

# 'Joint Centre-State efforts needed to check naxalism'

Accelerate socio-economic development, Patil tells States

Vinay Kumar

**NEW DELHI:** As the naxal menace continues to be an area of concern, the Centre on Wednesday asked the States to maintain constant vigil to ensure that the insurgents did not expand their base and spread influence to new areas.

A meeting of the Chief Secretaries and Directors-General of Police on internal security and law and order noted that new threats and challenges to internal security continued to emerge, prompting the need for new mechanisms to counter them.

The meeting reiterated the need for combined efforts between the Centre and States to fight terrorism, insurgency in the north-east, naxalism in 13 States, organised crime and crimes against the vulnerable sections of society.

## Fine-tune action plans

The meeting of the country's top police officials and administrators came a day ahead of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's scheduled session with the Chief Ministers of 13 naxal-affected States, where a new co-ordinated plan is likely to be un-

• **Easy availability of arms across the borders endangers internal security**

• **State police to closely monitor activities of religious organisations**

veiled to tackle naxalism.

In his inaugural address, Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil said the Centre's policy was to simultaneously combat the naxal menace on the political, security and development fronts. He asked the States to fine-tune their action plans and intensify anti-naxal operations by improving intelligence gathering.

"States must give greater attention to accelerate implementation of land reforms and socio-economic development in naxal-affected areas. The Central Government remains committed to providing all possible help to the States and facilitating greater coordination among them to meet the challenge posed by naxalism," Mr. Patil told the meeting.

In the first quarter of the current year, the incidence of naxal

violence decreased by 13.9 per cent. However, casualties have gone up by 29 per cent. "This is mainly due to the heightened level of naxal violence in Chhatisgarh," Mr. Patil said.

The Home Minister said factional violence, agitations, extortion, kidnapping, siphoning of development funds, money laundering, easy availability of arms from across the borders and shelter given to Indian insurgent groups in neighbouring countries remained areas of concern for internal security.

## Improved security in Kashmir

Referring to the significant improvement of security in Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Patil said terrorist-related incidents reduced by 22 per cent, civilian deaths by 21 per cent and those of security personnel by 33 per cent in 2005 compared to those in 2004.

Similarly, infiltration reduced by 54 per cent in 2005 over 2004. Security forces foiled 49 infiltration bids, killing 189 terrorists last year compared to 43 bids in 2004 where 95 terrorists were killed.

"In the first quarter of this year, only 30 infiltrators are re-

ported to have crossed over to our territory. Local support for terrorist activities is receding," the Home Minister said.

Briefing media persons after the meeting, Union Home Secretary V. K. Duggal said all States had agreed to strengthen their intelligence-gathering network, particularly at the local "micro" police station level. It was also decided to closely monitor activities of religious organisations and other extra-territorial organisations that posed threats to internal security and communal harmony.

## Coastal patrolling

On strengthening coastal security, Mr. Duggal said about 70 police stations along the 7,000-km coastal line of the country were identified to be trained in patrolling and the first instalment of the Rs. 514-crore plan spread over five years had already been released.

He said the Home Ministry had also released funds to improve policing in seven mega cities.

The meeting recognised that terrorists were going for "soft targets" such as religious places and scientific institutions for their subversive activities.

13 APR 2006

THE HINDU

# Centre blames Gujarat govt for clashes

**Press Trust of India**

NEW DELHI/ VADODARA, May 2: The Centre today said the Vadodara district administration did not take enough caution in dealing with the issue of removing the dargah as matters of religious sentiments needed to be dealt with a lot of sensitivity.

"Enough caution was not taken by the district administration which decided to remove the dargah on the pretext of clearing illegal encroachment. More caution should have been taken," minister of state for home Mr Sriprakash Jaiswal told reporters here.

Mr Jaiswal, who visited Vadodara where five persons have been killed in clashes following the demolition of the dargah, said "such matters (religious) should have been dealt with more sensitivity." He said the administration could have sorted out the matter in consultation with the community representatives and not

resorted to the demolition right away.

Pointing out that it was believed that the dargah was nearly 300 years old, Mr Jaiswal said "distinction should be made between an ordinary place of worship and the one which is a few hundred years old, where more sentiments are involved." He said the district administration could have used baton-charge or fired rubber bullets to bring the situation under control.

Asked whether the Centre would order an inquiry into the clash, he said "we will see what the state government will do and thereafter decide on the matter." He also said the Centre was ready to assist the state government in every possible manner and would provide extra forces, if sought.

Mr Jaiswal said according to the information received by him, the clash was not of communal nature but between the district administration and members of a particu-

lar community.

## Firing death

One person was killed in police firing and two were injured in clashes in Vadodara early this morning, taking the death toll in the violence to five, police said.

Police fired at a rioting mob around 2 a.m. in the Moti Vohrawaad area, killing one person while two others sustained injuries in mob clashes, they said.

Terming the situation as "comparatively calm", the authorities decided to relax curfew for two hours in the afternoon in Raopura and Panigate areas and for two hours in the evening at Wadi and Karelibaug.

The demolition of a more than 200-year-old dargah by civic authorities sparked widespread violence yesterday, claiming four lives in clashes and police firing, prompting authorities to impose curfew in the sensitive walled city area.

03 MAY 2006

THE STATESMAN

Rare intervention stays demolition

# Delhi defuses Gujarat bomb

OUR BUREAU

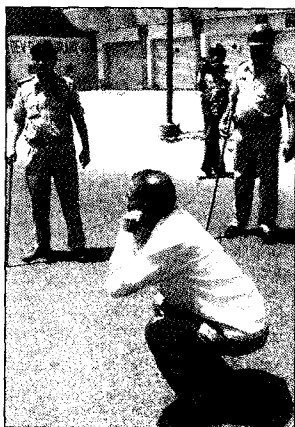
New Delhi, May 4: The Centre today made a rare legal intervention into the affairs of Gujarat to protect the "secular fabric of the nation", obtaining a stay on a high court ruling that ordered the demolition of all shrines encroaching on public land.

With Vadodara still smouldering in the aftermath of the demolition of a 300-year-old dargah and fearing a flare-up on a wider scale if more shrines are razed, the Union government set in motion what could be described as the strongest pre-emptive action since the Gujarat riots of 2002.

"The (high court) order... would have serious consequences on the law and order situation in the state and this may have repercussions in other states and, consequently, on the secular fabric of the nation as a whole," the Centre told the apex court.

Taking cognisance on its own of a newspaper report that said a court building was attacked by a mob protesting against the demolition, Gujarat High Court had on Tuesday directed four civic bodies to remove without discrimination all religious shrines obstructing roads.

The four civic bodies are those in Vadodara — where peace held during the day today, aided by a flag march by the army — Ahmedabad, Ra-



A man being punished for violating curfew in Vadodara. (PTI)

jkot and Surat. According to a controversial estimate by the Ahmedabad civic body, 1,200 temples and 260 Islamic shrines encroach upon public space in the city alone.

It is unusual for the Centre to intervene in such a case because the Union of India was not a party in the high court proceedings. But the sensitive nature and potential for trouble forced the Centre's hand, officials said.

Armed with inputs from the ground, the home ministry consulted the law ministry and the political leadership, and gave the green signal, following which a special leave petition was filed in the Supreme Court in the latter half of the afternoon session.

Home ministry officials said the decision to move the court was based on Article 355,

which imposes a duty on the Centre to protect states from external aggression and internal disturbance.

But the article — the precursor to the use of Article 356 under which a state government can be dismissed — was not mentioned in the court petition, perhaps to avoid a political confrontation between the Congress-led Centre and the BJP-ruled Gujarat.

The petition, however, did reflect the spirit of Article 355: "The Union of India is deeply concerned about the safety and security of the citizens of the state of Gujarat and the prevailing law and order situation."

The Union government submitted that the situation in Gujarat could become "uncontrollable" if the demolition drive is not stopped. It also pointed out that Vadodara is still extremely volatile.

A bench of Justices Ruma Pal and Dalveer Bhandari then stayed the high court order.

Appearing for the Centre, additional solicitor-general Gopal Subramaniam told the bench that the "premature" high court order was passed without appreciating the "severe and grave consequences" within Gujarat and its ramifications outside.

The Centre said the high court order was passed without verifying the contents of the newspaper report on the attack on the Vadodara court building.

■ See Page 6

# Mechanism on quota issue soon: Centre

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It will protect the interests of all sections of society: Pranab

Special Correspondent

**NEW DELHI:** The Centre on Monday said it would soon come out with a "mechanism" on the reservation issue that would protect the interests of all sections of society.

The decision follows the nationwide agitation by doctors and medical students against the Government's proposal to bring in a law to provide reservation for Other Backward Classes in institutions of higher education.

Briefing reporters after a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs on Monday evening, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said: "We will ensure a mechanism in which it will be possible to ensure the interests of all sections of society."

He said details of the mechanism were being worked out and it would be announced shortly. "The mechanism will be satisfactory to all. It is not our intention to cause harm to anybody. Those who are agitating are also our children."

## Notice to doctors

Earlier, the Government appealed to the doctors to resume duties. Union Health and Family Welfare Secretary P.K. Hota said a general notice had been sent to them and, if they did not report for work by Tuesday, individual notices would be sent and action

taken. "We have no choice. If we do not take action, it would amount to contempt of court as there is a Supreme Court directive that bans doctors from going on strike and a Delhi High Court order that is applicable to the Government-run hospitals of the capital," he said.

## Medical services affected

The Centre is in touch with the Railways, ESI and the Army for referring critical cases to their hospitals.

Opposition members in the Lok Sabha expressed concern over the impact of the anti-reservation agitation on hospital services in Delhi. Raising the issue during zero hour, Prabhunath Singh (Janata Dal-United) said the health system, particularly in Delhi hospitals, was in disarray.

The BJP's deputy leader in the Lok Sabha V.K. Malhotra said that notice had been given to the Speaker's office on the "brutal" police action against agitating medical students.

However, the party said that it was not against reservation. Charging the Government with creating confusion, he said the Government should clarify its stand.

Mr. Malhotra said there was need for reservation for the socially disadvantaged without sacrificing merit.



**PATIENTS' DILEMMA:** Patients affected by the anti-reservation stir, at a makeshift camp set up by the striking doctors outside the LNJP Hospital in New Delhi on Monday. — PHOTO: SHANKER CHAKRAVARTY

# Govt hardens stand against Hurriyat

## PM will not hold any separate meeting

**JAY Raina**  
New Delhi, May 23

PRIME MINISTER Manmohan Singh is unlikely to meet the moderate Hurriyat Conference leaders even on the sidelines of the second round-table conference on Kashmir beginning in Srinagar on Wednesday afternoon.

In what appears to be a hardening of its stance against the Hurriyat's decision to boycott the Srinagar Mahapanchayat, a senior PMO official said, "Singh's Srinagar engagement is round-table-centric, even as he plans to interact with the state government on Kashmir's development issues. There is no possibility of any separate meeting with the Hurriyat", he asserted.

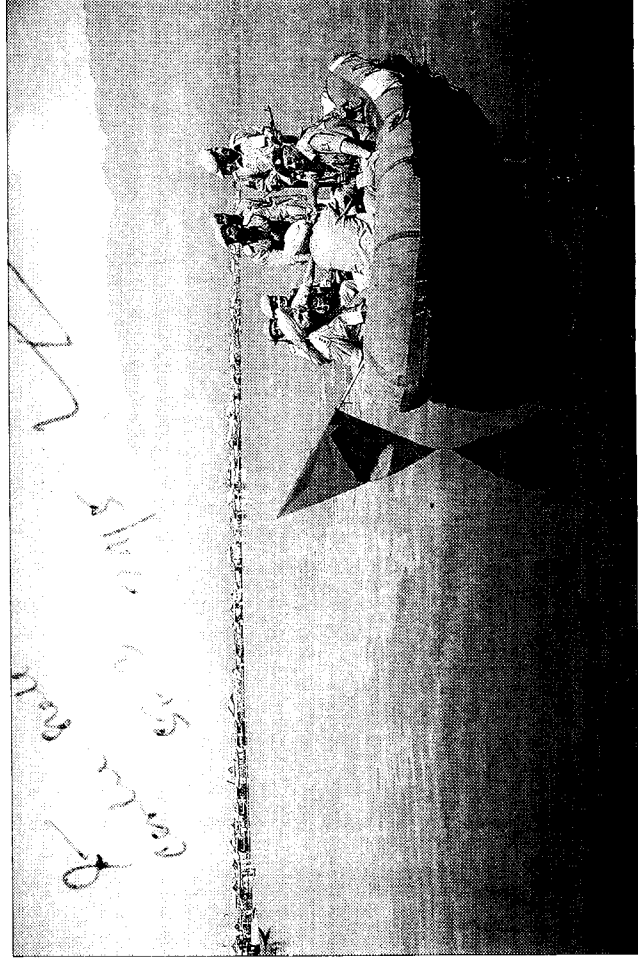
On Monday, J&K's premier political party, the National Conference headed by Omar Abdullah, had threatened to boycott the round-table if the PM would have a one-on-one meeting with the separatists. In its Monday boycott statement, the Hurriyat had branded the round-table as a crowd of hypocrite politi-

cians and ikhwans (counter-insurgents), while labelling itself "genuine representatives of the people and their sentiments".

Elaborating on the Hurriyat's boycott of the second Mahapanchayat, the official recalled that, during his May 3 meeting with separatists in Delhi, the Prime Minister had invited them to attend the Srinagar conclave to articulate their views for a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir problem. "After they spurned the Prime Minister's invitation, there's no room now for him to meet the separatists even after they expressed their desire to have a one-on-one meeting with him", he said.

PMO sources further clarified that the Hurriyat might now come up with specific proposals to the Union home minister.

Notwithstanding Hurriyat's boycott, the roundtable is to be kickstarted with the PM's remarks, to be followed by structured discussions on the conclusions arrived at at the February 25 Delhi conclave. This meet may also discuss the PDP-sponsored self-rule issue and National Conference's autonomy plank.



PTI

Security personnel keep vigil for the second round-table meet, in Dal Lake on Tuesday.

## Meet in shadow of gun

THE SHER-E-KASHMIR International Convention Centre (SKICC) the unnamed Camp David of Jammu and Kashmir overlooking the shimmering waters of the Dal Lake is all set to host the second round-table conference in less than 24 hours, virtually under the shadow of the gun.

While the authorities have sought to secure the venue from possible terrorist attacks with guns and binoculars dotting the entire landscape, the separatists will be testing the ground on the basis of the response of their two-day bandh call beginning Wednesday.

This event — involving talking peace and trying to find a solution to the Kashmir problem — is the first of its kind in J&K. The SKICC has been, till now, the scene of PMs presiding over security meets and inaugurating economic and political conferences. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will be the first to chair a peace conference in Srinagar in the backdrop of widespread terrorist assaults and fears of more strikes, since many *fitaveen* are still at large.

The PM will step into the chandeliered hall to address an exclusive audience of non-separatist parties, but the main Opposition party in the country, the BJP, will be missing. The PM is carrying with him an agenda and a package of peace, but the underlying message is: everything is possible only if terrorism is wiped out. **HTC, Srinagar:**

# জঙ্গিরা ফিরতে চাইলে বিবেচনায় রাজি দিল্লি

অগ্নি রায় • শ্রীনগর

২৪ মে: এক দিকে উপত্যকার হত্যাদ্যম মনকে চাঙ্গা করা, অন্য দিকে, সন্ত্রাস এবং কাশ্মীর সমস্যা নিয়ে ইসলামাবাদের উদ্দেশে বার্তা পাঠানো।

উত্তপ্ত শ্রীনগরে এসে প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ তাঁর কাশ্মীর-বৈঠক শুরু করলেন এই দ্বিস্তরীয় কৌশল নিয়েই।

দ্বিতীয় গোলটেবিল বৈঠকের প্রারম্ভিক বক্তৃতাতাই তিনি জানিয়ে দিলেন, সীমান্ত পেরিয়ে চলে যাওয়া কাশ্মীরি জঙ্গিরা ফিরে আসতে চাইলে বিবেচনা করবে নয়াদিল্লি। 'পরিবর্তিত পরিস্থিতির প্রেক্ষিতে' ভারতে কারারুদ্ধ পাক বন্দিদের মুক্তির বিষয়টিও পর্যালোচনা করা হচ্ছে বলে তিনি জানান। এই সদর্থক

আহ্বানের পাশাপাশি সন্ত্রাসবাদের কড়া সমালোচনা করেছেন মনমোহন। বলেছেন, "এই ধরনের কাজকর্ম রাজ্যকে সন্ত্রাসবাদ ও নাশকতা থেকে রক্ষা করার ক্ষেত্রে আমাদের প্রতিজ্ঞাকেই সুদৃঢ় করবে।" নাম না করে ডোডায় সাম্প্রতিক ঘটনার নিন্দা করেন মনমোহন। বলেন, "আমরা সকলেই কুস্মৃতে পারছি যে, একদা যে রাজ্য ধর্মীয় সহিষ্ণুতার প্রতীক ছিল, তা গত কয়েক বছরে সন্ত্রাসের ফলে সাম্প্রদায়িক উত্তেজনার কেন্দ্রবিন্দু হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে।"

হরিয়ত কোনও সুসংহত প্রস্তাব নিয়ে গোলটেবিল বৈঠকে যোগ দেবে বলে আশা করেছিল নয়াদিল্লি। আজ প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কার্যালয় সূত্রে জানানো হয়েছে যে, মে মাসে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গে বৈঠকে এমন প্রতিশ্রুতিই দেন মধ্যমপন্থী হরিয়ত নেতা মিরওয়াইজ ওমর ফারুক। আজ তাঁদের অনুপস্থিতির কারণে গোলটেবিলের মূল মেজাজ যাতে ক্ষুণ্ণ না হয়, সে ব্যাপারে বিশেষ সক্রিয় ছিলেন মনমোহন। হরিয়ত-সহ কোনও বিচ্ছিন্নতাবাদী সংগঠনই যে আলোচনার টেবিলে অস্থিত নয়, সে কথা কাশ্মীরের মানুষের কাছে স্পষ্ট করতে চেয়ে বলেছেন, "সমস্ত রকম আলোচনা এগিয়ে চলা উচিত।... আশা করব সঠিক সময়ে হরিয়ত বৈঠকে যোগ দেবে। এর ফলে তারাও আমাদের সঙ্গে তাদের চিন্তা ভাগ করে নিতে পারবে।"

কাশ্মীরের আবেগের কথা মাথায় রেখে কিছুটা অভূতপূর্ব

ভাবেই আগাগোড়া উর্দুতে বক্তৃতা দেন মনমোহন। রাজ্যের মানুষের ক্ষোভের একটি প্রধান জ্বালামুখকে প্রশমিত করতে চেয়ে সতর্ক করে দেন নিরাপত্তারক্ষীদের। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কথায়, "সর্বোচ্চ নিরাপত্তা দিতে হবে, কিন্তু স্বাভাবিক জীবনে যেন সামান্য অসুবিধাও না হয়।" জম্মু-কাশ্মীর ও কেন্দ্রের এক বাহিনীর সচিব এবং কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রীর কাছে নিয়ে কৃষি থেকে স্বাস্থ্য, পরিকাঠামো থেকে বিদ্যুৎ, রাজ্যের প্রতিটি ক্ষেত্র ধরে ধরে আজ বৈঠক করেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। বেকারিত্বকেই এখানকার মূল অসুখ হিসাবে চিহ্নিত করে ১৫ দিনের মধ্যে সড়ক নির্মাণ প্রকল্পে ৫০০০ জনের কর্মসংস্থানের ঘোষণা করেছেন।

তবে আজকের বৈঠকে কাশ্মীরি জঙ্গিদের ফিরে আসার

আহ্বানকেই সবচেয়ে তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ বলে মনে করছে স্থানীয় মহলা। এর

## কাশ্মীরে ঘোষণা মনমোহনের



আগে কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রক বেশ কয়েকবার এই কথা বলেছিল। কিন্তু প্রধানমন্ত্রীর ঘোষণার পরে বিষয়টিতে অনেকটাই রক্ত সঞ্চালন হল বলে মনে করা হচ্ছে। এই প্রক্রিয়া কী ভাবে বাস্তবায়িত হবে, পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে কথা বলে নয়াদিল্লি 'সেফ প্যাসেজের' প্রস্তাব দেবে কিনা, এ সবই পরবর্তী আত্মবর্ধক বৈঠকগুলিতে আলোচনা হবে। বৈঠকে উপস্থিত রাজ্যের নেতাদের প্রধানমন্ত্রী বলেন, "পরিবর্তিত পরিস্থিতির প্রেক্ষিতে সমস্ত বন্দির বিষয়ে

পর্যালোচনা করব। এদের মধ্যে তারাও রয়েছে, যারা আইন ভেঙে সীমান্ত পেরিয়েছে ও এখন ফিরে আসতে উদগ্রীব।"

গত দু'বছরে মোট ছ'বার কাশ্মীরে এলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখাকে শিথিল করা, গুরুত্বহীন করার কথা আগেও বলেছেন। আজও বললেন, "আমাদের ইচ্ছা এবং প্রয়াস হল, নিয়ন্ত্রণরেখার উভয় দিকই যাতে সম্পদশালী হয়।" এই কাশ্মীরে দাঁড়িয়েই দেশের মানচিত্র নতুন করে না আঁকার কথা ঘোষণা করে সাফ সঙ্কেতও পাঠিয়েছিলেন ইসলামাবাদের উদ্দেশে। আজ তিনি বিশ্বের সামনেও একটি সার সত্য তুলে ধরেন। জম্মু-কাশ্মীরের সমস্যা ও সন্ত্রাসের সঙ্গে ভারত-পাক দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্ক যে ওতপ্রোত জড়িত, তা বলেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। বলেন, জম্মু ও কাশ্মীরের সমস্যার দু'টি মাত্রা রয়েছে। একটি দিল্লির সঙ্গে ইসলামাবাদের অন্যটি দিল্লির সঙ্গে শ্রীনগরের। দুই সম্পর্কের মাত্রা পৃথক, কিন্তু একে অন্যকে প্রভাবিত করে।"

25 MAY 2012

ANADABAZAR PAINIKA

# 5 groups to study J&K's autonomy

M. Saleem Pandit | TNN

**Srinagar:** Seeking to give a meaningful conclusion to two days of talks in a barricaded convention centre overlooking the Dal Lake, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Thursday proposed creating five working groups to grapple with the complex issue of how much power the government in Srinagar should have and how ties across the frontier with Pakistan can be bettered.

"I believe the time is ripe to agree on the concrete mechanism for taking this process forward so that we can address issues that concern the people of this beautiful state," Singh told reporters before flying back to Delhi.

However, Singh decided to cut short his three-day visit to two, "to end the inconvenience being caused to tourists due to placement of security arrangements in the valley", said Sanjaya Baru, the media advisor to the PM.

The working groups agreed on at the roundtable conference, which was boycotted by the moderate and hardline Hurriyat factions, were to be on confidence-building measures between communities, improving relations across the LoC, ensuring good governance and forging efficient ties between Srinagar and Delhi.

The issue of effective devolution of power among different regions to meet regional, sub-regional and ethnic aspirations would be taken up by the working group on propping up centre-state relation, the Prime Minister said. Singh said he has instructed the security forces to be "more mindful" of human rights and be sensitive to the liberties and self-respect of ordinary people.

"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," he said.

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

On the peace process with Pakistan, Singh 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.

"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.

## IN DIALOGUE



The issue of proper devolution of power among different regions to meet regional, sub-regional and ethnic aspirations would be taken

Manmohan Singh | PM

Meanwhile, normal life remained paralysed in Srinagar as the conference wound up as the city wore the look of a garrison town under siege. Given the serial blasts on Wednesday, authorities had closed several roads to prevent repetition of grenade blasts on second day, a senior police officer said.

The job was made easier for police and security forces as most residents, including government employees, remained indoors due strike call given by Hurriyat Conference and supported by the Kashmir Bar Association for two days.

26 MAY 2006

THE TIMES OF INDIA

# Urban renewal

## Further friction in Centre-State equation

It is a crippling blow on the eve of the elections. Kolkata is the loser with the Centre's decision not to release funds under the National Urban Renewal Mission for traffic and transport. Like a bevy of other issues, this project has been an area of friction between Delhi and West Bengal. The Left Front is loathe to effect the reforms with which the fund has been tied up. They relate to removal of the urban land ceiling, reduction in the land registration charge and a user fee on services. And yet, none of these irritants appear to have influenced the latest move of the union ministry of urban development. The refusal is directly linked to the inexcusably tardy progress of the present dispensation's proud boast — the Megacity Project. The flopped schemes are vital for traffic and transport, notably the widening of the EM Bypass to an eight-lane highway, construction of a flyover across Bondel Road and widening of the expressway in Kona and Barrackpore. The state only exposes its wimpish helplessness when it pleads that work on the bypass has been held up because it entails the dismantling of the roadside stalls belonging to a certain community. The attitude is of a piece with the selective cleansing of the city's pavements.

Beyond that is the larger issue of the dead hand of government failing to utilise central funds. The city's Environment Improvement Project, intended to take care of drainage, slums and waste management was on the verge of collapse last year as the previous KMC dispensation under Trinamul was able to spend barely Rs 64 crore out of the Rs 1,718-crore ADB grant, channeled by the Centre. No less disastrous has been the Left Front's record in executing the the Megacity Project. Which explains the Centre's decision last June to slash the allotted funds from Rs 241 crore to Rs 31 crore. The National Urban Renewal Mission may well run aground with Rs 941 crore, earmarked for traffic and transport, being withheld for non-performance. Both the ministers for urban development and transport seem totally insensitive to the serial setbacks. This time, the classic cavil of the Centre being tight-fisted and step-motherly will fool none.

File - STATE/Urban



# PM to tell Orissa: stop seeking free power from inter-state units

KANDULA SUBRAMANIAM  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 14

STATES like Orissa have started demanding a portion of power from inter-state power stations (pit head) located in their states free of cost. Before this snowballs into a larger issue and other states also start demanding the same, it is learnt that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is going to tell the empowered group of chief ministers, especially that of Orissa, not to pursue this demand.

Before the meeting with CMs, which was scheduled on Monday (February 13), the power ministry informed the PM that the trend started by Orissa had a strong potential of creating problems all over the country. Not only does this result in an increase in retail tariff for other states, min-

istry officials pointed out that such demands have a chain effect and would affect the manufacturing sector. The meeting with the CMs is now scheduled for March.

Orissa, on its part, wants to take advantage of its natural resource reserves and is bargaining for the same facility extended for hydel power stations to be given even for coal-based stations. The ministry officials told The Indian Express that apart from Orissa, no other state, like Mandhya Pradesh or for that matter Chattisgarh, which were also sitting on huge coal reserves, had come forward with such a demand.

Officials said that the concept of giving 12 per cent free power from hydel stations to a state where the project was located was taken in order to ensure that they had enough funds for restoration and rehabili-

tation (R&R) purposes. Added to that, the very important difference between a hydel and a thermal venture is that there are no fuel costs associated with running a hydel station. They also pointed out that states like Orissa would in any case benefit from the royalty they receive on coal and in that regard had no case for demanding free power from inter-state power stations located in their state.

Apart from this issue, on the contentious issue of providing free power to agriculture, the ministry has pointed out to the PM that not only is there a need to stop this trend but to also impress upon them (states) to start recovering at least 50 per cent of the cost of supply to the agricultural sector as per the 1993 recommendations of the Sharad Pawar Committee.

# NDA won't give up sack-PM chant

9- Centre State Aoti

## Oppn Team Tells Prez Buta Must Be Booted Out, Not Allowed To Take Salute

**New Delhi:** Asserting that the supreme court verdict on Bihar had long-term implications for constitutional propriety and democratic accountability, NDA leaders on Wednesday petitioned President Abdul Kalam to secure PM Manmohan Singh's resignation and dismiss Bihar governor Buta Singh before Republic Day.

"We feel that the declaration by the apex court that the decision to dissolve the Bihar assembly was unconstitutional, arbitrary and malafide, which resulted in forcing an election on Bihar, has long-term implications for constitutional propriety, political morality and democratic accountability. In the circumstances, we respectfully urge you to seek the resignation of Prime Minister Singh and dismiss governor Buta Singh," NDA leaders, including L K Advani and George Fernandes, said in a memorandum to the President.

Addressing mediapersons later,



**NDA leaders led by L K Advani (centre) address the press after meeting President Abdul Kalam to demand the sacking of PM Manmohan Singh and Bihar governor Buta Singh on Wednesday**

Advani said, "Buta Singh has no right to continue in office even for a moment. He should be removed from office before taking salute. He should be sacked and it will be unfair if he takes the salute." In an apparent reference to UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, he said,

"The President should find out from the Prime Minister if the governor's report was a brainwave and handiwork of Buta Singh alone or was it a command performance? The country wants to know in national interests."

Despite the SC indictment, Buta

Singh on Tuesday ruled out the possibility of his resignation, declaring that he would take the salute on January 26.

The NDA leaders told the President, "After being misled by the governor, the Union cabinet, without any independent verification which it ought to have done, misled Your Excellency into agreeing to such a gross case of constitutional abuse. What was the urgency to approach Your Excellency in the dead of the night in far away Moscow also remains curiously unexplained."

Alleging that the Prime Minister was an active party to the motivated exercise to invoke Article 356 and dissolve the Bihar assembly, the opposition recalled that he had told the media on the morning of the cabinet decision that "an atmosphere of horse-trading of the worst kind prevailed and we had considerable information to substantiate the governor's recommendation".

Agencies

# Buta Singh, Manmohan must quit, says National Democratic Alliance

Demand follows Court comments on dissolution of the Assembly

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance on Tuesday demanded resignations of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Bihar Governor Buta Singh following the Supreme Court's indictment of the United Progressive Alliance Government at the Centre for recommending dissolution of the Bihar Assembly in May last year.

The President, who was abroad at the time, dissolved the Assembly after the Union Cabinet chaired by Dr. Singh recommended such a move at a late night meeting.

NDA Convenor and Janata Dal (United) president George Fernandes said not just Mr. Buta Singh but the Prime Minister, along with the Union Council of Ministers, should also resign.

"If the Prime Minister and the Union Council of Ministers can be misled, then they are not worthy of being in power. The President has every right to remove

• President has every right to remove Council of Ministers: George Fernandes

• Court's comments are strong, verdict has a far-reaching impact: Advani

them."

Warning of a "jan andolan" (mass movement) if those indicted continued to remain in power, Mr. Fernandes said the NDA would soon meet the President to press its demand.

BJP leader L.K. Advani said the judgment had a "far-reaching and meaningful impact": "Democratic accountability demands that both the Prime Minister and the Governor should quit. The decision that has been held unconstitutional by the apex court may have been taken on the basis of the Governor's report but the decision was not his. The judgment says that the decision was motivated to prevent someone [Nitish Kumar] from taking office. By convening a meeting in the dead of the

night, the Prime Minister was sub-serving the same motive. The Court's observations may appear harsher against the Governor but the culpability of the Prime Minister is evidently greater because he was instrumental in misleading the President in this regard."

The BJP leader said the Supreme Court had been "understandably polite" in its observations on the Union Council of Ministers but whatever had been said was a strong comment.

"For the Court to say that the Council of Ministers accepted the Governor's report without verification as gospel truth is a very strong comment and a serious charge. In fact, the judgment in its totality suggests that if the

25/1  
Mishra  
Centre - State  
rel.

Government was misled, the Prime Minister, as the head of the Council of Ministers, had misled the President into committing an unconstitutional act."

According to him, as head of the ruling UPA, Sonia Gandhi was also "accountable."

Mr. Advani described as "gross contempt of court" Mr. Buta Singh's reported denial of any plans to quit. "Anybody with a conscience would have stepped down."

On the Supreme Court's observation about having a policy on the appointment of governors, Mr. Advani said the Sarkaria Commission's recommendation that political persons should not be appointed to that post was unanimously rejected in the Inter-State Council meeting. The NDA-led Government, however, had initiated the convention of consulting Chief Ministers on governors' appointments but the UPA had done away with that practice "with this result."

**BIHAR DISSOLUTION VERDICT** | Centre should have verified facts, not accepted 'unconstitutional' report, sent in 'undue haste' as gospel truth: 3-2 judgment; Buta defiant, says not stepping down

# Buta Singh gets it in the neck as Centre tries to save its own

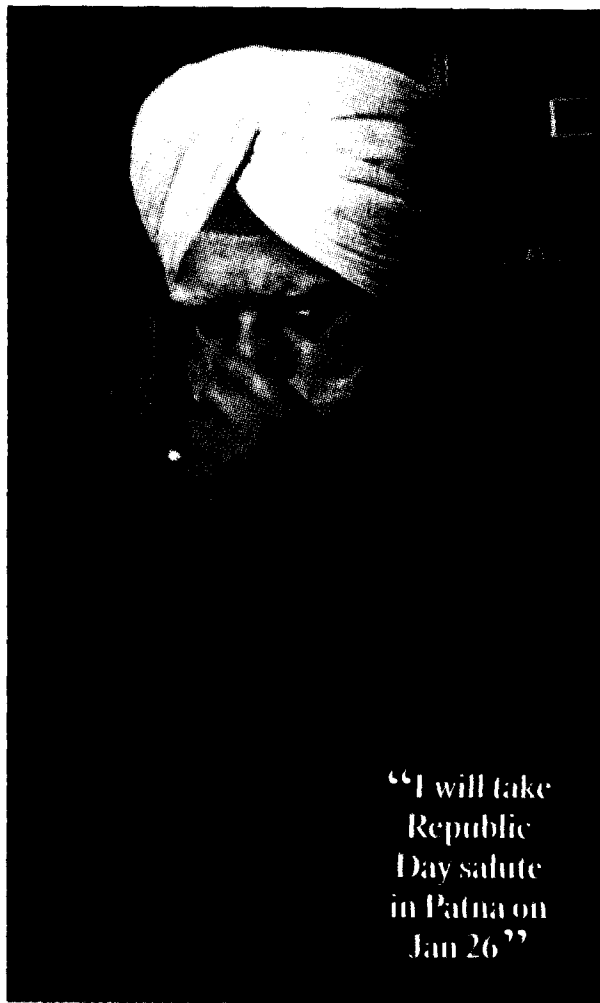
EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 24

**S**TOPPING short of indicting the Union Cabinet, the Supreme Court today slammed Bihar Governor Buta Singh saying he misled the Centre in recommending the dissolution of the state Assembly. The court's strictures on the Cabinet were limited to saying that it should have verified the facts before accepting the Governor's report as "gospel truth."

A defiant Buta Singh, however, refused to see this as an indictment and claimed he wasn't quitting, that he would take the "Republic Day salute" in Patna on Jan 26 amid growing speculation that the Government would get him to quit, if only to deflect growing heat from the Opposition.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said the country had to accept what the Supreme Court has said but declined to comment on the continuance of Buta Singh.

The apex court, which in its October 7 interim order had called the dissolution unconstitutional, said today that the Governor acted in "undue haste" in sending his report and his motive was to prevent JD (U) from staking claim to



Buta Singh after the SC verdict. Ravi Batra

"I will take Republic Day salute in Patna on Jan 26"

form a government after a fractured verdict.

Ruling on a batch of petitions and a PIL, a five-judge

bench, in a 3-2 judgement, said the Governor sent a report containing "unascertained facts." It said that the

## UPA dumps him now, look what it said when he told them to dissolve

Hours after the SC verdict, the Congress distanced itself from Buta's action, saying the court had not faulted the Council of Ministers. But look how they defended Buta last year:



### May 23, 2005

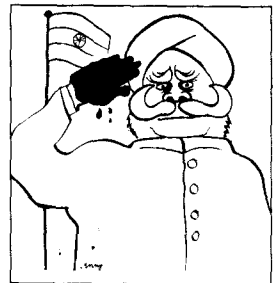
■ Cabinet acts on Buta's report, PM calls up President, who's in Moscow, late at night. Kalam consults advisors before faxing assent past midnight

■ Home Minister Shivraj Patil: "Since situation was worsening in the state, Cabinet accepted Governor's recommendations"

■ CPM statement: "Election result did not provide a mandate to JD(U)-BJP alliance. Yet efforts were made to buy MLAs, making a mockery of democracy"

### May 24, 2005

■ PM in Ranthambhore: "An atmosphere of horse-trading of the worst kind prevailed. We had considerable information to substantiate the Governor's recommendations"



### October 7, 2005

■ In interim order, SC says dissolution unconstitutional

### October 8, 2005

■ PM in Chandigarh: "I do not disown my responsibility as Prime Minister. There were specific circumstances on the basis of which we acted"

■ Sonia Gandhi: "I don't think Raj Bhavan (Governor) is involved in politics"

provisions of the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution were not relevant when Buta Singh sent his report. "That was fully an unconstitutional act." For, defection has to be dealt in accordance with the law as no such power is given to the Governor. "If such a power is

given to a Governor it would be horrendous. The power in the Tenth Schedule lies with the Speaker and not with the Governor."

The court reiterated the recommendation of the Sarkaria Commission that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

25 JAN 2005

INDIA EXPRESS