that the sufferings of Kashmiris end."

Advocating the involvement of militants in talks, Mr. Abdullah said those with Kashmir origin should be included in the dialogue process, and not foreigners. "I met many Kashmiri youth who have crossed the LoC [Line of Control] to acquire arms training. They are desperate to come back and I will take the issue with the Government of India."

20 MAR 2006

THE HINDU

KASHMIR ■ Musharraf meets Omar, Jihad Council slams General over his 'U-turn'

Pak cracks down on J-K militants

MUZAMIL JALEEL
SRINAGAR, MARCH 13

AS General Pervez Musharraf discussed a possible solution to the Kashmir problem with National Conference leader Omar Abdullah in Islamabad last Friday, Pakistani authorities began cracking down silently on Kashmiri militant groups, including Hizbul Mujahideen, by putting them in clear terms to restrict their presence only to

For three days now, the United Jihad Council, an amalgam of Pak-based militant groups led by Hizbul chief Syed Salahuddin, has been protesting Musharraf's Kashmir policy, accusing him of doing a "U-turn on the pattern of the Taliban in Afghanistan". Omar Abdullah, who became the first top mainstream Kashmiri politician to visit Pakistan in more than three decades, received a warm official welcome. He not only had a meeting President



Pushes his Kashmir plan

Musharraf but was accorded a special reception by the PoK leadership.

While this had the United Jihad Council protesting, a clear signal went out: Islam-

abad was beginning to get weary of militant groups being backed by the hardline Hurriyat faction of Syed Ali Shah Geelani.

Though the first cracks between the Geelani-militant combine and the Pakistan establishment surfaced soon after 9/11 with a perceptible shift in Islamabad's Kashmir policy, Pakistani authorities constantly tried to get the Geelani group and the Kashmiri militant leadership, especially Hizbul Mujahideen, to toe the Musharraf line and show

"flexibility" for a resolution of the Kashmir issue.

The Hurriyat moderates, led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, had already initiated direct talks with New Delhi and supported Musharraf's "out of the box" proposals for a solution. In fact, Pakistan managed to get almost every separatist leader in the Valley, including JKLF's Yasin Malik, on board to push forward Musharraf's suggestions in their talks with New Delhi.

Sources said that Pakistan

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Musharraf cracks down on J-K militants

made another attempt to rope in Geelani during his Hajj pilgrimage and sent its emissary to Saudi Arabia to convince him. In fact, Hizbul chief Syed Salahuddin too was asked to go and meet Geelani to remove the "last hurdle" in Musharraf's new gameplan for Kashmir.

Geelani, however, refused to join the peace camp. But what seems to have irritated the Pakistan establishment is Geelani's move to get close to Musharraf's domestic political opposition. Geelani met Nawaz Sharief and members of other political parties opposed to Musharraf's rule.

"After Geelani refused to support Musharraf's latest self-rule and demilitarization proposals and show flexibility towards New Delhi for a speedy Kashmir resolution, they (Pak establishment) are putting pressure on Hizbul Mujahideen and other Kashmir militant groups. They know this is his respiratory system," sources in the Geelani-led Hurriyat told The Indian Express. "They (Pak establishment) have stopped all support to Geelani. But we are not going to surrender," the sources said.

In fact, this wedge between Geelani-led separatists and Musharraf has had Pakistan giving tacit approval, for the first time since the emergence of militancy, to mainstream Kashmiri po-

US pressure: Lashkar
Militant groups on Monday accused the Pakistan establishment of a "U-turn on Kashmir", saying "Musharraf has defaced the Kashmir struggle with his weightless proposals". Lashkar chief Hafiz Mohammad Sayeed said: "The Pakistan government was pressurising Kashmiris to take wrong steps under US pressure. After Afghanistan, a U-turn on Kashmir will be dangerous". Statements issued by Jaish-e-Mohammad, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Al Badr and Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen criticised Musharraf's Kashmir policy.

liticians: Musharraf had a meeting with Omar Abdullah who favoured the General's demilitarization proposal and spoke of his party's autonomy agenda.

The view in Srinagar is that if Musharraf puts strict tabs on Kashmiri militant groups in Pakistan and chokes the Geelani camp, it will substantially bring down militant activities in the Valley. The Geelani-led Hurriyat has even been deliberating ways and means to indegenise their separatist campaign to make it independent of Pakistan's Kashmir policy.

Sources in the security agencies said in case funding is withdrawn from the hardliners and militant groups, the Hizbul would still be able to continue its activities for a "certain period of time".

14/3/03

তৃতীয় পক্ষ নয় কাশ্মীরে, ভোল বদল মুশারফের



নয়াদিল্লি, ৯
মার্চ: এ বার
উল্টো গাইছেন
পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট।
দীর্ঘ কাল
ধরে কাশ্মীর-
সমস্যাকে

আন্তর্জাতিক মঞ্চে টেনে নিয়ে যাওয়ার
লাগাতার প্রয়াসের পরে পারভেজ
মুশারফ এখন বলছেন, এই প্রসঙ্গটা
একেবারেই দ্বিপাক্ষিক। “আমরা
(ভারত ও পাকিস্তান) দ্বিপাক্ষিক
আলোচনা প্রক্রিয়ার মধ্যে রয়েছি।
সেটাকে ত্রিপাক্ষিক বা বহুপাক্ষিক
করতে চাই না,” বলেছেন মুশারফ।

কাশ্মীর-সমস্যার সমাধানে
আমেরিকার মতো কোনও তৃতীয় পক্ষ
মধ্যস্থতা করুক, এটাই এত কাল ধরে
বলে এসেছে ইসলামাবাদ। কিন্তু
সদ্যসমাপ্ত পাকিস্তান সফরে মার্কিন
প্রেসিডেন্ট জর্জ বুশ বলে এসেছেন,
কাশ্মীর-বিতর্কে তাঁর দেশ হস্তক্ষেপ
করতে চায় না। ভারত-পাকিস্তান
বসেই সেই সমস্যা মিটিয়ে নিক। পাক
জমিতে দাঁড়িয়ে খোদ আমেরিকার
প্রেসিডেন্টের এ হেন মনোভাবের পরে
পাকিস্তান যে অনেকটাই কোণঠাসা
হয়ে পড়েছিল, তাতে সন্দেহ নেই।
আর সেই পরিস্থিতিতেই পাক
প্রেসিডেন্টের এমন রক্ষণাত্মক মন্তব্য
বলে মনে করছে কূটনৈতিক মহল।

রাজনৈতিক মহলের বিশ্লেষণে,
কাশ্মীরকে দ্বিপাক্ষিক বিষয় বলে মেনে
নিয়ে মুশারফ এখন কাশ্মীরি
রাজনীতিতে মনমোহন সিংহের সুবিধা
করে দিলেন। মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্টের
ভারত সফরের আগে কাশ্মীর প্রসঙ্গে
ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রী যে গোল টেবিল
বৈঠক ডেকেছিলেন, হরিয়ত
কনফারেন্স তাতে যোগ দেয়নি।
কাশ্মীরের ব্যাপারে তারাই প্রকৃত
প্রতিনিধি এবং সমস্যা সমাধানে
ত্রিপাক্ষিক আলোচনাই কাম্য— এমন
দাবি এ যাবৎ করে এসেছে হরিয়ত।
এখন মুশারফ স্বয়ং দ্বিপাক্ষিক প্রসঙ্গের
কথা বলায় হরিয়তেরও অস্বস্তি বাড়বে
এবং হাত শক্ত হবে মনমোহনের।
ভারতীয় বিদেশ মন্ত্রক প্রত্যাশিত
ভাবেই মুশারফের এই বক্তব্যকে
স্বাগত জানিয়েছে।

পাকিস্তানের ভিন্ন সুর শুধু নয়, দুই
প্রতিবেশী দেশের শান্তি-প্রক্রিয়ায়
উৎসাহী হওয়ার মতো আরও ঘটনা
ঘটেছে। রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের ‘স্পোর্ট ফর
ডেভেলপমেন্ট অ্যান্ড পিস’ সংক্রান্ত
মুখপাত্র নির্বাচন করা হয়েছে রাহুল
দ্রাবিড় ও ইনজামাম-উল-হককে।
রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের সংশ্লিষ্ট দফতরের অধিকর্তা
জানিয়েছেন, কাগিল-পরবর্তী তিজুতা
ভুলিয়ে ভারত-পাক সম্পর্কে হৃদয়তার
নতুন বাতাবরণ গড়ায় ক্রিকেটের
ভূমিকা মাথায় রেখেই দুই
অধিনায়ককে শান্তি-দূত বাছা হল।

ইসলামাবাদে জর্জ বুশের
সাম্প্রতিক মন্তব্য সম্পর্কে ভারতের
একটি বেসরকারি চ্যানেলকে মুশারফ
বলেছেন, “বুশ শুধু উৎসাহ দিতে
পারেন বা মধ্যস্থতা করতে পারেন।
আমার কাছে দু’টোর একই মানে।”

এর পর ছয়ের পাতায়

ভোল বদল মুশারফের

প্রথম পাতার পর

তৃতীয় কোনও পক্ষের মধ্যস্থতা যে
তিনি জরুরি মনে করছেন না, স্পষ্ট
ভাবেই সেটা বলে দিয়েছেন মুশারফ।
মার্চ মাসের শেষের দিকেই ভারত-পাক
সচিব পর্যায়ে শান্তি-আলোচনা ফের
শুরু হচ্ছে। তার আগে দিল্লির মনোবল
এর ফলে অনেকটাই বেড়ে গেল বলে
মনে করা হচ্ছে।

কাশ্মীর-প্রশ্নে অন্য কথা বললেও
চেনা কথা বলতে কিন্তু একেবারে
ভোলেননি মুশারফ। যেমন বলেছেন,
“আস্বাবর্ধক ব্যবস্থাই যথেষ্ট নয়। দ্বন্দ্ব
মেটানোর প্রক্রিয়াটা ভাল চলছে না।”

10 MAR 2001

10 MAR 2001

ANALYST'S OFFICE

No mention of Kashmir in joint statement

B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan-United States joint statement issued on Saturday avoids any reference to Kashmir but says that both sides support the resolution of disputes in the region.

When a correspondent sought to know from Pakistan Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri as to why Kashmir did not even figure in it, he said U.S. President George Bush referred to the issue at his joint press stakeout with President Pervez Musharraf.

"There were so many subjects which figured in the course of the discussions but do not find a mention in the joint statement. The statement does talk about the need for resolution of disputes in South Asia," Mr. Kasuri said.

On the India-Pakistan peace process, the joint statement said, "Mr. Bush and Gen. Musharraf support the peace process and composite dialogue between Pakistan and India for improvement of relations and resolution of disputes and building a better future in South Asia."

In his remarks at a press conference, Mr. Bush said, "Pakistan and India now have an historic opportunity to work towards lasting peace. President Musharraf and [Indian] Prime Minister [Manmohan] Singh have shown themselves to be leaders of courage and vision..."

05 MAR 2006

THE HINDU

For Hurriyat leaders, focus is now on Pugwash meet

98-2
4/3

9.88 3.87

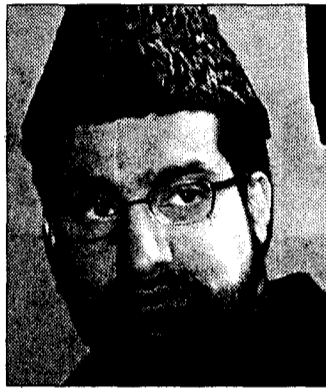
RIYAZ WANI

SRINAGAR, MARCH 3

EVEN as US President George W Bush's Indo-Pak visit continues, the discourse in Kashmir is fast shifting to the March 10-12 Pugwash Conference in Islamabad. And all the J&K separatists, including the Hurriyat doves, who had declined to participate in the PM's February 17 Kashmir roundtable, are raring to go.

At the forefront is Hurriyat hawk Syed Ali Shah Geelani, who had last year refused to travel to that country to signal his resentment against President Pervez Musharraf's "soft policies" on Kashmir. Geelani has already applied for the travel documents, even though his recent passport on which he travelled to Saudi Arabia was only Haj pilgrimage-specific.

Mainstream leaders, with whom separatists refused to sit in the recent conference with PM, are also wanting to attend the conference. The President of the National Conference, Omer Abdullah, is visiting the country to present his autonomy proposals in his scheduled meet with Pakistan President Pervez Mushar-



Mirwaiz may not make it to Islamabad due to a fractured leg

raf on the sidelines of the Conference. He will be the first NC leader going formally on a visit to the country after 1964, when his grandfather Shiekh Abdullah visited Pakistan. Besides, there will be Iftikhar Hussain Ansari from People's Democratic Party, J-K Revenue Minister Hakim Yaseen and Panthers Party leader Bhim Singh, besides some academicians and newspaper editors.

What has set the stage for the Conference is the visit to the Valley of a Pugwash delegation led by its Secretary General, Paulo Cotta-Ramusino. They have met all major separatist leaders, in-

cluding Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Syed Ali Shah Geelani, Shabir Shah and Yaseen Malik. Besides, meetings have also been held with many in the mainstream, including Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad.

If all are permitted to go, the Conference will be the first ever major get-together of the J-K leaders, stretching from mainstream to separatist extreme. And lending it further significance will be the backdrop of the ongoing Bush visit and the increased engagement over Kashmir between India and Pakistan. In the last Conference in Nepal in November 2004, leaders like Geelani, Malik and Shah did not attend. Similarly, there were no leaders of significance from J-K mainstream politics.

However, Hurriyat Chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, will not be going because of a leg fracture. He will be represented by former Hurriyat Chairman Prof Abdul Gani Bhat, who has been in Pakistan since the last Hurriyat visit to that country.

After the fiasco of PM's round-table, the Conference could provide an opportunity for a broader trilateral Kashmir dialogue between Indians, Pakista-

nis and Kashmiris. Besides, there will also be scope for a good intra-Kashmir engagement between mainstream and separatist leaders from the state. And as against last time in Nepal, this time, the setting will be Islamabad, the claimant country on Kashmir.

Although, permission to visit Pakistan is still to come for separatist leaders, some of whom like Geelani and Shah don't have passports. It is anticipated that this time, New Delhi might facilitate the visit. More so, in the wake of Bush's visit and also in the hope of getting the separatist leadership to participate in the next roundtable in Srinagar in May. The previous Pugwash Conference in Nepal also makes for a good precedent for the Islamabad follow-up. Nepal was a huge success with participants, otherwise bitterly antagonistic, agreeing on a consensus solution for Kashmir. The press release issued at the end of the Conference had underlined a vision that: "Jammu and Kashmir need not forever represent a chasm dividing India and Pakistan, but could potentially be a bridge between these two great countries."

স্বশাসন বা স্বায়ত্তশাসনের পথে সমাধান খুঁজছে কেন্দ্র

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা, নয়াদিল্লি, ২৫ ফেব্রুয়ারি: স্বায়ত্তশাসন না স্বশাসন— কোন ব্যবস্থা প্রয়োগ করে কাশ্মীর সমস্যার সমাধান করা যায়, তা নিয়ে ঐকমত্যে পৌঁছানোর চেষ্টা করছে কেন্দ্র। জম্মু-কাশ্মীর-লাদাখ এলাকার বিভিন্ন স্তরের প্রতিনিধিদের নিয়ে প্রথম গোল টেবিল বৈঠকে আজ এ বিষয়ের উপরেই জোর দিয়েছেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ। একই

সঙ্গে লঘু অপরাধে আটক ব্যক্তিদের মার্চের মধ্যে ছেড়ে দেওয়ার নির্দেশ দিয়েছেন তিনি। বিভিন্ন রাজনৈতিক দল, স্থানীয় সম্প্রদায়, শিক্ষাবিদ, সাংবাদিক, স্বৈচ্ছাসেবী সংস্থার প্রতিনিধি মিলিয়ে প্রায় ষাট জন আজকের বৈঠকে হাজির ছিলেন। সেখানে পিডিপি স্বশাসনের কথা বলে, আর ন্যাশনাল কনফারেন্স

জানায়, স্বায়ত্তশাসনের মাধ্যমেই কাশ্মীর সমস্যার সমাধান সম্ভব। স্বায়ত্তশাসন হলে কাশ্মীরে ১৯৫৩-র আগের অবস্থানে ফিরে যেতে হবে। সে ক্ষেত্রে রাজ্যের নিজস্ব নির্বাচন কমিশন, হাইকোর্টকে সর্বোচ্চ ক্ষমতা দেওয়া, কেন্দ্র দ্বারা রাজ্যপাল নিয়োগ না করা, মুখ্যমন্ত্রীকে উজির-এ-আজম বলার প্রথা চালু হবে। যোগাযোগ, প্রতিরক্ষা ও বিদেশ সংক্রান্ত বিষয় ছাড়া বাকি সব

কিছুই রাজ্য নিয়ন্ত্রণ করবে।

স্বশাসনের ক্ষেত্রে বিষয়গুলি মোটামুটি এক হলেও প্রক্রিয়াগত কিছু ফারাক রয়েছে। পিডিপি এটিকে আরও একধাপ এগিয়ে সংবিধানের ৩৭০ ধারায় 'সেফ-রুল' কার্যকর করতে চায়। সম্প্রতি জন্মতে তাদের রাজনৈতিক প্রস্তাবেও বিষয়টি পাশ করিয়েছে পিডিপি।

প্রধানমন্ত্রী নিজে

আলোচনার ভিত্তিতে জন্ম-কাশ্মীরকে আরও ক্ষমতা দিতে চান। বৈঠকের শেষে তিনি জানান, "আজকের আলোচনায় স্বায়ত্তশাসন ও স্বশাসনের ব্যাপারে নানা ধরনের মতামত এসেছে। এর মধ্য থেকে একটি ঐকমত্য খুঁজতে হবে। আমার বিশ্বাস মূলশ্রোতের অন্তর্গত ও বাইরে থাকা সকলের সঙ্গে কথা বলে সংবিধানের চৌহদ্দির মধ্যেই একটা জায়গায় পৌঁছানো যাবে।"

হরিয়ত কনফারেন্স, জেকেএলএফের মতো সংগঠন এ দিনের বৈঠক বয়কট করে। হরিয়ত মনে করে, তারাই কাশ্মীরের যথার্থ প্রতিনিধি। তাই শুধু তাদের সঙ্গেই আলোচনা করা হোক। কিন্তু মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট জর্জ বুশের ভারত সফরের আগে কেন্দ্র তার মনোভাব স্পষ্ট করে জানিয়ে দিল, হরিয়তের সঙ্গে আলোচনা করার

এর পর ছয়ের পাতায়

কাশ্মীর গোল টেবিল



Already acting on Kashmir: Bush

To urge India and Pakistan to resolve the issue

B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD: U.S. President George W. Bush has said that he has already begun to "play a role" in the resolution of the Kashmir issue with his speech to the Asia Society two days ago. He said he would use his trip to the sub-continent to urge the leadership of India and Pakistan to resolve the issue.

"Well, I started to play a role in my speech, and I spoke out on the issue and encouraged the President and the Prime Minister of India to continue down the road of solving the issue with a solution that's acceptable to all sides. And that's very important," Mr. Bush told state-run *Pakistan Television* in an interview in Washington on Saturday.

Mr. Bush also said without elaboration that there's a temptation sometimes for countries to try to jump in the middle of dialogue.

He maintained that a lasting solution (to Kashmir) could be achieved and he had seen the progress that had been made in the relationship from when he first became President.

"You might remember an early time in my Presidency, there was real tension. And now, all of a sudden, there are some very encouraging signs — transportation exchanges — not just transportation exchanges — new transportation opportunities, trade. In my discussions with both the President and the

• All of a sudden there are some very encouraging signs

• U.S., Islamabad share a mutual interest: tackling terrorism

Prime Minister, there appears to be a different attitude. And part of it has to do with trust, but there's got to be tangible progress. I recognise that. And so I will use my trip to urge the leadership to continue solving this issue, with the idea that it can be solved," the President said in response to a question on whether the U.S. was ready to play a role in the resolution of the Kashmir issue.

Strategy

On Washington's strategy to help Pakistan tackle terrorism, he said his government was working in close coordination with Islamabad as it shared a mutual interest. "Nobody should want foreign fighters in their soil wreaking havoc. And it is hard for a part of a country to develop if there are people in that part of the country that are willing to kill innocent life to achieve an objective. And so we share short-term objectives with the Pakistani government. We also share the long-term objective, and that is — that's freedom," he said.

Terming his trip to Pakistan as important goodwill visit, Mr.

Bush referred to Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf as his "buddy" and said they both have got a good relationship as they speak frankly with each other.

Difficult job

Mr. Bush said Gen. Musharraf had got a difficult job — made really difficult by the fact that people have tried to kill him. "As you know — extremists have decided that he is an obstacle to their vision and, therefore, have tried to kill him. And so he is not only a man who has shown great courage in the face of adversity, but he does have a vision of how to work together to achieve common objectives," he said.

Asked about long-term involvement of the U.S. with Pakistan, Mr. Bush conceded that he understood people questioning the motives of Washington.

"And this will give me a chance to speak to the people of Pakistan and say, look, we care for you, and remind people that in our country there're great Pakistani Americans. We are a rich society because we have got people from around the world, including people who were born and raised in Pakistan and have now chosen America as a home," he quipped.

Answering a question on what he had to offer to Pakistan, Mr. Bush said the two countries would look forward to increase trade opportunities and he would be talking about a bilateral investment treaty during his visit.

40-8
24/2
24

26 APR 2006

THE HINDU

PM seeks peace partners

J-K: Autonomy and self-rule can be reached within the 'vast flexibilities' of the Constitution

ENS & PTI

NEW DELHI | FEBRUARY 25

THE first ever roundtable conference on J-K today asserted that violence had no place in civilised society and that all concerned should uphold basic human rights as PM Manmohan Singh expressed the confidence that a common understanding on autonomy and self-rule could be reached within the "vast flexibilities" of the Constitution.

As a follow up of the process that began today, attended by leaders of various political parties, NGOs and intellectuals from J-K and Ladakh—but boycotted by separatist groups including the Hurriyat Conference—it was decided that the second roundtable conference would be held in Srinagar in the second half of May.

As the seven-hour meeting began, veteran CPI(M) leader



Separatist leader Hashim Qureshi after the meeting

M Y Tarigami demanded a two-minute silence in memory of the four youths, killed this week in Handwara in army firing. While all present observed the ritual, the PM in his remarks later affirmed the government's commitment to respect human rights.

"Every effort will be made that in dealing with terrorism and militancy, no innocent person should suffer," he said. "Whenever, there is any violation of human rights, there must be transparent mecha-

nism to fix responsibility and to punish those found guilty."

He also asked Home Minister Shivraj Patil to form a high-level group of officials to examine current cases of detention and release all detainees not facing serious charges by the end of next month.

Commenting on the variety of views expressed on the issue of autonomy and self-rule, Singh said he was aware that the people of Leh and Kargil may have different ideas about the future from

those living in Srinagar.

"But that is the real strength of democracy, which celebrates differences and does not smother them," he stressed. "I am confident that working together with all groups, both within and outside the mainstream, we can arrive at arrangements with the vast flexibilities provided by the Constitution—arrangements which provide real empowerment and comprehensive security to all people of J-K."

Noting the absence of certain groups, Singh said this was a long term process and he was sure they would participate in the future.

The PM said an important issue was the problem of people, particularly the Kashmiri Pandits, who have been displaced from their homes in the past. "We need to create a conducive environment for their return and rehabilitation and the onus is on all of us here to do so," he said.

100
INL
P-100

Life disrupted in strike-bound Kashmir Valley for second day

Dialogue cannot continue if rights violation continues: Hurriyat

Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR: Life in Kashmir remained disrupted for the second consecutive day on Saturday, following a general strike called by the hardline faction of the Hurriyat Conference to protest against the killing of civilians in the Handwara and Bandipora areas and the holding of a roundtable conference on Kashmir.

The separatist outfit Dukhtaran-e-Millat (Daughters of Faith) extended its support to the strike call.

Streets here were deserted, with most shops, business establishments, banks, semi-government establishments and courts remaining closed and vehicles keeping off the roads.

The response was near-total in the other major towns in the Valley.

The border district of Kupwara observed a complete shutdown for the fourth day, following the killing of four youths allegedly by Army personnel on Wednesday.

Army spokesmen, however, denied the charge, claiming that the casualties occurred in a gunfight between militants and the security forces.

Meanwhile, an undeclared curfew was lifted in Handwara district, where the situation is improving.

Kashmir Divisional Commis-



SHUT DOWN: THE deserted streets of Srinagar on Saturday. A general strike was called by some groups protesting against the killing of four youths in the Valley recently. - PHOTO: AFP

sioner Basharat Ahmed Dhar, Inspector-General of Police K. Rajendra and General Officer Commanding, Kilo Force, Major General N K Singh visited Dhudipora and distributed an ex gratia relief of Rs 3 lakh each to the families of the civilian victims. They also handed over appointment letters to the kin.

Mr. Dhar said, "The situation

is limping back to normal."

Major General Singh said the "killings were an aberration and unfortunate." The Army paid Rs. 2 lakh and the State Government Rs. 1 lakh towards compensation for each victim.

Army officer replaced

Mr. Rajendra said a special recruitment drive would soon be

held in the village. The Army also responded to the villagers' demand to replace Captain Sushant, who they alleged was behind the killings.

The Army, the Superintendent of Police and the Assistant Commissioner of Kupwara have launched three separate probes into the incident.

Dubbing the roundtable con-

- Total shutdown in Kupwara for fourth day
- Handwara limping back to normal
- Special recruitment soon at Dhudipora

ference, convened by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh a futile exercise, the Hurriyat in a press statement said: "It's India's attempt to show to the world community, especially to U.S. President George Bush, that we're talking to Kashmiri leaders."

The moderate faction of the Hurriyat Conference sent a message to Delhi, saying talks could not continue if human rights violations continued unabated in Kashmir.

The former Hurriyat chairman, Moulana Abbas Ansari, blamed the Centre for "not fulfilling its promise" of releasing detainees, stopping human rights violations and changing the situation on the ground.

The Shia cleric told this correspondent that during a meeting on September 5 last Dr. Singh assured the Hurriyat leaders of a positive change.

"This is the change they talk of. Innocents are being killed."

26 5-7 2006

THE HINDU

Second round table in Srinagar; high-level committee for detenus

Mannohan: It is a "dialogue" where "no one preaches and no one just listens..."

Vinay Kumar

NEW DELHI: Recognising that the journey to find a consensual solution to the problem of Jammu and Kashmir is long requiring patience, fortitude and involvement of the people of the State, the first-ever round table conference hoped that those who chose to stay away from Saturday's conference would participate in future meetings.

At the end of seven-hour-long deliberations, presided over by Prime Minister Mannohan Singh, attended by a broad spectrum of political groups and representatives of civil society from the State, participants suggested that a second round table conference be convened soon and it was accepted by Prime Minister who announced that it may be

held in the second week of May in Srinagar.

Dr. Singh asked Home Minister Shivraj Patil to form a high-level group of officials to examine all current cases of detention and see if it was possible to release all detenus against whom there are no serious cases. "This should be done before the end of March. I am sure, this will go a long way in assuaging the feelings of the people [in the State]," he said in his closing remarks.

"It was agreed that the views expressed during the conference should contribute to taking forward the resolution process and that the Government will continue its efforts to engage various sections and groups across the entire political spectrum and civil society," a brief statement adopted at the end of the confer-

ence said. It reaffirmed that violence has no place in a civilised society and that all concerned should uphold basic human rights.

Among others, the conference was attended by the State Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, People's Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mehbooba Mufti, the former Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, Union Minister Resources Minister Saifuddin Soz, National Conference president Omar Abdullah, CPI (M) leader Yusuf Tarigami, Dr. Karan Singh, Rajya Sabha member, and representatives of Panun Kashmir, Kashmiri Samaj and leaders from Jammu and Ladakh regions.

The separatist conglomerate Hurriyat Conference, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front

any violation of human rights there must be transparent mechanisms to fix responsibility and to punish those found guilty," he said.

Taking note of a variety of views on the issue of autonomy and self-rule, Prime Minister recognised that there were many differing views and perception on the issue. "There is a need to evolve a common understanding on autonomy and self-rule for Jammu and Kashmir and I am confident that working together with all groups, both within and outside the mainstream, we can arrive at arrangements within the vast flexibilities provided by the Constitution, arrangements which provide real empowerment and comprehensive security to all people of the State."

(JKLF) chief Yasin Malik and People's Conference leader Sajjad Lone who have had individual meetings with the Prime Minister stayed away. There was a broad consensus that the peace process with Pakistan should be carried forward laying particular emphasis on people-to-people contacts and opening up trade between the two parts of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state, Prime Minister noted in his remarks.

In a veiled reference to the killing of four civilians in Army firing in Kupwara district, Prime Minister reaffirmed his Government's commitment to respect the human rights of all people. "Every effort will be made that in dealing with terrorism and militancy, no innocent persons should suffer. Whenever there is

Dr. Singh 1991 ✓
M ✓

THE HINDU

J&K protests youth killings

By M Saleem Pandit/TNN



Residents hit the Srinagar streets on Thursday against the killing of four youths allegedly by the army in Handwara on Wednesday

Srinagar: Massive protests erupted all across the Valley as hundreds of villagers gathered on Thursday to vent out their anger over the killing of three young boys, including a nine-year-old, in an army firing at Doodipora village in J&K's Handwara sector on Wednesday.

While CM Ghulam Nabi Azad ordered a magisterial inquiry into the incident, the J&K police have registered a case of murder against the troops of Rashtriya Rifles 33 Bn, involved in the shootout.

According to Doodipora residents, soldiers of RR 33 Bn indiscriminately fired towards a group of youths playing cricket in a field across Mawar Nallah. They were targeting a suspected youth who had fled from the search operation. Denying the allegations, the army said terrorists targeted the boys.

Kupwara deputy commissioner Abdul Majid Khandey said the villagers, who were not allowing the bodies to be buried, did so only after the government assured action and announced ex-gratia.

Among those killed was 19-year-old Ghulam Hassan Bhat who had passed his class XII examination only a few days earlier. Two other boys, Shakil Ahmed Wani, 10, and Aamir Ahmed Hajjam, 9, also succumbed to their injuries. In addition, 23-year-old Abdus Mir, who police said was a known Lashkar activist, was also killed. He had been arrested and released several times in the past.

Chairman of the breakaway Hurriyat Conference Syed Ali Shah Geelani was put under house arrest while J&K Liberation Front chief Mohammad Yaseen Malik and about a dozen others were taken into preventive custody.

2011-11-11 0006

THE HINDU

Round table talks agendaless: Farooq

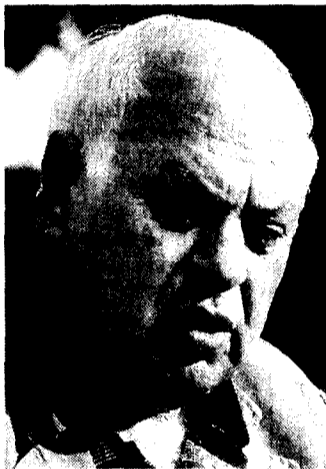
No groundwork done or agenda fixed for talks

Shuja'at Bukhari

SRINAGAR: Visibly upset over the "timing" and "handling" of the February 25 round table conference on Kashmir, former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah on Tuesday said he was disappointed and felt sad with regard to the "agendaless conference" convened by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

"It is unfortunate and I feel sad the way it is being handled. The round table conference would have been a very good move provided there was some ground work done," Dr. Abdullah said at a news conference here. "What is the ground work done before such a conference, what is the agenda and so far no papers have been distributed," he said.

Expressing inability to attend the conference due to "personal engagements," he said that the National Conference president



Farooq Abdullah

Omar Abdullah would be attending.

To a question he said, "I am not going in my individual capacity, and let me tell you that Omar Abdullah is the party president." He parried questions on New Delhi's sincerity towards the Kashmir issue but said, "I

cannot jump to the question of sincerity."

Autonomy to be considered

Referring to his and Omar Abdullah's meeting with Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil, he said that the latter had told them that the proposal of autonomy will be considered. Mr Patil, he said, even asked them to suggest names for a high level committee.

But nothing has moved forward even after our president reminded him repeatedly, he said. Dr. Abdullah said that autonomy was within the Constitution and "we do not know anything about General Musharraf's proposal on demilitarisation and self rule."

Earlier Dr. Abdullah released a booklet of comparative study on the functioning of the Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board and the Muslim Auqaf Trust (MAT). The MAT was taken over by the Mufti Mohammad Sayeed led coalition government in 2003 from the National Conference.

The former chief minister accused Mr. Sayeed of doing everything to belittle NC's founder Sheikh Abdullah's legacy. "The MAT had been mishandled and mismanaged by the Mufti regime to the hilt and we have solid proof regarding this," he said.

He said he would soon hand-over the booklet, which is a white paper, to Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad and urge him to intervene and save the institution.

'Declare J&K free trade zone'

Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR: People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti has called for declaring Jammu and Kashmir a 'free trade zone' so that the State could achieve self-sufficiency, which was imperative for long lasting and dignified peace.

At a party convention in Budgam, Ms. Mufti said the "self-rule concept" could address balanced development and political stabilisation in all the three regions of the State. Consensus on the 'self-rule concept' should be evolved not only in Kashmir, but also in the entire subcontinent, she asserted.

2006

THE HINDU

Now Hurriyat too declines PM invite for talks

ROUND TABLE ■ No point joining those who do not consider Kashmir disputed, says the Mirwaiz

RIYAZ WANI
SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 20

TURNING down Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's invitation for a round table on Kashmir in New Delhi on February 25, the moderate faction of the Hurriyat, led by Mirwaiz Umer Farooq, today said they would not participate in any dialogue attended by "people who do not consider Kashmir disputed".

The Hurriyat decision to stay away from the conference was announced after a three-hour meeting the of its execu-

tive and general councils. Mirwaiz Farooq, who described the idea of talks as "prematire", said: "India, Pakistan and Kashmiris are still far from arriving at a consensus on the resolution of the Kashmir dispute which would make a joint conference necessary."

Moreover, for the success of such endeavours in future, it was necessary that Pakistan and leaders from Pak-Occupied Kashmir be present at the table as well, he said.

"Hurriyat does not oppose India talking to other sepa-

ratists. But if New Delhi is pursuing a dialogue to resolve Kashmir, it should not involve people who do not challenge India's jurisdiction over the state."

His opposition to the roundtable, Mirwaiz added, stemmed from the "poor results" of the Hurriyat's engagement with the Centre.

In their second round of talks, the Hurriyat, he said, was to present some suggestions which the Prime Minister had agreed to consider.

"But instead of carrying forward an established dialogue,



'Still far from consensus'

India has invited us as part of a joint conference. Hurriyat believes such a conference will not only harm the process but will also create confusion".

He said in their last meeting with the PM, the Hurriyat was assured that the Centre would take steps to bring a perceptible change in the ground situation in the Valley. "Despite the two-year long talks, which Hurriyat undertook in face of a hostile domestic political situation in the Valley, New Delhi has not acted upon any of its promises," he said.

With the Hurriyat refusal to participate, almost the entire separatist block in the Valley has shown themselves to be against the round table on Kashmir.

Build trust, Yasin tells PM

Talks focused on self-governance & demilitarization in J&K

ARUN Joshi
Jammu, February 17

JKLF CHAIRMAN Mohammad Yasin Malik has asked Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to invest in building trust and not in military strength in Jammu and Kashmir before chalking out a roadmap for resolving the vexed Kashmir issue.

"That is the key to the entire thing", Yasin told the Prime Minister during his meeting with him late on Friday evening. The deliberations focused on various Kashmir solutions on offer in the media and diplomatic circles — self-rule and demilitarization.

Union home minister Shivraj Patil, home secretary Vinod Duggal, and the director, Intelligence Bureau, were also present at the meeting.

Yasin Malik, one of the leading architects of the armed secessionist movement in Kashmir Valley in the late-1980s, reportedly received a compliment from Prime Minister for having

shifted his faith from violence to the dialogue process.

Throughout an hour-long meeting, according to sources, Yasin did more of the talking and narrated

his experiences of the two visits to Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, and the desire within the Valley for a negotiated settlement of the Kashmir issue. But, the solutions could not be worked out without involving the people, and any exercise without them would inevitably fail, he said voicing his fears.

The sources added that Yasin emphasised that the dialogue process could generate hope only when something transforms on the ground and noted with deep concern that had not happened so far.

It was the Prime Minister's third meeting with Kashmiri separatist leaders since September 5 last year, when he had met a delegation of the moderate Hurriyat Conference and held discussions on the possible roadmaps on Kashmir, and the second meeting was with the People's Conference chairman, Sajjad Lone, and his team on January 14 this year.

Sources said these meetings had given the Prime Minister a fair idea of the various separatist outfits. The hardline view of Syed Ali Shah Geelani is well known through the media and his articulations.



Yasin Malik with Manmohan Singh in New Delhi on Friday.

AP

KASHMIR ISSUE

Roundtable conference postponed

THE ROUNDTABLE conference on Kashmir convened by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to broadbase the dialogue process in the state has been postponed by a day to February 25.

There was no official word on the reason for postponement of the meeting but informed sources said the delay was aimed at giving separatist groups time to make up their minds to attend the meeting.

Pro-Pakistan Jamaat leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani has already spurned the Centre's offer for talks while there has been no positive sign from the Hurriyat's moderate faction so far.

A Hurriyat spokesman said Geelani was contacted on Thursday evening by a Union home

ministry official for the February 24 conference in New Delhi, but the invitation was declined.

Geelani told the official that the ongoing peace process between India and Pakistan and talks between the Centre and some Kashmiri leaders have not brought about any change in the ground situation, the spokesman told reporters.

"This makes us believe that such exercises are fruitless. We are not participating in this exercise", he said, according to the spokesman.

Geelani said New Delhi is "yet to exhibit any flexibility over Kashmir, especially by not revoking the 1995 resolution passed by Parliament stating that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India".

PTI, Srinagar

Counter-terrorism forces in Kashmir not reduced

AD 1
10/2

Rashtriya Rifles replaces troops sent to northeast

Praveen Swami

SRINAGAR: Despite an official announcement that some 5,000 soldiers have been pulled out of Jammu and Kashmir, there has been no reduction in the number of troops committed to counter-terrorism duties, highly placed sources have told *The Hindu*.

On Monday, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee and Chief of the Army Staff J.J. Singh told journalists that a brigade-sized formation had been relocated from Jammu and Kashmir to the northeast.

However, *The Hindu* has found that new Rashtriya Rifles battalions were moved into the State prior to this withdrawal, ensuring that there is no degradation of forces available for counter-terrorism operations.

Line of Control

Most of the troop cut announced on Monday was made up of the 73 Mountain Brigade, which had been moved in the midst of the Kargil war to Nariyan, near the Line of Control at Naushera in Rajouri district.

Troops from this brigade subsequently undertook counter-terrorism duties in the fraught Thana Mandi and Kandi belt, and were also moved north to Pahalgam in 2000 to protect the Amarnath Yatra.

The sources said the 73 Mountain Brigade had over a month ago completed relocating to its home position in Manipur, where it serves as part of the

● **Brigade completed relocation a month ago**

● **Rashtriya Rifles holds out no offensive threat**

● **Announcement a foreign policy imperative**

Kalimpong-based 27 Infantry Division. The last elements of the brigade left Nariyan three weeks ago, after handing over charge of their headquarters infrastructure to the Romeo Force, the Rashtriya Rifles counter-terrorism formation responsible for Rajouri and Poonch.

New battalions

In place of the 73 Mountain Brigade, the Army pumped in two new Rashtriya Rifles battalions, which are now working under the command of the Romeo Force in the Thana Mandi-Kandi area. Unlike a typical infantry battalion, which is made up of four companies of 125 men each, Rashtriya Rifles battalions have six companies. As such, simple arithmetic makes clear that there has been no reduction in the force levels in Rajouri.

However, Rashtriya Rifles battalions more closely resemble their counterparts in paramilitary organisations such as the Border Security Force than a conventional military formation. Paid for by the Union Home Ministry, the Rashtriya Rifles battalions operate without organic components of re-

sources such as artillery. Committed to and organised for policing, these battalions hold out no offensive threat to Pakistani forces.

Analysts believe that the troop reduction announcement was dictated by foreign policy imperatives. In recent months, Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf has repeatedly called for demilitarisation of Jammu and Kashmir.

The United States wanted India to make at least a token concession to its ally, who is under growing assault from regional groups, Islamists and hawks within the Pakistan Army itself.

Strategists not happy

However, Indian military strategists were less than happy at the idea of force cut. Just last month, Gen. Singh noted that that cross-border "infiltration continues unabated."

In 1999, the forced removal of 56 battalions from counter-terrorism duties had resulted in a significant escalation in terrorist violence, as had the decision of the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, to terminate offensive operations in 2000-2001.

10 FEB 2006

THE HINDU

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2006

Challenges before new regime

9/8
Karnataka
22
10-10
10/2

W

inning is not everything. Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy easily won, by 138 votes to 64, the confidence motion in the Karnataka Assembly. He also began his innings with some panache. He seems to have consolidated his position in the Janata Dal (Secular), winning over to his side senior leaders such as former Deputy Chief Minister M.P. Prakash and three ex-Ministers, D. Manjunath, Merajuddin Patel, and Mahadeva Prasad. P.G.R. Sindhia, who voted against the motion, remains the lone heavyweight among those opposing him within the JD(S) legislature party. However, the vote in favour of the new Government can do little to overcome the instability inherent in the marriage of convenience between the Kumaraswamy faction of the JD(S) and the Bharatiya Janata Party. While the direction to the JD(S) MLAs to vote according to their conscience deferred a formal split, Mr. Kumaraswamy will have to face up to the irreconcilable differences with the national leadership of the party, which is against any tie-up with the BJP. His father, former Prime Minister and senior leader of the JD(S), Deve Gowda, cannot afford to vacillate any longer on the practical matter of taking action against those who have cast their lot with the BJP. The longer the delay, the greater will be the damage to the party's already diminished stock. After the vote of confidence, there can be no excuse for Mr. Gowda continuing with his soft persuasive skills and not wielding the axe against the rebels.

Any action by the JD(S) high command may not have immediate implications for the survival of the new coalition. With the Speaker, Krishna, recognising Mr. Kumaraswamy as the leader of the JD(S) legislature party, there is no imminent threat of disqualification of those who have voted for the confidence motion. But if Mr. Gowda gets earnest about reviving the JD(S) as a secular formation in Karnataka and treating the Kumaraswamy group as an adversary, there could be trouble. If, for some reason, the father goes back on his commitment, the son could face a renewed threat from the All India Progressive Janata Dal, an anti-BJP and pro-Congress breakaway group led by S. Siddaramaiah. Further, the new regime is at the mercy of the BJP, which can pull the plug on it any time. Chief Minister Kumaraswamy seems to be in the same vulnerable position as Prime Ministers Charan Singh and Chandra Shekhar were with the Congress supporting them. Irrespective of the Speaker's decision, Mr. Kumaraswamy cannot remain in the JD(S) and head a coalition government with the BJP. For the first time, the saffron party has come to power in a southern State. It cannot be unaware that marriages of convenience are, more often than not, undone in a popular vote. However, the new coalition Government starts off with one advantage: the standards of governance set by the predecessor regime were so low that the successor will not face the pressure of high expectations.

10 FEB 2006

THE HINDU

Marathon debate in Assembly as Kumaraswamy seeks trust vote

Tell me why I have been punished, says the former Chief Minister, Dharam Singh

A. Jayaram

Karnataka
BANGALORE: The Karnataka Legislative Assembly on Wednesday went through the motions of a debate on the confidence enjoyed by the five-day-old Bharatiya Janata Party-Janata Dal (Secular) Government led by H.D. Kumaraswamy without any sign of its survival being under threat.

The final word on the majority enjoyed by the Government had not come even at 10.15 p.m. (at the time of going to press) and the marathon debate, largely academic in nature, indicated that the motion of confidence moved by Mr. Kumaraswamy would be adopted later in the night.

The atmosphere in the House was free from the type of tension witnessed on January 27, the day the Dharam Singh Government could not obtain the vote of confidence as directed by the Governor T.N. Chaturvedi. Speaker Krishna had on that occasion adjourned the House *sine die* without putting the motion of confidence to vote.

What the House witnessed on Wednesday was a parliamentary debate of a high order and most of the members, especially the previous Chief Minister, N. Dharam Singh, seemed to be stating what they had intended to state on January 27. There was never a dull moment as members sparred and exchanged repartees. While the BJP had issued a whip to its members, the JD(S) had not done so. This enabled those of its members such as the former Deputy Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah, to speak their mind. The Chief Minister was banking on a conscience vote by his party members.

The reversal in the fortunes of the Congress in the last few days was illustrated by Mr. Dharam Singh taking his seat as the Leader of the Opposition. The Speaker recognised him as the Leader



WORKING TOGETHER: Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy (right), and Deputy Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa confer in the Karnataka Assembly on Wednesday during the debate on the motion of confidence. — PHOTO: K. GOPINATHAN

of the Opposition as also the leader of the Congress Legislature Party. It is for the second time that a Chief Minister is becoming the Leader of the Opposition in the State immediately after stepping down. D. Devaraj Urs did so in January 1980.

The debate brought to the fore the deep divisions in the JD(S), which is today in three pieces with the dominant group which has joined the Government and led by Mr. Kumaraswamy; what outside the House is denoted as the All India Progressive Janata Dal led by Sidda-

ramaiah and the one that remains loyal to H.D. Deve Gowda.

Choosing brevity while moving the motion of confidence, the Chief Minister referred to his own transition from a visitor viewing the proceedings from the gallery to one occupying the Chief Minister's chair.

The new Leader of the Opposition termed the BJP-JD(S) alliance as an unholy one. He went on to say emotionally: "I think the manner in which I have been removed is wrong, unjust. It has hurt me deeply. I request the

Chief Minister and the Deputy Chief Minister to tell me why I've been punished." He accused the BJP of being power-hungry and opportunistic. He expressed satisfaction over the record of his Government in the brief period it was in office.

In an interesting development, the former Deputy Chief Minister, M.P. Prakash, who has been replaced by Mr. Kumaraswamy as leader of the JD(S) Legislature Party, said he would support the motion of confidence and accept the *fait accompli* of Mr. Kumaraswamy's

being recognised as the leader in his place, and his becoming the Chief Minister. However, the former Minister, P.G.R. Sindhia, said he would never accept Mr. Kumaraswamy as leader.

On his part, Mr. Siddaramaiah took the position that only a duly elected leader could issue a whip. The 224-member Assembly has 79 BJP MLAs and 46 of the original 59-member JD(S) group supporting the Government, aided by the five-member JD(U) and at least four Independents. The Congress has 64 members.

JD(S), BJP form coalition Government in Karnataka

Kumaraswamy sworn in Chief Minister, Yediyurappa Deputy Chief Minister

S. Rajendran

BANGALORE: Janata Dal (S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader B.S. Yediyurappa were on Friday sworn in Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister of Karnataka by Governor T.N. Chaturvedi. This ended the fortnight-long political uncertainty in the State. The swearing-in ceremony took place on the flight of steps of the Vidhana Soudha.

Mr. Kumaraswamy and Mr. Yediyurappa took the oath of office and secrecy in the name of god amid rejoicing by a large gathering. The crowd greeted and cheered the two leaders.

The coalition partners have agreed to share power for the remaining 40 months of the 12th Legislative Assembly on the Jammu and Kashmir model. They will hold the office of the Chief Minister by rotation (20 months each). It is for the first time that the BJP has come to power in south India.

The BJP camp was overjoyed and jubilant. Party president Rajnath Singh and senior leader M. Venkaiah Naidu, who played a key role in the formation of the new Government, attended the swearing-in ceremony.

The outgoing Chief Minister, N. Dharam Singh, was the lone Congress leader present. It was appreciated by many in the gathering. The rest of the leadership stayed away as the Congress is yet to come to terms with the loss of power in the State.

Deve Gowda in Delhi

However, the most conspicuous absentee was H.D. Deve Gowda. The former Prime Minister left for New Delhi to attend a meeting of the national executive and, true to his words, refused to bless the new line-up.

However, members of Mr. Kumaraswamy's family attended the ceremony.

Ministry formation

Mr. Kumaraswamy and Mr. Yediyurappa said the constitution of a full-fledged Ministry would take time. It was likely to be before the end of this month. Under the power-sharing arrangement, the departments held by the Congress in the previous regime will vest with the JD (S) and those held by the JD (S) will now go to the BJP.

Speaker Krishna will retain his office.

Mr. Kumaraswamy and Mr. Yediyurappa later announced that the new Government would seek the vote of confidence on February 8. Confident of the support from the MLAs of the two parties, he is not going to issue a whip, Mr. Kumaraswamy said. The two leaders also called on the Governor later in the day.

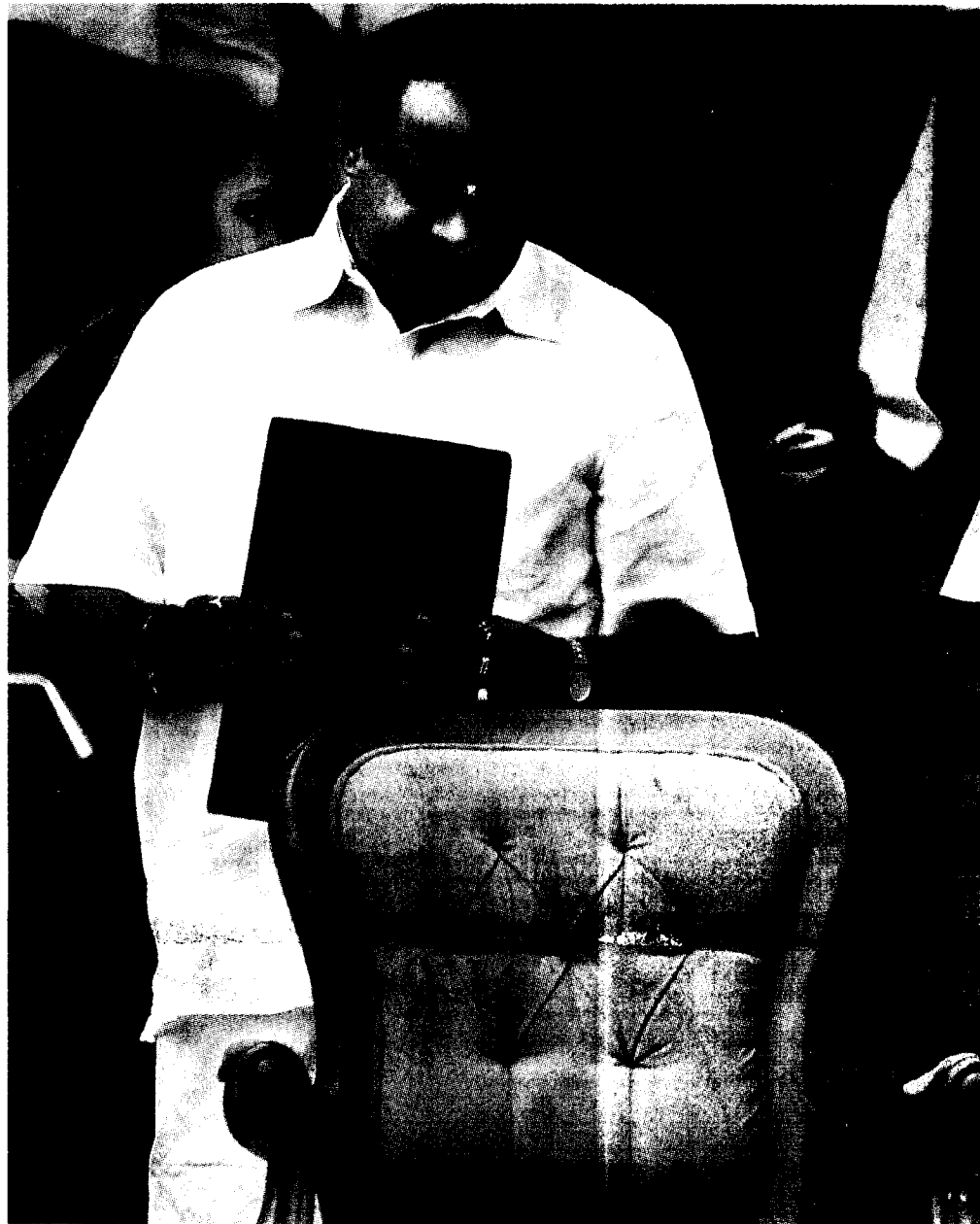
Blessings refused

Special Correspondent reports:

Hours before the swearing-in ceremony, Mr. Kumaraswamy went to Mr. Gowda's residence to seek his blessings but the latter was unmoved and refrained from holding any discussion.

Mr. Gowda told *The Hindu* that his son tried to seek his blessings when he was on his way to the airport. "I told him that I cannot compromise on my principles and he should not force me in the matter. I told him what I had told the party legislators on Thursday: you can go your way and I will go my way."

Mr. Kumaraswamy later said he was confident of convincing his father by putting in a good performance.



THE NEW OCCUPANT: Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy before the swearing-in ceremony in front of the Vidhana Soudha in Bangalore on Friday.

- PHOTO: G.R.N. SOMASHEKAR

THE HINDU

- 4 FEB 2006

9 87-
Karnataka
ArD 1 7/2

Behind Karnataka's regime change

At a time of political instability in States, Governors become fair game. Karnataka could easily have slipped into a constitutional crisis were it not for the deft but firm way in which Governor T.N. Chaturvedi, going by the letter as well as spirit of the Constitution, prevailed on Dharam Singh to quit as Chief Minister. For no sensible reason, Mr. Singh delayed his resignation by a day after failing to comply with the January 27 deadline set by the Governor for proving his Government's majority support in the Assembly. Any further delay on the part of Mr. Singh, or any precipitate gubernatorial action, would have raised the political temperature to an unhealthy level. For the past two weeks, the fate of the Congress-led coalition seemed to turn on the decision of one man — the national president of the Janata Dal (Secular), H.D. Deve Gowda. The existential dilemma of Mr. Gowda was there for all to see: While he proclaimed himself a secularist to the core, he was in no position to object to his son, H.D. Kumaraswamy, crossing over to the camp of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Once Mr. Gowda chose the easy way out of the moral conflict by resigning as the president of the JD(S), the game was up for Chief Minister Singh. The recognition of Mr. Kumaraswamy as the leader of the JD(S) legislature party by the Speaker, Krishna, who had won on the JD(S) ticket, was thereafter a formality. In one stroke, all questions of defection and disqualification were rendered irrelevant. Mr. Singh should have moved the confidence vote, as stipulated by the Governor, or resigned as soon as it became clear his fate was sealed.

Mr. Gowda had his reasons for what seemed a bizarre course of action. He had no sympathy for the Congress, which appeared intent on an informal tie-up with a break-away group of the JD(S), the All India Progressive Janata Dal. He believed that a dominant faction of the Congress in Karnataka, led by former Chief Minister S.M. Krishna, was bent on humiliating him and undermining the support base of his party. But he did not want to be seen doing business with the BJP. What distinguished the JD (S) from the Janata Dal (United), another offshoot of the Janata Dal, was its consistent opposition to communal politics. Something had to give. As it turned out, Mr. Gowda, who was not averse to using the BJP as a bargaining chip, effectively sided with his son against the Congress while claiming to be true to his secular ideology. Mr. Kumaraswamy will begin his Chief Ministership on an unpredictable, tricky wicket. The secular vote base of the JD(S), weakened by the formation of the AIPJD, might be further eroded. Given the nature of the 2004 verdict, all the difficulties involved in decision-making within a coalition will resurface under the new arrangement.

30 JAN 2006

THE HINDU

Dharam Singh resigns

9-87 Karnataka
Karnataka

29/1 HD-1
JD(S)-BJP Government to be sworn-in on February 3

S. Rajendran

BANGALORE: The political crisis in Karnataka has finally blown over with Chief Minister Dharam Singh putting in his papers. Governor T.N. Chaturvedi on Saturday invited leader of the Joint Legislature party of the Janata Dal (Secular) and the Bharatiya Janata Party, H.D. Kumaraswamy to form a new government.

The Speaker recognised Mr. Kumaraswamy as the leader of the Legislature party on Friday.

The JD(S)-BJP combine has fixed February 3 for the swearing-in though the Governor said he was ready to install the new Government immediately.

The Governor has directed Mr. Kumaraswamy to prove his strength on the floor of the Legislature within eight days of the new Government being sworn-in.

Early in the day, Mr. Dharam Singh was advised by the Governor and several senior Congress leaders, including AICC general secretary in-charge of Karnataka affairs A.K. Antony, to resign rather than persist with his demand for another floor test. He thereafter sought the permission of Congress president Sonia Gandhi and sent his resignation letter to the Governor through his principal secretary. The Governor has asked Mr. Dharam Singh to hold charge until the next government is installed.

Mr. Dharam Singh charged



Karnataka Chief Minister Dharam Singh leaving after a press conference where he announced his resignation in Bangalore on Saturday.

- PHOTO: K. GOPINATHAN

Speaker Krishna with not helping him to move the confidence motion. However, in his report to the Governor, Mr. Krishna said he had asked the Chief Minister to table the motion four times and when he avoided the issue he had no choice but to adjourn the House *sine die*. The Governor after due considera-

tion and consulting legal experts said that while Mr. Kumaraswamy should prove his majority in eight days, Mr. Dharam Singh could also use the opportunity to exhibit his strength.

Mr. Dharam Singh said it was "rather strange" that the JD(S), which had joined forces with the Congress only to prevent the

BJP forming a government, now aligned with the same party. The JD(S) commitment to safeguard secularism thus stood exposed.

With the BJP set to be part of a State Government for the first time in south India and the JD (S) emerging triumphant in a running battle with the Congress for several months, the swearing-in programme is expected to be a big show of strength.

The second coalition in the State comprising the members of the 12th Assembly will also have a total strength of 34 Ministers, including the Chief Minister and his deputy.

Deve Gowda's efforts

Sources in the JD(S) told *The Hindu* that Mr. Deve Gowda, who quit as JD(S) national president, continued his efforts to convince the legislators to stick to the party ideology. He met each of them and even suggested that the JD(S) extend only outside support to a BJP Government. However, there were no takers for his suggestion since Mr. Kumaraswamy was unanimously selected to lead the Government.

Deputy Chief Minister in the previous government M.P. Prakash and State Finance and Industries Minister P.G.R. Sindhia have decided to stay away from the Kumaraswamy Government and are likely to spell out their future course of action shortly.

THE HINDU

29 JAN 2006

DHARAM MEETS GOVERNOR, SEEKS FRESH DATE FOR CONFIDENCE MOTION

House adjourned before trust vote

Statesman News Service

BANGALORE, Jan. 27. — On a day replete with twists and turns, chief minister Mr Dharam Singh today spurned a trial of strength while seeking a fresh date for a trust vote even as the Speaker, Mr Krishna, adjourned the Assembly sine die.

The adjournment followed pandemonium sparked off by his decision to recognise Mr HD Kumaraswamy as leader of the JD-S rebel faction.

The action led to strong protests from the Congress, which surged to the well of the House. Mr Singh questioned the Speaker's decision,

saying that Mr MP Prakash, deputy chief minister and JD-S leader, continued to hold that position.

He said that the House was not in order and requested the Speaker to answer the questions raised by his party members about the recognition of Mr Kumaraswamy as JD-SLP leader. He also refused to resign, arguing that as the trial of strength had not taken place, the question of anyone calling it quits did not arise.

Both the Speaker and Mr Singh rushed to the state governor, Mr TN Chaturvedi, to explain their positions to the governor. The BJP and JD-S MLAs, too, met the governor, hoping to form a government as quickly as possible.

Mr Singh told reporters after

meeting the governor that the fresh date could be either tomorrow or the day after and that he was ready to face the floor test. He said that he had apprised the governor of the proceedings in the House and that he had been denied an opportunity by the Speaker to seek a confidence vote.

The governor, Mr Singh said, assured them that he would study the matter and take a decision tomorrow.

In a related development, Mr HD Deve Gowda, national president of the JDS, announced his decision to resign following what happened.

Mr Gowda spent a major part of the day in meetings with the Congress Working Committee

9.87 Karanika



KEY PLAYERS: Mr N Dharam Singh and Mr HD Deve Gowda

member, Mr AK Antony. The Congress went to the extent of agreeing to consider Mr Gowda's proposal for sharing power with the JD-S, an offer rejected by his son, Mr Kumaraswamy.

28/1

The Assembly was adjourned twice in the evening after the Speaker recognised Mr Gowda's son as leader of the JD-S legislature party.

While the BJP and the JD-S rebel faction were no doubt delighted, the Congress could not stomach it.

Its leaders, Mr HK Patil and Mr Mallikarjun Kharge, wondered how the Speaker recognised Mr Kumaraswamy as JD-SLP leader without the position falling vacant. They got voluble support from former deputy chief minister and erstwhile JD-S leader, Mr Siddaramiah.

He said that only the national president of the JD-S had the power to change the JD-SLP leader. The arguments, however, cut no

ice with the Speaker who, even as the debate was in progress, announced his decision in favour of Mr Kumaraswamy. After that he adjourned the House for 10 minutes.

When it reassembled, it was the turn of the Congress to go on the offensive with its members refusing to let the talks continue peaceably.

The Speaker requested the government to move the trust vote, something that had not been listed. The chief minister declined, stating that it was difficult to do so as the Speaker had not responded to his party members' appeal over his action in favour of the rebel JD-S leader.

Another report on page 5

**JAWAHAR LAL NEHRU AND KESHAVA DEVA MALAVIYA CREATED ONGC.
ONGC CREATED THE INDIAN CAPACITY FOR EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION OF OIL & GAS.**

Gowda calls back MLAs a day before D-Day

PRESS Trust of India
Bangalore, January 25

IN AN abrupt development, JDS supremo H.D. Deve Gowda has asked party MLAs currently on tour to return here for consultations with them to decide the fate of the Dharam Singh government, which is on the brink of collapse after JDS rebels withdrew support to it.

JDS MLAs, who were in Kollur in Udupi district, have now headed for Bangalore, changing their earlier plans to return on Thursday, a day before chief minister N. Dharam Singh is to seek a vote of confidence, party sources said.

Gowda's son and rebel leader H.D. Kumaraswamy had escorted the MLAs to Goa on January 20 fearing attempts by the Congress to split the party.

Shortly after returning from

H.S. Mahadevaprasad and Rajashekhara Murthy, Gowda told reporters that he had apprised them of the political developments and his talks with Gandhi.

Gowda said he would consult his party MLAs to seek their views on the crisis. He refused to answer whether he would be undertaking another trip to Delhi to continue the inconclusive dialogue with the Congress president, while Kumaraswamy told reporters at Udupi that there was no change in their stand to form government with BJP, irrespective of the outcome of talks between his father and Gandhi.

"Both my party and the BJP are working like brothers", Kumaraswamy said. "Whatever be the outcome of talks between the two leaders (Gandhi and Gowda), there is no change in my decision". Attacking the Congress, Ku-

maraswamy said "in the name of secularism", the Congress had, during the last 20 months, tried to suppress his party which had "undergone humiliation from Congress leaders".

Meanwhile, a JDS source said the MLAs would authorise Gowda to take an 'appropriate' decision on the next course of action.

In a sudden development, Kumaraswamy had undertaken a flying visit from Hubli to the city on January 23, called on his father and held discussions with him.

After meeting his son, Gowda had endorsed his (Kumaraswamy) actions, saying he had done so to "save the party" as attempts were being made by the Congress to split it.

The BJP, which had also rushed its MLAs to Tamil Nadu apprehending 'poaching' by the Congress, also asked them to return to the city on Thursday.



H.D. Deve Gowda with senior party leaders at his residence in Bangalore.

New Delhi, where he met Congress president Sonia Gandhi in an attempt to defuse the crisis, Gowda held two-hour-long parleys with

his party's senior leaders. After the meeting with deputy chief minister M.P. Prakash, ministers PGR Sindhia, D Manjunath,

PTI

Karnataka Assembly adjourned

Trust vote not taken; Gowda steps down; Kumaraswamy recognised as leader

S. Rajendran and A. Jayaram

BANGALORE: A constitutional deadlock has arisen in Karnataka: The third session of the 12th Karnataka Legislative Assembly was adjourned sine die by Speaker Krishna on Friday evening without the Chief Minister N. Dharam Singh seeking the vote of confidence in the House as directed by Governor T.N. Chaturvedi.

Now the situation is such that the majority enjoyed by the government of the day is an open question and the Governor's directive has been defied.

On a day of intense political developments, the kind of which the State has never witnessed, the fate of the first coalition Government has been sealed with the Speaker granting recognition to H.D. Kumaraswamy as the leader of the Janata Dal (Secular) Legislature Party which has allied with the Bharatiya Janata Party to form a new coalition.

The ball is back in the Governor's court after an eight-day gap. The Speaker called upon the Chief Minister to table the confidence motion three times amidst pandemonium; the Congress members were protesting against the Speaker's announcement recognising Mr. Kumaraswamy as the JDLP leader. Mr. Kumaraswamy had claimed before the Governor on January 19 that he enjoyed the support of 128 legislators to form the new government.

Soon after the Assembly was adjourned, sources in the Raj Bhavan said the Governor had invited legal experts for consultations. There are three options for the Governor — recommend the dismissal of the Dharam Singh-led Government on the ground that the Chief Minister had not tabled the motion of confidence or direct the Speaker to convene a session of the legislature once again to enable the Chief Minister to table a motion of confidence.

The Chief Minister categorically stated that he was not given a fair chance and was keen to table the motion of confidence. "How is it established that I have lost the majority and that my Government is reduced to a minority. It is a constitutional crisis."

The Chief Minister accompanied by Law Minister H.K. Patil thereafter called on the Governor and made a representation.



JUBILATION: Janata Dal (Secular) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy (second from right), along with Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly B.S. Yediyurappa (second from left) and other MLAs, shows the victory sign in Bangalore on Friday. (Below) The former Prime Minister, H.D. Deve Gowda, announcing his resignation as Janata Dal (S) president. — PHOTOS: V. SREENIVASA MURTHY AND SAMPAT KUMAR.

Meanwhile, AICC general secretary in charge of Karnataka affairs A.K. Antony said the Congress had been betrayed by the JD (S). Former Prime Minister and JD(S) leader Deve Gowda sent a sealed cover to him reportedly suggesting that Mr. Dharam Singh be asked to resign and thereafter fresh discussions could be held between the two parties on power sharing. The Congress leaders thereafter felt "ditched" and preferred to sit in the Opposition. Earlier in the day, the Congress had yielded to all the conditions put across by the JD (S) including power sharing as per the Maharashtra pattern with the sole intention of keeping the BJP out.

Sources in the JD (S) told *The Hindu* that Mr. Gowda who quit as the party's national president following his son's (Mr. Kumaraswamy) stubborn stance to go with the BJP decided to call off further appeals to him and the rebel legislators when he realised that they would not return



to his fold. Mr Deve Gowda had even set a deadline to the legislators to fall in line and meet him at the residence of his other son, H.D. Revanna, Minister for Public Works and Energy. However, none of the legislators heeded the deadline and Mr. Gowda announced his resignation.

The Assembly proceedings were delayed inordinately on ac-

count of a series of in camera meetings between the top Congress leaders and Mr. Gowda. Mr. Antony termed the political crisis in the State which ultimately resulted in the understanding between the two parties falling apart "a calculated coup" to dislodge the Government. Interestingly while Mr. Gowda was in close contact with Mr. Antony and Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee, the Kumaraswamy group of the JD (S) was in close touch with Senior BJP leader M. Venkaiah Naidu.

After his recognition as JDLP leader, an overjoyed Mr. Kumaraswamy said the Congress and the JD (S) never really enjoyed a good relationship despite coming together to form the coalition Government. It was to avenge the humiliation heaped on his father and the JD (S) that the legislators decided to go with the BJP. This exercise was not undertaken to enable "me to become a Chief Minister. Even now I am not after any position. We had made up our minds several months ago," he said.

Gowda U-turn in power pact

Statesman News Service

BANGALORE, Jan. 23. — JD-S supremo Mr HD Deve Gowda today virtually justified the action of his son Mr HD Kumaraswamy who has brought the Congress-JDS coalition government in Karnataka to the brink of collapse, saying it was to “save the party”. Stating that the end justified the means, he said his son could not be faulted for taking away more than 40 MLAs with him and bringing the Dharam Singh government to its knees. He said Mr Kumaraswamy had done what he thought best to save the JD-S.

The former Prime Minister and national president of the JD-S also took the opportunity to hit out at the Congress. According to him, the Congress had humiliated him during the past 18

months. Mr Deve Gowda said his son had taken away his supporters to avenge ill treatment by the Congress and prevent “poaching”.

A meeting between the father-son duo took place at the house of Mr Balakrishna, Mr Kumaraswamy’s brother. Mr Kumaraswamy had been telling the media that he would not meet his father at all.

After the meeting, all that Mr Gowda told reporters was that his son had wanted to discuss the issues raised by him with the MLAs who were supporting him.

Mr Kumaraswamy told reporters that he had come from Goa to enquire about his father’s health. Answering queries on whether he would reverse his decision, he quipped: “I cannot act against the wishes of my partymen.”

JAN 2006

THE STATESMAN

JD(S) flies MLAs to Goa

D. G. K. Kanwalakar
22/1
KD-1

JD(S) group, BJP pile up pressure

S. Rajendran

BANGALORE: The political imbroglio in Karnataka continued for the fourth day on Saturday with no sign of a resolution, although there were clear signs of much behind-the-scenes activity. The Janata Dal(Secular) group and the Bharatiya Janata Party seemed to be trying to pile pressure on Chief Minister Dharam Singh to quit ahead of the trial of strength on the floor of the legislature on January 27.

If the BJP moved its MLAs to Chennai on Friday night, on Saturday it was the turn of the JD(S) group to fly its MLAs to Goa. High drama marked the trip. The group included its rallying force, H.D. Kumaraswamy. His message was unambiguous: "I will prove my strength on January 27."

Mr. Dharam Singh, still banking on JD(S) national president H.D. Deve Gowda coming to his aid, exuded confidence that the former Prime Minister would manage to bring around his son, Mr. Kumaraswamy. He was looking to Hyderabad and the Congress high command, in particular some senior Congress leaders, to evolve a solution.

It was after several rounds of discussions that Goa was chosen as the 'safe haven' for the JD(S) legislators. State JD(S) president N. Thippanna led them.

Before their departure, Mr. Kumaraswamy said the move was not prompted by the fear of horse-trading. They had decided to shift out of Bangalore for a few days to let the Congress high command know that the JD(S) group's aim was not to bargain. Rather, it wanted to convey to the Congress its displeasure. "Rather than face a trial of strength on the floor of the legislature which will result in the defeat of the motion of confidence, it is better for the party to call upon the Chief Minister to quit.

• Kumaraswamy resolute, confident

• Dharam Singh looks to high command

• Janata Dal(U) supports new grouping

On Saturday the Janata Dal (United) with seven legislators, of whom five are MLAs, decided to support the combine of the JD(S) group and the BJP. State JD(U) president B. Somashekar, who is in New Delhi to finalise the understanding, told *The Hindu* that the modalities would be worked out after the trial of strength. The total strength of the JD(S)-BJP-JD(U) group combine is now 128 in a house of 224.

Deve Gowda's discussions

Mr. Deve Gowda held discussions with national-level JD(S) leaders, including the floor leader of the JD(S) in the Lok Sabha, M.P. Veerendra Kumar; senior vice-president Babu Kaldate, and secretary-general Danish Ali.

Deputy Chief Minister M.P. Prakash and Finance and Industries Minister P.G.R. Sindhi were present.

The JD(S) national president said he was working on ways to save the Dharam Singh Government. He ruled out any meeting of the national executive of the party before January 27.

He said he would meet Congress president Sonia Gandhi, if need be. (In Hyderabad, the Congress spoke of the possibility of Ms. Gandhi meeting him, but side-stepped questions on applying the Jammu and Kashmir formula of leadership rotation in Karnataka, reports PTI.)

More reports on Page 8

21 JAN 2006

THE HINDU

Karnataka MLAs moved out

Kumaraswamy won't relent; Congress sends emissary to Gowda



AT THE RETREAT: Janata Dal (S) group leader H.D. Kumaraswamy (centre) leaving a resort 30 km from Bangalore with legislators supporting him, on Friday evening. — PHOTO: K. GOPINATHAN

S. Rajendran

BANGALORE: A third consecutive day of political commotion in Karnataka on Friday found the H.D. Kumaraswamy group of the Janata Dal (S) and the Bharatiya Janata Party spiriting away their MLAs to havens outside the State to prevent any poaching during the run-up to the scheduled voting in the Assembly by January 27. A large group of the BJP legislators reached Chennai by a chartered flight a little after 10 p.m.

The day also witnessed feverish attempts by the H.D. Deve Gowda group and members of the family of the former Prime Minister to persuade Mr. Kumaraswamy to retrace his steps and terminate his alliance-in-the-making with the BJP. But on Friday it seemed that Mr. Kumaraswamy retracing his steps was a highly unlikely prospect.

The Congress high command, which has been in touch with Mr. Deve Gowda through various leaders including Ahmed Patel, political secretary to Congress president Sonia Gand-

hi, apart from the Chief Minister himself, sent Margaraet Alva as an emissary. While this was described as a courtesy call, it is learnt that during the nearly 30-minute in camera meeting, the Congress leader put across a package including change of Chief Minister and the party's fresh commitment to abiding by the Maharashtra pattern of power-sharing.

Chief Minister N. Dharam Singh, apparently still stunned by the developments, is yet to take a firm stand on whether to go through the trial of strength on January 27 or to demit office prior to the deadline set by the Governor. Using the phrase of an "exit option," the Chief Minister stated that he is ready to quit if the Congress high command wants him to do so. Meanwhile he is also gearing up for the trial of strength.

Horse-trading was the phrase in the air, although Governor T.N. Chaturvedi had said the previous day that MLAs are not horses to be traded. Mr. Dharam Singh alleged that what the Kumaraswamy group is doing is

worse than horse-trading.

It appeared on Friday that a large section of the JD(S) is caught between Mr. Deve Gowda and his son. But there also appeared to be the hope and confidence that a solution would be found to the embarrassing political-familial imbroglio. However, at the end of the day it appeared that despite the efforts of his kin, Mr. Kumaraswamy was adamant. Come what may, he seemed to say, he would not change his stand. Members of Mr. Deve Gowda's family led by his eldest son, H.D. Balakrishna, talked to Mr. Kumaraswamy for the third day, seemingly in vain.

Talking of humiliation

Mr. Kumaraswamy, however, stuck to his stand and said that following all the humiliation heaped on the JD (S) by the Congress over a period of time, the party legislators had no choice but to go with the BJP. The Kumaraswamy group has a strength of 44 legislators including five independents, who are associate members of the JD(S).

To keep the flock intact, the

legislators, who were accommodated in a resort on the outskirts of Bangalore, were shifted out in two groups by the evening of Friday.

Reports have it that while one group was taken to Jharkhand in the morning, the other group comprising a major chunk of the legislators left for an unknown destination in the evening. (Destinations as diverse as Goa, Kerala and Gujarat, and arrangements including chartered flights, were being mentioned even late in the evening.)

The BJP, which had "accommodated" its legislators in a resort, shifted them out by evening, and they took the flight to Chennai.

Deputy Chief Minister M.P. Prakash, Industries and Finance Minister P.G.R. Sindhia, Higher Education Minister D. Manjunath and Food and Civil Supplies Minister H.S. Mahadev Prasad along with the former Minister and BJP MP M. Rajashekaramurthy, a new entrant to the JD (S) attended a meeting at Mr. Deve Gowda's home to take stock of the developments.

Beleaguered Dharam speaks of exit option

Press Trust of India

BANGALORE, Jan. 20. — Given the weight of numbers against him a week ahead of a trial of strength in the Assembly on 27 January, Karnataka's beleaguered-chief minister Mr N Dharam Singh today spoke of his "option to exit" while the JD-S rebel faction ruled out reversing its decision to withdraw support to his ministry.

A day after Governor Mr TN Chaturvedi had ordered Mr Singh to face the floor test, the chief minister told reporters

that "I have an option to exit". But, in the same breath, he said he was optimistic of winning the trust vote, adding, "a miracle can happen." Congress, jolted by the dramatic turn of events which left the state's coalition ministry led by it unenviably insecure, sent party general secretary Ms Margaret Alva here in a last-ditch effort to rescue the tottering government.

Ms Alva had two rounds of discussions with the chief minister and a meeting in between with JD-S supremo Mr HD Gowda. She said she had discussed certain issues with Mr

Gowda which she would convey to Congress president Mrs Sonia Gandhi.

Mr Gowda seemed to be the main hope for the Congress as Ms Alva said: "Everything now rests on the JD-S president".

Legislators loyal to him stayed at a resort on the city's outskirts fearing "poaching" by the Congress.

Apprehending attempts by the Congress to split the party, the BJP today shifted its legislators to Chennai. party sources said.

Cong deposes trouble-shooters to woo Gowda, page 5

JAN 20 2006

THE STATESMAN

Karnataka trust vote on Jan 27

2011
Congress Running Away
From Battle: Venkaiah

Bangalore: As the Congress-JD(S) coalition government headed by him tottered, Karnataka chief minister N Dharam Singh on Thursday said he would seek a vote of confidence on January 27 in the assembly to demonstrate his strength after the withdrawal of support by JD(S) rebels led by H D Kumaraswamy.

After governor T N Chaturvedi addressed the joint session of the state legislature and his consultations with assembly speaker Krishna preceding the adjournment of the assembly, Singh announced his decision to seek the trust vote and expressed confidence that he would prove his majority.

Singh, whose government is on the precipice after the political coup staged by Gowda's son by joining hands with BJP to pull the rug under his feet, also did not rule out the possibility of meeting former prime minister H D Deve Gowda to defuse the crisis.

The decision to seek the confidence vote after a week came in for scathing attack from the BJP, with its senior leader M Venkaiah Naidu accusing the Congress of "running away from the battle."

"It (Congress) wanted to postpone the defeat by one week," Naidu said, alleging that it would employ "some dirty tricks" to survive in power but would not succeed. He (Singh) should have been bold enough to face the house," said Naidu, whose party also mounted pressure on the gov-

ernor since morning to take an early decision on the letter of withdrawal of support to pave the way for installation of the coalition government of BJP and the splinter JD(S) group.

In the unfolding political drama on Thursday, MLAs of BJP and the Kumaraswamy faction boycotted the governor's address to the joint legislature session, saying the address had been prepared by a ministry which had been reduced to a minority.

The BJP legislators also staged a dharna in the Raj Bhavan, and a party delegation met the governor urging him to advise the chief minister to resign on the ground that his ministry had been reduced to a minority or dismiss him if he refused to fall in line.

Keeping up the pressure, the BJP leaders met the governor again after his address to the legislature and told him to ask the chief minister to prove his strength by Friday.

The JD(S) splinter group also



BJP leaders B S Yeduriyappa and Ananthkumar alongwith MLAs stage a dharna in front of Raj Bhavan demanding the installation of a new government, in Bangalore on Thursday. Related reports on Page 13

submitted a letter signed by its legislators to the speaker, seeking their recognition and communicating that they had elected Kumaraswamy as their leader.

Congress high command, caught off guard by the Karnataka developments, on Thursday reviewed the situation at a meeting

attended by top brass, including Sonia Gandhi, but was in no mood to compromise with the rebel JD(S) faction led by Kumaraswamy to save its 20-month-old government.

At the same time, the central leadership felt that the JD(S) supreme H D Deve Gowda, who has disapproved of the coup staged by his son, would be able to persuade Kumaraswamy to see reason in the next few days before the vote of confidence on January 27 in the beleaguered Dharam Singh ministry.

Gandhi deliberated on the fast moving political developments in the southern state since Wednesday evening with PM Manmohan Singh and senior leader A K Antony, who is in charge of party affairs of Karnataka as the governor asked the chief minister to prove his majority by January 27. After the hour-long meeting, Antony merely expressed the hope that the party would succeed in "saving" the government but dismissed as speculative that Congress would back rebel JD(S) to form the government.

"We are closely monitoring the situation and are in touch with local colleagues, including chief minister and PCC chief," he said as Dharam Singh did not rule out the possibility of meeting Gowda but shunned suggestions of talks with Kumaraswamy. Agencies

20 JAN 2006

THE HINDU OF INDIA

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20, 2006

Tragicomedy in Karnataka

The political drama being played out in Karnataka does no credit to any of the three principal actors — the Congress, the Janata Dal (Secular), and the Bharatiya Janata Party. No matter how the present crisis, induced by the revolt of JD (S) working president H.D. Kumaraswamy, ends, the major share of the blame for destabilising the Dharam Singh Government must fall on the Congress. Vested interests within that party alienated the JD (S) by aligning with a breakaway group, the All India Progressive Janata Dal. In the months leading to the present crisis, the Congress in Karnataka provided a copybook demonstration of how not to run a coalition. It egregiously attempted to bring into its fold the JD (S) dissident leader, S. Siddaramaiah, who now heads the AIPJD. The national president of the JD (S) and former Prime Minister, H. D. Deve Gowda, fought back by applying intense counter-pressure. Following the intervention of the Congress president, Sonia Gandhi, Mr. Siddaramaiah and his supporters were forced out of the cabinet and the ruling combine. Congress leaders, especially those in the S.M. Krishna camp, seem to have learnt nothing from this experience. After the recent panchayat elections, the State Congress favoured an underhand deal with the AIPJD in a greedy attempt to gain control over local bodies in areas where it could not get a majority. This naturally angered Mr. Gowda. The published images of Siddaramaiah supporters, in the company of Congress leaders and activists, beating Mr. Gowda's picture with slippers and burning his effigies could not have improved matters.

But the JD (S) has done itself little good through its politics of brinkmanship. The secular image of the party, nurtured by Mr. Gowda over the long term, has taken a beating thanks to his third son's *coup d'etat* — the decidedly anti-secular understanding he forged with the BJP to form a government. The JD (S) legislators who went along with Mr. Kumaraswamy to meet the Governor did not even pause to think of the recently tightened disqualification provisions in the Constitution. They could not have got away with it — unless the game plan was to merge with the BJP. The Hindutva party displayed rank opportunism in embracing an ideological enemy at the faintest smell of power. At this point, it also seems to have miscalculated. Senior party leaders failed to factor in Mr. Gowda's antipathy to communal politics, the loyalty he commands among JD (S) legislators, and the strong father-son bond. Stating that he was fighting for his political life, the former Prime Minister has committed himself to saving a regime he does not respect. Governor T.N. Chaturvedi must be commended for keeping a cool constitutional head and playing by the book: he has asked the Chief Minister to prove the Government's majority in a floor test no later than January 27. It is virtually guaranteed that this tragicomedy will present further twists before the denouement arrives.

20 JAN 2006

THE HINDU

Dramatic Irony

11-18
20/11
Karnataka political crisis
compounds Congress blues

FIRST, the fall of Lalu Prasad, then Bofors, and now Karnataka — these are trying days for the Congress. Between May 2004 and November 2005, the party had a dream run. Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi, so far focused on issues of growth and welfare, are battling their way out of a series of setbacks. The imminent fall of the Congress-Janata Dal (Secular) government in Karnataka smacks of the Congress being beaten at its own game of defections, institutionalised by Indira Gandhi. There's another irony that is inescapable: True to the dynastic traditions of the Congress, JD(S) president H D Deve Gowda seems to have stage-managed the drama to ensure that his son, H D Kumaraswamy, becomes chief minister. For a man who has always promoted his kin, it is hard to believe that he was upset at the mass defection of JD(S) MLAs, 'led' by his son, to the BJP camp. He is unlikely to mourn the decimation of his party, in form and concept, if the process culminates in his son ruling the state. JD(S) came into being when part of the undivided Janata Dal allied with the BJP. That 'secular' element has all but vanished. Gowda's present sulk is only a token expression of political correctness. As for the BJP, it has internalised the ways of the Congress, a point that L K Advani has made from time to time. Chief minister Dharam Singh says the game is not over: Does he expect the party to somehow pull off a Goa or Jharkhand for him? The Congress could benefit in the next round of elections if it stays clear of manipulation for the sake of continuing in power.

The party's prospects for this year look bleak. It is likely to lose to the Left Democratic Front combine when it goes to polls in Kerala in another four months. West Bengal is a lost cause. In Maharashtra, the Nationalist Congress Party is making inroads at its expense. Rahul Gandhi's possible induction into the CWC is unlikely to produce immediate results in the Hindi heartland. Even where development concerns compete with caste empowerment, as in Bihar, Congress lacks the base or leadership to derive any advantage. Its condition in the states is unlikely to impact the stability of the government at the Centre. But it will impact governance in key areas of development, where Centre-state cooperation holds the key. This should concern Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi, if not Deve Gowda.

20 JAN 2006

THE NEWSPAPER OF INDIA

Karnataka Government on the brink

19/11

Section of Janata Dal (S) breaks with Congress, stakes claim to form government along with BJP

Bangalore Bureau

BANGALORE: The end of the 19-month-old Dharam Singh Government in Karnataka appeared imminent on Wednesday night with the dominant group in the Janata Dal (Secular) informing Governor T.N. Chaturvedi about its decision to withdraw from the coalition with the Congress and staking claim, along with the Bharatiya Janata Party, to form an alternative government.

The JD (S) group, which comprises 44 members out of its total of 59, announced its decision to align itself with the BJP, the largest group in the State Assembly with 79 members, to form a new coalition government. The group is led by H.D. Kumaraswamy, State JD(S) working president and the third son of H.D. Deve Gowda. The JD(S) had until now shunned the BJP as being communal.

Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly B.S. Yediyurappa, of the BJP, announced on Wednesday night that Mr. Kumaraswamy had been elected leader of the joint BJP-JD(S) Legislature Party. He was addressing the press along with Mr. Kumaraswamy in front of the Raj Bhavan. They said the Governor had told them he would take a decision on their letter staking claim to form the new government later in the night.

BJP's all-India vice-president M. Venkaiah Naidu earlier announced that Mr. Kumaraswamy would be the Chief Minister with Mr. Yediyurappa as Deputy Chief Minister. Under the arrangement agreed upon by the two parties, the JD (S) will lead the government in the first 20 months; a government on the Jammu and Kashmir model. The 12th Karnataka Assembly has still 40 months to complete its term.

Putting an end day-long spec-



DRAMATIS PERSONAE: BJP leader B.S. Yediyurappa (left) with H.D. Kumaraswamy, working president of the Janata Dal (Secular), in front of the Raj Bhavan after meeting the Governor. At right, Chief Minister Dharam Singh addresses the press at his official residence after a Cabinet meeting. With him are his Cabinet colleagues, Deputy Chief Minister M.P. Prakash, P.G.R. Sindhia, Srinivas Gowda, Mahadev Prasad, Mallikarjun Kharge, and H.K. Patil. - PHOTOS: BHAGYA PRAKASH K. AND V. SREENIVASA MURTHY

ulation, Mr. Kumaraswamy drove to the Raj Bhavan around 6-30 p.m. to inform the Governor asking him to ignore the claims made by the group of legislators of the JD(S) about withdrawal of support to the Government.

Deputy Chief Minister M.P. Prakash and five other Ministers - P.G.R. Sindhia, H.D. Revanna (the second son of Mr. Deve Gowda), D. Manjunath, Amaregowda Bayyapur and Mahadeva Prasad - have not joined the Kumaraswamy group. Two women MLAs - Mahima Patel and Parimala Nagappa are also not a part of the group. They apparently remain loyal to Mr. Deve Gowda.

The decisive action taken by Mr. Kumaraswamy does not have the blessings of his father, Mr. Deve Gowda. The veteran has distanced himself from the

Singh Government and the decision of the Governor on the strength of the new alliance will be crucial. It is being stated that though feeling betrayed by the JD(S) the Congress does not want to come in the way of the new coalition by recommending dissolution of the Assembly.

The Dharam Singh Government was caught in the political maelstrom at the most inopportune hour - on the eve of the joint session of the State Legislature to be addressed by the Governor on Thursday. The likelihood of the session being put off, however, loomed large on Wednesday. The session was scheduled to be held at 10-30 a.m. Governor T.N. Chaturvedi will read out the address prepared by the Government.

The new Legislature Party leader in the place of Mr. Prakash. Mr. Kumaraswamy met the Governor accompanied by 43 MLAs and Ministers. Interestingly, the group was led by State president of the party N. Thippanna, giving rise to varied interpretations.

In the 224-member Assembly, the BJP is the largest group, of which two have rebelled. The Congress has 64 members. The Janata Dal (Secular) has 59 members, of which about eight are supporting the former Deputy Chief Minister Siddaramaiah). The Janata Dal (United) has five members. The CPI(M), the Kannada Chaturvaligars and the Republican Party have one member each. And there are 14 independents. The last word has not been said about the Dharam



Betrayal, says Gowda

Special Correspondent

BANGALORE: The former Prime Minister, H.D. Deve Gowda, upset with the political crisis in the Janata Dal (Secular) arising out of his son and working president of the State JD (S) H.D. Kumaraswamy and his supporters withdrawing support to the coalition Government, has said "today is the saddest day in my political career spanning 54 years."

A visibly upset Mr. Gowda told *The Hindu*: "Even when I

relinquished the office of the Prime Minister I was not at all sad. But today, the commitment with which I had all along fought has been shattered by a group of legislators of the party. It is a very sad day in my life. I feel betrayed."

Through the day, members of the Deve Gowda family interacted with Mr. Kumaraswamy and pleaded with him not to align himself with the BJP since it was against the wishes of Mr. Deve Gowda.

Sajjad Lone looks forward to positive impact of dialogue

"An all-inclusive dialogue on the Kashmir issue needed"

Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR: Terming his recent talks with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh as "positive and satisfactory," Sajjad Lone, chairman of a faction of the People's Conference, on Monday predicted that something concrete would come out of the dialogue the Centre was having with the Kashmiri leaders.

At a news conference here, Mr. Lone declined to divulge the details of the dialogue he recently had with the Prime Minister to maintain what he called the "sanctity of dialogue."

Regarding the possible solution to the Kashmir issue, he said: "The solution has to be other than status quo, complete merger

with either India or Pakistan and autonomy."

Advocating an all-inclusive dialogue on the Kashmir issue, he said: "I don't represent the Jammu Kashmir State on the whole. I have made it clear that I represent a section." At the same time, he did not favour separatists holding a joint dialogue with the Centre. "That is not possible because it is difficult to have a consensus first."

He hoped that the dialogue would gain credibility in due course of time. However, he refused to comment on his estranged brother Bilal Lone's remarks, saying that dialogue was heading nowhere.

About involving militants in the talks, Mr. Lone said it was for gun-wielding youth to decide.

DDP 2

THE HINDU

GOWDA SON STAKES CLAIM WITH BJP SUPPORT

Rebels rock Dharam boat

Statesman News Service

BANGALORE, Jan. 18. — The 20-month-old Congress-Janata Dal (Secular) government, headed by Mr Dharam Singh, is on the brink of collapse following the withdrawal of support by 46 of the 49 JD-S MLAs.

The faction is led by Mr HD Kumaraswamy, working president of the party's state unit and son of former Prime Minister Mr HD Deve Gowda. Mr Kumaraswamy has staked his claim to form the next government with the BJP's support.

In the 224-member Assembly, the Congress has 65 seats, JD-S 49 and the single largest party, the BJP 79. Its ally, the JD-United has five seats. After a split and the easing out of Mr Siddaramiah from the party by Mr Deve Gowda last year, the strength of the JD-S has come down to 49 from 58. In fast-paced developments earlier today, even as Mr Gowda said that he would neither bring down the coalition government nor align with the BJP, his son, Mr Kumaraswamy, took his supporters to the Governor, Mr TN Chaturvedi, to say the opposite. The BJP leader, Mr Venkaiah Naidu, who had flown in from Delhi, said his party would try to form a government with the help of the JD-S splinter group.

In fact, such is the optimism in the splinter group of the JDS and the BJP that they appear to have shared out the portfolios in the new government. Mr Kumaraswamy would be the chief minister for the first 20 months after which the BJP leader, Mr BS Yeduyurappa, would take over. Until then, the BJP would occupy the deputy chief minister's position. Mr Gowda has sent a letter to the Governor, urging him not to recognise the breakaway JD-S group led by his son.

His says that only the leader of the JD-S in the Assembly, Mr MP Prakash, can take

CM seeks time till 31 Jan

BANGALORE, Jan. 18. — Karnataka chief minister Mr N Dharam Singh tonight sought time till 31 January from Governor Mr TN Chaturvedi to prove his majority on the floor of the state Assembly, official sources said. The Governor, however, has not taken any decision on the chief minister's request. Mr Singh's request came during his meeting with the Governor after the JD-S faction led by Mr HD Kumaraswamy informed Mr Chaturvedi of their decision to withdraw support to the Congress-JD(S) coalition government. — SNS/PTI



Mr N Dharam Singh

such a step. Mr Prakash is also the deputy chief minister.

In New Delhi, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh tonight held a meeting with defence minister Mr Pranab Mukherjee and home minister Mr Shivraj Patil to discuss the Karnataka situation. Most political observers in Bangalore do not think that the father and son have parted ways with the latter bent on grabbing power at any cost. They believe that as Mr Deve Gowda cannot openly seek the support of the BJP to form a government, he is using his son to achieve his objective.

Mr Gowda's main grouse against the Congress is that it is seeking to join hands with his arch-enemy, Mr Siddaramiah of the All-India Progressive Janata Dal, in running the panchayats which came to be saddled with a fractured mandate in the elections last month.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2006

The wheels of history

The wheels of history are turning in Jammu and Kashmir, excruciatingly slowly perhaps, but revolving nonetheless. On Saturday, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met the secessionist leader, Sajjad Gani Lone, and thus began the first formal dialogue New Delhi has held with politicians outside the umbrella of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference. By meeting with Mr. Lone, the Central Government has signalled that it intends to engage with all elements of the complex political mosaic in the State. Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad has made it clear that the doors of the Prime Minister's Office are open to other secessionist leaders as well, notably Mohammad Yasin Malik and Shabbir Shah. In time, the logic of Saturday's meeting dictates, New Delhi should open a dialogue on the State's future with politicians opposed to ethnic-Kashmiri secessionists. This category includes players as ideologically diverse as Mohammad Yusuf Tarigami, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader; Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, ex-Chief Minister and leader of the People's Democratic Party; Omar Abdullah, National Conference president; Kashmir Pandit organisations; and the Jammu-region leadership of the Congress. These players represent sections of the people who have equities in the future of Jammu and Kashmir, and thus a right to have their voices heard in the rooms where it will be decided.

Does this mean, as some critics contend, a dilution of the dialogue process? Yes — but also no. If the objective of the dialogue was to secure a one-shot settlement of the conflict, it would have made little sense to broaden participation in it. Yet it has been clear for some time that the APHC simply does not have the leverage to deliver an end to violence. Nor has its claim to be the sole spokesperson of the State's people been found credible. In turn, Pakistan's recent proposals on Jammu and Kashmir — demilitarisation of the State and what Pervez Musharraf has described as "self-rule" — have demonstrated flexibility, but not seriousness of purpose. President Musharraf has not, for example, said exactly what he intends to do to end terrorism by Pakistan-based groups — terrorism that claimed the lives of the fathers of both Mr. Lone and the APHC chairman, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq. Nor has he touched on the subject of allowing democratic governance in the part of Jammu and Kashmir administered by Pakistan. New voices must be heard if new ideas are to emerge. It is encouraging that the Mirwaiz has stated, notwithstanding his reservations, that he does not oppose the Prime Minister's meeting with Mr. Lone. New Delhi now needs to demonstrate that broad-based dialogue is not a tactical manoeuvre to marginalise the APHC. It will take time and patience to find a solution acceptable to all those who have stakes in Jammu and Kashmir. Dialogue, after all, is a process — not a tool to deliver a pre-conceived end.

17 JAN 2006

THE TIMES

KASHMIRI LEADER MEETS PM

Talks with Manmohan constructive, says Lone

Masood Hussain
NEW DELHI 14 JANUARY

After an hour-long "positive" and "constructive" meeting with Prime Minister, Kashmiri leader Sajjad Lone said no results should be expected from the just-started talks process. Right now, he said, process was more important than results and insisted Prime Minister had agreed to institutionalize the dialogue by making it inclusive after identifying and involving relevant parties and persons in J&K.

"Results should not be a yardstick for the failure of this process that has to be a long one and time consuming", Lone said. Though many issues came under discussion, Lone refused to divulge any details for the sake of the process. "It will defeat the purpose and offer no result at all", he said while briefing the reporters after meeting was over.

He talked of certain "promises" and insisted the people must have their say in the process for they have given sacrifices. PM's media adviser Sanjay Baru said

Singh was keen on reaching out to the elements that were outside the electoral process. The exercise would continue and there would be meetings with all other groups, he added.

Invitation to Sajjad stunned the Mirwaiz-led Hurriyat which was ready to have another round of talks with Mr Singh after their week-long stay on the other side of the Redcliff Line. Instead, they were asked to have a meeting with national security adviser, sources said.

Mirwaiz expressed his disappointment and accused Delhi of insincerity. "I think, NDA was more devoted to dialogue than UPA. We are not against Government of India talking to Sajjad but we feel they are neither serious nor sincere. Nothing much has changed in Kashmir after we talked to him (Prime Minister) last time", he told reporters. Unlike Islamabad, Mirwaiz said Delhi is rigid. He accused central bureaucracy of creating the notion that Hurriyat works on Musharraf agenda.

Before the talks began, Bilal Ghani Lone said there is "no need to react (to the meeting)

or to panic. We would welcome any person or initiative that would get some relief to the people", he said.

Bilal and Sajjad are brothers who split the Peoples Conference, the legacy of their father Abdul Gani Lone after his assassination. Bilal is with Mirwaiz and Sajjad is equidistant from rival Hurriyat's.

Ms Mehbooba Mufti, MP and PDP president commented, "We are a staunch pro-talks party and feel encouraged that the process is broadening. There is immediate need to involve other groups like Yasin Malik and Syed Ali Geelani". However, she sounded a word of caution. "Our immediate concern is that Kashmir should be handled at political level rather than by bureaucracy and the security grid. The people who are caught in the crossfire must get some relief," she insisted.

But some people privy of the happenings in Delhi insists the reservations being expressed are misplaced. Says Mohammad Sayeed Malik, former editor: "Within a few weeks Shabir Shah and Yasin Malik are being formally invited for talks.

15 JAN 20 0

111 111 111111 111111

FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 2006 ✓

Choosing friends carefully ¹⁰⁻¹⁰ ✓

With the Communist Party of India opposing the entry of the Democratic Indira Congress (Karunakaran) into the Left Democratic Front, the breakaway Congress group will have to face the possibility of being forced to float a third front in Kerala's polarised political arena. The LDF is yet to take a final decision on this issue, but the signs of hostility within the front should make the DIC(K) wary of putting all its eggs in one basket. The DIC(K) entered into informal seat adjustments with the LDF for the local body polls; it also supported the CPI in the Thiruvananthapuram Lok Sabha by-election. But the truth is that the LDF does not really need the support of the DIC(K). In the prevailing political situation, the LDF is poised to return to power with a substantial majority. Other than increasing its victory margin, the DIC(K) will make no difference to the LDF. The smaller partners of the LDF thus have some cause for worry: the admission of the DIC(K) into the front could reduce their share of Assembly seats without any tangible benefits in return. Moreover, a three-cornered contest will help the LDF almost as much as an alliance with the DIC(K), which can be expected to eat into the UDF's vote share.

But the CPI, and another constituent, the Revolutionary Socialist Party, have more substantive reasons for resisting attempts to include the DIC(K) in the LDF. Over the years, the LDF has developed into a cohesive unit with a distinct Left orientation. By including a breakaway group that only a few months ago was part of the rival front, the LDF might only be contributing to the blurring of the ideological divide. Also, an outfit such as the DIC(K), which walked out of the Congress following a factional conflict, could just as easily return to the parent party. After all, in the early 1980s, the Congress faction led by A.K. Antony was a constituent of the LDF. Within a couple of years of winning the election in the company of the Left parties, Mr. Antony merged his organisation with the Congress, bringing down the LDF Government in the process. More than 20 years later, it is a comparable situation with Mr. Karunakaran and Mr. Antony exchanging places. Not surprisingly, some of the LDF constituents believe Mr. Karunakaran will return to the Congress at the first available opportunity and walk away, as did Mr. Antony, with MLAs who had won the election with Left support. Although the United Democratic Front accepted into its fold leaders such as M.V. Raghavan and K.R. Gowri, who left the Communist Party of India (Marxist), this is not reason enough for the LDF to emulate it. In the short term, the Left has very little to gain by accommodating the DIC(K). And over the long haul, such a move could be counterproductive.

To broaden Kashmir peace process, PM invites Sajjad Lone for Delhi talks

Identify more relevant actors in Kashmir, says People's Conference chief

BHAVNA VIJ-AURORA,
RIYAZ WANI

NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR,
JANUARY 10

A DAY after the Hurriyat Conference charged the government with going slow on the peace process, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has invited J-K People's Conference Chairman Sajjad Lone for talks on January 14.

The invitation by the PMO is a bid to broaden the peace process and involve all separatist groups in J-K. Lone, the son of assassinated Hurriyat

leader Abdul Gani Lone, will be visiting New Delhi at the head of a five-member team. The meeting is likely to be held on Saturday evening.

Termining the invitation as "positive", Lone told *The Indian Express* it was important to have a "sense of realism" while going in for talks.

"Immediate results should not be the yardstick to judge a peace process. The fact that



'Let us make it more inclusive'

the process has started is a victory in itself. There are bound to be problems and there are bound to be speed-break-

ers, but it has to go on," he said.

About other members of the delegation, Lone said the decision will be taken on January 12. Lone, however, called for further broadening of the process. "India should identify more relevant actors in Kash-

mir and try to make the process inclusive," Lone said.

Government sources said the invitation to Lone was part of the Prime Minister's stated decision to involve as many separatists as possible in the peace process. The government, they said, was in touch with other separatist leaders through various interlocutors and will be inviting them.

The invitation to Lone has, however, ruffled the feathers of Hurriyat doves, who think it is an attempt by New Delhi to relegate them to a "less important position".

HURRIYAT | Says Centre seems not too keen on second round of Kashmir talks

'India's reaction is disappointing'

BHAVNA VIJ-AURORA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 9

BACK from Pakistan, the Hurriyat Conference has expressed "disappointment" at New Delhi's reaction to Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf's remarks on demilitarisation of Kashmir.

Talking to *The Indian Express* from Srinagar today, founder chairman of the Hurriyat Conference Mirwaiz Umer Farooq said that the Centre did not appear too keen to hold the second round of talks with the separatists.

About the Pakistan President's remarks on demilitarising Kashmir, he said that New Delhi should either have its own ideas or at least be receptive to other possible solutions. "It is necessary to take the peace process forward. It is very easy to derail it. If the government has some proposals, then they should spell them out," he said.

New Delhi's talks on both fronts—with Islamabad and with the Hurriyat—needed to pick up pace, he said. "In Pakistan, we met the President, the Prime Minister and also had talks with the All-Party Kashmir Parliamentary Committee. They all agreed that the focus has to be on taking the process forward—towards



Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf with Mirwaiz Umer Farooq and Abdul Ghani Bhatt in Islamabad last week. PTI

a settlement," the Mirwaiz said.

He said that Musharraf had assured the delegation of complete withdrawal of troops from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), if India agreed to withdraw troops from Jammu and Kashmir. In fact, the President, he said, had offered joint action to combat terrorism.

The peace process, he said, had entered a phase where we have to evolve new ideas since a solution can-

not be found in stated positions.

The Hurriyat leader said that they also discussed the self-governance issue with the Pakistani leadership. "The issue of self-rule is at an embryonic stage and talks need to be held at all levels before taking a final decision," he added.

About their talks with the Centre, he said that the government had not done much to boost the process. "The Hurriyat expected a better re-

'Musharraf had assured the delegation of complete withdrawal of troops from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), if India agreed to withdraw troops from Jammu and Kashmir'

sponse in terms of redressal of human rights problems and custodial killings in the state."

He said that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, in a meeting in September last, had assured them of sorting out the issues, but not much had been done on ground.

"The Centre needs to fulfil its commitments on ending custodial killings, showing more respect to human rights and releasing of political detainees. The PM had assured us of releasing detainees and putting in place a strict mechanism to check human right violations."

The Centre had released more than 50 political detainees after the talks and also issued a "dos and don'ts" for the security personnel engaged in counter-insurgency operations in the state, specially in civilian areas.

Hurriyat talks of co-existence after meeting Musharraf

Masood Hussain
SRINAGAR 7 JANUARY



Mirwaiz

FOR the first time, Kashmir's moderate separatists have ruled out the possibility of "complete independence" and insisted a way-out lies in "co-existence" with India and Pakistan. They have termed de-militarization a vital pre-requisite for any confidence building measure including self-rule and thrown their weight behind Musharraf's idea of cops replacing troops on the LoC.

Top Hurriyat trio led by Mirwaiz Umer Farooq is visiting Pakistan apparently to show solidarity with the quake survivors. They already had detailed meetings with the Pakistan President General Musharraf during which they told him that their plan of United States of Kashmir resembles his self-rule idea.

Explaining their blueprint, Hurriyat leaders have said their USK blueprint envisages creating a "federal structure" that would protect individual identities of all the "five units of Jammu & Kashmir". Though the regions have not been identified, it is presumed they are talking about Kashmir, Jammu, Ladakh, PoK and Northern Areas. While throwing their weight behind Musharraf's de-militarization idea, the moderates have seconded his recent statement of police replacing the troops on the LoC.

Observers say the statements being issued by Hurriyat are "very significant" especially in wake of the spadework that the neighbours are doing for the secretary level "composite dialogue" scheduled for January 17 in Delhi. Apart from other issues Kashmir continues to be part of the agenda. Mirwaiz Umer Farooq has rejected the idea of LoC getting converted into a permanent border and clarified that self rule is very different from the autonomy because the latter falls within the options of "India's constitutional framework".

Though Mirwaiz and Prof Bhat have stated that all the options being discussed through back-channels are till in embryonic stage, they have insisted on the inevitability of third party involvement especially for guaranteeing the outcome of the negotiations in the long run.

Character of Kashmir militancy changing, says Governor

"Greater strike capability, higher academic profile and wider reach"

Luv Puri

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Governor Lt. Gen. (retd.) Srinivas Kumar Sinha told *The Hindu* that the character of militancy in Jammu and Kashmir was changing, with the militant cadres, though reduced in number, demonstrating greater strike capability, a higher academic profile and wider reach. This was seen during the recent terrorist strikes across the country, Mr. Sinha said. However, the state apparatus was fully aware of the changing trends and would effectively deal with the situation.

He criticised the Pakistan establishment's silence over the activities of terror outfits in that country. "You still have chiefs of terrorist outfits moving about freely across the border," he said. Islamabad was indifferent

to the activities of jihadi groups, which have a direct fallout on Jammu and Kashmir. Infiltration still continued and there was a spurt during the earthquake as the fence was damaged.

"I refuse to believe that the Pakistan Army personnel along the Line of Control do not have knowledge when the terrorists sneak in. The enlightened moderation, which the U.S. or the Western world thinks President Musharraf is practising, is of little value for us and, in the long run, not even to them. The lessons of cold war are all before us."

- Pakistani establishment's silence on militants criticised
- State apparatus fully aware of the changing trends
- The State has the highest rural per capita income

On the political dialogue and type of solutions, some based on cartographic changes coming mostly from outside the country, he said he would not like to discuss specific solutions. But, at the same time, Jammu and Kashmir was the only State having its own Constitution. Even acts of Parliament had to be ratified by the State Assembly.

Economic situation

"On the economic front, the State cannot be termed poor as only 3.5 per cent of the total population live below the poverty line. According to the latest National Sample Survey of the per

capita earning in the rural areas of the country, the State has the highest: Rs. 5,500 per month. This is even higher than Punjab."

Mr. Sinha drew a comparison of the situation on both sides of the Line of Control. "People from Northern areas held by Pakistan have no democratic structure. An administrator appointed by Islamabad is in charge of its affairs. Recently, a functionary of the council of Northern areas met me on his own initiative and desired the opening of the Kargil-Skardu road. Two hundred persons have been killed in sectarian violence this year in that belt. Locals Shias are against the demographic changes going on in the Northern areas. This implicitly answers the question why Pakistan is unwilling to open this road."

THE HINDU

0 1 JAN 2006

Congress-JD(S) coalition under stress: Gowda

His party's national executive to decide whether to continue in or pull out of Karnataka Government

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The differences between the Congress and the Janata Dal (Secular) in Karnataka deepened on Monday, with the former Prime Minister, H.D. Deve Gowda, announcing that his party's national executive would decide on February 8 whether to continue in or withdraw from the coalition government in the State.

Mr. Gowda told reporters here that the coalition came under "severe stress" after the Congress decided to explore the possibility of aligning with "JD

(S) rebels" led by the former Deputy Chief Minister, Siddaramaiah, in zilla panchayats following the recent elections.

"The JD (S) joined with the Congress to form the government after the last Assembly elections to check the growth of communal forces in the State. We came to some understanding. Now, the Congress has decided to deviate from it. We will assess the situation at various levels and take a decision at the national executive meeting. I will meet Congress president Sonia Gandhi after the meeting and convey the party's decision."

Mr. Gowda said he had remained silent though he was "attacked and humiliated" by some Congress leaders for over a year. He was reacting now because the Congress was attempting to align with the very persons against whom the JD (S) had taken action for trying to break the party.

Mr. Gowda stressed that neither any Congress leader in the party headquarters here, including Ms. Gandhi, nor Chief Minister Dharam Singh was to blame. He, however, declined to name those who he thought were re-

sponsible.

The JD (S) president denied any move to tie up with the Bharatiya Janata Party. Describing his meeting with the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, on Sunday night as a "courtesy call," Mr. Gowda said he rejected the BJP's offer of support when he was on the verge of losing his post as Prime Minister. Reacting to Mr. Gowda's remarks, Congress spokesperson Jayanti Natarajan said the issue would be sorted out.

"In a coalition arrangement, problems can crop up. They will

be sorted out. The government in Karnataka is stable and will complete its term."

Asked about the meeting between Mr. Gowda and Mr. Vajpayee, she said there was nothing wrong in it. "In a democracy, leaders have a right to meet each other."

Mr. Dharam Singh, who was here on an official visit, said he would convey Mr. Gowda's views to the Congress high command and request it to resolve the issue. He expressed the confidence that "everything would soon be sorted out between the two coalition partners."