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SYED SHAHABUDDIN, ex-MP

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Representatives Overseas

- UK** Dr. Roohi H. Majid
 7, Woodville Road, London,
 NW11 9UH. Ph: 4556281
USA Dr. K.A. Mallick
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Autonomy for J&K the Only Viable Political Solution

Jammu and Kashmir's long quest of autonomy was dramatically climaxed in the endorsement of the recommendations of the State Autonomy Report by the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly on 26 June, 2000. The climax was almost immediately followed by the anti-climax – its abrupt and summary rejection en limine by the Union Cabinet. The State Government's proposal was thrown out of Court without reference to other political parties or to the people of the country, without bilateral discussion with the Government of Jammu and Kashmir or the National Conference, without internal discussion, even without detailed examination by the Ministry of Home Affairs! Suddenly autonomy became a dirty word in our political lexicon. It became synonymous with secession and separatism with Partition and Balkanization. Nothing could be more undignified for the Union and more humiliating for the State.

The Union Cabinet was in fact preponed, without circulation of agenda or a working paper or analytical note, contrary to the earlier indications by the Prime Minister and the Home Minister. All this was done under pressure from the RSS. For one thing, the episode shows who really rules the country. Certainly not the Prime Minister, nor his Home Minister, nor the Council of Ministers, not the Parliament but an extra-constitutional authority – called the RSS – which Vajpayee calls his mother and to whom Advani attributes all his 'goodness and greatness'!

Over the years the people have been conditioned to think of Jammu and Kashmir as a State with a special status and to appreciate its consistent demand of autonomy, supported by history and the Constitution. For long, the issue has not been the grant of autonomy, in principles but its quantum. Most of us recall 'sky is the limit' formulation of P.V. Narasimha Rao and of 'maximum autonomy' of H.D. Deve Gowda and of I.K. Gujral. Many remember the Accord of 1975 though most of us might have **forgotten** the Delhi Agreement of 1953. Just as we have **forgotten** that Jammu and Kashmir was not part of the Union on 15 August, 1947 and that it did not participate in the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly except in the last phase, towards the end of its labours. Just as we have forgotten that Jammu and Kashmir is the **only** princely State which, on accession, and that too conditional, was not merged and which, therefore, did not lose its identity when it became a State of the Union. Just as we have forgotten that the National Conference, established by Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah, on breaking away from the Muslim Conference, was, by its

very title, an assertion of Kashmiri Nationalism which was, by inference, accepted by the Freedom Movement, represented by the Indian National Congress and more particularly by the All States People's Congress, even before Independence. Just as we have forgotten that Jammu and Kashmir is the only state with a Constitution of its own and to which the legislative authority of the Union Parliament does not apply automatically under Article 370. Just as we have forgotten that the residents of Jammu and Kashmir enjoy double citizenship. Just as we have forgotten that Jammu and Kashmir cannot, therefore, be treated on par with any other State of the Union and that it has a unique constitutional status.

Of course, we prefer to ignore that in similar situations other countries have tried to protect their territorial integrity though constitutional compromise. The most recent example is the grant of autonomy to Scotland by the United Kingdom. Another example is the regime envisaged for Northern Ireland. On the other hand, we have been nibbling at the autonomy and special status enjoyed by Jammu and Kashmir from the word go. We have been diluting and eroding Article 370 to the point of meaninglessness, when the average citizen of Jammu and Kashmir feels that he is not governed by the democratically elected State Government but by a military administration; that his life, honour and property, his human rights, cannot be protected by his representatives against depredations and violations by the armed forces and the paramilitary forces, the Special Task Force of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, under its command, not to speak of the counter-insurgents and the militants masquerading as freedom fighters. As a result, he feels alienated and disenchanted with our democratic system and our secular order.

There is no doubt in my mind that Farooq Abdullah had a political motive and purpose (and why not?) in bringing the question of autonomy out of the freezer and pushing it under the nose of the Union Government, of which his party (and his son) form a part. For that reason he perhaps expected the Union Government to join the game and to play ball. There could have been committed consultations, bilateral talks till the time comes for the next elections. Then Farooq Abdullah would move into the arena as the knight in shining armour, the defender of the legitimate rights and aspirations of the people and, with a little rigging here and there, win the crown. He had another purpose: to trump the possibility of direct negotiations by the Union with the Hurriyat and of the latter's entry into the electoral arena. Farooq Abdullah is

indeed insecure; he knows the people no longer have any regard, far less, any love, for him. But he is also ever apprehensive that the Union Government, having used him, may throw him into the dustbin, if the situation so demands. That is why his opportunism has no limits. His party contests not only Assembly but Parliamentary elections against the BJP and then joins the NDA and his son, who had defeated a BJP candidate, becomes a Minister of State in the BJP-led Government! One sees how, in the wake of his 'unexpected' move, the RSS and the BJP lost no time in denouncing him as anti-national, communal, fundamentalist, even pro-Pakistan and threatening him with the dismissal of his government and the dissolution of the State Assembly! Of course, the tune changed, once Farooq Abdullah decided to lump his humiliation, forget his brave words and his valiant references to the dignity of his people.

Presently Farooq Abdullah is engaged in yet another charade of bilateral discussion on 'devolution' with the Union. Kashmiris had little trust in him then and have less now. He has lost the little prestige he had regained since he ordered magisterial inquiry in the killing of 5 innocent men by the armed forces in the wake of Chattisinghpura Massacre and voiced the demand for autonomy.

Farooq Abdullah, in any case, is a Man of all Seasons – the darling of the Indian elite, the chatterati, the academicians and even political leaders. And why not? He is the last and the only bet for them and he is malleable and ductile enough to be moulded or cut into any shape!

But what about the people of the State? For one thing, having been in the limelight for 50 years and having waded through rivers of blood, they are, each one of them, more politically conscious than the average citizen of the country. Their political antenna quivers to any change in political weather. They have known, for ages, how to survive and during the last decade, contrary to their cultural ethos, even learnt the ways of violence. Today the Valley all over is resounding with cries of 'Azadi'.

The cry of 'Azadi', if interpreted as Freedom has a meaning but if interpreted as Independence, may be ill-conceived because the people of the other two regions Jammu & Ladakh do not join it and because neither India nor Pakistan will countenance it. Nor will it be in the larger interest of the people of the Sub-continent, nor even in the long-term interest of the people of the Valley-deficient, as it is, in food and energy. Autonomy – not fake but real – amounting to internal self-government under its own Constitution – with a special relationship with the Union – could, I am deliberately not saying, would, have been a substitute for the peace loving, war-weary, spiritually exhausted, mentally alienated and physically

ravaged people. **But their hopes for peace and development lie dashed, between the hasty demand and its hastier rejection!** They are angrier than ever before.

Farooq Abdullah has, however, succeeded in reinstating himself as the favourite child and pushing the Hurriyat out of the arena. The moderates within the Hurriyat have lost to the extremists. To everyone of them the Union's offer of talks appears to be malafide. How can a Government which is not prepared to discuss autonomy, negotiate on 'Azadi'? The Union has lost its credibility.

To that extent the government has provided Pakistan with a propaganda advantage on a platter!

It is universally accepted that the Kashmir problem cannot be resolved by force. The Kashmiris cannot be silenced by guns. They cannot be liquidated nor pushed out of their land. Kashmir cannot be demographically transformed. So the only possible solution, in keeping with our national sovereignty and territorial integrity, was and is to evolve a workable regime based on autonomy.

But they are four oft-repeated objections: The clock cannot be turned back to 1947 or 1950 or 1952. Sheikh Abdullah had a historic chance in 1975. He and his successor frittered it away because they never made a move for the implementation of the Accord of 1975 in its entirety. In any case the extension of the jurisdiction of national institutions like the Supreme Court of India, the Election Commission of India, the C.A.G., the Reserve Bank of India and even the National Commissions on Human Rights and on Minorities cannot be rolled back because they are in the interest of the people of the State who cannot be left to the tender mercies of a local 'nabob' and his henchmen. A frank discussion can always open the path for setting the parameters of autonomy, through the restoration of the authority of the Jammu and Kashmir Constitution and reasonable limitation on the power of the Union of intervene in the State only in case of external aggression or internal rebellion.

The second objection relates to the aspirations of Jammu and Ladakh which do not share the dream of autonomy. The reason lies in that the more the autonomy, the more powerful will be the State Government, with its demographic base in the Valley. The more dominant the Kashmiris are, the more insecure will be the people of the other regions. It is for the State Government and the Kashmiri people to find ways of taking the people of Jammu and Ladakh, partially or wholly, with them. The Union cannot and should not negotiate with Ladakh and Jammu, behind the back of the State. Nor has the Parliament any authority to trifurcate the State. But, in good faith, if the State Government cannot persuade the

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

two regions to remain part of the State despite all possible decentralization of power and devolution of resources and structural equality and all possible, even statutory, assurances, it should allow them to go their way and wish them Godspeed. But why shouldn't the Kashmiris, defined by all possible parameters of ethnicity and by geography and history, have their special status and be autonomous, only because Jammu and Ladakh do not want it?

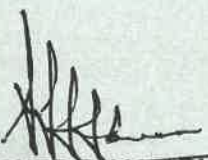
The third argument against autonomy – the Domino Effect – the fear of Balkanization is sheer politics. The Union is prepared to concede a measure of devolution to all other States. Then all the States including Kashmir will stay together in their own self-interest, not because the Sultan of Delhi wields a larger army than they can muster! India shall not be Balkanized; in fact, autonomous Kashmir will not secede. Perhaps all states in South Asia will one day join together to form the United States of South Asia which shall be one of the political, economic and technological poles of the world in the next millennium. The joy and the glory of belonging to the USSA shall inseparably bind them.

The fourth is the threat of Hindu upsurge, which may destroy the Secular Order. The foundations of the secular order, which does not serve the religious minorities alone but the Hindu majority as well are strong enough. Hindutva which is another name for chauvinism, obscurantism and revivalism, which is trying to row us back against the stream of time; it shall not overwhelm the Indian State. After all, autonomous Kashmir will remain a part of the Union – if it enjoys the substance of freedom, inter alia, as the Muslim Indians would like it to be.

So, let us boldly reiterate our past commitments. Let us not fight shy of the word autonomy. Let us trust our Kashmiri brothers. Let us respect their dignity. Let us work out a new framework of the Associated State of Jammu and Kashmir, assuming that Jammu and Ladakh, with some vital structural and fiscal safeguards, will not be averse to it.

And what about Pakistan? If we give the Kashmir people what Pakistan cannot match in the POK or the Northern Areas, will any Kashmiri, given the substance of 'Azadi', respond to their territorial aggrandizement, even if presented as 'liberation' and 'jihad'? And if they do not, will Pakistan be able to keep the fires of insurgency burning?

New Delhi,
1st August, 2000


(SYED SHAHABUDDIN)



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Muslim MP's of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha (30.6.2000)

State	Rajya Sabha		Lok Sabha	
	No.	Name	No.	Name
A.P.	2	K.M.Khan/INC K.M.Saifullah/TD	1	Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi/AIMIM
Assam	-		2	A.F. Golam Osmani/INC Abdul Hamid/INC
Bihar	1	Obaidullah Khan Azmi/JD	3	Syed Shahnawaz Hussain/BJP Md. Anwarul Haque/RJD Mohammed Shahabuddin/RJD
Gujarat	1	Ahmed Patel/INC	-	
J&K	3	Ghulam Nabi Azad/INC Sharief-ud-Din Shariq/NC Mirza Abdul Rashid/NC	4	Ali Mohmad Naik/JKN Abdul Rasheed Shaheen/JKN Hassan Khan/JKN Omar Abdullah/JKN
Karnataka	2	C.M. Ibrahim/JD K. Rahman Khan/INC	3	C.K. Jaffer Sharief/INC I.G Sanadi/INC Iqbal Saradgi Ahmed/INC
Kerala	2	Korambayil Ahammed/ML M.P.A. Samad Samadani/ML	3	A.P. Abdullakutty/CPI(M) E. Ahamed/MLKSC Gulam Mehmood Banatwalla/MLKSC
Madhya Pradesh	3	Sikander Bakht/BJP Ghufran Azam/INC Abdul Gaiyur Qureshi/INC	-	
Maharashtra	2	Najma Heptulla/INC Md. Yusuf Sarwar Khan/INC	-	
Rajasthan	1	Aimaduddin Ahmad Khan/INC	-	
Tamil Nadu	2	M.A. Kadar/DMK D. Masthan/Ind.	-	
Uttar Pradesh	4	Munavvar Hasan/SP Mohd. Azam Khan/SP Akhtar Hasan Rizvi/IND. Khan Ghufran Zahidi/INC	8	Begum Noor Bano/INC Rashid Alvi/BSP Ameer Alam Khan/RLD Rizwan Zaheer Khan/SP Saeeduz Zaman/INC Salim Iqbal Sherwani/SP Mansoor Ali Khan/BSP Ahmad Daud/BSP
W. Bengal	1	Mohd. Salim/CPI-M	6	Abul Hasnat Khan/CPM Moinul Hassan/CPM A.B.A. Ghani Khan Choudhury/INC Akbar Ali Khandukar/TC Mahboob Zahedi/CPM Hannan Mollah/CPM
Delhi	1	A.R. Kidwai/INC	-	
Lakshadweep	-	--	1	P.M. Sayeed/INC
Pondicherry	-	--	1	M.O.H.Farook/INC
Nominated	1	Shabana Azmi *		
Total	25 + 1 (Nominated)		32	

Total : 2.33 (excluding nominated)
 Muslim % : 10.73
 Muslim Deprivate Level : 14.8
Total Deprivate Level : 33.3%

Total : 543 (excluding nominated)
 Muslim % : 5.87
 Muslim Deprivate Level : 53.4%

Ministry of External Affairs: Annual Report, 1999-2000

India's Relations with South Asia and the Muslim World (Relevant Extracts)

South Asia

... South Asia is a region of tremendous opportunities as well as of continuing challenges of human development, peace and security. The use of terrorism as an instrument of State policy by Pakistan, residual reservations about greater economic intercourse and integration, the inability of democracy to take root in some societies as well as untenable territorial claims tend to set unnecessary brakes to the processes of economic and social development in the region... In the historic initiative of the bus journey to Lahore, in furthering communication links with Bangladesh ... and in intensifying economic cooperation with ... Maldives, India continued in taking the lead in developing greater cooperation with all its neighbours...

Regional cooperation, particularly economic cooperation under the SAARC framework, gained momentum in the first half of the year... The quickening of the pace of economic cooperation constitutes a major advance for SAARC and is expected to contribute to the operationalisation of the SAARC Free Trade Area...

However, events in the second half of the year cast a shadow over the gathering momentum in regional cooperation. The military coup in Pakistan on October 12, 1999 necessitated postponement of the 11th SAARC Summit...

Bangladesh

India continued to pursue a policy of further expanding and deepening its traditionally close and friendly ties with Bangladesh. There was a regular exchange of high-level visits which contributed to the promotion of mutual understanding and goodwill, with an emphasis on economic cooperation.

Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, accompanied by a delegation which included the External Affairs Minister, Minister for Railways and Surface Transport and the Chief Minister of West Bengal, visited Dhaka on 19 and 20 June, 1999 on the occasion of the inaugural run of the bus service from Calcutta to Dhaka...

Maldives

India-Maldives relations have been close and friendly. India attaches the highest importance to its relations with the Maldives and is committed to cooperate with the Maldives in its developmental efforts especially in the human resource development and health sectors. During the year 1999, a number of visits were exchanged between the two countries to strengthen cooperation in various areas including medicine, meteorology and customs cooperation.

A tripartite agreement between India, Maldives and Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) was signed on 22.12.1999, under which IGNOU will launch

distance education programmes in the Maldives. Another tripartite agreement between India, Maldives and Educational Consultants India Limited has been signed to facilitate tailor-made courses in India for Maldivian students.

Pakistan

Pakistan, by its premeditated aggression and armed intrusion in the Kargil sector of Jammu & Kashmir, shattered our endeavour to take India-Pakistan relations in a positive direction, as witnessed by the first round of the composite dialogue process in October-November, 1998 which was followed by the historic initiative of the Prime Minister to visit Lahore in February, 1999... The Prime Minister's meeting in Lahore was followed by a meeting between the External Affairs Minister and the Foreign Minister of Pakistan in Nuwara Eliya (Sri Lanka) on 19 March, 1999, on the margins of the SAARC Ministerial meeting, where they agreed on a detailed programme of bilateral contacts... All these initiatives by India were, however, negated by Pakistan's action in Kargil which revealed its abiding hostility towards us.

Pakistan's intrusion across the LOC was a well-planned operation involving both Pakistan Army regulars as well as highly trained, well-armed and motivated mercenaries under the management and control of the Pakistan Army... Operation Vijay was begun on 26 May, 1999 with the objective of completely evicting Pakistan's armed intrusion and aggression... Our position found virtually universal approbation and Pakistan was held as having violated the LOC and its efforts at terming it imprecise also failed. Throughout its military operation, India ... scrupulously observed the sanctity of the LOC...

Pakistan's aggression and intrusion across the LOC in Kargil constituted betrayal of trust and revealed their abiding hostility... The damage this action has done to relations is further compounded by Pakistan's continuing and stepped up sponsorship of terrorism against India as a matter of state policy. The hijacking of an Indian Airlines aircraft to Kandahar was an example of international terrorism at its worst. There is firm evidence that it was engineered by Pakistan and fundamentalist groups ... based in Pakistan and outside under its command and control.

The military coup of 12 October, 1999 brought further security concerns... Our basic policy approaches towards Pakistan remain... Pakistan needs to create the right environment in order to restore mutual trust and confidence through concrete and tangible action.

Afghanistan

India remains deeply concerned with the situation in Afghanistan... The continuing civil conflict ... was closely monitored... We continued to support the efforts

of the UN to bring peace to Afghanistan... The role played by the Taliban during the (hijacking) crisis was noted but we made it clear that the fundamentals of our Afghan policy would not change.

Iran
India's multifaceted relations with Iran continued to grow. The External Affairs Minister had a fruitful meeting with the Iranian Foreign Minister at New York on 23 September, 1999 while Foreign Secretary also paid a visit to Tehran from 31 July – 1 August, 1999 to review with his counterpart all bilateral, political, commercial, economic, technical, and consular cooperation...

Central Asia

India's relations with the Central Asian State (CAS) continued to be excellent ...marked by regular high-level contacts... In the economic sphere ... transitional difficulties in the CAS, has had a negative impact on two-way trade, which remains modest. Interactions in the cultural sphere continued to be strong...

Gulf

India deeply values its close historical ties and traditional cultural affinities with the Gulf countries... The warm and cordial relations between India and Bahrain were further strengthened and diversified. India's traditional ties with Iraq witnessed an upswing during the year particularly in the economic field... An exchange of visits by prominent leaders marked the warmth and closeness that exists between India and Kuwait. Defence cooperation, the signing of the extradition treaty ... with Oman gave a boost to our ... ties... India's relations with Saudi Arabia grew steadily, with the latter showing understanding of India's viewpoint on a number of issues. The visit of External Affairs Minister in April 1999 to UAE provided an opportunity to both sides to discuss issues of mutual interest and stress the importance of joint efforts to maintain security and stability in the Gulf and the Indian Ocean...

Palestine

... India maintains that the Palestinian issue continues to remain the underlying cause of conflict in the region. India has continued to support the realization of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region, based on relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the Principle of "Land for Peace"... In the spirit of south-South cooperation, India has continued to provide support to the countries of this region, under India's Technical and Economic Cooperation and Indian Council for Cultural Relations programmes...

On International Terrorism

The phenomena of international terrorism was an important area of attention in the UN during the year with the Sixth Committee of the UNGA adopting the resolution on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism in November 1999 and the UNSC also adopting a resolution in October 1999 condemning all acts of terrorism and

S. Venkatesh

TADA II Proposed by MHA & LC

The Home Ministry is now examining a Report prepared by the Law Commission... The Bill, is titled "Prevention of Terrorism Bill, 2000" as modified by the Law Commission. The Law Commission, headed by Justice B.P. Jeevan Reddy, a former Judge of the Supreme Court, had been requested by the Home Ministry to undertake a fresh examination for combating terrorism and other anti-national activities in view of the fact that the security environment has changed drastically since 1972 when the Law Commission had sent its 43rd Report on offences against national security. The Government had emphasized that the subject was of utmost urgency because the erstwhile Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1987, had lapsed and no other law had been enacted to fill the vacuum thus created... The Commission circulated a working paper to all the concerned authorities, organisations and individuals for eliciting their views with respect to its proposals. It also held two seminars on the subject.

... The Commission came to the conclusion, the legislation to fight terrorism is today a necessity in India. The feeling of fear and terror created by militant acts and prevented the judges and prosecutors were not prepared to proceed against terrorists in the worst days of militancy in Punjab. An extraordinary situation called for an extraordinary law, designed to meet and check such extraordinary situation.

The Commission said that it was one thing to say that we must create and provide internal structures and safeguards against possible abuse and misuse of the Act, and altogether a different thing to say that because the law is liable to be misused, we should not have such an Act at all.

As for the plea that such a law should not be permanently enshrined in the Statute Book, the Commission said that such an objection was academic and the Bill, as drafted by the Government, speaks of only a five-year duration for the proposed legislation...

(Source: The Indian Observer, 15 June, 2000)

calling upon all States to combat terrorism in all its forms...

Cultural Relations

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) effectively continued its activities through the continued implementation of its scholarship programs ... through its 14 Cultural Centres abroad, deputation of Visiting Professors in Indian languages and related subjects, organisation of various seminars, etc., sponsoring visits to and from India of leading performing artistes and cultural groups, facilitating exchange of eminent persons in all fields under its Distinguished Visitor's Program and organising various exhibitions...

BJP Ke Sangh Nahin

Editorial, The Times of India, 10 July, 2000

Are the good times coming to an end for the BJP-led government? The allies as usual are rallying round the Prime Minister, but that other source of trouble – the RSS – is once again breathing fire... The RSS had become the picture of cooperation under the genteel Rajju Bhairya... If the advent of K.S. Sudarshan upset this happy balance, it was not by accident. Sudarshan is a known hard-liner, and indeed, almost the first thing the new RSS chief did on taking charge was to prophesy an epic war between Hindus and anti-Hindus. This was RSS-speak we hadn't heard in some time. After that shrill rhetoric, now the RSS is on specifics. Sudarshan has a long list of dos and don'ts for the BJP – scrap Article 370, get the Ayodhya temple from the Muslims, forget foreign direct investment etc. Worse, Sudarshan makes mince-meat of Sheikh Abdullah by alleging that he worked for separation from India. The last bit is ominous for the BJP, especially considering the current sensitivities of its ally, the National Conference. There's a lot the Farooq Abdullah-led NC will put up with – including a thundering 'No' on the autonomy proposals – but it will not hear a word said against the Sher-e-Kashmir. And most certainly not from the RSS, which it views with enormous suspicion.

There is no mistaking the signals from Nagpur. The RSS wants the National Conference given the boot. RSS sources first merely hinted at this; later at its conclave in Ahmedabad, the Sangh actually asked the BJP to consider breaking ties with the NC. Sudarshan's attack on Article 370 and Sheikh Abdullah seems like a deliberate provocation... If the BJP won't do the needful, force the NC to bite the bait... The significance of the NC goes beyond its two MPs. In other words, while physically the NDA can withstand the exit of the NC, emotionally it cannot. Currently Farooq Abdullah is more than a mere ally of the BJP; in the aftermath of the autonomy struggle he has become something of a martyr, not just within the NC, but also for some of NDA's other constituents... The spillover will affect the NDA as a whole. It is crucially important, then, (for the) Vajpayee government (to) weather this all new-RSS storm...

Chandrashekhar: A Man for No Season

Editorial, The Statesman, 28 June, 2000

... One must admire his persistence. He is a non-entity, universally ignored, his offers designed to get him back some place in the sun have yielded nothing and short of filling a seat at important functions reserved for former Prime Ministers he has nothing to do. His attempts to lead a third front have been met by three other former Prime Ministers who each thinks he can do better... This man

PM Vajpayee

On Anti-Christian Violence

These incidents are an aberration and an exception to the general texture of peaceful and cordial relations between various communities that constitute our diverse society. Even so, they damage our secular ethos based on the age-old principle of '*Sarva panth samabhava*' (equal respect for all faiths).

Reports of recurring violence against institutions and individuals belonging to the Christian community "are a matter of deep concern to all those who believe in communal harmony and national unity", he said. "No individual or organisation belonging to any community has a right to spread ill-will and hatred towards another community."

Since law and order is a state subject, I urge all State Governments to apply the law of the land fairly, firmly and impartially, investigate every incident thoroughly and bring the culprits to book speedily.

(Source: The Statesman, 25 June, 2000)

Advani and Israeli Intelligence

Ram Gopal in The Statesman, 9 June, 2000

... During his foreign tour, L.K. Advani will meet the officers of Israel's top intelligence agency, Mossad, and British experts on terrorism to take lessons about the way and means to crush the decade old Pak-sponsored cross-border terrorism.

The naked truth is that the fault lies with Indian political leadership, not its intelligence agency, which was one of the most efficient in the world...

About six years ago during his visit to India, the Israeli Prime Minister had said that the cure of J&K problem was to change its demography. This is something of an anathema to the Indian government. With such a mindset any expert advice from Israel or UK is unlikely to bear any fruit.

continues in a manner so brazen as to evoke admiration for retaining hope over experience.

(Chandrashekhar) has tried everything, from offering to head a new coalition to defeat the saffron brigade, to leading a third front equidistant from the BJP and the Congress to joining the Congress on honourable terms, to declaring his willingness to join his sworn enemy the RSS and their Swadeshi Manch. He does not even have a Sancho Panza otherwise he could offer to play Don Quixote on stage. Pity the man whose time was limited and has passed long ago. Alternatively he could bury himself at Bhondsi and send out e-mails to all and sundry who need a leader without a cause, a general without an army, a man who has lost his bearings and wanders about aimlessly...

Gautam Chaudhuri On TC vs Left in Calcutta

Results of the Calcutta Municipal Corporation (CMC) today, made it clear that the Left Front will have a real problem at hand if there is a consolidation of anti-Left forces on the Mahajot mould.

The Trinamool may be only two ahead of the Left Front in the final tally of seats in the Calcutta Municipal Corporation (CMC), winning 64 as against 62 clinched by the CPI (M), but it must have come as a morale-booster to the party workers after the Panskura win...

With the State Assembly elections only a year away, the loss of the CMC must have been upsetting for the CPI(M). For over 15 years, the CPI(M)-led Left Front ruled the city by virtue of its hold over the CMC... In the 1995 election, the Left Front won 70 seats, the Congress 68, BJP two and Independent one. The Front won over the Independent to form the board, even though the Independent defeated a Front candidate at the hustings.

It was a virtual repeat of the 1985 election results, in which too the CPI(M) clung to a thin majority to gain control of the CMC.

The CPI(M) has real cause for worry in view of the way the Trinamool made rapid inroads into known CPI(M) strongholds in the southern fringes of the city like Jadavpore and Behala. It is more due to the split in votes between the Congress and the Trinamool that the CPI(M) was able to record easy wins in north and central Calcutta, making it obvious that only if the anti-left votes remain similarly split in the coming Assembly elections, the CPI(M) can find it easy to thwart the opposition challenge.

... Mamata Banerjee, who looks keen to woo the dwindling support base of the Congress further to her favour. With a section of newly-elected Congress councillors likely to cross into the Trinamool side to enable the Trinamool to form the Board, the possibility of the Congress base coming over to the Trinamool looks like a distinct reality as well. For the Congress, the only political success lies in the fact that despite its marginalisation, the party is put in the role of deciders in the hung CMC. The BJP, on the other hand, has little option but to toe the Trinamool line after its non-too-impressive showing. (Source: The Hindustan Times, 29 June, 2000)

Congress Spokesperson Anand Sharma On Apology for Emergency

... "Those who are asking for our apology should first apologise for the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi and the thousands of innocent people who were killed in the communal riots which followed. Then the party should apologise for the demolition of Babari Masjid in 1992 and barbaric killings of Graham Staines and his two sons. It owes an apology to the nation for the orgies of violence orchestrated by the Sangh Parivar." ... "The people are aware that ... the Congress response ... came in the form of a statement made by Mrs. Indira Gandhi when she expressed unqualified regret for any atrocities committed

Sunita Aron On BJP's Defeat in UP Panchayat Polls

The panchayat elections in Up have repainted the State's political landscape with the lush green-red of the Samajwadi Party and the BSP's deep blue, overshadowing the BJP's glistening saffron

While the SP has almost replayed its spectacular performance of the 1995 zila panchayat elections, the BSP's impressive show has surprised many. The BJP got relegated to the third position and the Congress figures in a few obscure pockets only... The four-tier election for over 3.25 lakh seats, including those of gram pradhans and members of gram panchayats, wasn't contested on party symbols. Only the 2,113 zila panchayat members were virtually elected on party lines.

A majority of the political parties had declared their official nominees... As the heads of zila panchayats are elected from amongst them and by them, the membership of zila panchayats is a crucial component of the State's panchayat polls. Results have so far poured in for about 1943 zila panchayat seats. And there are claims and counter-claims from different political camps...

On its part, the SP, whose party machinery is working overtime to document the poll outcome, has claimed victory in 787 of the 1943 seats for which results have been declared. In contrast, the BSP has got 368, the Congress 80, the Loktantrik Congress 40, and Kalyan Singh's RKP 35. So far 356 Independents have reportedly been elected...

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 1 July, 2000)

Shahabuddin's Letter to Former UP CM Kalyan Singh, 20 June, 2000

I have taken note of your Statement that you extend a hand of friendship towards the Muslim community and that you want them to give you an opportunity to prove yourself.

I feel that instead of making an emotional approach, you should clearly state your stand on the VHP's project of constructing the proposed Ram Mandir on the site of the Babari Masjid, law or no law, on reservation for Muslims in public services, development benefits and welfare outlays and on Muslim representation in the UP legislature, on provision in all government schools of **primary instruction through Urdu** and for teaching Urdu at the secondary level as a compulsory language to those students whose Mother Tongue is Urdu, without any numerical limits, apart from other current questions of legitimate concern to them. I would be grateful for your reply.

from 1977-79. The fact that people were moved by her ... was evident in the sweeping victory of the Congress in 1980," he said... "But such self-proclaimed champions of human rights (BJP and other outfits) have themselves launched a terror campaign against the minorities which only the fascist organisations resort to.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 24 June, 2000)

Text of Cabinet Decision On J&K Autonomy Resolution

The Government is committed to the promotion of federal harmony by ensuring a partnership of the Centre and the States as laid down in the National Agenda for Governance of the National Democratic Alliance.

The National Agenda for Governance of the NDA states in no uncertain terms that "there is a clear case for devolution of more financial and administrative powers and functions to the States"... In the last two years, the Government had taken several steps in this direction...

In the above context, the Cabinet finds the resolution passed by the State Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir endorsing the report of the State Autonomy Committee unacceptable. The Cabinet feels that the acceptance of this resolution would set the clock back and reverse the natural process of harmonising the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir with the integrity of the nation.

Most of the recommendations contained in the report of the State Autonomy Committee seek to reverse the application of constitutional provisions to the State of Jammu and Kashmir which may not only adversely affect the interests of the people of the State but would also tantamount to removal of some of the essential safeguards enshrined in our Constitution. Besides, the issue of restoring the constitutional situation in Jammu and Kashmir to its pre-1953 position had been discussed in detail by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1974-75. It is noteworthy that the agreement signed after these negotiations had affirmed that "provisions of the Constitution of India already applied to the State of Jammu and Kashmir without adaptation or modification are unalterable."

The Cabinet urges the people and the Government of Jammu and Kashmir to join hands in the endeavour to address the real problems facing the State: to root out insurgency and cross-border terrorism and to ensure accelerated development... The cabinet, therefore, decides not to accept the resolution passed by the J&K Assembly on the report of the State Autonomy Committee...

(Source: The Hindu, 5 July, 2000)

AICC: Statement On Kashmir Autonomy Report

... To a pointed question on Jammu and Kashmir autonomy package by Farooq Abdullah, Shri Shastri said that the Congress was not against autonomy in principle, but (it) is opposed to this package as it is a motivated political move which is basically diversionary in intent and ...smacks of communal mind set.

RSS: A.B. Karyakarini Mandal Resolution on Kashmir Autonomy, 2 July

The autonomy resolution passed by the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly is ... fraught with disastrous consequences. Not only does it give encouraging signals to the separatist demands in various parts of the country, especially in the North East, but it also manifests the divisive communal mindset of the National Conference... This resolution ... is a fallout of the Kashmir policy pursued by past Governments at the Centre ... characterized by ... drift and ... appeasement, in disregard of our overall national interests. Every opportunity to fully integrate the State, like all other States that signed the Instrument of Accession, was thrown to the winds.

... The (Central) Government felt satisfied with mere "erosion" and not the abrogation of Article 370 itself. The autonomy resolution seeks to undo even that quantum of integration, and take the State back to pre-1953 situation...

... The ... resolution ... is only a step short of actual secession. Things would not have come to this pass, had the transitory Article 370 been abrogated in time. Unfortunately, all major political parties, except the BJP, saw (Article 370) as a symbol of so-called secularism...

The ABKM congratulates the people of Ladakh and Jammu, the two regions of the State, on their bold stand to condemn the autonomy resolution. It is also gratifying to note that the people of these two regions ... have unambiguously voiced their resolve ... that they want their regions to be fully and unconditionally integrated with Bharat. The ABKM hopes that their sentiments (and) aspirations, both developmental and political, are respected and seriously taken into account by the Central Government, while talking to the Hurriyat leaders or discussing extravagant demands of their partner.

... The autonomy resolution is the resolution of a section of the people in the Kashmir Valley... A few lakh Hindus could not live with safety and dignity in a region of 95%... They are rendered refugees ... When the State had not that much of autonomy... The ABKM, therefore, urges upon the Government, to ensure that in any discussions with the protagonists of autonomy, which is just a thin veil for azadi, the uprooted Hindus of the Valley are rehabilitated ... and involved in deliberations at every level and the political aspirations of the Jammu and Ladakh regions are fully met.

Finally, ... all the people of the country intensely desire the full and final integration of all the regions of the J&K State by abrogating Article 370. Even those parts of J&K, which are under foreign occupation, are to be integrated... The integrity and sovereignty of the whole country is at stake. Therefore, the ABKM calls upon all patriotic people to resist the demand of autonomy.

(Source: The Organiser, 16 July, 2000)

APHC: Abdul Ghani Bhatt's Views

... Each house in Kashmir is a prison. The graph of custodial killings has risen alarmingly. Boys are picked up, taken somewhere and then we see their dead bodies...

dialogue about what? If you want to resolve the dispute in the interest of peace and stability, then Hurriyat will talk. But then you talk of the Constitution. Even without the Constitution, when you talk, you talk to the constitutional head. So why mention it? Transfer of power from one set of people to another is no solution. Elections are no answer. Autonomy is constitutional slavery... I wish India would let the Hurriyat go to Pakistan, talk to the people there and get back and talk to Delhi. This will be a peace offensive. As for convergence, the government of India is committed to holding a plebiscite...

... If Pakistan withdraws, will India hold a referendum? No, never. The problem is that India considers Kashmir to be an integral part. If they say they are holding us at gunpoint, then they are aggressors... If the people of Kashmir opt for India, I will be an Indian. If they want Pakistan, I will be a Pakistani.

The Hurriyat says if (plebiscite) is not possible, we must engage in purposeful negotiations involving India, Pakistan and the Hurriyat. If the Palestinians and the Israelis can meet, why not India, Pakistan and the Hurriyat? If the two Germanys can unite and if the two Koreas can meet, why not us?

India will not allow an independent state, Pakistan will not allow it, China will certainly not allow it. China knows that the Americans will get a foothold in such a state. India and Pakistan will not want it because balkanization of India and Pakistan will follow.

If Kashmir breaks into five pieces, we will not like it. We want to go to one or another country as a whole. Even if you want to break us, don't break us arbitrarily. We want to take the Hindus, Muslims and the Buddhists with us... I don't want azadi, but I will take it if that's what everybody wants. APHC is a political coalition that has got together on a minimum plank: Let the people decide.

... India and Pakistan have no option but to address the issue. The situation is pushing them towards it... The security man who kills young boys, is he not a terrorist?

Kargil is an offshoot effect and Kashmir is the root cause. Do not ignore history. Wasn't Bangladesh a part of Pakistan? Who divided it? If that logic can work there, why not here?

(Source: The Times of India, 25 June, 2000)

The decision is unfortunate but that does not mean the end of the road for us.

- Farooq Abdullah, J&K Chief Minister

S. Soz's Statement on Autonomy Report, 5 July, 2000

The Union Cabinet's decision to reject the resolution adopted by the J&K Legislative Assembly is unfortunate and fraught with dangerous repercussions. It is not a question of opposing or supporting Dr. Abdullah, but a vital issue connected with the settlement of Kashmir problem. After all, what does NDA Government propose to do to end the political deadlock in Kashmir? If the Constitution of India cannot accommodate the aspirations of the people of the J&K State in respect of self-governance, in certain areas, how do the BJP, the RSS and other hawks propose to solve the question of alienation of a people? If the Home Minister's pro-active policy in Kashmir should invariably mean more and more bullets, how will the bloody strife end? And, above everything else, with what moral authority will be BJP-led coalition now propose talks with the Hurriyat Conference as the legitimate representative of the separatists?

The Union Government's decision (which) blocks even a discussion on the Autonomy Proposal is an exercise in jingoism bereft of any political sagacity!

I appeal to the non-BJP opposition leaders to make the government see reason and support the concept of self-governance in particular areas and desist from settling political scores at the cost of the people of Kashmir who have already suffered immense tragedy, death and destruction.

National Human Rights Commission Case Statistics, 1999-2000

S.No.	State	Cases Registered	Cases Considered	Cases Admitted for Disposal
1.	Andhra Pradesh	625	584	278
2.	Assam	180	170	65
3.	Bihar	4426	4226	1995
4.	Gujarat	533	463	154
5.	Haryana	1662	1567	491
6.	Himachal Pradesh	126	106	39
7.	J&K	249	235	121
8.	Karnataka	674	636	217
9.	Kerala	309	291	82
10.	Madhya Pradesh	2271	2062	471
11.	Maharashtra	2188	2011	664
12.	Orissa	657	624	185
13.	Punjab	869	849	468
14.	Rajasthan	1953	1778	850
15.	Tamilnadu	1340	1273	356
16.	U.P.	28759	26829	12695
17.	West Bengal	814	724	202
18.	Delhi	3137	3052	1488
19.	Others	387	339	123
	Total	51159	47819	20944

National Press on Autonomy Proposal

Restoring Confidence?

Editorial, The Hindu, 22 June, 2000

It is regrettable that the question of autonomy for J&K, so vital for reversing the alienation of its people, should continue to be clouded by narrow, partisan and ideologically sectarian considerations... The politicisation of such a vital debate and an acrimonious exchange of accusations between the main players (has) preempted serious and rational discussion on the substantive autonomy-related issues in the light of the ... report.

The demand for autonomy in the case of J&K has to be placed in the context of the nation's categorical commitment to a special status for the State under the Instrument of Accession, the spirit of which is symbolised in part by Article 370, and the progressive dilution the special Constitutional guarantees have suffered over the years for various reasons. In essence, the recommendations of the SAC seek to restore, by and large, the pre-1953 position... To be realistic, any autonomy package has to be a modern or updated version of the 1952 or 1975 accord - one that, while respecting the unique political heritage of the State, recognises the ground realities and coheres with the evolving federal system. No less imperative is that 'autonomy' for the State is seen as part of the decentralisation process, with the long neglected regional and sub-regional interests getting a slice of the development cake and securing participation in governance... The main objective of restoring autonomy ... is to restore the confidence of its people who now stand alienated. This means 'autonomy' initiatives should be consistent with and complementary to the Centre's calibrated moves to engage the Hurriyat leadership in negotiations for a possible political solution... As long as the BJP continues to swear by its 'ideological' commitment to the abrogation of Article 370 ... the sincerity of the NDA regime's initiatives designed to win them over, and, in an extended sense, find a political

Beyond the Valley

Editorial, The Hindustan Times, 22 June, 2000

... Ladakhis are not alone in their opposition to the controversial (Autonomy) report. There is a significant section of public opinion in the Jammu region as well which is opposed to the move that seeks to turn the clock back to 1953 in terms of the State's relationship with the Centre. With such intra-regional divergence to the autonomy issue, the outcome of the special session is bound to be divisive and contentious in character.

... The Chief Minister should have tried to evolve a consensus between the State's three regions on the subject before pushing the ball into the Centre's court (by) responding to the longstanding demand for an internal

Farooq's Gambit

Editorial, The Indian Express, 23 June, 2000

What exactly is J&K Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah's intent? Why is he, thus far verging on the excessively agreeable in his relations with the Centre, suddenly confrontational? ... Two interpretations have been offered for Abdullah's sudden vehemence. One, he is worried about his vote garnering appeal in the forthcoming assembly elections... So, goes the argument, he is merely fabricating a rallying point — as much to enthuse his National Conference party members as to construct an electoral platform to facilitate re-election a year hence.

That may be. It is equally evident that there is a second dynamic at work; with a gathering swirl of hints and rumours indicating serious confabulations between the Government of India and separatist formations like the Hurriyat Conference, Abdullah would like to emphasize his integral role in any discussions on a political settlement. In a perfect world, Abdullah's somewhat escalatory tactics would be forgivable — many politicians before him have resorted to obfuscating issues before the electorate as well as throwing tantrums at the prospect of doubtful relevance... Yes, autonomy is a legitimate demand of the Kashmiris; its scope in the current context may be debatable but its historical relevance cannot be doubted. But by riding roughshod over all dissenting voices within J&K and without... Abdullah has not served his people's cause well... One cannot emphasize enough that any initiative that carries the seeds of further strife cannot be tolerated.

The consequences are already fructifying... Surely, Farooq must have been aware that any demand for wide-ranging autonomy would threaten the populations of Ladakh and Jammu. Indeed, his party may declare that it holds the territorial integrity of the state dear, but surely it is clear that the National Conference's new rallying point would only make demands for trifurcation more shrill.

devolution of powers to the regions. Over the years and despite repeated assurances, there have been little movement in this direction... Many in Ladakh and Jammu are apprehensive that the entire exercise is actually geared towards seeking greater powers for the ruling elite in Srinagar at the expense of the other two regions.

However, this critique ... need not be interpreted as an argument against the principle of autonomy... It would be unrealistic to expect much advance on the proposal to revert J&K to the pre-1953 constitutional position, even if the State Assembly were to back it up with a resolution... It is only through an informed and sensitive debate which takes into account the aspirations and grievances of all sections of the State that public opinion on an autonomy package can be evolved...

Politics of Autonomy

Editorial, The Hindustan Times, 28 June, 2000

... Any attempt to force the issue can only be counter-productive not least because it will result in a hardening of attitudes on all sides.

... It is extremely unlikely that the proposal will receive wide endorsement in the rest of the country. As a result, the very move towards autonomy may suffer a setback although no one will deny that nowhere is the need for it more urgent than in Kashmir. In fact, a patient evaluation of the situation might have yielded agreement on a status not substantially different from what is now being sought. Yet, now that the demand has been presented in such stark terms, resistance is inevitable... Just a year after Kargil which has seen an aggravation of the security situation in the State, this is not the best of times for such a controversial measure... It is not difficult to discern a political motive... It is possible that his resort to the dramatic measure is a desperate attempt to boost his sagging political fortunes. The timing is also significant in the context of the Centre's recent decision to renew the dialogue with the Hurriyat, implying the existence of political forces nearly as important as the National Conference in the Valley. Whatever the move, all that the Chief Minister has really achieved is to bring the autonomy question to the forefront again with a specific set of proposals...

Political Myopia

Thwarting Holistic Approach

Editorial, The Mainstream, 1 July, 2000

... Farooq Abdullah as the Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister has once again indulged in his favourite pastime: the game of one-upmanship. He is a member of the ruling coalition at the Centre; and yet he allows his party to pass in the State Assembly a resolution on autonomy for Jammu & Kashmir that would guarantee the pre-1953 status to the State — without initiating any national debate on such a vital issue. By this he wants to divert attention from his own misgovernance and mal-administration (which have added to the woes of the already alienated populace of the Kashmir Valley) and in the process win back the public support and sympathy he has substantially lost since 1996. This development has evoked howls of protest from the BJP and Congress while the negative reaction to the proposal from the Jammu and Ladakh regions has heightened fears that the move might trigger a communal division of the State, something neither the RSS nor the Muslim fundamentalists drawing sustenance from across the border are averse to. Although the demand for autonomy per se should not be construed as "retrograde" as the BJP has sought to project out of petty

Autonomy Thin End of Separatist Wedge

Editorial, The Statesman, 3 July, 2000

... Farooq Abdullah's ... handling of the autonomy report issue showcases desperation and dishonesty... The autonomy demand is dangerous because it will segregate J&K from the national mainstream and send out wrong signals to militants and their Pakistani-Afghan sponsors. Militants will read Abdullah's move as a response to the impending negotiations between the Hurriyat and the Centre. Which in turn can only be read as an aversion to a political solution to the Kashmir problem. Abdullah has to realise that he and his party are not the "sole spokesmen" of Kashmir. There are many voices which represent Kashmiriyat; and those which choose to do so by legitimate means — talks, negotiation and compromise — must be heard. Because what is at stake is the integrity of the nation-state and the future prosperity and peace of the Kashmiri people who have suffered many years of militancy and ... state oppression...

There is another dimension to the problem. The Kashmir autonomy demand has already prompted elements in Punjab to make similar demands... This will be a serious setback for the Punjab peace process... Maverick, unstable and irresponsible elements like the egregious Ghisingh will also be encouraged. The fallout in the already besieged North-east will be immense and adverse. Given this situation, the Centre must decisively reject Abdullah's moves... It can certainly be argued that the structure of the Indian Union can be reviewed... But the federal review has to be holistic, with a view to meet legitimate regional aspirations on the firm basis of administrative convenience — it cannot be based on special status for the politically ambitious.

calculations, objectively what Dr. Abdullah has done amounts to playing with fire.

The Centre obviously is on the horns of a dilemma. As The Indian Express has aptly explained,

If the autonomy demand is opposed, it may help improve Abdullah's prospects at the next elections but at the cost of stoking more popular discontent with the Union. If it appears to take the demand seriously, the BJP's own house is likely to be rocked.

So it has pointed out that instead of adopting a "reactive policy" the Centre must take the initiative into its own hands and set an agenda which involves consideration of various autonomy scenarios as well as devolution of power to the local bodies.

This indeed is the way out of the impasse. But the vital question is: devoid of a holistic approach well beyond any sectarian outlook, can the Centre chart out such a course? ...

B.G. Verghese on Case for Autonomy

... Two wars and two proxy wars later... Pakistan has failed to annex the State which remains divided and bruised. While a secessionist group continues to seek self-determination through union with Pakistan, others seek independence for all of J&K on both sides of the LoC. Neither is feasible. J&K is an integral part of the Indian Union and there will be no second Partition...

There has undeniably been discontent and alienation in the Valley, especially in the wake of the maladroit political management of the State between 1952 and 1975 and between 1984 and 1987. The latter gave birth to armed insurgency with sustained cross-border support. This only brought more grief. Nevertheless, the use of arms has once again clearly failed. While nationalist forces have rallied, significant sections among those alienated from the Indian state have come to adopt the more realisable and practical objective of seeking greater autonomy, self-determination or azadi within India.

The Government of India too has stated its willingness to consider greater internal autonomy for J&K. The term 'autonomy', so widely used, essentially implies an adjustment in Centre-State relations. The use of symbols such as a State flag and nomenclatures like Sadar-i-Riyasat and Wazir-e-Azam in place of Prime Minister or Chief Minister are really subsidiary issues ... without any real additionality in terms of substantive content. Nevertheless, symbols are supremely important when dealing with a people's psyche.

It would be useful to lay to rest a popular muddle that has entrapped highly placed minds. This is that more autonomy means less 'integration' with India and vice versa and that 'full integration' will be achieved by abrogating Article 370 of the Constitution. The fact is that Article 370 has nothing to do with integration which is governed by Article 1 and the First Schedule.

Article 1 posits that India shall be a Union of States as specified in the First Schedule which lists J&K along with ... all the rest. No distinction is made between States and Union Territories in terms of the quality or extent of 'integration' which is full and complete in each and every case... The Instrument of Accession transferred responsibility for three items to the Union, namely, defence, foreign affairs and communications, no more. Article 370 was the mechanism written into the Indian Constitution to regulate Centre-State relations with J&K...

Ever since the Afghan conquest, the Kashmir Valley had sought to reassert its independence. The rise of Kashmiri nationalism in the 1930s led to the formation of the Muslim Conference which Sheikh Abdullah shortly thereafter converted into the ... National Conference. The Sheikh's logic was that the struggle was not one of Muslim against Hindu but of the common people, whatever their faith, against the feudal tyranny of Dogra rule... In endorsing the Maharaja's decision to accede to India, when the tribal raiders were at the gates of Srinagar,

and in negotiating Article 370 and the Delhi Agreement, the Sheikh opted for autonomy or self-determination within India. He subsequently wavered on sensing certain negative trends, but returned to his original moorings after 1975. In 1995, Narasimha Rao announced that the Union Government would be prepared to consider autonomy 'short of independence' for J&K. Welcoming this on behalf of the National Conference, Farooq Abdullah asked the Union government to issue an order under Article 370(1)(d) to restore the State's autonomy in terms of the Delhi Agreement of 1952. When this did not happen, the NC boycotted the parliamentary poll. In 1996, Deva Gowda, as Prime Minister, offered J&K 'maximum autonomy' which persuaded Dr. Abdullah to participate in the Assembly elections. His demand was to go back to 1952. Autonomy is the key and there is little to fear... In fact, free elections, democratic decentralisation and wider autonomy for J&K within India could also electrify both 'Azad' J&K and the Northern Areas...

Nothing is lost by viewing the State's demands with sympathy, as the essential problem is more a crisis of confidence than anything else... Local and regional opinion might well favour continuation of many aspects of the existing dispensation. Even otherwise, J&K is constitutionally different and there need be no excessive fear of a domino effect on the rest of the country.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 24 June, 2000)

(Contd. from Page 382)

sobs, tears and sufferings?...

... Lucky Ali, the pop singer, who has concern for the people ... said that launching of Kashmir Channel is OK but the need is winning the hearts and minds of the people. The governments at both the Centre and the State have done enough naach-gaana in Kashmir but they have failed to read the minds and hearts of the people as there is veil on their eyes which does not allow them to see the sufferings of the common man.

(Source: The Mainstream, 17 June, 2000)

(Contd. from Page 384)

Muslim World – Afghanistan: *Pakistan asks Taliban regime to hand over Osama bin Laden to USA (21 May).

Libya: *Supports India's Permanent membership of UN Security Council (7 June).

Iran: *President Khatmi visits China (24 June). Also visits Germany, speaks of inter-civilisational dialogue.

Saudi Arabia: *Deports 5 Bengali children taken to Mecca for begging (22 June).

Pakistan: *Mohajir leader Altaf Quraishi calls Two Nation Theory an 'act of deception' (22 June).

*CE Musharraf rationalises Jihad against India (25 June).

Commemoration: *Darul Uloom, Deoband Old Boys Association organises Seminar on Life and Work of Qasim Nanautvi (27 May).

Obituary: Danial Latifi, Senior Advocate, Supreme Court, 83, passes away in Delhi. (17 June).

Prem Shankar Jha

On Negotiations on Autonomy with Farooq Abdullah

The Central government has several options before it in Kashmir. One is simply to ignore the resolution passed by the State Assembly (on) autonomy... A better one is to accept the principle of autonomy but refuse to take any action on the State Assembly's resolution till the report has been discussed in a wider forum of representatives from all parts of Kashmir. But for reasons explained below the simplest and best course will be to announce that the Centre will only take cognizance of the report when it has been endorsed by a freshly elected Kashmir Assembly and government.

The one thing it must not do is to change the status of J&K on the basis of a resolution passed by a National Conference Government in its fourth year in office, when its popularity is perceptibly on the decline. The reason is not what many Indians fear — that this could start a domino effect that would further weaken the Centre and bring the country closer to disintegration. If India stays united it is for powerful reasons — reasons that, incidentally, apply to Kashmir as well. The autonomy resolution is neither inherently unreasonable nor ultra vires of the India constitution.

All it involves is restoring an Article of the Constitution (Article 370, which gave a special status to Kashmir), and not changing it to weaken its existing federal features. But the NC no longer has the moral authority to demand such a major change. It fought the 1996 elections squarely on the issue of a return to the pre-1953 situation in Kashmir. Almost 50 per cent of the people of J&K cast their vote in that election. In view of the Hurriyat's boycott and the militants' threats this was a pretty high turnout.

But no sooner had the party come to power than 'autonomy' suddenly lost its urgency. Dr. Abdullah conveniently forgot that ... his father, Sheikh Abdullah, had gone through all the extensions of Central jurisdiction to Kashmir since he was imprisoned, in the weeks before he came back to power in 1975 and had been unhappy with only two enactments — the one extending Article 356, which vests the right to dismiss the State government with the President of India, to Kashmir, and one that gave took away the right to elect the governor of the State (Sadr-e Riyasat) from the Kashmir Assembly and vested it with the President.

Had he been serious about living up to his promise of autonomy, he would have taken up these two issues with the Centre within days of coming to power. But he did no such thing. In December 1996, in response to a direct query, Satish Chandran, Principal Secretary to Prime

Minister Deve Gowda, told me that Delhi had been waiting for Abdullah's proposals and was prepared to go to virtually any length to accommodate him, but had heard nothing. Instead, Dr Abdullah set up the Autonomy Committee to go into the finer issues of how to safeguard further the autonomy of the various regions of Kashmir in relation to each other.

The Committee took three years to perform its task, and ... Dr Abdullah chose to table the report only when the NC began to feel seriously threatened, first by its own sliding popularity and then by New Delhi's willingness to hold peace talks with the leaders of Hurriyat.

The decline in its popularity is not entirely the NC's fault... Niggardliness by Delhi in releasing funds to the State government and writing off security related expenses, (as Prime Minister Inder Gujral did for Punjab), and inordinate delays by the Planning Commission in releasing even the Plan funds ... have frustrated Dr Abdullah's efforts to consolidate his support base through ... development spending.

The continued incursion of terrorists and ... militants from Pakistan has made it impossible to reduce the military presence in the Valley and Jammu. This has led to a steady trickle of human rights violations, made all the worse by the fact that most of the excesses have been committed by the Special Operations Group of Kashmir's own Police. Add to this the normal quota of corruption and nepotism ... and Dr. Abdullah's whimsical style of government, and all the cards have been stacked against the party.

Autonomy was its ace in the hole. When Delhi began to mutter about talking to the Hurriyat, the NC decided to play it. In any other State this would have been normal, indeed astute politics. But in Kashmir it spells disaster. If the NC Government is allowed to appropriate the autonomy platform for itself, the Hurriyat will be left with no option but to harden its demand for either full independence for Kashmir or the status of an international protectorate. Thus, if New Delhi accepts the NC's demand it will play into Pakistan's hands.

... As Kashmiris look for an alternative to the NC, the pressure on the Hurriyat to enter into talks that can end the internal strife in Kashmir is rising steadily...

To them talks between Hurriyat and New Delhi are a beacon in the darkness... Farooq's ... MLAs know that the Hurriyat is responding to the pressure from the Kashmiri people. The real meaning of the NC's move is that peace is possible in Kashmir. All Advani has to do to

(Contd. on Page 365)

Rajindar Sachar

On Autonomy & LoC as International Border

Farooq Abdullah's gambit of getting the J&K Assembly to pass the resolution on autonomy has set the cat among the pigeons. But the BJP and the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) have only themselves to blame. Talks have remained stalled because the Union Government insists on certain preconditions. Equally uncalled for is the insistence of the Hurriyat Conference that there must be tripartite talks, with Pakistan also participating. The only crucial question is whether Pakistan is willing, as India claims it is, to agree to make the Line of Control (LoC) the international border. It is only in this sense that Pakistan has a role to play. The Hurriyat Conference's insistence on involving Pakistan flows from various considerations...

Surprisingly, the APHC has never challenged Pakistan to announce publicly that it is willing to give the option of independence to the whole of J&K - Pakistan has incorporated Gilgit as part of its territory and leased permanently hundreds of miles of Aksaichin to China. Of course, no one suggests that India can accept independent Kashmir - the dangerous consequence of the area becoming a pawn in the geo-political designs of the U.S. is too real for any Government to even consider such an eventuality.

That is why the only practicable solution is for the LoC to be made the international border and to concede pre-1953 status to J&K, with regional autonomy to the three regions, Jammu, Ladakh and Kashmir (hoping Pakistan will also give similar autonomy to its occupied portion of Kashmir)... I feel there is panicky overreaction that with pre-1953 status, the position of the minorities will become worse. The rights of the individual and the privileges of minorities in the matter of religion and language will be constitutionally guaranteed. And this evidently will be done after mutual consultations among the three regions of J&K...

It is shameful that the Congress(I), which during P. V. Narasimha Rao's term as Prime Minister had announced maximum autonomy, should seek to freeze the Kashmir situation in a 1975 time-frame. It is sheer recklessness to refuse to learn from what has happened in the Valley in the last decade. No group in J&K can ever dare to come forward for talks on the basis of the 1975 accord. But now it would appear that the Central Government, which had earlier given the impression that it was for an honest dialogue which could result in an agreement on the pre-1953 status and thus allow the APHC, Shabbir Shah and others to face the masses, seems to be backing out. May be it is being fed reports by intelligence agencies that the people are so tired of violence that militancy will die out by itself - how wrong, considering that compared to last

year there has been an increase in casualties. This suspicion is heightened by the statement by J.P. Mathur, BJP spokesman, that greater autonomy will never be granted, provoked possibly by the Congress(I) stratagem that it will not accept any pre-1975 solution.

The Kashmir question is getting mired in small-minded politics. It should be clear to anyone even a little familiar with the movement of the last 10 years in the Valley that while no Union Government can agree to an independent Kashmir, no group in the Valley can possibly agree to anything less than a pre-1953 status, if a permanent, peaceful solution is to be found.

But more serious doubts about the intentions of the Union Government are bound to arise from the reported statement of the Union Home Minister, Advani, at the Sindhu Darshan festival at Leh that he was not against the idea of trifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir on religious lines (as proposed by a US-sponsored study group). The proposal can never be accepted by the people of India as it will strike at the very root of our secular republic. In this thinking of the Government of India, I feel that we are witnesses to a conspiracy - already the RSS has given public support to this plan.

If trifurcation of J&K is envisaged, Pakistan's claim to the Valley, which is a Muslim majority area, can hardly be opposed. May be the RSS desires this communalisation so that it can spread its venom against the minorities ... to serve its fundamentalist approach. Cannot right-minded persons see through this dangerous game? ...

Above all, it must be appreciated that no settlement is possible unless the guns fall silent in the Valley. Of course, there is the difficulty that the gun-wielding militants are sponsored by Pakistan, and the APHC and others express their inability to control them. However, ... the Government of India could take a bold stand and announce that it will unilaterally silence its guns immediately, for a short period, in the hope of a similar response from the militants so that peace will prevail permanently. I know this is risky venture. But it was risk-taking by both sides that brought peace in Northern Ireland. In this exercise, the APHC will have to play an equally responsible role. It should simultaneously appeal that in view of the Government's announcement a similar response must come from the militants. But the anger and resentment of the populace can only be assuaged by extraordinary precautions to prevent excesses by security forces... The people of J&K want relief from the sense of insecurity and the denial of economic opportunities. Can politicians rise above their petty selves to respond to this plaintive cry?

(Source: The Hindu, 29 June, 2000)

Harish Khare on A New Compact on Kashmir

... About six months ago the ruling National Democratic Alliance establishment was flaunting its "mandate" as the licence to rewrite the Constitution; on the basis of this "democratic endorsement"... Yet six months later the same crowd and its cheerleaders want to deny Farooq Abdullah the right to invoke his "mandate" to work for "autonomy", as if the National Conference's "mandate" was not sufficiently consecrated in a democratic franchise. If the record were to be set straight it would transpire that during the October 1996 Assembly election campaign Abdullah talked more often about the ideal kind of autonomous relationship between Srinagar and New Delhi than did Vajpayee and Advani put together talk in the 1999 elections about rewriting the Constitution.

This negation of the democratic legitimacy of Abdullah's right to invoke "autonomy" is a minor affair when compared to the willful denial of our own word as a nation. It does not behove an honourable country to forget what has been said or promised on the floor of the sovereign Parliament of India, especially during those difficult days of 1995-1996 when our collective efforts were directed at putting in place the buffer of a "representative" Government between the security forces and the alienated people in J&K. The most inspired wisdom insisted that the "problem" would largely resolve itself once a "democratic" regime was installed in Srinagar. And, it seemed, every successive Union Home Minister would give his left arm to cajole Dr. Abdullah to participate in an election.

Participating in the debate on the J&K Appropriation Bill for 1995-96, the then Union Home Minister, S.B. Chavan, referred to the difficulty: with whom in Kashmir is "autonomy" to be discussed? His formulation was: "After the elections, there will be an elected representative Government. Those are the people who will be in a position to discuss with us and we cannot unilaterally take any decision. That becomes the starting point for further negotiations." That was as coherent a formulation as Chavan was capable of making. However, the Lok Sabha records show that when ... Somnath Chatterjee asked him: "What happened to 'autonomy'. He (the Prime Minister) has said earlier that short of azadi, autonomy will be given." The parliamentary records further show that, amid interruptions, the Prime Minister (P.V. Narasimha Rao) was heard observing: "He (the Home Minister) has spoken what was needed to be spoken, and you have also understood that much."

Let us hear what another Union Home Minister promised. After a meeting of all political parties, convened by Prime Minister (Deve Gowda) on August 7, 1996, the Home Minister, Indrajit Gupta, issued a public statement. Its last paragraph read: "As far as the promised 'maximum autonomy' to J&K is concerned, all parties agreed that its

content and quantum can be decided only after further discussions when there is a duly elected Assembly and Government in the State. There is no desire or intention by the Centre to impose any formula on the people of Jammu and Kashmir without first heeding the voice of their elected representatives." Well, the voice of the elected representatives has been heard, and, rejected peremptorily. "India" is as much a loser as is Abdullah. Can a nation pretend that its commitments are not solemn undertakings but merely convenient noises? What has changed so dramatically since the bloody days of 1995-96 for reneging on a national assurance. This collective amnesia is now sought to be elevated as statecraft.

It may be that the latest self-inflicted stalemate in Kashmir is an inevitable by-product of the conceptual stupidity that is at the heart of the Vajpayee Government's foreign policy: an untenable faith in the benignity of the American interest in Kashmir... The pseudo- deshbahts succumbed to the American pressure and went about signalling the start of a surreptitious "dialogue" with the Hurriyat leadership, forcing the impetuous Abdullah to go into "autonomy" over-drive. This folly was matched at home only by those who pride themselves on being the political heirs of Shyama Prasad Mookerjee; Abdullah's willingness to break bread with the BJP establishment was equated with the craven political opportunism of a Ram Vilas Paswan or a K. Ramamurthy, without understanding the structured precariousness of Kashmiri politics.

However, the follies of the Vajpayee-Advani-Jaswant Singh trio notwithstanding, the fundamental core of the "Kashmir problem" remains, more or less, unchanged: how to make the average Kashmiri think he is an honourable and equal partner in the enterprise called democratic India? Neither the voices (of) the Sangh Parivar nor the "autonomy" theatrics from Abdullah address this issue. Let us checklist the basic ingredients.

First, the 1996 Assembly elections were not an endorsement of the "Kashmir-is-an-integral-part-of-India" hymn book nor a rejection of "autonomy". Second, the Kashmiri psyche continues to subscribe to "we were cheated of our autonomy"; honour and self-respect remain evocative elements in the Kashmiris' quest for collective pride. Third, romanticism of the azadi movement may be gone, but the agents, prophets, financiers, arms merchants, RDX manufacturers and the constituency for azadi are very much in place. Fourth, though Abdullah courageously and consistently argued against azadi he and his National Conference never addressed the political psychological dimensions of "alienation"; instead, the United Front regime and later the BJP indulged in his infuriating indifference to the overwhelp provide governance and to recoup the society's creative energies. In fact, A+

Pran Chopra on Dialogue for Consensus on Autonomy

... On June 30, several correspondents at the Prime Minister's press conference on board his aircraft heard him say that the autonomy resolution passed by the J&K Assembly was within the Constitution... On July 2 followed a "clarification". It said what the Prime Minister said was that the Report would be "considered in accordance with the Constitution". Both comments were unnecessary statements of the obvious... The demand itself is unconstitutional only if made in an unconstitutional way, which a resolution by a State Assembly is not and if anything is conceded which is incompatible with the Constitution it is bound to be struck down in any case.

What this sequence did was only to heighten the contrast between what happened on the morning and the evening of July 4, and what the Prime Minister and the Home Minister had been saying until only a few days and hours earlier...

Thanks to (their) views and their extensive reporting a mood of hope had spread through Kashmir which was summed up in a newspaper headline on July 1 which said "Fed up with war, Kashmiris forget azadi settle for autonomy", and a signed article by the paper's well known chief editor said "End game in the valley. Azadi to Autonomy". "There is a lot of room for give and take" he added in a highlighted passage. The mood of hope was justified because ... P.V. Narasimha Rao had said in 1995 that short of secession, "the sky was the limit" for autonomy.

But what came to pass instead on July 4 was a startling anticlimax. At a single sitting that morning the Union Cabinet rejected the Report "unanimously", summarily (and) in toto. Advani announced "the Government would not do anything" to bring the Report before Parliament though a private member could do what he might. This followed his statement on Doordarshan the previous evening which can only be described as selective truth...

First. The same Accord also says that the "adaptations and modifications" made in (numerous) provisions before applying them to the State can be "altered or repealed" on merits. Second. It also lists many other extensions of the Union's jurisdiction to the State after 1953 (that is after Sheikh Abdullah was arrested) which could be terminated, and the State's recommendations about them would be "sympathetically considered". Third. It promises "fullest consideration" to the views of the State in taking any steps, going beyond the acceded subject of "defence", for protecting the safety and integrity of the State and of the Union. Fourth. The Accord is an extra-constitutional general agreement between the Sheikh and Indira Gandhi open to change by mutual agreement between their

successors. Fifth. The Centre is already committed, and proud to be, to devolve more powers to the States, including presumably J&K. Sixth. There is little difference between the quantum of powers the State may get under a practicable and exercisable autonomy and those it may get under a devolution which has now become practically irreversible all over the country. Seventh. If "give and take" had begun there would have been a good chance of consensus on the extension to the State of the jurisdictions of the Supreme Court, the Election Commission, and the Comptroller and Auditor General... Eighth. Given that consensus, and the Supreme Court's new-found power to protect "the basic structure", the State's essential interests in the union and of the Union in the State would have been equally safe. And finally, and most importantly, the issue on that fateful morning and evening of July 4 was not what was more constitutional but what was more conducive for a political climate, within the State and between it and New Delhi, which would nurture a consensus. Surely a sincere and open-ended invitation to patient talks, not the abrupt and almost insulting rejection of the Report, which has sharply diminished the standing of the most outspoken Kashmiri defender of the State's accession to India and has encouraged some ambivalent leaders of the Hurriyat to push their oars into the newly-troubled waters.

Who is responsible for this debacle? Facts are scarce as yet. But the needle of speculation points to the two meetings the Prime Minister had just before the cabinet met, one with the BJP president, Kushabhau Thakre, the other with Abdullah. Even while the Prime Minister and Home Minister were holding out uncommon hope. Thakre had already, on June 26, called upon people to reject the autonomy resolution, which he called "a retrograde step". Two days later the BJP General Secretary and party spokesman predicted rejection of the resolution by Parliament. Prime Minister and the Home Minister probably blinked, confronted with the false argument that other Indian States would prove to be dominoes — Abdullah's failure was patent and it must have soured his meeting with the Prime Minister. He had failed to keep his (reported) promise to the Prime Minister that the State Assembly would only debate the Report not adopt a resolution demanding its acceptance. Worse, he could neither prevent, anti-India venom in the Assembly debate nor build a consensus in the State... There is only a long way out of this mess, if there is one. Vajpayee and Abdullah have fortunately given themselves a chance to recover some lost ground. The least they must ensure is that substantial discussion ensues between New Delhi and Srinagar...

(Source: The Hindu, 13 July, 2000)

Trifurcation or Devolution?

A.G. Noorani in *The Statesman*, 13 July, 2000

... On 13 May 1992, the Governor of J&K, G.C. Saxena, ruled out categorically any move for trifurcation of the State. (On 7 June, 2000) in contrast, Advani has encouraged it. The ritual qualification "within the four corners of the Constitution" is less relevant than the fact that the Home Minister has countenanced ("can discuss") the trifurcation and in the context of the memo the LBA gave to the PM that day containing the demand.

Constitutionally, the Centre has no right or power in this matter at all. Article 3 empowers Parliament "by law" to "diminish the area of any State". In relation to Kashmir, no such Bill can even "be introduced in Parliament without the consent of the Legislature of that State". The Centre has no business to offer to "consider" a demand whose acceptance is the sole prerogative of Kashmir.

... Jammu's separation from the state of Jammu and Kashmir was demanded by the Jan Sangh at the very moment of its birth in 1951. It will lead to a partition of the state on communal lines with incalculable consequences, at home and internationally. The region of Ladakh comprises to districts - Leh, which is predominantly Muslim Kargil which "would remain with Kashmir" as an influential leader Asghar Karbalayee said on 19 June.

Jammu will split evenly. Three of its six districts have a Muslim majority - Doda (63.59 per cent; Poonch (88.87 per cent); and Rajouri (60.97 per cent). The latter two abut the LoC. The other three are Udhampur, Jammu and Kathua. A tehsil in Udhampur and three in Rajouri will go to the Valley.

Jawaharlal Nehru told the Lok Sabha on 25 March 1953: "It has been proposed ... 'Well, if not Kashmir, let Jammu become completely inter-related with India'. That obviously means that the Jammu and Kashmir state is disrupted. And we support his famous process of integration by disruption and by throwing away inevitably the rest of the State into somebody's lap".

Sheikh Abdullah sharply reminded Shyamaprasad Mookerjee on 4 February 1953: "This arrangement Article 370 has not been arrived at now but as early as 1949 when you happened to be a part of the Government". Nehru delivered the same reminder in the Lok Sabha on 7 August 1952: "A basis which was made in my absence from India ... and laid down by ... Sardar Patel. The Constituent Assembly adopted Article 370 of the Constitution on 17 October, 1949.

... Whenever Sheikh Abdullah spoke of Kashmir's autonomy vis-à-vis Centre, he stressed also the need for autonomy to its regions in his inaugural address to the State's Constituent Assembly on 5 November 1951, and repeatedly later.

... Districts or regions within a state are exposed to its

government's "overlordship" regardless of whether it has a "special status" within the Union or not. Devolution of power from the state capital downwards alone can prevent that. Hence, the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments (1992) on the panchayats and the municipalities, respectively. Jammu and Leh enjoy no better "protection" from Srinagar now or would if Article 370 were restored to what it was before its unconstitutional erosion. They do need fair guarantees of devolution...

... Devolution of power to Scotland and Wales is one of them. On 11 April 1992 the BJP leader Chaman Lal presented the PM with a memo which demanded inter alia "Statutory Regional Councils be established in all the three regions of Jammu, Ladakh and Kashmir on the principle of division of legislative, executive and judicial powers of the State between the State and the Region ... within the framework of the Indian Union and the unity of the States". It can be improved upon.

... As Governor G.C. Saxena had said in an interview to this paper on 6 May 1992 that "short of secession or azaadi (freedom), Kashmir can have anything within the framework of the Indian Constitution...

Let us look beyond our frontiers to gain some perspective, some calm. At our instance, Sri Lanka acknowledged in the 1987 accord that it "is a multi-ethnic and a multi-lingual plural society". India is much larger, far more diverse. The Meech Lake Accord (1987) between the PM and the Premiers of Canada's ten Provinces recognised "that Quebec constitutes within Canada a distinct society"... The Supreme Court of Canada's ruling on 20 August 1998 is very relevant to our situation. It said that the "principle of federation facilitates the pursuit of collect give goals of cultural and linguistic minorities which form the majority within a particular province. This is the case in Quebec..." it cannot secede "unilaterally" but nor can Ottawa ignore separatist sentiments in the province. The solution lies in "negotiations". The Court passed severe strictures on refusal by either the Centre or the Province earnestly "to negotiate in accordance with the constitutional principles" it had outlined in the judgement. It was a unanimous judgement by nine judges of distinction. A model of judicial statesmanship, it frowned on both extremes.

That is the only course open to all concerned in Kashmir. The LoC divides Jammu as well as the Valley. We need to look beyond it and to promote dialogue at all levels - with the Hurriyat, between the two halves of Kashmir, with Pakistan, and, indeed, with all the elements in all the regions of the State. If the two Koreas can sign an agreement on reunion of separated families, why cannot India and Pakistan in respect of divided Kashmir?...

Madhu Kishwar on Pre-condition for Political Solution

... In the last year or more, every single one of the *hartals* and other forms of public protest has been provoked by the killing of innocents by security forces in false encounters, custodial deaths and other human rights abuses. Neither the issue of autonomy nor *azaadi* has been the rallying point for any of the political protests.

During each of my three fact-finding visits to the Valley, I was impressed by the fact that every time we heard a tale of woe about arrest, torture or killing by the security forces, people did not try to hide whether the person targeted was actually a militant or an innocent. They would even tell us whether he had given up militancy or was still a part of the underground.

I was also struck by the fact that, in most of the cases, people expressed anger and outrage only when the person targeted was actually an innocent or had really given up terrorism and was trying to rebuild a broken life. Arrests and killings of actual terrorists did not evoke strong indignation.

Newspapers bring reports of over a dozen killings everyday. But public anger bursts over only in a few such cases. Whenever an even half-honest inquiry has been ordered, people's allegations are almost always vindicated as happened with the "encounter deaths" of six Kashmiri Muslims following the Chhattisinghpura massacre. At that time, despite repressive measures, people's outrage came pouring out because the armed forces in a desperate bid to show "results" had killed innocent men in cold blood under the guise of nabbing the guilty. When, under popular pressure, the bodies of the six dead men were exhumed, the allegations against the forces were proved.

What does this tell us? That, even at a time when Kashmiri society is undergoing a traumatic period, ordinary people have retained the sanity to distinguish between "just dues" and undeserving infliction of cruelty. They get upset only when innocents are brutalised. Contrast this with the behaviour of our security forces. It is clear that they have not learnt to distinguish between innocent citizens and actual insurgents or terrorists, between legitimate forms of protest and violent insurgency. More often than not, they kill, maim, torture and crack down so indiscriminately that even the most pro-Indian Kashmiris feel estranged, humiliated and demoralised.

To quote a respected Kashmiri journalist: "We need a surgeon's knife, not a butcher's." We all need to be concerned that our security forces are widely perceived as butchers rather than upholders of our Constitution.

... It is time we realise that the failure of the security forces in curbing cross border terrorism is inextricably linked to the high level of anger against the Indian state for harassing, fleecing torturing and murdering innocent people in the name of counter-insurgency measures. Such

crimes can only help further the Pakistani agenda in Kashmir.

Our politicians are never tired of repeating that any solution to the Kashmiri problem has to be found within the framework of the Constitution. Sounds noble and correct! But can the government say in all honesty that it is actually upholding the Constitution in the Valley?

Those who believe in the sanctity of our Constitution should also know that its most sacred part is Part III, the chapter on Fundamental Rights. Even criminals are not to be deprived of their life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law. In addition, our Constitution also entrusts the government with ensuring free and fair elections.

Even the most avid defenders of the government dare not claim that the state has actually protected all these and other basic rights of Kashmiri citizens. If the government functionaries do not respect the Constitution, what faith can it inspire among the Kashmiris?

... The Emergency was a baby dose of authoritarianism in comparison to what Kashmir has been subjected to. The heavy, oppressive and all-pervasive presence of the armed forces makes even pro-India Kashmiris feel like a colonised people: a sentiment not conducive to producing loyal citizens.

Disgruntlement against the establishment is rampant all over the country. But regular, free and fair elections provide an important safety valve by allowing people the right to vote out parties that misgovern. But in Kashmir where, except in 1977, most elections are believed to have been rigged, the anti-government sentiment easily turns into anti-India sentiment.

Our government is currently believed to be attempting track two, track three and many other of initiatives to solve the Kashmir problem. Even if it succeeds in winning over a few "leaders", to make a deal of some kind, real breakthrough will come only when ordinary people feel safe and secure. For that the government needs to ensure a truly functional transparent, grievance redressal machinery which provides speedy relief to those whose human rights have been violated as well as punishment to the guilty.

The government should also build a better-trained security apparatus with more sophisticated intelligence-gathering abilities to distinguish between innocent citizens, passive sympathisers and active helpers of the terrorists...

These steps are necessary preconditions for working out a political solution. They will pave the way for the withdrawal of security forces to border areas, and working out a workable deal for political autonomy (with) due safeguards for the interests of Jammu and Ladakh regions as well as participatory democracy down to the village level...

(Source: The Indian Express, 13 July, 2000)

Vidya Subrahmaniam on Alienation in Valley

It's an eerie feeling, even for a long-time resident of high-security Delhi. The ubiquitous police barricade is part of life in India's Very Important Capital and we have grown to accept it.

But this?

... While I drive past, ordinary citizens queue up at the barricade. They answer questions and put up their hands so the police personnel can frisk them and confiscate whatever they might be carrying. The scene etches itself in my mind, almost like a sepia-tinted frame from a '50s war movie.

This is the start of my guilt trip. As I travel in Kashmir, I often feel I'm not in my country. The overwhelming presence of the army and the BSF, the all-too-frequent check-posts and the piercingly sharp questions posed by citizens – all say that if this is India, this is not normal India. And I'm in a deep moral dilemma: As a journalist do I report what I see? Or am I Indian first, determined to see no wrong in Kashmir? I resolve the dilemma by deciding that there is no dilemma. For Kashmir to stay with us, more importantly for Kashmiris to stay with us in mind and body, we must acknowledge the wrongs done there. Without this vital step, we can secure our borders, enhance our intelligence, gather all the tactics we want from Israel, but not win the trust of the people. In short, make no headway.

I left for Srinagar believing that the Valley had turned around: Reports said that, yes, there was no let up in Pakistan-backed militancy. But no, there was no popular backing for this. Indeed, that the people had reconciled themselves to a future with India. Sadly, I didn't see this reflected on the ground. True, there is hardly any support for Pakistan. But there is hardly any support for India. Instead there is resentment and anger – whether along the Dal Lake, outside Hazratbal or in interior Kashmir. The stories repeat themselves too – of young boys picked up for questioning one day, and their bodies returned to their families the next. It is almost as if there is no family where a member has not made the mandatory trip to the interrogation cell.

(Some) sound calm, almost resigned... The mood is more hostile at Hazratbal.... "Why don't you leave us alone?" ... "Look, we are not against you. But for us you are India." They are sore about rigged elections, puppet regimes, the Abdullah family's self-indulgent ways, and worse, about the official presumption that each one of them is a terrorist. Their preference line-up: Azadi, Pakistan, India. I face more anger at the house of Mohammad Rafiq Baqal, a shopkeeper at I.D market, recently shot dead by the BSF. Baqal's neighbourhood is mourning his death, and in protest, not one shop has opened. Up in the hills of Pathribal, there is the same despondency. This is the spot where five young civilians perished in a fake encounter in March...

POK is not Pakistan. Terrorists are freedom fighters. This is the constant refrain even in interior Kashmir. And

this explains the contradiction between lack of support for Pakistan and support for militancy. And attached to militancy is the notion of *Azadi*, the almost innocent belief that for militants freedom is more important than Pakistan... As Mirwaiz Umer Farooq says, "*Azadi* is a vague concept. It is not necessarily for a separate state or Pakistan. It means alienation."

In Kashmir, there's no upsurge as in the mid-'90s. But there is enormous anger and hurt. Feelings natural to any people exploited politically and hounded by the security forces. For this situation to change, Farooq Abdullah and the BJP must stop playing games. Kashmiris have a strong sense of identity. But Abdullah-style autonomy makes no sense when panchayat elections are not held in years, when salaries are held up and there are no jobs for most. It makes even less sense when the state-run Task Force feels free to pick up innocent citizens. For its part, the BJP must understand that India cannot feel secure when Kashmiris are so insecure.

(Source: The Times of India, 13 July, 2000)

Who Needs Autonomy Any Way?

Editorial, The Greater Kashmir, 19 June, 2000

... Who needs autonomy any way? ... The people want final settlement of the dispute and not a short-term arrangement within the Indian Constitution... Even Farooq Abdullah and his national Conference do not want autonomy. Had Farooq been serious and sincere about it, he would have passed a resolution in the State Assembly, thereby forcing the Government of India to take appropriate measures... But can the Farooq Government afford it? And, if New Delhi alone can grant it, why should it (New Delhi) confer this honour on Farooq Abdullah? ...

History to Farooq: Do It Now

Editorial, The Greater Kashmir, 20 June, 2000

... From Leh to Kathua voices are being raised against all concessions to Kashmiris and thereby the entire state... This ... must have finally explained to Farooq Abdullah as to where his political constituency actually lies... Dr. Abdullah could well be poised on the crossroads of not only his political career, but at the very crossroads of history as well... The only thing that stands between the national conference leader and his party to rise back like the proverbial Phoenix is a strong fighting will. Dr. Abdullah can surprise his friends and enemies by proving that there is a political fighter alive in him... The outcome of the present assembly session would be closely and impatiently monitored by the common Kashmiri. His suffering, his tragedy and his despair are something the National Conference cannot afford to ignore... National Conference's hour of reckoning is now or never... It is time the national conference leader and party rose above considerations of power and political expediency... Tomorrow would be too late. This is Kashmir's message to Dr. Abdullah.

Jay Raina On Cabinet Reaction

The Union Cabinet's rejection of the J&K Assembly's demand for greater autonomy has raised more questions than it has actually answered in a note explaining the Centre's stand. Equating J&K with other states is not only politically erroneous, but also factually incorrect. A bone of contention between India and Pakistan since Partition, it has a Constitution of its own unlike other States of the Union. Its special status is sanctified under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution.

Moreover, the state's populace enjoys double citizenship rights—firstly as permanent residents (State Subjects) and secondly as Indian citizens. J&K can be brought directly under the Governor's Rule—a mechanism not applicable to any other State—for six months wherein the Governor, besides carrying out all executive functions, has powers to legislate.

All the 42 Presidential Orders to which Home Minister Advani referred while announcing the Cabinet decision, were not directly applied to the State.

These orders came into force by way of amendments to the J&K Constitution.

Another salient feature of the Constitutional arrangement in J&K is that its Assembly has a six-year term—a year more than other state legislatures—with powers to legislate in large ambit of residuary area.

Also, the sheer geo-political importance of the state sets it apart from other regions, particularly in the context of the super-power vested interests. For this reason alone, the Centre's proposed application of a common devolution package to J&K along with other states of the Union sounds farcical.

Whatever might be the parameters of the planned devolution, still far from being worked out in totality, Kashmir deserves a separate and special dispensation. The decade-long militancy and the concomitant loss of blood on either side has added a frightening dimension to the problem that, in itself, is unique in the history of the sub-continent.

Never mind Farooq Abdullah's sordid record in non-governance, which has contributed amply to the prevailing chaos, the seemingly absurd autonomy-theatrics have exposed the credentials of all the principal characters in the game. The Vajpayee regime's flip-flop over the autonomy resolution, before the Cabinet consigned it to the dustbin, has put a question mark on its claim to a cogent Kashmir policy. There is a long list of the naive components of the Centre's game-plan: Overtures for a dialogue with the Hurriyat leaders behind Abdullah's back; complete failure to foresee implications of the Assembly vote on the autonomy resolution; inability to rein in the irrepressible CM who is an NDA ally and finally the Cabinet meeting convened as a knee-jerk response to a situation crying for serious deliberation...

Finally, it was Dr Abdullah's action in going for the RSS' jugular—as a riposte to the Sangh Parivar's shrill

Ajoy Bagchi On Kashmir Problem

... As things stand today, the people in Pakistan and China controlled areas are not free to express their will. Out of the three regions under India's control, the Kashmiri-speaking area is the bone of contention. The majority of the people of Ladakh and Jammu regions have demonstrated their disenchantment with the State's decades old Kashmir-centric polity, and prefer a separate identity of their own. Kargil's Shia community has no love lost for the Valley's Kashmiri-speaking Sunni Muslim majority. It is the latter, or its so-called leadership that keeps equivocating about its relationship with India. The National Conference claims to speak for the entire Kashmiri community because of its majority in the last Assembly elections, which had a very low voter turnout. It favours greater autonomy under India. A similar claim by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, a fissured coalition with its fault-lines papered over by anti-India sentiments, is equally suspect.

Ladakh and Jammu regions should get their separate identities as constituent states of the Indian Union. These two regions would then be able to take their rightful place in the Indian mosaic and, with control over their own resources, be free to decide about the direction of their development. The Kashmir region is rife with Pakistan sponsored terrorism. The common man there finds himself in the vortex of violence, from militants as well as security forces. His prime concern is the safety and security of his life and property. He is equally concerned about development... A compact Kashmir state would be better able to address both these concerns of its people.

In course of time, the Mirpur-Muzzafarabad area under Pakistan and the Kashmir State under India could come together under an India-Pakistan condominium on the lines of the erstwhile British-French Condominium of New Hebrides in the South Pacific (now the independent nation of Vanuatu). Thereafter, it could become a nation on the lines of Nepal with its independence underwritten by its neighbours. Today, this radical solution may seem far-fetched but it has the potential to bring peace to Kashmir.

(Source: The Pioneer, 7 July, 2000)

opposition to the autonomy demand—that made the PMO advance the Cabinet conclave.

The rejection... was technically unanimous. But distinct viewpoints found expression in the course of the deliberations—a section of the Ministers even seeking clarifications on the covert contacts with the Hurriyat.

The positions taken by ministers who spoke on the issue ranged from moderate to extreme. While a few sought tough action against Abdullah, others wanted an honourable way out for the Chief Minister.

The formulation that eventually found acceptance was in tune with the middle-path proposed by PM.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 6 July, 2000)

Ban Military Training by Bajrang Dal Shahabuddin's Letter to Advani, 5 July, 2000

May I draw your attention to the training in firearms, which is being given by the Bajrang Dal (BD) to select cadre in Ayodhya? The Bajrang Dal, according to its leaders, is planning to open twenty-five such camps, which will train their cadre, to assist the Government in maintaining internal security. However, training in Ayodhya has already created a sense of apprehension in the small Muslim community there. Understanding fully well the role BD played not only in mobilizing the Karsevaks but also in training them for demolishing the Masjid, desecrating the graveyards and Mazars and generally harassing the Muslim community, I would request you to kindly examine whether such training in martial arts and firearms attracts the law. If it does not and the Government have permitted the BD to act as the second line of security, despite its obvious implications for the minority communities, the latter may also feel inclined to organize similar training for their youth.

The questions that arise are whether the State should share its authority and responsibility with private groups and whether the State is going to encourage confrontation between such rival groups which may plunge the country into a virtual civil war. I am aware of your views about the BD, notwithstanding its known role in many places. Yet I request you to kindly consider the questions I have placed before you in their proper perspective and formulate a considered view on such dangerous initiatives by private militant organizations.

Bajrang Belligerence Editorial, The Hindustan Times, 22 June, 2000

... There have been reports about the (Bajrang Dal) imparting arms training to its members in a camp near Ayodhya. More objectionable than the training itself is the purpose for it as expounded by the Bajrang Dal's national convenor. According to him, it is meant to counter the "growing activities of ISI agents and anti-social elements in the country". The chief of the VHP in UP has been more forthcoming. His explanation is that the training is directed against "anti-Hindu forces"... An arms training programme underlines the dangerous possibility of the tribes degenerating into open violence.

There has been a spate of attacks against Muslims against their churches and

the activists of the two to deepen the sense of among the Muslims. It goes any organisation to fight government's task... If the bold enough to announce the Centre's response to is and other minorities has time that the Government will not allow such openly

Judicial Verdict Only Option

Shahabuddin to K.S. Sudarshan, 8 July, 2000

We have taken note of your Statement on possible options for settling the Babari Masjid dispute in today's paper. The existing order of the Supreme Court totally bars the first option of any unilateral transfer of any part of the acquired land (including the disputed land and the Babari Masjid site) by the Central Government to anyone for any purpose, until the title suit is decided by the Special Bench of the Allahabad High Court.

The second option is not legally and constitutionally tenable, for any legislation for transfer of the site of a Masjid for the construction of a Mandir will be ultra vires.

The third option is Muslims voluntarily relinquishing claim on the Babari Masjid site. This option is simply not feasible because no Muslim individual or group or organisation has any authority to gift a Masjid, which is, by definition, a Wakf and belongs to Allah.

However, at one stage we did offer to the VHP, before the Masjid was demolished, that if it is proved to the satisfaction of eminent historians that the Babari Masjid was constructed in 1529 on the site of a standing Ram Janamasthan Mandir, after demolishing it, then in view of the association of the site with Shri Ram Chandraji, we would request the Muslim community to agree to its being handed over to the Hindu community. But the offer was not accepted. After the forcible demolition of the Masjid, the question does not arise. The law must take its course.

I would request you, in common interest, to ask the Government to expedite the hearing of the title suit on a day-to-day basis. We once again assure you that the Muslim community shall accept the final judicial verdict. I hope the Hindu community also will, in the interest of national unity and social harmony.

Ambikanand Sahay On Proposed Rath Yatra

If the signals emanating from Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) offices across the country are any indication, the Ganga belt will experience an extremely "hot" winter this year...

The timing of the proposed chain of events seems equally interesting.

- ❖ The chariot takes off during or after the Navratra in October.
- ❖ The dharma sansad would decide on the date for the launch of construction work at the Kumbh Mela in January.
- ❖ UP assembly elections take place in April.

Incidentally, as of now, the BJP looks like a spent force in Uttar Pradesh. Perhaps the party would get some much-needed oxygen in the post-rath yatra period prior to the elections.

(Source: The Times of India, 11 July, 2000)

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Neera Chandhoke on Ayodhya Tragedy

... Will we witness another saffron surge to prop up the somewhat sagging prospects of the (BJP) in the next Assembly elections? Perhaps. For the Ayodhya issue has proved to be enormously handy for the Sangh Parivar. Each time the parliamentary wing of the Parivar has faced a crisis, the issue has been pulled out of the closet, dusted, given a new coat of paint, and brandished anew for consumption by the body politic.

That every time the Ayodhya issue has been brought up for public attention the country has witnessed immense bloodshed, communal hatred, scarred geographies, scarred histories, and scarred psyches, does not seem to matter to the leaderships propelled solely by raw, unmediated passions to retain power. That every time the Sangh Parivar mentions Ayodhya, the chords that hold the body politic together tighten under stress and anxiety is of no consequence to people parading politics in the garb of religion. The spectacle of violated and burnt corpses, destroyed and arid spaces, wrecks of communities that had learnt to live, laugh and love together, is no cause for concern when it comes to electoral gains. Expectedly, the history of India since the mid-1980s, when the Ram Janmabhoomi agitation was initiated, has been marked by animosity, avarice and cynical abuse of the religious idiom. An entire generation has grown up in an atmosphere where mandirs and masjids have become synonymous with politics. And the invocation of Ayodhya has led to one tragedy after another.

For instance, in 1989, the Sangh Parivar, intent on subjecting Indian politics to political theatricals, began to collect and consecrate bricks - the Ram Shilas to lay the foundation of the Ram Janamsthan Mandir in Ayodhya... Conversely, earth dug up in Ayodhya was redistributed to different parts of India in a heroic effort to unite all Hindus in nationhood. As the VHP was allowed by the Congress(I) government at the Centre to lay the foundation stone of the Ram Mandir, the first stone of the new Hindu Rashtra was laid.

The Shilanyas marked a successful and a decisive breakthrough in the Ram Janmabhoomi agitation, representing the high point of politics as theatre, replete with symbolism and suffused with ritualism. Almost 200,000 villages sent bricks, 300,000 pujas of the Ram Shilas were performed and altogether about 100 million people attended the various processions that carried the bricks to and from Ayodhya. Even as this was happening, *mahayagnas* and meetings brimming over with provocative oratory and hateful propaganda assiduously nurtured a communalised atmosphere. Ritualised symbolism was to leave a trail of riots, bloodshed, mayhem, intensification of tensions and hostility, fractured communities and dismembered unities, all of which traumatised the nation...

The close co-relation among the routes of Ram Shila Puja, the communal violence of September-October, 1989

and the electoral gains made by the BJP in the 1989 elections is clear. Analysts estimate that out of the 88 constituencies where the BJP won in the 1989 elections, 47 were in areas that had seen wide-scale rioting - in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh...

As the news spread of the demolition of the Babari mosque on December 6, 1992, a new phase of murderous Hindu-Muslim riots accompanied by police firing in six States began. The worst incidents took place in Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Banaras and Jaipur. The spill-over of these riots was experienced in Pakistan, Bangladesh, even in the United Kingdom. Mumbai witnessed two spells of rioting from December 6 to 12, 1992, and then from January 7 to 16, 1993... By far the largest number of victims were Muslims. And investigations revealed that the police were active participants when it came to shooting Muslims, a fact accepted by the Police Commissioner of Mumbai, S.K. Bapat.

These two flash points of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement raised, and continue to raise, important questions of and for the future of democracy in India, and for the relationship between its people. At stake is India's claim that it is a tolerant nation, with a proud heritage of its people living together in some degree of harmony. **For the movement has cast a long shadow over the very idea that people of different persuasions can live together in a geographically bounded area in some degree of amity...**

... The 1980s, which witnessed separatist movements in major parts of the country and which saw the utilisation of the religious idiom by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and later by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, provided a fertile ground for the open communalisation of Indian politics.

The 1980s, in effect, saw the final dissolution of the secular spirit that had been carefully drafted and institutionalised by the first generation of leaders in India, and its replacement by the idioms, the grammar and the symbolism and oratory of religious identification. The increased visibility of saffron-clad sadhus in politics, the shrill provocation in the rhetoric of sadhvis including Uma Bharati and Sadhvi Rithambara, and open calls for the establishment of a Hindu state organised around the liberation of the sacred site at Ayodhya, became commonplace.

The "liberation" of Ayodhya formed the dominant metaphor in a cluster of ideological formulations that challenged practically each one of the accepted themes that went under the heading of secularism - minority rights, freedom of religion and equal citizenship. All these themes were dismissed as 'pampering the minorities', 'pseudo-secularism', 'cultural nationalism', the building of a strong 'Hindu Rashtra', and 'regenerating the Hindu spirit'. Ayodhya was transformed into a metaphor for the

impoverished spirit of Hindus who could not recover their sacred spaces, for the illegitimacy of minority entitlements, a historical allegory for Muslim invasions, and a spatial one for the construction of the space of a Hindu nation. The power of this metaphor was so great that events moved rapidly from the mid-1980s onwards.

In 1984, the first Dharma Sansad demanded the liberation of Ayodhya. In the same year, the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Mukti Yagna Samiti, formed under the leadership of Mahant Avaidyanath, launched the *tala khola* agitation. The year 1985 saw a series of processions - the Ram Janaki Rath from 25 places in northern India to Ayodhya.

In 1985, the VHP, which had been active since 1982-83 with the Ekmata Yatra in southern India, filed a writ petition demanding a re-opening of the 'disputed structure' for worship by Hindus. The VHP simultaneously restructured and strengthened its organisation. In 1984, the Bajrang Dal had been formed as the militant youth wing of the VHP, with the stated intention of recruiting young and underemployed men for militant action for the establishment of a Hindu nation, and for the "liberation" of the Ram temple. By the late 1980s, the Bajrang Dal had a membership of 100,000 people in northern India. By the late 1980s, the VHP also started the Durga Vahini for young women.

Internationally the VHP organised a series of conferences to appeal to the Hindu diaspora. The success of this strategy was all too obvious during the Shilanyas when Hindus abroad sent huge funds and bricks for the Ram Shilas programmes.

The campaign yielded results, for in February 1986, a District and Sessions Judge, K.M Pandey, ordered that the doors of the Babari Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi be opened... The Uttar Pradesh government was ordered to allow puja within the mosque. Neither Central government nor the State government reversed the decision.

... The VHP organised Shri Ram Maha Yagna from October 11, 1998... But matters had by then gone out of hand. The Ram Janmabhoomi became a symbol of resurgent nationhood, the concrete spatial indication of the new Hindu nation, and the icon of militant Hindu nationalism intent on recovering its patrimony. The year 1990 was a historic one. Even as the country, the Hindu community in particular, was rent by the politics of Mandalisation, L.K. Advani launched his Rath Yatra from Somnath. Traversing 10,000 km, the Rath Yatra evoked muscular emotions... On October 30, members of the Sangh Parivar stormed the mosque and planted a flag. Fifty people died in police firing.

The year 1991 saw an intensified campaign even as the BJP drew a large number of members from the VHP as its candidates for the elections. The election campaign was marked by the domination of the Dharma Sansad. The presence of trishul-wielding sadhus at meetings was a common feature. The 1991 election campaign was violent but the BJP became the second largest party in Parliament with 119 seats, expanding its vote share from 11.4 per cent

Stop Ram Rath Yatra in Rajasthan Shahabuddin Rajasthan CM, 11 July, 2000

As you know, the VHP has planned to organise a Ram Rath Yatra in October-November, 2000, from Jaipur to Ayodhya via Agra, Kanpur and Lucknow, with a model of the proposed Ram Janambhoomi Mandir and a marble statue of Shri Ram Chandraji. The purpose is not religious but absolutely political to mobilise the 'Hindu' votes for the coming Assembly election in UP scheduled for April, 2001.

All the Yatra organised by the VHP in connection with the Babari Masjid Question - Ekatmata Yatra, the Shila Yatra, the Advani Rath Yatra have all led to tension, violence and bloodshed. And have gained votes for the BJP at the cost of communal harmony.

Moreover, the proposed Yatra is directly connected with the VHP's publicly announced unlawful object of generating support for its project of constructing the proposed Mandir on the Babari Masjid site at a time of its choice in defiance of the Supreme Court Order.

It is obvious that the BJP-led Government in UP will extend full support to the proposed Yatra, once it crosses into that State. So if the trouble is to be nipped in the bud, **your Government has to act boldly and stop the Yatra in its very first lap from Jaipur to the UP-Rajasthan border, in the interest of public order and social harmony.**

As you know, Advani's Rath Yatra was stopped by Laloo Prasad Yadav, the Chief Minister of Bihar.

in 1989 to 19.9 per cent in 1991. The rest is history - the demolition of the mosque and the transformation of the BJP into a party of government leading a coalition at the Centre following the 1998 and 1999 elections.

It is true that after the demolition of the mosque the BJP has not been able to reap the kinds of gains it wants out of the intense, communally oriented, campaigns that its affiliates have launched for the building of the Ram temple. It is true that under the compulsions of coalition politics it has had to set aside the Ram Mandir issue. **But it is equally true that the Sangh Parivar has achieved perhaps a more durable victory - that of institutionalising and legitimising the discourse of majoritarianism in civil society, which carries one message.** That message is that the rightful inheritor of the nation is the majority community and that it will recover its patrimony through coercion if necessary... The project of Hindutva is to divide the polity. Temples meant for worship now provide cynical, amoral politics with a repertoire of strategies, which enable them to pursue their own cause. The name of Shri Ram: *Maryada Purshottom*, the epitome of right thinking and right action, relentless warrior in the cause of justice, inspires devotion and piety in the hearts of Hindus. (Nor) the invocation of the name by the Sangh Parivar equally inspires frenzy on the one hand and fear on the other. This is perhaps the greatest tragedy of Ayodhya.

(Source: The Frontline, 7 July, 2000)

Muhammad Hasibor Rahman on Muslim Factor in Assam Politics

Before the independence of India, Assam Muslims played an important role in the state politics. Syed Muhammad Sadullah had been premier of Assam for over seven years (from April 1, 1937 to February 11, 1946). In his ministry there were two to four Muslim cabinet ministers.

36 years after Sadullah, Syed Anowara Taimur of the Congress(I) became the Chief Minister of Assam with the support of independent members on December 6, 1980 and remained in the saddle till June 28, 1981... She had only three Muslim ministers in her 16-member cabinet. In Hiteswar Saikia's ministry, there were 6-8 Muslim ministers...

In 1941, the Muslim population of the State was 34,28,969 and their growth rate between 1931 and 1941 was 32.9. In 1946 there were 108 seats in the state legislature and the number of Muslim members was 34. After independence ... Muslim population of Assam decreased to 19,95,936 in 1951, and the number of their representatives in the Assembly was reduced to 15 in 1952. The Muslim representation in the Assembly during 1946-96 is as follows:

Year	Total Seats	Muslim Members	% of Muslim Population
1946	108	34	
1947	70	16	
1952	108	15	22.06
1957	108	15	22.06
1962	105	18	23.30
1967	105	19	23.30
1972	114	21	23.30
1978	126	28	24.56
1983	126	32	24.56
1985	126	25	24.56
1991	126	24	28.20
1996	126	28	28.20

Except in 1983, the percentage of the Muslim representation in the state legislature has always been less than the proportion of their population in the state. Some Assamese intellectuals and organisations have been raising an apprehension in the mind of the people to the effect that the Muslim population of Assam (is) a threat to the culture, identity and political power of the Assamese people, despite the fact that the Assam Muslims have already declared Assamese as their mother tongue...

When the Muslims are unable to secure representation in the State legislature in proportion to their population, how can they pose a threat to the political power of the Assamese Hindus? How can 28.20% Muslims who are known to be economically and educationally the most backward community in Assam, endanger the culture and identity of 71.80% strong non-Muslim population of the state? The fact is that the apprehension raised by the vested interests of the majority community is a ploy to harass the Muslim minority of Assam as Bangladeshis (and that) the identity and survival of the Muslim minority

in Assam today are in peril... Out of 17 districts, the Muslims have more than 50 per cent of population only in three districts which have a total of only 22 Assembly seats. Out of these 22 seats, Muslim candidates could win 12 to 15 seats and from the rest of the districts 13 to 20 seats. Thus they can have altogether 25 to 35 elected representatives in the state legislature.

The representation remains divided among different political parties. The chance for all Assam Muslims to come together under a political party for contesting election is very remote. Even then if they somehow unite together, they will never get more than 25 candidates elected. In 1985, the Muslims fought the assembly election unitedly along with the Bengali Hindus under the banner of the United Minorities Front (MUF) and could elect only 17 candidates - 13 Muslims and 4 Bengali Hindus. Besides this, another 12 Muslim candidates won the election - 5 on Congress(I) tickets, 2 on SUCI tickets, 1 on Congress(S) ticket and 4 independents. As a whole Muslim candidates won only 25 seats out of the total seats. It is now clear that Muslims will never be able to have more than 25-35 legislators and form government on their own...

The All Assam Students Union (AASU) has demanded cent per cent reservation of seats in parliament, state legislature and local bodies for indigenous people of Assam under clause VI of the Assam Accord which grants constitutional safeguards to the Assamese people (though) nowhere in the Assam Accord, the word 'indigenous' is mentioned.

At a tripartite meeting among the representatives of the Central Government, State Government and the AASU ... on April 10, 2000... (It was) agreed ... that those whose names have appeared in the National Register of Citizens (NRC), 1951 and in the electoral rolls of 1971 in the districts which do not have NRC and their descendants would be defined as indigenous people...

... In the Assam Accord it was agreed that foreigners who entered Assam before March 25, 1949 should be granted citizenship ten years after the date of their detection.

During the period 1951-1971 a total of 1,51,871 foreigners (came) into Assam. Of these, 1,27,900 were Muslims. During 1961-1980 alone 1,27,900 foreigners were detected and deported. (means that) the Muslim foreigners were 1,27,900 (51,871 (2,99,771 - 2,27,900) ... with the foreigners of 1951-1971 there is not a single Muslim Muslim foreigners total 15,18,71. The non-Muslim foreigners total 1,27,900. citizenship under the provisions of the Act should not fall within the definition of 'foreigners'. In 1950 community was displaced from Pakistan. As per Nehru...

Barun Das Gupta on 'Indigenous' Controversy

... According to the AASU, "indigenous" means those people (and their descendants) (a) whose names were recorded in the National Register of Citizens (NRC) of 1951 and (b) in the districts which do not have the NRC those who were recorded in the electoral rolls of the first general election in 1952...

The AASU's stand has been supported by the Advocate-General of Assam, Panchu Gopal Baruah, who maintains that the objective of clause 6 of the Assam Accord can be best achieved by making provisions similar to those for Jammu and Kashmir ... which ensure that political power will always remain with the permanent residents of the State...

However, Nishinath Changkakoty, a former DGP of Assam, thinks March 25, 1971, should be the cut-off date for the purpose of reservation of seats for the "indigenous" people.

The CPI ... almost echoes the AASU view: those who settled in Assam on the day the Constitution came into force (January 26, 1950) and whose names appeared in the 1952 electoral rolls should be taken as "indigenous".

The PCC chief, Tarun Gogoi's definition is simple: those "who accept the Assamese language and culture and Assam as their own land" should be treated as indigenous.

The BJP, however, wants the cut-off date for people to be considered indigenous as March 25, 1971, in terms of clauses 5.3 and 5.8 of the Assam Accord.

The strongest reaction to the AASU's definition of "indigenous" has come from the tribal people who claim to be the aboriginals/autochthons of Assam. The All-Assam Tribal Sangha has demanded that the cut-off date for identifying the "indigenous" people should be February 24, 1826, the date on which the Yandaboo Treaty between the East India Company and the King of Ava (Burma) was signed, marking Assam's annexation by the British...

The All-Bodo Students' Union (ABSU), powerful students' body of the Bodos, has rejected outright the AASU's definition... Daleswar Bodo, vice-president of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha, has said the AASU's move "is to deprive the aboriginals/autochthons of Assam, like Bodos and Misings, of their due protection and safeguard from the intrusion of the new-comers under the guise of 'khilanjia', that is, indigenous."

The Autonomous State Demand Committee (ASDC) ... of Karbi Anglong and North Cachar, has also opposed the AASU's unilateral definition of "indigenous"....

Hafiz Rashid Ahmed Choudhury, president of the

United Minorities Front (UMF), has questioned the validity of the very concept "indigenous". Clause 6 of the Assam Accord (quoted above) he says, only speaks of the "Assamese people", not "indigenous" people or "Assamese-speaking" people.

The Bengali-speaking people of the Brahmaputra Valley also have misgivings. At a convention on May 10 at Guwahati, a "Forum for Linguistic Minorities in Assam" was formed "to safeguard the interest of the people belonging to the various linguistic minority communities"... The Forum will hold a State-level Convention in October or November to set up a "broad based and permanent" organisation of all the linguistic minority groups in the State such as Nepalis and Chakmas.

The political significance of the AASU's demand is that it seeks to bar all people, including those who came from other States of India and settled down in Assam permanently, from contesting any election unless they satisfy its definition of an "indigenous" person.

(Source: The Hindu, 28 May, 2000)

Tribunals to Determine Citizenship of Suspects

**AIMMM: President Shahabuddin's Statement
26 June, 2000**

The All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (AIMMM) condemns the police firing in Yamuna Pushta on 24 June, 2000 in which one innocent life was lost and demands a judicial inquiry to establish the facts and circumstances leading to the firing.

The AIMMM also demands due compensation to the next-of-kin of the youth who was killed and magisterial regulation of the conduct of the Delhi Police in its campaign of detention, identification and deportation of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, so that Indian citizens are not harassed by the police.

As suggested earlier, by me to the Governor, it is reiterated that **every cordon and search should be supervised by a magistrate and no one should be detained for deportation until the evidence submitted by him in support of his claim to Indian citizenship and domicile are checked.**

The AIMMM also proposes that the **Illegal Migrants (Identification by Tribunals) Act, 1986 be notified in Delhi and one or more Tribunals be set up to try the cases of prima facie suspects.**

Mohd. Abdul Khadeer on Shakila's Triple Divorce Case

... There has been a demand to abolish triple divorce from many Muslims of the country. Who can abolish triple divorce, an existing practice by Indian Muslims? The Indian courts recognise its effect to break the marriage between the parties.

To abolish the triple divorce is not an easy job as it is a controversial issue. But we cannot remain silent spectators to the sufferings of Muslim divorced women who are left in a helpless and miserable condition by pronouncing the word talaq three times in quick succession.

This form of talaq is a 'Talaq-e-Bida', which is against the spirit of Quran and Ahadis. The Quran warns the people not to adopt this method saying 'And do not make jest of Allah's signs (commandments)' (Q.2: 231).

The marriage in the Muslim Law is essentially a civil contract. As in any other contract, conditions may be agreed and binding on the spouses.

It is time that in the interest of the Muslim community till the abolition of triple divorce through a proper legal process acceptable to Muslims, restrictive measures against this kind of divorce should be adopted within the framework of the Muslim Law. The Muslim social organisations, religious institutions and preachers should play a role to inform the members of the Muslim community about their matrimonial rights and duties laid down in Quran and Ahadis.

(Most) Muslim marriages are registered. The Qazis throughout the country prepare ... 'Nikhanama' for every marriage.

Now the Muslim Wakf Boards are maintaining records of the marriages. I propose that the Muslim Wakf Boards, in consultation with the Muslim institutions, the learned in the Muslim Law and Muslim advocates, may incorporate the terms and conditions of the marriage in ... 'Nikhanama'. Each spouse may be required to sign below the conditions with endorsement that the above conditions shall be binding upon him/her. The Qazi shall attest the endorsement.

Terms and conditions:

If divorce becomes an absolute necessity, the spouses shall observe the following conditions:

1. Before exercising right of divorce the matrimonial dispute shall be referred to arbitration for reconciliation (Q.4: 35).
2. Divorce shall take place in the presence of two witnesses to keep the testimony upright for Allah (Q.65: 2).
3. Divorce shall be pronounced when the woman is in a state of purity by accurately counting her prescribed period (Q.65: 1).

4. Divorce shall be pronounced in a period of three (menstruation) courses (Q.2: 228).
5. When the wife wants a separation through 'khula' form of divorce, the husband shall set her free (Q.2: 229 & 231).
6. Husband shall not leave his wife in suspension (Q.4: 129).
7. Husband shall not pronounce talaq three times in quick succession except in case of separation by mutual consent for.

(Source: The Hindu, 11 July, 2000)

One-Dimensional Man

Editorial, The Hindustan Times, 20 May, 2000

The proposed ban on talaq by the National Commission for Women is a positive move and needs to be considered with objectivity and openness by the Muslim community in India...

It is crucial for the betterment of the Muslim community that a dialogue "within" should begin. When women in Turkey and Iran can enjoy equal rights of divorce, or when a divorce in Bangladesh and Pakistan has to go through a reconciliatory process or an Arbitration Council, there is no reason why the Muslim Personal Law should be so conservatively interpreted in India. It is ironical that **India is the only country where this one-dimensional male authority of talaq is exercised.** It is hoped that this archaic system is ended, so that marriage becomes an equal partnership and not an arrangement titled so arbitrarily against the wife.

(Contd. from Page 351)

is set the ball rolling, turn (his) back on the NC and announce that he is willing to hold talks without pre-conditions with the Hurriyat leaders.

In the coming days, as Delhi 'considers' the J&K Assembly resolution, the NC is likely to turn up the pressure upon it. Its MLAs will make more and more seditious statements as they pose as the real champions of Kashmiri 'independence'. They may exhort Dr Abdullah to break his links with the NDA. Dr Abdullah will beg the Prime Minister to make some concession that will save him from his awful dilemma. If Vajpayee caves in, the Hurriyat will up the ante to full independence.

The 31,000 dormant militants in the Valley and Jammu will in all probability support them and become active once again. They may then strike a Faustian pact with the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen and the Lashkar... Only a firm refusal to discuss so important a subject with a four-year-old government whose popularity is on the wane, can arrest the slide into this abyss.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 30 June, 2000)

language belonging to the 'cow-belt'. In fact 90 per cent of the research papers written in Hindi speaking areas, most of which in any case are amongst the most underdeveloped in India, are in English. Professional journals are neither published in, nor translated into Hindi. Gunakar Muley, the famous Hindi science writer, asserts that Hindi and Hindi users are spurned by India's tax supported scientific establishment at the terrible cost of their talent and self-esteem. This has bred a deep seated inferiority complex in those who cannot read or write good English which is thought essential for the functioning of India's much valorised, though socially ineffective, scientific fraternity. The situation is hardly better in the social sciences. For example, there are many Indian students who pursue higher degrees abroad and base their research on the Hindi belt with an insufficient grasp of either Hindi or Urdu.

Poor Cousin to English

The official formalities of promoting Hindi have failed miserably. The failures have begun at the top as usual. For instance, the children of Indian political leaders prefer studying in English medium schools before leaving the country in pursuit of greener pastures. These ambitions are shared by businessmen, intellectuals and academics alike and almost everyone prominent manages to send his or her children abroad on one pretext or another. This push towards the west, and the widespread social admiration and envy it provokes in the case of people who 'make it', has shattered the self-confidence of the Indian middle class and blighted the Indian nation-building project. The Indian elite cannot escape blame for having used public institutions for personal gain since independence ... from the universities to the NGOs. If higher education in India is not good enough for their children how do the professors of our universities justify their vocation? Why are masters and doctorate still being given by Indian universities? Obviously a colonial complex is at work here or else why are foreign degrees considered superior to their Indian counterparts per se?

The mentality is universal. Indian scientists have always dreamt of settling in the west for a number of reasons and if the bureaucracy is added to these role models a neat picture of a neo-colonial elite emerges. When the Indian ruling class wants to live off India without being a part of it, who will uphold the cause of Hindi or other regional languages? ... Government inspired and largely symbolic efforts to encourage Hindi, including the ill-conceived, badly managed and counter-productive Hindi 'sammelans', have failed. What is the point, we may ask, of taking Hindi to the UN in this context. A historical relationship exists between language and the social formation to which it belongs. The ideological and cultural super structures of a society are tied to languages in dialectical evolution.

The history of Indian languages proves this. After the Aryans brought Sanskrit into India, the transformation of

the Vedic civilisation resulted in the emergence of Pali and regional Prakrits which were produced by the interaction of Sanskrit with locally spoken languages. The proliferation of Pali was also linked to the spread of Buddhism and the policy adopted towards it by the kingdom of Magadh. During the medieval period Indian languages were largely influenced by Persian which was patronised by the ruling elites. The result was the gradual evolution of new and highly cultivated languages like Urdu, and its more popular cousin Hindustani, in the Hindi speaking regions. The process of linguistic interaction, assimilation and evolution which probably began with the advent of the Aryans in India was produced by, and in turn reflected, a long-term process of socio-cultural synthesis in India. British rule and Macaulay's vision changed all this.

In the era of imperialism the English language and British mannerisms became popular amongst the social elite in most parts of British and princely India. But the nature of colonial rule meant that the influence of English was neither universal nor deep-rooted. It was resisted by the national movement and Indian literature of the period. But, for reasons stated earlier, the potential inherent in the protest against the imposition of English could not be realised in the Indian republic despite the anti-colonial noise its ruling elite continuously made. After 1947 English continued to flourish as the first language of the ruling classes and the state. This went hand-in-hand with the growing neglect of those values which had informed the protest against the British during the freedom struggle. The dual educational system prevalent in India and the sway of English over the media, literature and science are living monuments to this neglect of national values. This politics of language also helped the Indian bourgeoisie keep the labouring masses disempowered. What had worked for the British, the new rulers of India quickly realised after 1947, could also work for them. Hence while the Turko-Afghans and Mughals were assimilated into Indian society and even their names vanished the elite spawned by India's colonisation and so-called modernisation chose to isolate itself from the very country and society of its origin.

The previous decade of liberalisation, with the elite's vain hope of catching up with the west in a sea of backwardness, has been particularly unkind to Indian languages.

The votaries of English point out its merits in the context of India's regional, linguistic and social pluralism. Nobody can doubt that English is one of India's great assets. However, the admirers of English must also understand that successful nation states cultivate their own languages even at the cost of historical legacies they might unfortunately inherit. True knowledge and philosophy of a society cannot be developed in languages the masses do not comprehend...

(Source: The Economic and Political Weekly, 6 May, 2000)

Anirudh Deshpande on Future of Hindi, Urdu and Hindustani

... Hindi's future looks increasingly uncertain in its heartland... In India and abroad the decline of Hindi is a well-established fact ... despite ostensible government efforts to the contrary.

Political of Language

Hindi does not inspire hope today. Often it is so deeply influenced by other languages and English that it is difficult, in fact almost impossible, to call it Hindi. The uncouth medium dominating FM radio, cable TV and Bollywood in the 1980s and 1990s is neither a correct nor cultivated language. The Sanskritised and artificial sounding Hindi imposed upon us by the central government through the Air, Doordarshan and other government agencies does not enthuse Hindi supporters either. In fact alienated Hindi speakers often ridicule these unproductive government efforts... The reverse of this comprises the highly Persianised Urdu heard on the special Urdu programmes sponsored by the official media. These developments have kept pace with the gradual disappearance of good Hindustani from the average north Indian conversation which is now dominated by English slang and vulgar expressions, including abusive phrases, borrowed from other languages. Unfortunately, the decline of Hindustani and the step-motherly treatment meted out to Urdu in Uttar Pradesh, both related subjects reflecting the communalisation of language politics in India (is) not (widely) discussed... The growth of cosmopolitan India and a westward looking Indian diaspora seems to have worsened the situation. The condition appears more pathetic considering the sizeable number of pro-Hindutva elements among the NRIs who generally support an exclusivist notion of Indian culture. Most of the NRIs and Indians settled abroad usually speak broken Hindi with a great deal of effort. This peculiar language is overshadowed by imperfect English and the identity crisis of its speakers. It hardly complements a cultural achievement commensurate with the material prosperity attained by the majority of the NRIs.

However, some people overlook the implications of these facts while asserting that Hindi should also evolve like other languages. They also fail to see that an argument for Hindi is not necessarily against its evolution. Evolution is a good thing and, given the historical nature of linguistic evolution, will happen despite the purists. But, in the process of evolution, the distinction between the enrichment and necrosis of a language should be understood as clearly as possible. This leads to more questions. Why is it that under the influence of Sanskrit and Persian local Indian languages evolved into their present syncretic form whereas English could never be completely Indianised despite the deep socio-economic penetration of colonialism in India? English, precisely because of the destructive nature of British colonialism and the isolation of the ruling elite, produced a linguistic reaction in India whereas Persian – like the Turko-

Afghans and Mughals who brought it here – blended into the social and scholastic continuities characteristic of Indian history. Hence English could never combine with any Indian language to produce a literary and viable hybrid. After 200 years of colonial rule and 50 years of 'English' education only 5 per cent of Indians speak, read and write English.

After 1947 things have turned out differently in India. While the sentiment of anti-colonial nationalism has given way to widespread political cynicism the ruling classes have become increasingly westernised with the passage of time. Simultaneously the rise of Hindutva has also meant the selective promotion of Sanskritised Hindi in opposition to Hindustani and Urdu. But the swadeshi gimmicks of the saffron brigade have neither helped the cause of Hindi nor lessened the craving for English widely felt among the petty bourgeois supporters of Hindu communalism. The socio-cultural manifestation of liberalisation, which is also supported by Hindutva, have reinforced this trend. All this has ushered in a process of linguistic change in contemporary India which poses a grave threat to Hindi, its overall personality – both literary and spoken – and its capacity to express our history in a specifically indigenous idiom. Evolutionists will concede that this has not happened everywhere else in the world...

The popularity of a language depends upon the social prestige, self-respect, regional pride and national sentiment of its speakers. State policy, which may not do justice to the relevant constitutional provisions mentioned earlier, significantly influences its future. Hence it is easy to see why Hindi fares poorly after 50 years of independence. In modern India, Hindi is not the language of social status and power. This salutary fact affects the condition of Hindi in multiple ways. Social scientists and linguists tell us that in every society the language of the ruling class moulds the language of society and political hegemony is closely related to linguistic dominance in general. Hence, the decline of Hindi can be located in the power equations of Indian society. It must also be seen in connection with a general debasement of values in India since the end of the freedom movement. The consequences are evident. For instance, Hindi is not preferred in the upper echelons of the administrative and judicial services. It is not patronised by the middle class and particularly the upper middle class, most private schools and the glamourised crust of the urban literary sections. In higher education, technical education, colleges and university departments Hindi, both as a spoken language and subject, is rapidly declining in importance. In most universities students pursuing Hindi for graduate and post-graduate degrees often find themselves isolated from the academic mainstream and sometimes even an object of derision. Higher academic research in the sciences and social sciences is often considered impossible to conduct in Hindi, which is supposed to be a 'backward'

All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat

Formation of Parallel Body Motivated, Subversive and Disruptive Statement, 10 July, 2000

"The dissident group led by the former President Maulana Salim Qasmi, the former Vice-President Maulana Mohd. Wali Rahmani and the former General Secretary Ahmad Ali Qasmi, which had unlawfully held a meeting of the old Markazi Majlis-e-Amla on 17 June, 2000 spurned all efforts at reconciliation and finally crossed the rubicon by convening a meeting of a fake Markazi Majlis-e-Mushawarat, held fake elections for appointing themselves as office-bearers. By forming a parallel body, the dissident group has left no room for reconciliation.

The All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (AIMMM) regrettably notes that the dissident group has torn the Dastoor of the Mushawarat into shreds although they had originally raised the banner of revolt in the name of the Dastoor. This shows that the subversion of the unity of the Mushawarat was deliberately planned and motivated to protect their own selfish interests and capture the Mushawarat.

To recall, Maulana Ahmad Ali Qasmi had sold the Kalan Mahal office of the Mushawarat, rented by the late President Mufti Atiqur Rahman, and pocketed the sale proceeds. Subsequently he spent nearly Rs. 5 lakhs during his General Secretaryship (1991-95) out of the bank interest on the Mushawarat's FD's relating to Central Relief Fund and Babari Masjid Legal Defence Fund, for which he is yet to render full account. On the other hand, during 1995-2000, the Mushawarat has raised the FD from Rs. 11 lakhs to 16 lakhs and has not spent a single paisa out of the interest in the Mushawarat's office.

He harps on his claim of having spent Rs.20,000/- from his own pocket for the Mushawarat but this was not supported by documents and hence it was not endorsed by the Mushawarat Committee set up to examine it.

Maulana Wali Rahmani wanted to be the President of the Mushawarat and is known to have canvassed for his nomination but failed to find any member to nominate or second the proposal.

Maulana Salim Qasmi, during his Presidentship, failed to give due time and attention to the Mushawarat because of his preoccupation with the Darul Uloom (Wakf). But what is notable is that he did not take any action to recover Rs.1,65,000/-, admittedly payable by the former Treasurer Mr. Qamar Kazmi, who is related to him and lives in Deoband.

In forming their parallel body, the dissidents have enacted a total farce. Their illegal meeting of 17 June, 2000 was attended by only 10 out of 93 members of the Markazi Majlis for 2000-2003 (formally constituted on 12 May, 2000 without any objection from any of them), 3 out of 11 Constituent Members and 3 out of 13 Jamaats. They

did not publish the names of participants even in the formal minutes!

They announced the formation of a parallel Markazi Majlis on 17 June, 2000 but have so far not published the list of its members. Nor have they published the names of the 17 Jamaats they claim to have affiliated.

Their so-called 'election meeting' on 8 July, 2000 was attended by rank outsiders and strangers. With all their effort they could entice only 3 more members of the Markazi Majlis-e-Mushawarat to their camp: Mr. Ashfaq Alam, Maulana Fuzailur Rahman Usmani (a close relative of Maulana Salim Qasmi) and Mr. Junaid Ahmad Banarsi. The last had indeed participated in the meeting of the Markazi Majlis on 18 June, 2000 and has now, for reasons better known to him, switched sides. As usual, they have not published the names of those who participated in the farce of 8 July, 2000. And the core group took 7 out of 10 posts!

In a democracy, any group can form an organisation but, in view of the above, it is clear that they have no moral or legal right to designate themselves as the All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat and thus misguide and confuse the people. They have done this presumably to claim the assets of the Mushawarat including Rs. 16 lakhs in fixed deposits.

The AIMMM unequivocally and strongly condemns their illegal, subversive and disruptive action and cautions the Millat against their campaign of disinformation and disintegration.

Since the separation of a small group does not amount to a division of the Mushawarat, the AIMMM is confident that it will emerge stronger from the separation of this self-centred, disgruntled and unprincipled group and it shall continue to serve the Muslim community and the country with commitment and determination.

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Tahir Mahmood

On Planning for Empowerment

... Even going by the officially admitted figures, every eighth Indian is a Muslim, in the global Muslim population Indian Muslims figure in the slot of the top three countries next to Indonesia and Bangladesh...

... The Muslim presence in India ... is not at all reflected in the State policies, practices and programmes or the official statistical data and numerical figures. In the Central, State and Local Self Governments, in statutory and autonomous bodies, in decision-making and law-enforcing agencies, in public and private undertakings, and in the educational and professional institutions of national, regional and local levels, the representation of the Muslims is – by all standards – far from being even remotely proportionate to their national, regional and local population. Notably, this is also true of the Muslim-dominated Jammu & Kashmir, Lakshadweep and of all those districts where the Muslim population is above the national average.

During these 51 years of Independence, State policies, policy-makers' decisions, legislative enactments, governmental actions, and even judicial pronouncements, have made no efforts to ensure in any way that this community actually gets its due in the material resources and the developmental avenues of the nation.

Through the Constitution ... "solemnly resolves" to secure to all citizens "social, economic and political justice" and "equality of status and opportunity". So far as the Muslims are concerned, this resolution unfortunately has not been fulfilled...

The Muslims, have to seek due empowerment under the protective umbrella of the Constitution that stresses on secularism and equality of all religions. The Constitution is a product of a century-long national movement in which the Muslims had an equal part.

On the basis of the actual experience of these 50 years the Equality and Secularism Clauses of the Constitution have to be further strengthened and developed. Protection of the secular Constitution is, therefore, the first imperative for the Muslims for their ... empowerment...

The State failed to adequately play its Constitutional role in respect to the educational and economic development of the second largest religious community. However, ... Muslims have also not played their cards well in this regard.

They have kept themselves busy with regard to their religious rights leaving not much time for planning and implementing proper strategies for educational and economic development...

Fifty years of state apathy to the constitutional rights of the Muslims and their educational and socio-economic

West Bengal Minorities

Development and Finance Corporation Report on Activities, 1997 – 31 March, 2000

Lending Programme

	Total No.	Total (Rs.)	Per Capita Loan
Muslim	3,481	188,429,256	54,131
Christian	28	1,386,525	49,519
Sikh	10	1,056,875	105,688
Buddhist	12	747,205	62,267

Loan Recovery Position

Amount Due on 31.3.2000 (1)	Amount Repaid (2)	Amount Overdue (3)	% of Recovery (2÷1) (4)
32,167,712	11,123,710	21,044,001	34.58

Lending Target for 2000-2001: 1200.46 Lakhs for 5000 beneficiaries, for term loans, development finances, transport finance, margin money. Some Non-Governmental Organisations are being identified for implementation of the Schemes of Micro-Financing... Vigour drives have been planned to improve recovery position...

Training Programmes

	Total Trainees	Duration	Cost
Total	174	499 man-months	5,22,740

The Corporation has undertaken to provide training programmes in the field of Traditional and Technical occupation and entrepreneurship to develop professional skill leading to self-employment with special emphasis on women in leather footwear, fashion designing, doll making, jute weaving, electrical, plumbing and sanitary practice.

The Corporation plans to spend Rs.19.98 lakhs under Training Programme for the year 2000-2001 and extend it, apart from the above to basic computer training, interior decoration, kanatha stitching and embroidery, carpentry, tailoring, electric gadget repair, two and three-wheeler repair.

Housing Programme

...The Corporation plans to undertake some housing projects for low, medium and high-income groups among minorities.

The Government has already allocated one site in Calcutta... Details will be worked out in due course.

empowerment as per the Constitutional requirements, coupled with our own indifference to the ... Islamic ... guidelines in this respect, has led to stagnation of the community. A programme of empowerment of the Muslims through skillful social engineering should be planned and implemented...

(Source: The Al-Harmony, July-September, 1999)

Apratim Mukarji

On RSS Textbooks in RSS Schools

... Thousands of children in the country who are acquiring a unique perspective of Indian history and culture, thanks to a 'special' series of textbooks.

(A) textbook published by Vidya Bharati Akhil Bharatiya Shiksha Sansthan is part of the curriculum in the 6,000 (according to an unofficial estimate, 14,000) schools run by the organisation that is closely identified with the RSS. The organisation says that it is engaged in providing ... education in religion, culture and nationalism.

The textbooks, "Sanskriti Jnan Pareekhsha" (Culture Knowledge Examination) and "Sanskrit-Jnan Pareekhsha Prashnottari" (Culture Knowledge Examination Question-Answers) are used in an all-India examination conducted by the organisation.

On Babari Masjid: For example, the students learn that ... Maharaj Kush, son of Lord Ram, who built the first temple to the Hindu God at Ayodhya... Chandragupta Vikramaditya (AD 380-413) built the present Ram temple.

And which Mughal invader destroyed the Ram temple in 1528? Easy question, for who doesn't know that it was Babur? But why is the Babari Masjid not a mosque? Because Muslims "have never till today offered namaz there," says the textbook.

On Sri Lanka: ... "What is the name of the island in the south which touches the feet of Bharat Mata and which reminds us of Sri Ramchandra's victory over Ravana and which was a part of our country at one time?" The almost innocuous jab at the truth is typical of the deliberate untruths and distortions of historical facts that abound the textbooks.

Congress Member of the Rajya Sabha Eduardo Faleiro has accused the publishers of the textbooks of spreading religious bigotry and denigrating Christianity and Islam.

On Christianity: "It is because of the conspiratorial policies of the followers of (Christianity) that India was partitioned. Even today, Christian missionaries are engaged in fostering anti-national tendencies in Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Kerala and other regions because of which there is a grave danger to the integrity of the present-day India."

Interestingly, the National Steering Committee for Text Book Evaluation, which evaluated these textbooks, "shares the concern expressed over the publication and use of blatantly communal writings in the series entitled 'Sanskriti Jnan' in the Vidya Bharati schools and agrees that the series is designed to promote bigotry and religious fanaticism in the name of inculcating knowledge of culture in the young generation."

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 5 June, 2000)

Views of Dara Singh

On Staines Killing

... There are enough reasons to hate (on Staines. They) have been targeting our religion. They have been converting Hindus by deceit and inducements.

Our religion is under siege. So to oppose them was my responsibility as a true Hindu. Therefore I worked in the region, organising people against conversions and cow slaughter... I was only doing my duty.

... There has been a movement even against the Muslims in the locality... We never liked their activities. The Muslims targeted cows and our religion... And the neo-converts were being unleashed on the local Hindus. How can any religion sleep over such constant attacks.

... Hindus are opposed to both Muslims and Christians and the fight is still on here. It's a fact of life and when there is a fight, some people do die.

For the deaths of the two Staines children I have no regrets. And I will never regret. I have other important things to regret, like the loss of lives in the Orissa cyclone. I also regret the (killings) of Indian jawans by missionary-backed insurgents in the North East. When Hindus die, others don't cry. So why should we weep when others die? Whatever has happened is right. Whatever that will happen will also be right.

... I am certain that cow slaughter and conversions will stop once for ever. And till the time it happens, the fight would be on...

... Graham Staines ... must have got killed because he was into conversions. This is certain... If (Mrs. Staines) is also into conversions, I will oppose her.

Once (I am) free, I will go back to do what I have been doing - against cow slaughter and conversions... The Government must stop conversions and cow slaughter. If they are not stopped, more might get killed. Anything can happen...

(Source: The Indian Currents, 28 May 2000)

QUIZ TIME

Question: How many devotees of Lord Ram gave down their lives to liberate the Ram temple in 1528-1914?

Answer: Three lakh fifty thousand.

Question: How many times did the British invade Sri Ramjanambhoomi?

Answer: Seventy-seven times.

Question: Why will November 1992 be inscribed in black letters in the history of India?

Answer: Because on that day, the then Home Minister, by ordering the police to open fire on the kar sevaks, massacred hundreds of innocent people.

Ministry of Human Resource Development: Annual Report, 1999-2000 (Extracts)

Equalisation of Educational Opportunities for Minorities: ... Area Intensive Programme for Educationally Backward Minorities was launched in May 1993. It seeks to provide basic infrastructure and facilities in areas of concentration of educationally backward minorities, which do not have adequate provision for elementary and secondary education... The scheme covers 325 blocks and four districts (of Assam) spread over 13 States and three Union Territories.

Since the inception of the scheme, full/part grants have been given for the construction of buildings for 1502 primary/upper primary/secondary schools, 13 hostels, six residential higher secondary schools for girls and 1060 classrooms; upgradation of 38 primary schools to upper primary schools and high schools to higher secondary schools; construction of toilets in 106 schools and provision of teaching-learning material in 724 primary/upper primary schools and provision of library books and furniture in 638 primary/upper primary/secondary schools.

... During 1998-99 Rs.13.52 crore were released... The BE for the current financial year is Rs.15 crore out of which Rs.10 crore has been released to State Governments (as on 31 January, 2000).

Modernisation of Madrasa Education: ... Grants amounting to Rs.6,73,85,000 were released during 1998-99. The BE for the current financial year is Rs.10 crore.

Incentive for Teaching/Study of Urdu

The scheme provides for appointment of Urdu teachers and incentive for teaching/learning of Urdu to augment educational facilities for girls... The scheme is implemented in the minority concentration blocks/districts identified by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

Coaching Classes for Weaker Sections

Under this scheme, the University Grants Commission provides financial assistance to selected universities/colleges which organise appropriate coaching classes to train persons belonging to educationally backward minority communities to enable them to compete in various competitive examinations. 21 Universities and 57 Colleges have been brought under this scheme which includes ten coaching centres. The University Grants Commission has constituted a committee to effectively monitor the scheme and to review the working of these centres.

National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language

... The National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL) an autonomous body ... became functional w.e.f. 1 April, 1996. The NCPUL is engaged in preparation of academic literature in Urdu for the Urdu-speaking people of the country. Financial assistance is provided to 54 calligraphy training centres... Out of the intended 12 volumes of Urdu Encyclopaedia, six volumes have been published and others are under compilation.

Five volumes of English-Urdu Dictionary have also been published.

Another major achievement of the Council has been to coordinate the activities of various state Urdu Academies... The Council has published 33 new titles besides 98 reprints during the year. Besides the publications which were discontinued in the past have been revived and are being published regularly.

... The Council has endeavoured to design a well-knit all-India network for coordination of Urdu promotional activities....

Shahabuddin on Introduction of English in MCD Schools

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has introduced English from Class-I in its schools with effect from the current academic year.

The MCD has justified the introduction of English from Class-I on the ground that it is the 'need of the hour' and provides an 'alternative to those who cannot send their children to private schools'.

The MCD seeks to introduce English progressively as medium of instruction in higher classes of the primary schools. English is not the mother tongue of those students, except perhaps for a handful. Most of the students have Hindi as their Mother Tongue. There are, however, considerable number of children whose Mother Tongue is Punjabi or Urdu. There are other linguistic minorities but they are small and the children largely go to their own schools.

Two question arise: is it a considered decision to substitute Hindi by English as medium of school instruction? This needs to be seriously pondered over.

The second relates to the linguistic minorities in Delhi. Every child will now learn English besides Hindi. The non-Hindi children, if they wish to learn their M.T. at the primary stage, as they must, will have to carry a triple load - 50 per cent heavier than the Hindi-speaking children. Introduction of English will, therefore, leave practically no academic space for Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali and other minority languages in the Delhi context. Is this fair? Is it equality? Is it intended to introduce Three-Language Formula from class-I itself?

Top Colleges in India

S.No.	Faculty	Total	No. of Minority Colleges	No. of Christian Colleges	No. of Muslim Colleges/ Depts.
1.	Arts	10	5	5	-
2.	Science	10	5	5	-
3.	Commerce	9	4	4	-
4.	Engineering	10	-	-	-
5.	Medicine	10	2	1	1*
6.	Law	10	1	-	1*

*Faculties of Medicine and Law of the AMU, if AMU is regarded as a MEI.

(Source: The India Today, 19 June, 2000)

MOEMIN: Karnataka Convention, Bangalore, 1-2 July, 2000

Working Paper on Education (Relevant Extracts)

Education

1. **Literacy:** The literacy rate of Karnataka state as per 1991 census was 56% while as per socio-economic and educational survey conducted by the State Minorities Commission in 1994 the literacy level obtaining among Muslims was 53%...
2. ... Muslims with 85% of the minorities people are a drag on the average figure of minority literacy... This demonstrates the need for greater participation of Muslim organisations in mass education programme of the government... (They should) open total literacy centres and post-literacy centres with the help of the Government.

Primary Education: The general enrollment levels according to State Economic Survey 1998-99 for the year 1996-97 and the age group-wise details of children attending schools according to Minorities Survey are tabulated below:

	Children in Primary Schools	
	Percentage of children of	
	All Communities Enrolled	Muslims Attending Schools
Class I – IV	94.20	35
Class V – VII	74.95	36

... The question, therefore, arises as to how to motivate particularly the weaker sections among Muslims to enroll, retain and educate their children in primary schools at least upto VIIIth standard level...

Nursery Schooling: ... Efforts should be made to prevail upon Government and concerned authorities to open Urdu Anganwadis/Balwadis in Muslim dominated areas, both urban and rural... Private managements should open model nursery/play schools based on Montessori system etc, wherever such a target group is available in adequate numbers among Muslims...

Awareness Campaign: ... One Jumma Khutaba in a month to be delivered by Imams of mosques should be on the benefits, opportunities and prospects of education... Local public should also carryout enrollment and literacy campaigns with maximum assistance (from the) Government... Propaganda/persuasion campaign (should be carried out) on individual basis with families and collective basis in religious festivals, gatherings and Urs/ anniversary of saints etc.

Essential Inputs for Success of Primary Education: The following essential inputs ... are recommended:

- i) **Textbooks, Uniforms in Urdu Primary Schools:** Free textbooks and uniforms now being given to SC/ST students even in higher primary schools (V to VII) should cover Urdu Primary Schools also.
- ii) **Mid-day Meals Scheme:** should be introduced,

with and without Government, help in Urdu Primary Schools.

- iii) **Construction/repair of class room/water and toilet facilities.** A fair share of Government funds earmarked should be given to Urdu Schools...
- iv) **Supply of educational equipment** (Audio Visual aids, colour TVs, Computers). A fair share should be allocated to Urdu Primary Schools by Government as recommended by State Minorities Commission.
- v) **Teachers** ... should be appointed in time at the present scale of 1:40 Teacher: Pupil ratio. Particularly to teach Kannada, Urdu-knowing Kannada teachers may be appointed.
- vi) **School Betterment Committees** should be reconstituted.

Non-Formal/Distance Education and Vocational Education: ... There is need to combine education with vocational education for certain segments of the society. Towards this there is need to open vocational education centres near schools/community halls, or other public places in slums and predominantly Muslim villages to teach (dropouts) skills like masonry, carpentry, wiring, mechanics, plumbing, tailoring etc... These centres should have literacy classes for 2 hours a day (even evening)...

Such centres could enroll their students-cum-helpers in distance education centres under open school schemes of the Government...

Secondary Education: In High School age group viz., 14-16 years 24% of Muslim children were in schools; whereas the corresponding percentage for other minorities was high... The following recommendations are made:

Quantity: Towards increasing enrollment awareness campaign is recommended... Here also vocationalisation ... will greatly help...

Quality: ... Audio visual aids, computers with Internet etc. ... may be obtained from the Government as well as from the Muslim public... Incentive awards for rank holders in each class and scholarships to bright poor students may be held out.

Recommendations for all Levels of Education

Remedial Classes: Some remedial classes may be taken ... out of school hours. Teachers may be remunerated for the same.

Knowledge of Kannada and English: ... It is noted that third language as Urdu is not there in Government syllabus for school education... It is recommended to Government that Urdu, in addition to Kannada and English as first and second language status may be accorded third language status...

Residential Schools: ... Private managements should ... open at least one residential school of highest standards in each district following ICSE syllabus.

Residential Polytechnics/ITI's/Vocational Centres

for Certificate Courses: There is need to open at least one such institution on a residential basis in each district.

Higher Education: All the Urdu-medium and Muslim managed secondary schools should be converted into pre-university (10+2) colleges, attached with vocational education courses.

All Muslim managed degree colleges of Arts, Science and Commerce should be run efficiently and offer remedial classes. Students should be guided to take appropriate private coaching as is happening in the case of Brahmin managed institutions... These colleges should consider offering new courses like molecular biology, biotechnology, industrial sociology, genetic engineering etc. to meet rising demands...

Career Guidance, Coaching for Competitive Exam: In every institution ... run by the community career guidance bureaus should be opened... In addition coaching both for common Entrance Test for admission to (i) Engineering (ii) Medicine (iii) all other professional courses including IITs and for Competitive examinations for services ... should be opened in all degree colleges.

Muslim Representation in AICTE, IMC, IDC etc.: In all state and India bodies constituted for according permission/recognition to professional colleges, P.G. courses etc. there should be a Muslim member...

Muslim Members on Recruitment Panels of Universities: A Muslim member may be invariably included in the recruitment panels for all teaching and non-teaching staff...

Madrasa Education: In all Madrasas run in local mosques at least general education upto IV standard may be given along with study of Arabic etc. Central and/or State funds earmarked for Madrasa Education may be obtained. In religious institutions training the clergy along with religious knowledge general education at least upto degree level may be imparted. This can be organised through distance education...

Moral Instructions: ... In all institutions run by the community, at least one hour a week should be devoted for moral instructions. A uniform syllabus could be drafted for this purpose.

Hostels: All available government funds for starting hostels ... should be fully availed of... Private people, trusts, etc. should put up hostels in other places...

Scholarships: Maximum possible help from government scholarships should be taken. Private endowments, trusts etc. also should extend scholarships to needy and deserving students.

Meritorious students should be given financial awards for high attainments in PUC, Engineering, Medicine P.G. courses etc.

Loans from Banks: ... Banks are extending loans to students. The students who get selected ... should be helped to secure bank loans.

Financial Resources: ... Funds ... should be mobilised in the following ways:

- i) Contributions including Zakat

Spreading Saffron

Editorial, The Hindustan Times, 24 June, 2000

After history, the arts. The latest victim in the drive to saffronise various institutions is the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) which has witnessed the unusual spectacle of a Union Minister appointing himself to a committee for running the institution. Culture Minister Ananth Kumar apparently does not believe in half-measures. Not only did he sack the board of trustees and nominate his appointee as member secretary along with a group of new trustees, he must have also considered it safer to find a place for himself in the seven-member executive committee charged with running the Centre...

Mr. Kumar has argued that the earlier board had to go because most of its members were politicians. So, he tried to make 'amends' by appointing several artistes to the new board. But that must have been part of a window-dressing exercise. For when it came to the executive committee, it turned out that it was nearly filled with names known to be close to the ruling party. That is where the real purpose of the takeover becomes clear. It also knocks the bottom out of the Minister's earlier justification for sacking the board.

Apparently, culture is too important a subject for those in power to be left just to persons engaged in cultural pursuits. But, unlike the other cultural institutions in the government sector, the IGNCA's charter had been so designed as to allow it the maximum immunity from official control and interference. That has now received a body blow... Mr. Kumar ... seems to have highly original ideas about how an institution of this nature must be run. Judging from the initial reports, the new dispensation seems to favour a shift in the thrust ... from basic research to cultural (saffron?) propagation and conducting familiarisation courses... This would amount to ... a trivialisation of the IGNCA's original mandate.

- ii) Government programmes
- iii) About 20% of Wakf Development Fund
- iv) Contributions from the Corporate Sector

Confederation of All Muslim Organisations in the Human Resource Development Sector: All organisations working in the field of education ... should have a state level Confederation for human resource development to plan, coordinate and execute development plans...

English Medium Schools: ... The Government of Karnataka should allow private managements to open English medium schools at their own cost...

Women's Education: Due importance should be given to women's education. It appeals to parents to ensure that the education of a girl child is given as much importance as a boy... Managements should open schools, polytechnics, colleges, etc., exclusively for women and Women's Hostels.

Islamic Studies: In the Universities Islamic Studies/ West Asian Studies may be introduced...

All India Educational Movement: Third Annual General Meeting

The Third Annual General Meeting of the All India Educational Movement was held on 12.3.2000 at New Delhi. The following attended:

Members

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Saiyid Hamid | 10. A. Karim Naik |
| 2. J.M. Khan | 11. Md. Sharif Khan |
| 3. Mohd. Ishaq | 12. Amirul Islam |
| 4. Amanullah Khan | 13. Afzal Husain |
| 5. S. Farooq | 14. Abdun Nabi |
| 6. P. Koya | 15. Mohd. Israil |
| 7. Uzma Naheed | 16. Muzaffar Ali |
| 8. Atiq A. Siddiqi | 17. M.H. Zulqarnain |
| 9. P.K. Saiyed | and 19 Special Invitees |

The Chairman, in his address, confessed that the expectations with which (they) had established AIEM had unfortunately not materialized. We have, he exhorted to start a new chapter and redouble our efforts.

The General Secretary reported that AIEM has been registered under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 on 3.11.1999. The Newsletter has been published regularly.

It was resolved that the Statement of accounts for 1999-2000 presented by the General Secretary was adopted. The budget for 2000-2001 was adopted as below:

1. Newsletter	Rs. 72,000
2. Salaries	Rs. 48,000
3. Tours	Rs. 50,000
4. Conveyance	Rs. 5,000
5. P&T	Rs. 3,000
6. Meetings	Rs. 12,000
7. Rental	Rs. 10,000
8. Misc.	Rs. 50,000
Total	Rs. 2,50,000

... The following persons agreed to constitute state bodies in their respective States:

R.K. Saiyed	:	Gujarat
J.M. Khan	:	Rajasthan
Mohd. Israil	:	Haryana

A Government Vedic University

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi Vedic Vishwa Vidyalaya Adhiniyam, 1995 (MP Act 37 of 1995) establishes ... a University ... to provide education and research in Vedic learnings...

The University shall provide for instruction in all branches of Vedic learning and practices including Darshan, Agam Tantra, Itihas, Puranas, Upvedas and Gyan-Vigyan...

Maharshi Mahesh Yogi shall be the first Chancellor and shall hold office during his life time...

The Sunni Cultural Centre, Calicut

The Sunni Cultural Centre (Markaz-us Thaqafa-tis Sunniyya) is situated at Karanthur, 14 kms off Calicut city, the nerve centre of Malabar (established) in 1978... The Markaz comprises of Arabic College, Hifzul Qur'an Centre, Post-graduate Islamic Study Centre, L.P. & U.P. Schools, Secondary Madrasa, a residential English-medium school, printing press, Computer and Typewriting Institute and an Orphanage..

One of the major ventures of the Markaz is the orphanage for boys under 15, which was opened in 1980 (with the) capacity (of) more than 900 boys... An investment is made on behalf of each inmate by the Centre in a business venture with funds donated by the public. The profit is shared by the inmates only. On completion of their education and vocational training such as electronics, computer, printing, tailoring and carpentry, inmates get their invested amount with profits ... to start their own ventures... An orphanage for poor girls was also opened recently.

... Over 200 students are (learning to recite the Quran)... More than 700 students are studying at the Shari'ah College (for) the award of 'Moulvi Fadil Thaqafi'. They are engaged by various organizations for the propagation of Islam. The Islamic Research Centre and Library are other ... facilities at the Markaz.

One of the largest mosques in Kerala, Masjidul Hamili, is situated in the campus (with capacity of) 5500.

The Markaz's budget comes to Rs.3.5 million monthly ... which comes from (donors) in India and abroad (and) the commercial complex built at the centre of Calicut...

The advisory role of the Centre is acceptable to Sunnis who constitute 90 per cent of the Muslim population in Kerala... The Markaz has attained a special place in the field of Islamic studies and scholastic pursuits in Kerala.

The credit ... goes to the reputed scholar Shaikh Aboobakar Musliar, known as Kanthapuram, who is a charismatic leader of the Sunnis of Kerala...

(Source: The Milli Gazette, 1-15 June, 2000)

AICTE Call for

New Institutions and Courses

All India Council for Technical Education, I.G. Sports Complex, I.P. Estate, New Delhi - 110 002 has called for applications by 10 August, 2000 from registered Trust/Society, Universities, State Government etc. for establishment of new technical institutions in academic year 2001-2002/2000-2003 and introduction of new courses and/or variation in the approved intake capacity in academic year 2001/2002.

Prescribed forms maybe obtained from the AICTE.

Neena Vyas on Sangh Parivar's Role

The second head of the RSS, Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar, identified three "enemies" of the Hindu nation - Muslims, Christians and communists. He made it crystal clear that Christian gentlemen, especially the missionaries, were out to demolish the religious and social fabric of our life... Golwalkar noted in his Bunch of Thoughts that wherever the followers of Jesus Christ went they proved to be not blood-givers, but blood-suckers. And the disciples of Christ helped to annihilate natives wherever they went, be it America, Australia or Africa.

In fact, he argued in another book, *We, Our Nationhood Defined*, that as long as the Muslims and the Christians failed to abandon their own religion and culture they cannot but be only foreigners in this country and if they stayed here without losing their "separate existence" they might be treated as "enemies", at best as "idiots." His argument tilts more favourably towards treating all Christians as "hostiles" who are agents of the international movement for the spread of Christianity.

... What the RSS gurus have been preaching for nearly 75 years, it has helped to produce the mindset in the cadre. And perhaps it is no coincidence that the establishment of the Vajpayee Government at the Centre has led to an explosion of anti-Christian literature - pamphlets, handbills, even posters. Of course, some of this inflammatory matter has been printed under the masthead of various little known organisations, some directly linked to the RSS organisations and others whose identity and pedigree need to be investigated. Whatever the view that emerges, the RSS and its organisations cannot absolve themselves of the charge that they have helped to create an atmosphere conducive to assaults on Christians...

It should not be difficult for any government to establish the identity of those behind this foul hate-literature. But instead, it seems, the RSS, the BJP, the VHP and the Bajrang Dal have decided jointly that the ISI be blamed for the spate of attacks on the Christians and their institutions... The earlier stance articulated by both Advani, Union Home Minister, and Vajpayee that the incidents were plain cases of infringement of the law and were being "blown out of proportion" by some Christian organisations and 'pseudo-secular' parties has been given up, at least temporarily...

The RSS and its many organisations may continue to protest, a bit too loudly, that they have no hand in the violence being perpetrated against the Christians and their institutions, but there are enough hard facts available, in black and white, to establish that they have created a hate Christian mindset in their cadre... As John Dayal of the All-India Christian Council alleged, the "RSS controlled organisations have been carrying out blatant propaganda not only against Christians but their faith itself, questioning the very tenets of their belief, ridiculing the

entire community by questioning the belief in Virgin Mary and the Resurrection of Christ."

What stands out is the fact that for 53 years since Independence and 2000 years since Christianity came to this country, the Christians have lived in peace with fellow countrymen. Now the attacks on the Christians have coincided with the BJP rule at the Centre. That fact alone should make the government sit up and take note.

(Source: The Hindu, 25 June, 2000)

Rajeev Shukla

On World Christian Reaction

The time is now ripe for the Government to come down heavily on those who are either attacking churches or making statements against Christians. By their obnoxious behaviour, a handful of people are causing a lot of damage to the nation. These incidents cannot be ignored as stray acts of vandalism and appear to be part of a laboriously chalked-out, mischievous strategy. And, at a time when the country is already suffering from a communal divide between Hindus and Muslims, a new confrontation with Christians should not be allowed at any cost.

So far, the Christians have been the most peace-loving people in this country. And the others, by and large, have no problems with them. I firmly believe that the people of India are not against the Christians and also, don't nurture a soft corner for the miscreants attacking churches. The so-called self-proclaimed Hindu organisations don't even have any Hindu support in the canard they spread against the Christians. In fact, people like Giriraj Kishore of the VHP are helping Pakistan a lot with their irresponsible comments. So far, the world has ignored the Pakistani propaganda that minorities are being targeted in India... These utterances by the VHP and the Bajrang Dal, and certain incidents of violence against Christians, have provided the predominantly Christian West... Now, the ISI is taking full advantage of the utterances of the VHP and Bajrang Dal, apart from the gory acts committed by Dara Singh... There is indication of the involvement of a foreign hand behind the three church explosions in South India, and that foreign hand is the ISI's. These blasts must immediately be probed by the Home Ministry...

If blasts continue to rock churches and Christians continue to be soft targets, the global Christian bloc will become hostile towards India... Kishore and the others are only loudmouths who talk more and act less.

... It's high time that Vajpayee and Advani call the VHP and Bajrang Dal leaders and tell them to shut up. If they do not listen, put them behind bars. The whole nation will support this act. After all, the nation is more important than individual agendas based on narrow ideologies.

(Source: The Indian Express, 9 July, 2000)

Seema Mustafa on Anti-Christian Violence

... Time-bombs set a new trend in the systematic violence that has been unleashed against the Christians for the past two years. It has given invisibility to the perpetrators of the violence who now do not have to lead mobs to destroy churches and hack priests. They can do the same from the sanctuary of their own homes, making it easier for the law enforcing authorities to protect them. It also extends their reach, for now places of worship and missionaries can be targeted even in states where the assailants do not enjoy ... support. From Gujarat, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh they can now operate in all of India with a lot of prejudice and no fear.

The secular environment of the country has been totally vitiated. Hate literature of the worst kind is being openly circulated in the districts by organisations like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Bajrang Dal, as well as many others that are floated by the RSS and the BJP from time to time. Leaders of these organisations are on record, legitimising the violence (against) the citizens of this country (who are) living peacefully and working with the poor and downtrodden...

Christian workers have adopted the poor and very backward areas in some states like Bihar, Orissa as their own. They have worked amongst the scheduled castes and tribes with a dedication that is admirable. They have provided the poorest of the poor with food, shelter, clothing and a level of education which is now bringing a generation of the tribals and dalits out of their ghettos into the mainstream. In the process many have found it convenient to convert to Christianity to escape the miseries of an oppressive caste system. Many have also been asked to convert by the missionaries whose religion provides for conversion, and whose faith believes in it.

So how does this affect India? The people, Hindus, Muslims, Christians or whatever, are still citizens of the country. They are not being taken away. And if there are other religious groups who are not very happy with the conversions then what stops them from working with the poor and downtrodden and influencing them with their doctrines? Nothing except that this is hard work require a level of dedication and commitment that these fanatics do not have ... that they are not interested in bringing these sections up socially... But at the same time they are scared of an entire constituency, read vote bank, slipping away outside their control. So what is the way out? Murder, time bombs, rape. Terror.

In the midst of (it all) the mighty Govt. of India remains a silent spectator. As do most of the Opposition parties except the Left Front which has shown concern for the plight of this hapless minority which is now at the receiving end of the goon's gun and the policeman's baton... The Christians are an easy target... Taught to turn the other cheek, they are easily terrorised and are not

present in numbers large enough to mount an effective resistance to those attacking them. So what would have been a communal riot becomes an "incident" which can then be coloured any which way by the Government of the day. It can become an attack by a criminal gang, with the argument being given the necessary endorsement by the hired men of ... who are running the Minorities Commission these days.

It is because of this one fact that the Muslim minority in the country is being given a breathing space... An ideology which believes in consolidating its constituency by keeping a hate target alive, also needs to remind its people that they are under siege by the minorities who are either converting (Christians) or reproducing (Muslims) at a frenetic pace. Muslims are not a very pliable or predictable target, but the Christians obviously are. And are being used by the ideological fascists... The Christians have been left on their own by the political establishment. No tears are being shed for India is the process of losing its soul. To opportunism and communalism.

(Courtesy: The Asian Age, 10 June, 2000)

(Contd. from Page 353)

let the Army be as long as New Delhi did not ask him any questions about anarchy, lawlessness and non-governing kleptocracy; in the process, the good doctor squandered his credibility as a custodian of the "Kashmiri identity".

Now the Vajpayee establishment's political cleverness has combined with Abdullah's nervousness to push Kashmir back. It is, therefore, time to work towards a new compact between democratic India and the people of J&K. A way must be found to break out of fallacy of the 1953 accord and 1975 agreement: "New Delhi" could conclude pacts only with the Abdullah family, which in turn nurtured everyone's comforting formulation that "Farooq is our best bet". The Abdullah family is not Kashmir, just as the Hurriyat is not. As long as we continue to proceed on an assumption that Kashmir is the Abdullah family's zamindari, we will not be able to address the "problem".

The time has come for a democratic engagement of Kashmir with the rest of India. Instead of letting Abdullah do a guilt-number on democratic India, he should be asked to explain his willful incompetence. Similarly, Gilani and the rest of the APHC should be asked to explain their "grievances" before the people of India... In this age of global democracy neither the Abdullachs nor the Hurriyat leaders can be allowed to get away with their self-proclaimed assertions of representativeness. The people of J&K do have a right to an honourable ruling arrangement, but they will continue to feel cheated of such a dispensation as long as they allow the Abdullachs ... and the Gilanis to manipulate their hurt feelings...

(Source: The Hindu, 12 July, 2000)

John Dayal on Hate Campaign against Minorities

The full dimensions of the ominous conspiracy against Christians in India is at last being unfolded before the eyes of the world.

It is a conspiracy layered like the skin in a wild onion, each seemingly thin and transparent, but seen together, poisonous weed that has brought tears to the eyes of the nation.

The outer skin has been visible for a long time, made up of the hundreds of incidents of violence that have pricked this country since 1997 when the Bharatiya Janata party made its final and eventually successful dash for power. In the over three hundred cases of violence in these three years, the Sangh Parivar first gave indication that it had switched targets from the Muslims to the Christians. The pogrom that began with Lal Krishna Advani's rath yatra, and ended in the demolition of the Babari mosque and the massacre of Muslims in Mumbai and other cities in 1993, had peaked, and would no longer pay the dividends that the Parivar needed to keep its blood-thirst quenched, and its political mobilisation at fever pitch. With Sikhs and Buddhists on the list for absorption and Vedic evangelisation, the Christians were the natural target, followers of a Semitic religion not too different from the Muslims, spread out in vulnerable thinness in the north, and in poverty and innocence in the tribal areas. If the Muslims could be demonised as violent relics of a violent invading past, the Christian were tail enders of a western colonialism, buying souls through money, medicine and force. The inevitable violence flared in the demolition of nearly three dozen churches in Dangs, rape of nuns in Jhabua, the burning alive of Graham Stuart Staines, his sons Timothy and Phillip, and Catholic priest Fr Arul Doss in Orissa in 1999. The Sangh Parivar could prove that it could strike wherever it wanted to, and that forest, village, field or town were no barriers. Its propaganda machine could also prove that with official backing, it could isolate each incident's media fallout, counter each incident with local counter-propaganda.

The world, after an initial sense of outrage, relapsed into silence. Looking with greedy eyes at the Indian market ... western governments eventually closed their eyes to the incidents.

This violence however continues to grow, as must layers of this poison weed. Underneath it has grown a more sinister layer. If the first was to terrorise and incapacitate individuals, institutions and congregations, the second one targets larger masses of people... Briefly, the strategy is for a group of about seven to twenty persons to come at night, armed with iron rods, sometimes wearing the barest minimum of clothes, mimicking local nomadic tribes. They use huge stones to batter down church and convent doors, and then assault the men in the house, in this case priest, with the rods and staves. When they believe the victim is dead, or close to death, they ransack the rooms, sometimes desecrating the chapel or

church. Once in a while they pick up whatever valuables they can, sometimes they don't. The police would have the community believe that each case is isolated, each unconnected with the other. The police would have the human rights movement believe that the cases are not part of a pattern... As the United Christian Forum for Human Rights has pointed out, how is it that these gangs do not target Hindu temples? How is it that all victims in this time period have been Christians. Is it that the so-called criminal tribes have been communalised? Is it that these groups have been hired by others to do the dirty work?

Or more likely, is it that communal gangs, mimicking these groups, are attacking the Christian communities and making the crimes look as if they are ordinary dacoities?

There is no doubt that these attacks have added to the suspicion of the community and has spread terror... The larger community was still not in a state of panic. This explains the upgrading of the violence in the use of bombs at churches in the southern states...

Could this be the world of the Inter Services Intelligence Agency of Pakistan? ... But what would the ISI hope to achieve? Would it want a 'Christian backlash'? The very concept of a Christian backlash is a joke... There cannot be a backlash. There is nothing that the ISI can fish in Christian waters in India...

That brings us to the most dangerous layer of this Sangh onion.

... While the violence takes place, a parallel track activity is also taking place. Involved in it are not just the old trouble makers of the RSS and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the Singhals ... and Giriraj Kishores. A new escalation has taken place with the involvement of some who call themselves Sankaracharyas or Dharma gurus, among them the one of Puri. The so-called reconversions camps are going apace. Puri does not promise salvation. Even as he heaps abuse on Christians, he tells the Tribals they are third grade, deserving of no better than small separate temples, not good enough for their impure blood to mix in marriage with any of the traditional Hindus. And he wants us to believe that the tribals are willingly coming to him to live in this hell he promises them. Puri is backed up by one of the most sophisticated campaign machines seen since ... Hitler. RSS chief Sudershan talks of epochal wars between Hindus and non Hindus, Puri calls to throw out missionaries, Dara Singh is unrepentant for having burned two innocent children and their father. Others are raising Dara Senas. India's towns and villages are inundated with hate material that violates every law on the books.

Literature is being pushed into homes, paraded in marketplaces and beamed from loudspeakers. An entire people are being poisoned, with impunity, while policemen watch and officers smile...

This hate is the heart of the onion.

(Source: The Indian Currents, 18 June, 2000)

TERRORISM

US State Department's Report On Global Terrorism: Asia Overview, 1999 South Asia

In 1999 the locus of terrorism directed against the United States continued to shift from the Middle East to South Asia... The United States made repeated requests to Islamabad to end support for elements harboring and training terrorists in Afghanistan and urged the Government of Pakistan to close certain Pakistani religious schools that serve as conduits for terrorism. Credible reports also continued to indicate official Pakistani support for Kashmiri militant groups, such as the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HUM) that engaged in terrorism...

India

Security problems persisted in India in 1999 from ongoing insurgencies in Kashmir and the northeast. Kashmiri militant groups continued to attack Indian Government, military and civilians targets in India-held Kashmir and elsewhere in the country...

The Indian Government took a number of steps against terrorism at home and abroad. In August the Indian cabinet ratified the international convention for the suppression of terrorist bombings. New Delhi also introduced a convention on the suppression of terrorism at the UN General Assembly meeting... New Delhi announced in November 1999 the establishment of a US-India Counter-terrorism Working Group, which aimed to enhance efforts to counter international terrorism worldwide.

Pakistan

... The United States repeatedly has asked Islamabad to end support to elements that conduct terrorist training in Afghanistan, to interdict travel of militants to and from camps in Afghanistan, to prevent militant groups from acquiring weapons, and to block financial and logistic support to camps in Afghanistan. In addition, the United States has urged Islamabad to close certain madrasas, or "religious" schools, that actually serve as conduits for terrorism.

Credible reports continued to indicate official Pakistani support for Kashmiri militant groups that engage in terrorism, such as the HUM... Kashmiri extremist groups continued to operate in Pakistan, raising funds and recruiting new cadre. The groups were responsible for numerous terrorist attacks in 1999 against civilian targets in India-held Kashmir and elsewhere in India. Pakistani officials from both Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government and, after his removal by the military, General Pervez Musharraf's regime publicly stated that Pakistan provided diplomatic, political, and moral support for "freedom fighters" in Kashmir – including the terrorist group Harkat-ul-Mujahideen – but denied providing the militants training or material...

Sectarian and political violence remained a problem in 1999 as Sunni and Shia extremists conducted attacks against each other...

*With Best
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from

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**THE ASSOCIATION
OF INDIAN
MUSLIMS OF
AMERICA**

**THE ORGANIZATION
FOR UNIVERSAL
COMMUNAL
HARMONY**

**WASHINGTON D.C.
U.S.A.**

Tribal Attack On Jains for Rains

It's called the wari dhool, the drum beats used by the tribals of about six villages in the Mewar area to send a message – to attack the Jains immediately.

The sound is then picked up by neighboring villagers and they begin to act. Within a night, the houses and shops of the members of Jain community are plundered, but the members are spared. This organised "criminal act" is one of the tribal customs of the Bhils who believe that until the coffers and godowns of the Jains are not plundered, the monsoons will not arrive. Jains form about 45 per cent of the population in the area.

This medieval custom is followed during the Ganuumaas which falls in the last week of June, extending up to July 11, which is generally when monsoon reaches Rajasthan. The tribals believe that the drought is brought by the prayers of the Jain community. "They lock the monsoon clouds in their iron safes. Until we go and release them, the rains will never come" says Nathu Bhil, a former village headman of Phalasia.

Besides Phalasia, the custom is also prevalent in Kothari, Phali, Jhadol and Undi. Every year, a fortnight before the monsoon, the Jains of these areas flee, locking up their property and come back with the rains... The Jain Jagambar Samaj ... hasn't even thought of going to the police...

(Source: Kota Neelima in The Indian Express, 28 June, 2000)

Marriage of Frogs Also for Rains

The pomp and splendour was all there... The wedding was typically Assamese, with the only aberration being that the bride and groom were not human beings but frogs... The "wedding" was performed in Silpukhur, Gauhati, was attended by a host of people from the neighbourhood... According to Assamese folklore, arranging marriage of frogs is one way of pleasing rain god Varuna and there are numerous instances of such weddings in the past when there was a dry spell...

(Source: The Times of India, 15 March, 2000)

(Courtesy: The Indian Skeptic, April, 2000)

Balaji as Sleeping Partner

Bangalore businessmen, as well as several others, have devised a new way to advance their business interests. They have joined hands with Lord Balaji, the god of commerce – and incorporated him as a sleeping partner in their business.

A fixed amount of their profits are deposited in his name in the Tirumala temple 'hundi'. The gain: A foolproof situation where you have a business run as a partnership but ... you can be your own boss. Yet 'share' the profits with a 'partner', thereby cutting down income tax returns. People believe that periodic donations to Balaji help you rake in double the amount you have donated...

(Source: Archana Sharma in Times of India, 11.12.1998)

Jain temple Controversy at Badrinath

A bitter controversy has erupted over the construction of a Jain temple at Badrinath dham... Various Hindu organisations have threatened to launch an agitation and some individuals have even threatened immolation.

Sanatani Hindus, who consider Badrinath and Kedarnath located in the Himalayas as their most revered (shrines), are opposed to the construction of a Jain temple at Devdarshani, gateway to the Badrinath shrine. They allege that if the Jain temple is allowed to come up at Badrinath, it would threaten the age-old "cultural and religious traditions"... Two meetings between the Hindu and Jain leaders have taken place to resolve the dispute. Construction was suspended following opposition and it was assured by the Jain religious leaders that only a prayer hall would be built at the proposed site. But this has failed to allay the apprehensions of the Sanatani Hindus...

(Source: S.M.A. Kazmi in The Indian Express, 11 July, 2000)

Milind Ghatwai on Campaign Against Ritual Animal Sacrifice

The campaign against animal sacrifice has driven a wedge among the 1.5 lakh strong Mali community of Vadodara, with a majority in favour of the ritual killing.

... Animal sacrifice has been a part of Mali rituals for ages, and many feel that offering a goat to the deity is the only way of getting rid of their problems; from childlessness to incurable disease and from land disputes to quarrels within the family. At the moment, the law allows, the practice, provided the animal is sacrificed indoors and not at a public temple.

The controversy began when the Gujarat Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (GSPCA), citing the Gujarat Animal and Birds Sacrifices (Prevention) Act, 1972, and the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, urged the police to disallow the practice henceforth. Later, the GSPCA members, reportedly in association with the police, raided a couple of houses and prevented goats from being sacrificed... The Mali community feels this is an intrusion into their religious affairs and registered a protest... After the row broke out, a circular was issued by Commissioner of Police J. Mahapatra to every police station asking them not to register an offence "under pressure from any organisation"... The circular ... notes that sacrifice is allowed within four walls...

(Source: The Indian Express, 5 July, 2000)

Shahabuddin's Letter to The Hindustan Times, 8 June, 2000

Your editorial "Nothing Sacred about it" (3 June, 2000) rationalises slaughter of cow and other related animals in the name of export. But modernisation of the slaughter process and of means of transit may add to costs and make our leather uncompetitive! I wonder whether the issue is slaughter per se or the manner of slaughter and of transportation.

Ajaz-ul-Haque On 'Our' and 'Their' Philmi Heroes

'All Khans are the henchmen of Dawood Ibrahim. All Bollywood directors are forced to cast them and them only'. This is what RSS believes in. We add: "All Indian Muslims are traitors. With gun or with guitar, with beard or with mustache, in mosque or in studio; they are Pakistanis by heart, always attempting to destabilise the land that provides them the shelter'.

A moment to brood over for those who still see their future safe ... with India...

The recent June 254 cover story *Katuta Ke Beej* (Seeds of bitterness) published in RSS mouthpiece *Panchjanya* has nothing new for us. The story presenting itself in a different form. Communalising a profession where religion has little to do dispels the doubts regarding the secular fabric of India as state. Shah Rukh Khan is no Mast Gul, whom you fight against to rid your nation of the threat. Aamir Khan, Saif Khan – both married to the Hindu women, perhaps have nothing anti-national in them that provoked Sangh Parivar to direct the barrel towards them. Salman Khan, is just a dancer, and dance knows no religion whatsoever. The Big Khan, Mohammad Yousuf is no more a Khan, but Dilip Kumar is still a suspect.

India is fast showing its signs of intolerance towards the minority community... Thumping their racial superiority over the ones they consider perhaps as their hostages makes us think otherwise about the 'composite culture'... From the barbaric act of demolishing Babari Masjid to the stupefying thought of claiming Hrithik Roshan as 'our own' and putting Bollywood as 'Khanwood' – India has come a long way.

Muslims they are byname and this is the sin that makes them suspect. Shah Rukh swears *Phir Bhi Dil Hai Hindustani*, but this Hindustan has something different for him. He may drape himself with tricolour on screen but *Dil Se* he loves the green crescent and maybe this is what swings the pendulum of suspicion towards him. Aamir is the angry young *Sarfarosh* out to crush everything that intends to molest his mother India, but the Muslim boy has still to prove his loyalty towards the Hindu Rashtra. Salman takes the lead and boasts *Sab Se Aage Hoonge Hindustani*, but this is not enough...

... Pitting 'their own' Hrithik against 'our own' Shah Rukh means nothing but to widen up the divide and to make India the domain of Indians and to synonymies Indians s Hindus and Hindus only...

When your nation doesn't bear you as a film artist, would it tolerate you as a community conscious man who teaches religion, preaches religion and is known by the same religion he represents.

(Source: The Greater Kashmir, 28 June, 2000)

RSS Goes to Bollywood Editorial, The Hindustan Times, 23 June, 2000

... Most people recognise that when it comes to sport and popular culture, India is totally secular. This is especially true of the film industry where the days when Yusuf Khan had to change his name to Dilip Kumar are now a distant memory. Bombay's top stars are called Khan: Shahrukh Khan, Aamir Khan and Salman Khan. And nobody regards their religion of being of any consequence — or rather nobody did till the RSS and the Shiv Sena got involved.

The RSS journal *Panchjanya* features a bizarre cover story this week in which the Khans are portrayed as henchmen of Dawood Ibrahim who comprise a gang which dominates Bollywood ... while Hindu actors are blocked by an 'international conspiracy'. Only brave Hindu Hrithik Roshan dares fight for the rights of his community. Not to be undone, Bombay's fading *senapati*, Bal Thackeray, has also contributed to this comical campaign by calling the three Khans 'puppets of the underworld' and urging his demoralised and defeated Shiv Sainiks to "wake up and do something".

If *Panchjanya* is to be believed then even soft-drink multinationals are part of this "pre-meditated communal mindset" and Muslims (code-named "a particular section") drink only Pepsi because Shahrukh advertises it and not Coke which is pushed by Hrithik... More seriously though, the behaviour of the RSS and the Shiv Sena demonstrates how communalists ... cannot bear the success of Indian secularism. In the RSS's world view, Hindus and Muslims must be enemies. So, there can be no greater setback to its agenda than the discovery that millions of Hindus adore the Khans. The only way it can reconcile this fact with its world view is to conclude that the phenomenon must be the result of a criminal conspiracy. Fortunately, the vast majority of Indians laugh at these views.

Zafar Meraj: A Report on the Doordarshan's Kashmir Channel in Srinagar, 9 June, 2000

The launch of Kashmir Channel at Srinagar's Palace Hotel was full of obscenity, if you agree with the ordinary definition of the word. On the function Rs. 2 crores were wasted and gifted to the artistes from Bollywood who had been called for its launch for their performance in the foreground of the serene, picturesque, world famous Dal Lake... It looked as if it was the launch of some music channel in Mumbai... It is a slap on Kashmiri culture, which they want to promote through this Channel. What kind of culture they want to promote in Kashmir and what is their definition of Kashmiriyat they want to promote in the blood-soaked Valley where there is nothing beyond

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Chronology of the Month

(16 June – 15 July, 2000)

NATIONAL POLITICS

SANGH PARIVAR: *BJP gives dismal show in UP Panchayat Polls; SP and BSP do much better (28 June).

*President Thakre pleads with VHP and Bajrang Dal for restraint (7 July).

*RSS Chief Sudarshan calls for scrapping Article 370 and construction of Ayodhya Mandir (7 July).

*BJP and RSS call halt to polemics on economic questions (11 July). *VHP applies for consultative status with UN-Economic and Social Council; Pakistan obstructs (14 July).

*Shiv Sena defaces English signboards in Bombay (11 July).

*Kalyan Singh condemns Vajpayee and Advani as power-hungry (27 June).

*Samata's George Fernandes slams RSS for equating patriotism with religion (8 July). *TC trounces Left in Calcutta municipal election; provides Mayor with Congress support (28 June).

Congress: *Shares blame for raging caste violence in Bihar; PM pleads inability to dismiss Rabri Government for lack of number (17 June). *Ahmed Patel resigns as Treasurer. *Maharashtra Government clears Thackeray's prosecution for incitement of riot in 1992 (15 July).

Janata Parivar: *BSP leader Mayawati calls SP's Mulayam Singh BJP's agent (5 July). Rules out truck with BJP (5 July). *VP Singh demands right to shelter as fundamental right. *Chandrashekhar plans nationwide movement on his own (26 June).

Government: *Saffronisation hints National Centre of Arts Performing (21 June). *Defence Minister proposes compulsory military training for all youth (1 July).

*Union and States agree to enact TADA II (28 June), NHRC opposes strongly (12 July).

Human Rights: *NHRC urges ratification of UN Convention on Torture (25 June), directs UP police to pay compensation for 'harassment' (16 June); issues notice to UP for report on Bajrang Dal's threat to 'oust Christians' (23 June). *Punjab HRC orders probe in police forcing a Sarpanch to drink urine (8 July).

Terrorism: *G-8 backs India on UN action against global terrorism (14 July).

Small States: *Kisan leader Tikait demands bifurcation of UP (1 July). *Lok Dal leader Ajit Singh campaigns for Harit Pradesh in West UP (24 June).

Indo-Israel Relations: *India consolidates ties with Israel. Home Minister Advani, Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh and W. Bengal CM Basu visit Israel in quiet succession. Cooperation mooted also in areas of international security, trans-border terrorism and nuclear research. Both call on Arafat. Arab countries discreetly critical. Congress blasts Jaswant Singh for relating diplomatic relations to Muslim 'block vote'.

Indo-Pakistan Relations: *Congress demands White Paper on ISI activities (3 July).

*Advani and Naidu confirm involvement of members of

an obscure sect 'Deendar' based in Hyderabad in bomb attacks on Churches in Karnataka, AP and Goa.

BABARI MASJID QUESTION

BMM: *BMMCC and AIBMAC agree in principle to merge themselves to form a unified movement (3 July).

Sangh Parivar: *RSS Chief Sudarshan proposes solution by legislation or pressure on Muslims to relinquish claim; BJP supports (8 July).

*VHP announces plan for Jaipur-Ayodhya Rath Yatra (16 June). BMMCC asks CM Rajasthan to stop Rath. Samata Party and some other NDA constituents raise objection.

*VHP sets up more workshops for carving stones to meet deadline of January, 2001. Announces finalisation of date by Dharam Sansad in January, 2001.

*Bajrang Dal organises military training camps in Ayodhya, the 5th such camp in UP, to meet ISI (read Muslim) threat (25 June).

Liberhan Commission: *Summons ex-CM Kalyan Singh on 20 July (21 June). Kalyan Singh blames RSS, VHP, Vajpayee, Advani and Joshi of conspiracy to destroy Babari Masjid. *Examines Cabinet Secretary Prabhat Kumar denies intelligence input but affirms seeking CM's order for deployment of central forces camping near Ayodhya (21 June).

Administration of Site: *High level meeting held in MHA to discuss custodian's proposal to release acquired temples and facilitate Darshan and Pooja (30 June).

KASHMIR QUESTION

Autonomy: *J&K Assembly passes Resolution to demand restoration of pre-1953 status within the Indian Union, as recommended by the State Autonomy Committee (26 June). NC leadership proposes debate (26 June). Union Cabinet rejects Resolution in toto under RSS pressure (4 July).

PM's Visit: PM and HM visits Srinagar to condole Begum Akhtar Jahan's death. Throw life line to Farooq Abdullah by inviting him for talks on Devolution (11 July). NC decides not to withdraw from NDA (11 July).

*Wave of anger and frustration in Valley (4 July). Farooq Abdullah initiates negotiation in Delhi (15 July).

*RSS Working Committee opposes autonomy (2 July). Presses government to adopt hard-line without delay (3 July).

*BJP rejects restoration and autonomy; opts for devolution as for other States; identifies autonomy with separation and secession, 'second partition' and Balkanisation (23 June). Ridicules and abuses Farooq Abdullah (3 July). Expresses satisfaction with rejection (4 July). Subsequently softens stand on NC and Farooq Abdullah (12 July).

*APHC downplays autonomy resolution calls autonomy non-issue and no solution. Relieved at rejection; doubts Union's bonafides in offer of talks.

Other Parties: *Congress wants NDA to clarify stand (30 June). Alongwith Left, criticises Government for

CHRONOLOGY

mishandling issue. Supports 1975 Accord (13 July). CPM wants consultation with all parties (5 July).

*Tohra demands autonomy for Punjab (27 June).

*Assam CM support autonomy move.

*Ex-PM's join against autonomy move (29 June). V.P. Singh calls for dialogue (5 July).

*AIMMM supports autonomy (3 July).

Trifurcation: *RSS proposes trifurcation (28 June).

*Ladakh Buddhists and Jammu Hindus reject autonomy and demand integration with Union as UT and State respectively. *Pandits oppose autonomy (25 June).

Hurriyat: *Geelani expresses readiness for talks (19 June). Calls freedom struggle 'obligatory Jihad' (23 June).

*Lone considers Kashmir Study Council a formula possible solution (22 June).

Human Rights: Violence in Srinagar over student's killing in 'fake encounter' (23 June).

Insurgency: *Militants target State Secretariat (28 June). Hizbul Mujahideen calls rejection slap on Farooq's face.

Foreign Reaction - UK: Training of British Muslim militants for Kashmir reported (29 June).

Pakistan: *POK Assembly calls autonomy resolution a conspiracy (29 June). *Foreign Minister Sattar accuses India of silencing Kashmir leadership by barring Hurriyat from attending OIC (29 June).

OIC: Foreign Ministers reiterate support for self-determination under UN Resolution.

OTHER MATTERS OF CONCERN

Census 2001: *Shahabuddin calls upon Muslim youth to keep vigil on enumeration in February, 2001 (18 June).

UP Religious Buildings Bill: *JUH, AIMPLB, AIMMM reiterate stand. However, agitation cools down in wake of press report about bill put in cold storage.

*Numerous incidents of highhanded administration obstruction to repair and construction of Masjids in UP reported. *Masjid attacked in Guntur [AP] (25 June), attack criticised by Muslim organisations (27 June).

State Violence: *Police action in Jamuna Pushta, Delhi for detecting Bangladeshi immigrants; 1 killed in police firing; Masjid desecrated, Muslim organisations condemn police action (25 June).

Communal Riots: *Dube Commission holds DM and SP responsible for Ayodhya-related Bhopal Riots in 1992 (3 July). *Communal violence in Malpura town and village Tordi in Tonk (Rajasthan), tolls 12 lives, curfew imposed. Sonia Gandhi and CM Gehlot visit (10-14 July).

Anti-Christian Violence - Sangh Parivar: *Violence continues with vandalisation of graveyard (23 June), attack on Church (26 June), invasion of school (3 July), bomb blast in Hubli (8 July), killing of priest (13 July). Members of obscure Deendar sect arrested in Bangalore and Hyderabad (12 July). Deendar Anjuman denies involvement (15 July). *RSS accuses Christian leaders of nursing persecution complex (20 June). VHP seeks CBI inquiry (27 June). RSS denies involvement and claims planned conspiracy against Hindus (2 July). A.I. Christian

Council accuses RSS of hate campaign exploding into violence (16 June). *PM calls for probe (24 June). Meets Pope in Rome and assures him of safety of Christians (25 June).

Slum Clearance: *Muslim dominated slums in Delhi and Maharashtra targetted in the name of Slum Clearance. JUH condemns operation in Jalgaon (26 June).

JMI: *Administrative inquiry justifies police action, finds excessive use of force (13 July).

*Students restive because of non-withdrawal of police cases as promised. Shahabuddin reminds VC (27 June).

AMU: *VC Ansari takes several steps to restore residential character and academic level (21 June).

Education: *JUH organises National Conference on Contemporary Education in Islamic Perspective. S. Hamid, A.M. Khusro and others participate (2 July).

*AMU, JMI and Hamdard Education Society jointly organise 2-day Seminar on Information Technology to sensitise Muslims (27-28 June).

*UGC publishes list of fake universities (20 May).

Urdu: *Assam adds Manipuri as medium of instruction in 3 districts (18 June).

Personal Law: *AIMPLB criticizes Calcutta High Court judgement on extension of Iddat till remarriage of divorce (16 June) and Bombay HC's full Bench Judgement for sanctioning payment of 'provision' in instalments beyond Iddat (12 July). Decides to challenge verdict (14 July).

*Centre leaves compulsory registration of remarriage to States (27 June).

Conversion: *VHP repeats call for law to ban conversion (but not reconversion) (18 June). *Tribes in South Bihar refuses Hindu tag (20 June). *Reconverted Muslim family alleges fraud deception (6 July).

Infiltration: *Delhi Police continues to harass Bengalis; brands some as Bangladeshis; detains them for deportation. W. Bengal Government protests (30 June).

*Delhi HC rules ration card or voter's IC not adequate to claim citizenship (15 July).

*CM Mahanta defends 'quit India' notices to Bengali-speaking persons found to be foreign nationals by Tribunals (22 June).

Muslim Organisations: *A.I. Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat elects Shahabuddin as President for 2000-2003, alongwith 9 other office-bearers (18 June). Subsequently AIMIM joins the Mushawarat (3 July).

*JUH Working Committee meets (3 July).

*AIMTM organises Seminar in Hyderabad on Problems of Muslims in Foreign Countries (16-18 June).

*A dissident group forms parallel Mushawarat on 17 June and elects Salim Qasmi as President, without disclosing names of members of Markazi Majlis-e-Amla.

Monuments: *ASI clarifies Sikri excavation site as being distinct from Akbar's Sikri.

*Supreme Court summarily rejects petition questioning credit for Taj Mahal (13 July).

Other Muslim Minorities: *Germany permits teaching of Islam in schools.

(Contd. on Page 350)