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- Editor

# Muslim India

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## The Unfinished Agenda of the Muslim Personal Law Board Nothing Short of Codification will do

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board which has been striving to defend the Muslim Personal Law against the threat of delegitimation and pressure for its replacement by a common civil code. It sought and received from successive Governments the assurance of non-interference with the Muslim personal law unless there was a demand from within the Muslim community.

During 1985-86 the Board launched a campaign against Chandrachud judgement in the Shah Bano Case, which ignored political assurance, legislative history and the provisions of the Cr.P.C. [Section 127(3)(b) and (c)] and brought Muslim divorcees within the purview of Section 125 as 'ex-wife' and succeeded in having it nullified by the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986. The Act proved to be an example of both the success and the failure of the Board, its strength and weakness.

Despite its flaws, contradictions and weaknesses the Act is a legal landmark; it was the first Act related to Muslim Personal Law enacted by the Indian Parliament since Independence and on the demand of the community. So it established beyond doubt the principle of legislative supremacy of the Parliament and the acceptance by the Muslim community, the elite and the masses of its legislative authority in matters related exclusively to the Muslims. Thus it has created a precedent and opened the door for future legislation in this field as well as it has determined the essential condition that the substantive provisions of any such legislation must be in accord with the Shariat and enjoy the consensus of the Ulema.

The Act itself, it must be said, was so flawed that Muslim MP's, particularly the present writer, Mr. Ebrahim Sulaiman Sait, Mr. G.M. Banatwalla and Mr. S.S. Owaisi had proposed scores of amendments to improve it and to bring it into line fully with the Shariat. Many amendments were withdrawn, many were lost in voice vote but taken together, they placed on record that the Muslim community was not satisfied with the Bill and that while it did not oppose the Bill, it reserved its right to press for its modification at the appropriate time. And subsequently the Board did place a whole spectrum of amendments before the Government. But they were not seriously followed up and the matter is still hanging. The mistake lay in the Board leaving it to the Government to draft the Bill and then accepting the flawed bill, despite reservation and protests by some members, including the present writer.

Not unexpectedly contradictory interpretations have been made by different High Courts of various provisions. The Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court recently

heard the consolidated case. Perhaps its coming judgement may underline the urgent need for amending the Act. One hopes that the Board will be better prepared and more determined to take up the cause of the Shariat.

But the very constitutionality of the Muslim Personal Law, uncodified as it is, has been challenged in many High Courts. All such cases were consolidated and were also recently heard by the Supreme Court. One hopes that in view of the multiplicity of personal laws in the country, the existence of the Shariat Act, 1937, the impossibility of formulating a common civil code, the guarantee of Freedom of Conscience and of Religion in the Constitution, the close and, above all, unseverable relationship between religion and personal law in case of all major religious communities in the country, the Supreme Court will endorse the constitutional validity of the Muslim personal law.

Notwithstanding this, time has come for the Board to consider the question of involving State authority for legal mitigation of the social consequences of some prevalent practices in the Muslim community, particularly of polygamy and triple divorce and to formulate a clear stand on the question of codification within the framework of the Shariat.

The Board knows that its campaign of social reform has not taken off and that given the paucity of resources, human and material, it is not in a position to launch a campaign of such intensity that it will break the hold of age-old customs on the generally conservative Muslim society in India which, because of its minority status, is ever apprehensive of an assault on its religious identity and naturally tends to be more orthodox as compared to Muslims in Muslim States.

The apprehension is real because in fact many of those who plead for reform in Muslim society on grounds of gender justice are anxious either to de-Islamise the Muslim community or to absorb it into the Hindu fold. All of them think that the only way to achieve their goal of destroying or deforming Islamic identity is to detach the Muslims and particularly the Muslim women from the Shariat, i.e. the Holy Quran and the Traditions of the Holy Prophet.

The frequency of polygamy among Muslims is about the same as among the Hindus. Yet Muslims are alone identified with it. No one speaks of polygamy among the ST's, SC's and even many Hindu castes; no one mentions polyandry rampant in many regions. Similarly, every one - from a Marxist to a Sanghi sheds crocodile tears on the "plight of the poor Muslim woman". That for every Muslim woman in distress, there must be at least 7 non-

Muslim women in similar circumstances is ignored. No one speaks for them. Female foeticide, dowry burning, sati and suicides by daughters due to parents' lack of resources to 'pay' for husbands are rampant in Hindu society. Many are forced into brothels or end up leading a life of religiously sanctioned prostitution. All these are shrugged off. These sympathisers of Muslim women are silent when the latter are raped and butchered and burnt in communal riots or when their near and dear ones become targets of atrocities.

Similarly, everyone speaks for the poor Muslim divorcee when her former husband refuses to maintain her for life. Yet there are many times more Hindu women whom their husbands do not support or abandon! There is no anxiety to raise the maximum of Rs.500 under the Cr.P.C., which is a pitifully inadequate for maintenance.

And no one is prepared to understand that marriage in Islam is essentially a civil contract between a man and a woman and that once the contract is terminated, there can be no lingering claims of one party over the other and that there is no concept of life-long alimony in Islam.

But, all these issues are projected, sometimes even by well-meaning friends. The impact is to vilify Islam and to bring down the community in the eyes of the non-Muslims.

Granting the malafides of many critics and pseudo-sympathisers, the Muslim society cannot claim perfection; it cannot be any one's case that Muslim women have not been suppressed, exploited and even oppressed by men, in a man-dominated society, to ensure their dominance over the women. It is thus imperative that gender imbalance and injustice and viciousness and degradation arising therefrom are remedied by the Muslim society. And they can, and should, be, by recourse to Islam, to the Shariat, to the Holy Quran, interpreted in the light of the Traditions and crystallised in the form of a Muslim Code.

Progressive Muslims, including many enlightened Ulema, believe that through reinterpretation, a modern Fiq'h, preserving the essential and relevant core and the best applicable provisions of the various Schools can be formulated which would meet the demand of the age and the circumstances of the society, without in any way infringing upon the holy texts. **This is the unfinished agenda of the Board, which it must courageously take in hand, without any further delay,** taking into account the experience in many Muslim states (other than Turkey and Tunisia which have thrown the baby out of the window with the bath water and have ignored the Shariat). Through this scheme of things, the troublesome questions of polygamy, instantaneous divorce and maintenance of divorcees can be tackled.

So, on one hand, the Board, duly rejuvenated by inflow of fresh blood from the racks of the younger Ulema

and the non-Ulema (of various specializations, law, sociology, politics, economics, communication etc.), has to keep up its struggle against the inposition of a common civil law, in the name of cultural uniformity or 'constitutional purity', should apply itself at various levels to the promotion of education among Muslim women and instruction of the community in Islamic norms of family life i.e. women's right in Islam, anti-Islamic vicious social customs like fixation of Mehr at a very low level and its eventual non-payment; whimsical and arbitrary exercise of the right of divorce by husbands **without recourse to the procedure laid down in the Holy Quran**, and contraction of more than one marriages without any rhyme or reason and without the manifest ability to do justice to and maintain all the wives.

In this context, the failure of the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the Board held in Bangalore on 28-29 October, 2000 to deliver what had been promised despite massive build up by the media makes it imperative to adopt a new approach.

The insiders knew all along that the battle for social reform is long and arduous, and that no change can take place overnight and that it was not only a question of formation of a positive consensus within the community but of reconciliation among various sects and also of neutralising the pressures from the dominant forces of conservatism.

The skirmish over the formulation of a standard Nikahnama has led to a stalemate and the draft Nikahnama has been referred back to the Drafting Committee for reconsideration in the light of the observations made on the floor. Some observations were on the expected lines; but some apprehensions expressed specially by some women members of the Board must be taken note of. Given male dominance in the Muslim Indian society, the woman is an unequal, weaker, party in the Nikah, which is essentially a civil agreement; so it is difficult for Muslim women to find suitable husbands, as it is, and the insertion of too many conditions in the Nikahnama will aggravate the difficulty; this would be contrary to the Board's purpose, namely to protect the interest of the women. So the Board should pause and rethink. There were, however, others who thought that the draft Nikahnama did not go far enough. The Board, in any case, has no legal power, the Nikahnama even if promulgated, will have only moral authority and social conservatism would have neutralised its application.

But the most important task, beyond the formulation of a standard Nikah Nama or the intensification of the social reform campaign, is the Codification of Muslim Personal Law.

This is not a task which can be fulfilled overnight. Or by a small coterie. The Board should, in my view, adopt a 10-year plan, with a deadline for each phase, appoint a

## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Collegium of Scholars who should, among themselves, represent all the important Schools of Islamic fiqh as well as all relevant branches of contemporary knowledge.

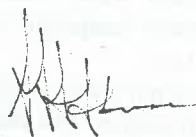
One is compelled to take note of the fact that while the Board has limited resources, over the years it has overstretched itself and taken upon itself added responsibilities which have no direct relation to the object and purpose of its establishment. At the Bangalore Session most of the available time was devoted to RSS Chief Sudarshan's call for Hinduisation of Islam and Christianity, the progress of National Commission for the Review of the Functioning of the Constitution, Joshi's programme of Saffronisation of education, the vilification of and assault on Muslim educational institutions, not to speak of the Babari Masjid cases. The Bangalore Declaration could have been adopted by any national Muslim organization, the JIH, JUH, AIMMM or the AIMC. Little time was devoted to the key issues of Nikahnama and Social Reform. The Board has to concentrate on its prime objectives or run the risk of losing its identity and raison d'être.

The experience shows that the Board needs to combine vision with authority. The society is crying for reform; Reform to be viable, must be, both within the framework of the Shariat and engage State authority.

In the age of democracy, Muslim Indians cannot become politically dominant in India when they form only 12.5% of the population but they have the potential to organize themselves and their affairs in a manner that can present them as an admirable model for the rest of the Indian people to emulate, if in their personal conduct, in their family life, in their collective life and in their interaction with the larger Indian society, they are seen as exemplars of integrity, compassion and justice.

Administration of Criminal Law, justice being a prerogative of the State, the Shariat cannot be applied but in matters civil through proper application of the Shariat, the Muslim society can achieve a degree of inner harmony which would make it the cynosure of all eyes, indeed the Khair-ul-Umma as the Holy Quran proclaims its raison d'être.

The Board has not only to take a long-term overview and carve out a path through the exuberant accretion of the ages to the shining light of Islam to guide the family life of the community but instead of tinkering over various aspects of social reform, **take up formulation of a Muslim Code and then seek its enforcement through an Act of Parliament.**



(SYED SHAHABUDDIN)

1<sup>st</sup> December, 2000

MUSLIM INDIA 216, DECEMBER, 2000



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## Proposal for Creation of Ministry of Minority Affairs

**Shahabuddin's Letter to PM Vajpayee, 23 May, 00**

May I draw your attention to the suggestion made by your college Shri Tapan Sikdar, Minister of State, for the formation of a Ministry for Minority Affairs.

As you are aware, this has been a longstanding demand of the minorities, particularly of the Muslim community, so that they do not have to run from pillar to post to get their problems attended to or their grievances redressed. Further, this would make for coordination between various officials and semi-official bodies concerned with the implementation of programmes for minorities welfare, such as the National Commission for Minorities, the Central Wakf Council, the National Minorities Finance and Development Corporation, the Haj Committee, the National Council for the Promotion of Urdu etc. This ministry could also monitor the implementation of the PM's 15-Point Programme and intervene, when necessary, in cases such as those relating to recognition of minorities educational institutions and permission to receive foreign contributions or exemption of charitable trusts from income tax etc., handled by other ministries/departments.

However, I would like to suggest that the Ministry of Minorities Affairs should function directly under the Prime Minister because minorities grievances are the concern of several ministries and departments. The P.M. may like to have a MOS for Minority Affairs to assist him.

I request you to give serious consideration to Shri Sikdar's suggestion.

## What Makes Muslims Distrust Police?

**Shahabuddin's Letter to Delhi Police  
Commissioner, 19 Oct., 2000**

I have seen your statement on distrust and hostility between the Muslim and the police force.

It is not difficult to understand the psychological distance between the two, if you recall the numerous atrocities committed by the police force in various parts of the country over the last few decades and the partisan role that the police, particularly the armed constabulary played in situation of conflict and violence.

Coming to Delhi, I wonder if you have ever checked the known cases of arbitrary arrests, custodial killings and atrocities. I imagine you would find a disproportionate share of the Muslims. It may be that there are proportionately more criminals among Muslims and, therefore, they are targeted by the police! It may also be that the police is activated by communal bias and prejudice.

This anti-Muslim bias, believe me, is a fact of life. There are only two ways, I can see, of reducing it, you cannot eliminate it altogether. The first is good training

## President K.R. Narayanan On Growing Intolerance

... There is scattered intolerance abroad which is worrying. It is not as if everyone has become intolerant. The majority of the people are tolerant. But what is happening is that important people are not condemning intolerance enough...

Sometimes, many leaders do not strongly condemn intolerance even for the sake of condemning. It is very important that leaders and opinion makers strongly argue against the spirit of intolerance where people are made to attack each other in the name of faith, language or for any other reason...

(Source: The Week, 5 November, 2000)

## PM Atal Behari Vajpayee On Social Peace

India's greatest asset is her unity in diversity. Let us together strengthen our unity, by creating greater tolerance and respect for our linguistic, ethnic, regional and religious diversity. Today, there is greater social cohesion and communal peace, for which I compliment people belonging to all communities. We must now make it a permanent feature of our national life.

(Source: The BJP Today, 1-15 November, 2000)

## Peril of Identity, Muslims with ISI Editorial, The Milli Gazette, 16-31 Oct., 2000

"Our suspicion is that ISI activities are not that large and widespread as the saffron home minister makes them out to be. We further suspect that the aim is to create a certain atmosphere in the county (sic), which will provide the right environment conducive for the passages of changes cherished by the Sangh Parivar. Let all be warned that it's playing with fire to sow the seeds of hatred and suspicion about such a large community. The repercussions will be bitter indeed and nothing like what you have seen until now... The few terrorist elements here and there do not enjoy the community's support. But any overplaying will change the scenario and the moment the community at large supports such activities it will be hell and not a thousand Advanis will be able to contain it. The J&K and North-East examples are for us all to see."

and secular leadership. The second is co-option of Muslims in the police force. I think the PM's 15-Point Programme for Welfare of Minorities also makes this point. Short of reservation, there are ways of ensuring due representation of Muslim in the force. Once the face of the force is more cosmopolitan, the communal edges will be automatically rubbed out. And I dare say that a Muslim SI or a Muslim Constable can be more useful to you in Muslim mahallas as the British found that black and Asian policemen are more effective in Black and Asian concentration areas of London.

## Abusaleh Shariff on Relative Economic and Social Deprivation in India

The declaration of Indian Republic as a secular state ... explains the religious and ethnic diversity imbibed in its socio-cultural and political ethos since time immemorial. The caste, religious and regional differentials in economic, social and political spheres in India have a historic basis... Indian socio-economic fabric is (very) complex ... because of various layers and segmentations the society is divided and sub-divided into...

... A large majority of people in India suffers from abject poverty. Poverty has two dimensions: as absolute and a relative dimension. India has over 330 million people belonging to all faiths, religions and regions who live a miserable life of absolute poverty suffering from extreme degree of human deprivation. In spite of falling levels of poverty in terms of proportion, the absolute number is hovering around 300 million since independence... There are two essential reasons for understanding relative poverty profile. Firstly, reduction in relative poverty is a pre-condition in alleviating absolute poverty in any society. Secondly, it is important for any government to track the variations in relative poverty gap between various types of population groups so as to ensure equity in opportunity as a mechanism of poverty alleviation.

... Of late a few independent data sources have come into existence which help in both estimating and redefining the parameters of poverty in its absolute and relative dimensions. A survey of 33,000 nationally representative rural sample, conducted by the National Council of Applied Economic Research in 1994 provides data on household income and a range of human development parameters which can be cross-classified according to a number of population groups. These data have been used to estimate levels of poverty according to selected population group...

### Income and Levels of Living

... The key indicators in Table 1 show a very high incidence of poverty among the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes followed by the Muslim compared with the all India average. The percentage of population below the poverty line is about 50 for the SCs and STs and 43 for Muslims compared with 39 for the whole population (32 per cent among the Hindus excluding SCs and STs). If the household and per capita income are considered a scenario emerges where **the SCs, the STs and the Muslims can be considered as the economically deprived population groups...** This brings to the fore the lack of access to productive assets, employment and wage stability for the Scheduled groups and the Muslims. Land is the most preferred and valued asset across India and the SCs and Muslims are relatively more deprived in terms of land ownership across India. Hindus as a whole have a relative advantage of owning land in larger proportion and in larger size class, for example while one-fifth of Hindus own five acres or more of land, only one-tenth of Muslims belong to this category. This points to the need for creating new instruments which may provide an alternative for land as the main source of security among the rural households.

Agriculture is the main source of income among the STs and all Hindus... Agricultural wage is an important source of income to the SCs and STs and artisanship for Muslims. The proportion of income derived from agriculture and allied activities among the Muslims is much lower than the Hindus, whereas their share of income is disproportionately large from artisan and industrial work. This at the outset appears a positive feature, but in fact it is not. In rural areas stable and higher level of income is derived from land and agriculture matched only by those with salaried regular income.

The work participation rate among the Muslims is the least both for males and females suggesting relatively

Table 1

### Income, Asset and Material Well-being of Households According to Caste and Religion

|                                          | ST    | SC    | Hindus | Muslims | All   |
|------------------------------------------|-------|-------|--------|---------|-------|
| Household Income (Rs.)                   | 19556 | 17465 | 25713  | 22807   | 25653 |
| Per Capita Income (Rs.)                  | 3504  | 3237  | 4514   | 3678    | 4485  |
| Work Participation Rate – Male           | 51.6  | 52.8  | 52.3   | 48.0    | 51.9  |
| -do- – Female                            | 27.7  | 23.0  | 19.3   | 9.6     | 18.4  |
| Source of Income – Agriculture           | 55.6  | 37.7  | 56.1   | 44.1    | 55.0  |
| -do- – Artisanship                       | 2.7   | 5.7   | 4.3    | 8.3     | 4.5   |
| -do- – Salaried                          | 14.8  | 15.2  | 16.4   | 14.7    | 16.5  |
| Land Holding/Reporting Household (acres) | 4.3   | 2.8   | 4.6    | 3.6     | 4.5   |
| %age Kutch Houses                        | 74.0  | 66.6  | 55.2   | 65.9    | 55.4  |
| %age Electric                            | 29.7  | 30.7  | 43.2   | 30.0    | 42.9  |
| %age Protected Water                     | 61.6  | 72.8  | 71.1   | 78.1    | 72.0  |
| %age Piped Water                         | 17.2  | 22.6  | 25.3   | 19.4    | 24.8  |
| %age Having Toilet                       | 12.2  | 8.3   | 13.2   | 26.7    | 15.3  |
| %age Using PDS                           | 37.5  | 32.1  | 34.1   | 21.8    | 33.2  |
| Poverty Head Count                       | 51.0  | 50.0  | 39.0   | 43.0    | 39.0  |
| Capability Poverty %                     | 68.0  | 60.0  | —      | 56.0    | 52.0  |

(Source: INDIA: Human Development Report of the 1990s (forthcoming, Oxford University Press).

higher unemployment rate. WPR among the Muslim women is as low as 10 per cent compared with an all India average of 18. Access to selected basic needs is below the national average for the SCs, the STs and the Muslims, particularly in electricity and piped water supply. Muslims particularly have lower PDS utilization compared with all other castes and religious categories.

### Literacy and Schooling

... The SCs and STs are least literate in India, followed by the Muslims compared with rest of population (Table 2). Only about 40% of SCs and STs and 50% of Muslims are literate compared with about 54% over all average (60% for Hindus excluding SCs and STs)... A matter of concern is that the enrolment rate among the Muslims is only 62% almost at parity with the SCs and STs as compared with about 72% for all India and 77% for Hindus (other than SCs and STs)... A large inter-group disparity in enrolment compared with the disparity in levels of literacy suggests that enrolment rate in elementary schooling among the Muslims has been falling in the immediate past especially so in case of females...

Another important fact to highlight is the onset of private schooling across India, more so in UP, Punjab, Haryana, Bihar, AP and Kerala. Muslims send their children relatively more to the private elementary schools compared with all other communities. There appears to be some sort of resentment on the part of Muslims to send their children to government schools. Since schooling and education is a state subject important policy initiatives have to be taken by the states to set right this anomaly in providing equal opportunities and appropriate education at least at the primary and elementary levels. National efforts should be initiated to find out as to why the Muslim children are being withdrawn from the publicly provided free schooling in India. Allowing this trend to continue is also likely to affect female education among the Muslims much more. Considering education as one of the main parameter of human development, clearly the SCs, the STs and the Muslims lag in most of the output indicators such

as the literacy, enrolment, discontinuation and percentage of population (aged 17+ years) completing matriculation. A relatively greater dependence on private schooling of Muslims, which is disproportionately expensive and especially given the low economic conditions, seems to be due to compulsions emerging out of inappropriate education. There is an urgent need to take a serious note of the above facts to design appropriate public policy interventions and implement them in due earnest taking help from multi-national agencies such as the United Nations and the World Bank if needed.

### Health and Demography

Besides, high fertility rates among the Muslims, the SCs and the STs, overall a birth rate of 32 per thousand population for rural India as a whole should be a cause of concern. The mortality and morbidity rates are relatively high among the SCs and STs and how among the Muslims. The physical disability rates are relatively higher among all the three communities focused in this presentation. The contraceptive practice is low for Muslims followed by the Scheduled groups. However, a dynamic look at the changes in all these factors over time suggests that relative differentials in fertility, mortality and family planning practice are declining over the past four decades and the differential found recently are the lowest. In fact the rate of increase in contraception has begun to be more than the general population among the Muslims as evidence emerging from intensive studies on contraception. Muslims prefer to use spacing methods relatively more than all other communities which is cause for optimism for the programme implementations. This scenario suggests that Muslims have begun to accept family planning measures in large numbers in the preceding two decades or so. Research has also conclusively proved that an improvement in human development parameters depress fertility and mortality and improve choice based contraception. Thus there is a great prospect that various states in India enter the third and fourth level of demographic transition in the early first

**Table 2**  
**Level of Literacy and Schooling According to Caste and Religion**

|                                                         |               | ST   | SC   | Hindus | Muslims | All  |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------|------|------|--------|---------|------|
| Literacy Rate 7+ age                                    | Total         | 39.3 | 41.5 | 53.3   | 49.9    | 53.5 |
|                                                         | Male          | 51.4 | 53.4 | 65.9   | 59.5    | 65.6 |
|                                                         | Female        | 26.0 | 28.2 | 39.2   | 38.0    | 40.1 |
| Enrolment Rate                                          | Total         | 60.3 | 62.5 | 72.0   | 61.6    | 71.4 |
|                                                         | Male          | 67.6 | 69.6 | 78.1   | 66.2    | 77.1 |
|                                                         | Female        | 51.5 | 54.7 | 65.1   | 56.6    | 64.8 |
| Discontinuation Rate<br>(Average for 6014 years)        | Total         | 7.32 | 7.0  | 5.9    | 6.9     | 6.0  |
|                                                         | Male          | 6.6  | 5.7  | —      | 6.4     | 4.8  |
|                                                         | Female        | 8.0  | 8.8  | —      | 7.7     | 7.6  |
| %age Matriculates 15+ years                             | Total         | 4.9  | 4.9  | 8.5    | 5.9     | 8.6  |
|                                                         | Male          | 3.2  | 5.8  | 9.3    | 13.3    | 9.8  |
| Percent Students aged 6-14 years<br>in private schools. | Total         | 3.8  | 6.9  | 10.4   | 14.4    | 10.8 |
|                                                         | Males         | 2.3  | 4.2  | 7.7    | 11.9    | 8.3  |
|                                                         | Females       | 2.3  | 4.2  | 7.7    | 11.9    | 8.3  |
| Annual Household Expenditure<br>on schooling            | Govt. Schools | 397  | 450  | 531    | 515     | 539  |
|                                                         | Aided Schools | 664  | 544  | 671    | 542     | 665  |

(Source: INDIA: Human Development Report of the 1990s (forthcoming, Oxford University Press).)

decade of the next century and Muslims will be not lacking in contributing to this important achievement. While it is encouraging that the population group differentials are narrowing down in demographic parameters, the utilization of government provided health care services is relatively low among the SCs, STs and especially the Muslims. For example, the number of deliveries conducted under the care of trained professionals such as the auxiliary Nurse Midwives and the child immunization rates among the Muslims are low. There is thus an urgent need that Muslims come forward in a big way to harness the benefits of public programmes.

## Hope for the Future

On the whole compared with the dominant Hindus, the SCs, the STs and Muslims seem to be characteristically marginalised due to social and physical distancing from the social, economic and political nucleus. They also have low personal esteem. The process and mechanisms of exclusion could take mundane and subtle routes that often go unnoticed. Most of the downtrodden are illiterate, maintain endogamous social relations, work as wage labour and artisans. They have a high (age) dependency due to high fertility and, low economic dependency ratio because almost every one has to work including children. Low employment and wage stability, relatively more nuclear and fractured families, high mortality and low health care utilization. Their participation in public programmes and utilization of publicly provided goods and services is substantially lower than the population as a whole. They have been unable to find adequate proportion of positions in the government machinery, and in public and political policy making.

The reason for relative backwardness of the SCs, STs and Muslims is only partly due to historical reasons. All these communities have a poor asset base especially in terms ownership of immovable assets, such as cultivable land. Partly, the reasons for relative backwardness are social – the relative bargaining power in the local social and political system has always been low. Rural to urban migration of the SCs and Muslims since Independence

may have also contributed to this state of affair. Concurrently the particular and unique problems emerging from the caste system and multi-religious population composition were not accorded adequate attention in public debates, public allocations and program implementation, notwithstanding the reservations for the SCs, the STs and OBCs. **Most programmes aimed at alleviating the problems of poor and minorities are symbolic and un-sustainable due to want of implementation and adequate public commitment.** There should be public efforts to create enduring opportunities, and carefully conceived affirmative actions, at least in the short run, to alleviate the relative backwardness especially in the areas of education, employment and training, productive credit and political participation.

Ensuring that India remains a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, diverse and dynamic society is imperative both for national integrity and strength. While these attributes are India's strength a reformed legal system should evolve which can penalize vested interests that misuse these characteristics regardless of whether they be individuals, communities or the political parties. There has been considerable progress in this direction, but much has to be done. The Indian legal system has not been fully harnessed to address these issues...

The forces of globalization and a new deal world economic order can create opportunities to overcome many a crisis faced by the downtrodden, only if the fruits of new economic order are accessible to all and fairly distributed. The economic forces of liberalization and globalization should essentially be the most secular forces sweeping India in the recent past. However, the peculiar way of adaptation of these forces may not entirely be free from subjective decision making, thus excluding selected population groups and regions from accessing the ensuing benefits. The present day private and to some extent the corporate sector seem to still rely on traditional social systems which needs to change.

## Promoting mainstream participation of the

**Table 3**  
**Health Care Utilization According to Caste and Religion**

|                                       | ST   | SC   | Hindus | Muslims | All  |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|--------|---------|------|
| Short Duration Morbidity ('000)       | 130  | 124  | 123    | 106     | 122  |
| Major Morbidity (per lakh)            | 3377 | 4527 | 4503   | 4441    | 4578 |
| %age receiving ANC Care               | 5.7  | 11.6 | 9.9    | 8.0     | 9.8  |
| %age Delivery Attended Trained Person | 31.9 | 37.6 | 40.5   | 31.5    | 40.0 |
| %age Children Immunized (all 8 doses) | 39.5 | 42.6 | 49.7   | 34.5    | 48.5 |
| Disabilities 0-4 years/lakh           | 1881 | 2058 | 1983   | 2409    | 2042 |
| 5-12 years/lakh                       | 2406 | 3325 | 2771   | 3792    | 2896 |
| Sever Malnutrition 0-4 years %        | 38.0 | 40.3 | 37.4   | 37.7    | 37.2 |
| 5-12 years %                          | 30.2 | 30.3 | 28.7   | 33.5    | 29.0 |
| Crude Birth Rate                      | 35   | 35   | 32     | 39      | 32   |
| Total Fertility Rate                  | 4.4  | 4.7  | 4.2    | 5.8     | 4.3  |
| Infant Mortality Rate                 | 98   | 99   | 86     | 75      | 84   |
| Contraception                         | 34   | 31   | 36     | 25      | 36   |
| % Spacing Methods                     | 4.4  | 4.7  | 4.9    | 8.2     | 5.6  |

(Source: INDIA: Human Development Report of the 1990s (forthcoming, Oxford University Press).

**SCs, STs and Muslims in social, economic and political spheres should be one of the important objectives of the state governments.** This will imbibe the feeling of propriety and ownership which brings along with its responsibility to save, protect and promote. In this regard it is essential to conceptualize programmes and to generate a sense of agency and trusteeship among all but more so among the community leadership irrespective of religion and caste. Participation in secular education is a necessary but not sufficient condition. Education should impart values' emphasizing the multi-cultural nature of Indian society, tolerance and mutual respect of basic human values rather than propagation of procedures, rituals and unconformable historical events. **Choice based education system should be evolved in which different religions and communities should have opportunities to choose their language of instruction and topics of interest.** Importance is providing education and schooling in English should be reviewed, along with priority in computer literacy. This re-emphasis in education is in the interest of all the future generations in India. There are certain responsibilities that the respective communities should share. These communities should be sensitive to local issues and should identify first with the local population and then to the larger population identities of states, nation and international communities. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments do not

automatically address these issues. Yet they provide a good platform. The hitherto marginalized communities should participate in large numbers in the Panchayati Raj system and the urban local self-governments. The respective communities which often suffer from urban middle class stereotype should come out of it as soon as possible. Besides, there is a need to recognize diversity within communities, including that in the minority communities. Creating homogeneity is not the answer. Locate where community lives and integrate. Ensure gender equity and enable female participation in market activities. These should be effected both in the intra-household as well as community context.

There should be institutions and structures that encourage individuals and community to realize the benefits of social services provided by the government. It needs social mobilization not necessarily of the communities alone. The SCs, STs and Muslims should come out in a large way to realize the benefits provided by a large number of public programmes. Special programmes for the downtrodden are yet not fully implemented. Pressure groups and lobbying may help improve programme implementation... Special trade fairs and display of unique skill that the Indian SCs, STs and Muslims have deserve special encouragement. Private and corporate sectors should open avenues for employment for all communities based on the principles of efficiency and competition.

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## Amulya Ganguli on Pro-Hindu Line - A Recipe of Disaster for Long Run

... The essence of (V.N. Gadgil) thesis is the need for the Congress to adopt a pro-Hindu line since the Hindus constitute a majority in the country.

There is so much that is wrong with this approach that it is difficult to decide where to begin. For a start, the neat division that Gadgil has made between 82 per cent Hindus and 18 per cent minorities is not as neat as he presumes. The 82 per cent is not a homogeneous entity, ready to band together against the 18 per cent with great fervour. Only the rank communalists among them, who constitute the Sangh Parivar's core base of support, will want to do so. But their percentage cannot be too high, as the BJP's electoral difficulties ... show.

Even the BJP is aware of their inadequacy in terms of numbers which is why its new president has reached out to the Muslims in a vain attempt to widen his party's acceptability. It is not a little ironical that when the BJP, which used to believe in the theory of the Hindu majority enabling it to attain power, has realized the complexity of the Indian scene, Gadgil is reiterating that same stale theory.

... What is outrageous is that a Congressman ... should be looking at the electorate through the Sangh Parivar's sectarian lenses...

After the departure of Gandhi and Nehru, the Congress started deviating from their broad-minded outlook and began pandering to sectarian sentiments... Even if the party's gradual degeneration is the result of its blinkered and unprincipled members rising in the hierarchy, the party never formally canvassed for votes on the basis of religion or caste.

The broadness of its appeal even in its present moribund state is due to the still prevailing belief among the voters that the Congress essentially stands above caste and community and looks at India as a multi-religious, multi-linguistic and multicultural society. For anyone to advocate a departure from this concept, especially at a time when it is gaining worldwide recognition and approval, indicates a remarkable obtuseness of mind.

The myopia is all the more inexplicable when India's liberal secularism stands in such striking contrast to the ... theocracies and ... dictatorships in its neighbourhood...

... Gadgil's prescription ... will also be disastrous in practical terms. Imitation is the best form of flattery and if the Congress decides to adopt the BJP's pro-Hindu line, the only effect will be for it to lose even the votes which it still gets without stealing any from the BJP. The reason is why should the people vote for an imitator when the real thing is around?

... It is the failure of Congressmen to protect democracy then which explains the party's present plight, for it revealed the party as comprising hollow men.

The Congress' present condition has nothing to do

with its disinclination to play the Hindu card. In fact, had it tried to do so, it would probably have plunged even deeper into trouble by showing that it has become totally disoriented in its cynical pursuit of power...

Gadgil is also fond of praising the discipline and dedication of the RSS workers...

(These) can be regarded as virtues only if the organization displaying them serves a noble cause. The RSS' record in this respect is not worthy of emulation. It isn't only that its charter is divisive, the outfit has been indicted by several judicial commissions for its role in communal trouble.

To give just one example, the Jitendra Narain Commission inquiring into the Jamshedpur riots of 1979 had stated that "the RSS with its extensive organization in Jamshedpur and... close links with the Jan Sangh and the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, had a positive hand in creating a climate which was most propitious for the outbreak of the communal disturbances". Is this the example which Gadgil wants his present party to follow?

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 16 October, 2000)

### Call for Indo-Pak Dialogue

Resolution adopted by Pakistan-India People's Forum for Peace and Democracy, New Delhi, 14-15 Oct., 2000  
**Text**

Convinced that there can be no military solution to the Kashmir problem and that only a solution which meets with the wishes and aspirations of the people of J&K can be durable and just, a civil society meeting in New Delhi held on October 14 and 15, 2000 calls for the following:

1. We demand an immediate dialogue between the Government of India and Government of Pakistan at the highest level without any preconditions.
2. We want all forms of terrorism, both state and non-state, to cease immediately.
3. In order to create a suitable climate for the resumption of dialogue at the highest level. We also:
  - a) call upon the Government of India to set up special courts to hold day-to-day trials facilitating early prosecution ... of all cases of custodial deaths, disappearances, extra-judicial executions, torture, cruel and degrading treatment.
  - b) Call upon all armed Opposition groups and non-state groups to abide by Optional Protocol I and II of the Geneva Convention and respect all tenets of international human rights and humanitarian law.
4. We urge for immediate cease-fire from all parties and all forces, state and non-state, in the erstwhile State of J&K.
5. We call upon the Government of Pakistan to exercise its influence and control over various groups engaged in violent and militant activity in the erstwhile State of J&K.

(Source: The Mainstream)

## BJP: President Bangaru Laxman On BJP's Relation with RSS

... I wish to state categorically that what Sudarshanji had said about Christians and Muslims in India are the views of the RSS. They do not represent the views of the BJP. The RSS Chief is entitled to his views and it is up to the different sections of our diverse society to react to these views, as they deem right...

... The RSS is a patriotic organization and we hold it in high esteem. But this does not mean that we agree with it on every issue. The BJP follows its own agenda, which is significantly different from that of the RSS.

Both our precept and performance have shown that the BJP's commitment to principles of secularism is complete, unconditional and irreversible. For us, all Indians are equal irrespective of their caste and creed. All have equal rights and responsibilities towards the nation. Similarly, the Government is duty-bound to follow the principle "Justice for All and Appeasement of None".

(Source: The BJP Today, 16-30 November, 2000)

## BJP's 'Pro-Muslim Record'

### Shahabuddin to The BJP Today, 16 October, 2000

Mr. T.R. Gopalan's response to my letter borders on irrelevance. None of the 'acts' of the BJP-led government cited by him are new or relate to the post-Nagpur period. So they cannot serve to fortify Shri Laxman's credibility.

Of the items cited, these related to Article 44 and Article 370 are a gift of coalition politics.

The number of Haj pilgrims within India is well within the maximum (0.1% of the Muslim population) suggested by the Government of Saudi Arabia. There is no rationale for a 'quota' where every citizen is free to travel abroad and draw a foreign exchange for the purpose. As for subsidy, I have always opposed it. It is not a Muslim demand but a political compulsion of the Government of the day. And it is no innovation; it has been there since early 70's.

Articles 29 and 30 cannot be removed because the NDA does not command 2/3 majority in the Rajya Sabha. The same may be said of the project to declare India as Hindu State. Only then the Shankaracharya can be invited to inaugurate the Parliament!

Every legislator is permitted to take the oath in the name of the deity he believes in. Our Law Courts also permit oath on the Holy Book the witness believes in.

The Minorities Commission is a statutory body. The Act could no doubt be repealed but short of disbanding it, it has been effectively emasculated. Also the Act covers State Minority Commissions and some State may not agree.

However, we are grateful for small mercies.

No one asks BJP to crawl or even to prostrate itself.

## Neena Vyas On BJP's Double-Track Strategy

The "decision" by ... the new BJP president, Bangaru Laxman, not to include K.N. Govindacharya as a general secretary of the party in his new team is being seen as a move which will achieve two goals in one stroke. It is calculated to sideline one more person in the party known to be close to the Union Home Minister, L.K. Advani, as well as tame the anti- Government voices emanating from the RSS...

... Those who have been watching the party for some years point out that in the years when Advani was completely in control of the party, he too had successfully sidelined some key Vajpayee supporters leading to a situation where Vajpayee himself complained publicly that he was not being consulted on key issues...

Although many party leaders reiterate that the Vajpayee-Advani pair has stayed together in thick and thin and no one can drive a wedge between them, there is a certain pattern that has emerged over the last few years and has become clearer even as Mr. Vajpayee has become stronger in his position as Prime Minister...

... The new BJP president is his nominee, and he is calling the shots in the party...

... What many insiders feel is that this episode could be a precursor to other battles which could also involve the Sangh Parivar, possibly through the Vishwa Hindu Parishad which is getting ready to test the Government on the Ram temple issue. This is also seen as an RSS strategy to bring Hindutva back into political focus.

Also, the move on the temple could coordinate nicely with the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections due next year. This could become a flashpoint and a source of tension between party hardliners and the Sangh on one side, and the moderate and ... elements supporting Vajpayee's policies on the other. It could also become a source of tension within the coalition partners of the National Democratic Alliance.

Some in the party see the BJP reverting back to its Hindutva ideology with full vigour; and when that happens, using the temple issue once again to break away from coalition politics... (Source: The Hindu, 9 September, 2000)

But one only like words to be supported by deeds, before we are asked to believe in them.

As for what can be done for the Muslim Indians, provided you are prepared to publish it, I shall send you a copy of the Charter of Muslim Aspirations, which was presented jointly by 5 nationally eminent Muslim organizations to all secular parties on the even of the General Election, 1999. I hope the BJP leadership can pick up at least a few items and press the BJP-led Government to realize them.

## Vidya Subrahmaniam on the Battle of Succession

Atal Behari Vajpayee bagged close to 70 per cent in a recent opinion poll, conducted ironically to find his successor... Judge(d) by (any) yardsticks. Personal popularity: Full marks. Coalition management: Full marks. Foreign policy achievements: A plus ... the succession talk just doesn't fit in - not in the context of the above achievements, and even less considering Vajpayee is the bedrock on which the edifice called the NDA, and (its) the government, rest.

Clearly, there's something extraordinary here. The BJP is not itself these days; there is a lethargy in the cadre which is inexplicable for a party that has won two successive elections... and has Vajpayee for its leader...

What explains this? ... The poll seemed to confirm the reigning political joke: Vajpayee is number one, two, three... right up to number ten.. Previously, Advani had barely made it to the list of wannabes, finishing behind even the Mulayams and the Laloos... From that to 45 per cent is an unexplained mega leap.

Advani's track record as home minister couldn't have anything to do with this. The promised Sardar in Advani has hardly been spotted. Tough talk, yes - hot pursuit, white paper on ISI and so on - but not much actual action.

The succession story is, then, not about Advani (but) is symptomatic really of what is to come. A political party in good health will rarely disturb the existing order: It is sound business sense not to rock a good thing. Conversely, it is when the outlook is bleak that political manoeuvres are at a peak. Leadership change needs a strong impetus. Indira Gandhi reigned like an empress as long as she won elections. When she didn't, the party threw her out. V P Singh challenged Rajiv only after Bofors ruined the Congress's election prospects. Mandal did the same to Singh. Narasimha Rao was shown the door after his party bit the dust in 1996. Sonia came on the strength of her mystique and the Gandhi name, both of which stand devalued in the aftermath of the Congress's humiliating defeat.

**In other words, it is the BJP's precarious health that has emboldened sections of the BJP and the Sangh Parivar to float the succession story.** Indeed, there is no better barometer than the RSS to understand this. The Sangh is a typical bully... The Sangh is once again doing all it can to embarrass Vajpayee. The more moves Bangaru Laxman (a Vajpayee appointee) makes towards the minorities, the more the RSS talks of swadeshi churches and Indianised Islam.

The coming elections have made this a Catch-22 situation for Vajpayee. If he talks tough, he risks alienating the Sangh, its vote base and Advani, who has made it a point to defend the organization. If he mollifies it - as he did with the 'I'm a swayamsewak' bit - the Sangh

gets the upper hand.

There are other ... worries. The economic ... indicators (are bad)... Politically, the BJP is in a deeper mess. UP has slipped out of its grip... In West Bengal, the BJP and the Trinamul are not vibing well and in Tamil Nadu the party has no leadership to speak of.

Vajpayee is popular. The BJP is unpopular. Till now the two have carried on with this mismatch. With crucial state elections coming up, the gap could get wider... There is a real danger that the BJP will go down, dragging the PM with it.

(Source: the Times of India, 26 October, 2000)

### Hawk Sounds Better

#### Editorial, The Hindustan Times, 17 Oct., 2000

... L.K. Advani has always been seen as the RSS's preferred candidate. He was, after all, the man who took the BJP away from Vajpayee's liberal-moderate agenda and turned it into the party of Masjid, mandir and mayhem. Few can deny that Advani was spectacularly successful in turning Hindutva into a vote-winning issue. Equally, it is also true that when the BJP did eventually assume office, it was on the basis of a Vajpayee-like moderation and not on Advani's Hindutva agenda.

... Towards the end of the NDA's first term, Advani suddenly began suggesting that his own views were not that different from Vajpayee's and that the hardline image was only a hangover of the Ayodhya movement.

In recent months, Advani has taken a moderate line on nearly every issue of consequence. So sensible have his positions been that many people began talking of him as a leader in the Vajpayee mould... However, Advani has (now) sent out conflicting signals. There was no need for him to turn up to bless the RSS faithful in Agra. And his latest statement, saying that the RSS is to the BJP what Mahatma Gandhi was to the Congress, will shock many moderates.

Why is Advani throwing away the moderate image? ... It could be that his friends in the Sangh have taken time off from haranguing Christians, lecturing Muslims and bad-mouthing Vajpayee to convey their displeasure. After all, Advani is their man. And they probably don't like the moderate noises he is making.

### Muslims in BJP High Command

#### Parliamentary Board

Total : 9 Muslim : 1 Sikander Bakht

#### Central Election Committee

Total : 9 Muslim : 1 Sikander Bakht

#### Heads of Morchas/Cells

Total : 11 Muslim : 1 M.S. Usmani  
(Minority Morcha)

## Kuldip Nayar on BJP-RSS Ties

... Advani, has ... compared BJP-RSS ties to Nehru's inspiration from Gandhi. The RSS represents ... Hindu chauvinism. Gandhi and Nehru symbolise Indianness. How can fanaticism, the darkest side of man, take the place of pluralism or tolerance? And it becomes a matter of concern when toadies are equated with freedom fighters.

There is yet another point of concern. Advani has sung the RSS' praises and stood in salute side by side with its leaders at a time when he is India's Home Minister. He should realise that he is no more an RSS '*pracharak*' (preacher) or '*sanchalak*' (functionary). His actions - and words - purvey the Government's thinking. The authorities, whether in the police or administration, may take the cue from the anti-minority crescendo of the RSS...

What happens to law and order or, for that matter, the country? Already, there are numerous examples of the creeping pro-Hindu bias in governance. Communal riots have turned into running battles between Muslims and the police... Yet it is not understandable why Advani has chosen this time to affirm the BJP's loyalty to the RSS. It suggests some inner contradictions or infighting...

Many regional parties joined the NDA on the understanding that the BJP would not allow the RSS to dictate to the Government in matters of state. Now that Advani has made it clear that the BJP would rather break up the government than break with the RSS, leaders such as Chandrababu Naidu of the TD, Mamata Banerjee of the TC and Nitish Kumar of the Samata Party should be able to see the BJP in its true colours. They would like to stick to office because power means a lot to them. But they should not be under any illusion.

In fact, Jayaprakash Narain, who gave credibility to the Jan Sangh by allowing it to join the Janata Party, regretted that the Jan Sangh never fulfilled its part of the obligation. It promised to snap its ties with the RSS. At one gathering when he asked Jan Sangh members to take off the black cap, RSS symbol, they readily did so, letting him believe that they had effaced their past loyalties...

For the RSS, which constituted first the Jan Sangh and then the BJP to serve as its political arm, it is a matter of strategy. It does what suits it when. The destination is Hindu Rashtriya and any way is good enough as long as it goes in that direction. It talks of one culture. Those who believe in a composite culture are being described as 'traitors'. The RSS is determined to overturn Indian traditions.

The tragedy is that many Hindu intellectuals have been taken in by the propaganda that nationalism is based on religious identity. The RSS has been clever enough to promote (Hindu) interests in the garb of universalistic values which are pillars of liberal democracy.

The tainted intellectuals have failed to see through the systematic campaign to link hatred against the minorities with the compulsions of security. The result is that the

minorities are feeling increasingly marginalized. They stay away from the mainstream because it does not give them a sense of participation, much less equality. This can lead to desperation, with disastrous consequences.

(This) serves the purpose of the RSS which may say that only Hindus are loyal to the country. But then which country are we talking about, that of Gandhi or Golwalkar's? India's ethos is secularism and Muslim leaders, Azad, Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Asif Ali, sacrificed as much as Gandhi, Nehru and Patel.

Without pluralism, the country can sustain neither democracy nor unity. Hindu intellectuals in the country and abroad are not seeing beyond the wrong notion of entity... The entity is that of India, not of any particular community.

Advani's reiteration of the BJP-RSS ties may also have to do with the coming Assembly elections in six States... Maybe, Advani is preparing the NDA partners for the Hindu card... After the BJP debacle in the local elections in Gujarat, the thinking at Nagpur is to win back the Hindu electorate at any cost.

... Where do the NDA partners stand? What happens to the nation's ideal of secularism, the approach of tolerance... Gandhi said some 75 years ago: "When we are welded together by ardent feelings, we will embrace one another and cling so close that we should appear to be one ..." The same mantra holds good today.

(Source: The Hindu, 20 October, 2000)

### Khushwant Singh On Laxman Rekha

It was heartening to hear Bangaru Laxman, the new president of the BJP, extend a hand of friendship towards religious minorities, notably the Muslims. He wants to change the anti-Muslim image of his party to one of a minority-friendly set up. If his aim is only to harvest Muslim votes in the elections to come, he will not get very far.

To convince Muslims of BJP's sincerity he will have to do the following: tender an apology for the destruction of Babari Masjid and ask for punishment of those who connived at perpetrating this most un-Hindu act of vandalism; assure everyone that the Ram temple will not be built on the site of the demolished mosque but elsewhere; he must issue a clear statement that no places of worship, particularly mosques on the hit-list of vandals (Varanasi and Mathura) will be touched.

The BJP must also distance itself from the Shiv Sena, Bajrang Dal, the VHP and people like Ashok Singhal, Giriraj Kishore, Uma Bharati, Sadhvi Rithambhara and others who continue to make 'inflammatory anti-Muslim statements. I do not regard them as Hindus... If Bangaru Laxman really wants to allay the fears of Indian Muslims (and Christians), he has to do a lot more than make pious pronouncements of goodwill towards them. I wish him success.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 9 September, 2000)

## Amulya Ganguli on Dynamic Equilibrium between RSS & BJP

BJP leader L.K. Advani ... has often said both inside and outside Parliament that what he is today can be attributed to his RSS background... His appearance at the RSS conclave in Agra ... was seen, first, as not being in conformity with his position as Home Minister. Secondly, it was seen as justifying the skepticism that was voiced when the BJP made its recent overtures to the Muslims. It is the second point which is important, and it becomes even more so when Advani equates the position of the RSS vis-à-vis the Vajpayee Government to that of Gandhi to Nehru Government and Jayaprakash Narayan's to Morarji Desai Government.

The comparisons made by Advani should help in dispelling any illusions about a softening of the BJP because of its current adherence to the NDA's agenda...

None of this should cause any surprise except in the context of one of Advani's interviews on the first anniversary of the Vajpayee Government in which he regretted that the BJP still had an anti-minority image...

What is odd, however, is Advani's apparent inability to see the connection between the BJP's umbilical ties with the RSS and its anti-minority image. You cannot boast about the one and be mystified by the other. Even now when the years in power have made Advani realise the need for distancing ideology from governance, as he has acknowledged, for him to stress the links between his party and the RSS means taking two steps back to Bangaru Laxman's one step forward.

Such an attitude obviously has long-term implications for the BJP. It means that the party will never quite be able to secure the minority vote without which, it has now realized, it will not be able to make any significant political gains, let alone attain a majority in Parliament on its own. What is more, some of its present allies may stay with it, guided by opportunism, but there is little doubt that their comfort level will fall as the RSS under a hardline chief undoes what the BJP under a softliner tries to accomplish.

If some of the BJP leaders wonder why the minorities are so upset with a 'patriotic' organization like the RSS, they are being disingenuous. The reason is simple. The image of the RSS in the eyes of the minorities has been moulded by experience at the ground level which is reflected in the adverse comments about its role in communal trouble made by several judicial commissions...

(Such things) are reinforced at the ground level by the other organizations within the Sangh Parivar like the VHP and Bajrang Dal... However, none of these organizations have ever deviated from their views. They are quite clear

in their view that India is a Hindu Rashtra where the minorities must accept the 'culture' of the majority.

It is the BJP which has been hedging its bets. Because of political compulsions, it has always been less abrasive than the other, more outspoken, outfits of the Parivar. After the infructuous 13 days of the first Vajpayee Government ... it became even more benign. But as Advani's praise of the RSS has shown, **the mask can occasionally slip.**

... At the moment, however, it is a tightrope walk for them between a fascist ideology favouring one dominant culture and the compulsions of a multicultural polity. Hence the contradiction between Advani's RSS-is-our-soul statement and his regret about the BJP's anti-minority image.

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

### BJP Backtracks

Editorial, The Hindustan Times, 7 Nov., 2000

... (Not) so long ago the BJP was all agog with 'social engineering'. Essentially, this implied that a party with a cast-iron Hindutva ideology was embarking on a grand strategic shift to secure the votes of the 'lower' castes in a bid to extend its electoral social base. For a time the idea seemed to click and the party made enviable gains in the Hindi heartland which is thought to be crucial to holding power at the Centre. But all of a sudden this grandstanding seems to be in retreat.

With the BJP decapitating its principal non-(higher) caste functionaries in UP and replacing them with (high) caste Hindu representatives – witness the change of Chief Minister, state party chief as well as Governor, all in quick succession – it is becoming clear that the party is signalling to all concerned that it is going back to its roots to prepare for the coming round of Assembly elections in the state... The so-called backward castes of UP, and the Dalits, will no doubt draw their own lessons from this turn-around. But equally importantly, the example of UP is likely to become a message for all parts of the country, particularly northern India.

The point is that 'social engineering' was only a facade, a ploy to bring in votes. It was not grounded in any real change in the BJP's philosophy. In plural and heterogeneous societies, parties that aspire to power are obliged to resort to symbolism in order to attract diverse elements. Even if recognized as tokenism, such efforts buttress their claim to represent the whole electorate and not just particular sections. In the BJP's case, the veneer has just dropped. ... The BJP's first Dalit president ... Bangaru Laxman may (be) feeling neglected.

# Ajit Kumar Jha on RSS vs BJP

... Conceived on the Vijaya Dashmi day by Hedgewar, the RSS celebrated its 75th birth anniversary recently amidst much fanfare and a massive display of khaki shorts and saffron flags in Agra. After all, its *ardhangini* (better half), the Bharatiya Janata Party, with which it has shared five decades of political companionship is firmly ensconced in power. And yet the tone was strident, not one after victory but one after defeat.

Consider the recent public speeches of the RSS Sarsanghchalak, Sudershan, first made in Nagpur on Dussehra day, and subsequently repeated in Agra, during the *shivir*. Born into Sanatan Dharma, the eternal quality of religion should have been obvious to him. He is also aware that Dussehra signifies ... cultural pluralism for the Hindus. They celebrate it ... in different forms: either Durga Puja for the Maithils and Bengalis or as the end of Ram Lila for those from the North. Yet in the most non-festive, non pluralistic fashion, Sudershan let out a virulent diatribe against the Christians: they must construct a "Swadeshi church".

Religion, despite its changeless quality must, according to Sudershanji, suddenly bend to the dictates of a nation... Little did Sudershanji realise the irony involved even as he failed to foresee its logical outcome: Yankee style mandirs for the NRI Hindus. And all this while Prime Minister Vajpayee calls for communal harmony even from the confines of his Breach Candy hospital.

The RSS chief's behaviour signals an organizational crisis... All throughout its tumultuous history, the RSS, patiently but steadily, worked towards an alternative vision, that of the Hindu Rashtra. The aim of the Sangh, according to its constitution, is "to weld together the diverse groups within the Hindu Samaj and to revitalize and rejuvenate the same on the basis of its Dharma and Sanskriti."

This alternative vision appears diluted. Under the influence of over two dozen NDA partners, the BJP has begun developing its own agenda. Because of the compulsions of vote politics, the BJP is defining its own brand image. Its newly chosen Dalit president Bangaru Laxman, under direct instructions from the prime minister, has begun courting all minorities. The ideological conflict is as much on the economic front as in culture... If politics is the art of setting agendas, then the pragmatic BJP leadership with its centrist platform is turning to be the hegemon, not the RSS. The latter feels threatened of losing its USP.

The RSS with its corporatist structure (essentially hierarchical, without ... elections) also feels rather uncomfortable with the BJP's democratic structure. In the case of the BJP, the pull from below is too much for the RSS bosses' push from above...

... Notwithstanding ... Congress's abdication, the RSS is not in a position to occupy the opposition space. For starters, the RSS is not a political party, it is more of a pressure group (although gigantic) but with a limited agenda. Even on the economic front, the RSS leadership admits that it needs at least two years to lay out a comprehensive plan of Swadeshi for which Govindacharya seems to have been deputed full time. It has never contested elections directly although it has campaigned for political parties.

Others argue that the conflict is merely on the surface, with the moderate and the extremist wings of the Sangh Parivar only meant for outsiders... The consequences of the conflict may be beneficial to the Sangh Parivar. But individuals are not always aware of the consequences of their actions... A moderate positioning under political compulsions by BJP leaders would obviously, cause ideological cleavage with the more extreme RSS.

Is this crisis going to blow over? Will the marriage stay intact? Or will it lead to divorce? Ever since the Bharatiya Jan Sangh was formed in 1951, the two organizations have cohabited through thick and thin. The RSS needs the BJP and vice versa. But the absence of choices, certainly in the case of the RSS, is likely to keep this marriage intact. It is already facing a crisis of recruitment...

The campaign (of) adult literacy and the mushrooming of *shishu mandirs* ... is already degenerating into an anti-Christian rhetoric... Unless a new leadership does not completely revamp the organization, inject fresh ideas and a new vision, the present crisis might blow out of proportion and end up threatening the Parivar's numero uno position.

(Source: The Indian Express, 19 October, 2000)

## BJP: Territorial Allocation of Work

|           |   |                    |
|-----------|---|--------------------|
| Bihar     | : | Kailashpati Mishra |
| Karnataka | : | Gopinath Munde     |
| W. Bengal | : | M.L. Khurana       |
| Assam     | : | Sunil Shastry      |
| Rajasthan | : | Saheb Singh Verma  |
| Jharkhand | : | M.A. Naqvi         |

(The only one with a Muslim name – Editor)

|             |   |                       |
|-------------|---|-----------------------|
| Kerala      | : | V.P. Goyal            |
| Delhi       | : | V.K. Malhotra         |
| Tamil Nadu  | : | V. Rama Rao           |
| J&K         | : | O.P. Kohli            |
| A.P.        | : | Aswani Kumar          |
| UP          | : | P.L. Khandelwal       |
| Gujarat     | : | K. Jana Krishnamurthy |
| Maharashtra | : | -do-                  |

(States/UT's with small Muslim population left out of the above – Editor).

## P. Indra on BJP's Split Personality

... L.K. Advani, after riding the RSS-VHP 'rath' to Ayodhya, which culminated in the demolition of the Babari Masjid, realized that his own stewardship of the party had become a liability.

With its status as the arch untouchable of Indian politics getting underscored so aggressively, the impossibility of the non-Congress, non-Communist parties joining hands with Advani's BJP became apparent. With that was gone whatever hope the party could entertain of gaining power at the Centre. This was the context in which the second major *Shakuni*-like move on India's political chessboard was made by the hard-core saffron brigade with the aim of gaining power to establish eventually a 'Hindu Rashtra'.

Let it not be forgotten even briefly that the declared mission of the RSS is to advance the cause of their sectarian and shallow version of Hindu dharma, Hindu *sanskriti* and Hindu society in order to totally dominate the centuries-old many-splendored diversity of an emergent, maturing and modern nation.

The first time that the BJP under (Vajpayee as) the *mukhauta* tried to form a Government at the Centre it came a cropper, despite the promises of putting away the basic BJP agenda on the shelf made loudly on the floor of the Lok Sabha...

... In the event, the people turned to the BJP to try them out as the last resort. The BJP increased its presence in the Lok Sabha to 182 members, still 50 per cent short of a clear majority. Yet, the party offered the best, if not the only prospect of forming a Government and the regional satraps had no great problem switching their fickle loyalties from simple secularism to 'genuine secularism'.

Chandrababu Naidu's TDP proved to be the classic case in point. The Marxists, of course, lived to rue the day of their shortsighted manipulations. The *coup de grace* came when they started sending out SOS to Sonia Gandhi to save the nation from the saffron surge.

It was this conspiracy of circumstances that made the mask come alive. After initial humiliation by a besieged and demanding Jayalalitha, he has grown from strength to strength. **Today, he is actually able to tell the sarsanghchalaks where to get off.**

But then, within his Government, the Sangh loyalists are still to be reckoned with. Whatever the level of their commitment to the parent organization and its Hindutva agenda vis-à-vis their own ambitions of power, they may find themselves coerced into towing the RSS line for fear of losing the grassroots support of the parent body that has sustained them all along. They may well be mortally frightened of going to the hustings without the mobilisational crutches traditionally provided by the RSS

cadres. At the same time, if they fail to 'Vajpayise' themselves, they may be left high and dry by several of their current and prospective 'allies' when the time to form the Government arrives the next time round.

The evolution of the BJP under Vajpayee has placed the RSS on the horns of a dilemma. While they are just not in a position to give up the mask, they have as much to fear from the Vajpayee phenomenon as they ever had to from their worst enemies. Indeed, the more they visualize themselves as getting close to the goal, the greater is the camouflage they will require, to be able to seize fully the apparatus of Government, to 'Hinduise' every citizen of 'Hindustan' a name so dear to the founders of the RSS. So, what they would like to see happen, as soon as possible, is for the mantle to pass on to someone who can be relied upon to treat the mask as such and not let it get fused into the personality.

In Vajpayee, they had a man who was basically non-fundamentalist. He was not cut out to be a slave to narrow and hostile doctrines. Despite his undisputed stature, he could never be persuaded to climb atop a RSS *rath* to arouse the Hindu populace to 'undo historic wrongs'. That is why, at one stage in the RSS pilgrimage towards the shrine of power in New Delhi, he was the ideal choice to win friends and influence politicians.

The RSS was fortunate in having him around when he was so desperately needed; but no longer. Today, unfortunately for them, his way of thinking is engendering the rise of a BJP which is quite different from the BJP of their dreams and designs.

For now, the RSS and its 'Parivar', after all their angry fulmination against the BJP *sarkar*, have made a strategic retreat. This became easier as their brittle egos were duly massaged by the 'first ever visit' of a Prime Minister to the RSS headquarters in Nagpur. But the frustration of being rendered impotent is not about to go away in a hurry.

Indeed, the first major political match of the new millennium BJP (Vajpayee) vs BJP (RSS) has now got well under way. And we, the people of India, are not just spectators but active participants, and the final arbiters of which way it finally swings.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 25 October, 2000)

We consider every nationalist a "Hindu". Any person who looks at India as his or her mother land (*matribhoomi*), father land (*pitribhoomi*) or holy land (*punya bhoomi*) is a Hindu. We are not against Muslims, we are not against Christians, we are all Indians.

- S.N. Bansal, RSS Delhi Unit Chief

# The Hindu on RSS-BJP Relationship

## BJP's Overture to Minorities A Political Compulsion

The BJP has for more than a decade now articulated its Hindutva ideology at two levels. It has tried to clothe Hindutva in secular garb by saying that by Hindus it means all the people who live in Hindustan, that Hindutva was an inclusive concept, not excluding the minorities...

But all long, ... the Hindutva ideology as an instrument in the hands of the party workers at the lower levels was always used against the minorities.

The slogans, the writings on the wall, the fear generated among the minorities, the riots, they all contributed to Hindutva as a fascist tool to send the message loud and clear to the minorities, especially the Muslims, that in India they would have to live by the rules framed by the majority community, that they must join the "national mainstream". The implication always was that they were not part of the mainstream, that their patriotism was always suspect, that they could be accepted as Indians only if they agreed to give up claim on the Babari Masjid to allow the building of a Ram temple.

The two levels of interpretation of Hindutva have been cleverly used by the BJP time and again. (While) Bangaru Laxman ... emphasis(ed) that the Hindutva ideology was inclusive...

... A little later, the RSS at its Agra convention ... implied that the minorities were not part of the national mainstream, that they would have to "Indianise". The meaning, perhaps, was that the church-going Christian, or the Muslim who says his namaz several times a day were not to be accepted as Indian until they also learnt to admire Ram and Krishna, the Hindu deities and ... celebrate Diwali and Holi. If in the 1990s the anti-minority stance was emphasized to garner Hindu votes ... attempt is being made to send out the message that the BJP was never anti-minorities.

The reason for the change in emphasis may be that the BJP has realized that as a political party, especially as a party of governance, it cannot afford to completely alienate 15 to 20 per cent of the population...

... Without them its goal of single-party rule may continue to be elusive. (Source: The Hindu, 12 November, 2000)

### Kalyan Singh's Views

The RSS controls the BJP through remote control. It does not want to give importance to backward castes and Dalits. It does not have even a single backward as Sanghchalak... It is the RSS which selects candidates for any election, the BJP only puts its seal of approval...

(Source: The Times of India)

## Panchtantra Story Retold RSS as Rishi, BJP as Mouse

An interesting sidelight at the recent Agra camp (of) the RSS was the telling of the story (about the Rishi and the Mouse) from the Panchatantra by a senior RSS functionary, H.V. Seshadiri. And it was not difficult to read the political message he was conveying.

There was a 'rishi' (sage) who lived in the forest and nearby lived a mouse who played around the dwelling of the 'rishi.' One day the mouse said to the 'rishi' that he often felt afraid for his life as there were fat cats around. Could the 'rishi' help? Certainly, was the response, and using his extraordinary powers he turned the mouse into a cat. The mouse-turned-cat was happy, but not for too long. One day it pleaded with the 'rishi' once again. It was frightened of the jackal which was threatening its life. The kind 'rishi' once again came to its help, instantly turning the mouse-turned-cat into a jackal.

But that was not the end of the story. After a decent interval of time, the mouse-turned-cat-turned-jackal approached his friend once again. How could it be safe in the jungle where the tiger ruled supreme? What could the jackal do when a hungry tiger was on the prowl? The trusting 'rishi' took pity on the creature and changed it once again into a tiger.

The mouse-turned-cat-turned-jackal-turned-tiger took no time at all to try and pounce on its former friend and mentor, the 'rishi.' But, said Mr. Seshadiri, the 'rishi' had the presence of mind to immediately turn the tiger back into a mouse.

... The RSS was sending out the message that when the time comes, and if the tiger does not behave, if it threatens the RSS agenda, it will turn the tiger back into a mouse.

... More than a month before the RSS camp one senior BJP leader spoke about the growing disenchantment with the Government's policies among those in the BJP who had been brought up on RSS ideology. Speaking on condition of anonymity, he had warned that if this continued, there was a possibility, however remote, of a serious break between the RSS and the BJP.

The debate within the BJP has already begun. One day, the Union Home Minister, Advani ... present at the concluding function ... let it be known that there was no question of the BJP distancing itself from the RSS. Two days later, the BJP president, Bangaru Laxman, stated that the BJP's views on the question of minorities "were significantly different" from those of the RSS, that the RSS had its own agenda, the BJP its own... The debate in the party is likely to continue. (Source: The Hindu, 22 October, 2000)

Sunita Aron

**On BJP's High Caste Strategy in UP**

The BJP has finally launched the crucial phase of "Operation Uttar Pradesh" by handing over the CM's charge to Rajnath Singh, who by saving the then fledgling Kalyan Singh Government after ties with the BSP were broken, had earned the sobriquet of a "Chanakya".

Two factors have apparently spurred the party high command to take the decision: First, the party men feel that urgent corrective steps are needed to reconstruct its vote-base of the upper caste. The exercise had started with the appointment of Kalraj Mishra, a Brahmin, as party president, albeit for the fourth term.

Secondly, the creation of Uttaranchal has thrown up a new challenge. With a majority of barely two MLAs, any CM would require political acumen to keep the government afloat...

Rajnath Singh enjoys a fairly good rapport with the allies. Though some senior backward caste BJP MLAs are upset over his elevation, the fact is that he does enjoy support of a majority of OBC MLAs of the party.

... Of the three important OBC vote banks of Lodhs, Kurmis, Yadavs, the BJP has already lost Lodhs to Kalyan Singh's Rashtriya Kranti Party. Yadavs have always been with Mulayam Singh Yadav while Kurmis are looking towards their ... Apna Dal.

As for Dalits, while Mayawati has a hold over nine per cent of the most backwards, Union communications Minister Ramvilas Paswan is also trying to dent the vote bank through his Dalit Sena.

The Kurmis are divided from region to region - in Awadh they support the Samajwadi Party, in Rohelkhand they back the BJP. Moreover, it is not possible for the BJP to adopt an aggressive pro-backward tilt as it would alienate the upper caste vote bank, something that the party can ill-afford.

Thus, ... the party leaders (had) to bank upon over 20 per cent upper caste vote, which still wields tremendous social and economic power... As for their political strength, the upper castes have often captured about 150 to 160 assembly seats in a House of 426.

... The BJP high command seems to have little option but to project Brahmin-Rajput leaders. This also becomes essential with the Samajwadi Party judiciously trying to chip away the disgruntled Brahmin and Rajput ... leadership.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 25 October, 2000)

Neerja Chowdhury

**On Mamata Banerjee's Muslim Card**

Mamata Banerjee had almost hit the jackpot when she quit the Vajpayee ministry on the price hike issue. But she lost it all with one swift stroke ... with her decision to withdraw her resignation...

... By resigning and withdrawing Mamata made the biggest mistake of her political career. This is bound to affect her bid for the Writers Building...

**Saroj Nagi on Christian-Adivasi-Muslim-Backward Alliance in Jharkhand**

... Tribals constitute about 26 per cent of Jharkhand's population, with the Muslims accounting for nearly 10-12 per cent. The Yadav factor, fully exploited by Laloo in Bihar, accounts for another 8-10 per cent here.

The Christians are largely concentrated within the tribal population, with barely one to two per cent falling outside it.

At present the tribal vote is largely split between the various Jharkhand parties, the Left outfits and the BJP.

The Muslim vote is divided between the non-BJP parties, with the RJD acting as a major claimant to it. The Christian vote likewise is split between the Congress and other non-NDA forces.

But the creation of Jharkhand is likely to have an impact on all this. In the non-NDA camp, for instance, the RJD ... may be forced to seek other moorings.

The Congress, which is yet to rediscover its charm, may have to search for another ally or prop in this region.

The Left parties are perhaps the only ones who will continue to plough their lonely furrow.

In the NDA grouping too, the BJP's overarching presence contrasts sharply with the whittled down presence of the Samata and the JD (U) who would need to reinforce their alliance...

The re-prioritising in status of parties and their re-positioning in the new State would seem to provide fertile ground for reworking social and political alliances.

**Of these, the most potent could be the Christian-Adivasi-Muslim-Backward (CAMB) line-up.**

... The Muslim-Tribal tensions at the local level spring from the economic exploitation by the Muslim trader or middlemen of the tribal worker and are believed to be local and incident-specific.

But local leaders here admit that the cobbling a political alliance of these groups would require intense ground work.

It would have to surmount, among other things, efforts made by rival parties that such a combination does not emerge...

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 28 October, 2000)

Mamata still appears undecided about her political alignments in West Bengal. Her indecisiveness made her play safe: return to the cabinet. In her mind she had fixed the year end as the cut off date, by which she would have decided one way or the other. But the price hike seemed too good an opportunity to miss.

Breaking with the BJP, and aligning with the Congress, would give her the advantage of the minority votes, which constitute almost a quarter of the electorate in West Bengal. The alliance with the Trinamool would also have strengthened the Congress... Staying with the BJP would rob her of the Muslim votes, which then would switch towards her main opponent, the Left Front.

(Source: The Indian Express, 16 October, 2000)

# The Outlook Survey of Public Opinion in Kashmir, 2000

## Introduction

Five years ago, Outlook commissioned an opinion poll in the Valley to fill a vital gap in public discourse – taking into account the thinking of the Kashmiris. The results were carried in the inaugural issue of October 18, 1995. Half-a-decade later, MDRA went to the Valley to, once again, flesh out the dominant trends in the current ferment. In view of the fact that no census records for the Valley have been in existence since 1981, the results of both the Outlook polls constitute the only empirical data in the country – perhaps even in the world – on what the Kashmiris think. Twelve years after the Kalashnikov found its way into the Valley, some broad trends can be discerned:

- More people than previously think a solution is possible within the Indian Constitution.
- The dominant feeling that Kashmir should have a separate identity has grown, albeit marginally.
- Peace is in. Promotion of violence as a means to an end may now be counter-productive.
- Though Pakistan is considered central as a “third party” negotiator, it is not considered as being a core part of a final solution.
- And, Kashmiri women have a political voice that is emerging as an independent counterpoise to traditional political thought.

... In all, 581 respondents (468 men and 113 women) were interviewed (from September 20-24) by MDRA's field officers at 32 urban and rural locations across five towns in the Valley – Srinagar, Budgam, Baramulla, Anantnag and Kargil – which, in geographical terms, covers the entire Valley. In '95, the poll revealed that Kashmiris were committed to dig their heels for a long haul in their quest for azadi. The sentiment rules. The road to peace is undoubtedly going to be bloody. Alienated from their masters in New Delhi and the self-proclaimed saviours in Pakistan, Kashmiris still live in that twilight zone.

## Do you feel that a solution to the Kashmir problem exists within the framework of the Indian Constitution?

|           |      |
|-----------|------|
| Yes       | : 39 |
| No        | : 58 |
| Can't Say | : 3  |

## Should Pakistan be involved as a third party in negotiations to solve the problem?

|           |      |
|-----------|------|
| Yes       | : 91 |
| No        | : 7  |
| Can't say | : 2  |

## In your opinion what is the solution to the Kashmir problem?

|                          |      |
|--------------------------|------|
| Separate identity of J&K | : 74 |
| Greater Autonomy to J&K  | : 16 |
| Other Solutions          | : 3  |
| Merger with Pakistan     | : 2  |
| Pre-1953 status          | : 5  |

## What do you think is responsible for the violence in Kashmir?

|                                            |      |
|--------------------------------------------|------|
| Both the security forces and the militants | : 39 |
| Security Forces                            | : 13 |
| Militants                                  | : 6  |
| State                                      | : 34 |
| Centre                                     | : 8  |

## Do you want Pakistan to stop supporting insurgency in Kashmir?

|           |      |
|-----------|------|
| Yes       | : 70 |
| No        | : 22 |
| Can't say | : 8  |

## Do you support a Hizbul-type ceasefire as a

## prelude to political dialogue?

|           |      |
|-----------|------|
| Yes       | : 82 |
| No        | : 14 |
| Can't say | : 4  |

## Whom should the Government of India talk to so as to solve the Kashmir problem?

|                       |      |
|-----------------------|------|
| Hurriyat              | : 54 |
| Hizbul Mujahideen     | : 8  |
| Farooq Abdullah       | : 2  |
| All political parties | : 36 |

## Does the Hurriyat Conference represent the interests of the people of Kashmir?

|           |      |
|-----------|------|
| Yes       | : 77 |
| No        | : 19 |
| Can't say | : 4  |

## Who's been more serious about solving the issue: The Vajpayee Government or the Congress?

|                |      |
|----------------|------|
| Vajpayee Govt  | : 31 |
| Congress Govt. | : 13 |
| None           | : 52 |
| Both           | : 4  |

(Source: The Outlook)

*Let Farooq get out of the NDA if he wants to. But we are not going to ask him to stay or to get out.*

**- J.P. Mathur, Vice-President, BJP**

*No Muslim country except Pakistan has been providing support to Kashmiri separatists. No one sent us even 11 cartridges, 11 grenades or 11 ounce of explosive material over the last 11 years.*

**- Hizbul Mujahideen Chief Syed Salahuddin**

### K.R. Malkani On Trifurcation of State

The Jammu and Kashmir Nationalist Front's proposal to trifurcate the state is very sensible... The old state of Hyderabad ... was wisely reorganized along linguistic lines.

... Before Independence the state of Jammu and Kashmir was even more of an artificial construct. It included six different geographical and cultural areas. These were Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Poonch, Gilgit and Baltistan. Today the first three are in India and the rest are with Pakistan.

It would be incorrect to say that trifurcating the state would mean communalizing the state's polity. Firstly, people should recognize that Jammu, the Kashmir Valley and Ladakh are, to begin with, three distinct geographical entities where people speak three different languages. Today, things have come to such a pass that though on the one hand people speak in Kashmiri, Dogri and Ladakhi, the government's business is conducted in Urdu. This is definitely an anomaly.

Second, the people in Jammu resent the fact that they are suppressed by the Kashmiri dominated state government. The only way to address the two anomalies would be to trifurcate the state.

### Pernicious Plan Editorial, Hindustan Times, 9 Oct., 2000

... In a well-coordinated move typical of the Sangh Parivar, the RSS had first mooted the idea of dividing the trouble-torn state into three parts - Hindu Jammu, Muslim Valley and Buddhist Ladakh. And now the idea has been taken up by a so-called J&K Nationalist Front and a Jammu Mukti Morcha to push for its implementation... There is a hidden purpose behind the organisation's strenuous efforts. One of these is to sow the seeds of discord primarily between the Hindus (who include the Buddhists in the saffron lexicon) and the Muslims in Kashmir, and also in India. Administrative advantages ... do not seem to be the main objective considering the kind of determined efforts that are being made by the RSS through its proxy outfits...

*I want to tell Vajpayee that Kargil was the first round. There is no question of defeat. We have already started the second round. Mr. Sharif has committed a big crime.*

- Hafiz Mohammad Saeed,  
Lashkar-e-Taiyaba Chief

### Shahabuddin on Kashmir Question Letter to Anwar Ali, Advocate, 3 Nov., 2000

Your letter of 22.10.2000, received yesterday. I regret that you have misunderstood my ideological position. I do not believe in religion-based nationalism, though I do stand for the rights of religious minorities within a territorial nation-state.

However, that is beside the point. Much water has flown down the Jhelum since 1947, and much blood since 1989. So one simply cannot go on shouting the old slogans and playing old records.

I agree with you (but not necessarily for the same reason) that it is in the interest of the Kashmiris, the Muslim Indians and the Indians, as a whole for Kashmir to be a part of India. But no one, neither the Muslim Indians, nor the Indian people, as a whole, nor the Indian State has a right to impose this status on the people of Kashmir, **if they do not want it**. Hence the solution of the problem has to be primarily in accordance with the wishes of the people of Kashmir.

The Kashmiris do not regard themselves as Indians or Pakistanis. They, therefore, want independence. I am prepared to persuade them that independence is neither possible nor desirable nor in the larger interest of the Sub-continent.

Neither India nor Indian people nor the Muslim Indians can stop Pakistan, a nation-state, to pursue its policy of territorial aggrandizement by all means at its disposal. So one has to find a solution which is also acceptable to Pakistan. That is how, many years ago, I proposed a separate status for the Valley - **full autonomy under the joint control of India and Pakistan**.

On my last visit to the Valley in June, 2000, I issued a statement, I am sending you a copy.

I am trying to form a Muslim Study Group on Kashmir to keep in touch with developments in Kashmir.

### Saifuddin Soz on Autonomy and Trifurcation, 23 October, 2000

Home Minister Advani was guilty of duplicity when he rejected the demand for Autonomy and for Trifurcation.

He very much a part of the RSS Jambooree at Agra recently. He could have rejected the RSS demand for Trifurcation... If Advani ... thinks that the Kashmir imbroglio can be resolved without even allowing accommodation within the Constitution of India, they are grossly mistaken. The people of Kashmir can hardly compromise on the question of Autonomy. Devolution of powers, Advaniji has proposed ... is only a vague format for a pointless debate. Who does not know that the BJP wants a strong center with weak and subservient States... Advaniji ... seems to be convinced that bullet for bullet policy will yield ... results. Obviously, he is wrong...

## Prem Bhasin on the Origin of the Kashmir Imbroglio

"It was well-known that some of the tallest in the Congress had actually cried 'never again' during their last detention in 1942... And so they took important decisions without consulting or even informing him (Gandhiji). The alternative was again to go into the wilderness. This was the genesis of the Congress Working Committee's passing its resolution for partition of the Punjab into Muslim majority and Hindu-majority zones, in the first week of March, 1947, without consulting Gandhiji. No communication followed from the Congress High Command after the resolution for nearly a fortnight. On the 20<sup>th</sup> March, in a letter to Pandit Nehru, Gandhiji wrote 'I would like to know the reason behind it... I had (no) opportunity (to) give my own view which was against any partition based on communal grounds and the two-nation theory' (Mahatma Gandhi, the Last Phase, by Pyarelal, Volume 2, pp 32/34-35). The above ... quotation gives us the genesis of the Kashmir imbroglio.

Anxious to come to power at the earliest, the Congress leadership, led by Nehru and Patel, accepted all the conditions imposed by the British Government for transfer of power. Perhaps the most pernicious of that conditions was the power given to the individual rulers (not the people) of Indian States to decide whether the States concerned would accede to India or Pakistan, or assume complete independence and sovereignty. If this a power had been given to the people instead, independent India would not have had to face problems of Hyderabad, Junagadh and Kashmir. India had ultimately to use force to compel Hyderabad and Junagadh to accede to India. Jammu and Kashmir, however, was a different proposition altogether.

... 78 per cent Muslims (were) ruled by a Hindu Maharaja. It bordered not only on both India and Pakistan, but on Russia and China as well. This gave an opportunity to the ... Maharaja to dream of an independent, sovereign State of Jammu and Kashmir, with himself as its absolute ruler. So he did not accede either to India or Pakistan, and concluded a "stand Still" agreement with both...

The Maharaja's army was not able to repel the tribals, and the Maharaja ran away to Jammu with all his riches, leaving the valley to its fate. Sheikh Abdullah and the National Conference workers stepped into the breach and they did not allow any communal flare up in the valley. Not a single Hindu or Sikh was touched by any Muslim, fanatic or criminal. Ultimately, the Maharaja sought accession to India. Sheikh Abdullah supported it, and Indian military successfully repelled the invaders. On the other hand, Muslim evacuees from Jammu were attacked by the local Hindus, often led by the RSS. The Maharaja's army stood by, if it did not actually help the Hindu mobs!

Nehru, conscious of the fact that the Congress had ... briefly accepting the two-nation theory, to stipulated that a plebiscite to ascertain the wishes of the people of Kashmir would be held after peace had been restored.

The British had insisted on a referendum in the North Western Frontier Province, although a Congress Ministry led by Dr. Khan Sahib had not only absolute majority in the Assembly but also had a majority of Muslim MLAs with it. And the Congress had accepted it! Why! Why did it not, then, insist on similar referendums in Hyderabad, Junagadh and Kashmir? If a referendum had been held in Kashmir at that time, there was every possibility of Kashmiris opting for India. But even if they did not, there would have been no Kashmir problem on our hands all these years. That, however, was not to be.

So far as Kashmir was concerned, there was agreement on ascertaining the wishes of the people, but there was no agreement on how to ascertain these wishes. Since India and Pakistan did not reach any agreement on this issue. Attlee, Prime Minister of UK, suggested to Mountbatten that the matter be referred to the United Nations Organisation. Mountbatten advised Nehru, and Nehru, accepting the advice, filed India's complaint against Pak aggression with the UNO.

Gandhiji was against going to the UNO, where, he was sure, India would get only "Monkey Justice". Addressing a prayer gathering on December 25, 1947, he asked: "Why could not Pakistan and Union representatives sit down and thrash out the 'Kashmir Affairs'? (Pyarelal, Vol. II).

Incidentally, this was exactly the suggestion jointly made by the Socialists of India and Pakistan when their representatives met separately in Rangoon at the first Asian Socialist Conference ... in January 1953. Jayaprakash Narayan, Asoka Mehta and Prem Bhasin represented the Praja Socialist Party, while Mohammed Yusuf and Mubarak Saghar represented the Socialist Party of Pakistan. In a joint statement issued by them they "agreed that the dispute on Kashmir was the most vital issue that was seriously affecting not only the relations between the two countries but also causing incalculable harm to both. Force could never settle the issue ... a peaceful solution must be found. The basis of such a solution already existed in that both India and Pakistan recognized the right of the people of Kashmir to decide their future through a free plebiscite... Instead of talking to each other through the medium of the UNO the leaders of the two countries must sit together and settle among themselves the terms of the plebiscite". (Press Release, Asian Socialist Conference, Rangoon, January, 1953).

This was about seven months before Sheikh Abdullah was arrested and the launching of the "Plebiscite Front" by his followers.

In the meantime, India and Kashmir had reached an agreement in July 1952. Signed by Jawaharlal Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah on July 24, 1953, it provided that:

The head of the State of J&K shall be recognized by the President on the recommendation of the legislative assembly of the State;

Residuary Powers would vest with the State as provided in Article 370;

The State Legislature would have the power to regulate the rights and privileges of permanent residents;

Exceptions and modifications to the Fundamental Rights Chapter of the Indian Constitution, in the State;

The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court would extend to the state;

The National Flag will enjoy the same status as in other parts of India. The State Flag, however, would be retained for historical and sentimental reasons;

Article 352 of the Indian Constitution be modified to provide for promulgation of Emergency in case of external aggression; in case of internal disturbance only at the request of or with the concurrence of the State Government;

The Election Commission would conduct elections to Parliament, and of the President and the Vice-President;

A financial arrangement between the Union and the State would be evolved.

It is difficult to say with certainty about what went wrong between July 1952 and August 1953 when Sheikh Abdullah was summarily dismissed and arrested. But one thing seems to be certain. There was a certain amount of mistrust about the Sheikh in influential quarters in Delhi, to whom a Hindu Prince appeared to be a better bet (for India) than a Muslim leader enjoying popular support among the Muslims in the Valley. One report has it that the Intelligence Bureau ... was asked by Home Minister Patel, to thoroughly investigate the Sheikh's nationalist credentials as well as possible personal ambition. When the IB gave the Sheikh a clean chit, he was asked to re-investigate more thoroughly. And the IB's second report contained enough material to implicate the Sheikh and justify his arrest.

For another, the Praja Parishad, the cover under which the RSS operated in the state, had started a campaign for full and immediate integration of the State ... with India, and for scrapping Article 370. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherji, the founder of the Jana Sangh, decided to lead the campaign. He reached Jammu from where he proceeded towards Srinagar. He was arrested midway! His unfortunate death while still in custody, inflamed Hindu feelings. The Hindu backlash was fully exploited by elements opposed to the Sheikh, in India and, perhaps, he felt cornered. He had unreservedly supported J&K's accession to India in the belief that Hindu communalism could never take control of India... This conviction was now shaken and the Sheikh, perhaps, began to apprehend that a Muslim majority J&K may not be treated fairly in India of not far-off tomorrow. And further that, Article 370 might be scrapped, and, instead of the J&K enjoying a special position, it might be pushed to complete submergence in India. This apprehension might have led him to initiate moves which had the potential of separation from India and establishment of an independent State of J&K, with full support and guarantee of Western powers.

It was a sort of vicious circle, feeding suspicion on both sides – and Nehru was prevailed upon to take action before it was too late. The rest is history.

The pro-integration elements in India now had a field day and, with the meek concurrence of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed and his successors, who were put in Sheikh Abdullah's place after the Sheikh's arrest, the Delhi Agreement of 1952 was negative in practice. For all practical purposes ... Jammu & Kashmir now became one of the many States of India. Article 370 was not touched for tactical reasons. But it remained more or less a façade hiding the reality of full integration.

The people of the Valley were particularly alienated and antagonized. They had to be dealt with a strong hand, and periodic elections brazenly rigged to give the ruling National Conference overwhelming majority. H.V. Kamath and I were deputed by the National Executive of the PSP to go to Srinagar and study the situation. I not only met Sheikh Abdullah there but also the Governor. I asked the Governor about the rigging of elections. He was frank enough to tell me that he was expected to ensure comfortable majority for the ruling party. Free and fair elections did not square with it. The rigging of elections was inevitable under the circumstances!

But let that be. Nehru tried to right the wrong but it was too late. He died while Sheikh Abdullah was still on his way to Pakistan on a mission assigned to him by Nehru.

Almost a decade later, his daughter Indira Gandhi picked up the thread again. Tortuous negotiations between her emissaries, on the one hand, and Sheikh Abdullah and Mirza Afzal Beg, on the other, resulted in what is known as "Kashmir Accord" of February 24, 1975. The "Accord" enabled Sheikh Abdullah to come back to power and become the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir.

Terms of the "Accord" includes:

Continuation of Article 370.

Residuary powers of legislation to remain with the State.

Parliament would continue to have power to make laws pertaining to prevention of activities detrimental to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India, secessionist activities and insult to the Constitution or the National Flag.

Where any provision of the Constitution of India has been applied to the State with adaptations and modifications, it would be altered or repealed by the President under Article 370. But provisions of the Constitution of India already applied to the State without adaptation on modification are unalterable.

The State can have its own legislation on money matters.

No agreement was possible on the question of nomenclature of Governor and Chief Minister.

... 1977 saw a sea change in Indian politics. Indira Gandhi was ousted from power and a Janata Party government led by Morarji Desai took over. 1977

elections in Kashmir were the first really free and fair elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Janata split and subsequent events (into which we need not go here), however, allowed Indira Gandhi to bounce back to power. She and President Giani Zail Singh rushed to Srinagar when Sheikh Abdullah died, and saw to it that Dr. Farooq Abdullah was installed as a Chief Minister, although D.D. Thakur was number two in Sheikh Abdullah's cabinet and Farooq lived in London more than in Kashmir.

But Farooq Abdullah, it seems did not feel unduly obliged and soon chalked out an independent course for himself. There was near consternation in Delhi when he began hobnobbing with the Opposition and attended some of their conclaves.

He had to be subdued! Governor Jagmohan was at hand. He manoeuvred a split in the National Conference Legislative Party and, installed a government of defectors in 1984. Sheikh Abdullah's son-in-law (who always believed that he had a better right to succeed Sheikh Abdullah), G.M. Shah was sworn in as Chief Minister.

... G.M. Shah's government fell not long after and Farooq Abdullah returned to power.

By 1987 (when Rajiv Gandhi was in power in Delhi), Farooq Abdullah had been properly subdued. He was literally forced into an alliance with the J&K Congress in the elections held that year. Farooq's inefficient and corrupt administration had alienated the people from the National Conference and Farooq. This alliance alienated them further. Kashmiri youth was looking forward to 1987 elections to register its protest, defeat the NC-Congress alliance and usher in a basic change in the State's power equation.

The Alliance was not unaware of its unpopularity and of the distinct probability of its defeat at the hands of the new emerging forces. So it (again) resorted to brazen rigging...

It did win. But its consequences were disastrous. The people lost confidence in the democratic process (and) opted for undemocratic and violent means. And militancy was born! Before that there was hardly any instance of militant action in Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan, naturally, saw an opportunity for itself in this situation and began to play its part in sustaining and fanning it. Militancy grew with every attempt by security forces to curb it, because the methods employed by the insensitive security forces and the administration alienated the people further. Militancy, much of it funded and equipped from across the border, now knew no bounds and became almost uncontrollable.

It is too early to say if anything concrete or worthwhile would emerge out of the current moves and counter moves and initiatives on the chessboard of Kashmir... (No) serious observer (can) be sanguine (but) there are some hopeful signs...

(Source: The Janata, Deepavali Special Number, 2000)

## Eminent Journalist Brij Bhardwaj 'Kashmiris are Longing for Peace, Dialogue and Final Solution'

... There is a sense of fatigue on both sides of the border and a strong desire for peace. The leaders may still differ on the issue of one point, that the solution cannot be found by use of arms, and that a peaceful dialogue is the only answer. It needs to be noticed that the Hizb's Kashmir cease-fire may have been short-lived but has changed the State's politics forever.

For instance, leaders in the State, including secessionists and pro-Pakistan elements, have acknowledged the fact that the Central Government, headed by the BJP, made a major turnaround when it agreed to hold talks with militants in Kashmir. This has also virtually finished the Hurriyat Conference as the voice of the Kashmir people. Its failure to carry forward the peace process has been noticed by people and with that its effectiveness as well as credibility has suffered. The divisions in the organisations became even sharper after there was a contest for the chairmanship of the conference in which Molvi Farooq and A.G. Lone were defeated by a single vote leading to the installation of Prof. Bhat as the Chairman.

The immediate impact was that the Molvi chose to withdraw from politics by taking two years study leave while A.G. Lone became busy trying to revive the People's Conference. A political convention was organized in Srinagar last week, and the speech delivered by Lone in the meeting was significant as in this he blamed both India and Pakistan for the Kashmir problem. He suggested that the solution could be found if, besides the two countries, the people of the State were also made a party to it.

Lone is slowly but surely disassociating himself from hard-core elements and is preparing the ground for a peaceful solution. His hint that a dialogue may start soon also indicates that situation has changed in J&K and the majority leans towards a peaceful solution.

These changes have come about as a result of a realistic assessment of the Kashmir situation by leaders on both sides of the dividing line. The leaders on our side are aware that India's democracy gives them a better chance to put across their viewpoint and can help create conditions in which Kashmir's identity can be maintained. On paper, the area under Pakistani occupation may be free, but is, in reality, being governed with a strong hand by Islamabad, where the generals in power take all the important decisions... It may come as a surprise to leaders on both sides of the border that the Kashmiri leaders are far closer to a settlement or an agreement than the reports suggest. For instance, there is almost a near-agreement on a ceasefire being revived in the state at the earliest. This has led to a split in Hurriyat and a break in the ranks of fundamentalist outfits like the Jamaat-e-Islami.

(Contd. on Page 562)

# **BMMCC's Appeal on Observance of 8<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Babari Masjid Demolition, 7 November, 2000**

"The BMMCC endorses the programme adopted by the AIMPLB for the observance of the 8<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Demolition on 6 December, 2000, i.e.

- i) Speech on Babari Masjid Question in all mosques by the Imams before the formal Khutba on **Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2000** and Dua for its restoration at the end of the Namaz-e-Juma.
  - ii) Presentation of Memorandum addressed to the President by a representative group including all secular parties to the DM or the Tehsildar at all Zila/ Tehsil headquarters on 6 December, 2000, preceded by a public meeting, if possible at a suitable place.
  - iii) Organisation of Public Meetings or Seminars on Babari Masjid Question in important places to which intellectuals and opinion-makers should be invited.
- The Memorandum/Resolution should include the following points:-

1. Express concern and apprehension of all secular forces, and particularly of the Muslim community, at the repeated statements of the JASS-VHP and other members of the Sangh Parivar to start construction of the proposed Ram Janambhoomi Mandir on the disputed site, in defiance of the law, on a date of their choice, without waiting for the final judicial verdict on the question of title, which constitute a serious threats to public order as well as a contempt of the Supreme Court and a defiance of the Constitution.
2. Demand that the Central Government break its silence and administer public warning to the VHP and take all possible action to safeguard the security of the acquired area against any organised assault as well as give public assurance on the floor of the Parliament during the Winter Session that no construction shall be permitted anywhere in the security zone before the judgement in the title suit and the subsequent Order of the Supreme Court.
3. Demand that the Government move the Allahabad High Court for day-to-day hearing of the title suit by the Special Bench.
4. Demand that no repair or renovation of the temporary make-shift structure on the disputed site shall be undertaken by the Government without appropriate order of the Supreme Court.
5. Appeal to the secular forces to join hands in the defence of the Constitution and the Rule of Law and support the above demands.

The BMMCC proposes to hold a National Seminar in New Delhi on 6 December, 2000 to commemorate the occasion.

**Neena Vyas**

## **On VHP Preparing Ground for BJP in UP**

... The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has ... announced that during the Kumbh Mela at Prayag in January it will publicly declare the date for the start of construction of the Ram temple at the disputed site in Ayodhya.

The dates are likely to be around the end of next year, anytime between October and December.

As always, the VHP plans in Ayodhya have coincided with Assembly elections. Whether the temple is built or not, clearly the VHP plans to test the waters...

... Although for some time now it has tried to keep off the Ayodhya issue, every now and then its leaders in Uttar Pradesh have kept the issue alive by making statements about the BJP's commitment on this.

And its coalition partners at the Centre are too busy enjoying the fruits of power to worry too much about the BJP's Hindutva platform.

... If the VHP is even half way successful in whipping up a frenzy over the Ram temple issue, the BJP too will jump in to make full political use of it in the Assembly elections...

Senior leaders ... do not admit that the party has now given negative signals to the Backwards and the Scheduled Castes in Uttar Pradesh...

Experience has shown that in State politics it is the caste of the leader at the State level which matters and which can pull members of that caste towards the party. Laxman ... in Delhi will hardly be able to counter the effect of Bhan having been given the sack in Lucknow...

With no senior Backward or Dalit leader in the party from Uttar Pradesh, the lower castes are feeling orphaned. This may also explain why Vajpayee gave in to the blackmail tactics of Uma Bharati and accommodated her in the Union Cabinet.

For, the party could not afford to be seen to be sidelining another Backward leader...

... This upper caste-lower caste tension in the party ... together with the tension between the party's Hindutva ideological base and its newer secular pretensions could become a powerful factor in determining the BJP's electoral fortunes.

Uttar Pradesh ... will become the focal point of the party's struggle to retain its supremacy in the Hindi heartland. After all, in the rest of India, the East, the South and Maharashtra in the West, the BJP is simply riding piggy-back on other political forces, and it is acutely aware of this. It cannot afford to lose its base in Uttar Pradesh.

(Source: The Hindu, 12 November, 2000)

## BJP President Laxman On the Babari Masjid Question

The BJP has clarified its stand that it would abide by the decision of the Supreme Court on the issue.

I agree that the BJP has changed its outlook on the controversy. First, the party wanted the issue to be resolved through a dialogue, then preferred a legislation to resolve it. It was really unfortunate the way the disputed structure was demolished in 1992. **Now all concerned should wait for the court judgement.**

When pointed out that the Vishwa Hindu Parishad had reiterated its resolve to construct a temple there, It will create some problem... The BJP stand on the issue is very clear that it would wait for the judgement.

(Source: The Pioneer, 24 October, 2000)

## Shahabuddin's Letter to Neerja Chowdhury, 15 November, 2000

I have read your piece on the Babari Trio (Indian Express, 15 November, 2000). For better appreciation of the case, let me clarify that the Babari Trio have been taking shelter behind the fact that though they stand charge-sheeted, no charges have been framed, as in the case of the Gujarat Duo. But the question is: Why the charges have not been framed?

The charges have not been framed because some 30 accused, including the Trio have filed a review petition in the Allahabad High Court on a technical point that the CBI's charge-sheet is based on a multiplicity of FIR's. The petition has been heard but the order has been deferred from time to time. But the Special Session Judge has been asked by the High Court not to proceed with the case till the order on this petition.

Thus, the accused have been saved from responding to the repeated summons of the Court to be present for framing of charges.

However, on the basis of the CBI charge-sheet, the empowered Court had not only taken cognizance of the charge-sheet and found a prima facie case **but committed the accused for Sessions trial.**

Is it moral to evade the judicial process on serious charges on a technical point?

If the Trio is innocent, why shouldn't they face the trial and prove their innocence?

Incidentally, the real charge against L.K. Advani is not limited to presence at the Demolition and moral support to the Karsevaks **but of complicity in a conspiracy to demolish the Masjid.**

*With Best  
Compliments*

*from*

**KALEEM  
KAWAJA**

**THE ASSOCIATION  
OF INDIAN  
MUSLIMS OF  
AMERICA**

**THE ORGANIZATION  
FOR UNIVERSAL  
COMMUNAL  
HARMONY**

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

## Law Alone Won't Do Editorial, Islamic Voice, October, 2000

... The National Commission for Women's recently released report on the status of Muslim women is indication enough that social rot is indeed deep in the Muslim society all across the country. Muslim women are unfairly divorced; curse of dowry affects Muslims as it does others and polygamy is another way to collect more and more dowry and wives. Saddled with children, mothers deserted by husbands are a harassed lot. Blatant denial of Mehr weakens their financial situation even more. Islam had given a set of social laws that were quite in keeping with biological and emotional role of the two sexes...

Ideally, these laws should have put the Muslim women a notch higher than others. But that is not what is commonly observed. Three talaqs at one go is almost the rule among men from the lower social strata. It has become a convenient tool to punish the erring women by uncouth and irresponsible men. More ironically, divorce is used when wives and in-laws refuse to comply with the demands for dowry. Polygamy has come in as additional facility for satisfying greed by gathering more dowry through more wives. While dowry has almost become obligatory, Mehr is becoming nominal and invariably denied or waived through consent obtained under duress in the tense final moments before husbands' deaths. Result: more Muslim women are being burnt at the altar of the dowry, children are being rendered destitute, hospitals are brimming with undernourished Muslim kids and anaemic Muslim mothers, more Muslim kids are turning criminals.

We all accept that the Shariah is blameless... It has worked flawlessly in the past and still works fine in several Muslim countries. The rot therefore is traceable to other factors. Possibly, lack of awareness about the Shariah among Muslims, lack of counselling of spouses before and after marriage, low socio-economic status, anonymity offered by big cities to people ... who feel no social pressures to stick to recognized social mores and behaviour, huddled living in slums where free mixing of sexes is more and economic opportunities are less etc. etc.

Seen in this backdrop, it will be worthwhile for the Muslim ulema, intellectuals, advocates and the members of Muslim Personal Law Board meeting in Bangalore on October 28, 29 to take a holistic view of the social mess in the Muslim society. Mere insistence on letter of the Shariah and issue of "hands-off" warning sounds too superficial. Unfortunately, the religious class among Muslims comprises of more theology scholars than social scientists. While muftis can justifiably be perturbed over interference in the Shariah, as social scientists they ought to trigger the reform mechanism within the society. It is where our ulema must redefine their role. They ought to be more *musleh* (reformers) and *muzakki* (trainer) of the people than mufti (jurists). Unless this happens, the societal structure will be in peril of getting damaged by the internally mobile lava of social discontent.

## Syed Saiyidain Hameed on Urgency for Ban on Polygamy and Triple Talaq

... Talaq is permissible in the Koran only on condition that there is a complete breakdown of marriage. Parting of ways must be graceful, and utmost care is taken to inflict no suffering on the woman. The common practice of impulsively uttering talaq thrice in a go, or writing talaq thrice on a postcard ... is totally anti-Islamic. No cleric, regardless from which school of Fiqah, can ever condone this form of talaq.

Just as the man is permitted talaq, so also is the woman permitted to take khula. In this matter as in all others, women and men have equal rights in Islam...

... Most women are brainwashed to believe that for a virtuous wife, it is incumbent to forfeit her mehr altogether. This they do without understanding their rights; and when the husband pronounces talaq, he can throw her out minus the mandatory mehr...

The fact of the matter is that Muslims (males) selectively practice whatever suits our need. (They) indulge in triple talaq, in polygamy, in dodging mehr and maintenance. (They) ascribe (their) actions to (the) religious sanctions and continuously harp on our religious code. But we blatantly violate the injunctions of Islam. (They) pronounce triple talaq without following the commands pertaining to it. We marry again and again without adhering to the commands pertaining to second and subsequent marriage. Thanks to the way (they) practice it, Islam is looked upon by the world as the most anti-gender religion. For this perception, it is (they) who are to be blamed. It is time (they) applied the corrective to (their) own selves and stop using religion as an excuse for (their) misdemeanours. (Source: The Times of India, 15 November, 2000) (The author is a writer, founder of the Muslim Women's Forum and former member, National Commission for Women).

## Muslim Failure

### Editorial, The Hindustan Times, 1 Nov., 2000

(The) meeting of the Muslim Personal Law Board attract(ed) so much publicity ... presumably because of the faint hopes about the possibility of the Board finally coming to grips with the so-called triple talaq form of divorce and perhaps even banning it. The hopeful expectations, however, proved futile. Nor was this surprising because this practice has proved to be quite an intractable one...

... If the Indian Muslims are unwilling to end this practice, which is patently unfair to women, it is presumably because of the hesitation which a minority community feels in dispensing with a 'tradition', no matter how iniquitous, lest it should open the floodgates of 'reforms', undermining its distinctiveness...

Even then, there is obviously a need for the Personal Law Board to be much more forward-looking than it has been so far... Above all, there is a need for the leading lights of the community to make a genuine effort to eradicate the impression that the Muslims constitute a backward-looking mullah-dominated group.

## Mushirul Hasan on Social Reform Through Ijtehad and Legislation

... It has been argued that any legislative change in the Muslim personal law would violate the fundamental rights guaranteed in the Indian Constitution. The argument is contested, but the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) failed to take an explicit stand at their recent meeting in Bangalore. It is no longer possible to keep deferring an issue that is not only affecting Muslim women but is also so central to their future welfare and security. Already, demands for judicial activism and pressure are mounting from some Muslim women organisations to amend the laws relating to 'triple talaq'. Time and again precedents from other Muslim countries, including Pakistan, are cited to clamour for some measure of reform in the Muslim personal law. Members of the AIMPLB would do well to pay heed...

Today, the contentious issue is not the preservation of 'Muslim identity', expressed through mosques, religious institutions, the traditional system of education and charitable institutions. There is an overall consensus, despite the spurt in majoritarian stridency, on guarding minority rights provided by the Constitution. Nor is the sanctity of the Shariat in question... At the heart of the present debate, so argued the Deoband-educated Maulana Said Ahmad Akbarabadi in the 1960s, is the distinction between those Quranic injunctions that were specific to the Arab customary law of the time and those applicable to Muslim societies in other times. This distinction has been made in the past, and that alone enabled Islam to pass through many stages of reorientation and readjustments. The scholar of Islamic jurisprudence, A.A.A. Fyzee, positioned himself against the traditional belief that in Islam law and religion are coterminous. He argued that law is a product of social evolution and it must change with time and circumstances.

In the past, the AIMPLB has not been impressed with these arguments; I doubt if they think differently now or are sensitive to the powerful and successful reformist initiatives in Muslim societies. They may settle, in response to certain court judgements, for a few cosmetic changes without satisfying the growing and persistent demands for gender justice for Muslim women. Perhaps, the only way out is to ... bring about some form of consensus (ijma, the most important legal notion in Islam) not on the enforcement of a uniform civil code but on substantial reforms in the provisions on 'triple talaq' and maintenance for the Muslim widows.

... Jawaharlal Nehru ... may have been right in thinking that the time was not ripe for bringing Muslims within the preview of a uniform civil code, but the initiative on such matters, should have rested with Parliament and not the religious traditionalists and the defenders of the status quo.

Not many people know that Nehru's Cabinet received

suggestions, in 1961, for reviewing and reforming the Muslim personal law... Lengthy discussions followed, and the Law ministry was asked to make appropriate recommendations. But the mere hint of an inquiry in the ministry's report led to a public outcry. A gathering of Muslim ministers and MPs, chaired by Zakir Husain, the vice-president of the Republic, echoed their sentiments without any serious deliberation.

No government after Nehru could contemplate reforms to ensure the equal status of Muslim women. Electorally, the risk was too great. In consequence, state intervention in the Shah Bano case came about with an eye on the "Muslim vote"... This is because the political regime, acting in unison with the Muslim orthodoxy, had legitimised the AIMPLB members as the sole custodians, interpreters and transmitter of the Shariat.

... The urge for reforms must come from the community itself. One hopes that patience, persistence and education will lead to a reappraisal of existing attitudes and that more and more educated Muslims will take recourse to ijtehad (exercise of independent judgement), defined by Iqbal as "the principle of movement" in Islam.

(Source: The Indian Express, 15 November, 2000)

### AIMPLB: Bangalore Declaration 29 October, 2000 (Extracts)

Bangalore Declaration released by the All India Muslim Personal Law Board at the conclusion of the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the Board ... expresses concern over the fact that attempts were being made to ignite communal passions (and feels) that the idea behind whipping up the communal frenzy is to divert popular attention from real issues like poverty, illiteracy and underdevelopment...

The Board appeals to religious leaders, intellectuals, journalists, teachers and other opinion-makers not to remain mute spectator to the fascist attempts to destroy the democratic and secular foundations of the country at the behest of external and imperial forces and all right thinking citizens of this country must come out to do their best to promote communal amity, peace and respect for each other.

The Declaration expresses concern over what it called State Terrorism against religious minorities and appeals to religious minorities to evolve a common strategy to collectively confront the threat and take the message of unity of God and mankind to our other brothers in the country.

The Declaration calls upon the community to be true and practice Muslims rise above petty distinctions of regions, groups and communities and unite itself on the basis of unity of faith and to solve their differences by approaching Sharia Panchayats or Dar-ul-Qaza as well as shun meaningless and evil customs and social practices in the matters of marriages etc.

**NCPUL: Workshop-cum-Seminar  
On Promotion of Urdu Language  
New Delhi, 18-20 Nov., 1999 (Resolution)**

- ... (Since) National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL) has been recognized as a nodal agency for promotion of Urdu language and Urdu education... The following areas of Urdu education are formally entrusted to the NCPUL: -
- Training of teachers of Urdu language and subject teachers of Urdu medium...
- ... Conducting academic audit of all Urdu textbooks in whole of the country...
- A National Core Curriculum be formulated for modern subjects (to be introduced in Madarsas) without any interference in the basic pattern of (religious) instruction (and) so devised (so as to) be holistic and job-oriented preferably computer-oriented (and to be) imparted through Urdu medium...
- A Monitoring Agency be established by Government of India to oversee the impact of modernization (and) NCPUL may conduct impact assessment strategies...
- ... Efforts ... be made to rediscover the roots of Urdu in the context of Indian civilization...
- Role of Urdu as an important link language in the common civil space ... be reaffirmed.
- Project "Urdu in contact with other Indian languages" ... already undertaken by the Council to be recast both in scope and articulation...
- Urdu be declared as the national minority language and the bondage between Hindi and Urdu further strengthened.
- NCPUL should open one Model School in each minority-dominated district of the country.
- NCPUL should institute fellowships in Education, Culture and Linguistics in all ... Central Universities...
- Knowledge of Urdu should be recognized as an additional qualification in all government services in all (Urdu-concentration States, namely, UP, Bihar, AP, Maharashtra, Karnataka, MP, Rajasthan and Haryana).

**Shahabuddin Demands DD's Urdu Channel  
Letter to Min. of Information, 15 Nov., 2000**

The Door Darshan has separate channels in a number of national languages, the last one to become functional is in Punjabi. But Urdu - a national and pan-Indian language but without a home-base - has been left out so far. I beg of you to consider the establishment of a Urdu Channel which would command a large body of viewers in India and neighbouring countries.

In the meantime, you may also like to find out and let me know the duration of Urdu Programmes on various Kendras of the DD.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Conference of the State Urdu Academies  
Jaipur, 14-16 October, 2000  
Resolution and Recommendations (Summary)**

The Conference:

1. Welcomes the establishment of Urdu Akademi in Tamilnadu and recommends establishment of Urdu Akademi in other States, particularly in Jharkhand, Uttaranchal and Chhattisgarh.
2. Emphasizes the need for increase in grants for Urdu Academies and their timely release.
3. Calls upon the Union Government to sanction grants, at least upto 50% of the expenditure, on national and international programmes for promotion of Urdu education and composite culture.
4. Recommends establishment of Urdu-medium primary and secondary schools in adequate numbers, participation of Urdu Akademi in National Literacy Mission for the removal of illiteracy in Urdu-speaking people.
5. Calls for participation of Urdu Akademi in Information Technology Missions.
6. Recommends proper census of Urdu-speaking population during Census 2001.

**Shahabuddin's Comments**

**Letter to Director, NCPUL, 20 Oct., 2000**

I have gone through the Recommendations and Resolution of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Conference of State Urdu Academies, held in Jaipur on 14-16 October, 2000.

There is one serious omission about teaching of Urdu to those whose Mother Tongue is Urdu at the secondary level as the First Language in the Three-Language Formula, with Hindi/Principal Language of the State as the compulsory Second Language.

You may kindly consider it for future recommendation.

**Shahabuddin's Comments  
On NCPUL's Perspective Plan**

I feel that if it is to serve as the Perspective Plan for the Promotion of Urdu Language for, say, 2000-2009, it needs to be rewritten and in four parts:

Part I: Present Status of Urdu in the country in 2000 AD.

Part II: Target for the year 2009 A.D.

Part III: Policy Corrections Required

Part IV: Executive Responsibility assigned to NCPUL and other Central and State Agencies in this regard and the Financial Outlays for various Schemes, Central, Centrally sponsored and State.

That the Perspective Plan for Urdu should not be totally identified with the Working Plan of the NCPUL is my humble request.

## Saffron on the Rampage

### Joint Report on Violence in Gujarat, August, 2000

The dreaded finally happened. The cynically targeted bullets of Pakistan's mercenaries that claimed the life of 30 Hindu pilgrims headed for the Amarnath Yatra (the final toll was 100, the rest dying in the cross-fire between the Indian para-military and militants) caused a direct resonance in far-flung Gujarat.

In Ahmedabad, Surat, Sabarkantha (Lambadiya, Khed Brahma and Modasa villages) and Palanpur and Rajkot, Muslim business establishments – powerlooms, granaries, printing presses, shops and godowns – were cold-bloodedly targeted by indigenous terrorist squads led by elected representatives belonging to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal (BD). In Surat alone, a senior correspondent of the Financial Express has estimated the total damage by the selective destruction through full-fledged arson of only Muslim-owned powerlooms ... at Rs. 10 crores totally. In the Modasa village of Sabarkantha district, of the 63 business establishments charred to nothingness, 51 belonged to Muslims, 12 to Hindus totaling to a loss of not less than Rs.1.5 crores.

On August 1, 2000, the news of the massacre of Amarnath yatri was received throughout India with horror, the numbing stupor caused by this pre-mediated carnage only pierced by many concerned protests by Muslim organizations and rights' groups all over India, fearful of the consequences of this carnage on the fragile internal peace within India. These anxieties were well justified. Within hours of the massacre on our northern borders, the self-styled leaders of Hindu extremist outfits expressed outrage and thereafter systematically geared up for their brand of retaliation.

In Mumbai, the recently humiliated chief of the Shiv Sena (SS) Bal Thackeray's Hindi evening *Doppar ka Saamna* flashed a headline, "Hindu ilakon mein shokh, Muslim mohallon mein jashan" (Grief in Hindu areas, celebration in Muslim areas), a blatant falsehood that was allowed to pass uncontested by the city's police, never particularly concerned by the brewing of communal sentiments.

In Gujarat, the intentions were far more ruthless and sinister. International general secretary of the VHP, Praveen Togadia, announced at a press conference in Ahmedabad on August 2, 2000 that the VHP was declaring a state-wide bandh in protest... The Gujarat government, ruled by the BJP, formally declared its support to the bandh. Within hours, all-Gujarat-based textile manufacturing associations and the Surat Textiles Federation and Diamond Merchants had also extended support.

If Gujarat is Hindutva's laboratory, as the proud proponents of this political ideology have so often declared, what took place in Gujarat on the day of the bandh on August 3, and for a week thereafter, should, be

viewed as one more test case of Hindutva in action.

Despite the fact that many Muslims closed down business and shops on that fateful day ... for the squads of Hindu Rashtra, this was just not enough. Publicly, office bearers of the VHP and BD, and in many cases helped by elected representatives of the BJP, bayed for more blood in revenge... and got it with the help of the government and the police: destruction worth crores and all in the form of property and businesses owned by Muslims...

The most noticeable trend in this round of minority targeting that has, since 1998, especially taken on a blatant and public form, was that the post-bandh violent incidents in different parts of Gujarat were motivated by a systematic aim to economically cripple the minority community. The total number of lives lost were 5 from Surat and 2 adivasis who were part of a violent mob and died due to police firing in Lamabdia village of Sabarkantha.

But it was the scale and venom of the destruction that has resulted in mass-scale evacuation and resultant ghettoisation already being enforced by the hit squads of the VHP-Bajrang Dal and the BJP in urban areas of Gujarat that is noteworthy. This time the squads successfully moved to adivasi-dominated tribal areas. The venom behind the hurling of rocks in the Lamabdiya village over two days, August 4 and 5 rocks systematically at Muslim shops and even some homes destroyed a harmony existing between adivasis and the minorities for centuries and which, in turn, has led to mass-scale evacuation from the villages by resident Muslims...

Two years ago, in August 1998, when pre-mediated violence broke out in Randhikpur and Sanjeli in Gujarat ... investigations by civil liberties groups had (brought out that) the destruction had been pre-planned to enable takeover of the local transport business, then in the hands of Muslims once they were cleansed through terror out of the area.

These attacks had been accompanied by a spate of violent attacks against the state's Christian minorities between 1998 and 2000... In many of these attacks the senior functionaries of the BJP-VHP and BD were directly named by the police but no action was taken thanks to blatant pressure by a partisan executive. These steps have also been accompanied by administrative measures that are prejudicial and biased, some of which have been challenged (though not all reversed) in the state's Courts.

Similarly in the recent bout of post-bandh violence, both the administration and the police were either browbeaten into paralysis or actually assisting the zealots...

In other parts of Gujarat on bandh day, squads of the Hindu extremist groups had a field day on the streets; like never before the bandh related violence exposed the lawlessness of not merely the VHP-BD squads but the

## Vir Sanghvi on the Mind of the RSS

... Why does the 'Christian menace' keep (Sudarshan) awake at nights? His supporters offer the familiar responses. Christianity ... converts people. Missionaries lure tribals to the church... The Vatican does not regard Hinduism as being a means to find God. And missionaries have played a dubious role in the North-east.

For the purpose of argument, let us concede that each of these points is well-taken... All the complaints that the RSS has about Christians may well be valid – but here's the thing: they were as valid 15 years ago as they are today.

And yet, 15 years ago – or even a decade ago when the Masjid fever was at its height – nobody of any consequence within the Parivar raised these issues with any great conviction.

Instead, we were told about how Muslims had never really accepted an Indian identity, how they all secretly identified with the evil Babar and all those terrible foreign invaders who had so humiliated the Hindu samaj, and why in any case did they get to keep four wives when the rest of us had to be content (or not so content) with only one?

... Has the Christian community done anything so dramatically different over the last five years that it now warrants Sudarshan's ire? ...

My guess is that Sudarshan is still exercised by the Muslim menace. But he has been told, to lay off that subject, at least in public... The current spell in government and the ability to win moderate alliances is directly linked to the yards of masking tape pasted securely across the mouths of Sudarshan and his Sangh Parivar pals. The anti-Muslim rhetoric has served its purpose. Now it is time to shut up.

From Sudarshan's point of view, this may all be very well for the BJP but it robs his organisation of its *raison d'être*. The RSS flourishes only when it can unite Hindus against a threat. For decades, it remained in business by re-opening the wounds of centuries of Muslim rule.

How can it still unite the samaj without attacking Muslims? How does it identify an enemy who is striking at the core of our society and who must be defeated?

Easy enough: it falls back on the 'Christian menace'.

The problem is that even the most imaginative demagogue finds it difficult to suggest that the road to national ruin lies ... the Lord's Prayer...

But the RSS gets around this objection nicely. Indian Christians, by themselves, may not seem menacing. So it suggests that they are not really Indian at all. They are part of a global conspiracy run by our former colonial masters who cannot bear to see Hindu India rise again and so, bribe hapless tribals into embracing Christ, and

then stir up trouble in the North-east.

If Christians wish to prove their patriotism, says Sudarshan, they must forsake their Western masters, send all white missionaries packing and run a purely swadeshi church like China's...

All this may seem silly... What can he possibly hope to achieve? To answer these questions we need to cast our minds back to the mid- 1980s. When the Babari Masjid campaign began, 99 per cent of Hindus had never even heard of the Masjid and it was considered preposterous to believe that a political party could win votes by focusing on some medieval mosque.

The reason why the Babari Masjid campaign succeeded beyond our wildest expectations was this: all such campaigns provoke a reaction from the other side. Muslims felt threatened by the rhetoric. Their religious (and political) leaders saw this as a perfect opportunity...

... Angered by these positions, even liberal Hindus began to think: My God! May be Advani is right! Perhaps these people are fanatics after all!

Much the same sort of thing could happen with the Christian community. So far, at least, Christians have reacted just as Muslims did... So don't laugh at Sudarshan. He knows what he is doing. The boys, in khakhi have done it once before in the 1980s. And judging by the early results, they are well on their way to doing it again.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 22 October, 2000)

### Shahabuddin's Response, Letter to The Hindustan Times, 23 Oct., 2000

I have read your reflection on Sarsanghchalak in the Hindustan Times of 22 October, 2000 in the course of which you have adopted the usual 'reaction' theory to explain away the wave of chauvinism, which helped the RSS-BJP to achieve their object and purpose.

We may not have consulted sympathetic friends like you but please let me know whether in your view, the Muslim community should not have taken notice of the highjacking of the Babari Masjid in broad day-light and its de-facto conversion into a temple in February, 1986! And what did it demand? It only demanded that the wheels of law move faster and the cases pending since 1949-51 be consolidated and placed before a Special Bench of the Allahabad High Court which should hold day-to-day hearings! The cases were consolidated a year and a half later after V.P. Singh won the Allahabad bye-election but the repeated plea for day-to-day hearing has never been conceded.

Yes, we had our hawks but 'doves' like me even offered an out-of-court settlement in February, 1986 itself

(Contd. on Page 566)

## Khushwant Singh On Political Character of RSS

Now that many of our top leaders have re-affirmed their loyalties to the RSS, the pretence that the organisation was – and is – only social and cultural without any interest in politics may be forgotten. Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee went on record to say “once a swayamsevak forever a swayamsevak”. Home Minister L.K. Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi (both accused in the destruction of the Babari Masjid), Chief Ministers and Governors of some states have also confirmed their loyalties to the RSS.

Unfortunately, the RSS has no constitution (nor) a list of members and keeps no accounts of donations or expenses. But it has spawned a large number of sub-organisations which carry out its programmes among workers, students, civil servants and (masses). The Bharatiya Jana Sangh and its successor, the BJP, are its offspring.

The earliest studies of the RSS were made by Americans connected with the CIA - J.A. Curran and Craig Baxter. A comprehensive account of the RSS is available in D.R. Goyal's RSS brought up-to-date and republished (Radha Krishna). Goyal was once a member of the RSS and knows what he is writing about.

The RSS was founded by K.B. Hedgewar (1889-1940) on Vijaya Dashmi (Dussehra) day in 1925 in Nagpur ... only five members... The idea was to organise a body of Hindu boys, drill and train them to be able to face Muslim goondas in communal riots. Their hero was Shivaji.

By the time Hedgewar handed over the baton to Golwalkar, the RSS had 400 shakhas with over 40,000 members... Although the war was on and Gandhiji called on the British to 'Quit India', the RSS' priority was not to get the British out but to cut Muslims to size. In return, the British took a benign view of the RSS and even arranged military training for it. The communal strife in the wake of Partition of the country gave yet another fillip to the

The murder of the Mahatma at the hands of Nathuram Godse created a revulsion against the RSS in the minds of Indians... He went to the gallows chanting the hymn of the RSS.

Godse succeeded Golwalkar. During his tenure, the RSS made further inroads into workers', students' and civil servants' organisations. It had a series of publications in many languages... The RSS way of thinking which appealed to many parties like the Shiv Sena, the VHP and the Janata Dal. All of these are exclusively Hindu, anti-Muslim, anti-Christian, anti-socialist and anti-communist.

This aspect came into sharp focus during the tenure of Godse's successor, Rajendra Singh... The Ramjanmabhoomi agitation led to the destruction of the Babari Masjid; in recent times, the violence against Christians gathered strength.

The pretence that it was apolitical was shed: the RSS

## Rajesh Ramachandran on Sudarshan's Outpourings against Islam & Christianity

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief K S Sudarshan on Sunday lashed out at the church, alleging that Christianity is today more about politics than religion. The insurgency in the North-East is the result of a US conspiracy, using the church, he told newsmen at the end of the Rashtriya Raksha Mahashivir (national security grand camp) here.

Sudarshan said during the Cold War when India rejected US requests for military bases, it used the church to get access to the strategically important northeast.

He alleged that the church is part of the West's arsenal through which it could guide Christians into political action in domestic as well as international politics.

Hence, an indigenous church is essential for national security, he contended. Earlier at a public meeting he calling for the Indianisation of Islam. Sudarshan asked Muslim clergy to stop exploiting illiterate Muslims who are being told to call Hindus *kafirs*. He said just as the Muslims of Indonesia still carry Hindu names and honour their Hindu ancestry, Muslims of India also should accept Hindu gods as part of their ancestry...

All through the two-and-a-half hour programme, Union home minister **Advani sat out in the sun among other guests away from the stage. Advani was seen reciting Sangh songs and doing the Sangh salute. Ram Prakash Gupta, Uttar Pradesh chief minister, sat next to Advani.**

(Source: The Times of India, 16 October, 2000)

### (Contd. from Page 551)

At present it is split between the followers of its present Chief G.M. Bhat and Gilani. Bhat is reported to have bought peace for his followers through a secret understanding with Farooq Abdullah, by assuring him that his followers have nothing to do with the ongoing Jihad in the State and should not be targeted by the paramilitary forces... Lone, another player in Kashmir politics, may have traveled a long way since the time he was associated with the Congress and the Janata Dal, but his desire to preserve Kashmiriyat or his secular credentials can not be questioned. The combination of many such new players can throw up an opportunity for finding a solution to the problem. It will, however, depend to a large extent on the approach adopted by New Delhi and Islamabad...

The actions of the ISI and the induction of foreign elements have certainly complicated the situation... The time has therefore come when the search for alternative solutions should begin in Kashmir.

(Source: The Pioneer, 13 October, 2000)

was the force behind the Hindu Jana Sangh and is today the invisible puller of strings of the BJP leadership. The new supremo, K.S. Sudarshan, is not likely to loosen the RSS hold on the BJP. One has to stretch one's credibility beyond limits to accept the RSS' claim of being secular...

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 11 November, 2000)

## Neena Vyas on Vajpayee and Advani as Builders of India of Golwalkar's Dreams

... The RSS ... cannot explain why it never participated in the freedom struggle in any meaningful manner... And yet, it has never tired of preaching lessons in patriotism, especially to Muslims and Christians.

The writings by RSS leaders, beginning with 'Guru' M.S. Golwalkar, reek of a hatred of Muslims and Christians, and it is well known that he stopped just short of recommending Hitler's method of dealing with what he called "the problem of the minorities". Writing about the purge of the Jews by Hitler, he affirmed: "Germany has shown how well nigh impossible it is for races and cultures, having differences going to the roots, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by"...

At the Agra camp ... its 'Sarsanghachalak', Sudarshan, could not help dishing out the old and familiar views. The Christians must Indianise the church, the Muslims must accept Rama and Krishna as their heroes... The view was often expressed by Advani during the days of the Ayodhya agitation. This view is hardly different from that of Golwalkar who prescribed the five points needed to be part of the nation of Hindustan. "In this country, Hindustan, the Hindu Race with its Hindu religion, Hindu culture and Hindu language (the family of Sanskrit and her offsprings) complete the Nation concept." And not wishing to leave anything ambiguous, he further wrote: "we must bear in mind that so far as 'nation' is concerned, all those, who fall outside the five-fold limits of that idea, can have no place in national life, unless they abandon their differences, adopt the religion, culture and language of the Nation and completely merge themselves in the national race. So long, however, as they maintain their racial, religious and cultural differences, they cannot but be only foreigners, who may be either friendly or inimical to the Nation."

Sudarshan's call to Muslims and Christians ... is a step in the direction of asking them to adopt the Hindu religion if they wished to be part of the nation. The war cries of the VHP and the Bajrang Dal on the conversions issue, the call by the Prime Minister for a "national debate" on the subject, all fall into place. In fact, even the review of the Constitution was a demand made by Golwalkar barely a few years after it took shape...

What happened at Agra ... - the reassertion of Hindutva, the "suggestion" to the minorities to "Indianise" (as if they were not Indians), the criticism of the Government's ... policies ... and more importantly the participation by the Union Home Minister - was perhaps an attempt to keep the Hindutva constituents solidly behind the BJP... The RSS has never strayed from the Hindutva course, and one could even say, never will...

The BJP has been trying to fine-tune its own views and approach so as not to frighten its political friends... But Advani's presence seemed to suggest that ... he could jump back on the Hindutva bandwagon. Ironically, the party seems to have also come to the conclusion that to

surge ahead electorally it cannot continue to alienate the minorities... There is a view in the party that if the minority card is played too strongly, it may lose its Hindutva vote bank. And the BJP has been trying to keep the balance, alternately giving the come hither look to the minorities and then wielding the Hindutva stick to beat them with... The apparently contradictory statements made by Laxman and Advani on the RSS are also being seen as an attempt by the party to keep two options open - pursue the soft and on the surface moderate Vajpayee line, or go back to the hard Hindutva line...

... The Prime Minister talked about "building an India of my dreams" ... in New York. And surely, the India of his dreams, as much as the India of Advani's dreams is pretty much like the India of the dreams of Golwalkar and Hegdewar and Sudarshan.

(Source: The Hindu, 22 October, 2000)

### Deep Saffron

#### Editorial, The Asian Age, 17 Oct., 2000

... Sudarshan has effectively demonstrated that there is no change in the organisation's policy towards the minorities. And that the Muslims and Christians continue to be suspect in the eyes of the RSS which has spent decades in trying to convince the majority community about the legitimacy of its assumptions... In this day and age ... the RSS sounds like a voice from another century, a primitive band of men ... who are still beating the drums of communalism. Perhaps Sudarshan himself does not know what roots he is talking about... He has legitimized the attack on the Christian community by speaking of the supposed Indianisation of the Church... (He) drew his own rabid distinction between the "Indian" Christians and the "Western" Church... Similarly Muslims were again reminded of their supposed Hindu roots, and selective quotes were used to send home the message that this minority too is here on sufferance and should not take undue liberties...

That the RSS camp was attended by Union home minister L.K. Advani and Uttar Pradesh chief minister Ram Prakash Gupta should be a matter of concern for a country which ... draws its strength and sustenance from ...secularism and democracy...

The Agra meet has sent a strong anti-minority message down the line, and this will have its impact on the BJP whether it is in or out of the government. The RSS has not soft-pedaled the message, the minorities have to follow RSS guidelines if they want to live in peace. The BJP government will be expected to protect the RSS and its front organizations like the VHP if there is violence... Its cadres (will) watch over the minorities to ensure that they demonstrate their suspect patriotism at every turn and corner... All in all Sudarshan has acted true to type, followed the well laid out line, and shown that he has brought no new thinking or insights into the RSS which remains full steam ahead on the anti-minority track.

## Rajesh Joshi

### On Revival of Golwalkar's Thoughts

... A piece of polemical indulgence on Sangh ideology (by) Golwalkar is the RSS' gospel today. When he had spelt it out ... his views were largely ignored. But when the fifth RSS chief, K.S. Sudarshan, expounded, at the 75th anniversary meet at Agra last fortnight, on the need for "swadeshikaran" (indigenisation) of the Church and "Indianisation of Islam" it, predictably enough, stirred a hornet's nest.

Sudarshan's suggestion to both Christians and Muslims to "Indianise" their respective faiths was roundly criticised... Addressing the Mahashivir, Sudarshan (also) called upon the swayamsevak to possess the "power of violence" if they wanted to be truly non-violent...

This accent on violence within a non-violent framework has sent jitters, particularly through the Christians, who take the RSS' statements seriously. Says All India United Christian Forum leader John Dayal: "I take the RSS seriously for two reasons. First, these statements come from a political group which controls the political party which controls the government. Secondly, ... the RSS (has a) dubious track record-hate and violence against all minorities and a declared distrust of the Constitution."

... Father Donald de Souza, deputy secretary-general of the Catholic Bishops Conference of India (CBCI), sees a larger political motive behind the idea of the swadeshi church. Says he: "The idea of swadeshi church is aimed at hitting at the very roots of democracy and the Constitution. Nobody can regulate faith. The Pope is the guarantor of the unity of faith, he does not tell me about my political choices."

... By reviving Golwalkar, Sudarshan is trying to energise his disillusioned cadre. However, almost every negative comment made by him was followed by a seemingly benevolent advice to both communities. The stakes, therefore, are clearly electoral-try to give the BJP's sagging fortunes a boost vis-à-vis the impending UP assembly polls. Many feel that the soft words were to save the BJP-led government, wooing the minorities, from embarrassment. The RSS chief distinguished common Christians and Muslims "who feel for the country" from their "anti-national" clergy.

Said Sudarshan: "Christians and Muslims changed their method of worship but they've links with our ancestors. Even our Indian Muslim brothers didn't come from outside...so why can't we create a new form of Islam?" ... Church leaders, however, (feel) that they have no illusion that such changes in their vocabulary will be convincing enough for the saffron brigade to roll back

## Sangh 75

### Editorial, The Organiser, 29 October, 2000

The Sangh is seventy-five... From a small beginning (it) has grown into a remarkably unique effort in networking for its man-making and nation-building mission... The founder of the RSS, Keshav Baliram Hedgewar firmly believed that national reconstruction cannot be the job of an organization or even a social group. It is an ongoing process and an atmosphere conducive to such healthy growth of good qualities and high moral values has to exist as a permanent feature in any society. The second Sarsanghchhalak of the RSS, Golwalkar Gurujī used to reiterate this point saying that as society unites, its scattered strength assumes unparalleled strength... The collective efforts of (the Sangh) is to evolve the society into a strong self-reliant nation, proud of its moorings and sure of the future. As Deendayal Upadhyaya stated, we should be proud of our past but need not hold it as the highest watermark of our glory. We can achieve even greater glory if we understand the dynamics of today and work for a better tomorrow as one nation. This necessarily involves the united effort of all – as one people.

... There is no place for dividing the people as minority or majority, between religious and linguistic groups, between vanvasis and nagarvasis or even among castes. These distinctions are but superficial and many times risen out of certain historical compulsions. No one should make a virtue of one's caste or religion... Lakhs and lakhs of swayamsevak vow to protect divine dharma meaning the value system, which is universal (which) has to be proved to be good for the place of its origin – India – the mother of all civilizations...

#### RSS Chief on National Press

*The RSS does not care what the English media publish because those who read English newspapers do not go to the polling booths to cast their votes.*

- **K.S. Sudarshan, RSS Supremo**

*Those who are trying to Indianise Indian Christianity and Muslims should first try to Indianise the Union Government.*

- **V.P. Singh, Former Prime Minister**

their campaign against the Christians. Going by the parameters set by the founder-fathers of the RSS, whose ultimate dream was to establish Hinduism's superiority over other faiths, they feel there will be no end to the RSS crusade.

(Source: The Outlook, 30 October, 2000)

## RSS Repackaged

**Editorial, The Hindustan Times, 17 Oct., 2000**

... With a friendly Government at the Centre and in some of the states, (the RSS) may well feel that a chance to achieve what it wants may never come again...

While the exhortation to the Muslims to accept Hindu mythological heroes as part of their 'cultural' heritage, as in Indonesia, is an old one, the RSS' latest preoccupation with Christians has made it come up with ideas which have a more specific connotation. It is not only that the suggestion for a swadeshi church can be resented by a community, whose faith is claimed to be older than that of Europeans, as unwarranted advice on its institutional framework; it is also a slur which is more explicit in the allegations of subversive activity by Christians in the North-east. The broad hint in these statements – that the Muslims and Christians cannot be regarded as 'nationalists' unless they 'Indianise' or 'Hinduise' themselves – is as old as the RSS... What is new is the boost which such ideas have received because of the BJP's present stint in power.

The RSS' realization, however, that it cannot press its agenda too eagerly in case it has an unsettling effect on the Vajpayee Government has complicated its task, for it cannot be too forthright about its own propaganda... Arguably, the taming of the BJP because of the compulsions of power now includes the RSS as well. The only difference is that while the BJP is at present also restrained in its utterances, the RSS has no such need. The result is that its divisive thesis will continue to sow seeds of doubt among Indians of different faiths.

## Loaves and Fishes

**Editorial, The Hindustan Times, 20 Oct., 2000**

Union Home Minister L.K. Advani's recent observation that the RSS exerts a 'moral' influence on the present Government (much as Gandhi did on Nehru's and Jayaprakash Narayan on Morarji Desai's) perhaps tells us more than anything else that the name of the game is power, and that there is little that the NDA constituents will allow to come in the way of keeping it. The singular lack of a ... reaction to (the) statement from the BJP's allies (apart from the) TDP and the JD(U) which have had some pretty obvious but innocuous things to say — should confirm to the RSS as well as its opponents that neither a point of moral or philosophical principle nor substantive differences on policy is likely to wean any of the BJP's present allies away from its share of the loaves and fishes of office.

... By hearing Advani without twitching a muscle, what the allies have done, in effect, is to obliterate the difference between a BJP Government and a Government of the NDA.

## The Roots Thing Could Lead to Some Surprising Conclusions

**Editorial, The Statesman, 21 Oct., 2000**

It is funny that KS Sudershan should urge Indian Muslims and Christians to accept their Hindu roots, since "Hindu" itself is a Farsi term, coined by Muslims to describe inhabitants of "Hind" or India not belonging to their religion. "Hinduism" in the sense of a single and unified religion is a still later invention, to which widespread currency was given by the British in the 19th century...

Sudershan ... should be expressing some gratitude: the roots of the notions of "Hindu" and "Hinduism" lie respectively with Persian Muslims and British Christians. If Sudershan or RSS ideologues were to examine Sanskrit scripture or any Indian text written before Muslims came into India, they would not encounter a single instance of the term "Hindu", or of any term synonymous with it. The closest they might come is the term "Arya", but that excludes, famously, the "Anarya", lower castes and untouchables, whom Sudershan may or may not want to number among the Hindu flock. These are people who worship Hindu gods, but who for centuries have not been allowed into Hindu temples. In some cases they were not just untouchable but even unseeable...

While Sudershan would like Indian Muslims or Christians to "remember" their roots, in the case of Harijans he would enjoin the very opposite – that they should forget the past. But this is difficult... If Sudershan has a nationalist agenda, delving into roots is the worst possible thing he could do, since elements in Indian culture of "indigenous" or "foreign" origin are too inextricably mixed.

A nationalism based on ethnic or religious exclusivism is also the worst possible strategy in terms of practical politics... Milosevic's Serb Nationalism, for example, led to the break-up of the Yugoslav republic. Nearer home, Pakistan's steady drift towards Islamic Fundamentalism has earned it the cachet of a "failed state"... It passes understanding why the Sudershans and Bal Thackerays should wish to take India down the same route as Pakistan or Yugoslavia.

By demonstrating the point so succinctly, Advani has, strictly from the BJP's point of view, once again led from the front. If the BJP wishes to be flagrant or venturesome, now it can even think of taking up issues that it was leaving for the day when it will have the parliamentary numbers right... It has been shown for the first time in India's public life that cohabiting with ideological foes can be a pleasant pastime if power-sharing is also on offer.

## Looking for a New Paradigm

Editorial, *The Statesman*, 23 Oct., 2000

Available insights into the state of mind of the RSS are baffling. For instance, ... Cardinal Ratzinger's speech ... refusing to put Christianity on par with other religions which does not bother anyone in this country, apparently put the bee in the RSS sarsanghchalak's bonnet... Sudershan would appear to have other bees in his bonnet: for example, the receipt of money from abroad — VHP sympathizers send vast sums into this country but this is of course all right... But there is a cultural dimension too: Christianity is suddenly seen as a threat to the affirmation of Hindu identity. It is doubtful whether anyone outside the RSS's inner circle sees any problem or at least in the same way... What is happening in the North-East has nothing to do with Christianity: the Nagas are revolting as Nagas, their religion is just another marker setting them apart, not from Hindus ... believe but from all Indians. Had the neighbourhood been full of Christians, the Naga problem would have been just as acute.

Problems peculiar to the RSS remain. The fact is that attendance at shakhas is dwindling while front organizations devoted to political action are flourishing... The RSS has an idiom problem. Sudershan now speaks of farmers, something the RSS rarely did earlier. It means that the core Hindutva ideology is made to cater to an increasingly literate, possibly culturally disaffected, peasantry besieged by television and metropolitan values... Hindutva needs redefinition and the quest of Hindu identity reformulated in a rural context.

The original flare-up, over the BJP's declared move to woo the Muslim electorate, should be seen from this strategic perspective. Sudershan tells them that they have "the blood of Rama and Krishna in their veins". In other words, Muslims are either foreigners or Hindus, they cannot be Muslims. Which takes everybody well over the brink of sanity.

(Contd. from Page 560)

— leave the bare Masjid alone and take whatever else you need for a magnificent Mandir..

No, dear Vir, you are wrong. On the Babari Masjid question, Muslim community could not have been more genteel and law-abiding.

To understand the Hindu-Muslim relations, you have to probe the Hindu psyche more deeply. The net impact of all the anti-Muslim propaganda for generations has been to make the average Hindu believe that the Muslims should pay some price for all the 'sins' committed for a thousand years and conclude that the Sangh Parivar is right in claiming only 3 shrines after all. I think this is because the RSS has succeeded in generating a Hindu sense of proprietorship over India and the propriety of settling the

## Rajesh Ramachandran

### Swinging Between Support & Proposition

... The RSS is doing a fine balancing act, trying its best to retain the government as well as the Opposition spaces. The thinking apparently is to use the friendly government at the Centre to further the Sangh agenda, while not letting the cadre feel disillusioned and drift away from the party.

"We are like Krishna during the Mahabharat, having to fight the enemy with a man who pawned his wife" is how a veteran RSS *pracharak* explained the situation. But be sure the BJP-led government serves the RSS purpose. And whatever be the much-hyped disillusionment of the cadre, the BJP remains the party that assures a "friendly environment for the Sangh's social work."

Friendliness is explained by a senior *pracharak* thus: "More resources are at our disposal than ever." The RSS leaders while addressing the volunteers, might decry the political class which obviously includes the BJP, but later in press conferences they try to moderate the impact of the earlier statements...

The *pracharak* *pramukh* Suresh Rao Ketkar was asked whether the RSS accepted VHP chief, Ashok Singhal's stand... (His) answer was: **"We would wait for the government's permission and the courts decision, while trying to explain our position to the government that the temple should be built."**

... So at one level, the Sangh is projecting a new moderate image of an open organization meant solely for social service which has friendly relations with a multi-party government which is bound by several limitations. At the other level, the Sangh is acutely aware of the growing anti-incumbency factor against the Union government and more importantly, the confusion within the ranks about the blatantly anti-*swadeshi* policies of the government. And again, the Sangh is sensitive to the effective utilization of the Opposition space which over the years had helped it and its affiliates to grow...

A senior leader while discussing the issue of the cadres attitude towards the government admitted that the Sangh's control over the Opposition space can be in jeopardy, but he added, so long as it takes the lead in raising economic as well as political issues against the government, it need not overtly bother about losing out its cadre. But how long can the Sangh defend the government and oppose its policies? Wouldn't its cadre see through the duplicity? RSS leaders are sure they will manage the contradiction...

(Source: *The Times of India*, 15 October, 2000)

account of the centuries to glorify Hindu and humiliate Muslim Indians. Indeed, it is the educated, rich, upcoming Hindu middle class, which is more anti-Muslim and communal in outlook than the Hindu masses. □

## Romila Thapar on Hindutva and History

"The Aryans" became a historical category in the late nineteenth century. There was much confusion between "Aryan" as race and as language, a confusion that has not entirely cleared in popular perception. In its application to Indian history, it was argued that the Aryans referred to in the Rigveda were the Aryans who had invaded and conquered northern India, founded Indian civilization, and spread their Indo-Aryan language. The theory had an immediate impact, particularly on those with a political agenda and on historians.

Jyotiba Phule maintained that the Aryan invasion explained the arrival of alien Brahmans and their dominance and oppression of the lower castes. The invasion was necessary to this view of history. For those concerned with a Hindutva ideology, the invasion had to be denied. The definition of a Hindu as given by Savarkar was that India had to be his *pitribhumi* (ancestral land) and his *punjabhumi* (the land of his religion). A Hindu therefore could not be descended from alien invaders. Since Hindus sought a lineal descent from the Aryans, and a cultural heritage, the Aryans had to be indigenous. This definition of the Hindu excluded Muslims and Christians from being indigenous since their religion did not originate in India.

Historians initially accepted the invasion theory and some even argued that the decline of the Indus cities was due to the invasion of the Aryans, although the archaeological evidence for this was being discounted. But the invasion theory came to be discarded in favour of alternative theories of how the language, Indo-Aryan, entered the sub-continent... The language - Indo-Aryan - had come with a series of migrations and therefore involving multiple avenues of the acculturation of peoples. The historically relevant question was not the identity of the Aryans...

Why then do Hindutva ideologues - Indian and non-Indian - keep flogging a dead horse and refuse to consider the more recent alternative theories? For them the only alternative is that if the Aryans were not invaders, they must have been indigenous... Their insistence ... allows them to maintain that the present-day Hindus are the lineal descendants of the Aryans and the inheritors of the land since the beginning of history. This then requires that the presence of the Aryans be taken back into the earliest history. Hence the attempt to prove, against the prevailing evidence from linguistics and archaeology, that the authors of the Rigveda were the people of the Indus cities or even (earlier). Indian history from the perspective of the Hindutva ideology reintroduces ideas that have long been discarded and are of little relevance to an understanding of the past... The rewriting of history according to these ideas is not to illumine the past but to allow an easier legitimization from the past for the political requirements of the present. The Hindutva obsession with identity is not a problem related to the early history of India but arises out of an attempt to manipulate identities in contemporary

politics. Yet ironically, this can only be done if the existing interpretations of history are revised and forced into the Hindutva ideological mould. To go by present indications, this would imply a history based on dogma with formulaic answers, mono-causal explanations, and no intellectual explorations. Dogmatic assertions with no space for alternative ideas often arise from a sense of inferiority and the fear of debate. Hence the determination to prevent the publication of volumes on history which do not conform to Hindutva ideology.

History as projected by Hindutva ideologues, which is being introduced to children through textbooks and is being thrust upon research institutes, precludes an open discussion of evidence and interpretation. Nor does it bear any trace of the new methods of historical analyses now being used in centres of historical research. Such history is dismissed by the Hindutva ideologues as Western, imperialist, Marxist, or whatever, but they are themselves unaware of what these labels mean or the nature of these readings. There is no recognition of the technical training required of historians and archaeologists or of the foundations of social science essential to historical explanation. Engineers, computer experts, journalists-turned-politicians, foreign journalists posing as scholars of Indology, and what have you, assume infallibility, and pronounce on archaeology and history. And the media accord them the status... (Source: The Frontline, 13 October, 2000)

### Sanjay Banerjee On History as Retold by RSS

... A glossy booklet circulated by the Sangh Parivar seeks to establish that an important Hindu temple was destroyed by the Portuguese and a church built in its place... VHP wanted to take out an all-India march from the island of Diwar in October 1999. The plan never got off the ground but Diwar has remained a fixation for VHP leaders. The booklet quotes Jesuit historian Fr Francisco da Souza, author of *Oriente Conquista*, as saying: "Diwar was as much venerated by the Hindus as the Holy Land is by us on account of a temple of many indulgences and pilgrimages, and even at present on a certain day of the year, the Hindus hopefully flock there to bathe themselves."

The VHP booklet says: "The temple on the island is relocated at Narve in Bicholim taluka after the original was destroyed by the Portuguese. It was rebuilt by Shivaji in 1668. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva as Shri Sapta Koteeshvara. The holy *lingam*, made of an alloy of seven metals and consecrated by seven sages, was believed to grant freedom from sin by sight and salvation by touch. Thus, the tradition of pilgrimage is traced to unknown antiquity." Combining its argument "with the tradition of Vedic and Sanskrit learning recorded in various copper plates", the literature concludes that "Goa is equal to Kashi as a centre of pilgrimage as well as learning"... (Source: The Times of India, 21 October, 2000)

### On Conservation of Siddhpur Masjid Shahabuddin to The Pioneer, 29 Sept., 2000

Apropos Shri Prafull Goradia's article on the Rudramahalaya complex at Siddhpur, Gujarat, the records do not bear out his contention that the 'work of the ASI was halted by the intervention of the Minorities Commission' or that 'the Commission worked at the behest of narrow local vested interests'.

The complex including the Jama Masjid were and are protected monuments of national importance. Protected monuments, by definition, are not excavation sites. Excavation follows its own rules. In this case, in the name of repair and renovation of the Masjid, which was its prescribed duty, the ASI began large-scale excavation all around and within the Masjid, in which some ancient relics were discovered. The discovery ignited the communal fuse and the local Hindutva forces began an agitation for the stoppage of Namaz in Masjid and for its demolition. Communal violence followed on 14.3.1980.

The matter was brought to the notice of the Commission by the Trustees of the Masjid after the ASI failed to fulfill successive undertakings for repair and maintenance works and had instead begun large-scale excavations.

The Commission made some suggestion for settlement in consultations with the representatives of the two communities and the Adviser to the Governor (Gujarat being under President's rule). The Commission team included Justice M.R.A. Ansari, A.C.M. Arjun Singh and Rev. Kushak Bakula. The suggestions included the preservation of the complex as a national monument, respect to the sanctity of the Masjid, filling up of the excavation sites around the Masjid and stoppages of further excavation, rebuilding of the western wall of the Masjid, stoppage of religious worship or gathering in the complex and **the provision of an alternative site for the Masjid for the Muslim community of Siddhpur.**

Obviously the Commission took pains to reconcile the rival claims to find a satisfactory settlement. The Commission only made suggestion for the Central and State Governments to follow. It had no executive authority and could not direct the ASI.

Neither national nor international law permits excavation under or near historic monuments. Does Shri Goradia want all historic sites to be dug up to reveal what lies underneath?

The fact is that the ASI has not paid due attention to the maintenance of Muslim monuments in its charge. A look at the protected Muslim monuments in Delhi alone will bear this out. Is protection an euphemism for continued decay and eventual disintegration?

### VHP Yajna in Qutab Minar Complex - An Act of Desecration and Illegality AIMMM Statement, 14 November, 2000

The All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat (AIMMM) records its protest at the Archaeological Survey of India permitting the performance of a Yajna by the VHP and its associates in the Qutub Minar Complex on 13 November, 2000, as it constitutes both a sacrilege to a Masjid and a violation of the Law of the land.

The VHP may be motivated to keep its donors satisfied by opening new fronts in its battle against the Muslim community but there is no reason for the ASI to play the role of its collaborator.

The AIMMM has been protesting in the past at the 'puja' being performed at a corner of the outer wall of the Quwwatul-Islam Masjid in the complex. But **a full-fledged Yajna is a development fraught with serious consequences.**

**The AIMMM cautions the Government of India that the Muslim Indians will not tolerate the beginning of another Ayodhya."**

### Sunetra Choudhury On Jahaz Mahal in Mehrauli

At Mehrauli ... a grant structure like the Jahaz Mahal, that has a beautiful lake, lies in a decadent state... The Mahal dates back to the Lodi period (15<sup>th</sup> century)... In Jahaz Mahal's case, one cannot just see the decay, but also smell it...

The stench of sewage, from the Shamsi lake, hits you as soon as you come ... near the monument. According to local residents ... the DDA and the MCD let all the sewage from other areas into that lake...

Despite the Archaeological Survey of India's notification ... construction within 100 meters of a monument, is going on all over the place. In fact, the monument may not be noticed from a distance, as some recent buildings tower over it. The encroachments have blocked a path which goes all along the lake...

(Source: The Indian Express, 30 October, 2000)

### Shahabuddin's Response Letter to Lt. Governor of Delhi, 4 Nov., 2000

May I draw your attention to the Indian Express report on the pollution of the Shamsi Lake in Mehrauli by the flow of sewage from the area? his lake is adjacent to the protected monument Jahaz Mahal at which you recently inaugurated the traditional Phool Walon-ki-Sair.

Shamsi Lake is the only lake in Mehrauli and I request you to instruct the DDA/MCD to divert and stop the sewage flow and to clean it up and restore the pathways around it.

## Ethnic Upsurge in Pakistan

[On invitation from Mr. Altaf Hussain, the Leader of the Muttahida Quami Mahaz (MQM), eminent Pakhtoon, Sindhi, Baluchi and Mohajir political leaders assembled in London on 17 September, 2000 and adopted a framework for a multi-ethnic democratic and secular Pakistan and demanded the return of the Army to the barracks and restoration of democracy. Relevant extracts from the Resolutions adopted by them are given below - Editor]

### The Assembly

... Demands that according to the spirit of 1940 Lahore Resolution, a new liberal and democratic Constitution based on equality of nations be formulated for the people of Pakistan. This Constitution shall provide equal and democratic rights to all the citizens, ...democracy and fundamental rights. This Constitution shall not only provide equal rights to all the religious minorities but also provide them the right to vote in a joint-electorate system instead of the separate-electorate system. Women shall be provided with equal rights and representation in all walks of life and the discriminatory treatment, which they are subjected to, should come to an end. All the provinces shall have total autonomy and all the present functions of the Federation with the exception of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Currency shall be transferred to the provinces. Federal interference in the matters of provincial rights and authorities shall end. This Constitution shall also provide a foolproof guarantee to safeguard the rights and authorities of the provinces.

The composition of the Pakistan Army shall be recomposed, having equal representation of nations from all the provinces that it can effectively and practically be presented as the National Army of Pakistan instead of being the Punjabi Army.

So that Pakistan can actually become a democratic State where;

Also wants to make it clear today that the smaller nations do not want to fight nor do they want further dismemberment of Pakistan... If the existing Pakistan breaks-up, it will not be the doing of the smaller provinces but of the Punjabi Army, the civil bureaucracy and the intelligence agencies... If the Punjabi Army, the civil bureaucracy and the intelligence agencies do not change their attitude, as a consequence if the smaller provinces (likely) approach the United Nations and demand for the right of self-determination...

... Demands that the Army goes back to the barracks immediately while handing over the powers to those Supreme Court Judges who refused to take oath under the PCO. They should also be able to take practical steps to formulate a new Constitution in accordance with the resolutions...

... Demands of the international community, all the donor countries of the world, international monetary institutions (including the IMF and the World Bank) not to sign any agreement or provide loans and aid to Pakistan until such time that the people of the smaller nations are

provided equal representation in the administration and governance of Pakistan. In the present conditions, the smaller provinces of Pakistan will not be responsible for the repayment of these loans or honour any such agreement that are being made without the consent of these provinces...

... Demands that Hamoodur Rehman Commission Report be made public and those held responsible for the break-up of Pakistan in this Report, be severely punished. At the same time the reports on the tragedies of the murder of the first Prime Minister Shaheed-e-Millat Liaquat Ali Khan, the Ojheri Camp disaster, the C130 Plane Crash and the Kargil fiasco should also be made public and those responsible for these disasters be punished accordingly...

... Demands that the Kalabagh Dam Project should be scrapped...

... Demands to adopt a formula to allocate funds equitably to the provinces through the NFC Award in proportion to their contribution to the federal exchequer...

... Demands the cessation of the State operation in the urban and rural Sindh and in Balochistan, particularly the State Operation against the Muttahida Quami Movement (MQM), which is continuing for the past eight years.. The immediate release of all the innocent people unlawfully arrested in Sindh and Balochistan and exemplary punishment to the murderers of Sindhis, Mohajirs, Balochs and Pakhtuns...

... Demands that the Punjabi establishment stops fanning the religious extremism and sectarianism...

... Declares that since the present Government is itself illegal and unconstitutional and has no public mandate (it) does not have the right to hold any one accountable...

... Demands that the present Military Government should cease the act of retrenching the employees from the Government and Semi-Government institutions particularly the employees hailing from the smaller provinces and also the deployment of the Army personnel and officers in the Government and Semi-Government institutions...

... Declares the so-called intellectuals and journalists equally responsible and guilty, of oppression against the smaller nations, along with the Punjabi Army, civil bureaucracy and intelligence agencies, particularly the ISI...

... Demands that the harassment against the business community should be stopped forthwith (as) the present unconstitutional and undemocratic government has no right to collect revenue from the people...

## Harold A. Gould on Israel's Colonial Character

... The root cause of what is occurring in Palestine today is not political chicanery, as a number of Western commentators have asserted, but the prolonged perpetuation by Israel of what can only be called a colonialist culture. This has finally created a fatal disconnect between ordinary Palestinians and leaders on both sides of the border. Ordinary Palestinians are saying that they have endured enough denigration and are taking matters into their own hands. The Palestine Authority President, Yasser Arafat, is no longer effectively leading the Palestinian masses. He is following them, desperately trying to regain enough credibility and control to restore his authority...

... The repeated cycles of political confrontation followed by negotiations ... have consistently failed to resolve any of the underlying issues that have for so long fuelled Palestinian rage and despair. Genuine political autonomy, free of Israeli military and political hegemony, despite all the promises and assurances, has not been achieved. The *de facto* annexation of Arab land has continued unabated. Since the 1970s, there has been a 73 per cent growth in the number of Jewish settlements. Jerusalem remains unresolved. The plight of the vast refugee populations, who live in squalor and virtual economic serfdom along Israel's borders, and who have credible claims for compensation for properties lost in the turmoil that followed the establishment of the Israeli state, have never been meaningfully addressed.

... Colonialist structures are inherently reactionary, uninclined to relinquish their grip on their subalterns unless they are coerced into realizing that the costs of perpetuating subjugation exceed the rewards of abandoning it... It is hard for both Israelis and bewildered outsiders to understand why still another dose of vague promises of eventual statehood are not enough of an incentive to keep rock-throwing Palestinian school children off the streets and Arafat at the bargaining table. As in all past colonialisms, to repeat, a point is reached where its victims just refuse to be rational anymore. When that point is reached, sweet reason falls by the wayside. That is what has happened in Palestine today...

The June War of 1967 was the turning point. Victory transformed Israel from a state under siege to a conquest state. Israel for the first time acquired control of populations that were outside the purview of her natural socio-political boundaries. Controlling conquered territories in the name of security became the country's supreme preoccupation. Out of this preoccupation, unfortunately, there developed the disdain and contempt for a conquered and occupied people that has been the progenitor of colonialist structures everywhere. The colonialist culture brings out the bully in one! Israel's reluctance to evolve policies leading to an eventual

termination of its imperium culminated in the first intifada and now to the even worse conflagration we are witnessing in Palestine...

... In 1995, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres saw that reconciliation was imperative... They understood that the colonialist structure had to end. The mainstream of both Israeli and Palestinian society were ready for reconciliation. But the effort ended in a fusillade of assassination and suicide bombings. Fundamentalists and extremists on both sides destroyed the dream. (After) the elections of 1996 ... the new Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, employed obfuscation and endless knifepicking as a means of indefinitely prolonging Israeli dominance by stringing out interminably negotiations that were supposed to lead to Palestinian statehood. The silent majority on both sides were sold out by these tactics not only because they once more postponed the inevitable but because they re-energised the fundamentalists and extremists lurking on the fringes of both societies...

The coming of Barak appeared to offer one more opportunity for the Rabin-Peres model to reassert itself... Camp David seemed to offer hope ... simply because time has run out... The Palestinian masses have gone over Arafat's and Barak's heads and declared that the only acceptable solution is immediate Palestinian statehood. Nothing less than this will successfully dissolve this crisis because nothing less will terminate the colonialist structure that is fuelling it... We are witnessing the end of the Israeli Raj just as in 1947 the world witnessed the end of the British Raj.

(Source: The Hindu, 21 October, 2000)

[The writer is Visiting Professor of South Asian Studies, University of Virginia]

### (Contd. from Page 570)

their role in the creation of Pakistan... They should show the grace of tendering a general apology to the Muslims of the sub-continent. It is because of them that in Bangladesh the non-Bengali Muslims are abused as Biharis, in Pakistan they are called Mohajirs and in India they had to endure the hurtful epithet of being Pakistanis under the skin.

(Source: The Tribune)

(Courtesy: The Nida-e-Khilafat, 26 October -1 November, 2000)

### (Contd. from Page 571)

protecting American discourse about Israel that no questions can be put to the minds that produced Oslo and that for seven years have been passing off their scheme to the world as peace.

... But our miserable status as far as US Zionism is concerned is compounded by the absence of any institution in the US or in the Arab world ready and able to produce an alternative... The dithering Palestinian leadership, unable either to retire or to go forward (is) the ultimate pity.

(Source: The Asian Age, 6 November, 2000)

## Chronology of the Month (16 October – 15 November, 2000)

### NATIONAL AFFAIRS

**Congress:** \*Sonia Gandhi elected as President, by 7448 votes to 94, in the first ever challenge to Nehru-Gandhi family, by a former member of inner coterie Jitendra Prasad (15 Nov).

**NDA:** \*Vajpayee adds 4 Cabinet Ministers including another Demolition accused Uma Bharati and 1 MOS (7 Nov).

\*Partners express unhappiness with political developments and consult each other for better equation with Vajpayee Government (20 Oct).

**BJP:** \*Advani declares RSS-BJP ties as ideological and historical, compares RSS to Gandhi and JP.

\*Drops R.P. Gupta, a Bania, and inducts Rajnath Singh, a Rajput, as CM of UP (24 Oct).

**Trinamool Congress:** \*In bid to attract Muslim support, Mamata Banerjee supports reservation for Muslims in Public Employment and Second Official Language Status to Urdu in West Bengal; describes support to NDA as 'not forever' (14 Nov).

**JD(U):** \*Paswan distances himself from Advani's support to RSS (20 Oct).

**Shiv Sena:** \*Demands BJP to drop its President Lakshman (12 Nov).

**CPM:** \*Special Conference calls for unity of 'all Left, secular and democratic forces to defeat communalism' (22 Oct), ready to share power with others. Rejects CPI's call for Left unity.

\*Jyoti Basu retires after 23 years as CM. Demands rejection of VHP's application for UN Observer status.

**Other Parties:** \*SP condemns RSS call for Indianisation of Islam and Christianity and Advani's presence at RSS meet (17 Oct). Attacks BJP as communal.

**RJD:** Yadav and Muslim killings in Siwan shake Laloo Yadav's MY mantra (17 Oct).

**New States:** \*NDA rejects JMM leader Shibu Soren's claim. \*BJP candidate Marandi becomes CM of Jharkhand (15 Nov).

**RSS:** \*Organises Rashtriya Rakshav Mahashivir at Agra.

\*Chief Sudarshan calls for Hinduisation of Islam and Christianity, criticizes economic policies of Vajpayee Government; indicates preference for Advani as successor/substitute for Vajpayee; announces a national mass contact drive to explain RSS ideology and views. \*JUH demands Indianisation of RSS. AIMPLB proposes Islamisation of India.

\*RSS's offensive denounced by secular forces, Muslims and Christian leaders, Left and Congress.

\*BJP feels uncomfortable but endorses RSS line leaving it to minorities to decide (17 Oct).

**VHP:** Demands ban on cow slaughter. Demands ban on setting up Madarsas in Kutch.

**Terrorism:** \*ULFA targets Bihari migrants in Assam (23 Oct).

**Electoral Reform:** \*Delhi High Court asks Election Commission to provide information to voters about criminal record of candidates.

\*C.E.C. wants mandatory party polls but rejects idea of Commission's interference in such elections (12 Nov).

**Small States:** \*BJP President Lakshman supports small states for better administration (20 Oct).

\*RSS organ demands fresh look at reorganization of States. \*BJP rejects JD(S)'s plea for 2<sup>nd</sup> State Reorganization Commission. \*UP Assembly says 'no' to further division of UP (24 Oct).

**Reservation:** SC admits petition against extension of reservation in legislatures for SC/ST.

**Corruption:** \*5 top cricketers, including Azharuddin, suspended by Cricket Board following indictment by CBI (3 Nov).

**Human Rights:** \*Law Commission proposes to curtail police's power to arrest and detain (6 Nov).

**Constitutional Review:** \*BSP leader Kanshi Ram calls move anti-minorities.

\*AIMPLB appoints 7-man Committee to monitor progress of review and intervene as and when necessary, to defend secular order and protect minority's interests (29 Oct).

**Education:** \*UGC's review of promotion policy criticized by teachers.

**Nuclear Disarmament:** \*National Convention on Nuclear Disarmament and Peace adopts Charter of Peace to support nuclear disarmament (12 Nov).

### BABARI MASJID QUESTION

**Title Suit:** \*Special Bench examines 17<sup>th</sup> witness of Sunni Wakf Board (14 Nov).

**CBI Case:** \*Allahabad H.C. reserves order on revision filed by 33 out of 49 accused in demolition case.

\*Following resignation of ministers from Gujarat, opposition demands resignation of key accused Advani, Joshi and Uma Bharati (10 Nov). BJP rejects demand (13 Nov).

**Liberhan Commission:** \*Uma Bharati deposes; denies involvement until 31 Oct., '92; evades question on BJP's role (23 Oct).

\*H.C. directs Commission not to insist on Kalyan Singh's appearance (1 Nov).

**RSS:** \*Asks Government 'to permit construction of Mandir' but gives no explicit support to VHP's move for starting construction in defiance of law. Advani remains silent in concluding session (17 Oct).

\*AIMMM conveys concern to H.M. Advani on repeated announcement by VHP on Mandir construction (17 Oct).

\*VHP's Kendriya Margdarshak Mandal's Goa session fails to announce date for starting construction and leaves decision to Dharam Sansad meeting in Allahabad in January, 2001.

\*AIMPLB reiterates stand and accuses VHP of contempt of court (30 Oct).

\*BJP President Lakshman warns VHP of law taking its course (31 Oct). VHP criticizes BJP's stand.

\*VHP mobilizes Karsevak for Shaurya Diwas in Ayodhya on 6 Dec., Agenda may include attempt to make token beginning (9 Nov).

\*Shiv Sena accuses BJP of deceiving Hindus; rejects court's jurisdiction.

\*Kalyan Singh accuses BJP/RSS of having misled him (14 Nov).

### Reconstruction of Demolished Temple:

\*Unlawfully constructed temple in Faridabad, demolished by the local authorities (17 Oct), ordered rebuilt on same site by Haryana Government under pressure from VHP (24 Oct).

### KASHMIR QUESTION

**Insurgency:** \*Shia leader Aga Syed Mehdi, brother of a MOS in J&K, killed in land mine blast near Srinagar (3 Nov). No militant outfit claims responsibility.

\*Suicide attack on army camp by Lashkar-e-Taiyaba (5 Nov). \*Government claims 1413 militants killed upto 11 Nov. against 316 security personal lost, figures for 1999 were 898 and 260.

\*Al Burq dissociates from A.G. Lone's People's Conference which holds a public Convention in Srinagar.

**Atrocities:** \*Inquiry Committee headed by Gen. S. Mukherji holds CRPF responsible for killing of many Amarnath pilgrims on 1 August.

\*Pandian Commission holds Kashmir Police and CRPF responsible for Patharbal and Barakpura killing.

\*CM announces judicial inquiry in Chhattisinghpura massacre (31 Oct).

**Political Developments:** \*N.C. GS asks India not to treat Kashmiris as slaves' and recognise Pakistan as legitimate party. \*Farooq accuses Centre of following communal agenda in State (24 Oct).

\*G.M. Shah's ANC asks militants to stop violence for negotiated settlement through tripartite talks.

\*Hurriyat Chief calls for realistic approach on 'Majlis' Day (6 Nov). Throws hints for bilateral talks with GOI (7 Nov). Asks Pakistan to let Kashmiris decide (14 Nov). Asks observer status with UN.

**Government:** \*India allows Umar Farooq and Ansari to attend OIC Conference in Doha; allows Lone to go to Pakistan to attend son's marriage with Amanullah Khan's daughter.

\*Home Minister Advani considers Assembly's Resolution on Autonomy as anti-people (20 Oct). Rejects pre-1953 status; sees progress towards normalization in Valley (24 Oct).

\*C.M. Farooq Abdullah proposes discussion on RSS's views in NDA.

\*Former Foreign Secretary Salman Haider proposes resumption of talks with Pakistan (15 Nov).

**Trifurcation Move:** \*Advani rejects RSS' trifurcation move (22 Oct). \*Movement builds momentum in Jammu with open RSS support (3 Nov).

**OIC:** \*OIC Summit condemns human rights violation in Kashmir and supports self-determination; reiterates

proposal to send fact finding mission; asks India and Pakistan to resume bilateral negotiations (14 Nov). India rejects Resolution (15 Nov).

### OTHER MATTERS OF CONCERN

**Personal Law:** \*AIMPLB meets in Bangalore (28-29 Oct). Adopts Bangalore Declaration and several Resolution on Communal upsurge, Babari Masjid, Review of Constitution etc. but fails to adopt draft Standard Nikahnama or launch movement on social reform or discuss codification.

**Jama Masjid:** \*Imam Ahmad Bukhari in his first Khutba criticizes BJP and Pakistan for creating problems for Muslim Indians (20 Oct).

\*Russian Ambassador calls on Bukhari. Defers plan to form political party (9 Nov).

\*Delhi H.C. asks police to file status report on sedition charges against ex-Imam and his son (9 Nov).

**Education:** \*M/HRD Joshi releases National Framework for School Curriculum aimed at Hinduisation of education, specially of non-Hindu students.

**Monuments:** \*ASI exempts Friday worshippers from entrance fee in Taj Mahal and Kotla Ferozeshah Complex (3 Nov).

\*ASI begins renovation of Kabuli Bagh Masjid in Panipat and initiates legal action to remove encroachments (28 Oct).

\*VHP adds Masjid Quwwatul Islam on Qutub Minar Complex to demolition list; announces plan to perform Dev Mukti Yagna on Masjid premises. Mushawarat protests, plan foiled by Delhi Police (15 Oct).

\*Delhi H.C. questions Union on maintenance of Red Fort (18 Oct) and asks ASI to conduct survey around Begumpuri Masjid in Delhi (19 Oct).

\*S.C. orders foundries to shift out of Taj zone in Agra (8 Nov).

**Haj:** \*Haj Charter fare fixed at Rs.12,000; BJP President Laxman defends 'subsidy' (31 Oct).

**Urdu:** \*NCPUL organizes 3-day meeting of 15 State Urdu Akademis in Jaipur. Meeting asks Urdu-speaking people to register their Mother Tongue correctly in Census 2001 (17 Oct). Organises first Urdu Kitab Mela in Delhi (4 Nov).

**Muslim Organizations:** \*BJP demands ban on SIML.

**Wakf:** \*Market unlawfully constructed on Wakf land in Faridabad demolished on objection by Punjab Wakf Board (5 Nov).

**Sectarian Violence:** \*Pre-planned Sunni-Shia clash in Mubarakpur (UP) (5 Nov); 15 killed; many injured. Town under long curfew; Muslim delegations not permitted; SP alleges conspiracy.

**Police Atrocities:** \*JUH condemns continued police atrocities in Mau, UP (18 Oct).

**Communal Violence:** \*Clash over Qabristan near Hubli in Karnataka (12 Nov). Tension over Azan in Daudpur, UP.

**Conversion:** \*VHP demands ban on conversion and foreign missionaries.

\*Orissa Bajrang Dal alleges mass conversion to

## CHRONOLOGY

Christianity; police \_\_\_\_\_ to investigate (8 Nov).

**Other Minorities:** \*Karnataka police charge sheets 31 for attacks on Churches including members of Deendar Anjuman in India and Pakistan.

\*A.I. Christian Council denounces RSS as fascist (19 Oct).

\*U.S. Council for International Religious Freedom rejects RSS call for Indianisation of Church as first step towards declaring India Hindu nation.

**Other Muslim Minorities – Singapore:** \*Muslim community scuttles play TALAQ.

**Philippines:** \*OIC's 22-member team led by Indonesia's F.M. probes status of Muslims in insurgency torn South (16 Oct).

**Yugoslavia:** \*Kosovars who had boycotted Yugoslavia presidential elections vote massively in State elections; demand independence (28 Oct).

**USA:** \*Muslim citizens of Egyptian origin pleads guilty in terrorist attack on US Embassies (21 Oct).

\*Issues Eid stamp for the first time (14 Nov).

**Russia:** \*Accuses Muslim Brotherhood of trying to penetrate Russia and break up Central Asian States with help of international terrorists (18 Oct).

**Muslim World - Palestine:** \*Intifada continues. Israel plans 'reconquest' of vacated Arab territories (31 Oct). OIC Summit condemns Israel but fails to take effective stand on diplomatic and economic relation with Israel (11 Nov).

\*Solidarity meet organized in Hyderabad (27 Oct). AIMMM asks Indian Government not to equate Israel and Palestinians and support Palestinian cause. \*Imam Jama Masjid holds demonstration. \*JUH demands break of diplomatic relations with Israel (16 Oct). Holds demonstration (23 Oct).

\*Cong(I) demands stronger stand. \*Left Parties support cause.

\*Arab Ambassadors make joint demarcation. F.M. reiterates India's support for Palestinian case but emphasizes peace process.

\*Palestine Ambassador calls on BJP President and leaders of other major parties.

**Iraq:** \*Indian MP's call for lifting sanctions..

**Pakistan:** \*MQM Leader Altaf Hussain widely criticized in Pakistan for his utterances against 'Pakistan ideology' (27 Oct). Government planning to charge him with high treason.

\*Qadianis gunned down in Punjab while praying (30 Oct). Another mob attack on Qadianis. Attacks condemned by Amnesty International (14 Nov).

**Saudi Arabia:** \*Renew invitation to F.M. Jaswant Singh.

**Egypt:** Egyptian Ambassador calls on BJP President.

**Commemoration:** \*112<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad officially observed in Delhi (11 Nov).

\*Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi honoured with first Shah Waliullah Award by Institute of Objectives Studies (3 Nov).

**Obituary:** \*Noted Urdu writer Anwar Azeem, 76, passes away in Delhi. P.M. mourns death (20 Oct).

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