

NEW BASE ■ Arrested ULFA leader says outfits trying to forge alliance with Maoists

ULFA, KLO homing in on Nepal

SAMUDRA GUPTAKASHYAP
GUWAHATI, MAY 23

MORE than two years after the Royal Bhutan Army flushed out all ULFA and Kamatapur Liberation Organisation (KLO) cadres from the Himalayan kingdom, the two groups are now exploring possibilities of setting up bases in Nepal.

Revealing this, sources in the Intelligence department said interrogation of senior ULFA leader Manoj Haz-

arika, alias Plaban Phukan, who was arrested in Siliguri in North Bengal, also indicated that the two outfits were trying to forge an alliance with the Maoists in Nepal.

Hazarika, along with three other ULFA cadres, was picked up on the night of May 17 following simultaneous raids conducted in two hotels by the IB and West Bengal Police. Two more rebels were later arrested from the Naxalbari area on Sunday night, sources said.

Hazarika, sources said, was a high-ranking leader of the

ULFA who directly reported to commander-in-chief Paresh Barua and headed the dreaded 28th Battalion of the underground group. He was also one of the 11 privileged leaders of the outfit who possessed a satellite phone, sources added.

A case under the Arms Act and various sections of the IPC has been registered against Hazarika and his accomplices. Meanwhile, the local magistrate has sent them to police custody for 10 days.

Hazarika, sources said, was in Nepal recently to hold

discussions with some Maoist leaders on behalf of Paresh Barua and ULFA chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa. Issues related to the establishment of ULFA camps within areas under the influence of the Nepal Maoists also came up during the talks, it is learnt.

Intelligence agencies have been monitoring ULFA movements in the Siliguri corridor, which not only links the North-Eastern region to mainland India but also provides easy and quick passage between Bangladesh and Nepal.

There were reports that some senior ULFA leaders recently travelled between the two countries using the Siliguri corridor, but it was only last week that the agencies could zero in on some of them.

Hazarika, according to police reports here, has for a long time been suspected to have been behind the Dhemaji blast that killed 10 children among others on Independence Day in 2004. There were several cases registered against him in different police stations in Assam, police sources here added.

24 MAY 2006

IB detected Nagpur terrorists

Communications operation enabled it to monitor the squad's movement

Praveen Swami

NEW DELHI: Intelligence Bureau agents had detected the three Lashkar-e-Taiba members killed in Nagpur on Thursday at least three weeks before their abortive attempt to attack the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's headquarters — an operation that could have resulted in large-scale communal violence.

Sources said an Intelligence Bureau communications operation enabled the agency to monitor the squad's movement, as well as their likely target. However, it was not able to determine the precise time of the attack or gather enough details to make pre-emptive arrests. As a result, Intelligence Bureau di-

rector E.S.L. Narasimhan flew to Nagpur in mid-May to ensure enhanced security for the RSS leadership.

Maharashtra Police authorities have confirmed that the three killed were Pakistan nationals, as exclusively reported by *The Hindu* on Thursday. Based on documents recovered in the course of the Intelligence Bureau operation, they were identified as Afzal Ahmad Butt and Abdul Kalam Azad, both residents of Lahore, and Mohammad Usman Habib from the town of Gujranwala.

Authorities believe the three went to Nagpur through Patna but little information on the networks that arranged for their transport and stay in both cities

is available.

The sources said there had been progress in determining how the terrorists obtained the white Ambassador car in which they attempted to penetrate the security ring around the RSS headquarters but declined to share details at this stage.

Maharashtra-based Lashkar cells have long sought to eliminate politicians of the Hindu right wing.

As early as November 2000, police arrested three Pakistanis who had set up a covert cell in Mumbra, near Mumbai.

Mohammad Yasin Khalil, Afzal Shah and Mohammad Tayyab were sent from Jammu and Kashmir to make a 'fidayeen' attack on Shiv Sena chief Bal

Thackeray.

Lashkar fidayeen volunteers are taught that Islam in India is under state-supported assault. In one typical propaganda article, Lashkar ideologue Hafiz Abdul Salam bin-Muhammad, asserted that "in India, the Muslims are being slaughtered just because they profess Islam. Their property is plundered, their women are disgraced and molested and their mosques have been razed to the ground."

He argues that a campaign of genocide has been instituted against Muslims in India. He claims Mr. Thackeray has told Muslims to "leave the sub-continent, or they should convert to Hinduism or be ready to lose their lives."

War room leak: CBI raids on

Interpol's Red Corner Notice Against Ex-Naval Commander

New Delhi: Investigating the sensational naval war room leak case, the CBI on Friday conducted raids in 19 places in four cities including the premises of businessman Abhishek Verma who has been accused of trying to procure confidential documents of the armed forces.

CBI sleuths searched 15 places in the national capital region, two places in Kolkata and a place each in Vishakhapatnam and Bhubaneswar, sources said.

They said the searches were part of the agency's probe into the naval war room leak, during which the CBI claimed to have found that certain officials of the navy, army and defence ministry had allegedly been provided "illegal gratification" for supplying secret documents. According to sources, Verma was close to certain officials who had been allegedly indulging in leaking confidential documents.

In Friday's operation, CBI sleuths searched the residences and official premises of seven officials of the navy, three officers of the rank of under secretary in the defence ministry and two army officials, besides Verma and a chartered accountant.

Acting on a request from the CBI, the Interpol has issued a red corner notice against former naval commander Ravi Shankaran, a relative of the navy chief admiral Arun Prakash, for his alleged links to those involved in the war room leak. Shankaran has been declared a proclaimed offender.

CBI sources claimed that former naval commander Kulbushan Parashar, who has been arrested by the agency, had told sleuths that he had been supply-



KEY ACCUSED
The house of a bureaucrat in New Delhi that was raided

- CBI raided the premises of businessman Abhishek Verma who has been accused of trying to procure confidential documents of the armed forces

- Ex-naval commander Ravi Shankaran, a relative of the navy chief admiral Arun Prakash, has alleged links to those involved in the war room leak

ing sophisticated computers, mobile phones and pen drives to some navy and army officials besides providing them other illegal gratification.

Sources added that the FIR was registered on the basis of information from the defence ministry that three navy officers and an officer of the air force had "acted in collusion with private persons and retired military officers to conspire to unauthorisedly procure classified documents or information relating to the ministry, the disclosure of which is likely to affect the sovereignty and integrity of the country".

The CBI had registered a case in connection with the naval war room leak on March 20 and had later arrested six people. The navy had sacked three officials in October last year for leaking information. AGENCIES

THE TIMES OF INDIA

ARMY SKIRTS QUIT POSER

Vice-chief says sorry

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, June 20: The vice-chief of army staff, Lieutenant General S. Patabhraman, today apologised in the aftermath of a controversial remark attributed to him that was said to be disparaging about women in the army.

A statement from army headquarters this evening comes after days of staunch denial and repeated assertions that the vice-chief was misquoted.

The vice-chief was quoted in a newspaper report as having said the army could do without lady officers, a day after Lieutenant Susmita Chakraborty shot herself in Udhampur, apparently out of professional frustration.

Girija Vyas, head of the National Commission for Women, and BJP leader Sushma Swaraj had reacted to the report based on an interview of Patabhraman. Sushma had said: "The defence minister should tell the vice-chief that the army can do without him."

The army spokesman, asked if Patabhraman had offered to resign, said: "No, he is not."

Had he been told to resign or was he resigning? The spokesman replied: "I am not aware of such a thing."

The following is the full text of the army "clarification":

"It is unfortunate that during an interview on 16 June 2006 remarks ascribed to me by a journalist in relation to intake of lady officers in the army has caused consternation and generated ad-



Patabhraman

verse publicity.

"I would like to place on record that the lady officers joining the army as part of women's Special Entry Scheme have contributed in as much measure as their male counterparts towards upholding army's traditional work culture and ethos. They have also excelled in fields such as adventure sports and shooting, apart from providing value addition to army's work in fields such as education, IT, communication engineering, architecture, inventory management, intelligence and combat logistics.

"I also recognise that women of our country have played a stellar role not only in nation building but also in extreme adventure activities like climbing the Everest.

"Should my remarks, as reported in the press, have caused any anguish or doubt on my personal commitment and healthy respect towards the role of lady officers in the army, I have no hesitation in rendering an apology to such groups or sections of society or individuals."

THE TELEGRAPH

21/6/06

10:00 AM

Woman army officer ends life

9087
HT Correspondent
Udhampur, June 16



IN THE first such incident in the Indian Army, a 25-year-old woman officer shot herself to death at the Northern Command headquarters in Udhampur late on Thursday just 10 months after joining service. Lt Sushmita Chakravorty of 5071 ASC Battalion was unhappy with her job and had been depressed for the past few days, her family said.

The incident has sparked off a debate after Lt Gen S. Pattabhiraman, the army vice-chief, remarked that "ideally we would like to have gentlemen officers and not lady officers at the unit level...the comfort levels with lady officers are low. We can do without them".

The army of late has been deeply embarrassed by incidents involving women officers and the suicide at Udhampur has only magnified the army's image problem.

On Thursday evening, Sushmita walked into a guesthouse near her official residence and asked a sentry to hand over his rifle to her. She then locked the door and shot herself.

Sushmita had earlier gone on leave for two months to her home in Bhopal where her mother Sachana persuaded her to continue with the job. The reluctant officer returned to duty on June 3. Her mother said for some reason Sushmita was not satisfied with her job.

See also Page 3

It's officers & gentlemen

Not for girls with dreamy notions'

Payal Mehta plans to join the army to pack some 'glamour' into her life, but she's not really sure if she's cut out for the job. Here's some advice: it's best that the 21-year-old opts for an alternative career option.

Air Marshal Padma Bandopadhyaya (ret'd) and Vice-Admiral Puneeta Arora (ret'd), two celebrated women officers who created history by reaching the three-star rank, caution that the uniform is not for girls driven by dreamy notions about the services or lack motivation. With almost four decades of military service behind them, the women should know. Air Marshal Bandopadhyaya bluntly says, "If a girl isn't mentally prepared, the job could be worse than climbing Mt Everest. Life is tough and there are plenty of difficult situations. They'll have to deal with them like soldiers and not expect the gender factor to come to their rescue". The Air Marshal says, "Before joining the armed forces, girls should make efforts to get insights into what the army way of life's all about. Family life's often disturbed. Deployment in tough areas is part of the deal". Vice-Admiral Arora, who headed the navy's medical services branch before retiring last month, feels it's extremely crucial for women officers to choose the right spouse. "The spouse can play a vital role in easing pressures. And, if that's not the case, you've had it", she cautions. **HTC**

ARMAY thinks it is better off without women officers. Management of women cadres has surfaced as a gargantuan problem - even for the world's second-largest army, with about 1.2 million personnel. However, there are no plans to reduce the intake of women, primarily because shortage of officers continues to dog the army. Speaking exclusively to *Hindustan Times*, army Vice-Chief Lt-Gen. S. Pattabhiraman said, "Ideally, we'd like to have gentlemen officers and not lady officers at the unit level. Feedback from the lower formations suggests that comfort levels with lady officers are low. We can do without them". The army, which began inducting women in 1993-'94, has a strength of about 1,000 women officers serving in non-combat roles. The army has been acutely embarrassed by bad publicity in the recent months emanating from incidents involving women officers who have levelled serious allegations - ranging from molestation to harassment - against their superiors. The suicide by a woman officer at Udhampur on Thursday has only magnified the army's image problem. He said, "The right kind of male candidates aren't stepping forward to join the army. We have to turn to suitably qualified women. The challenge is how best to utilise their services without compromising the army's character and ethos". The army Vice-Chief also said the tendency among women officers to plan marriage soon after getting commissioned was causing problems. "We have deployments in field areas. Separation from spouses can't be ruled out. It leads to frustration in some cases", he said.

Women may not be the army's first preference, but measures have to be taken to address their well being and provide them with more career options. Gen. Pattabhiraman, responsible for military training, said instructions had been issued to the Officers' Training Academy, Chennai, to devise a new capsule for women officers to condition them to the army environment. There's also a move to assign them to artillery and armoured corps in non-combat roles.

But it has met with stiff opposition. **HTC**

Serial blasts rock Assam, Rajdhani has a close shave ^{11/6}

HTC and Agencies
Guwahati, June 10

THERE'S BEEN no lull in the continuing violence in Assam with seven more blasts reported on Saturday. On Friday night a bomb had gone off on the railway tracks in Tinsukia just before the Delhi-bound Rajdhani Express was to pass.

While the police are blaming the Ulfa for the blasts, the outfit has blamed the Assam Police. Guwahati SP Nitul Gogoi said that at 7.20 pm on Saturday, suspected Ulfa men hurled a grenade on the RPF Head Office at Railway Colony in Chandmari injuring three RPF jawans. At 8 pm another grenade was lobbed from a flyover at Ganeshguri injuring two and killing one.

A grenade was also hurled at a CRPF camp in front of the Sib-sagar deputy commissioner's office in which three jawans were injured. Blasts were also reported from near the historic monuments at Ranghar and Talatalghar, but no injuries.

Again, in Tinsukia, suspected Ulfa men blew up an oil pipeline at Langkasi around 6.30 pm. At Hapajan in Dibrugarh, too, there was an explosion on an oil pipeline.

At 8.10 am on Saturday the police defused a powerful time bomb, kept inside a tiffin box, in Panbazar. It was set for 10.10 am. The timely action had saved many schoolchildren, the SP said.

In an email to a section of the media on Saturday, Ulfa commander-in-chief Paresh Barua alleged that the blasts at public places were the handiwork of Assam Police's Special Branch. "Assam Police (Special Branch) IGP Khagen Sarma was directly responsible (for) all the blasts that occurred in (the) last 48 hours. This was a move to derail the ongoing peace talk process and to malign the Ulfa," Barua alleged in the email.



UB PHOTOS

A victim of Saturday's grenade blast at Ganeshguri.

11/6 2006

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

ASSAM | Interrogation of ULFA militant arrested in Siliguri reveals plan to attack vital installations 5 die in Guwahati blast, cops suspect ULFA hand

SAMUDRA GUPTA KASHYAP
GUWAHATI, JUNE 9

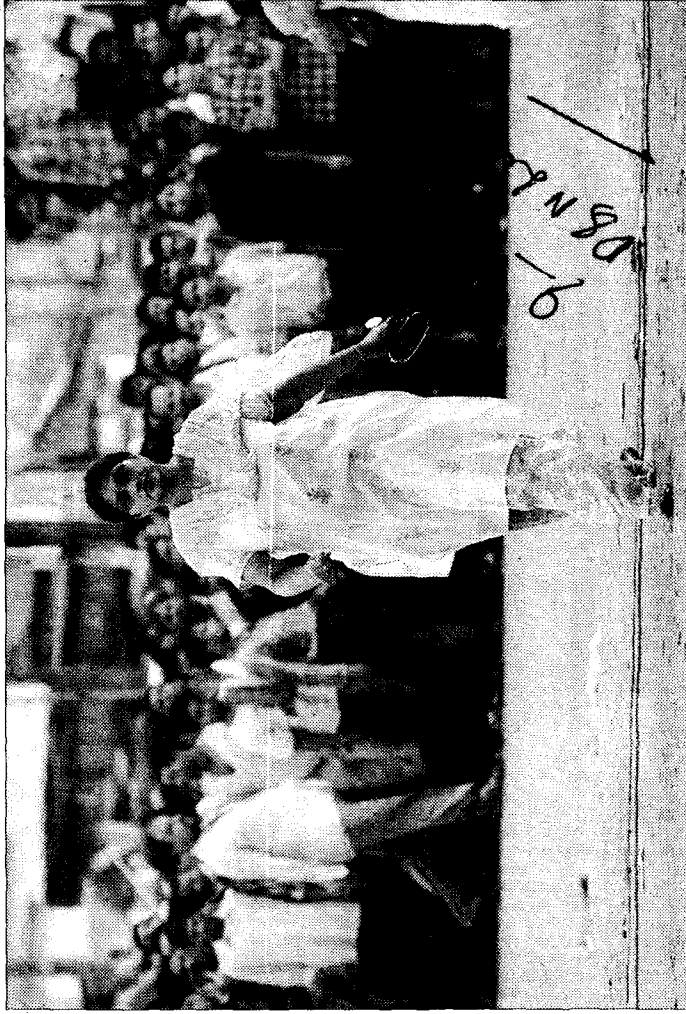
AT LEAST five persons were killed on the spot and more than a dozen injured in a powerful blast at the busy Machkhowa bazaar in the heart of the Assam capital today, with the police holding the outlawed ULFA responsible for it.

The blast took place at around 4:15 pm in the vegetable market just behind Pragiyoti, a cultural complex sponsored by the Indian Tea Association (ITA) where about 400 people, most of them on their way home from office, were shopping.

Two of the five killed have been identified as vegetable vendors in front of whose stall the explosion had occurred. The other victims were yet to be identified when this report was filed. This is the first major incident since ULFA entered into an indirect talks process with New Delhi in October last year. It is also the first incident since the Congress-led coalition government took over last month.

Eyewitnesses said the blast took place in front of a vegetable stall, with the entire area becoming dark with smoke and dust. "I was buying papayas when I heard an explosion only a few metres away. I also saw dust and smoke and some objects flying out," said Nur Hussain, a resident of a nearby locality who had a narrow escape.

While the police arrived within 10



A doctor rushes to the site of a blast at a vegetable market in Guwahati on Friday as people look on. (Right) Bodies of victims at the site.

minutes of the blast, all the injured and the dead were taken to the GMC Hospital, where five were declared brought dead. "We had prior information that ULFA would unleash a spree of violent incidents for three days beginning today, and security had been beefed up at all vital installations, including oil pipelines, bridges and government buildings," Assam Police Director-General D N Dutt told *The Indian Express*, quoting interrogation

statements of Mrinal Hazarika, a hardcore ULFA militant who was arrested in Siliguri on May 18.

Dutt said Hazarika had told policemen during interrogation that ULFA C-in-C Paresch Barua had instructed all "battalion commanders" of the outfit to strike at vital installations and security personnel on June 9, 10 and 11.

In fact, 10 persons were injured in three similar explosions that took place at Haibargaon, Dhubri and DGP added.



Bodies of victims at the site.

The Centre had only yesterday announced that the third round of talks with the ULFA-nominated PCG would take place on June 22.

The decision was conveyed to noted Assamese litterateur Indira Goswami and former footballer Rebatu Phukan — both ULFA-nominated interlocutors — when the duo had called on National Security Advisor M K Narayanan and Union Home Secretary V K Duggal in New Delhi yesterday.

SUBHAMOY BHATTACHARJEE

AP

11-1
10/6
D & M Centre

Centre widens defence door to private players

Select Industries Will Get Right To Import Tech

New Delhi: In a major move to encourage larger private sector participation in advanced armament production, the defence ministry on Friday announced that it proposed to give select private industries the right to receive technology from abroad.

Defence minister Pranab Mukherjee said such companies would be conferred the status of "raksha udyog ratna" and be treated on par with defence public sector undertakings (PSUs) for transfer of technology from overseas sources. They will also be allowed to assume the role of system integrators of large weapons systems and producers of weapons platforms, the minister said, adding that a selection committee had been set up



“The companies will be conferred the status of ‘raksha udyog ratna’ and be treated on par with defence PSUs for transfer of technology from overseas sources”

Pranab Mukherjee | DEFENCE MINISTER

to select Tier I industries that would be called "raksha udyog ratnas".

Addressing a gathering to give away the defence minister's awards for 2005-'06, he lamented that since 2001, when the defence sector had been opened to private participation, the response had been dull. Mukherjee said the government wanted

to trigger a much wider private sector participation and infusion of investments and resources so that the strain on the exchequer would be reduced. "We want this system to act as an instrument of incentive to encourage private sector investment in the country's defence research, production and development," he said.

10 JUN 2006

THE TIMES OF INDIA

PURCHASES ■ To clean up purchases, MoD circulates list of banned vendors: from Denel to several private firms

Govt issues blacklist of 118 defence suppliers

RITU SARIN
NEW DELHI, JUNE 7

IN its first such exercise, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) has compiled a nationwide blacklist of 118 companies, suppliers and vendors banned from doing any business with the Government. These range from

several private firms in India to international arms majors, even a country, the former "Yugoslavia."

The list, available with *The Indian Express*, has been sent by the MoD's vigilance department to the three service headquarters and all procurement and finance units. Along

with a note that its Chief Vigilance Officer will be the point person monitoring all allegations and investigations in progress or "final action taken against any supplier/vendor." Work on the list began early this

year when all wings of the Ministry as well as Defence PSUs were asked to send their respective lists of banned firms to Defence Vigilance. On the list:

■ **Federal Republic of Yugoslavia:** In the '90s, MoD signed a \$50-million contract with Federal Direc-

torate of Supply and Procurement, Belgrade, for fire control systems for T-55 tanks. As Yugoslavia disintegrated, it was unable to execute supplies. A \$10-million advance has been lost.

■ **Denel:** Following press reports in 2005 that South African Denel paid money to a British agent to secure information from MoD's price committee, Denel was banned. Alleged kickbacks now subject of CBI probe.

■ **Optic Electronics:** A company banned along with Denel in 2005. The company placed orders with Ordnance Factory Board for periscope observation devices but

export order faced a major quality problem. Said owner Chetan Seth: "We were not sent any show-cause notice before the ban. The MoD is harassing small and medium units with a list like this. They have ignored the big fish who are involved in shady dealings."

■ **Shogi Communications:** As first reported by *The Indian Express*, this company, dealing in surveillance equipment, was the subject of a CBI advisory after being involved in an alleged forgery case with the National Security Guards. The company was then

blacklisted by Military Intelligence and has now been put on the ban list, along with its sister concerns, Secure Telecom and Sidhi Tech, by the Mazagon Docks Limited.

■ In fact, Mazagon Docks sent the



blacklisted by Military Intelligence and has now been put on the ban list, along with its sister concerns, Secure Telecom and Sidhi Tech, by the Mazagon Docks Limited.

MoD a huge list of 60 firms it has banned. These also include large conglomerates like the Cable Corporation of India. Said Hiten Khatau, Managing Director of Cable Corporation of India: "We have no information about being blacklisted. As far we are concerned, we are still dealing with the MoD."

■ **Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL)** has banned 20 firms and informed the MoD that their ban operates for a 10-year period.

▶ **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

ID cards to check influx

321 716 9.08 12.11.05
Manash Ghosh

KOLKATA, June 6: The Centre yesterday decided in principle to issue multi-purpose identity cards to all residents living in five states within a 10-km radius of the Indo-Bangladesh border. At a high-level meeting held in Delhi under the joint auspices of the Union home and external affairs ministries, it was decided that the home ministry from early next year would start distributing these special "colour cards" whose twin objectives are to stop future illegal migration from Bangladesh into India and to recognise all existing residents living in the specified areas of the border districts of the country as legitimate Indian citizens.

The idea of introducing multi-purpose identity card was mooted as a solution to the contentious issue of the continuous flow of illegal Bangladeshi migrants into India, especially in the districts along the border. A senior home ministry official said: "the purpose of issuing these cards is to ensure that in future no Bangladeshi is able to settle in our border districts." The decision would, however, de-

Work permits

KOLKATA, June 6: A crucial part of yesterday's decision is to issue temporary work permits to Bangladeshis who may be allowed to stay and work in India only in supervisory roles but would be devoid of voting and other rights enjoyed by Indians. ■ SNS

facto recognise all those living in the specified areas of the border districts - including, it is alleged, illegal Bangladeshi immigrants - as legitimate Indian citizens. According to an official, identification of Bangladeshis among the border residents had become "a very difficult exercise". "Recognising them once and for all as Indians will help us to start with a clean slate," he added.

Not only has illegal immigration resulted in significant demographic changes in many border districts of Bengal like Murshidabad, Malda and North Dinajpur, but also in at least nine districts of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram. Some of these districts also have highest population density in the country giving rise to

social, economic and communal tension.

But it is the question of national security that really prodded the Centre to introduce this special card. Delhi woke up to the threat that Bangladeshi militants posed to nation's security after their involvement in a series of bomb blasts in Delhi and elsewhere was proven beyond doubt. Not only were these militants belonging to various *jihadi* groups using bordering Indian districts as staging points, they were also smuggling in arms and ammunition from Bangladesh through these border areas. Border districts have also been targeted for "activity" by fundamentalist preachers.

According to a home ministry official, it will be mandatory for all Indian nationals living inside the 10-km zone to always carry their multiple identity card with them.

The card will not only identify its owner as an Indian national but will also enable him or her to cast vote in elections. Anyone found residing in this area without the card would be deported to Bangladesh. Registration of all newborns in this area will be a must.

07 JUN 2006

THE STATESMAN

Terror at Sangh sanctorum gate

908 R Belwings

Pre-dawn raid by trio foiled

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Mumbai, June 1: Militants disguised as policemen tried to storm the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's headquarters in Nagpur shortly before dawn today but were gunned down in their car outside the gates.

No senior RSS leader was present in the complex but police said the three militants could have wanted to create a "hostage-like situation".

With an attack on the "hub of Hindutva" fraught with the potential for a flare-up, the Prime Minister quickly appealed for calm and communal peace.

The BJP bristled at the Centre's "soft" policies on terrorism, blaming it for the attempted strike, while the Sangh appealed to its cadre to remain calm.

A subtle game, too, began to play itself out within the "narivar with L.K. Advani and Narendra Modi — both not known to be in the good books of the Sangh — taking the lead in singing paeans to the RSS and announcing a cash prize for the police for foiling the attack.

The attack bid began unravelling around 4.15 am when policemen on duty spotted a white ambassador with a red beacon outside the eastern gate of Hegdewar Bhavan, the RSS headquarters named after its founder.

"When the policemen chal-

lenged the vehicle, it started speeding towards the gate, breaking the barricades. Our team chased them and killed the three occupants in an encounter that lasted about five minutes," Nagpur police commissioner S.P.S. Yadav said.

The shootout took place about 100 metres from the eastern gate of the sprawling, tightly guarded building, but the militants managed to breach the first barrier, 200 metres from the gate.

"The police found three AK-Ms, a modified and superior version of the AK-47, and 13 hand grenades, along with 5 kg of some suspicious powdery substance which seems to be RDX," Yadav said.

Preliminary inquiries suggested the attackers were members of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Toiba, police sources said. They wore police inspectors' uniforms and were about 20-22 years old. One of them carried a diary. "The diary indicates they were Islamic militants," Yadav said.

The militants, he added, had left Patna a couple of days ago and intelligence agencies had alerted police chiefs. Taking no chances, Mumbai police today stepped up vigil at big shrines in the city.

The thwarted attack comes weeks after a huge cache of arms was seized in phases in Maharashtra's Aurangabad and 11 suspected Lashkar militants were arrested.

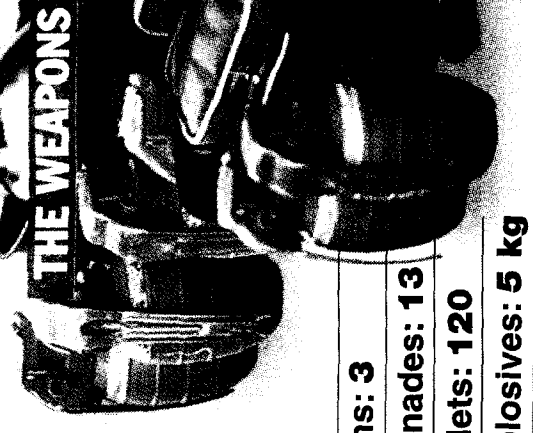
■ See Page 6

Me



THE TARGET

The RSS headquarters, which was targeted



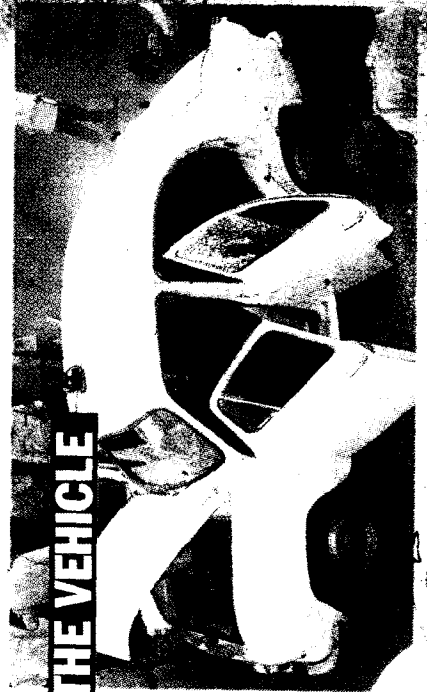
THE WEAPONS

Guns: 3

Grenades: 13

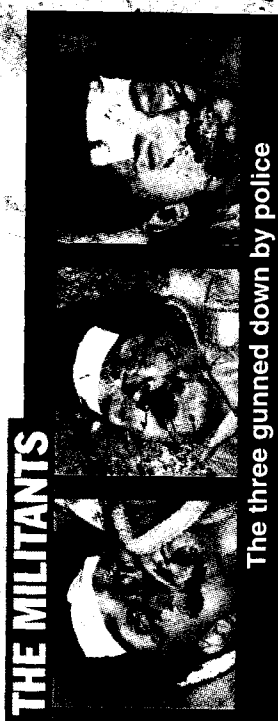
Bullets: 120

Explosives: 5 kg



THE VEHICLE

The car in which the three militants tried to storm the complex



THE MILITANTS

The three gunned down by police

Bombed: kid Bomber: kid

SUJAN DUTTA

Srinagar, June 1: Tamali is a name for yesterday's collateral damage in Kashmir. She is all of four years old and is from Bantala, the tannery township across Calcutta's Eastern Metropolitan Bypass.

She was sleeping in her mother Gayatri's lap when someone rolled a grenade under their bus.

It was 5.30 pm, a little over an hour after their bus left Gulmarg. The time taken for a grenade to explode after impact is two seconds.

Today, Tamali is lying supine and bewildered in the Government Bone and Joint Hospital at Barzulla in Srinagar. Her legs bandaged, a needle through her wrist pumps fluid, a hand is in splints.

A strike is on in the Valley today as children a little older than Tamali drowned in an accident in the Wullar Lake on Tuesday. In the protest that followed, two died in army firing.

Children too young to understand a prime ministerial roundtable conference, jihad or freedom are bearing the burden of the maddening bloodletting in Kashmir.

Even after making allowances for political violence, no one — police, politicians, businessmen, hoteliers, tour operators — is able to understand why tourists should be targeted.

At least Tamali is a survivor in this terrible war. And, or in this terrible war. And,

maybe, the worst is over for her.

Who tried to kill Tamali? "I saw him. I saw I saw him. He was a kid, no more than 15 or 16," asserts Phulu Roy of Belgharia, from her stretcher in the SMHS Hospital.

"I think he was wearing a long kurta. I wondered why he was rolling something under the bus and then suddenly there was the explosion. He was a kid, a child, I say."

Tamali's father is Basudeb Naskar. The Naskars planned their trip to Kashmir two months ago. Basudev is also in the Bone and Joint Hospital. Gayatri is in SMHS.

The 15-day tour cost

Status of injured Page 8

Rs 8,000 per adult for those travelling sleeper class on the Kalka Mail from Howrah and Rs 11,000 for those who opted for the upper class.

Most of the families on tour are simple, middle class and footloose folk, who must travel once in two years. They stay in cheap hotels like Golden Finger and Kohinor and Bengal Lodge and take cheap buses because they must share the enjoyment.

They pay to people like Basharat Ali, a taxi driver. "We simply cannot understand why tourists are targeted. All the *tanzeems* (militant outfits) deny involvement. Usually they are quick to make a claim when they attack," he says.

Pictures: Fotocorp, PTI

Varanasi blast 'brain' was UP madarsa teacher

Zubair's younger brother Haroon said that Waliullah used to come to Tanda to meet Zubair. "Zubair told me that Waliullah was seeking donations for his madarsa in Phoolpur. We never suspected anything else," he said.

Bhagat said the three terrorists who landed in Phoolpur in early March were also introduced to Waliullah by Zubair after which Waliullah helped them carry out the plan. "It became clear to us that Zubair was the main mind behind the blasts. However, on April 5, when we raided his village, Zubair was gone," said SSP Bhagat.

Zubair's father Mohd Yousuf, however, said that his son had left for Badaut near Baghpat town on the night of April 4 along with his family for some work but later disappeared after abandoning his wife and children there.

"We searched for him everywhere. Since then, police has been banging on our doors each

day," said Yousuf.

The neighbours are shocked. "Zubair was a nice man, used to stay quiet most of the time as far as we know. After completing his education at Deoband, he had gone to Jaipur to teach at a madarsa there for a year," said Ishaq Abad, a neighbour.

The cat-and-mouse game between Zubair and the police lasted over a month. "He tried his best to escape to Bangladesh from the Bengal border but our team foiled his attempts by stepping up vigil. Frustrated, he went to J&K around 15 days back to cross the border. We got information and our STF unit from Ghaziabad has been camping there for six days now. Early this morning, our unit got concrete information on him which was passed on to the J&K police and Army," said Bhagat.

Around 5.15 am, Zubair was shot dead by the troops of the Four Jat and the SOG of the J&K police.

(with EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE in SRINAGAR)

17 1 MAY 1995

Isro set to launch Russian satellite

Srinivas Laxman | TNN

Mumbai: For the first time in the 45-year-old history of the Indian space programme, India will launch a Russian satellite, 'Glonass', in 2007.

The consul general of Russia, Alexander V Mantytsky, said the satellite, which will be used for civilian and military navigational purposes, will be carried by the indigenous Geo-Synchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. He said Russia had considerable confidence in India's space technology.

Mantytsky said during Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Fradkov's visit to

New Delhi on March 16-17, the Indian Space Research Organisation and the Russian Federal Space Agency signed an agreement relating to the joint development of 'Glonass' navigation satellites. "We plan to launch more such satellites from India in the coming years," the Mumbai-based Russian diplomat said.

On the nuclear front, he said Russia will enhance cooperation with India once the 45-member Nuclear Suppliers' Group changes its rule since Delhi was not a signatory to the NPT. "India has asked us for four more light water reactors. But, first the NSG has to amend its rules," he said.

Mantytsky said that the licensed production of multi-

role Sukhoi fighters was progressing on schedule at the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited in Nashik. "Also, the aircraft carrier, Admiral Gorshkov, will be formally inducted into the Indian Navy in the end of 2007," he said.

Earlier, addressing the gathering at a function held to mark the 45th anniversary of the Yuri Gagarin's first flight to space on April 12, 1961, marking the beginning of the manned space missions, he said, "In 2005, 18 Russian space vehicles were launched. Russia possesses now 38 civilian satellites, among which 28 are communication satellites. By 2015, the number of civilian satellites will increase to 70," he said.

STARRY FUTURE



Glonass, which will be taken to space by the GSLV in 2007, will be used for civilian and military navigational purposes by Russia

Hitch-hike guide for pygmy payload

Prashanth G N | TNN

Bangalore: Ever thought of sending your own mini satellite into space—hitch-hiking a ride with bigger satellites? This is now possible, thanks to Isro's small satellite mission.

Every time the space agency launches a satellite, a little launch capacity of the vehicles—some 50 kg to 100 kg—goes unused. The organisation is inviting science faculty and students to use this capacity to launch their own satellites, free of cost. "The unutilised capacity in bigger launches enables Isro to launch smaller satellites without additional costs. Students will benefit from the data they can generate by designing a satellite on their own," officials say.

Isro has sought proposals from students and faculty from universities and institutes across the country to design and build satellites. While the offer is open to everyone, the proposals will be subject to quality tests and will have to meet Isro's requirements and standards. If it is cleared, Isro will help with development of the satellite as well.

PM threat No. 1 tag on Maoists

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

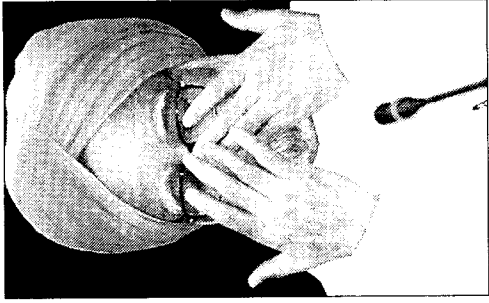
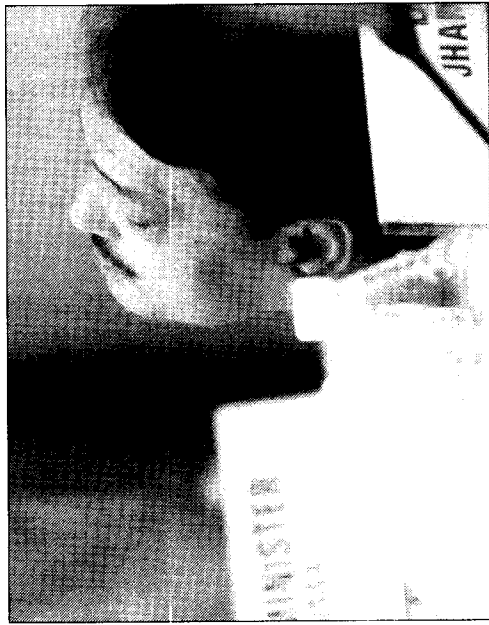
New Delhi, April 13: Spring Thunder has struck Delhi, a day after its disruptive potential was acknowledged in Calcutta and 39 years after the clarion call rose in Naxalbari in Bengal.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh today identified Maoist insurgency as the gravest threat to India's internal security since Independence, delivering a speech peppered with catchphrases usually found in US presidential addresses.

"It would not be an exaggeration to say that the problem of Naxalism is the single biggest internal security challenge ever faced by our country. There seems to be unanimity on the fact that we need to give the problem a very high priority," Singh told a meeting of chief ministers of the six Naxalite-affected states.

The appraisal came less than 24 hours after Bengal chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee conceded in Calcutta that Maoist strikes are a cause for concern. On the campaign trail in Purulia, a Naxalite stronghold in Bengal, Bhattacharjee today vowed

ZZZ... BUT SEE NO EVIL



Maharashtra's Vilasrao Deshmukh dozes off at the Delhi meeting where Manmohan Singh (right) identified Maoists as the gravest threat to India's internal security. (PTI)

to crush the insurgency in the age of speeches tailored for television.

Bengal has not been officially declared a Naxalite-hit state. The six with the tag are Bihar, Orissa, Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

In Delhi, the Prime Minister said the Maoist movement had evolved into a major force that threatened "our democracy, our way of life", expressions that have gained currency of its intellectual attraction.

but it has gained in strength by spreading to over 160 districts all over the country. The ideological base of the movement has diminished and there are many lumpen elements now in the movement."

He told the meeting that states affected by Maoist violence needed to do a better job of intelligence gathering and coordinating security operations, as well as beefing up and

modernising their police forces.

At the same time, Singh lamented the country's failure to deliver social justice and development to its poorest regions, a neglect he said had alienated people and helped feed the rebellion.

State governments, he said, had to focus on "good governance" and eliminate "leak" of development funds — in other words stop stealing the money meant for the poor. "Our strategy, therefore, has to be to walk on two legs — to have an effective police response while at the same time focusing on reducing the sense of deprivation and alienation."

Naxalites are trying to establish "liberation zones" in core areas and "civil administration and police are periodically absent in some of these areas", he added.

Maoist cadre were now better trained, and the movement increasingly militarised, with "superior army-style organisation".

Singh fever

Later in the evening, Singh developed a mild fever and the weekly cabinet meeting was cancelled.

চন্দ্রাভিযান সফল করতে নাসার হাত ধরল ইসরো

বাস্কোলার, ৯ মে: ঘটনা এক, ভারতের বেশ কিছু মহাকাশ কেম্পের উপরে এখনও মার্কিন নিষেধাজ্ঞা বলবৎ রয়েছে। ঘটনা দুই, ৩০ বছর পর নাসার কোনও প্রধান ভারতে এলেন এবং বললেন, “মার্কিন নিষেধাজ্ঞা এখনও ভারতীয় মহাকাশ কেম্পের উপরে বলবৎ থাকায় আমি আন্তরিক ভাবে দুঃখিত। অতীতে যা হওয়ার হয়ে গিয়েছে, ভবিষ্যত তা যেন উজ্জ্বল ও বন্ধুত্বপূর্ণ সহযোগিতার দৃষ্টান্ত হয়, সে চেষ্টাই করব।”

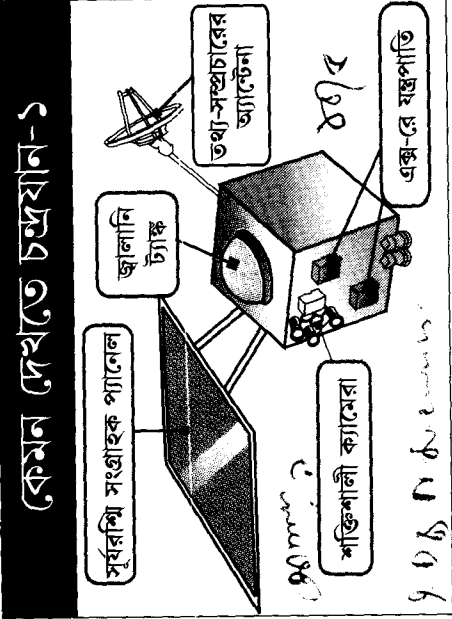
যটনা তিন, নাসা প্রধান দু’দিনের এই ভারত সফরে এসে কাল এমনিই নিষেধাজ্ঞা-কবলিত বিক্রম সারাভাই মহাকাশ কেম্প এবং শ্রীহরিকোটা মহাকাশ বন্দর পরিদর্শনে যাচ্ছেন। ঘটনা চার, আজ ভারতীয় মহাকাশ গবেষণা সংস্থা (ইসরো) এবং ন্যাশনাল এরোনটিকস অ্যান্ড স্পেস অ্যাডমিনিস্ট্রেশন (নাসা) ভারতের প্রথম চন্দ্র অভিযান সার্থক করতে মউ স্বাক্ষর করল।

নিষেধাজ্ঞার বেড়াজাল পেরিয়ে নাসার আজ ইসরোর হাত ধরা অনেকেই কাছে যুগান্তকারী। নাসার প্রধান মাইকেল গ্রিফিনের কথায়, “আশা করি এর ফলে ভবিষ্যতে আরও ভাল করে মহাকাশে মানব সভ্যতার চিহ্ন ছড়িয়ে দিতে সক্ষম হবে। এই অভিযানে ভারত আমেরিকার অন্যতম সহচর হিসাবে প্রমাণিত হবে। আমরা প্রযুক্তিগত চ্যালেঞ্জ ও বৈজ্ঞানিক সাফল্যের অংশীদার হতে পারব।”

তবে ভারতের জন্য নাসার উপহার’ একটা ধাক্কাও। পরবর্তী মার্কিন মহাকাশ অভিযানে এক ভারতীয়কে অন্তর্ভুক্ত করার জন্য তাঁকে নাসায় প্রশিক্ষণ দেওয়ার যে পরিকল্পনা ছিল, তা আজ বাতিল হয়ে গেল।

আজ বাস্কোলারে ইসরোর স্যাটেলাইট সেন্টারে মাইকেল গ্রিফিন ও জি মাধবনায়ার যে ‘ইতিহাসিক’ চুক্তিতে সই করলেন, তার মূল বিষয় এই যে, ২০০৭-০৮ সালে ভারতের মহাকাশযান চন্দ্রযান-১ এ দু’টি অত্যাধুনিক মার্কিন যন্ত্র থাকবে। এর একটি, মিনি সিঙ্গেলিক অ্যাপারচার রাতার (মিনি সার), যেটি নাসার অনুদানে আমেরিকার জন হপকিন্স বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে তৈরি করা হয়েছে। অন্যটি, মুন মিনোরোলজি মাপার, এটি তৈরি হয়েছে বার্ডিন বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় ও নাসার জেট প্রোপালশন গবেষণাগারের যৌথ উদ্যোগে।

চন্দ্রযান-১ চাঁদের মাটি থেকে ১০০ কিলোমিটার উপর থেকে চাঁদের উৎস সন্ধানে বিভিন্ন তথ্য সন্ধান করবে। মিনি সার যন্ত্রটি চাঁদের দুই মেরু অঞ্চলে বরফের খোঁজ করবে। আর অন্য যন্ত্রটি খনিজের সন্ধান



কেমন দেখাতে চন্দ্রযান-১

করবে। মার্কিন যন্ত্র ছাড়া ভারতে দেশীয় প্রযুক্তিতে তৈরি কিছু যন্ত্রও থাকবে। যেমন, টেরেন ম্যাপিং ক্যামেরা, এক্স রে স্পেকট্রোমিটার ইত্যাদি। এ ছাড়া বুলগেরিয়া-সহ দু-একটি ইউরোপীয় দেশে তৈরি কয়েকটি যন্ত্রও থাকবে চন্দ্রযানে। ফলে, এটা আক্ষরিক অর্থেই আন্তর্জাতিক চন্দ্র অভিযান। তবে অভিযানে কোনও মানুষকে পাঠানো হচ্ছে না। চন্দ্রযান-১ যে সব তথ্য পাঠাবে তা নাসা ও ইসরোর বিজ্ঞান ভাণ্ডার আরও সমৃদ্ধ করবে বলে মন্তব্য করেন গ্রিফিন। এর আগেই দুই সংস্থা বিজ্ঞানীদের নিয়ে জয়েন্ট ওয়ার্কিং গ্রুপ তৈরি করেছিল।

ইসরো ভবিষ্যৎ অভিযানে মানুষ পাঠাতে পারে বলে জানিয়ে জি মাধবন বলেন, “আজকের এই মউ নিঃসন্দেহে ভারত-মার্কিন মহাকাশ গবেষণার ক্ষেত্রে নতুন দিগন্ত খুলে দেবে। এই সহযোগিতা পরস্পরের প্রতি শ্রদ্ধা ও বাড়াবাড়ি নয়।

হয়তো সেই শ্রদ্ধা থেকেই গ্রিফিন বলেন, “ভারতীয় মহাকাশ কেম্পগুলির উপরে মার্কিন নিষেধাজ্ঞার বিষয়টি দুঃখজনক। তবে পরিস্থিতি পাল্টেছে। মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্ট ও ভারতের প্রধানমন্ত্রী পরমাণু চুক্তি করে দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্ককে আরও শক্তিশালী করেছেন।

তবে সত্যিই কী সব সমস্যা এখন প্রশমিত? গত বছর মনমোহন সিংহের মার্কিন সফরকালে ঠিক হয়েছিল, এক ভারতীয় মহাকাশচারীকে নাসায় প্রশিক্ষণ দিয়ে নাসার পরবর্তী মহাকাশ অভিযানে সামিল করা হবে। কিন্তু আজ অনির্দিষ্ট কালের জন্য সেই পরিকল্পনা বাতিল করা হয়েছে। গ্রিফিন এ সম্পর্কে বলেন, “পরের চার বছরে ১৭টি অভিযান রয়েছে, কিন্তু আসন খালি নেই। ইসরো ওই প্রশিক্ষণের জন্য নির্ধারিত অর্থ খরচ করারও সিদ্ধান্ত নেয়নি। তবে, এমন সম্ভাবনার জন্য নাসার দরজা খোলাই রইল।”

সম্ভাবনার দরজা খোলা থাকলেও ভারতের মহাকাশ গবেষণার ক্ষেত্রে নাসার কাছ থেকে আজকের প্রাপ্তির এক গামলা দুখে প্রত্যাখানের এই সামান্য চোনা ভাবাচ্ছে অনেককেই।

— পি টি আই

10 MAY 2006

Varanasi blast 'brain' shot in J&K was UP madarsa teacher

BAGHPAT ■ 'I cannot believe my son was a terrorist,' says shocked father, recalls how Zubair suddenly disappeared



Father Mohammad Yousuf (left) at the Tanda madarsa in western UP hours after the news of his son Mohammad Zubair's death. Express photo by Ravi Batra

AMAN SHARMA

BAGHPAT (UP), MAY 10

AT a sprawling madarsa in Tanda, in western UP's Baghpat, the students were waiting for their teacher, Mohammad Zubair, gone missing since April 4. Then news came yesterday morning quoting police from the Valley that he was the Varanasi blast mastermind shot dead in north Kashmir's Handwara.

"His students were waiting for him...He is married with six children...I cannot believe my son was a terrorist," said his father, Mohammad Yousuf, who runs the madarsa where Zubair taught for 15 years.

The police claim he was a top Harkat-ul-Jehadi-Islamia leader who was the "main organiser" of the March 7

Varanasi blasts that killed 20 people. He was shot today in a joint operation by the J&K police's Special Operations Group, the Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force and troops of the Army's 4 Para.

Police said two others who were along with Zubair managed to escape during the encounter.

Handwara SSP Nitesh Kumar said the militant had been on the run for two weeks in the Valley. "Zubair tried to flee to Bangladesh but failed because of constant police pressure. So he came to Kashmir and was planning to cross over to Pakistan," said Kumar.

The UP STF said that Zubair's name first cropped up in the Varanasi blasts probe following the arrest of Phoolpur's imam, Waliullah,

on April 5. The night before, Zubair vanished. "Both Zubair and Waliullah worked for the LeT before shifting to HUJI. Waliullah told us that it was actually Zubair who had met him on February 12 near Allahabad and told him that "ladke aa rahe hain Bangladesh se, Benaraswala kaam karna hai," STF SSP SK Bhagat told *The Indian Express*.

Bhagat claimed Zubair's association with terrorism was old. "His name first came up in 2001 when we killed three LeT militants in Lucknow. We are checking the records now. Zubair and Waliullah were classmates at Deoband over 15 years back. Both had been arranging for the training of their recruits in Pakistan as well," said Bhagat.

▶ CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

11 MAY 2008

15 MAY 2004

Futuristic weapons systems planned

Government concerned about haemorrhage of scientific talent from key departments: Manmohan

Sandeep Dikshit

NEW DELHI: India will begin production of cutting edge technology weapons in sensors, robotics, and propulsion systems. There are also plans to develop precision guided munitions and unmanned vehicle technologies in the 11th and 12th Plan period.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said this on Sunday after inaugurating the new headquarters of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

Outsourcing under study

The Government was examining the possibility of outsourcing some of the tasks assigned to research facilities to industry. "This will enable our institu-

tions to focus on development of technology, while applications, industrialisation and related aspects are devolved to industry," he said.

Since a critical component of success in this endeavour was talented scientists, senior offi-

cials were working out ways to make careers in science more attractive.

"Apart from fiscal and career incentives, we are willing to consider mobility between such institutions and academia, as well from research institutions to

production and marketing sectors. My own Scientific Advisory Council is also deliberating this question," Dr. Singh said.

Besides seeking to nurture new talent, the Government was concerned about the haemorrhage of scientific talent from key technology departments due to the demand for scientific talent from abroad and the country's private sector.

Agni-III ready for launch

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Intermediate-range ballistic missile Agni-III, with a range of over 3,000 km, is technically ready for launch, according to the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) chief M. Natarajan. This is the first authoritative observation on

the status of the missile after August 2004 when the then DRDO chief V. K. Atre said there were "not many technical issues" to be sorted out.

Dr. Natarajan said while all technical issues had been sorted out, the DRDO was waiting for the Government's nod to conduct the first test.

"Growing confidence"

Dr. Singh said the fact that the DRDO's list included propulsion systems, camouflage and stealth technologies, sensors and micro-electromechanical systems, as well as precision-guided munitions, robotics and unmanned vehicle technologies illustrated its "growing confidence" in these fields. Such confidence was

The Government would back the DRDO and other defence public sector undertakings in their efforts to export products. The DRDO should bring commercial value to the laboratory, by ensuring that the defence technologies also had commercial spin-offs so that the profits were recycled into more effective research.

Dr. Singh advised the DRDO to enter into partnerships with foreign and domestic institutions to develop high-technology products.

India, China sign landmark pact

9.9.8 N & Leeky

47-3
PRESS Trust of India
 Beijing, May 29

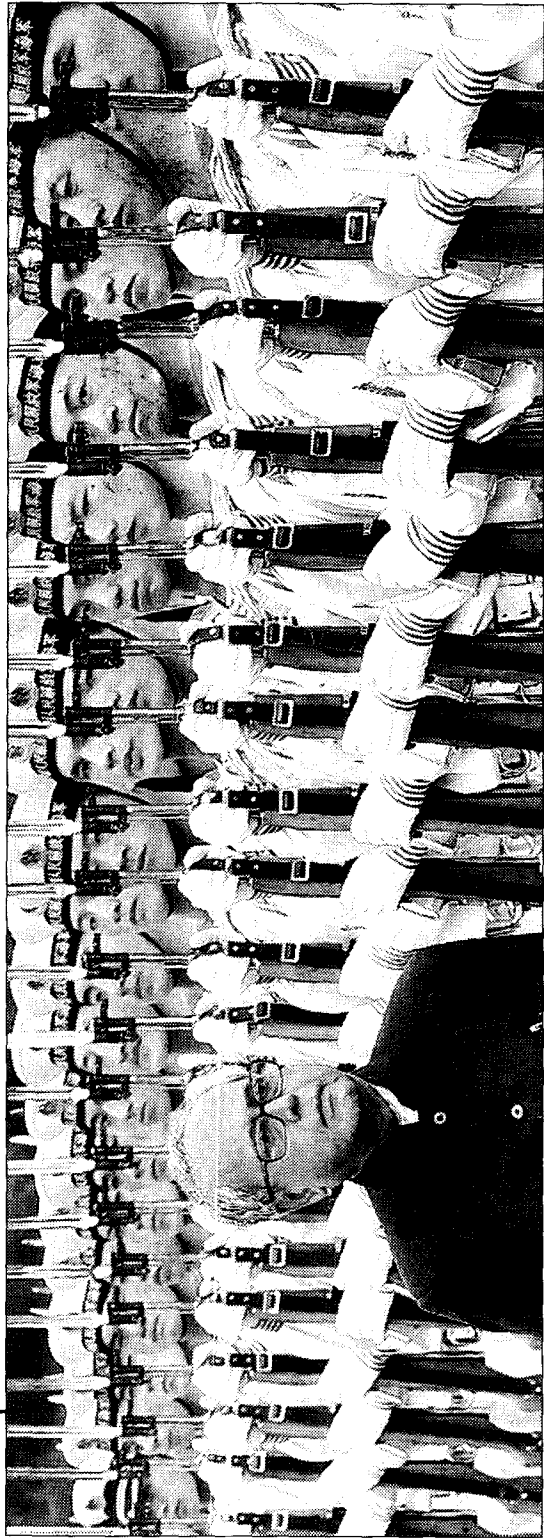
NDIA AND China on Monday signed a historic and first-ever MoU to institutionalise military training and expressed their "endeavour" to hold joint military exercises and training programmes to add more content to their emerging strategic relations.

The MoU was signed by visiting defence minister Pranab Mukherjee and his Chinese counterpart, General Cao Gangchuan, after they held over two hours of talks here at the Central Military Commission headquarters.

"This is the first-ever agreement of its kind between the two countries and I am confident that it will serve as an effective framework for facilitating our defence dialogue and exchanges," Mukherjee told Cao during their interaction. "We must work together to implement it fully," he said.

Addressing a press conference, Mukherjee said the MoU provided a formal basis for the first time for defence and military exchanges that had been taking place between the two countries in the last few years. The MoU is a major confidence building measure (CBM) in the defence field between India and China and will contribute towards building up greater understanding and trust, he said.

The two defence ministers agreed to have frequent exchanges between the leaders and high-level



Defence minister Pranab Mukherjee during a welcome ceremony in Beijing on Monday. He is on a six-day visit to China.

REUTERS

el functionaries of the defence ministries and the armed forces. Both sides will work out an annual programme of exchanges.

The two sides also decided to hold an annual defence dialogue, which would be hosted alternately by the two sides to review progress in exchanges, make suggestions for the future and to exchange views on international, security and strategic issues.

The two ministers reached a consensus to "endeavour to hold joint military exercises and training programmes in the fields of

search and rescue, anti-piracy, counter-terrorism and other areas of mutual interest. Each side will invite senior military officers of the other side to witness designated military exercises.

The two sides agreed to establish a mechanism of study tours for each other's senior and middle level officials in order to facilitate better understanding of the foreign, defence and national development policies of the host side.

Earlier, Cao accorded a ceremonial red carpet welcome to Mukherjee and welcomed him to

China for a six-day official visit. Cao said the Chinese government hoped that peace, stability and economic growth would continue in the South Asia region.

Mukherjee also held a meeting with Chinese foreign minister Li Zhaoxing, which he described as "very productive." Li has pledged to step up strategic and cooperative relations with India in 2006, a year of friendship between China and India.

He said China attached great importance to relations with India, and noted that the common prosperity of China and India, he stressed.

with one-third of the world's population, would be a huge contribution to mankind.

Mukherjee said India and China were good friends and shared similar views on several issues, adding that cooperation between the two countries and their active involvement in world affairs were conducive to the peace, stability and development of the world. India will make concerted efforts with China to boost mutual understanding and trust in a bid to push forward bilateral ties, he stressed.

30 MAR 2006

Centre's twin strategy to combat Naxals

Sops for states to expose ultras

SOMYAJIT Pattanaik
Bhubaneswar, March 29

THE CENTRE has asked the Naxal-affected states to "expose unlawful activities and misdeeds of the Naxal outfits and their leaders" through publicity campaign in the affected areas for which the ministry of home affairs will reimburse the expenses under the Security Related Expenditure (SRE) scheme. In this regard, the Orissa home department has issued detailed guidelines to the SPs of the Naxal-affected districts.

The guidelines on the distribution of publicity materials say, "The total expenditure, with the ceiling of Rs 2 lakh per Naxalite affected district per year, will be reimbursed under the SRE scheme". The messages to be publicised will include "various welfare and developmental schemes of the government, ex-

posing unlawful activities and misdeeds of the Naxal outfits and their leaders, lack of development in affected areas due to fear and extortion of the Naxalites and the benefits of bringing peace in the area".

The expenditure should be incurred on purchase of papers and printing charges, engagement of experts in the local tribal languages for drafting the message or the pamphlets... and remuneration to the persons engaged for distributing and pasting the pamphlets in the targeted villages, the guidelines say.

Apart from the publicity materials, the MHA will also reimburse the expenses incurred by the state governments in appointing "special police officers" in Naxal-affected districts. The Centre has also communicated that the states may consider ex-servicemen/politicians, gram rakhi, home guards, kin of vic-

tims of terrorism, ex-forest guards and surrendered Naxals for appointment as SPs with proper verification and prior approval of the SRE's standing committee headed by special secretary (internal security), MHA.

The persons to be appointed as SPs must be residents of the same police station area where they are appointed and should be a member of scheduled tribe community. They should fulfill the physical standards prescribed for recruitment of constables against the reserved vacancies of scheduled tribe.

The MHA will also reimburse sums paid by the state governments to insure police personnel engaged in anti-Naxalite operations. The guidelines say, "Cent per cent of the payment of premium, subject to a maximum of Rs 1000 per police personnel is reimbursable under the SRE scheme".



The offer

- Total expenditure on anti-Naxal campaign to be reimbursed
- Expenditure on appointment of SPs will be borne by Centre
- Campaign to highlight misdeeds of Naxals and development projects of govt
- RPF strength to be increased in Naxal-hit states
- Specialised training on anti-Naxal operations for RPF
- Existing laws to be modified to give more power to RPF to counter Naxal attacks

Blueprint to protect rly property

RAJNISH Sharma
New Delhi, March 29

THE UNION home ministry has drafted an elaborate blueprint to protect railway properties from Naxal attack. The strategy, chalked out at a high-level meeting chaired by home secretary V.K. Duggal on Wednesday, has been necessitated by the recent spate of attacks by Naxals on the railways. The Naxals had hijacked a passenger train in Lathar, Jharkhand recently and earlier blown up an engine in Chhattisgarh.

Duggal said the ministry had specific intelligence that Naxal groups were planning attacks on railway properties in some states. "But we have worked out an elaborate foolproof plan in co-ordination with the railway ministry and the states to avoid any further strikes on the railways by the Naxals", Duggal added.

Sources said the states where the railways were considered a "soft target" were Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Orissa.

Among those present at the meeting included chairman, Railway Board J.P. Barua, director general of Railway Protection Force A.K. Suri, director, Intelligence Bureau ESL Narasimhan and senior officials from MHA, CISF and CRPF.

In another move, the Centre has decided to increase the strength of RPF. Both Batra and Suri have been directed to work out a proposal to increase the RPF's strength for deployment in Naxal-affected areas. Both CRPF and CISF will also be roped in for protecting the railway property.

The MHA has also decided to provide specialised training to RPF personnel in anti-Naxal operations. The training will be pro-

vided at various centres managed by CRPF, BSF and even army. Sources said a specialised commando unit would be carved out within the RPF to deal with the Naxal attacks. These commandos will be deployed in trains passing through Naxal areas.

The ministry has also agreed to strengthen the existing laws to provide RPF more power to deal with heinous crimes committed by Naxal outfits. "As of now, the RPF deals with offences like molestations, theft or dacoity in trains or at stations. But Naxal violence is a new area for them which will require an amendment in laws governing RPF so that the forces can be given more teeth", a senior MHA official said.

The RPF has been directed to co-ordinate regularly with the Intelligence Bureau to develop "actionable intelligence" on Naxal activities.

Countering the naxalites

The Government announced in Parliament that it has a national policy on dealing with naxalites. But what do we make of the continued violence?

K. Srinivas Reddy

THE ATTACKS by naxalites on government institutions in R. Udayagiri town of Orissa and on tribals in Kanker district of Chhattisgarh in the last two days do not point to a corresponding increase in their military capabilities. At best, the violence highlights the total lack of coordination and preparedness on part of governments.

Simultaneous coordinated attacks are the new strategy the Maoists introduced with their strikes in Koraput, Orissa, in February 2004. In addition, they have unleashed a ruthless campaign against those who oppose them and support the state, as evident in the violence against tribals supporting the *Salwa Judum* (peace initiative) in Chhattisgarh.

There is no apparent counter-strategy. But the United Progressive Alliance Government begs to differ. When there was trenchant criticism on this point in the Lok Sabha, Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil sprang a surprise on March 13 when he tabled a document detailing the Centre's policy on the naxalite problem.

Surprise it was because despite the spatial spread of the naxal movement assuming alarming levels, the Centre had not before this come up with a policy to deal with the problem. In fact, formulating a policy on the

naxalite problem was one of the foremost demands of Chief Ministers of the affected different States.

Raman Singh, Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh, had repeatedly been underlining the need for a national policy so that States did not work at cross-purposes. During the experiment in Andhra Pradesh of holding negotiations with the Maoists and after the failure of the talks, the demand for a national policy reached a crescendo.

"Every now and then this point [of not having a policy] was made. We were told that neither the Government of India nor the State Governments have any policy to deal with the naxalite movement. We were telling them that we do have the policy and we are following the directions given in that policy," Mr. Patil said in Parliament.

How was the policy formulated without involving the affected States? The Centre had been periodically convening meetings of Chief Ministers of affected States, Directors-General of Police, and Chief Secretaries but a national approach had not evolved. The policy, it appears, was confined only to files in the corridors of power. (While replying to a question in the Rajya Sabha on March 1, 2006, Minister of State for Home, Sriprakash Jaiswal, asserted that the Centre had a "well-defined policy to deal with the naxalite problem.") It was the secrecy that

surrounded the policy that left the individual States in confusion. Whenever the Maoists succeeded in pulling off a spectacular strike, States took refuge in saying this showed the 'desperation' of the Maoists. There was no explanation why the policy was not discussed by the intelligentsia, political parties, security experts, elected representatives, and people in general.

None would disagree that the field tactics in dealing with the naxalites should be kept a secret. But surely a policy should be in the public realm, as should the effort to frame it? For, counter-revolutionary strategies can be successful only when they are backed by a policy. A policy can be evolved when the decision makers thoroughly understand the problem. A thorough understanding would be possible only when an unbiased study is done. In the present case, the discussions and brainstorming seem to have taken place behind closed doors.

The most worrisome aspect is that the Centre has now very categorically announced that it would make efforts to promote local resistance groups against naxalites. Such an effort would be taken up "in a manner that the villagers are provided adequate security cover and the area is effectively dominated by the security forces."

What then of the onslaught of the Maoists on *Salwa Judum* activists in Chhattisgarh?

Though *Salwa Judum* was launched by Congress legislator Mahendra Karma in Dantewada district, the BJP Government in Chhattisgarh has been extending full support to the movement. Despite this, more than 60 tribals have been killed in the last two months alone by the Maoists in reprisals against *Salwa Judum* activists. This raises questions about the Centre's idea of promoting local resistance groups.

Andhra Pradesh's successful programme of 'peaceful resistance' to Maoists in the forest areas of North Telangana, especially in Adilabad district with the maximum population of tribals, could have been suggested for replication elsewhere. In Andhra Pradesh, the police won the confidence of tribals by a rather unconventional but highly effective strategy. They made a conscious bid to shed their aggressive behaviour and began honouring the tribal traditions like leaving footwear outside while entering a hut or greeting the village elders with folded hands. The campaign was so effective that within a year, tribals in more than 360 villages vowed not to support Maoists, and in 26 villages, people revolted against Maoists.

Before formulating the national policy, such experiments and a draft plan could have been discussed. After all, every section of society should help to tackle one of the most serious problems India is facing.

Maoist error kills 13

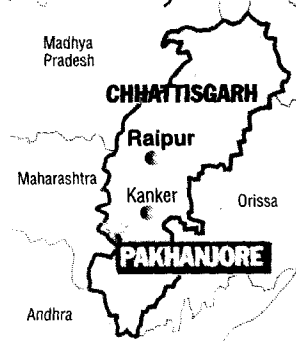
R. KRISHNA DAS

Raipur, March 25: Mistaking a private jeep for a police vehicle, Maoists blew it up last night killing 13 people near a Chhattisgarh village, about 250 km southwest of capital Raipur.

Naxalites had on February 28 blown up a truck in the state's Dantewada district, mistaking the passengers for members of the Salwa Judum, a government-backed body of anti-Maoist activists. They later apologised for the operation that killed 32 villagers returning from a peace rally.

Last night's landmine attack near Pakhanjore in Kanker district, which lifted the jeep 20 feet in the air before blowing it to pieces, left four of its 17 occupants severely injured. The impact hurled the engine 200 feet away and left bodies and limbs scattered over a radius of 100 feet.

The 9 pm blast was the second major Maoist operation of the day. In the morning, guerrillas had attacked a sub-jail in Orissa's R. Udaygiri town, freeing some 40 prisoners, killing



three policemen, looting ammunition and taking the jailer and the officer-in-charge of the local police station hostage.

Last night's victims, mostly traders and porters, were returning from the weekly market at Sangham village, Kanker superintendent of police Pradeep Gupta said. Most of them were Bangladeshi refugees from the resettlement colony in Pakhanjore.

As the jeep reached a spot between Ghoragaon and Paralkote village, the rebels set off the blast. The dead and the injured lay there through the night before the police arrived

in the morning. The injured were shifted to the Pakhanjore government hospital, from where three were sent to Raipur Medical College Hospital in a critical condition.

Villagers protesting against the government's failure to protect them gheraoed home minister Ramvihar Netam and state police chief O.P. Rathor after they arrived in a helicopter. They later freed the visitors but wouldn't let the minister board his official car, forcing him to walk a kilometre from the helipad to the government rest house.

Netam announced a compensation of Rs 2 lakh and a job for each bereaved family.

The dead have been identified as Gobindo Nandi, Arun Biswas, Kalachand Bhavak, Bipul Das, Sudhanshu Kundu, Bishnu De, Tapan Samaddar, Bipul Dutta, Kiran Bagchi, Manoj, Rajak Esabeda, Pradeep Shah and Wajeed Khan.

The government recorded a minor success against the Maoists this morning with the Nagaland Armed Police gunning down three rebels in Bijapur district. (See Page 6)

26 MAR 2006

THE STATESMAN

Naxalites raid Orissa jail, kill 3 cops

Statesman News Service

R UDAYAGIRI, (Gajapati), March 24. — In an early morning raid reminiscent of Jehanabad and Koraput, more than 300 Communist Party of India - Maoist radicals rampaged through this town today, storming an Orissa state armed police camp and a sub-divisional jail to free 40 prisoners before wresting arms and ammunition from the police. The rebels kidnapped the police officer, Mr Ranjan Kumar Mallick, and the jail superintendent, Mr RN Setty.

The three-hour turbulence left a triad of policemen killed and a quartet of its colleagues injured. A few Maoists, too, were said to have been hit by police bullets. More than 40 rifles were taken away by the brash mutineers in combat fatigues who surged in around 4.50 am.

Two lorries and a few light vehicles, allegedly hijacked at Nuagada, ferried them to the unsuspecting town, where

they got going by snapping all communication facilities and sealing arterial roads off. Cellphone services, begun a week ago, were stopped by hacking down the lines stretching from a tower. The radicals then entered the police station where the OIC, Mr Mallick, and an assistant sub-inspector were at work. Brandishing guns, the rebels asked them to come out. Booming guns indicated presently that the nearby OSAP camp too was under attack. A sentry alerted his platoon, resulting in some resistance being sought to be put up, if only for half an hour. The radicals brought the police officers, by then bound with ropes, to the OSAP camp, calling for submission and declaring that defiance would lead to the officers being killed.

The desired effect achieved, the Maoists collected the arms and ammunition before shifting their attention to the jail, where the superintendent woke to find himself besieged and parted with the keys to

the prisoners' cells. All the convicts, including Ghirsinga Majhi of Mandimara, an alleged Naxalite, were released and, taken to a distance of about 100 meters from the jail, were asked to shout *Inquilab zindabad, Maobadi zindabad* and told to run away. One of the prisoners, Basant Singh, from Kandhamala District, has returned, though.

The District Collector, Mr Binod Behary Mohanty, coincidentally on tour here, had been sought to be met by a quintet of the Maoists. But, alert to the development, he escaped to the PWD quarters here. At 1 p.m. that the Gajapati SP, Mr AN Sinha, reached R Udayagiri. He visited the OSAP barracks to find out what had happened but refused to speak to the Press.

Two of the policemen who had died were identified as Tanu Dooriya and P K Patnaik. In the injured quartet is Sitaram Satapathy, Rajaseh Ekka, D Kujuru and R N Behera. They are all in Berhampur Hospital.

THE STATESMAN

Pranab denies illegal payment

"The Govt Did Not Pay An Extra Rs 4,500 Cr Than What Was Negotiated Earlier In The Scorpene Deal"

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI

DEFENCE minister, Pranab Mukherjee on Tuesday rejected the Opposition's allegation of involvement of middlemen and kickbacks in the Scorpene submarine deal and asserted that the UPA government had in fact succeeded in bringing down the costs by Rs 313 crore and had also signed "integrity" pacts to ensure transparency.

Soon after, the Congress tried to turn the tables on the Opposition by demanding a probe to find out what had prompted the erstwhile NDA regime to originally fix the deal at an additional cost of Rs 313 crore.

AICC spokesman, Rajiv Shukla, said now the Opposition leaders who had targeted the government on Monday should come out with explanations for the NDA regime negotiating the deal on a higher price tag.

Opposition leaders — LK Advani, George Fernandes and Jaswant Singh — had alleged on Monday that middle men (they named Congress leader's son Abhishek Verma) were involved in the deal and an extra amount of Rs 4,500 crore was paid to the French firms than was earlier negotiated.

Mr Mukherjee said: "The

facts of the case are contrary to these allegations. No contract or contracts were signed with French firms for Rs 16,000 crore for the Scorpene project as alleged by the Opposition and also a section of the media". Mr Mukherjee said the total cost of the two contracts, signed with the two French firms M/s ARMARIS and MBDA for the project was Rs 7,197 crore.

"The government did not pay an extra amount of Rs 4,500 crore than what was negotiated earlier. On the contrary, after the present government came to power, it re-examined the project even though all negotiations had been completed in 2002 and the ministry of finance had accorded approval to the project in 2003," he said.

The UPA government, he added, held negotiations and "was able to achieve a reduction of Rs 313 crore from the negotiated position in 2002". Mr Mukherjee said for the first time, signing of integrity pacts were made mandatory. Besides ensuring transparency, they provided for severe penalties in case of breach of any provisions.

He said the safeguards include cancellation of the contract and recovery of all advances with an interest at a rate of 2% higher than the rate of-



ferred by the European Inter Bank (EURIBOR).

The minister added the French company, accused of paying commission to the alleged middleman, has denied all the allegations and termed as "fake and fabricated" all e-mails published in a journal.

He said the French Embassy here in a press communiqué termed the media reports as slanderous. The French company has since filed a case in the Delhi High Court last month against the journal.

On media reports seeking to establish a link between the Scorpene project and breach of security in the directorate of naval operations, he said a court of inquiry against a former Indian Navy officer Lieu-

tenant (Retd) Kulbhushan Parashar had found leakage of information but it did not pertain to the submarine deal.

He said the Board severely indicted three naval officers — Captain Kashyap Kumar, Commander Vinod Kumar Jha and Commander Vijendra Rana. The inquiry had established that there had been leakage of information, primarily of commercial value, to unauthorised persons.

The three naval officers were dismissed from the Indian Navy and CBI has been asked to undertake further investigation and filing of criminal proceedings against them as well as civilians and retired officers involved in the leak of information.

Abu charges framed

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

Mumbai, March 18: A special Tada court today framed charges against gangster Abu Salem and associate Riaz Siddiqui in the 1993 Bombay blasts case.

Salem, extradited from Portugal in November, was charged with collecting arms from Bharuch in Gujarat and distributing them in Mumbai in the second week of January 1993. The blasts took place on March 13, killing 256 people and injuring 713.

Siddiqui is facing charges of providing the vehicle to Abu Salem and another accused, Aziz Bilakia, who is absconding, in which arms and ammunition were brought from Bharuch to Mumbai.

Nine AK-56 rifles, about 100 hand grenades, some boxes of cartridges and magazines were allegedly carried in hidden compart-



Abu Salem

ments of a Maruti car.

Salem is charged with delivering some arms, including an AK-56 rifle, at actor Sanjay Dutt's residence and later returning to take most of them to the house of co-accused Zaibunissa Kazi, on the orders of Anees Ibrahim, brother of blasts prime accused Dawood Ibrahim.

Siddiqui was charged with providing Salem with the Maruti car and participating

in the conspiracy hatched by Dawood and Anees to carry out the blasts.

Nine charges were framed against Salem and two against Siddiqui. Both pleaded not guilty.

The charges were framed under Tada (Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act), Explosives Substances Act, Explosives Act, IPC and Arms Act.

The prosecution has filed a petition for a separate trial for the two accused, as the trial of the other accused in the blasts, including Dutt, is over. The court will hear arguments on the matter on March 21.

Public prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam said that there was no need to file a case against Dutt, as his trial was over and there was "enough evidence" against him.

Salem has told the court that he had carried arms to Dutt's residence, but under the impression that it was smuggled silver.

Ace pilots killed in IAF jet crash

B.R. Srikanth & SUTIRTHO Patranobis
 Bidar (Karnataka)/ New Delhi, March 18

SURYA KIRAN, THE Indian Air Force's high-profile aerobatic team, lost two ace pilots on Saturday morning when a Kiran MK II, an indigenously built trainer jet, crashed near the airbase here during an exercise.

The crash, which claimed the lives of Wing Commander Dheeraj Bhatia and Squadron Leader Shailendra Singh, was the first such accident to hit the aerobatic team formed a decade ago.

Shankar, a photographer who was eyewitness to the accident, said three planes were engaged in aerobatics when the tail fin of one jet hit another. But Air Force spokesman Wing Commander V.M. Raghunath told reporters in Bangalore, "It was not a mid-air collision. The aircraft was seen veering away from the three-plane formation before it crashed."

IAF sources said Sq Ldr Singh was a new entrant and had joined the team two months ago. Aerobatic displays by these bright red jets are a regular feature at most IAF events.

On Saturday morning, when Squadron Leader Singh and Wing Commander Bhatia took off in their Kiran Mark II, they were rehearsing their act ahead of a show in Chandigarh next Sunday. The two, along with other pilots of the Surya Kiran formation, were to be one of the main attractions at the Chandigarh demonstration, organised as part of the Air Force's induction-related publicity rallies. The Sunday show, however, had not been put off till late on Saturday evening.

"The Surya Kiran demonstration is part of the publicity programme to attract the young to the IAF. The aircraft is usually part of the display where those attending the rally can get a close look," an IAF officer said.

The two pilots, along with four others in two more Kiran aircraft, were on one of the last practice sorties before the show. They were to fly out of their base on Tuesday.

It could have been one of the first such programmes for Singh who had recently joined the formation. Bhatia, however, had already been with the formation for some years and had taken part in air shows abroad. Both were in their early '30s. "In the last year or so, the Surya Kiran formation had performed in air shows in Singapore, Dubai and Sri Lanka



HEAD COUNT

2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number of aircraft crashed					
28	30	15	21	21	1
Pilot/Personnel killed					
31	15	3	1	5	-

among other places," the officer said.

Both pilots were in the category of 'master green pilot', which means they were among the very best. "To be part of the Surya Kiran formation, all pilots have to be flying instructors from the fighter stream of pilots. These guys were easily among the country's best pilots," the officer added.

Aircraft that are part of the Surya Kiran formation are considered to be among the best, though there have been crashes involving them. Two had crashed in 2001 and one in 2003. On December 27 last year, a Kiran Mark I had crashed near Mysore. But the pilots bailed out safely.

19 MAR 2006

Growing threat of Maoist violence

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More than 160 people have died in naxalite-related violence so far this year.

K. Srinivas Reddy

THE RECENT hijacking of a passenger train in Latehar, Jharkhand, and the attacks on tribals in Chhattisgarh and Bihar point to the naxalites upping the ante. So much so that the death toll in naxalite violence has begun to rival that in Jammu and Kashmir.

Thirteen States, including Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, and Maharashtra, are affected by naxalite violence in varying degrees. Provisional figures put out by South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) for 2006, up to March 12, put the death toll in naxalite-related violence at 168: 74 civilians, 49 security forces, and 45 ultras. SATP put the deaths in Jammu and Kashmir during the same period at 199: 31 civilians, 48 security forces personnel, and 120 militants. What is disquieting is that the civilian deaths that have occurred in the Maoist violence are far higher.

Analysts say the Indian Maoists are trying to emulate their counterparts in Nepal, where the decade-long armed struggle has made the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) Maoist so powerful that its writ runs in a majority of the districts. Despite the vast difference in the socio-political-economic conditions in the two countries, the Indian Maoists, it is said, are "slightly" disappointed over the "results" of their three-decade-long struggle, as the Nepal Maoists have made "fantastic strides."

The increase in violence has to be understood in the backdrop of the merger of the country's two major revolutionary parties — the Maoist Communist Centre of India (MCCI) and the CPI-ML People's War (PW) — to form the CPI (Maoist). The MCCI had a strong presence in Bihar and Jharkhand, while the PW had its base in Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and parts of West Bengal, Haryana, Karnataka, and Bihar.

Of the two, the MCCI was known for its brutal methods while the PW in comparison was considered "moderate." This "moderate approach" of the PW leaders was resented by their own comrades. Of late, they have been denouncing the leadership and had almost held it responsible for the near-collapse of the movement in Andhra Pradesh, when such a trend was not visible in the 'Dandakaranya' region.

Moderate approach criticised

The Maoist leadership in Andhra Pradesh believes the "moderate" approach led to irreversible losses, especially in North Telangana where the party had to face the ignominy of withdrawing the

Central Guerrilla Squads from the plains. In a bid to infuse new blood, the leadership expanded the North Telangana area by including adjoining Sironcha and Ahiri in Maharashtra, and some parts of Bastar adjoining Khammam district.

In the meantime, the Maoists started facing an unexpected enemy in the *Salwa Judum* (peace rallies) campaign launched in the Bastar forests by Chhattisgarh Opposition leader Mahendra Karma. As the campaign picked up pace, it began attracting the tribal youth. With cracks developing in their control over Bastar, declared their base area, the Maoists decided to react in their way. The result: 40 tribals were killed in the last two months alone.

This was in stark contrast to the spectacular successes being enjoyed by Maoist cadres (belonging to the erstwhile MCCI) in Bihar and Jharkhand.

Faced with such a scenario, a section of the Maoist leadership in Andhra Pradesh is said to have argued in favour of adopting the MCCI tactics and emulating methods of the Nepal Maoists and the LTTE in Sri Lanka. But the arguments were shot down by the "moderate" leadership, which countered that the Nepal and Sri Lankan rebels were succeeding because of the local conditions and that such strategies might not work in India.

These differences have become sharp and some leaders have even criticised party general secretary Ganapathy, attributing the movement's losses in Andhra Pradesh to his "moderate" stance.

It is believed that this issue will come up for discussion at the next Maoist Congress to be held this year.

In this context, New Delhi's reaction to the emerging situation appears confused. The Centre despatched a huge National Security Guard contingent to Chhattisgarh following the attacks on *Salwa Judum* activists. NSG teams were also sent to Bihar after the sensational Jehanabad jail attack. However, the Centre seems to be little aware of how ill-suited the NSG is for anti-guerrilla warfare. Its teams had to return without participation in the anti-extremist operations in Bihar; they had no specific intelligence inputs to act upon.

While another meeting of Chief Ministers of the naxalite-affected States is being called for, there has been no positive outcome of the earlier meetings held on September 19, 2005, and September 21, 2004. Interestingly, every Chief Minister who attended these meetings had advocated for more coordination among the States but this is yet to be done.

17 MAR 2006

115 11/11

Centre calls meet to check Naxalites

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, March 15. — In view of the recent hijacking of a train by Naxalites in Jharkhand, the Centre has convened a high-level meeting of all Naxalite-affected states to chalk out a strategy to combat them.

The meeting, convened by the home ministry, will be held on 31 March and would be attended by chief secretaries and director generals of police of the affected states.

The Union home secretary, Mr VK Duggal, will chair the meeting and discuss new strategies to tackle Naxalite attacks. The Centre and state government have already launched a massive operation in Latehar and adjoining districts of Jharkhand to nab the Naxalites who captured the train in Latehar two days ago.

Meanwhile, Naxalites triggered a blast at a school building damaging a portion of the wall at Tundi in Jharkhand's Dhanbad district, a top police official said.

"The side wall of a school building under Tundi police station has been damaged by a blast triggered by Naxalites," inspector general of police (Hazaribag range) Mr Rajiv Kumar said over the telephone. He said the incident took place on Monday night.

In Karimnagar, a surrendered ultra was hacked to death today by Maoists on the suspicion that he was a police informer. Three armed Maoists of the Sircilla group took M Ratan (35) from Pandimadugu village in Nizamabad district to Marimadla and hacked him to death. Ratan had worked in Srikonda Dalam (Maoist group) before his surrender, police said.

16 MAR 2006

THE STATESMAN

Naxalites hijack passenger train

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Late-night strike in Jharkhand

HT Correspondent
Ranchi, March 13

NAXALITES ON Monday night took possession of a passenger train in a bold attack, the first of its kind in the country.

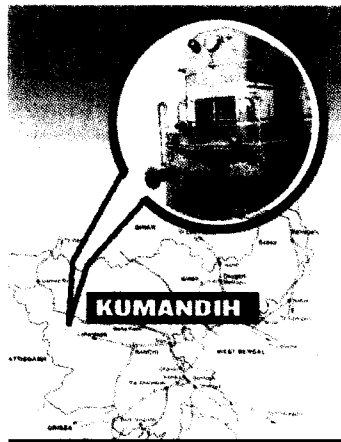
The Barkakhana-Dehri-Mugalsarai 628 Down passenger train was crossing the dense jungle terrain of Jharkhand's Palamau district when the Naxalites stormed the engine around 7.30 pm and took control of the train at Kumandi, 13 km from Latehar.

The militants of the CPI(Maoist) snatched the walkie-talkie of the driver, beat him up and held him hostage. With communication cut off, the fate of over 200 passengers was still unknown; the police fear that they were being robbed and assaulted.

TV channels reported that the Naxalites had claimed the ambush was in revenge for the killing of one of their comrades. No one from the authorities, however, confirmed this.

The only information that has come so far is through the driver of a goods train that was travelling on the same route. Railway authorities asked the goods driver to pass the seized train and report whatever he saw over his walkie-talkie.

The goods train crossed the passenger train along parallel



tracks and contacted the authorities, said Mahesh Bhagat, stationmaster of Latehar. The driver said it looked like a ghost train, standing still at pole number 234/12 with lights in all its carriages off. Even when the goods

train guard signalled to the stationary train waving his green light, he received no response.

A.K. Sinha, inspector-general, railways, Ranchi, claimed the district and police administrations were fully aware of the situation, but they were unwilling to divulge too many details of the incident.

Subodh Prasad, superintendent of police, Latehar, said forces from adjacent police stations had converged at Hehegara and Kumandi railway stations. They were awaiting further instructions from their seniors to proceed on a rescue mission. Policemen were wary about challenging the Naxalites at night, fearing they might fall into a trap.

"All attempts to contact driver A. Munda, assistant driver N.K. Roy and guard K. Oraon on their walkie-talkies have failed. The walkie-talkies simply failed to respond," said the SP.

Witnesses fail to identify Varanasi blast suspects

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Lashkar-e-Taiba denies involvement in blasts

VARANASI/LUCKNOW/HARDOI: Witnesses failed to identify on Sunday two suspects who were detained in Hardoi in connection with the Varanasi blasts.

There was confusion over whether they were released, with Uttar Pradesh Home Secretary Alok Sinha and the Hardoi police taking contrasting positions.

The witnesses to the twin blasts at the Sankat Mochan temple and the Varanasi Cantonment rail station failed to identify Sadiq Ali and Ansar, whose faces resembled the released sketches of the suspected terrorists, official sources in Varanasi said. Ali and Ansar were paraded a number of times before the two witnesses at a hotel in the holy city on Saturday, the sources said.

The two eyewitnesses said they were not the persons who had allegedly kept a bag containing the bomb at the Godaulia market on March 7. Shopkeepers were called to identify the



PEACE RALLY: Social worker Teesta Setalvad, activist Swami Agnivesh and lyricist Javed Akhtar and others taking an anti-terrorism pledge in Varanasi on Sunday.

— PHOTO: PTI

two who, along with six others, were picked up from a marketplace in Hardoi on Friday evening.

Meanwhile, Mr. Sinha said in Lucknow that the two suspects had not yet been released. "I spoke to the Additional Director-General of Police (Crime)

and was informed that the two suspects were still being quizzed." He said the police were very much within its rights to question any suspect.

However, Kotwali circle officer in Hardoi, Visarjan Singh Yadav, told PTI that Ali and Ansar were freed. — PTI, UNI

Varanasi and after

Double whammy for saffronites 25-8 173

It's been a double whammy for the saffronites in course of a week, the first a terrorist outrage and the other a challenge from within. While the administration still flounders in search of those who triggered the Varanasi explosions, the perpetrators would seem to have achieved their short-term objective, however dubious. After the bedlam and butchery in a bastion of Hinduism came the near-total shutdown of UP, ironically brought about by the standard political response of a bandh called by the VHP and the Bharatiya Janata Party. Within 24 hours the terrorists, albeit indirectly, were able to disrupt the tenor of life in a part of India that has the largest representation in the Lok Sabha and is variously referred to as the cow belt, the Hindi heartland and, most notably, the nerve centre of Hindutva. There is little doubt that the saffronites have suffered a jolt after having barely recovered from last year's in-house setbacks. Which now gets more acute with the ever-so-assertive Lal Krishan Advani deciding to embark on a *padayatra* in company with Rajnath Singh in a stridently spectacular protest against the *Sankatmochan* explosions and the policies of the UPA government.

Though he is no longer on the presidential saddle, he has been able to take the wind out of the sails of the BJP and still more important its parent party, the RSS. With the *yatra* scheduled to coincide with the elections, it is bound to deflect attention from the BJP's campaign, however inconsequential it may be in the five states going to polls. Which accounts for the ruffled feathers within the saffron lobby. Indeed, Mr Advani's announcement has caught the RSS and the VHP with their pants down. Well may he have reduced his party to a bunch of *palkhiwallahs*, a rather uncharacteristic response of the BJP. The RSS is clearly peeved over what it considers to be a unilateral move; its stress on collective decisions is merely a euphemism to exercise its control. The RSS can make its position clear without such a convoluted exercise in turf protection. Its overbearing policies are at the root of the crisis that still plagues the BJP even after the change of guard. That the present president will accompany the previous carries its own message — a former ruling party with a tradition deserves a free hand to chart an independent course.

Govt ready to take on Naxalites

Mukesh Ranjan

Cops killed

NEW DELHI, April 19: Concerned by the threat posed by the rampant Naxalite violence in the country and Naxalites' attempts to create a red corridor from Pashupatinath in Nepal to Tirupati in south India, the government is set to soon take some counter-offensive measures.

A highly-placed source said the government is seriously considering instructing the affected state police and Central forces to actively and constructively support the "Salva Judum" in Chhattisgarh.

"Salva Judum" is a movement of local tribals in the state which is opposed to Naxalite violence and is considered an anti-thesis to the revolution propounded by the Naxalites.

The government is also considering creating groups of local people on the pattern of "Salva Judum" in other affected states, the source said. Since the government is aware that apart

NAGPUR, April 19: Two constables were killed and 17 others, including a police sub-inspector, were injured when Naxalites triggered a powerful landmine blast and opened indiscriminate firing in the Phulbondi forest area in Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra today, police said. He said the blast was so powerful the vehicle was tossed in the air. ■ PTI

from police, the Naxalites' prime targets are new industries and new mineral units, it is being mooted that apart from proper rehabilitation of the displaced, five per cent equity ownership will be given to local tribals so that they have a sense of belonging.

The government is also considering roping in the Border Roads Organisation to complete road construction work in areas where contractors are facing trouble because of Naxal threats. Strategic rural roads will be put under the

Backward District Initiative (BDI) instead of the Prime Minister's Gramin Sarak Yojna (PMGSY).

In another significant step, the government is mulling incorporating "security cost" as part of the project cost while evaluating and sanctioning mega projects in the affected area. "But there is a problem in doing so as there is a distinct difference in plan and non-plan expenditure," said an informed source. The government is looking into other options to sort out this problem as action has to be taken to include the cost of required security in the construction of mega projects.

If the proposal comes through, all the affected states, West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh, would benefit as they would either be compensated for the security to be provided or would be relieved of the responsibility of providing security to the projects.

No breakthrough in Jama Masjid blasts case

Special Cell considering angle of mischief by local criminal elements; 'role of Tunda's men cannot be ruled out'

by D. B. K. Desai

Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: Though the Special Cell has been working round-the-clock on the twin blasts that took place at the Jama Masjid in the Walled City area on Friday, it has not achieved any major breakthrough.

It is learnt that apart from the involvement of an extremist group, the angle of mischief by some local criminal elements is also being probed by the Special Cell. The use of a crude bomb, apparently assembled using materials easily available, indicates that someone who had no access to lethal explosives was behind the low-intensity blasts.

Also, the culprits knew the bombs placed near the tank at the centre of the mosque would not cause much damage as it was an open area. "In many such

cases, it has been found that the motive is to create communal disturbance. As was seen in the recent blasts in Varanasi," said a senior police officer.

Probe continues

The police are also trying to find out if someone trained by Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba militant Abdul Karim Tunda was involved in manufacturing the improvised explosive devices.

"As we are probing all possible angles, the role of Tunda's men, some of who are still at large, cannot be ruled out," said the

police officer. Experts are trying to find out the unique features of the bombs used. "In several cases, the type of bomb used provides valuable clues regarding the outfit behind the incident. Cadre-based organisations carry out all their attacks in a similar fashion," he added.

On Saturday, the Special Cell interrogated about 15 people. Though a majority of them have been let off, some are still being grilled.

Two of the 14 injured are still in hospital.

Meanwhile, tenant verification

tion drives in the capital have been intensified and guesthouses in the Walled City area, north-east Delhi and in south Delhi are being checked. But normality has returned to the Walled City area with many foreigners visiting the historic Jama Masjid on Sunday.

UNI adds: The police are contemplating drawing sketches of suspects based on eye-witness accounts and the questioning of those 'detained'.

Though senior officials refused to say anything, sources said getting the sketches drawn could enlarge the 'search' ambit and lead to possible clues.

After reports of some people having seen 'suspects', carrying the bags, the police are enthused about the possibility of getting some leads through 'unknown quarters', as they are calling it.



ALL CALM: Foreign tourists at the historic Jama Masjid in New Delhi on Sunday. PHOTO: SANDEEP SAXENA

17 APR 2013

THE HINDU

Nine arrested for Srinagar serial blasts

Militants belong to Jaish-e-Mohammad

Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR: A day after seven explosions rocked Srinagar, killing five people and injuring 40, nine militants were arrested on Saturday in connection with the attacks.

The day also saw a bomb scare in the city. As a car remained unattended for some time on Residency Road, shopkeepers informed the police and the entire area was sealed. A bomb disposal squad arrived, and after an hour, nothing was found in the car that belonged to a contractor.

Vital clues collected

"There was nothing in it but people got suspicious. Everything is normal now," Haseeb Mughal, Superintendent of Police, Kothibagh, told *The Hindu*.

Director General of Police Gopal Sharma said at a news conference: "By the time the seventh grenade was lobbed on Friday, we collected vital clues about the identity of the terrorists and started follow-up action."

A mini-bus, carrying explosives and ammunition, was seized. "We recovered 30 UBGL grenades, eight grenades, two explosive detonators, five pencil timer chargers and rounds of AK47 ammunition," Mr. Sharma said.

Follow-up operation

During the night-long follow-up operation, the nine militants were arrested and all of them belonged to the Jaish-e-Mohammad. They planned the attacks and divided the task among

themselves. Sources said the father and a brother of the two arrested, Zubair and Sameer, were in jail in connection with militant activities.

Family involved

"It is a family which is deeply involved in militancy. A year ago, a top commander was killed in their house," said a senior police officer.

Similarly, the brother of another arrested, Arif Shah, is also behind the bars.

Fresh attack

ANI reports: Suspected militants launched a grenade attack on a bunker of the Central Reserve Police Force near the Khanyar shrine on Saturday.

The explosion occurred in a park.

Union Home Secretary V. K. Duggal on Saturday held a security review meeting in New Delhi.

Special Secretary (Internal Security) in the Home Ministry G.S. Rajgopal, Delhi Police Commissioner K. K. Paul, Director General of Military Operations Madan Gopal and senior officials from the Home and Defence Ministries attended the meeting.

● Bomb scare in city

● Mini bus carrying explosives, ammunition seized

● Police conduct night-long follow-up operation

Over a dozen picked up for Jama Masjid blasts

Security stepped up in and around the mosque as life returns to normal

Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: Even as normality returned to the Walled City area of the Capital on Saturday within hours of the two bomb explosions inside the historic Jama Masjid complex on Friday, the Special Cell of the Delhi police picked up over a dozen people for questioning. However, no arrests have been made so far.

Amid tight security, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh along with Union Minister of State for External Affairs E. Ahmed visited the mosque on Saturday evening and met the Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid. He also visited the hospital where the injured are admitted.

Earlier in the day, Delhi's Police Commissioner K. K. Paul took a round of the Walled City area to review the security arrangements. "We are piecing together all the evidence gathered from the blast site. About 15 people have been interrogated in coordination with intelligence agencies in connection with the blast," he disclosed.

Along with those picked up for interrogation, the antecedents of at least two suspects are being

portions of a battery from the scene of explosions but have not come across any timer device or wire. Though senior police officers are sure that the bombs used in the explosions were crude, they are probing how exactly they were configured.

According to the police, the nature of blasts indicates that some local group was involved. "As investigations are in an initial stage, we cannot say for sure which outfit is behind the explosions," said a senior police officer, emphasising that the motive of the blasts by all indications was not to kill but to whip up communal passions.

Following the explosions, metal detectors have been installed at all entrances to the Jama Masjid and more police personnel have been deployed in the area. All visitors to the mosque are being frisked and their belongings checked. However, all the shops in the area around the mosque remained open on Saturday.

Meanwhile, barring three of the victims, all the other injured were discharged from Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan Hospital on Saturday.



THE MORNING AFTER: Para-military personnel man the main entrance at Delhi's Jama Masjid on Saturday. — PHOTO: S. SUBRAMANIAM

probed by Special Cell officers as they have given contradictory statements about their movement at the time of the blasts. With the help of eyewitnesses

the police are trying to reconstruct the sequence of events leading to the explosions near the water-tank right at the centre of the historic mosque.

The police have also recorded the statements of some of the victims injured in the twin blasts. The police have recovered

দিল্লিতে জামা মসজিদে নমাজের সময়ে জোড়া বিক্ষেপণ, জখম ১৫

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা, নয়াদিল্লি, ১৪ এপ্রিল: বারানসীর সফটমোচন মন্দিরে জঙ্গি হানার এক মাস পরেই আক্রান্ত হল দিল্লির জামা মসজিদ। আজ বিকেলে মসজিদ চত্বরে দশ মিনিটের ব্যবধানে পরপর দুটি বিক্ষোভ হয়। আহত হন ১৫ জন। তাঁদের এলএনজেপি হাসপাতালে ভর্তি করানো হয়েছে। কেন্দ্রীয় গোয়েন্দাদের বক্তব্য, দেশি বোমা দিয়েই ওই বিক্ষোভ ঘটানো হয়েছে। তবে ঘটনাস্থল যে হেতু জামা মসজিদ, তাই উদ্দিগ্ন স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রক। আজই শ্রীনগরে ছ'টি বিক্ষোভে ৫ জনের মৃত্যু হয়েছে। তার মধ্যে শেষ দুটি জামা মসজিদের ঘটনার কিছু পরে। ঘটনার পর দেশজুড়ে বিশেষ সতর্কতা জারি করা হয়েছে। বারানসী ও মুম্বইয়ের বিভিন্ন মন্দির ও মসজিদ চত্বরে নিরাপত্তা বাড়াহা হয়েছে।

জামা মসজিদের এক নম্বর গেটের পাশে আজ বিকেল সাড়ে পাঁচটা নাগাদ প্রথম বিক্ষোভগণটি হয়। সেখানে যারা ছিলেন, তাঁদের মধ্যে কয়েকজন আহত হন। মিনিট দশেকের মধ্যেই মসজিদের ভিতরে ওড়ু করার জলাশয়ের পাশে দ্বিতীয় বিক্ষোভগণটি হয়। ধোঁয়ায় ঢেকে যায় মসজিদ চত্বর। আকস্মিক বিপদে দিগ্বিদিক জ্ঞান হারিয়ে ছোট্ট ছোট্টে বাস্তব হয়ে পড়েন মহিলা-শিশু-পুরুষ মিলিয়ে ভিতরের জনতা। পুলিশ জানিয়েছে, বোমাগুলি প্লাস্টিকের ব্যাগে রাখা ছিল। তৃতীয় একটি বোমা পুলিশ নিষ্ক্রিয় করে দেয়। জুম্মাবার হওয়ায় আজ ভিড় বেশি ছিল। জামা মসজিদের আশপাশে প্রচুর ইলেকট্রনিক্স ও খাবারের দোকান রয়েছে। অদূরে লালকেন্দ্র।

ঘটনার পরেই দিল্লি পুলিশের বিশাল বাহিনী, বম্ব স্কোয়াড ও দমকল ঘটনাস্থলে চলে যায়। প্রথমে রটে যায় দুজনের মৃত্যু হয়েছে। পরে জানা যায়, তা ঠিক নয়। ঘটনাস্থলে গিয়ে দেখা যায়, শাহি ইমাম সৈয়দ আহমেদ বুখারি মাইকে বারবার সম্প্রীতি বজায় রাখার আবেদন জানাচ্ছেন। জলাশয়ের ডান পাশে ইতস্তত ছড়িয়ে পলিথিন ব্যাগের টুকরো, স্কিটোর।

দ্রুত অবস্থা আয়ত্তে আসায় দেড় ঘণ্টার মধ্যেই অবশ্য শুরু হয়ে যায় সন্ধ্যার নমাজ। ছড়িয়ে ছিটিয়ে উত্তেজনা থেকে যায় শুধু রাস্তার ধারে ছোট ছোট জটলায়। বিক্ষোভগণকে 'কম ক্ষমতাসম্পন্ন' হিসাবে পুলিশ কর্তারা আখ্যা দিলেও এর অভিঘাত ও তাৎপর্য অনুসন্ধান যুদ্ধকালীন তৎপরতা সরকার পক্ষে। বিক্ষোভগণে ঘটনায়

গভীর শোক প্রকাশ করেন কংগ্রেস সভানেত্রী সনিয়া গাঁধী। স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী শিবরাজ পাটিল বলেন, "এই কাজ যারা করে, তারা কোনও ধর্ম বা জাত দেখে না। তারা ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতার বিরোধী।"

দু'দিন আগেই রাজধানীতে দেশের অভ্যন্তরীণ নিরাপত্তা নিয়ে পুলিশ কর্তাদের সঙ্গে বৈঠক করেছেন শিবরাজ, কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্র সচিব ভি কে দুগ্গলেরা। দুগ্গল বলেছিলেন, "সন্ত্রাস হানা শুধুমাত্র হাম্মু ও কাশ্মীরেই সীমিত নেই। বরঞ্চ দেশের বিভিন্ন স্তরে তাকে ছড়িয়ে দেওয়া, সফট টার্গেট-কে চিহ্নিত করার ঝাঁক বাড়ছে। বিক্ষোভগণের পর দায়িত্ব

নেওয়ার প্রবণতাও কমছে।"

আজকের ঘটনার পর এখনও পর্যন্ত কোনও সংগঠন নিজেদের দায়িত্ব স্বীকার করেনি। কিন্তু একে নেহাতই দুষ্কৃতি বা সমাজবিরোধীর কাজ বলে মনে নিতেও নারাজ নর্থ ব্লক। গোটা ঘটনাকে কেন্দ্র করে এক দিকে যেমন চলছে সাম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রীতি বজায় রাখার জন্য সক্রিয়তা, অন্য দিকে চলছে রহস্য উদ্ধারের চেষ্টা।

প্রথম ও প্রধান প্রশ্ন কেন জামা মসজিদ? সরকারি সূত্রের মতে, খুব বড় ধরনের বিক্ষোভগণ না ঘটলেও আতঙ্ক ছড়িয়ে দেওয়ার জন্য এই জায়গাটি আদর্শ। দিল্লিতে নিরাপত্তার টানটান ভাব এখানে অনেকটাই শিথিল। এর আগে চাঁদনি চক এলাকাতোও এই ধরনের বিক্ষোভগণ ঘটানো হয়েছিল। স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রকের কর্তার মতে, "এই ধরনের বিক্ষোভগণে একজন স্থানীয় ব্যক্তিকে কাজে লাগানো হয়। বাকিরা আসে দেশের বিভিন্ন প্রান্ত থেকে।"

এই নাশকতার ঘটনাকে বিশ্লেষণ করা হচ্ছে ভারত-পাকিস্তান দ্বিপাক্ষিক সম্পর্কের প্রেক্ষাপটে। মে মাসে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কাশ্মীর সফর। পাক প্রেসিডেন্ট মুশারফ মনমোহনকে নিয়ে যেতে চান ইসলামাবাদে। সেস্টেঘরে রাষ্ট্রপুঞ্জের মহাসম্মেলনে দু'দেশের রাষ্ট্রপ্রধানের পার্শ্ববৈঠকে মিলিত হওয়ার কথা। সব মিলিয়ে এই শান্তির বাতাবরণকে কিছুটা ভেঙে দেওয়ার চেষ্টা হিসাবেও একে দেখা যেতে পারে।

পাকিস্তানেও এই ধরনের ধর্মস্থানে নাশকতার ঘটনা ক্রমাগত ঘটে চলেছে। সেখানে উদ্দেশ্য মুশারফকে দুর্বল করা। ভারতে একই ঘটনা ঘটলে ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ সম্প্রীতির বাতাবরণ বিঘিয়ে দেওয়ার চেষ্টা হচ্ছে কি না তাও তদন্তের হিসাবের মধ্যে রাখছে স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রক।

সম্প্রতি মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্টের সফর ঘিরেও দেশের স্থানে স্থানে বিক্ষোভ হয়েছে। ভারত পাকিস্তান পরমাণু চুক্তি নিয়েও ইসলামাবাদে ক্ষোভ জমা হয়েছে। সম্প্রতি জামা মসজিদ সংলগ্ন এলাকা ভরে গিয়েছিল বৃশ-বিরোধী লিফলেটে। এক সঙ্গে বিক্রি হচ্ছিল সাদাম ও জিন্নার বই। এই ঘটনার সঙ্গে গোটা বিষয়টি সংযুক্ত কি না, তাও খতিয়ে দেখছে সরকার। শ্রীনগরের আজকের ধারাবাহিক বিক্ষোভগণের অভিঘাত ও ভয়াবহতা যদিও জামা মসজিদের থেকে বেশি, কিন্তু এই দুই ঘটনার নকশার মধ্যে কোনও যোগাযোগ রয়েছে কিনা, তা দেখছে নর্থ ব্লক।

কাশ্মীরে ছ'টি গ্রেনেড হানা, হত ৫

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা, শ্রীনগর, ১৪ এপ্রিল: শুভ ফ্রাইডে-র দিনে সন্ত্রাস হামলা ভূষর্গেও।

সারা দিনে কাশ্মীরের বিভিন্ন এলাকায় হামলা চালান জঙ্গিরা। দুপুর থেকে সন্ধ্যা পর্যন্ত ছ'টি হামলায় মৃত্যু হয়েছে অন্তত পাঁচ জনের। এই পাঁচ জনই সাধারণ নাগরিক। তাঁদের মধ্যে দু'জন আবার মহিলা— দীপিকা জোশী নামে এক নেপালি শ্রমিক এবং শাহিনা নামে এক স্থানীয় বাসিন্দা। বাটামালু থেকে লাল চক হয়ে ডাল গেট পর্যন্ত সবক'টি ঘটনা ধরে ১০ জন নিরাপত্তারক্ষী-সহ ৩৫ জন আহত হয়েছেন। প্রায় সব ক্ষেত্রেই গ্রেনেড হামলা চালানো হয়েছে।

হামলার দায় স্বীকার করে সংবাদমাধ্যমের কাছে বিবৃতি পাঠিয়েছে জইশ-ই-মহম্মদ, জামিয়াত-উল মুজাহিদিন, আল মানসুরিয়ান এবং ইসলামিক ফ্রন্ট। তাদের বক্তব্য, আক্রমণের লক্ষ ছিল নিরাপত্তাবাহিনী। কিন্তু হতাহতের খতিয়ানেই স্পষ্ট যে, প্রাণ দিতে হয়েছে সাধারণ মানুষকেই।

হজরত মহম্মদের জন্মদিনের পরে আজই ছিল প্রথম শুক্রবার। দশ দিন পরে উপনির্বাচন রাজ্যের চারটি বিধানসভা আসনে। সেই পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে আজকের লাগাতার বিক্ষোভগণ বেশ

এর পর এগারোর পাতায়

15 APR 2006

ANADOLU AEM L AEMINA

Terror strikes in Delhi, Srinagar

TNN & AGENCIES

New Delhi: Thirteen people were injured, one of them seriously, in two explosions that took place in quick succession inside the historic Jama Masjid in old Delhi when the devout were offering prayers on Friday evening.

While the first explosion occurred at around 5.20 pm, another took place 15 minutes later near a pond used by worshipers for ablutions in the courtyard of the 17th century mosque built by Mughal emperor Shahjahan.

The explosions left black patches near the pond. Blood stains were also seen at the blast sites.

A doctor at the LNJP Hospital, about four kilometres away from the mosque, said 13 people have been admitted for treatment of minor injuries and burns. One of them is stated to be serious.

However, a senior police official said only six persons were injured.

A thick blanket of black smoke engulfed the area and people ran for cover even as announcement was made on the public address system of the mosque asking the devotees to leave the premises. No damage was done to the structure of the mosque.

The day being a Friday and a holiday on account of Ambedkar's birthday, a large number of people were present in the complex at the time of the explosion.

Ambulances and fire tenders were rushed to the site and the entire area was cordoned off. Police in large number was deployed to prevent any law and order problem. However, undeterred by the explosions, devout went back to the mosque about one-and-a-half hours later to offer 'isha' prayer.



The site of blasts in Jama Masjid

High alert in Mumbai

Mumbai: Security in places of worship in the city was enhanced and a high alert sounded following explosions inside Jama Masjid in New Delhi, police said. These included shrines like the Haji Ali, Mahim Durgah and mosques in central Mumbai. Security has also strengthened at Siddhi Vinayak temple in Prabhadevi and Mahalaxmi temple. Agencies

UPA showing 'casual attitude' towards Naxal threat: Rajnath

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

RAIGARH, APRIL 10

ACCUSING the UPA government of taking a "casual attitude" towards the Maoist threat, main Opposition BJP today slammed the Congress saying it lacked the commitment and political will to confront the problem frontally.

"We are dismayed that the UPA government has taken such a casual attitude to the threat. The Maoist have become an impediment to development projects in most backward regions and are running parallel administrations, siphoning money from government funds and extorting from local people," party chief Rajnath Singh told reporters, before starting out on the second day of his 'Bharat Suraksha Yatra' in Chhattisgarh.

He alleged that the Congress government in AP had tried to ap-

pease the extremists and gave them an opportunity to regroup and rearm themselves. "Today the Maoists from Andhra Pradesh even threaten neighbouring states," he said, adding the Centre had also played host to the top Maoist leadership from Nepal ignoring red-corner Interpol notices against them.

Questioning the Congress' sincerity in tackling the Maoist problem, the BJP chief said the Centre had not given adequate help and resources to states like Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar and Orissa to fight the Maoist.

Warning that the Centre's "inaction" would prove costly, he suggested a five-point strategy to deal with the problem.

He said the issue should be recognised as a national menace and fought unitedly by the Centre and the states. There must be an

action plan and an unified command involving the Centre and the states, he said.

Noting that Naxalism was an assault on the sovereignty of the country as it was a bid to gain political power with the gun, he said the problem should be treated like an insurgency. He said since Maoists possessed modern arms, the Centre should pump in more funds for police modernisation and supplement the police and paramilitary forces with the Army.

The BJP chief said that his party would be observing with keen interest next week's meeting of the PM with the CMs of Naxalite-affected states. He said that Naxalism posed one of the most important threats to the progress, prosperity and security of the country and at least 150 districts in 16 states were affected, while another 35 districts faced direct threats. (With PTI)

08 APR 2006

THE HINDU

Five arrested in 'War Room Leak' case

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has arrested five persons, including three former naval officers, and conducted searches at 17 locations in connection with the alleged leakage of classified documents pertaining to the Defence Ministry.

Of the three former officers arrested on Wednesday night in the "War Room Leak case," two

were produced before a Delhi court on Thursday. They were remanded to 14 days police custody, while the third was given transit remand.

On Thursday, two civilians were arrested from Pune. They were being brought to Delhi on transit remand, a CBI release said.

Lieutenant-Commander (retd.) Kulbhushan Parashar, an accused, was arrested at the Indira Gandhi International Air-

port here when he returned from London by an Air India flight. Soon after the arrests, the CBI raided 17 places — primarily the residential premises of all the accused — in Delhi, Chandigarh, Pune, Mumbai, Goa and Muzaffarpur.

The agency also searched the offices of a chartered accountant in Mumbai and the factory premises of a private company in Mumbai and Goa belonging to one of the accused.

The case was registered under the Official Secrets Act (OSA) on the basis of information received from the Defence Ministry that three naval officers and an officer of the Indian Air Force, in collusion with civilians, retired officers and others, allegedly conspired to unauthorised trading in classified documents and information relating to the Ministry.

Such information was likely to affect the sovereignty and in-

tegrity of the country. The case was registered against nine persons, including a former Wing Commander of the Air Force, two former Commanders of the Navy, a former Naval Captain and five civilians under Sections 120-B of the Indian Penal Code and Sections 3(1) (c) and 5 of the OSA, 1923.

Another report on Page 12

NEW FACE OF TERROR

He has been made fall guy, says family

Darul, Bangladesh Links Worry Investigators

By Pervez Iqbal Siddiqui/TNN

Lucknow: Three factors stand out in the arrest of the six persons who have been accused to carrying out the March 7 blasts in Varanasi—the involvement of a cleric and Bangladeshi, who were all students of the Darul Uloom Deoband, one of the most respected seats of Islamic learning.

"This is perhaps the first time that an ex-student of Darul Uloom in Deoband, Waliullah, has been arrested for his direct involvement in an act of terror," said S K Bhagat, the senior superintendent of the Special Task Force which carried out the arrests.

"Waliullah has admitted that the three youths who planted the bombs in Varanasi had been his mates in Deoband," added Bhagat, who headed the probe.

The fact that Waliullah is the serving pesh imam (who heads the namaz) of a mosque in Phulpur, Allahabad, has perturbed investigators. "He is the first serving cleric to have been arrested in this part of the land," claimed an intelligence official. "Earlier, those booked were people like teachers at some remote madrasa or merely a preacher," he added.

PLANNED IN BANGLA, SET UP AT PHULPUR, EXECUTED IN KASHI



FEBRUARY 23, 2006: Waliullah, pesh imam at Phulpur, attends meeting in Allahabad. Told Assadullah, the commander of HuJI in Dhaka, would send men to get 'job done by them'



MARCH 3, 2006: 3 Bangladeshi—Bashir, Mustafeez and Zakaria—reach Waliullah's house with two bags at 9 pm. He says the men were with him in Deoband, rents a house for them



MARCH 6, 2006: The men buy three pressure cookers. The crude bombs are made that night at the rented accommodation using the explosives the three men had brought along with them

March 7: Carrying the deadly cargo, the men board Bundelkhand Express for Varanasi



STF parades five of the arrested before media in Lucknow on Wednesday

The trend could take its toll on the fabric of communal harmony, he feared. "The fact that an arrested

accused is a pesh imam is sure to create doubts about the police action in the minds of some sections of the minority community," he said, pointing out that this is not the first time Waliullah has been arrested for anti-national activity.

Waliullah's brother Zikra Ullah has condemned the arrest while talking to news channels in Phulpur. Claiming his brother was innocent, he accused the STF of implicating a pious man because the cops had failed to pin down the real culprits.

Vijay Pratap Singh/TNN

Phulpur (UP): The capture of a small mastermind of Varanasi blasts Mufti Waliullah March 26 had created a buzz in the town of Phulpur, 35 km from Allahabad.

But his confession on April 5 before the media in Lucknow went largely unnoticed in the area, with only his family members claiming he was be-



A victim of the Varanasi blasts

ing falsely implicated.

Though small groups of people were seen discussing his arrest in the market place, no unusual activity was noticed in this normally sensitive small town. inhabited by around 20,000 people of the minority community. When queried, people, however, condemned the Varanasi blasts and said real culprits should be punished.

Waliullah's family members, including his wife Humairah, brothers Waliullah, Mohd Abdullah, and neighbours categorically denied his involvement in the blasts saying that he was a pious man and had been engaged in teaching in the mosque.

HuJI has close ISI, Bin Laden links

By Anjali Aggarwal/TNN

New Delhi: The Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami (HuJI), the Bangladesh-based group linked to the Varanasi blasts, was formed in 1980 as part of the Pakistan-based jihad network fighting Soviet troops in Afghanistan. But as things changed there, much of its operations moved to Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh unit was established in 1992 with assistance from Osama bin Laden's International Islamic Front. It was headed by Shawkat Osman alias Sheikh Farid.

The Bangladesh unit aims to establish Islamic rule in that country and reportedly maintains six camps in the hills of Chittagong. It was assigned



BIN LADEN: Footprint in India?

the task of recruiting Bangladeshis and Indian Muslims to fight in Kashmir under the command of the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen. Several hundred recruits of the unit have been trained in Afghanistan and pushed into India to carry out terrorist operations.

In 2004, a little-known militant group, Harkat-ul-Zihad, suspected to

be a shadow of HuJI, had threatened to kill Indian cricketers if they toured the country. A high-level security team had flown to Dhaka to make an on-the-spot assessment of the situation.

The outfit's cadres are believed to infiltrate regularly into India's eastern corridor and maintain contacts with terrorist groups operating there, including Ulfa.

The HuJI continues to maintain active links with the Al Qaida and remnants of the Taliban militia. Reports indicate that ISI agents train HuJI cadres, both Indian and Bangladeshi, in Kurigram and Rangpur areas of Bangladesh.

It is also linked to another Islamist

extremist outfit, the Asif Reza Commando Force, which claimed responsibility for the January 22, 2002, attack on the American Center in Kolkata. The arrest of Aftab Ansari alias Aftab Ahmed alias Aftab Malik, the prime accused in the attack, drew out further information on the links between Jaish-e-Mohammed, Kashmir-e-Taiba and the HuJI. There have also been reports that a 25-member team of Taliban operatives reached Bangladesh in June 2001 to train HuJI cadres.

The HuJI reportedly receives financial assistance from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan through Muslim NGOs in Bangladesh.

09 APR 2006

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Blast suspects walked free in Jan

Delhi Police zero in on seven accused in '97-'98 strikes

TUSHAR Srivastava
New Delhi, April 15

SEVEN PERSONS, who had been tried for the 1997-98 serial blasts, and who had walked out of Tihar jail this January — five of them for lack of evidence — may hold the key to the conspiracy behind Friday's twin blasts in Jama Masjid, the police believe.

Sheikh Hussain, Himan Sheikh, Shamim Akhtar, Tasleem, Naimuddin, Mohammed Umar Ali and Mohammed Abdul Qasim were released from prison on January 18, and less than three months later, the blasts took place. Intelligence agencies think it is more than just a coincidence.

The explosives used on Friday were crude and low-intensity, possibly a combination of ammonium chloride and potassium chlorate, packed tightly with iron nails bearing the signature of Abdul Karim

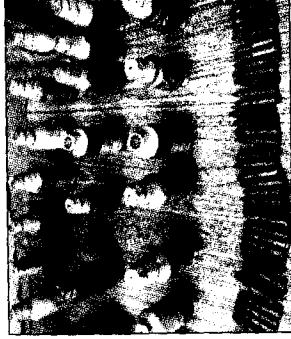
Jaish men held for Srinagar attacks

THE J&K police on Friday night arrested nine Jaish-e-Mohammad men believed to be behind the Srinagar blasts, which left five persons dead and over 50 wounded.

DGP Gopal Sharma said a large quantity of ammunition was recovered from them. "More arrests are likely," he said.

"We got vital clues and seized a minibus in which explosives and ammunition were being carried to Ajas village," Sharma said. The DGP said so far police had found no link between the blasts in Srinagar and those at Jama Masjid in Delhi.

HTC, Srinagar



REUTERS
Grenades seized in Srinagar.

Tunda, of the Lashkar-e-Tayyeba. He was responsible for 37 blasts which rocked Delhi, Panipat, Sonapat, Ludhiana, Kanpur and Varanasi in 1997-98 killing 17 persons and injuring over 300. Most of

Tunda's associates from a Sadar Bazar hideout. Of those arrested, Himan, Shemim, Sheikh Hussain, Tasleem and Naimuddin were discharged in January, 2006, for want of evidence, while Ali and Qasim were found guilty under the Explosives Act, but were freed because they had already spent seven years in jail.

The police's special branch has obtained the seven's jail records. Teams have been dispatched to their addresses, and those still in jail will also be questioned.

"Tracking down the seven could be a tough ask as it's been three months since they were released, but we're on the job," said a senior sleuth. "We have also drawn up a list of those who came to meet them in jail and efforts are on to track them too." "This is one of the main leads we are following. It is too big a thing to be ignored as a mere coincidence," he added.

More reports on page 2

IED found at Byculla, terror plot foiled

Device Similar To One Used At Varanasi, High Alert At All City Railway Stations

Mumbai: A day before the 13th anniversary of the Mumbai bomb blasts, a major terrorist strike in the city was averted on Saturday with the timely detection of an improvised explosive device containing two kg of ammonium nitrate from Byculla railway station in central Mumbai.

Apart from the explosive filled in a polypack water bottle, police also recovered a pocket-size transformer that could have provided necessary current had a detonator been attached to the explosive device, police commissioner A N Roy said.

The explosives was taken to Girgaum Chowpatty in South Mumbai, where an Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) team defused the device. The samples of the explosive have been sent for forensic examination.

The device was similar to the one used in the Varanasi blasts, Roy said, adding that in the temple town ammonium nitrate was used along with RDX. Stating that the device found in the upper rack of a gents toilet at Byculla was "not complete in it-



The anti-terrorist squad defuses the device at Chowpatty on Saturday

self" to cause an explosion in case of human contact, he added that a high alert had been sounded at all railway stations.

"The assembly which we have seized would not have caused a blast itself, since some vital components like detonators, energy source and a timer were missing," Roy said, adding that the police

were not ruling out the possibility of terrorists having hidden the explosives at Byculla to be assembled later.

Stating that Mumbai had been on the terrorist scanner for many years now, he claimed that the excellent intelligence set up and infrastructure had foiled similar subversive attempts in the past. Agencies

GEARING UP FOR EVENTUALITY

National plan on N-attack

CCS guards against potential militant threat

RAJNISH Sharma
New Delhi, March 10

AMID SPECIFIC Intelligence inputs that militant organisations could use chemical weapons in future attacks, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), in a significant move, cleared a proposal mooted by the home ministry to formulate a "plan with detailed standard operating procedures (SOPs)" to deal with such a scenario.

The plan will also deal with a possible attack in which radioactive radiations are used and even leakage of radioactive radiations from a nuclear plant.

In fact, the MHA, sources added, had approached the CCS on Thursday with a proposal to formulate a strategy to deal with chemical and radioactive attacks. The ministry had also drafted some standard operating procedures (SOPs), but the CCS was of the view that this should be further expanded by putting in place a proper plan.

The plan, to be implemented at the national, state and district levels, will be broadly divided into three components - the command and control structure, preparedness for such attacks and the post-attack recovery. The ministry of home affairs, in consultation with other ministries, is now in the process of further elaborating the SOPs for the three components of the plan. Central Intelligence agencies have been giving regular inputs to the home ministry that militant organisations may use a chemical weapon to attack important targets and there is need for a "foolproof strategy" to deal with this situation.

Sources said the command and control structure at the Cen-



tre might be headed by the Prime Minister or the home minister. Other important functionaries, such as the national security adviser, Cabinet secretary and home secretary, will also be part of this structure.

The plan will spell out detailed SOPs, which will have to be followed by various ministries and departments. For this, regular drills and exercises will be conducted to check preparedness and coordination. There is a possibility of raising a highly specialised force that will be trained and equipped to deal with chemical and radioactive attacks.

"Since the move involves huge financial implications, the proposal will have to be discussed in detail with the finance ministry, too", a senior home ministry official said.

11 MAR 2008

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Probe on the right track, say police

9-08-11 10:15

tip: i 10/3

Sketches of suspects released

Vinay Kumar

VARANASI: Two days after blasts rocked this city, the Uttar Pradesh police released sketches of two suspected terrorists, who placed a bomb in the crowded Godowlia market area.

Senior Superintendent of Police Navneet Sakera said here on Thursday that the sketches were prepared after talking to eyewitnesses and vendors, who saw two youths go away from the spot, leaving behind a bag which contained the "cooker bomb." It was, however, defused.

According to Mr. Sakera, shopkeepers, who were shown the sketches, said these more or less resembled the suspects.

Eyewitness accounts point out that the suspects spoke with a heavy north Indian accent, were clean shaven and possibly hailed from Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr. Sakera said the Special Task Force, the Central intelligence agencies and the State police gathered vital clues to Tuesday's blasts.

To a query, he said they were looking into the claim by the hitherto unknown outfit Lashkar-e-Qahab that it caused the blasts. "We are in constant touch with Central agencies as well as the Jammu and Kashmir police. We will unmask those behind the blasts. The perpetrators will be nabbed soon." The probe was progressing in the right direc-

tion. "Investigations in such complex cases take time. But we are sure to get some substantial evidence by next week. The videotape of a marriage ceremony at the Sankat Mochan temple is being examined as it can throw up useful leads," Mr. Sakera said.

ISI modules

Highly placed sources in the security establishment told *The Hindu* that Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence had set up modules in eastern Uttar Pradesh. Its operatives had entered India from Bangladesh and taken the West Bengal-Bihar-Uttar Pradesh route.

Intelligence agencies are also said to be looking at any electronic transfer of funds in the recent past.

Similar modus operandi

The police are probing who provided local support to the terrorists and how ammonium nitrate and RDX landed in Varanasi.

"There is a possibility that at least five or six people were behind the blasts. We are also studying similarities between the twin blasts here and the pre-Diwali blasts in Delhi. The *modus operandi* is unmistakably similar," Mr. Sakera said.

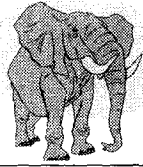
Another report on Page 12

বিপদ এবং শঙ্কা

দিগ্লির পর বারাণসী। সন্ত্রাসবাদীদের অতর্কিত হামলায় আবার বহু হতাহত। হামলা অতিশয় পরিকল্পিত। সন্ত্রাসবাদীরা এখানে আত্মঘাতী মানববোমা হইয়া ফাটে নাই, মন্দিরে, রেলস্টেশনে, ট্রেনে বিস্ফোরক রাখিয়া নিজেরা নিরাপদ দূরত্ব হইতে হত্যা ও ধ্বংসলীলা ঘটাইয়াছে। যাহারা হতাহত হইয়াছে, জঙ্গিরা তাহাদের চেনে না, তাহারাও জঙ্গিদের চিনিত না। শিকার ও শিকারির মধ্যে কোনও শত্রুতার ইতিহাসও নাই। ক্রোধে মাথা-গরম করিয়াও এমন পরিকল্পিত, শীতলমস্তিষ্ক আক্রমণ হানা যায় না। তবে কেন কতগুলি নিরীহ মানুষকে এ ভাবে হত্যা করা? বিশিষ্ট হিন্দু তীর্থনগরী বারাণসীতেই বা কেন এই হামলা? উদ্দেশ্য কি সাম্প্রদায়িক প্রতিক্রিয়া সৃষ্টি করা, যাহা দাঙ্গা ও হানাহানিতে পর্যবসিত হইয়া দেশের স্থিতি নষ্ট করিয়া দেয়? সামনে বসন্তোৎসব, সেই অবসরে আবার পারস্পরিক বিদ্বেষ ও হানাহানির এই দুর্ভাগ্যময় ঘটনা দেশকে আরও এক পা অন্ধকারে টানিয়া লইয়া গেল।

সন্ত্রাসবাদীদের পরিকল্পনা আগাম আঁচ করা নিশ্চয়ই কঠিন। তবু প্রশ্ন উঠিবে, রাজ্য সরকারকে কেন্দ্রীয় গোয়েন্দারা অযোধ্যা, মথুরা ও বারাণসীর ধর্মস্থানগুলিতে সম্ভাব্য জঙ্গি হামলা সম্পর্কে যে সতর্কবার্তা দিয়াছিল, তাহা গ্রাহ্য করা হই নাই কেন? সঙ্কটমোচন মন্দির বারাণসীর বিখ্যাত ধর্মস্থান, প্রতি মঙ্গলবারই যেখানে বহু পুণ্যার্থী-সমাগম হয়। সেখানে নিরাপত্তা এত শিথিল ছিল কেন যে জঙ্গিরা অনায়াসে বিস্ফোরক পাতিয়া রাখিয়া আসিতে পারে? সব বোমা ফাটে নাই, কিন্তু কাশী বিশ্বনাথ মন্দিরেও তো একটি না-ফাটা বোমা পাওয়া গিয়াছে। উহা ফাটিয়া মন্দিরের ক্ষতি হইলে দেশময় তাহার বিরূপ প্রভাব পড়িত। উত্তরপ্রদেশ সরকার বা মুখ্যমন্ত্রী মুলায়ম সিংহ যাদব কি সে কথা জানেন না? না কি বাবারি মসজিদ অক্ষত রাখিতে তিনি যে তৎপরতা দেখাইয়াছিলেন, সঙ্কটমোচন বা বিশ্বনাথ মন্দিরের বেলায় তাহার প্রয়ে জন বোধ করেন নাই? মুলায়ম সরকার এমনিতেই খুব নড়বড়ে অবস্থায়। প্রশাসন কি রাজনৈতিক কর্তৃত্বের এই দুর্বলতার সুযোগে শিথিল হইয়া গিয়াছে? নাকি তাহার সংখ্যালঘু-তোষণের নীতি, আগামী নির্বাচনে মুসলিম-যাদব মোর্চার শক্তিতে ক্ষমতায় ফেরার বাধ্যবাধকতা তাঁহাকে হিন্দু তীর্থের নিরাপত্তার প্রতি এমন উদাসীন রাখিয়াছে? সে ক্ষেত্রে এই বিপজ্জনক সুবিধাবাদ অচিরে পরিহার্য। সম্প্রতি মুলায়মের এক মন্ত্রী প্রকাশ্য জনসভায় ওলন্দাজ ব্যঙ্গচিত্রীর মৃত্যুদণ্ডের ফতোয়া দিয়া তাহা কার্যকর করিলে ৫১ কোটি টাকার পুরস্কার ঘোষণা করেন। ওই মন্ত্রীকে বরখাস্ত করা হয় নাই, এমনকী মৃদু ভৎসনাও নয়। সংবিধানের ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতার আদর্শের প্রতি শপথ না লইয়াই কি মুলায়মের মন্ত্রীরা মন্ত্রী হইয়াছেন? তাহার পরে পরেই মার্কিন প্রেসিডেন্টের ভারত সফরের প্রতিবাদে লখনউ শহরের সংখ্যালঘু মিছিল হইতে দৃষ্টিরা দাঙ্গার আগুন লাগায়। এই সব বিবোধগার ও তাণ্ডব রাজের সাম্প্রদায়িক পরিবেশটি বিবাইয়া তুলিয়াছে।

কংগ্রেস-বিরোধিতার রাজনীতি করিতে গিয়া বামপন্থীরাও মুলায়মের মতোই ইরান-ভোট, বুশের সফর, পরমাণু চুক্তি ইত্যাদিকে ভারতীয় সংখ্যালঘুর স্বার্থহানিকর নীতি রূপে তুলিয়া ধরিতে প্রয়াসী। এই ধরনের সুবিধাবাদ তাহার বিপরীতে হিন্দু সাম্প্রদায়িকতার জঙ্গি অবয়বটিকেও নূতন করিয়া খুঁচাইয়া তুলিতে পারে। জামাতে উলেমা-ই-হিন্দ এবং মুসলিম লিগ সন্ত্রাসবাদী হামলার কঠোর নিন্দা করিলেও জামা মসজিদের শাহি ইমাম বা মুসলিম পার্সোনাল ল' বোর্ড নীরব, যেমন নীরব কাশ্মীরের ছরিয়ত বা মুলায়ম মন্ত্রিসভার মুসলিম সদস্যরাও। নীরবতা দুর্ভাগ্যজনক, সন্দেহজনকও। আডবাণী সংখ্যালঘু তোষণকে ইসলামি সন্ত্রাসের উত্থানের কারণ শনাক্ত করিয়াছেন। সেই সিদ্ধান্তের ভিত্তিতে উগ্র হিন্দুত্বের মরা গাঙে জেয়ার আনার প্রচেষ্টা আত্মঘাতী হইবে। তিনি এই উপলক্ষে আরও এক বার 'যাত্রা'য় বাহির হইবার পরিকল্পনা শুরু করিয়াছেন। এই যাত্রা তাঁহার দলের ভাঙা কপাল জোড়া লাগাইবে কি না, দল তথা পরিবারের অন্দরে তাঁহার হতগৌরব ফিরাইবে কি না, সে সকল গুঢ় প্রশ্ন। কিন্তু দেশের শান্তিপ্রিয় মানুষ এই নূতন যাত্রাপালার তোড়জোড় দেখিয়া শঙ্কিত হইবেন নিশ্চয়ই। ঘরপোড়া অসহায় মানুষ তো!



FEMININE WILES

Guess what a village in Orissa did to control a rogue elephant? Brought in a female tusker who made a gentleman of the ill-tempered male in 12 hours

TEMPLE TERROR

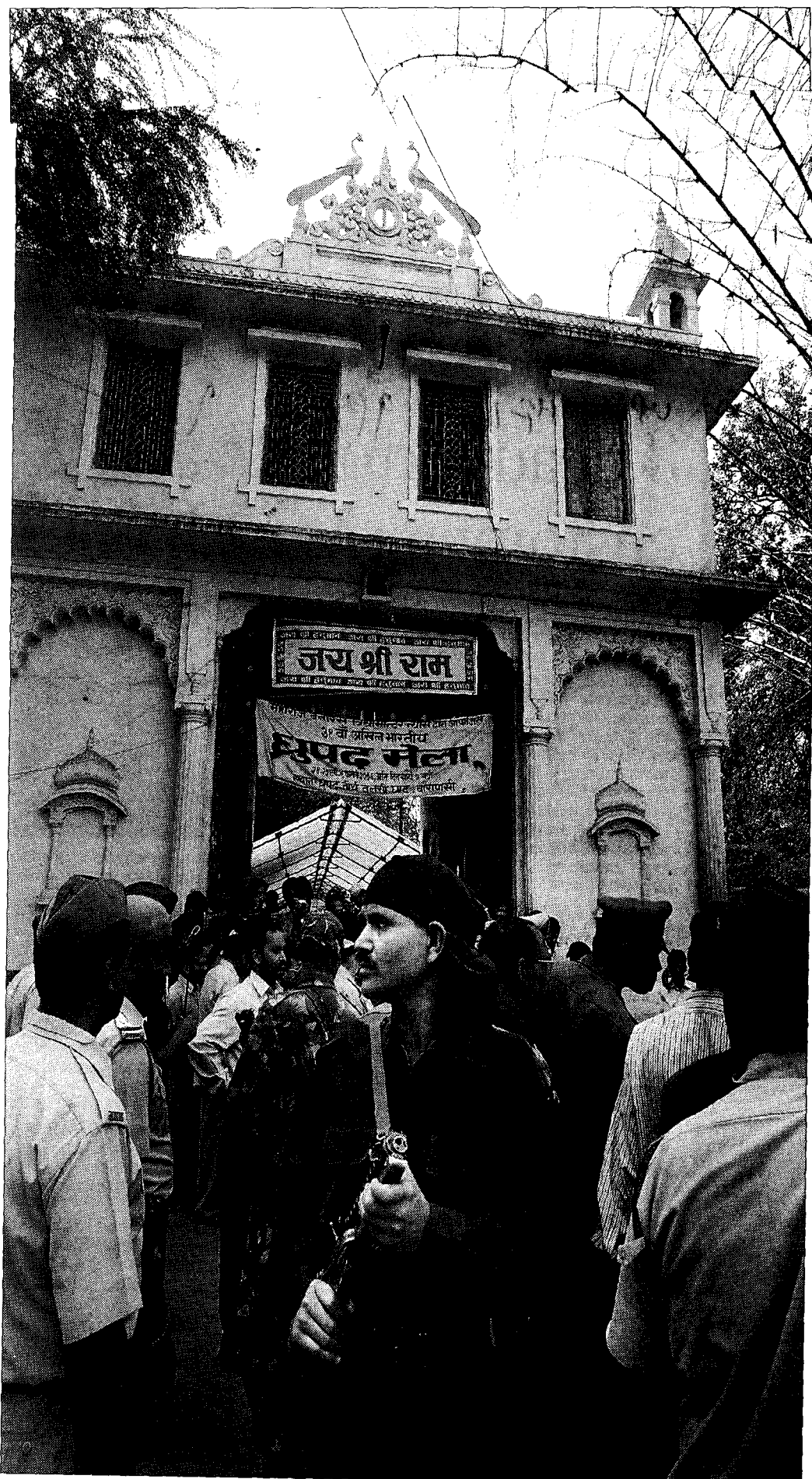
Kolkata, Thursday, March 9, 2006



COLOURS OF PAST

A housewife in Indore is keeping the rare tribal art of Warli paintings alive by using the motifs in wall hangings and other handicrafts

Day after: Chaos, protests, tension



Police commandos stand guard at Sankat Mochan temple in Varanasi on Wednesday.

AP

Leaders with proposals make a beeline for city

UMESH Raghuvanshi/PARBHU Razdan
Varanasi, March 8

A DAY after the twin blasts at Varanasi, the atmosphere is still charged in the temple town which remains the hub of major political activity, with politicians making a beeline and protesters fighting pitched battles with the police here and there amid indications that the pressure-cooker blasts were executed in a planned manner.

As politicians made a beeline for the spotlight — with Congress president Sonia Gandhi asking for a joint probe, BJP chief Rajnath Singh urging people to refrain from playing Holi, BSP chief Mayawati demanding imposition of President's rule and chief minister Mulayam Singh Yadav facing a hostile reception and a black flags demonstration — the investigations continued only at a slow pace.

A tough challenge lies ahead for security and intelligence even as Mulayam and Union home minister Shivraj Patil spoke to each other at least five times in an obvious attempt to maintain the peace and work out the case at the earliest.

Mulayam hoped the case would be worked out as expeditiously as after the Ayodhya attack. That had been worked out in a month, he said. The chief minister announced that a probe would be conducted into lapses if any. Talking to the media persons after visiting the site of the blasts and meeting the injured in the hospitals Mulayam said he would not tolerate any laxity while dealing with such incidents. The special task force was well-equipped to conduct the investigations, he said.

Replying to a question about Sonia Gandhi's visit to the temple town, chief minister said he had no objections to her visit. It was good that she had, he said. But the Opposition bayed for his blood. Mayawati said the Mulayam Singh government could not escape the responsibility of the terror attack. "He has no right to cling to the chair", she added.

Rajnath Singh also demanded the dismissal of the Samajwadi Party government and imposition of President's rule in the state. He said the Mulayam Singh government and the UPA government at the Centre were equally responsible for the terror acts in Varanasi. "The UPA government's abolition of the Prevention of Terrorism Act (ACT) has boosted the morale of the terrorists and is the reason why there is a rise in terrorist incidents in the country", Rajnath said.

Ashok Singhal demanded a ban on madrassas in the country, saying terrorists were getting their initial training at these madrassas. Singhal held Pakistan responsible for the terrorist activities in India. He lashed out at the Mulayam Singh government for pro-

Suggestions galore

- Congress president Sonia Gandhi wants a joint probe
- BJP chief Rajnath Singh urges people to refrain from celebrating Holi
- BSP supremo Mayawati demands Prez Rule in UP and CM Mulayam Singh's resignation
- Protesters fight pitched battle with police in Varanasi
- VHP chief Ashok Singhal demands ban on madrassas in the country
- Union minister of state for railways R. Valu announces free medical treatment for the injured

moting madrassas as an appeasement of Muslims.

Union minister of state for railways R. Valu, who also visited the blast sites and the injured, announced free medicare facilities for those injured and Rs 1 lakh each for those dead.

Parliament rocked

The bomb attacks in Varanasi led to a furore in Parliament on Wednesday as agitated BJP and Shiv Sena members disrupted the proceedings, shouting slogans against the government. Both Houses of Parliament had to be adjourned for the day after the Opposition showed no signs of calming down.

As soon as the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha met for the day, angry members stormed the wells of the Houses, raising slogans of "Jai Bajrang Bali" and "Har Har Mahadev", while accusing the UPA government of failure to check terrorist activities in the country.

Home minister Shivraj Patil, who had hurriedly read out his statement on the blasts amid the loud disturbances in the Lok Sabha, said the Sankat Mochan temple in Varanasi had been "targeted understandably to cause communal tension in the country". He assured the House that the government was firmly committed to combating terrorism.

Patil told the House that, according to the initial information received from the Uttar Pradesh government, two blasts had occurred on Tuesday evening in Varanasi — one at Sankat-mochan Temple and the other at Cantonment railway station.

Fourteen people, including a woman and child, had been killed, he said. Speaker Somnath Chatterjee condemned the blasts as "senseless acts of violence" and affirmed the country's resolve to maintain the peace and unitedly battle terrorism.

SECURITY STEPS

From Ahmedabad to Puri and Srinagar to Kochi, there's a security alert in temples.

JAGHANNATH TEMPLE, AHMEDABAD
Security at all major temples — at Somnath, Dwarka, Akshardham, Ambaji and Dakor — in Gujarat has been beefed up. Metal detectors are in place at entry points.

ORISSA: 12th Century Jagannath Temple in Puri has doubled its armed security personnel. Strength of Jagannath Temple Police raised from 49 to 100.

ASSAM: Eight closed-circuit cameras placed in the main Kamkshya temple recently.

TAMIL NADU: Armed guards at Kapaleswara temple, Chennai, Meenakshi temple, Madurai, and Ramanathaswamy temple, Ramanthapuram. Elaborate network of hand-held metal-detectors to check devotees and their baggage and vehicles, flower and agarbathi shops in vicinity.

ANDHRA PRADESH: Tirupati and at Tirumala, abode of Lord Venkateswara, security tightened in hills and foothills.

KARNATAKA: Sri Mookambika, Kollur, and Sri Krishna Temple, Udipi, under enhanced surveillance.

BIRLA MANDIR, HYDERABAD
Security at all major temples — at Somnath, Dwarka, Akshardham, Ambaji and Dakor — in Gujarat has been beefed up. Metal detectors are in place at entry points.

LAXMI NARAYAN TEMPLE, BHOPAL
Security at all major temples — at Somnath, Dwarka, Akshardham, Ambaji and Dakor — in Gujarat has been beefed up. Metal detectors are in place at entry points.

JAGHANNATH TEMPLE, PURI
Security at all major temples — at Somnath, Dwarka, Akshardham, Ambaji and Dakor — in Gujarat has been beefed up. Metal detectors are in place at entry points.

LeT deaths stoke blast ire

208 R 22/03/06 (51)

913

SNS & PTI



A boy injured in an explosion triggered at Sankatmochan temple on Tuesday, being treated at the Banaras Hindu University hospital on Wednesday. — AFP
(More reports and photograph on page 5)

VARANASI/NEW DELHI, March 8. — A day after the twin bomb blasts which left 20 people dead and 50 injured in Varanasi, the holy temple town and the rest of Uttar Pradesh remained peaceful today. Security forces maintained a strict vigil as authorities launched a manhunt for two militants suspected to belong to a Pakistani terror outfit. Suspecting the involvement of the Lakshar-e-Taiyaba militant outfit in the blasts, intelligence agencies have instructed state police forces and intelligence agencies to keep a close eye on LeT sympathisers to prevent more attacks.

Hours after the explosions, three Lashkar-e-Taiyaba militants, including one believed to have masterminded yesterday's twin blasts, were killed in separate encounters with police in Delhi and Lucknow early this morning. While two terrorists were killed in an encounter with police at Bawana in north-west Delhi, another militant, identified as Salar alias Doctor Majeed was gunned down during a joint operation by the UP Special Task Force and J&K Police in Gosaiganj on the outskirts of Lucknow. A police source said RDX and some detonators were found in the possession of Salar, a Pakistani national. Referring to the slain militant, Mr K Rajendra, Inspector General (Kashmir Range), said in Srinagar: "I do not rule out the possibility of his having masterminded the Varanasi blasts."

Unfazed by the blasts, people thronged the Sankatmochan temple and the Cantonment Railway Station in large numbers amidst beefed up security. Additional police and paramilitary personnel were deployed in the vicinity of temples. A BJP-VHP-sponsored general strike evoked a near total response in the town but a tepid one across the state.

Chief minister Mr Mulayam Singh Yadav, who visited the town early this morning, was shown black flags by an angry crowd. He too spoke of the possi-

ble involvement of a Pakistan-based terror outfit in the explosions. While the Special Task Force of the UP police has been asked to probe the blasts, sketches of two suspects have been prepared by security agencies based on the description provided by a shopkeeper. The culprits had reportedly left a cooker-bomb in a bag after buying a doormat for Rs 100 from his shop. The bomb, similar to the one used to trigger the blasts at the Sankatmochan temple and the Cantonment Railway station, had been eventually defused by police.

The modus operandi of the twin blasts and the explosives used to trigger them are similar to what the LeT had used in setting off over four dozen blasts in Delhi in the mid-90's and last year ahead of Diwali, an official said. "The use of ammonium nitrate, self-actuated detonator, and not so sophisticated detonator in the bomb blasts, the timing of the blasts (evening hours when the rush is maximum and security is comparatively lax), and planting of more than one bomb at a time, suggests that this is the handiwork of the LeT, which has expertise in the matter," the official said.

While intelligence agencies have strong reasons to suspect an LeT role in the blasts, they are also looking at the involvement of Jaish-e-Mohammed, the militant outfit that masterminded the Parliament attack. The national security advisor today reviewed the internal security of the country and directed all states to beef up security at all important places, including places of religious importance. The Centre has asked the National Security Guards to be ready for any eventuality, a home ministry official said.

The President, Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, and other world leaders have condemned the twin blasts. They said the blasts clearly proved the involvement of terrorists. The leaders have called for a united action to fight terrorism — a global threat. Protests were staged throughout the country today, demanding the culprits be tracked down and appropriate punishment meted out to them.

Police gather vital clues to Varanasi blasts

P. D. B. N. K. K. K.
NO 1 913

STF probing attack; blasts smack of a "deep-rooted conspiracy"



TAKING STOCK: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav visiting the Sankat Mochan temple in Varanasi on Wednesday. The temple and the Cantonment railway station were the target of bomb attacks on Tuesday. — AP

Vinay Kumar

VARANASI: The police have begun to piece together crucial bits of evidence gathered from the sites of the three bomb explosions that rocked this holy city on Tuesday. Twenty persons were killed and 110 injured in the blasts; 20 were in a critical condition.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav told newsmen on Wednesday that the blasts were part of a "terror strike" and smacked of a "deep-rooted conspiracy." He said the Special Task Force of the State police was probing the

attacks. All help would be taken from the Centre. He hoped the probe would be completed in a month.

Mr. Mulayam Singh said a suspected militant was killed in an encounter in Lucknow on Wednesday, but it was not clear if he was involved in the blasts.

In Varanasi, life came to a standstill on Wednesday following a bandh called to protest against the blasts.

Security in and around Sankat Mochan temple, the site of one of the blasts, and the Kashi Vishwanath Temple was tight. There was a thin stream of devotees in both the temples by evening.

Police sources said the STF had gathered "vital clues" based on the statements given by businessmen and traders of the busy Godowlia area in the heart of the city, where a pressure cooker bomb was detected and defused. They were preparing the sketches of two persons who were seen by some shopkeepers moving about in a suspicious manner. They had disappeared after placing a bag near the divider on the busy road. The bomb disposal squad later defused the bomb that, police say, would have caused a huge loss of lives. Sources said the timer device of the bomb, containing lethal

black RDX, had probably stopped ticking.

Heartrending scenes were witnessed at many hospitals in the city to which relatives of the injured had flocked in large numbers. Doctors said that most of the injured bore deep wounds on their hands, legs and chests. Some of the victims suffered burn injuries and multiple fractures. Nine bodies have been identified so far.

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Hours after the blasts, police hit back

9-11-2001
D. S. Ramesh
110-1

Two Lashkar terrorists killed in Delhi and one in Uttar Pradesh

Praveen Swami

NEW DELHI: Just hours after the bomb blasts in Varanasi, the Uttar Pradesh and New Delhi police hit back at the Lashkar-e-Taiba, which experts believe could have carried out the Tuesday attacks in the San- kat Mochan temple and the cantonment railway station.

A joint group of the Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Uttar Pradesh Police shot dead Mohammad Salim bin-Aziz, a Ratlam resident. Officials say he was one of the Lashkar's senior-most organisers.

The counter-terrorist Special Cell of the Delhi Police killed two Lashkar terrorists, including Ghulam Yazdani, in north Delhi. Yazdani is the architect of a Dhaka-based cell that executed blasts and assassinations in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat.

"Both the Intelligence Bureau and State police forces have been monitoring these cells for several weeks," one senior official told *The Hindu*. "While there were indications that several large-scale strikes were being planned, there is no evidence to suggest either group had any direct contact with the Varanasi bombers," he said.

Informed sources said neither operation had direct links with the Varanasi bombings, but described the killings as the most significant blow to the Lashkar's capabilities in over a year. In particular, the elimination of 43-year-old bin-Aziz in a pre-dawn raid in Lucknow's Gosainganj area marks the culmination of the 20-year terror career of the Lashkar's most wanted - and most enigmatic - operatives.

On the run from police in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan where he was wanted on organised crime charges, bin-Aziz came into contact with a Harkat-



FIGHTING TERROR: The body of suspected senior Lashkar organiser Mohammad Salim bin-Aziz after he was shot dead in Lucknow on Wednesday. PHOTO: AP

linked cleric at the Deoband seminary in 1989.

He was trained in a camp near Rawalpindi, and then assigned command of the Harkat unit that operated in the Anantnag from 1991.

Police and intelligence authorities in Uttar Pradesh have drawn sketches of the two men, who witnesses say, planted the explosives.

At least one of the bombs, Home Minister Shivraj Patil said in New Delhi, had been cased inside a pressure cooker.

Forensic tests to determine the nature of the explosive used will be done to determine if it was the same one used in other

strikes in the country.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav told journalists that investigators may have recovered important bombing-related evidence from the Lucknow safehouse used by bin-Aziz, who operated using the code-names 'Salaar,' 'Doctor,' 'Majeed,' and 'Masala-wallah.'

Mr. Yadav also repeatedly referred to bin-Aziz as a Pakistan national, but later corrected himself by describing him simply "a terrorist."

Another report on Page 12

09 MAY 2001

General alert issued

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Home Minister Shivraj Patil have condemned the blasts in Varanasi on Tuesday. Dr. Singh appealed to the people to maintain peace and calm.

The Prime Minister was monitoring the situation, his media adviser, Sanjaya Baru, said.

Mr. Patil told reporters that he had spoken to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav, and that Home Secretary V.K. Duggal was in constant touch with top State officials.

Mr. Patil said he might visit Varanasi on Wednesday to take

stock of the situation. To strengthen security, the Home Ministry placed five Central Reserve Police Force companies, including two for deployment in Varanasi, at the disposal of the Uttar Pradesh Government.

The situation was reviewed by the Home Ministry at a high-level emergency meeting in the evening. A general alert was issued to all States, and the national Capital was placed on high alert.

Home Ministry officials said the blasts were possibly part of a pre-planned conspiracy. They said Tuesday was chosen for the blasts as devotees throng the Sankat Mochan temple.

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THE HINDU

দুই বিশ্ফোরণে ইত ২০, তপ্ত রাজনীতি

বারাণসী ও নয়াদিল্লি, ৭ মার্চ: দশ মিনিটের মধ্যে দু'টি বিশ্ফোরণ। তাতেই কার্যত শুরু হয়ে গেল সদ্যবাস্তব বারাণসী। আর তোলপাড় রাজনৈতিক মহল।

সন্ধ্যা সাড়ে ছ'টা নাগাদ প্রথম বিশ্ফোরণ সফটমোচন মন্দিরে। তার পরে বারাণসী ক্যান্টনমেন্ট স্টেশনের ওয়েটিং রুমে। সফটমোচনে মৃতের সংখ্যা ৬। স্টেশনে অন্তত ১৪ জনের মৃত্যু হয়েছে। সব মিলিয়ে আহতের সংখ্যা ৫০-এর বেশি। এদের মধ্যে কয়েক জনের অবস্থা গুরুতর। এ ছাড়াও বিশ্ফোরক মিলেছে শহরের আরও দু'জায়গা থেকে— গোধুলিয়া এলাকার এক রোস্তোর আর দশাশ্বমেধ ঘাট থেকে।

বিশ্ফোরণের অভিঘাত পাতালিক ভাবেই ছড়িয়েছে গোটা দেশে। এমনিতেই শহর হিসাবে বারাণসী খুব স্পর্শকাতর। অযোধ্যায় বাবরি মসজিদের মতোই এখানকার বিস্মনাথ মন্দির লাগোয়া জ্ঞানবাপী মসজিদের উপরে দাবি জানিয়ে বসে আছে হিন্দু সংগঠনগুলি। অন্য দিকে, বিস্মনাথ মন্দিরে হামলা চালানোর হুমকি দিয়ে রেখেছে মুসলিম জঙ্গিরা। ফলে উত্তেজনার চাপা স্রোত দেশের অন্যতম প্রাচীন এই শহরের নিতাসঙ্গী। সামান্য প্ররোচনাতেই বেধে যায় সংঘর্ষ। আজকের ঘটনা সেই সঙ্ঘবনা অনেকটাই উল্লেখ দিয়েছে। তেমনটা কিছু যদি সত্যিই ঘটে, তবে দেশের অন্যত্রও তার গভীর প্রভাব পড়বে।

সেই আশঙ্কা থেকে বিশ্ফোরণের পরে পরেই সচিবালয়ের অফিসারদের নিয়ে বৈঠকে বসেন প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ। কথা বলেন কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী শিবরাজ পাটিলের সঙ্গেও। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর মিডিয়া উপদেষ্টা সঞ্জয় বাবু জানান, এই কাপুরুষোচিত ঘটনার তীব্র নিন্দা করে শান্তি বজায় রাখার জন্য আবেদন জানিয়েছেন মনমোহন। রাতেই শীর্ষ কংগ্রেস নেতাদের নিয়ে জরুরি বৈঠকে বসেন সভানেত্রী সনিয়া গাঁধী। উদ্দেশ্য একটাই, সংঘর্ষ ছড়ানোর সম্ভাবনা রাজনৈতিক ভাবে মোকাবিলা করা। রাতের বিমানেই পাটিলকে সঙ্গে নিয়ে বারাণসী পৌঁছেন তিনি।

বারাণসী রওনা হওয়ার আগে প্রশাসনিক ব্যবস্থা কী নেওয়া হবে, তা ঠিক করতে স্বরাষ্ট্র সচিব ভি কে দুগল এবং মন্ত্রকের অন্যান্য আধিকারিকের সঙ্গে আলোচনা করেছেন পাটিল। উত্তরপ্রদেশের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী মুলায়ম সিংহ যাদবের

সঙ্গেও ফোনে কথা বলেন তিনি। বারাণসীর পরিস্থিতি নিয়ন্ত্রণে রাখতে ২০০ সিআরপিএফ জওয়ান পাঠাচ্ছে কেন্দ্র। উত্তরপ্রদেশের অন্য এলাকার জন্য বরাদ্দ হয়েছে আরও ৩০০ জওয়ান। গোটা উত্তরপ্রদেশের পাশাপাশি দিল্লি, মুম্বই এবং দেশের গুরুত্বপূর্ণ শহরগুলিতে চূড়ান্ত সতর্কতা জারি করা হয়েছে। নজরদারি বাড়ানো হয়েছে অযোধ্যা এবং মথুরা-সহ দেশের প্রধান ধর্মস্থানগুলিতে।

দীপাবলির ঠিক আগে ২৯ অক্টোবর দিল্লিতে পরপর তিনটি বিশ্ফোরণ হয়েছিল। বারাণসী-কাণ্ড সেই ছবিটাই মনে পড়িয়ে দিচ্ছে। দিল্লির ঘটনায় অভিযোগের আঙুল উঠেছিল লঙ্কর-ই-তইবার দিকে। পাক মদতে পুষ্ট কয়েক জন জঙ্গিকে গ্রেফতারও করা হয়েছে ওই ঘটনার সঙ্গে জড়িত সন্দেহে। এ দিনের বিশ্ফোরণের পিছনে কারা, তা নিয়ে তড়িঘড়ি মুখ খোলেনি কেন্দ্র বা রাজ্য কোনও সরকারই। ঘটনার দায়ও র নেয়নি কোনও জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠী। যদিও এই কাণ্ডের পিছনে র সন্ত্রাসবাদীদেরই হাত আছে বলে প্রাথমিক ভাবে মনে করছে কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রক। কিন্তু প্রকাশ্যে তাদের বক্তব্য, তদন্ত না-ও করে কোনও সিদ্ধান্তে পৌঁছনো ঠিক হবে না।

অন্যান্য বরের মতো পাকিস্তান আর লঙ্কর-ই-তইবাকে কাঠগড়ায় দাঁড় করানোটা এ বার তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ ভাবে অনুপস্থিত। বরং পাক বিরোধিতাকে ছাপিয়ে গিয়েছে রাজ্য রাজনীতির বাধ্যবাধকতা। হিসেব মতো বিধানসভা নির্বাচনের এক বছরও বাকি নেই। এর মধ্যে বহুজন সমাজ পার্টির দলছুট বিধায়কদের নিয়ে মুলায়ম সিংহের গদি টালমাটাল। রাজ্যে রাষ্ট্রপতির শাসন জারির দাবি উঠেছে।

সেই সূত্র ধরেই মুলায়মের বিরুদ্ধে তোপ দেগেছেন বিজেপি সভাপতি রাজনাথ সিংহ। তাঁর অভিযোগ, সমাজবাদী পার্টির সরকার বরাবরই জঙ্গিদের প্রতি নরম। তার উপরে যখনই সরকারের কার্যকাল শেষ হয়ে আসে, তখনই দেখা যায় রাজ্যে দাঙ্গা বেধেছে। আর তাতে ভর করে মুলায়ম সংখ্যালঘুদের সহানুভূতির ভোট পান বলে বিজেপি সভাপতির অভিযোগ। দিন কয়েক আগেই সপা থেকে বিভাভিত সাংসদ রাজ ববর অভিযোগ করেছিলেন, রাজ্যে

এর পর ছয়ের পাতায়

● জঙ্গি হানার খতিয়ান...পৃঃ ৬

তপ্ত রাজনীতি

প্রথম পর পাতার পর

দাঙ্গা বাধানোর চেষ্টা করছে মুলায়মের সরকার। এ নিয়ে রাজ্যপালের কাছে চিঠিও দিয়েছিলেন তিনি। তার পরেই লখনউয়ে বৃশ-বিরোধী বিক্ষোভে পুলিশের গুলিতে চার জনের মৃত্যু হয়। আর আজ বারাণসীতে বিশ্ফোরণ। ফলে ববরের আশঙ্কাই সত্যি হল বলে শোরগোল তুলতে শুরু করেছে মুলায়ম-বিরোধীরা। কাল বারাণসীতে বনধ ডেকেছে বিজেপি ও বিশ্ব হিন্দু পরিষদ। মুলায়ম অবশ্য স্বাভাবিক কারণেই এই বিতর্কে জড়তে চাননি। তাঁর বক্তব্য, এই নিয়ে রাজনীতি না করে গোটা দেশের উচিত এই ঘটনার নিন্দা করা। সাম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রীতির যে ঐতিহ্য ভারতের আছে, তা রক্ষা করা উচিত। নিহতদের পরিবারপিছু পাঁচ লক্ষ টাকা দেওয়া হবে বলে জানিয়েছেন তিনি। গুরুতর আহতেরা পাবেন ১ লক্ষ টাকা করে। কম আহতদের জন্য বরাদ্দ হয়েছে ৫০ হাজার টাকা করে।

রাজনাথ যখন মুলায়মের প্রতি খড়গহস্ত, বিরোধী দলনেতা লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী তখন ইউপিএ সরকারের নরম মনোভাবকেই দুষছেন। তাঁর মতে সংখ্যালঘু ভোষণের রাজনীতির কারণেই জঙ্গিরা উৎসাহিত হয়। এবং তা সংখ্যালঘুদের পক্ষেও মারাত্মক। এ দিন পাটিলকে ফোন করে অবস্থা সম্পর্কে খোঁজ নেন আডবাণী।

সফটমোচন মন্দির বারাণসীর অন্যতম প্রাচীন মন্দির। কথিত আছে, মহাকবি বাস্কী নাকি এই মন্দির প্রতিষ্ঠা করেন। প্রতি মঙ্গলবার হনুমান এখানে পূজা করে চিত্রকুটে যান বলেই ভক্তদের বিশ্বাস। সেই কারণে মঙ্গলবার ভিড় উপচে পড়ে মন্দিরে। কাছেই বেনারস হিন্দু বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়। পবিত্র মরসুমে ছাত্রছাত্রীরাও ছিলেন অনেকে। সন্ধ্যার মুখে চলছিল আরতির আয়োজন। সামনের চত্বরে হচ্ছিল বিয়ের অনুষ্ঠান। এমন সময় জুতো রাখার জায়গার কাছে বিশ্ফোরণ। প্রাথমিক তদন্ত বলছে, এটা কোনও মানববোমার কাজ নয়। কেউ বিশ্ফোরক রেখে গিয়েছিল। কেন না, নিহত বা আহতদের শরীরে নীচের অংশেই আঘাত রয়েছে। বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় চত্বরে স্যর সন্দরলাল হাসপাতালে আনা এক জনের দু'টো পা-ই উড়ে গিয়েছে বলে প্রত্যক্ষদর্শীরা জানান।

বারাণসীর ব্যস্ততম রেল স্টেশন ক্যান্টনমেন্ট। এক নম্বর প্ল্যাটফর্মে দাঁড়িয়ে শিবগঙ্গা এক্সপ্রেস। প্ল্যাটফর্ম লাগোয়া ওয়েটিং রুম ভিড়ে ভরা। সেখানেই হঠাৎ বিশ্ফোরণ। এখানেও কোনও কিছুর ভিতরে বিশ্ফোরক রাখা হয়েছিল বলে গোয়েন্দাদের ধারণা।

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Salem names Sanjay Dutt in confession

Says He Delivered AK 56 Rifles, Hand Grenades To Bollywood Star's Bandra Residence

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The confessions of gangster Abu Salem have finally been revealed and actor Sanjay Dutt may not like to know its contents.

The confessional statement of 36-year-old Salem, which was recorded by CBI officer O P Chatwal on November 20, 2005, and which was so far in a sealed cover, was opened in the designated TADA court on Wednesday. Salem, extradited from Portugal for his role in the 1993 serial bomb blasts in the city, candidly confesses to his role in delivering the AK 56 rifles and hand grenades to Dutt's residence in Bandra before the March 12 blasts.

Salem said he did not know what he was delivering to Dutt and was "shocked" when he saw the 100 hand grenades and all the arms in the van.

The confession on the face of it corroborates the confessions given (though later retracted) by Dutt and others regarding delivery of AK-56 rifles and ammunition to the actor's bungalow at Pali Hill in Bandra. Salem, however, keeps referring to Dutt by his full name throughout the statement.

Salem, however, says at the end that he "regretted" his mistakes and wanted "one chance to redeem himself".

Meanwhile, the CBI on Wednesday filed an 84-page supplementary chargesheet against Salem and his alleged accomplice Riyaz Siddiqui for their role in causing the 13 se-



Sanjay Dutt arrives to appear before a TADA court in Mumbai on Wednesday

rial bomb blasts in March 1993 in Mumbai. Submitting the bulky document that also contained 54 pages of documentary evidence at 11.15 am, special public prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam, who represented the CBI, said the agency is now looking out for two absconding accused, one of whom is believed to be outside India. The names were not revealed openly in court, but TOI later learnt that the two who are wanted

for their conspiracy are Aziz Bhulkia and Abdul Qayoom. Both are wanted for their role in procuring and dispatching weapons before the blasts.

The chargesheet against Salem contains statements from 15 witnesses including three police officers and a woman who allegedly accompanied Riyaz from Mumbai to Bharuch in Gujarat.

Nikam asked the court to protect the identities of 12 witnesses as "this being a sensitive case and Salem being a dreaded gangster, their lives could be in danger". "How can you say Salem is a 'dreaded' gangster?" shot back special judge P D Kode. To this, Nikam said he was a "seasoned criminal and famous extortionist". CBI was asked to file an affidavit following which the judge ordered that the identities and numbers of the witnesses be kept secret.

The court also took Riyaz into its custody after Nikam contended that he played the "vital" role of taking and handing over a van which had concealed cavities in its body to Salem in Bharuch in January 1993 at the instance of underworld don Dawood Ibrahim's brother Anis Ibrahim. Riyaz, said Nikam, drove from Mumbai to Bharuch and took along a woman to make the errand look innocuous. The same van was later brought to Mumbai laden with arms and ammunition, including the AK-56, that was handed over by Salem to Sanjay Dutt, he added.

02 MAR 2006

Recruitment open to all: Pranab

9.11.2005
22/2

Panel asked to prepare database

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Government on Tuesday asserted that armed forces recruitment "is based on merit and open to every citizen of the country, including the members of the Muslim community, without any discrimination on the basis of their caste, creed, religion or region."

Making a suo motu statement in the Rajya Sabha, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said the armed forces were professional, apolitical, secular and highly disciplined and every State contributed to the manpower.

The Justice Rajindar Sachar Committee was set up on March 9, 2005 to prepare a report on the social, economic and educational status of Muslims. It was mandated to obtain information from the Union and the State Governments and prepare a database so that the Government could make interventions, if necessary, for their uplift, he said.

The Defence Ministry, in a letter to the committee on September 14, 2005, pointed out that the recruitment policy was based on merit.

Replying to letters from the committee, the Navy gave some statistics on its civilian personnel. The Air Force also provided some data. The Army, however, did not give any information. "No survey has been conducted, or is proposed to be conducted for compilation of any other statistics than those maintained on the existing database of the armed forces."

Mr. Mukherjee said that on his direction Defence Secretary met Mr. Justice Sachar on Janu-

ary 17 and again a month later to explain that recruitment in the armed forces was based on merit and open to every citizen of the country without any discrimination on their caste, creed, religion or region. A letter to this effect was also sent to Mr. Justice Sachar.

Replying to clarifications sought by Sushma Swaraj (BJP), Brinda Karat (CPI-M) and Abu Asim Azmi (Samajwadi Party), he said the Government was not at all "apologetic" about setting up the committee.

There were over 138 million Muslims in the nation, constituting about 13.4 per cent of the population. The community reportedly suffered from illiteracy, low income and irregular employment, implying a higher incidence of backwardness relative to other religious groups. "If we want to have a survey, what is wrong in it?" Mr. Mukherjee asked.

The exercise was important, as it would involve research and analysis of published data. The "study" would also address issues relating to Dalit Christians and Buddhists and help the Government take an "overall view."

The Government was committed to improving the lot of the Muslim community and all weaker and backward communities. All regiments, named after communities and regions, were formed during the pre-Independence period. None was raised after 1950 when the country became a republic.

He agreed with the suggestion of Leader of the Opposition Jaswant Singh that the controversy be put to rest and the armed forces kept away from it.

25 INJURED IN EXPLOSION ON PLATFORM, RDX USED

Blast rocks Ahmedabad station

Press Trust of India

AHMEDABAD, Feb. 19. — At least 25 people were injured when RDX exploded at a platform in Ahmedabad railway station in the wee hours today.

The explosion, that occurred at platform 2/3 at 1:55 am, from a crate of bottles kept near a phone booth, was so powerful that it shattered several glass and window panes more

than 20 feet away, police said.

The powerful explosion ripped through the phone booth and brought down the asbestos roof while also shattering the window panes of the trains on platform no 1 which is more than 20 feet away.

"Forensic tests have proved that the material used was RDX. We, however, do not know the exact quantity of the high quality

explosive used to trigger the blast," director general of police Mr AK Bhargava said. The RDX, concealed in a crate of cold drink bottles kept adjoining a phone booth, was so powerful that it shattered several glass and window panes more than 20 feet away besides ripping apart the asbestos roof of the platform.

The explosion took place barely minutes after a train had left the platform and

the phone booth vendor left for a tea break. Gujarat home minister Mr Amit Shah said close scrutiny by the forensic and bomb disposal teams proved that a timer device was used to trigger the powerful blast.

Police were yet to get a lead on who were behind the incident even as an alert has been sounded in and around the city following the explosion. No one has so far claimed responsibility for the blast.

Railway authorities have intensified patrolling at the railway station following the powerful blast and have increased the timing of sniffer dogs doing the rounds.

CCTVs would be placed on all platforms for constant monitoring and the intelligence wing of the railway police would be strengthened, Ahmedabad divisional railway manager Mr Arvind Khare said.

Govt to three service chiefs: Muslim data won't go to panel

SURVEY ■ Defence Ministry will not send data on Muslims in armed forces to Sachar panel; Sachar says: nothing official yet

SHISHIR GUPTA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

UNDER increasing fire for its controversial Muslim survey of the armed forces, the UPA government has conveyed to the chiefs of the Army, Navy and Air Force that the Defence Ministry will not forward the data on Muslims in the military, their ranks and their role, to the Justice (ret'd) Rajinder Sachar Committee.

This comes after the PMO dis-

tanced itself from the survey following the report in *The Sunday Express* ('How many Muslims do you have, Govt asks armed forces,' Feb 12). In fact, a statement issued by Justice Sachar on Monday made it a point to mention that the PMO was not involved in the survey.

The damage control comes amid speculation in the government that President A P J Abdul Kalam, who was petitioned by the NDA to stop the exercise, may seek clarifications on the issue.

Army had raised objections as early as Jan



■ **Feb 12:** *The Sunday Express* reports that the armed forces have been asked by the Govt to provide data on Muslims in their ranks, the positions they hold, even their role in some key operations

■ **Feb 13:** BJP slams Govt, says it amounts to "communalising" armed forces; NDA convener calls it "anti-national"; says he will take it up with President Kalam

■ **Feb 14:** Army chief General J J Singh objects to Muslim head-

count: "It is not the Army's philosophy to discriminate or maintain such information... We do not bother about where they are from, their faith or their language"

■ **Feb 15:** NDA petitions Kalam, says as Supreme Commander of Muslim headcount exercise. Advani says Oppn will bring it up in Parliament

When asked what he would do if the data wasn't handed to him, Justice Sachar told *The Indian Express* today: "I have not received any formal communication to this effect."

Yesterday, the Defence Ministry assured the service chiefs that the Muslim data now with South Block will not be shared with the Sachar Committee as the government was for an "apolitical and secular" military.

As early as last month, Army Chief General J J Singh—who

has been opposed to the entire Muslim survey from the beginning—along with Navy Chief Admiral Arun Prakash and Air Chief Marshal S P Tyagi the three service chiefs met Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee and apprised him that the entire "Muslim headcount" exercise was unnecessary suggesting that he should let "the lions sleep."

It is understood that Mukherjee agreed with the three chiefs but then asked them what would

▶ **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Govt to service chiefs: data won't go to panel

they have done if any individual had requested for the same information under the Right to Information Act (RTI). Although the government has exempted para-military forces from RTI, the defence forces are within its purview. The three chiefs are said to have asked the government for exemption under RTI.

While the Navy and the Air Force handed over the

data between July-September 2005, the Army submitted its Muslim count to the Defence Ministry on January 9, 2006, after making it clear that the issue was sensitive and should be handled at the highest levels in the defence establishment.

General Singh, who commands an Army that has 20 Lieutenant Generals out of a total 73 from the minority communities, was the most vocal and put

in writing that the military was apolitical and an equal opportunity force.

Significantly, while the Navy and Air Force Chiefs were merely asked about the Muslim share in their respective forces, the Sachar Committee over-stretched its brief and raised questions about the role of minorities in specific operations. It is then that the Army put its foot down.

Army gives data but does not want it passed on to panel

Sachar Committee says its efforts to seek information have been misconstrued

Aarti Dhar and Sandeep Dikshit

NEW DELHI: The Army has submitted data on the number of Muslims in its ranks to the Defence Ministry but requested that the information be not given to the Justice Rajinder Sachar Committee. The committee had sought information for preparing a report on the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim population in the country.

The panel said its efforts to seek information according to its terms of reference had been misconstrued and misrepresented.

"We had only asked for the number of Muslims in the military as part of questionnaires sent to over 500 institutions all over the country. It has been blown out of proportion. After all, that is our mandate," committee's Officer on Special Duty Syed Zafar Mahmood said.

The Army told the Government that it had less than eight

• **Navy, Air Force had submitted reports**

• **Statistics sought from more than 500 institutions: committee**

per cent Muslim personnel and this number varied slightly since Independence. It had striven to recruit eight per cent Muslims out of its overall strength of 11 lakh, but the transfer of the Baluch and Frontier Force regiments to Pakistan led to shortfalls.

The Army maintains two registers on the religious composition of its men. The register for officers has a breakdown according to ranks, and the one for those below officer ranks is a composite one, sources in the Army said.

The Navy and the Air Force had submitted information on Muslim personnel immediately after a request by the committee.

The Army attempted to stall furnishing the data but was left with no option after the Ministry sought one. "It was almost an order," Army officials said.

Explaining the Army's stance, a senior official said: "It is not as if Muslim personnel in the Air Force and the Navy do not handle sensitive information or deal with expensive equipment. It is better to avoid this in the case of the Army, especially the infantry regiments, because we are on the ground dealing with counter-insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir and had [fought] wars with Pakistan. Men regardless of caste or creed conduct these operations. We do not think on these lines."

The committee said it was anguished by the "incorrect reports" on its communication to the armed forces. "The committee is fully aware and values the intrinsic importance of the armed forces, and there is no way that the committee would ever ask any question that may

in any manner be even remotely prejudicial to the interests of the nation, which must always remain supreme," a statement said.

The committee denied that it had asked specific questions regarding the 1948 and 1999 Army operations. The Government issued a notification on March 9 last on setting up of the committee to collect information from all possible sources, including the Central Government, State Governments and a large number of other agencies to prepare a report on the social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community.

It sought information on the present participation of Muslims in various walks of life. It had visited 11 States and held discussions with a cross-section of people as well as the Governments.

Kalam's intervention sought: Page 12

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NDA seeks Kalam's intervention to stop survey in armed forces

Says the move is fraught with "dangerous consequences"; wants Navin Chawla to go

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The National Democratic Alliance on Tuesday sought President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's intervention to "stop" a survey on Muslims in the defence forces by a government-appointed panel. The move was fraught with "dangerous consequences," it said.

The Opposition also urged Mr. Kalam to use his "good offices" to prevail upon the government for the resignation of Election Commissioner Navin Chawla and prevent a "constitutional embarrassment."

Serious issues

Speaking to newsmen after submitting a memorandum to the President, NDA convener George Fernandes and BJP leader L.K. Advani said: "Both are serious issues. The President is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces. We told him that everybody is keen that poverty ends. It is an issue that needs to be handled with a non-discriminatory attitude. But to undertake an exercise to ascertain only from the Muslims their economic situation, their backwardness and what could be done for them, is to communalise the issue for vote-bank politics."

Mr. Advani said: "The Army has no religion. Selections in the Army are based on the ability to defend the country. Even the Army Chief has raised objections to this exercise. We met the Supreme Commander and objected to it."

"Sectarian politics"

Charging the Congress with

"It is an issue that needs to be handled with a non-discriminatory attitude"

indulging in sectarian politics, he said the move to accord minority status to Aligarh Muslim University, amendment to the Foreigners Act and reservation on the basis of religion in Andhra Pradesh were "shameless attempts to woo the communal vote bank."

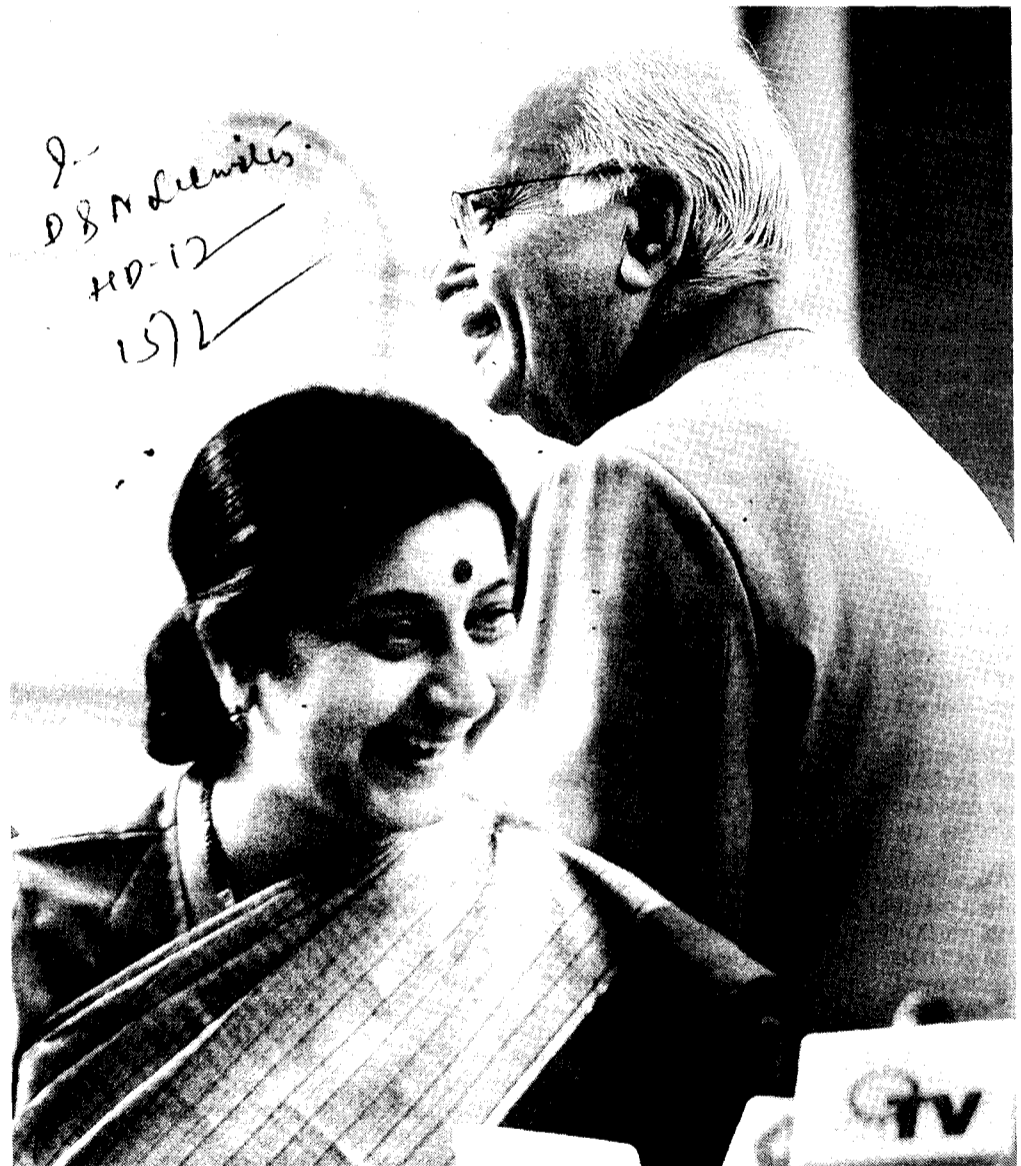
The two-page memorandum said: "For this committee [headed by a retired judge] to start inquiring into the religious denominations of the personnel of the Armed forces and further probing the kind of postings being given to each one of them is fraught with dangerous consequences. Is it a prelude to reservations in the Army on the basis of religion? It is the remedy worse than the disease."

Memorandum soon

On the Navin Chawla issue, the NDA requested Mr. Kalam to refer the matter to the Chief Election Commissioner for his removal under Article 324 (5) of the Constitution.

"Under the law, an Election Commissioner can only be removed by impeachment — his being a constitutional post — if the Chief Election Commissioner advises such a course of action," Mr. Advani said.

The National Democratic Alliance would soon submit a detailed memorandum on Mr Chawla to the President.



ALL SMILES: Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha L.K. Advani and BJP leader Sushma Swaraj brief the media about the NDA meeting with President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam on various issues, at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Tuesday. — PHOTO: RAJEEV BHATT

SACHAR PANEL | Sachar says no questions asked on Muslim role in 1948, Kargil operations, facts show otherwise

In Jan, Army HQ said: such data bad for morale

SHISHIR GUPTA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 13

ON January 9 this year, the Army Headquarters put on record its objections to the UPA Government panel's questions on Muslims, their ranks and their roles in the armed forces.

Sending the list of Muslim officers and their ranks, Army Headquarters wrote to the Defence Ministry that collation of such data could affect troop

morale as it could play into the hands of those who wanted to give it a particular political flavour.

Army Headquarters also declined that the force followed an open, merit-selection system without quota or reservations on the basis of caste, creed or religious denominations.

This was echoed by Army chief General J J Singh in Visakhapatnam today. Reacting to *The Indian Express* report (*How many Muslims do you have, Govt asks armed forces,*



February 12), Gen Singh told this newspaper: "It is not the Army's philosophy to discriminate or maintain such information. We are equal-opportunity employers. We strive to take people on certain standards af-

It's not the Army's philosophy to maintain such information (break up of ranks as per religion). We do not bother where they (ranks) come from or their faith

— ARMY CHIEF GENERAL J J SINGH

ter which only merit takes them forward. We do not bother about where they are from, their faith or their language. We have responded to the Defence Ministry (on the Committee's demand) or Kargil (1999)

operations. But *The Indian Express* has learnt that South Block did request the same information on behalf of the Sachar committee last month.

Subsequently, Army Headquarters prepared a list of postings of senior Muslim officers, which included one Lieutenant General, one Major General and nine Brigadiers.

The Army Headquarters was also made to refer to an article by Omar Khalidi entitled "Ethnic Group Recruitment in Indian Army" that appeared in

a defence journal. The article questions the Army's recruitment policy in the context of its British past and the "loyalty of Muslims."

While the Sachar Committee said that it had not asked for the number and levels of Muslims in the Indian Army, a September 7, 2005, letter from Member-Secretary Abusaleh Shariff to Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee does stress the "importance" of identifying Muslim representation in the armed forces.

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Outcry over army count of Muslims

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A decision by the government to sanction a survey of the number of Muslims serving in the military has sparked a major political furore with the opposition NDA accusing the UPA regime of "dividing" the armed forces through a "communal" exercise.

The "socio-economic survey" of the status of Muslims in the armed forces by the government-appointed Justice Rajendra Sachar committee has seen the BJP and its allies accuse the government of "dividing" the armed forces by directing the panel to collect Muslim-specific data.

The "census" of Muslims in the armed forces could well become a political issue for the government, which will have to contend with the charge that an institution like the military, which was by common consensus kept above partisan politics, has been now dragged into controversy.

With the army itself introducing more mixed units, the utility of the survey as a tool to measure minority welfare is bound to be subjected to critical appraisal. Not surprisingly, the PMO swiftly distanced itself from the exercise, with sources saying that it was not involved in the committee's functions.

Congress sought to see the survey as a data-collection exercise, while defence minister Pranab Mukherjee felt that BJP's criticism was a case of the opposition party seeing "phantoms everywhere". The exercise, which has been slammed by former defence personnel, is unlikely to earn government any favour in the defence establishment. "I was both shocked and outraged when I read a report that the Centre has ordered a count of Muslims in the three wings of the armed forces," BJP president Rajnath Singh said.

JD(U) chief and former defence minister George Fernandes felt it was preposterous that "the Indian armed forces should from now on be identified by their religion". He said those behind the survey had betrayed "India's security concerns". Fernandes feared that such a status report of Muslims in the forces would undermine the solidarity of jawans and impair a secular institution like the army.

Defence minister Pranab Mukherjee admitted that the defence establishment has provided certain information to the Sachar panel. "There is nothing more to it," he said, dismissing the reactions of BJP and its allies as unprovoked.

THE HINDU MEDIA

How many Muslims do you have, Govt asks armed forces

SHISHIR GUPTA
NEW DELHI | FEBRUARY 11, 2006

FOR the first time ever, all three wings of the armed forces have been asked by the Government to provide data on how many Muslims are there in their ranks, which positions they hold, even their role in some key operations.

This controversial Muslim-specific survey, ordered last March by Prime Minister's Office, is on despite



Can we have a religion break up?

objections raised by the Army that such an exercise could send the wrong signal to what is, by tradition, a secular, apolitical organisation. But this objection was over-ruled.

For the record, this survey forms part of what the Government calls its efforts to promote "minority welfare" by studying the social, economic and education status of the Muslim community in India.

objections raised by the Army that such an exercise could send the wrong signal to what is, by tradition, a secular, apolitical organisation. But this objection was over-ruled.

For the record, this survey forms part of what the Government calls its efforts to promote "minority welfare" by studying the social, economic and education status of the Muslim community in India.

member committee headed by Justice (retired) Rajender Sachar. June is the deadline for its report. When contacted, Justice Sachar told *The Sunday Express* that the military is not different for any other Central government organisation. "We are still to get the figures," he said.

Apparently not satisfied with merely Muslim figures in the military, the Sachar Committee is also asking questions relating to opera-

tions, like the one in Hyderabad in 1948 to the Kargil War in 1999.

Quoting extracts from a book *Khaki and the Ethnic Violence in India* by Omar Khalidi, the Sachar Committee late last month asked the Army to confirm whether 700 Muslims deserted during "Operation Polo (Hyderabad operations)" in 1948. And whether then Lehar-based III Division Commander V S Budhiwar wanted

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

How many Muslims...

Muslim villagers evicted from Turtok along the Line of Control (LoC) in Ladakh during Operation Vijay in 1999.

The Army is yet to reply to this. But on January 9, 2006, it told the Sachar Committee that the seniormost Muslim officer in the Indian Army is Lt General Zu Shah, brother of celebrated actor Naseeruddin Shah, who is Commander of Dima-pur-based III Corps.

And that there were 29,093 Muslims in the Army in 2004, including more than 29 battalions that had a sizeable number of the community. For instance, Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry has 50 per cent Muslim strength.

That there is disquiet in the forces is evident given that in August 2005, the Army declined to give information about Muslims in its ranks. It told the Sachar Committee that the Army is apolitical in character in which people from all communities and regions work together irrespective of caste, creed and religion. And that the Army does not maintain data relating to various castes or religions. Also, it would be improper to collect such data as it would send a wrong message to troops.

But Sachar Committee's Member-Secretary Abusaleh Shariff complained to Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee in October 2005 that while the Air Force and the Navy had passed on the relevant information, the Army was making a fuss about it on the grounds of regimental spirit and cohesion.

The next day, Army chief General J J Singh met Mukherjee to apprise him of the "sensitivity" needed in such an operation. But this evidently has had little effect.

12 FEB 2006

INDIAN EXPRESS

5,000 troops "redeployed" from Jammu & Kashmir

Troops moved to base in West Bengal: Pranab

Sandeep Dikshit

NEW DELHI: The Government has "redeployed" about 5,000 troops in Jammu and Kashmir to West Bengal due to an "improvement" in the situation, Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said here on Monday. Chief of the Army Staff J. J. Singh indicated that more troops could be moved from Kashmir if the situation further improved.

Describing the redeployment as a routine exercise, Mr. Mukherjee said the move was taken keeping in view the decrease in violence level. He denied that it was linked to the coming visit of U.S. President George Bush. The troops were sent from the eastern sector over five years ago.

"Sometimes, we do it [a review]. It is a regular exercise and this [redeployment] was done last year too. It is due to a decrease in the level of violence and not because of visit by important visitors. The decrease in violence helped us take the decision," Mr. Mukherjee said after inaugurating a seminar organised by the Territorial Army.

The troops were moved from

• **It's a regular exercise and has nothing to do with impending visit of Bush: Minister**

• **Army chief indicates that more troops may be moved out from State**

the area between the Line of Control (LoC) and the Pir Panjal range on the Jammu-Poonch axis, a favoured area of infiltration, to their pre-Kargil conflict locations of Darjeeling and Siliguri.

Last year some parts of a brigade were relocated to their original base in Ladakh.

Gen. Singh said the force levels were under constant review and if situation permitted, more troops could be moved out from Jammu and Kashmir. However, there was no definite plan on these lines.

The situation was "well under control" due to lesser violence level, and erosion of the terrorist leadership.

"The people of Jammu & Kashmir must understand that we have the upper hand," Gen.

Singh said while attributing the better attrition rate (the death ratio of soldiers and terrorists) to improved intelligence about the movement of terrorists from the local people and focused operations. "So we felt comfortable in de-inducting a brigade to the east. Also this will restore the balance in the north-east."

Despite the departure of these troops, the Army had the capacity to perform its tasks in Kashmir, said Gen. Singh.

Barely a fortnight back the Army chief had said, "As long as terrorism continues and the level of violence does not come down to negligible levels, I don't see the possibility of [the Army] leaving the area for the terrorists to dominate and exploit." He had also said infiltration was continuing through "other ways."

Pakistan welcomes move

B. Muralidhar Reddy reports from Islamabad:

Pakistan on Monday said it would welcome the proposed withdrawal of Indian troops from Jammu and Kashmir if it were part of the "significant reduction."

THE HINDU

7 FEB 2006

Quattrocchi cash too fast for SC order

Q Bank (Bofors)

New Delhi, Jan. 23 (PTI): The Centre today said the money in Ottavio Quattrocchi's two London bank accounts was withdrawn the day the Supreme Court had told it and the CBI to ensure the funds were not transferred.

The statement came amid revelations that the UK prosecutors had asked if additional solicitor-general B. Dutta had exceeded his brief in giving the clean chit that led to the accounts being defrosted on January 11.

Dutta had told the UK's Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) last month there was no evidence to link the money, equivalent to Rs 21 crore, to the Bofors payoff.

"The money was withdrawn on January 16 itself," additional solicitor-general Gopal Subramanian told a three-judge bench.

"On January 17 and 18, the CBI requested the Indian high commission and Interpol London (to help ensure) the orders of the Supreme Court are complied with," a CBI affidavit said.

But the CPS replied that since the bank no longer held



Quattrocchi: Quick mover

any funds in favour of Quattrocchi, "no useful purpose would be served by seeking to restrain the accounts".

Senior crown prosecutor Shane Nainappan sent a mail to senior CBI official R.K. Sharma saying that to begin any fresh initiatives against the Italian, the CPS would have to satisfy the British high court on two points.

One, that proceedings had been initiated against Quattrocchi in India and two, there was reason to believe that an external confiscation order may be made during the trial.

CPS 6 2/11

He said Dutta had given "unequivocal instructions" that "there was no longer any reasonable prospect of the case proceeding to trial".

"On what basis it is now said that there is a reasonable prospect of the case... proceeding to trial and the reasons for the change of circumstance?"

The mail asked "who instructed Dutta", what the instructions were and if Dutta had exceeded them. It said any fresh plea against Quattrocchi must make a "full and frank disclosure" on these issues.

The apex court asked petitioner Ajay Agrawal to file a reply to the CBI affidavit within two weeks.

CBI hunt

The CBI has sought the Union home ministry's clearance to send letters rogatory to Switzerland to find out the source of the money that was held in the two accounts.

CBI officials said the ministry hadn't responded yet. The agency believes the money came from Lugano in Switzerland.

জঙ্গি ঠেকাতে বাংলাদেশ সীমান্তে রক্ষী বাড়ানো হচ্ছে

শর্মিষ্ঠা গোস্বামী

কাশ্মীর ও মণিপুর থেকে সীমান্ত রক্ষী বাহিনীর ২০টি ব্যাটেলিয়ন তুলে এনে বাংলাদেশ সীমান্তে মোতায়েন করার সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছে ভারত সরকার। বাংলাদেশে ইসলামি জঙ্গিদের কার্যকলাপ অত্যধিক বেড়ে যাওয়ায় সীমান্তে প্রহরা এক ধাপে অনেকটা বাড়িয়ে দেওয়ার এই সিদ্ধান্ত। কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রকের এক রিপোর্টে এই পরিকল্পনার কথা ঘোষণা করা হয়েছে। এই মুহুর্তে বিএসএফের অন্তত ২০টি অতিরিক্ত ব্যাটেলিয়ন ভারত-বাংলাদেশ সীমান্তে মোতায়েন করা হবে। তার অর্ধ, আট হাজার অতিরিক্ত বিএসএফ-কর্মী সীমান্তে প্রহরায় থাকবেন। একই সঙ্গে বাড়ানো হবে সীমান্ত টৌকির (বিওপি)-এর সংখ্যাও। বর্তমানে সীমান্তে ৮১৬টি বিওপি রয়েছে। তা বাড়িয়ে করা হবে ১১০০টি। ভারত ও বাংলাদেশের মধ্যে সীমান্তের দৈর্ঘ্য ৪০৯৬ কিলোমিটার। সীমান্তে কর্তব্যরত ছিলেন ৪৫ হাজার বিএসএফ কর্মী। এখন তা বাড়িয়ে করা হচ্ছে ৫৩ হাজার। এই ব্যাপারে বাংলাদেশের সঙ্গে সীমান্ত আছে, পশ্চিমবঙ্গ-সহ এমন রাজ্যের সব ক'টিকেই সতর্কতা বাড়াতে বলা হয়েছে। মোতায়েনের প্রক্রিয়া শুরু হলে বিএসএফ-কে সব রকম ভাবে সহায়তার নির্দেশও দিয়েছে কেন্দ্র।

রিপোর্টে বলা হয়েছে, বাংলাদেশের ভিতরে মৌলবাদীদের কাজকর্ম যেমন বেড়েছে, তেমনই অবাধে চলছে সীমান্ত পেরিয়ে তাদের এ দেশে অনুপ্রবেশ। গোয়েন্দা রিপোর্ট অনুযায়ী, জইশ-ই-মহম্মদ ও লঙ্কর-ই-তইবা এখন বাংলাদেশের বিভিন্ন প্রান্তে খুবই সক্রিয়। তারা হরকতুল-জিহাদ-ই-ইসলামি (হুজি) ও জামায়াতুল মুজাহিদিন বাংলাদেশ (জেএমবি)-র সঙ্গে হাতে হাত মিলিয়ে চট্টগ্রাম, কক্সবাজার এলাকায় জঙ্গিদের জন্য প্রশিক্ষণ কেন্দ্র চালাচ্ছে। পশ্চিমবঙ্গ সীমান্ত দিয়েও নানা ভাবে জঙ্গিদের পাঠানো হচ্ছে এ দেশে। জাল নোটের কারবারিরাও সীমান্তকে ব্যবহার

এর পর সাতের পাতায়
● নোট পাচার চক্রের চাঁই...পঃ ৫

জঙ্গি ঠেকাতে রক্ষী

প্রথম পাতার পর

করছে। চলতি বছরের মার্চে কলকাতায় ২৪ লক্ষ টাকার জাল নোট-সহ রজ্জাক নামে এক জনকে গ্রেফতার করে পুলিশ। তার কাছে ওই টাকা এসেছিল বাংলাদেশ সীমান্ত পেরিয়েই।

সম্প্রতি হিলিতে ধরা পড়ে মহম্মদ আবু আলি নামে লঙ্করের এক জঙ্গি। সে কাশ্মীরে সেনা শিবিরে বিশ্ফারণ ঘটিয়ে ফেরার ছিল। আরও একটি ঘটনায় ধরা পড়ে আব্দুল বাকি মণ্ডল। সে বশিরহাটের বাসিন্দা হলেও মাসের বেশির ভাগ দিনই থাকত বাংলাদেশে।

পুলিশের অভিযোগ, গত ৫ জুলাই অযোধ্যায় বিশ্ফারণ যারা ঘটিয়েছিল, বাকি মণ্ডলই তাদের বাংলাদেশ থেকে সীমান্ত পার করিয়ে নিয়ে আসে ও

অযোধ্যায় পৌঁছিয়ে দেয়। ইসলামি জঙ্গি ছাড়াও ভারত-বাংলাদেশ সীমান্ত অবাধে নিজেদের প্রয়োজনে ব্যবহার করে বড়ো, আলফা ও কামতাপুরী জঙ্গিরা। বাংলাদেশের সাম্প্রতিক বিশ্ফারণের ঘটনাগুলিও দিল্লির এই সিদ্ধান্তের পিছনে রয়েছে। নিষিদ্ধ ঘোষিত জেএমবি, হুজি-র মতো মৌলবাদী গোষ্ঠীগুলি অত্যন্ত সংগঠিত ভাবে বাংলাদেশ জুড়ে আতঙ্কের পরিবেশ তৈরি করে ফেলেছে। সংগঠিত হয়ে উঠেছে জাগ্রত মুসলিম জনতা নামে আরও একটি মৌলবাদী গোষ্ঠী।

বাংলাদেশে গত কয়েক মাসে পরপর জঙ্গি হানার পরে কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্র মন্ত্রক বাংলাদেশ সীমান্তকে আগের চেয়ে অনেক বড় ঝুঁকি হিসাবে দেখছে।

27 JAN 2016

ANADAR...
...KA

Deshraj Miba in
New Delhi

Jan. 18. — India has expressed concern regarding situation in Nepal where Maoist violence against the government has increased and rallies by political parties have been banned.

According to sources, the Indian envoy to Nepal, Mr Shiv Shankar Mukherjee has expressed his anxiety regarding the

“fluid situation” in the Himalayan kingdom. He is now in Delhi to brief the external affairs ministry about the situation after the withdrawal of the unilateral ceasefire of the Maoists on 2 January.

With the King unbending as ever, the visit has been described as “routine.” Mr Mukherjee, who arrived yesterday, met the foreign secretary, Mr Shyam Saran, today.

The Maoists have started selective attacks on the

government machinery, chiefly the police and the army. So the Royal Nepal Army has to defend administrative infrastructure like telephone exchanges that are vital for conducting the civic poll on 8 February apart from conducting combat operations against the Maoists.

In an interview to a Nepali television earlier this month, Mr Mukherjee had said that the credibility of the election was suspect with the

political parties boycotting it.

On Monday, the Nepal banned all political demonstrations indefinitely much before the big political rally of the seven-party alliance on 20 January. The parties have vowed to hold the rally. They had held a 100,000-strong demonstration in Janakpur last month. “In such a scenario, the presence of thousands of protestors in the capital in a banned rally is extremely

serious,” said a senior MEA official. If there is violence on Friday, it could spiral into an eye-for-eye kind of situation.

Analysts point out that the international community has so far been united on Nepal, still talking about Nepal’s “twin pillars” of “constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy.”

They stress that the king must “reach out” to the political parties, which effectively means

that he must hand over the reins of power.

Senior MEA officials point out that the king is now isolated. “He is only backed by the RNA,” they said.

The “China card” is being played down by South Block, with diplomats stating that recent reports on the opening of consulates of China and Pakistan on the India-Nepal border are still “unconfirmed.” China had given 18 truckloads of

ammunition to the RNA in November 2005. The Indian envoy had expressed hope that the international community, including China, would not worsen the situation by supplying arms to Nepal.

Mr Mukherjee is scheduled to meet defence minister, Mr Pranab Mukherjee tomorrow. Sources indicate no revival of India’s military aid to Nepal in near future.

‘Fluid’ Nepal situation has India worried

No political interference in CBI: Mannohan

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Mannohan Singh on Wednesday reiterated his Government's "solemn commitment" that it would never interfere in the professional work of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). Speaking after laying the

foundation stone for a Rs. 134-crore, multistorey building here to house the agency's headquarters, he applauded the CBI for its efficiency and impartiality and expected it to achieve "total transparency and objectivity" through hard work.

Appealing to political parties and citizens to adopt a policy of

"zero tolerance" towards corruption, he said the CBI should aggressively pursue all cases against corrupt elements without fear or favour.

He wanted the agency to suggest improvements to government systems, procedures, rules and regulations to help to reduce corruption in

public life.

Asked whether the Government exerted pressure on the CBI to defreeze the London bank accounts of Italian businessman Ottavio Quattrocchi, a key accused in the Rs. 64-crore Bofors payoffs case, Dr. Singh told mediapersons: "I have clarified my stand earlier. There has

been no political interference."

On Monday, he said in Guwahati that his Government had never interfered with the CBI in matters of investigation and in defreezing the accounts.

Terrorism biggest threat: Page 12

Accounts of Quattrocchi defreezed

We can only make a request to
the British authorities: Pranab

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Two London bank accounts of Italian businessman Ottavio Quattrocchi, a key accused in the Rs. 64-crore Bofors payoffs case, have been defreezed. This has been conveyed to the Central Bureau of Investigation by the Crown Prosecution Service of Britain.

The action follows a London High Court order, well-placed sources in the CBI said. However, CBI officials were not able to confirm whether Mr. Quattrocchi had withdrawn the money.

Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee said on Tuesday that

the Government could at best make a request to Britain. "We have no jurisdiction on other countries. We can at best make a request to them," he told reporters. Asked if the Government would make any formal request to ensure that Mr. Quattrocchi did not take out the money, he said legal opinion would be taken on the issue.

On Monday, the Supreme Court directed the Government and the CBI to ensure that Mr. Quattrocchi did not withdraw the money. The CBI on Monday requested the Crown Prosecution Service to give details about the status of the accounts.

U.K. awaiting fresh request

Hasan Suroor

LONDON: British authorities are awaiting a fresh request from the Government of India to "refreeze" the bank accounts of Ottavio Quattrocchi, Italian businessman accused of receiving kickbacks in the Bofors gun deal.

A spokesperson of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) confirmed to *The Hindu* that it was in "discussion" with the CBI.

"All I can say is that the discussions relate to this case," she said. It was not for the CPS to comment on the Supreme Court directive to

the Government of India and the CBI to take steps to refreeze the accounts.

"We will have to go to the High Court again if we receive such a request from the Indian authorities," she said. The CPS continued to "liaise" with the Indian authorities.

Sources in the CPS refused to comment on reports that Mr. Quattrocchi may have already withdrawn the money. "We have nothing to do with that. It is between the bank and its client," said an official.

Editorial on Page 10

IIsc Lashkar militant held in Karnataka says he was asked to plan explosions ‘LeT plan to blow up Kaiga N-plant’

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BANGALORE, JANUARY 16

ALASHKAR-e-Toiba conspiracy to blast reservoirs and power installations in Karnataka has been unearthed following the arrest of a militant from Almatti in Bagalkot district in Karnataka yesterday.

City Police Commissioner Ajai Kumar Singh, told reporters here today that the arrested man, Habeeb alias Mehboob Ibrahim alias Chopdar, was a key LeT operative in Karnataka. Habeeb had been directed by Abdul Rehman, an alleged Lashkar commander, to plan explosions at Kaiga Nuclear Plant in Karwar district, Almatti Dam in Bagalkot and the Sharavathy transmission lines from Sharavathy Hydel sta-

tion in Shimoga district.

Singh said that Habeeb, a fabrication mechanic from Guledagudda in Bagalkot district, had been in Saudi Arabia from 1993 to 2001, where he came in contact with Abdul Rehman and other Lashkar leaders. After returning to Bagalkot, he continued to communicate with Rehman and had been trying to recruit people from Karnataka to join militant outfits.

Police recovered explosives like gelatin from the premises where Habeeb was apprehended. A diary, a passport and other incriminating materials have also been seized.

During a narco analysis test, Rehman reportedly revealed the names of “key LeT operatives” in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh who were executing a Lashkar-backed conspiracy by organising at-

tacks on vital installations, and places of economic and national importance, besides disrupting communal harmony.

“Habeeb’s role in the Dec 28 Indian Institute of Science (IISc) attack is yet to be confirmed. As of now, he has not admitted that he was a party to the shootout, but his involvement cannot be ruled out,” Singh said.

Police have also contacted their counterparts in Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh to collect more data on militant outfits.

Mearwhile, Abdul Rehman was produced before the 7th ACMM court today. Habeeb will be interrogated for a few more days. JCP (Administration), Gopal.B. Hosur said: “Based on Habeeb’s interrogation, more arrests are likely, and we will soon zero in on the intruder who killed Prof.MC Puri.”



On LeT's Karnataka map: Bijapur, Gulbarga, Udupi, Kolar

- In each state, a 'key operative' sends men to Rehman, who has operational contacts in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Chennai and Uttar Pradesh.
- Most recruits from Bijapur, Gulbarga, Udupi, Mangalore, Kolar and Ramnagar districts
- Once selected, recruits reach Kolkata from where they go to Bangladesh for training in weapons, making explosives and organising attacks. They are also trained to handle police interrogation
- They are later sent to Balochistan for intensive training after which they return to their native states and plan attacks

CBI doesn't know who did it

Vijay Thakur in New Delhi

Jan. 18. - The CBI director, Mr Vijay Shankar, does not know who recommended the unfreezing of fugitive Italian businessman Ottavio Quattrocchi's Bofors-linked bank accounts in London.

His statement comes after Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh said unfreezing had been sought by the CBI. The UPA chairperson and Congress president, Mrs Sonia Gandhi, too said the government did not know what the CBI was doing.

The joint director in the investigating agency, Mr A K Majumdar, said on Monday additional solicitor-general Mr B Dutta's visit to London last month - when he con-

veyed India's acquiescence in unfreezing Quattrocchi's accounts to the UK's Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) - had been advised by the CBI. He said that the law ministry and the personnel ministry did not play any role in it.

Mr Majumdar's statement was widely perceived as the CBI's "U-turn" in a row which had previously landed law minister, Mr HR Bharadwaj at the centre of this new Bofors storm. It is a different matter that Mr Majumdar refused to say whether Mr Dutta exceeded his brief in interacting with the CPS.

The disclosure of a 23 December e-mail from the CPS to Indian authorities indicate that Mr Dutta might well have gone beyond the CBI's brief which, according to Mr

Majumdar, was focussed on the point that the agency had not succeeded in linking Quattrocchi's two UK accounts with Bofors payoffs. The CPS e-mail states: "Mr Dutta conveyed instructions on behalf of the Government of India, the Ministry of Justice and the CBI that no useful purpose will be served by maintaining the Restraint Order (freezing the accounts) dated 25 July 2003 as there is no longer any reasonable prospect of the case against Mr Quattrocchi proceeding to trial."

Mr Shankar appeared to reflect the agency's dilemma he said: "I do not know who asked for the unfreezing. Whatever else we have to say we will say, it to the Supreme Court."

More reports on page 4

THE HINDU

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2006

Bhardwaj must go

A good scapegoat, the cynical saying goes, is almost as good as the solution to the problem. Exposed for the brazen conspiracy to facilitate the defreezing of the bank accounts of Bofors accused Ottavio Quattrocchi, the Central Government has laid the blame at the door of the Central Bureau of Investigation. The Centre could not have asked for a more submissive and willing scapegoat. The CBI, which until a couple of days ago more or less publicly distanced itself from the attempt to bail out Mr. Quattrocchi, has performed a flip-flop. After briefing reporters that it had nothing to do with Additional Solicitor General B. Datta's visit to London, where he informed the Crown Prosecution Service that there was no evidence to link two of Mr. Quattrocchi's bank accounts to the Bofors payoffs, the CBI has tamely assumed full responsibility for the developments that led to the defreezing of the accounts. In an unconvincing attempt to insulate the Congress party and the Central Government from the damage, the CBI has stated that "neither the Law Ministry nor the Department of Personnel and Training had any role to play" in lending Mr. Quattrocchi a helping hand. As if on cue, the Centre, through a statement by no less than Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, has 'clarified' that *l'affaire* Quattrocchi was dealt with entirely by the investigative agency.

This amounts to a crude obfuscation of the CBI's long-standing differences with the Government on how to handle Mr. Quattrocchi's frozen funds — a subject that has been highlighted in the press. It is also a reflection of the political interference in the functioning of the CBI — a problem that continues to dog the country's premier investigative agency despite the Supreme Court's ruling that sought to insulate it from "extraneous factors" and give it a measure of functional autonomy (*Vineet Narain vs Union of India, AIR 1998*). Mr. Quattrocchi remains an accused under the Indian criminal justice system. Providing him assistance in unlocking his bank accounts — deposits that were allegedly linked to the Bofors payoffs and are under investigation — is tantamount to subverting the course of justice. From refusing to give the CBI clearance to appeal against the Delhi High Court February 2004 verdict to stretching a helping hand to Mr. Quattrocchi, the H.R. Bhardwaj-headed Law Ministry's approach to the Bofors issue provides a throwback to the cover-up methods of the late-1980s and the early 1990s. The country can ill afford a Law Minister who, at the bidding of others or otherwise, has given cause for widespread suspicion that he has unclean hands in a case that has become emblematic of political corruption. In 1992, Madhavsinh Solanki was obliged to resign as External Affairs Minister following reports that he had asked his Swiss counterpart to go slow on the question of handing over secret bank documents to India relating to the Bofors kickbacks. The charges against the Union Law Minister are no less serious. There is only one way to restore some semblance of credibility in the Manmohan Singh Government's handling of the Bofors case. Mr. Bhardwaj must go immediately.

BJP seeks Manmohan's intervention

Keep accounts frozen: Jaitley

Vinay Kumar

NEW DELHI: The latest controversy relating to the Bofors case over two bank accounts of Italian businessman Ottavio Quattrocchi in London, lying frozen for the past 30 months, threatens to snowball into a political embarrassment for the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government.

Stepping up its campaign, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Sunday sought Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's intervention to ensure that the two accounts of Mr. Quattrocchi remain frozen. The accounts with the BSI AG bank in London held \$ one million and three million euros when they were frozen in July 2003.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, senior BJP leader and former Union Law Minister, Arun Jaitley, said the moneys would fly out of "these accounts to unknown destinations and this needs to be prevented immediately." The issue of concern to the entire country, he said, was with regard to preventing the damage caused by the action of the Union Law Minister and the Additional Solicitor-General of India.

Taking exception to the visit of the Additional Solicitor-General, B. Dutta, to London last month to inform the Crown Prosecutor that moneys lying deposited in the two British accounts be paid to Mr. Quattroc-

chi after de-freezing the accounts, Mr. Jaitley termed it as "an extraordinary concession volunteered by the Government of India." In his view, "the CBI and the CBI alone is authorised to deal with this case."

Who authorised the visit?

Mr. Jaitley pointed out that the Law Ministry has no locus standi in the matter. "Under the allocation of business rules, the CBI comes under the Department of Personnel of which you are the Cabinet Minister. The job of the Law Ministry is merely to tender legal advice and to provide for lawyers to represent different Departments of the Government. Who authorised the Law Ministry to deal with this matter? Who authorised the visit of the Additional Solicitor-General to Britain? Who prevented the CBI officer from accompanying the ASG?" he said in the letter to Prime Minister.

The BJP leader said that "fairness requires that since Mr. Quattrocchi has close connections in high places, the role of the Government and the investigative agencies in dealing with him must confirm to the highest standards of fair play, transparency and impartiality." Mr. Jaitley said that Mr. Quattrocchi was allowed to escape from India in 1993 without even his passport being impounded, charge-sheet was filed against him in 1999.

ফৌজি তথা পাচার, পাক চর পাকড়াও কলকাতায়

শর্মিষ্ঠা গোস্বামী ও সুনন্দ ঘোষ

কলকাতায় ধরা পড়ল পাকিস্তানি চর। আই এস আইয়ের সেই চর আবার খাস কলকাতারই বাসিন্দা!

মহম্মদ মহসিন হুসেন সঈদ (৩৭) নামে গার্ডেনরিচের ওই যুবককে রবিবার সকালে তার বাড়ি থেকে গ্রেফতার করে কলকাতা পুলিশ। তাকে জেরা করে চাঞ্চল্যকর তথ্য পেয়েছেন গোয়েন্দারা। ভারতের উত্তর-পূর্বাঞ্চলে সেনাবাহিনীর গতিবিধির সম্পর্কে আই এস আই-কে খবর পাঠানোই ছিল মহসিনের প্রধান কাজ। তার পাঁচটি ই-মেল ঠিকানার খোঁজ পেয়েছে পুলিশ। সেগুলির কোড বার করে পুলিশ খতিয়ে দেখছে, কাদের কাছে ঠিক কী ধরনের তথ্য পাঠাত মহসিন।

কলকাতার গার্ডেনরিচ থানা এলাকার ধানখেতিতে মহসিনের বাড়ি। সেখানে বাবা-মা ছাড়াও ছিলেন তিন ভাই। দু'ভাই মারা গিয়েছেন। মহসিন পুলিশকে জানিয়েছে, নেপাল থেকে কাপড় এনে বিক্রি করাই ছিল তার পেশা। ১৯৮৬ সালে সে পাকিস্তানে যাতায়াত শুরু করে। তার পাসপোর্ট বা ভিসা কিছুই ছিল না। গোয়েন্দাদের মতে, প্রতি বারেই আই এস আইয়ের মদতে সে বেআইনি ভাবে সীমানা পেরিয়ে পাকিস্তানে ঢুকেছে ও ফিরে এসেছে। আই এস আইয়ে যোগ দিতেই মহসিন পাকিস্তান গিয়েছিল। গুপ্তচর সংস্থায় নাম লেখানোর পরে ২০০১ সালে পাকিস্তানের হায়দরাবাদ ও করাচিতে তাকে বিশেষ অস্ত্র প্রশিক্ষণ দেয় আই এস আই।

এর পর আটের পাতায়

পাক চর পাকড়াও

প্রথম পাতায় পর

গোয়েন্দা সূত্রের ধর, ৮৬ সালে পাকিস্তানে গিয়ে বেশ কিছু দিন ছিল মহসিন। সেখানে সে বিয়েও করে। তবে সে পুলিশকে জানিয়েছে, পাকিস্তানি স্ত্রীর সঙ্গে তার তালোক হয়ে গিয়েছে। মাঝখানে বেশ কয়েক বার ভারতে ফিরেছিল সে। সেই সময় থাকত কলকাতার গার্ডেনরিচের বাড়িতেও। তার কাজ ছিল ভারতের উত্তর-পূর্বাঞ্চলের বিভিন্ন প্রান্তে ঘুরে বেড়ানো। গোয়েন্দারা জানান, এ ভাবে সে সেখানকার সেনাবাহিনীর গতিবিধির উপরে নজর রাখত এবং সে কথা ই-মেলে আই এস আই-কে জানাত। তাকে জেরা করে জানা গিয়েছে, গত কয়েক বছরে সে বেশ কয়েক বার অসম ও অরুণাচলপ্রদেশ গিয়েছে। সব চেয়ে বেশি গিয়েছে অসমের তেজপুরে। সেখানে সেনাবাহিনীর গতিবিধির উপরে নজর রাখার চেষ্টা করত মহসিন।

আদতে বিহারি এই মুসলিম যুবক আই এস আইয়ে মির্জা নামে পরিচিত। কলকাতায় বা উত্তর-পূর্ব ভারতে থাকাকালীন সে নিয়মিত আই এস আইয়ের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ রাখত। তার নিজের পাঁচটি ই-মেল ঠিকানা আছে। সেগুলি থেকে তথ্য জোগাড় করার চেষ্টা করছে পুলিশ।

জাল নোটের কারবারের সঙ্গেও জড়িয়ে রয়েছে মহসিন ওরফে মির্জার নাম। দীর্ঘদিন ধরেই ভারতের বাজারে জাল নোট চালু করার চেষ্টা করছে আই এস আই। সম্প্রতি হাওড়ার গোলাবাড়ি থানা এলাকার এক ব্যক্তিকে গ্রেফতার করেছিল পুলিশ। ২০০৫ সালের মার্চে কলকাতা থেকে পুলিশ ২৪ লক্ষ টাকার জাল নোট উদ্ধার করে। সেই জাল নোটের সঙ্গে পুলিশের জালে ধরা পড়েছিল হাজি রজ্জাক নামে এক ব্যক্তি। তাকে জিজ্ঞাসাবাদ করেও মহসিনের নাম জানতে পেরেছিল পুলিশ। ফৌজি তথা পাঠানোর পাশাপাশি পাকিস্তানে তৈরি জাল নোট এ দেশের বাজারে ছড়িয়ে দেওয়ার দায়িত্বও ছিল তার উপরে। কিন্তু তখন পুলিশ মহসিনের নাগাল পায়নি।

সম্প্রতি লালবাজারের সামনে থেকে ধৃত বাংলাদেশি যুবক মহম্মদ আজমের সঙ্গেও মহসিনের যোগাযোগ ছিল বলে পুলিশের ধারণা। তাই রবিবার তাকে গোলাবাড়ি ও হেয়ার স্ট্রিট থানার মামলাতেও যুক্ত করা হয়েছে। আজমের সঙ্গে জাল পাসপোর্ট চক্রেরও যোগ আছে বলে কলকাতা পুলিশের গোয়েন্দাদের সন্দেহ। সে কলকাতা থেকে লাহোর যাওয়ার চেষ্টা করছিল। যদিও তার কাছে কোনও পাসপোর্ট ছিল না।

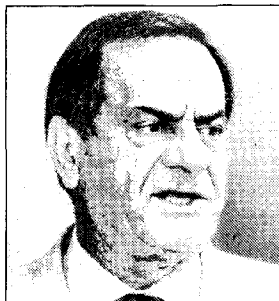
UK may defreeze Q's bank a/c

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Bofors fugitive Italian businessman Ottavio Quattrocchi's London bank accounts may soon be defrozen with UK's Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) having officially informed CBI of receipt of information from the Indian government that money in the accounts was not linked to kickbacks in the 1984 defence deal.

The CPS has made it clear to the CBI that in the light of additional solicitor-general Bhagwan Dutta having informed the UK authorities that there was no evidence to link Quattrocchi's accounts with kickbacks, there was little that could be done to prevent the Italian businessman from accessing the funds.

Top CBI sources said the key accused in the Bofors bribery scandal would be able to operate his accounts with the BSI-AG bank hold-



ing Euros 3 million and \$1 million. Dutta had handed over the Quattrocchi-related communication to CPS on December 22 last year.

CBI officials also agreed that they had no evidence at present to link the money to the Bofors paybacks even as they maintained that Quattrocchi remains an accused in the Bofors case and that the hunt for the kickback money routed to him would continue with the help of Interpol. But, in the meantime, the Italian may well be able to access the funds that had been frozen since

July 2003.

Agency officials maintained that Quattrocchi and other accused like the late Win Chaddha had dexterously moved kickback money from bank to bank to prevent potential investigations from linking payments with sources. The possibility of Quattrocchi getting hold of the London funds is likely to further fuel the political controversy over the government "assisting" the businessman in accessing the money.

BJP insistently questioned the government's action of sending a Quattrocchi-is-not-guilty message when it was the CBI's job as the investigative agency to move the appropriate court either in India or abroad. "Law minister H R Bharadwaj and Dutta were interlopers, hustlers to usurp to themselves power to decide whether Quattrocchi was innocent or guilty," BJP leader Arun Jaitley said.

Q-DBA & under
11-9 (Bofors)
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CONGRESS IN BOFORS HUDDLE

Sonia, PM look for way out

15/1
P.D. S.N. d. 10/1/15
(Bofors)

Statesman News Service

'Clear stand, CBI'

NEW DELHI, Jan. 14. — Stung by a fresh twist in the Bofors affair, the Congress leadership, including Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh and party president Mrs Sonia Gandhi, held a meeting tonight. Its aim was to work out a "damage-control" strategy to tackle the raging controversy arising out of the Union law ministry's recent move to let the fugitive Italian businessman, Ottavio Quattrocchi, a Bofors scam accused, access his frozen bank accounts in the UK.

The meeting was held at the PM's residence and lasted nearly 90 minutes. It was attended, among others, by defence minister Mr Pranab Mukherjee, home minister Mr Shivraj Patil and Mrs Gandhi's political secretary, Mr Ahmed Patel.

Mr Patel claimed that the meeting had been a "routine" one, but, clearly, it was believed to have deliberated on the options for "containing" the adverse political fall-out of the law ministry's move.

As the Opposition trained its guns on the Manmohan Singh government for its alleged bid to "scuttle" a probe into the allegations against Quattrocchi for his "proximity" to the

NEW DELHI, Jan. 14. — The British Crown Prosecution Service has asked the CBI to make its position clear on de-freezing Quattrocchi's London bank accounts. Spelling out the CBI's position, a senior official claimed it would continue with its efforts to extradite him.

Details on page 4

Gandhi family, the Congress has now sought to distance Mrs Gandhi and itself from law minister Mr HR Bharadwaj's move by passing the buck to the government. The party has said that "the law should take its own course and the guilty should be punished." Congress managers hold that both the PM and Mrs Gandhi were kept in the dark about Mr Bharadwaj's move.

The PM yesterday summoned Mr Bharadwaj and Mr Suresh Pachouri — who heads the ministry of state for personnel which cleared Mr Dutta's trip to London — and sought clarifications from them.

The government is reportedly considering asking the British authorities to continue with the freeze on Quattrocchi's accounts and ignore Mr Dutta's communication.

11/1/15

THE STATESMAN

Bofors returns

And exposes all our politicians

1991
of Bofors deal
SI-A

The return of the Bofors deal to the front page must force the Indian political establishment, not just the ruling Congress party, to turn the spotlight on itself. But let us begin first with the role of the Congress. For a party that has eternally claimed innocence, both on its own behalf and on that of its late leader Rajiv Gandhi, there are several embarrassing realities to confront. The Congress has never satisfactorily been able to explain why it needed to subvert a judge of the Delhi High Court or order then External Affairs minister Madhavsingh Solanki to carry a note to the Swiss if it had nothing to fear from an impartial probe. In an operation reminiscent of the Solanki note, a senior law officer of the Government has now informed British authorities that it will be in order for them to unfreeze bank accounts of Italian businessman, Ottavio Quattrocchi. The minister in charge, Hans Raj Bhardwaj, is an old family loyalist, and owes both his legal and political accomplishments, such as they are, to the party and the Gandhi family. That Quattrocchi's role has never fully been explained matters little to the likes of Bhardwaj. Why would an Italian oil company representative have been part of a Swedish gun deal unless it was at the behest of his close friend, the then Prime Minister and his wife? Snamprogetti, the company he worked for, and the ENI group that owned this company had at the time no business connections with Bofors. Yet his name surfaced with alarming regularity in the Bofors papers. If the Gandhis were innocent, surely there must be an explanation for this amazing fact. None has ever been offered. The case against the Hinduja was dismissed by the Delhi High Court, and the government chose not to move the apex court. But Quattrocchi has never been made to explain his role. And now, thanks to Bhardwaj, he has been allowed to even get his hands on money that can at best be described as suspicious.

But what of others in the political establishment? Is it enough for Arun Jaitley or the Left to express outrage when they are as much a part of the cover-up as the Congress is? What stopped Jaitley or his party from pursuing the investigation vigorously in the many years they were in government? And what stops the Left from withdrawing support to the Congress? After all, both BJP and the Left were part of the anti-corruption campaign launched by V P Singh in the late 1980s; indeed prominent Leftists such as Jyoti Basu, Gurudas Dasgupta and Somnath Chatterjee spoke often and eloquently about the corruption in the Bofors deal. And, finally, where is Mr Singh, the man who became Prime Minister thanks to Bofors and who will be judged by history as having been among the most opportunistic manipulators of public opinion? These leaders occupied the public space, our space, provoked us to support them, and vowed to bring the culprits to book. They must either admit now that they were enacting a gigantic political fraud on the people of India, or act decisively to tell Sonia Gandhi and her flock that this really is the last straw. Bofors is not about the corruption of the Congress alone.

Nothing to bar Q's access to bank

CBI's London trail goes cold

J. Debra & Co. T-1 1671

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Jan. 15: The British legal system having issued the order to lift the freeze on Ottavio Quattrocchi's accounts on Wednesday, it is likely that the Italian businessman has already taken out money he has been denied access to for years.

Till this evening, the CBI had no knowledge that Britain's Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) had removed the restraining order on two of Quattrocchi's accounts on January 11.

Reacting to a report in **The Telegraph** today about the freeze having been lifted on the two accounts in the Swiss bank, BSI AG, that hold \$1 million and Euro 3 million, CBI spokesperson G. Mohanty said: "I am not aware of any such development."

While it is surprising that an investigating agency does not have the information, there is very little the Indian government can do now if it were to try to have the process reversed.

Government sources, however, were claiming that efforts would be made to get another restraining order on Quattrocchi's accounts and the CBI was committed to getting to the bottom of the Bofors scandal.

The CBI may, theoretically, crack the Bofors mystery



Quattrocchi: Bonus?

some day, but chances of the government getting another restraining order on the accounts are remote.

Reports are that the CPS — the agency which decides whether there is sufficient evidence to bring criminal charges against an individual or individuals — was told by an Indian government representative of lack of evidence linking the money (over Rs 20 crore at current exchange rates) in the accounts to the alleged kickbacks in the Bofors deal.

The spokeswoman for the CPS had told **The Telegraph**: "We met the (Indian) additional solicitor-general (B. Dutta) in December. After the meeting, we corresponded with the court and the restraining order on Quattrocchi's accounts has been removed."

If India were, indeed, to

pursue the case for re-imposing the restraint, it would have to present clinching evidence to the CPS after, presumably, having failed to provide any only last month.

There is, of course, also the possibility that Quattrocchi, whose money had remained frozen since July 2003, has left nothing in the accounts between Wednesday and today to freeze again.

"If this is indeed the case, the damage has already been done. The benefits of collusion have reached where they were supposed to," said BJP general secretary Arun Jaitley.

Earlier in the day — but too late nevertheless — he had written to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, urging him to prevent the lifting of the restraining order.

"The issue of concern to the entire country is now with regard to preventing the damage caused by the action of the law minister. The crown prosecutor in Britain would obviously act on the opinion given to him by the additional solicitor-general and these two bank accounts are likely to be de-frozen soon. Money would fly out of these two bank accounts to unknown destinations. This needs to be prevented immediately," Jaitley said in the letter.

The BJP has stepped up the demand that law minister H.R. Bhardwaj be sacked and the Prime Minister explain how he was kept in the dark.

16 JAN 2004

Manmohan: it was CBI's decision

J D & R L - Emily
HD-1 (Bofors)
1071

Government had no role in de-freezing accounts

Sushanta Talukdar

GUWAHATI: Action on both freezing and de-freezing of Italian businessman Ottavio Quattrocchi's bank accounts has been taken at the level of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in consultation with Law officers as per the established procedure, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on Monday.

"Neither the freezing was done under government orders nor has the de-freezing been done under Government orders. These matters are exclusively under the functional jurisdiction of [the] CBI in which government does not interfere," Dr. Singh said reading out a statement at a press conference here.

The Prime Minister said his Government had never interfered with the CBI in matters of investigation. "Autonomy of [the] CBI will be preserved under this government at all costs," he said.

"As per procedure"

"A controversy has been sought to be created about certain steps taken by the CBI in the matter relating to the freezing of the Quattrocchi bank account. Actions relating to both the

freezing and the de-freezing of these accounts have been taken at the level of the CBI in consultations with Law officers as per established procedure," he added.

The Prime Minister said that all steps taken in this matter were in accordance with established procedure in such cases.

Re-freeze accounts: court

J. Venkatesan

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Monday directed the Government and the Central Bureau of Investigation to take steps to "re-freeze" the two London bank accounts of Italian businessman Ottavio Quattrocchi, accused in the Rs. 64-crore Bofors payoffs case. A three-judge Bench comprising Chief Justice Y.K. Sabharwal, Justice C.K. Thakker and Justice R.V. Raveendran made it clear that if the bank had already de-frozen the accounts, the Government and the CBI must ensure that Mr. Quattrocchi did not withdraw money until further orders.

The Bench issued notice, asking the Government and the CBI to file by January 23 an affidavit explaining their stand on the petition filed by

Ajay Agarwal, a lawyer who brought to the court's notice the de-freezing of the accounts.

The Bench told Additional-Solicitor General Gopal Subramaniam, appearing for the Centre, that steps should be taken for maintaining status quo on Mr. Quattrocchi's accounts, which were frozen in July 2003 at the Government's request.

"Till further orders we direct the Centre and the CBI to take necessary steps for maintenance of status quo on the accounts in question so that de-freezing does not take place. If de-freezing has already taken place, the amounts should not be allowed to be withdrawn."

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Law Officer sent to London to explain legal position, says CBI

Crown Prosecution requested clarifications on High Court judgments

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Monday said it had proposed on November 16 last to send a senior Government law officer to London to explain to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) the "legal implications" relating to the freezing of the bank accounts of Italian businessman Ottavio Quattrocchi, accused in the Bofors payoff case.

The clarification comes four days after a political row erupted over Union Law Minister H.R. Bhardwaj defending the Government's decision to de-freeze the two bank accounts. Though reports suggested that the London High Court ordered de-freezing of the accounts on January 11, the CBI said it was yet to receive a communication from either the CPS or the British authorities on the de-freezing of the

accounts containing \$1 million and three million Euros.

Addressing a hurriedly convened press conference here, CBI Joint Director A.K. Majumdar, who has handled the Bofors probe, said the agency would continue its efforts to get Mr. Quattrocchi to stand trial in the case pending before the court of Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, Delhi.

Clarification sought

Narrating the sequence of events that led to the visit of the Additional Solicitor-General B. Dutta to London on December 22 last, Mr. Majumdar said the CPS officials had asked for clarifications on implications of the two Delhi High Court judgments of February 2004 and May 2005 in which charges against public servants and the Hinduja brothers were quashed in the pay-offs case.

"It also wanted to know on what technical grounds Malaysian courts had refused to extradite Mr. Quattrocchi to India. So it was decided by the CBI to send a law officer, to be accompanied by an officer of the agency, to explain the legal position relating to the case," Mr. Majumdar said.

He said only the CBI had been in touch with the CPS and there was no question of either the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) or the Law Ministry stepping into its jurisdiction. "Our proposal was examined and approved by the DoPT but the Integrated Finance Division ruled out the visit of the CBI officer and a junior of Mr. Dutta to London on the ground that only the legal implications were to be explained," he said. Mr. Dutta, who was to leave here for London on December 8 last, could undertake the visit

only on December 22 due to certain problems in "scheduling" his visit. As Mr. Dutta was fully conversant with the facts of the Bofors case, he was chosen to represent the CBI.

He said the CBI had briefed Mr. Dutta in detail about the visit and the fact that it had failed to connect the money in two frozen bank accounts of Mr. Quattrocchi to the alleged illegal pay-offs of the Bofors case.

Trail goes cold

Asked about the probe into the two frozen bank accounts between July 2003 and November 2005, Mr. Majumdar said that Letter Rogatories were sent to the Bahamas but the money trail could not be traced there. Later, the CBI took up the matter with the Indian Embassy in Switzerland and, according to Swiss law, the probe into old bank accounts became time-

barred. "They informed us that many of the banks since then had disintegrated and there was no record available to trace the origin of funds. Since this transaction is of 2003, fresh Letter Rogatories will be sent to Swiss authorities," he said.

The CBI Joint Director said an Interpol Red Corner notice was still out against Mr. Quattrocchi, who was chargesheeted in 1999 six years after he left India.

To a question, Mr. Majumdar said the CPS had also wanted to know if Sections 82 and 83 of the Cr.PC declaring Mr. Quattrocchi a proclaimed offender could be invoked. Since Mr. Quattrocchi was a foreigner and did not have any properties in India, he could not be declared a proclaimed offender — a condition that could have made things more difficult for him before the British authorities.

CBI role in Bofors case to be probed

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 15 JANUARY

THE CBI's role in the Ottavio Quattrocchi episode will come in for scrutiny when the Supreme Court (SC) takes up the public interest litigation (PIL), asking the court to intervene for stalling the defreezing of the middleman's accounts.

While the law ministry has said there was no case against the Italian middleman, the CBI has been saying it is still making efforts to get him extradited from Italy.

The two stands are clearly at variance and the position the CBI takes will throw light on how the issue was tackled by the UPA government.

A day after the Congress core committee met at the Prime Minister's residence to discuss the fallout of the political controversy, questions are being raised by the ruling establishment as to whether the CBI had opposed the move when the law ministry consulted it while framing the letter that was sent to the Crown Prosecution.

"There are allegations that the law ministry made its recommendations to the UK unilaterally without taking the view of the CBI in the matter. What is the basis of this allegation? Will the CBI substantiate these charges?" asked a senior member of the ruling establishment.

"Did the CBI say in its stated view that the extradition case against Mr Quattrocchi and his charge sheet can be persuaded only by keeping his UK bank accounts frozen?" he added.

Going by their version, the law ministry had indeed consulted the CBI and got the consent of the director (prosecution) of the agency that the government could recommend the defreezing of Mr Quattrocchi accounts.

The ruling party leaders also claimed that the letter Additional Solicitor General B Dutta delivered to the UK authorities, carried the signature of the CBI official.

"The CBI is free and shall continue to pursue these cases. But that does not mean the investigation agency opposed the defreezing of



his UK accounts. To freeze the account, the CBI has to have evidence to link the money in that account to the pay off.

Those who argue that the law ministry and CBI have different stands on the issue of defreezing the accounts include the former law minister Arun Jaitley.

"They should answer this core issue. They can't obliterate this core issue by creating diversionary tactics. Or else they should wait for CBI's position before jumping the gun," the Congress leader added.

The Economic Times

কুত্রোচ্চি-কাণ্ডে প্যাঁচে পড়ে নিঃসঙ্গ ভরদ্বাজ

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা, নয়াদিল্লি, ১৩ জানুয়ারি: ওস্তাভিও কুত্রোচ্চির ব্যাঙ্ক অ্যাকাউন্টকে ছাড়পত্র দিয়ে চক্রব্যূহের মধ্যে পড়ে গিয়েছেন কেন্দ্রীয় আইনমন্ত্রী হংসরাজ ভরদ্বাজ।

প্রায় বিশ বছরের পুরনো বফর্স কাণ্ড নতুন যে চক্রব্যূহের জন্ম দিয়েছে, তা এইরকম: প্রধানমন্ত্রীর অফিস সূত্রে বলা হচ্ছে, মনমোহন সিংহকে অন্ধকারে রেখে যা করার করেছেন ভরদ্বাজ। বিজেপি বলছে, যদি তাই হয় তবে পদত্যাগ করতে হবে ভরদ্বাজকে। সিপিএম বলছে, কুত্রোচ্চিকে বাঁচানোর চেষ্টা বরদাস্ত করা হবে না, আর কংগ্রেস বলছে আইন চলবে তার নিজের পথে।

অর্থাৎ ভরদ্বাজ নিঃসঙ্গ। রাজনৈতিক সূত্রে অবশ্য এ কথাও স্মরণ করিয়ে দেওয়া হচ্ছে যে ভরদ্বাজ দশ নম্বর জনপথের ঘনিষ্ঠ। কিন্তু একই সঙ্গে এটাও ঘটনা, ঘনিষ্ঠতা সত্ত্বেও শেষ পর্যন্ত চাকরি খুঁইয়েছেন প্রাক্তন বিদেশমন্ত্রী নটবর সিংহ।

প্রায় ১৪ বছর আগে সুইস কর্তৃপক্ষকে এমনই এক চিঠি দেওয়ার জন্য চাকরি গিয়েছিল নরসিংহ রাও সরকারের বিদেশ মন্ত্রী মাধব সিংহ সোলাঙ্কিরও। অভিযোগ ছিল, তদন্তকারী ভারতীয় অফিসাররা সে দেশে গেলে সুইস কর্তৃপক্ষ যেন সাহায্য না করে। সে কথা জানাজানি হয়ে যাওয়ায় বাম-ডান-সহ তামাম বিরোধীরা ঘিরে ধরেছিল সরকারকে। এবার ভরদ্বাজের বিরুদ্ধে অভিযোগ ততটাই গুরুতর।

প্রধানমন্ত্রীর দফতর সূত্রে বলা হচ্ছে, বফর্স কেলেঙ্কারিতে অন্যতম অভিযুক্ত কুত্রোচ্চির ব্যাঙ্ক অ্যাকাউন্ট থেকে নিষেধাজ্ঞা তুলে নেওয়ার জন্য আইন মন্ত্রক যে ভাবে ব্রিটিশ কর্তৃপক্ষকে অনুরোধ জানিয়েছেন তার বিন্দুবিসর্গ জানা ছিল না মনমোহন সিংহের। এই ঘটনায় তিনি রীতিমতো অখুশি। কিন্তু সেখানেই থেমে না থেকে ভরদ্বাজ গতকাল যা করেছেন তাতে সরকার আরও অস্বস্তিতে।

বফর্স দালালি কাণ্ডে কুত্রোচ্চির কোনও ভূমিকা ছিল না বলে কাল ছাড়পত্র দিয়ে দিয়েছিলেন ভরদ্বাজ। অথচ সিবিআই কর্তারা বলেন, কুত্রোচ্চির বিরুদ্ধে এখনও চার্জশিট রয়েছে। সে ফেরার। তাকে প্রতর্পণ করে এদেশে নিয়ে আসার

যাবতীয় চেষ্টা চলছে। সিবিআইয়ের সঙ্গে ভরদ্বাজের এই পরস্পরবিরোধী বক্তব্য নিয়ে সরকার ঘোর সমস্যায় পড়েছে। সরকারি ভাবে এখন বিষয়টি নিয়ে কিছুই বলা হচ্ছে না। মুখে কুলুপ এঁটেছে কংগ্রেসও।

সরকারি সূত্রে খবর, কাল গভীর রাতে প্রতিরক্ষা মন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় এবং কেন্দ্রীয় অর্থমন্ত্রী পি চিদম্বরম বিষয়টি নিয়ে বৈঠক করেন। বিষয়টি মোকাবিলা করতে সরকার কী কৌশল নেবে তা নিয়ে আজও দফায় দফায় বৈঠক হয়।

এ দিকে ভরদ্বাজকে নিয়ে সরকারের ভিতরে জল্পনা শুরু হয়েছে। তাঁর কার্যকলাপ নিয়ে এর আগেও বিতর্ক সৃষ্টি হয়েছিল। এ বারও তিনি ভালোমতোই বিপাকে। তাঁর রাজ্যসভার সদস্যপদের মেয়াদ খুব শীঘ্রই ফুরোতে চলেছে। এই পরিস্থিতিতে ভরদ্বাজের রাজ্যসভার সদস্যপদ পুনর্নবীকরণ হবে কি না তা নিয়েও ইউপিএ-র আন্দরমহলে এখন গুঞ্জন।

এ দিকে কুত্রোচ্চির ব্যাঙ্ক অ্যাকাউন্টকে ছাড়পত্র দেওয়ার প্রসঙ্গে সিপিএম কঠোর অবস্থান নিয়েছে। তাদের বক্তব্য, কুত্রোচ্চিকে কোনওভাবেই ছাড় দেওয়া চলবে না। সিপিএমের এই অবস্থানে বিজেপির পক্ষেও কিছুটা সুবিধা হয়েছে। কারণ কেন্দ্রে প্রধান রাজনৈতিক দলগুলির মধ্যে সিপিএম, সমাজবাদী পার্টি এবং সংযুক্ত জনতা বিষয়টি নিয়ে সরকারকে চাপে ধরেছে। আজ মুখে খুলেছেন সংযুক্ত জনতা নেতা জর্জ ফার্নান্দেজও।

বিজেপি সাধারণ সম্পাদক অরুণ জেটলি আজ কেন্দ্রীয় আইনমন্ত্রীর পদত্যাগ দাবি করেন। জেটলির বক্তব্য, ভরদ্বাজ যে কাজ করেছেন তা সম্পূর্ণ এজিয়ার বহির্ভূত। তিনি জেনে বুঝে কুত্রোচ্চিকে ছাড় দিয়েছেন। এমন একজন ব্যক্তির কেন্দ্রীয় মন্ত্রিসভায় থাকার কোনও অধিকার নেই। একই সঙ্গে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর অস্বস্তি বাড়তেও সচেষ্ট বিজেপি। জেটলি বলেন, প্রধানমন্ত্রী বলেছিলেন, দুর্নীতিকে কোনওভাবেই প্রশ্রয় দেবে না তাঁর সরকার। অথচ তাঁর মন্ত্রিসভার একের পর এক সদস্য দুর্নীতি করে চলেছেন। এর পর মনমোহন সিংহের ভূমিকা নিয়েই প্রশ্ন উঠছে।

অন্ধকারে মনমোহনও



SATURDAY, JANUARY 14, 2006

A helping hand for 'Q'

Even the fig leaf has been discarded. The Central Government's unwillingness to see that justice was done in the Rs.64 crore Bofors payoff case was evident when it became clear that no appeal would be filed against the Delhi High Court's controversial February 2004 judgment. In that unpersuasive and tortuously argued ruling, a single Judge held there was no evidence of bribery in connection with the Rs.1,437 crore deal for the purchase of 155 mm howitzers. Now it transpires that the Government is willing to go further than showing a studied lack of interest in pursuing the country's most sensational corruption case — one that became synonymous with skulduggery in high places. The resourceful expose by a television channel has shown the Government is quite prepared to extend a helping hand to one of the key accused, a man who enjoyed unrestricted access to the highest reaches of power when the howitzer deal was struck in 1986. It has been disclosed that India's Additional Solicitor General B. Datta visited the Crown Prosecution Service in England in December 2005 to inform it that there was no evidence to link two bank deposits of Ottavio Quattrocchi, the infamous 'Q' of the Martin Ardbo diary, with the Bofors payoff. Factually untrue and politically scandalous, this submission was unashamedly intended to facilitate the free operation of two of the Italian businessman's accounts in the BSI AG bank in London.

The two bank accounts — holding 3 million euros and \$1 million — were frozen by the Government of the United Kingdom on the basis of bank documents obtained by the Central Bureau of Investigation from the Swiss authorities; according to the agency, these documents revealed an incriminating trail of transactions. The CBI's success included getting Interpol to issue a Red Corner Notice against Mr. Quattrocchi, and convincing British authorities that the money in the accounts he controlled was part of the kick-back received from Bofors. The key question is: why does the Government want a freeze that was upheld by the London High Court and the British Supreme Court to be lifted now? The Red Corner Notice against Mr. Quattrocchi is still valid and the criminal case against him is pending before the Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's court in Delhi. If the trial has not begun, it is only because the surviving accused, Mr. Quattrocchi, and Bofors' former chief executive, Mr. Ardbo, have managed to elude the reach of Indian law. Significantly, the CBI, which opposed the de-freezing of the accounts, has distanced itself from Mr. Datta's submission and stated that the efforts to win Mr. Quattrocchi's extradition will continue. It is the Central Government — in the persona of Union Law Minister H.R. Bhardwaj — that has rushed in to defend the indefensible. The proper course is surely to let India's principal criminal investigation agency pursue the financial trail, which has been traced to a bank in Lugano, Switzerland, to its original source — not in scoring another own goal.

Gun with the wind

Progress on Bofors is more frozen than Mr Q's money. Hope of resolving it has turned to cynicism

IT was the emblematic case of political corruption. As if by deliberate design, it provided the raging climax to an ebbing of trust that had been with us awhile. There was mounting popular cynicism about the political class through the '80s, more specifically about the dominant Congress party, which Rajiv Gandhi's massive mandate in 1984 had only served to temporarily obscure. When it first broke out in the late '80s, therefore, Bofors was a defining moment, but one that also carried a promise. All the culprits would be identified, they would meet with justice and the people would learn to give the politician the benefit of doubt again. Now, almost 20 years later, as the case climbs into the headlines once more, it has entirely cast off that burden of hope. There is weary irony as the law ministry and its ostensible handmaiden, the CBI, are seen to be openly at loggerheads over the defreezing of the overseas accounts of a controversial Italian businessman, surely the last of the prominent accused to survive the tortuous legal process in the case.

The UPA government must explain why its law officer acted in a way that suggests a blatant cover-up. Ottavio Quattrocchi's well-known association with the Gandhi family should have made it more

scrupulous, in fact. That it still chose to conjure up a clean chit that wasn't from the CBI, all the better to let Mr Q, against whom extradition proceedings are still on, avail of his long frozen crores, speaks of a chilling cynicism. But while the government is answerable for its dubious conduct, of course, the never-ending Bofors case demands that we ask some other questions as well. They have to do with the country's justice system.

How can a high-profile case that dragged in a prime minister, linger on, evade closure, for nearly two decades? Why has there been such inconsistent follow-through, with so few questions asked, on the leads unearthed from time to time, mostly by the investigative media? Why were governments, even non-Congress ones, non-serious about taking this case forward and why did a supposedly independent judicial process allow governments to get away with their deliberate inaction? Who is responsible for the several reputations sullied by the innuendo industry that sprang up around the case, meanwhile? The high-profile corruption case could have been the opportunity to renew faith in the system. It is, instead, the metaphor for a state in which the onus is ever on politics to prove its innocence.

INDIAN EXPRESS

14 JAN 2006

Centre allows de-freezing of Quattrocchi's accounts in UK

SNS and PTI

NEW DELHI, Jan 11. — In a surprise move presaging far-reaching political consequences for the government and the Congress, New Delhi is reported to have allowed British courts to de-freeze the bank accounts of Ottavio Quattrocchi, the Italian businessman who was allegedly a prime beneficiary of the Bofors deal pay-offs.

A private TV channel, CNN-IBN, which broke the story, quoted "sources" to say that Additional Solicitor-General Mr B Dutta visited the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) on 22 December 2005, allegedly de-freeze two accounts in BSI AG Bank in London. The accounts belong to Quattrocchi, who currently lives in Italy.

Mr Dutta met two officials at the CPS — Mr Stephen Helman and Mr Shane Naniappan — and told them that there was no case against Bofors in India and also that there was no evidence against Quattrocchi, the TV channel said, adding that the CPS had officially confirmed

this.

The Congress spokesperson, Ms Jayanti Natarajan, told the TV channel from Chennai that the reported development would affect neither the Congress or the government.

She repeated the party's oft-voiced plea that nothing had been proved against anyone in the Congress in the dispute. "It has been flogged to death," she said and refused to be drawn into the alleged links between Quattrocchi and the Gandhi family.

The BJP's Mr Arun Jaitley said the Congress could not wash its hands of the issue as Quattrocchi was known to have very cordial relations with the Gandhi family. The BJP spokesman, Mr Prakash Javadekar, told The Statesman from Mumbai that he would have to study the matter to give his reaction. He, however, said it was a big issue and the party would formulate plan of action to pressure the Congress and the UPA government.

A British court ordered in July 2003 that the two accounts —

5A51 51516L and 5A5151516M — with BSI AG Bank, London, containing Euros 3 and 1 million respectively would continue to remain frozen. The Italian businessman unsuccessfully appealed against the freeze in various courts.

The Court of Appeal in UK, which is part of the Supreme Court of Judicature, upheld the High Court's order, dismissing Quattrocchi's petition with a cost of £38,460 to be paid to the prosecution out of the frozen funds.

The Crown Prosecution Service of Britain, which was arguing the case on behalf of the CBI, has informed the British High Court of the decision of the agency.

The prosecution had argued that the money could not be released as there was an immediate need to probe its source following a CBI allegation that it was part of the payment that Quattrocchi got from Bofors. Following this, the CBI had also sought Letters Rogatory for Bahamas to ascertain the route of the money.

Warning wasted in Bangalore

Praveen Swami

J. D. S. N. S. P. mky
NEW DELHI: Evidence has emerged that poor communication and bureaucratic delays might have resulted in the squandering of an opportunity to pre-empt the December 28, 2005 terrorist attack on the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.

Sources told *The Hindu* that an identification document, issued by the Election Commission, belonging to Mohammad Ashraf Paddar, a schoolteacher from Jammu and Kashmir, detained on suspicion of having participated in the attack, was found outside a military facility in Bangalore on September 5.

Concerned at a possible terrorist strike on their premises, Army authorities promptly forwarded the card to the Police Commissioner, asking for verification of his antecedents.

The Bangalore police officials, however, forwarded this request to the Jammu and Kashmir police, through the Intelligence Bureau, on December 29, more than three months after the card was discovered.

Jammu and Kashmir police officials, contacted by *The Hindu*, said their Bangalore counterparts' failure to follow the common-sense procedure — of phoning Srinagar for verification of the document — highlighted serious problems in the functioning of the force. "We get calls several times a week from our colleagues in other States," a senior official said, "and teams often visit us for follow-up investigation. The Bangalore po-

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lice could have just picked up the phone or put someone on a flight."

The Jammu and Kashmir police authorities say they are still unsure whether Paddar visited Bangalore in the weeks before the attack or whether the card was used by another individual with or without his consent. Paddar reported the loss of his card, issued just before the 2002 Assembly elections, soon after he obtained it. In 2003, he applied for and received a fresh card from the Election Commission.

With no record of his involvement in terrorism, Paddar is an unlikely suspect. The Jammu and Kashmir police say his brother was murdered by terrorists some years ago. However, investigators say Paddar has given a number of contradictory statements that have fuelled suspicion of his possible role in the Bangalore attack. For example, Paddar first said he had not travelled outside the State in years but then admitted to visiting Shimla in Himachal Pradesh some months ago.

Whether or not Paddar was involved in the attack, sources close to the investigation seem increasingly convinced that the assault rifles and grenades used in the Bangalore strike were transported from Jammu and Kashmir. Local Lashkar-e-Taiba operatives are thought to have made arrangements to transport and harbour an assault unit from Jammu and Kashmir but they did not participate in the attack. News that Paddar's card was found outside a military facility means it may also be considered a target.

THE HINDU

2006

Suspected LeT operative held for IISc attack

All 9-D & N elements
Abdul Rehman nabbed in Andhra Pradesh

Staff Reporter HD-1

BANGALORE: The Bangalore police claim to have achieved a breakthrough in the probe into the attack on the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) by arresting Abdul Rehman, said to be the chief of the Lashkar-e-Taiba's (LeT) "violent operations in south India."

Police Commissioner Ajai Kumar Singh told presspersons on Tuesday that a team from the city arrested Rehman (35) in Nalgonda, Andhra Pradesh, on January 1. The police have not seized any arms and ammunition from him.

The police are yet to ascertain Rehman's role in the attack. An Indian national and resident of Nalgonda, he had been in Saudi Arabia for the past few years and was visiting India frequently. A businessman, he occupied a top position in the LeT hierarchy, Mr. Singh said.

Asked whether Rehman masterminded the attack and whether he was in Bangalore that day (December 28, 2005), Mr. Singh said: "His arrest indicates that we have some information that he is connected with the incident." Rehman was brought here on Tuesday morning and a court remanded him to police custody for 14 days.

Sources in the city police told *The Hindu* that Rehman was recruiting cadres in south India and provided funds to the Lashkar from Saudi Arabia. Intelligence Bureau inputs led to his arrest. An IB team would soon come here to question him.

The police are yet to ascertain whether Rehman was involved

• Bangalore court remands him to police custody

• Rehman was in Saudi Arabia in the past few years

• He may be subjected to narco-analysis test

in the attack on the Task Force Office in Hyderabad. "I spoke to the Hyderabad Police Commissioner today in this regard," Mr. Singh said.

To a question, he said investigations alone would reveal whether the attack on the IISc was part of a larger conspiracy and whether the LeT planned to carry out similar attacks in Bangalore. "As Rehman has strong connections with the LeT, his arrest will deter the outfit from carrying out further attacks, if it had planned any."

He had several aliases, and the police were verifying his passport. Mr. Singh refused to release Rehman's photograph to the media, saying this could hamper investigation.

The police team, which returned from Hyderabad, had "very useful background material," he said. If necessary, Rehman would be subjected to narco-analysis and other tests.

Mr. Singh denied reports in a section of the media that some foreign and north Indian students here had been picked up for questioning. "We have not arrested anyone other than Rehman, and reports that students are under a scanner are false."

IISc attack: no arrests yet

Police receiving calls from public following release of the portrait

Staff Reporter

BANGALORE: A day after the Bangalore police released a computer-generated portrait of the suspect involved in the attack at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) here, the public have been making calls to them providing details of similar-looking persons.

Police Commissioner Ajai Kumar Singh told presspersons on Saturday that he himself had received two calls. "They told me that a person similar to the suspect was found in a restaurant. I have alerted the officer in charge of the area." But he refused to specify the area.

Mr. Singh said the police had not arrested anyone in connection with Wednesday's attack, in which a scientist was killed and four others were injured.

Sources in the city police told *The Hindu* that on Friday they questioned a man but found him innocent.

Mr. Singh said ballistic experts opined that all 42 bullets recovered from the IISc campus were fired from the AK-56 assault rifle, which was found on the scene.

Police working on leads

The police were working on different leads. "I am in constant touch with my counterparts in Delhi, Hyderabad, Rajasthan and Jammu and Kashmir. We are yet to get a definite clue to the group involved in the attack," Mr. Singh said.

The sources said a team, led by Deputy Commissioner (Crime) M.D. Basannavar, now in Hyderabad, was exchanging information with the police there. The Hyderabad police had arrested three suspected terrorists.

Meanwhile, Bangalore city has been put on high alert in the

• **No clues yet to identity of attackers**

• **Police team exchanging information in Hyderabad**

• **High alert in Bangalore**

• **Cabinet discusses security lapse**

• **Shivraj Patil makes enquiries**

wake of the attack at the IISc and threats that explosions would be triggered at the Chief Minister's residence and adjoining Hotel Grand Ashok on Saturday night.

Security has been stepped up at the Chief Minister's official residence, 'Anugraha,' and the hotel.

The Chief Minister's residence, which is normally crowded, was almost deserted on Saturday. The police screened vehicles and people in the area.

Massive deployment

In all, 4,000 civil policemen, 50 platoons of the Karnataka State Reserve Police and three Quick Reaction Teams of the Army have been deployed in the city.

The services of mine and bomb detection squads and canine squads are also being used.

The Karnataka Cabinet discussed the security lapse at the IISc. Chief Minister N. Dharam Singh instructed the police to tighten security for international seminars such as the one the institute hosted.

Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil, who enquired of the State Government about the attack, was informed that there were no clues yet to the assailants.