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SYED SHAHABUDDIN, ex-MP

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Representatives Overseas

- UK** Dr. Roohi H. Majid
7, Woodville Road,
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CONTENTS

FEBRUARY, 1999

***Chronology of the Month (16 December, 1998 - 15 January, 1999), 95,**
***From the Editor's Desk: Muslim India, 1998, 50.**

Babari Masjid	: CBI Chargesheet against Advani & Co. in the Demolition Case.	74
	: Kuldip Nayar on Babari Masjid Demolition.	
	: Shahabuddin's Comments on BJP Today Article, 28 December, 1998.	
	: VHP: Ashok Singhal on Ayodhya Mandir Project.	75
	: Exorcise Ayodhya's Ghost, Editorial, The Indian Express, 8 Dec., 1998.	
	: Vir Sanghvi on L.K. Advani's Remark on Demolition	76
Education	: Government Statements on Modernisation of Madarsa Education, Schemes for Minorities, Girls' Education and on Promotion of Sanskrit and Vedic Studies.	83
	: Supreme Court on Minority Educational Institutions.	84
	: Bhiwandi Medical College Project in Maharashtra.	
	: Shahabuddin on Jamia Millia Islamia, Letter to the Pioneer, 26 October, 1998.	
Hindu	: Eminent Analyst A.G. Noorani on Hindutva's Hymn of Hatred.	68
Chauvinism	: C.P. Bhambri on Hindutva and Multi-culturalism.	69
	: Tanika Sarkar on Fascisization of Society and State.	71
	: Sumir Lal on Hindu Rashtra.	72
Infiltration	: Govt. Statements on Illegal Immigration, Infiltration and Registered Foreigners.	86
	: Aliens in Assam, Editorial in The Statesman, 5 January, 1999.	
International	: USA: International Religious Foundation Act, 1998.	93
Action	: US Policy towards Taliban Regime.	94
Kashmir Question	: Views of Haider Farooq Maududi on Kashmir Movement.	77
	: J&K SHRC Report on Sialian Carnage by Security Forces.	78
	: The Statesman on Waning Militancy in J&K.	
	: Riyaz Punjabi on J&K: Plea for a Concerted Dialogue.	79
Militancy	: Govt. Statements on Pending TADA Cases, Militants Outfits and ISI Agents.	87
Minority Rights	: President's and UNSG's Messages on Minorities Rights Day, 1999.	53
	: Government Statements on Renaming of Ahmedabad, Lifting Ban on 'The Satanic Verses' and Conversion to Christianity in NE.	
	: Hiranmay Karlekar on Importance of Minorities and Shahabuddin's Letter.	54
	: Targetting Minorities, Editorial, The Hindu, 29 December, 1998.	
	: Sidharb Bhatia on the Minority Situation in India.	56
Muslim Politics	: Milli Parliament: Bangalore Declaration on Islamic Political Party.	61
	: RSS Leader Sudarshan's Call for Dialogue with Muslims and Christians.	
	: Farooq Abdullah's Clean Chit to the RSS	
	: Zia-us-Salam on Muslim Vote-Bank and Shahabuddin's Comments.	62
Muslim World	: Govt. on Declaration of Pakistan as Terrorist State & Support to Palestine.	90
	: Shahabuddin's Letter to US and British Ambassadors on Aggression against Iraq.	
	: Pakistan Oppressed Nations Movement, Islamabad Declaration, 2 October, 1998.	91
	: Israel's "Ethno-Bomb" and Gadhafi: Muslims, Arabs and Africans	92
	: Mazar-e-Sharif Massacre in Afghanistan by Taliban.	
National Politics	: Anirudh Deshpande on Prospects of BJP Government.	57
	: V. Subrahmaniam on RSS-BJP Standoff.	
	: 'Potential for Schism in Hindutva', Editorial, The Statesman, 23 December, 1998.	58
	: Shubha Singh on Intra-Parivar Skirmishes.	
	: Neerja Chowdhury on Congress Tactics.	59
	: Left's Fresh Look at the Congress.	
	: S. Jha on Mulayam Singh's Dilemma and the Hindu Report on his Decline in UP.	60
Other Minorities	: Akshaya Mukul on the Political Strategy Behind Gujarat Violence.	63
	: VHP: VP Giriraj Kishore's Views.	
	: Harish Khare on Gujarat as the Hindutva Laboratory.	64
	: CPIM) and CPI's Statement on PM's Visit to Gujarat.	
	: A.J. Philip on Atrocities against Christians.	65
	: Nothing but Politics, Editorial, The Indian Express, 14 Jan., 1999.	
Overview	: Tahir Mahmood on Muslim Empowerment through Social Engineering.	73
Reservation	: Muslim MP's, 1999 and Muslim ex-MPs, 31 October, 1998.	66
Social Environment	: Government Statement on Child Marriage.	89
	: Suicide to Please Deity, Fire Ordeal for Dalit Children.	
	: Khushwant Singh on Sound Pollution.	
Society	: UNDP Award for Fatima Bi, Muslim Woman Sarpanch in AP.	88
	: Shahabuddin on Religious Identity versus Assimilation.	
Urdu	: Eminent Poet Shahryar on Mushairas as Theatre.	85
	: Review of K.C. Kanda's Masterpieces of Modern Urdu Poetry.	
	: Shahabuddin's Letter to CM on Status of Additional Official Language in Delhi.	
Vande Mataram	: Shahabuddin on Introduction of Saraswati Vandana etc., 22 November, 1998.	80
Controversy	: Translation of Saraswati Vandana.	
	: Vikram Kumar on Vande Mataram's Background.	81
	: Sharad Gupta on Saffronisation of School Education in UP.	82
Wakf	: Govt. on Lease of Wakf Property & Appointment of Non-Muslim in PWB.	87

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Muslim India, 1998

1998 was a year of shock and reappraisal but also of a new beginning, cautious movement for accommodation to a new situation. Despite frustration and disappointment and non-representation in government and administration, the year also witnessed a reassertion of its political weight and re-activation of its legitimate demands.

In 1998, after the General Election, for the first time in the history of independent India and 75 years after the RSS was born, the Sangh Parivar entered the portals of governance and firmly established itself in the halls of power, aided and abetted by some 'secular parties', particularly the Telugu Desam Party of AP, the Trinamul Congress of W. Bengal and surprisingly, the Jammu & Kashmir National Conference which overcame overnight their ideological repugnance for the RSS and the BJP and came forward to provide ballast to stabilize the rocking ship of the ruling coalition. Atal Behari Vajpayee, the liberal poet and the most acceptable face, took over the reins of Government but Advani served as its arms and Joshi as its heart. The head was elsewhere – in Nagpur, the headquarters of the RSS, which exercised, or at least tried to exercise, long distance extra-constitutional control over the affairs of the Government. For the sake of the coalition, the BJP, no doubt, agreed to place on the back burner the controversial issues like the construction of the Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir on the site of the demolished Babari Masjid, the promulgation of a uniform civil code and the deletion of Article 370 from the Constitution. But the Sangh and therefore the BJP had its own secret agenda – to infiltrate into the government machinery, to control its critical parts, to give a free hand to the forces of Hindutva, though more than 50 members of the Sangh Parivar, to promote with confident transparency, their long-term mission of the Hinduisation of the Indian society and culture, under the benign umbrella of the Government. Naturally there are some skirmishes on the fringes, between the hawks and the doves, between those in a hurry to make the best of the opportunity and those anxious to avoid premature explosion. In the process, however, many faces were unmasked; many hidden liaisons came into the public view.

With the Indian National Congress, under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi, deciding against the strategy of a counter-coalition the Vajpayee Government, initially on daily wages, has lived longer than expected and is poised to survive longer, if the Congress takes time to put its house in order, particularly in UP, Bihar, Tamilnadu and W. Bengal. However, at the end of the year, with its impressive victory in Delhi Rajasthan and MP, pressure began building up within the Congress to take a plunge but Sonia Gandhi does not appear to be in a hurry. The anti-Christian pogrom and the revulsion it has caused, nationally and internationally, may force her hands.

From the Muslim point of view, it was unfortunate that the secular parties not only failed to form a national alliance but even make electoral adjustment and come to any understanding. Had they put up or even supported common candidates against the BJP and its allies,

Vajpayee would have been the Leader of the Opposition and not the Prime Minister. Muslim Indians, however, realised that along with the division of secular votes the division of Muslim votes in many Muslim-concentration constituencies also contributed to the victory of the BJP candidates. In the meantime, their experience with the secular parties has also disillusioned them, in power and out of power, whether in UP under Mulayam Singh Yadav or –Mayawati or in Bihar under Laloo Prasad Yadav, or in West Bengal under Jyoti Basu or in AP under Chandrababu Naidu or in Tamilnadu under Karunanidhi.

In the Assembly elections in November, 1998, the Muslim Indian voted largely for the Congress primarily because almost in every constituency, the Congress appeared to be the only winnable alternative to the BJP and also because under Sonia Gandhi, the Congress had made a conscious effort to woo them. This has set a trend which is likely to become more pronounced during 1999, as more States hold elections, provided the Congress, once again, does not play the old game of competing with the BJP for the 'Hindu vote', the game that Indira Gandhi initiated in 1980 and which was taken to its logical conclusion by Rajiv Gandhi and Narasimha Rao, with disastrous consequences for the country and for the party. On the whole, Muslim Indians have welcomed the revival of the Congress.

Muslims have also taken the BJP government in their stride. They have not been overawed into silence or retreated in fear on confronted it in hostility but while thinking of possible options for political empowerment they have been concentrating in the meantime on their educational and economic agenda. They have also begun looking for a political strategy, beyond the limited choice between the Congress and what are essentially regional parties.

For the first time, Muslim Indians have taken note of their persistent under-representation in the legislatures. The first ever Muslim Parliamentarians' Meet demanded effective steps by the secular parties to raise the level of representation or agree to proportionate reservation. This was spurred by the threat of further reduction in the number of Muslim legislators implicit in the proposed Constitutional amendment to reserve 33% of the seats for women. Throughout the country, the Muslim community has unanimously demanded a proportionate sub-quota for Muslim women.

1998 did not witness any major communal incidents, partly because those who wielded the lathi had turned into watchmen and the BJP-led government was anxious to build its reputation. But there was palpable tension at the grassroots level with the Hindutva forces asserting themselves in arrogance and the administrative machinery either buckling and looking the other way or acting in collusion, particularly in BJP-ruled States like UP, Rajasthan and Gujarat. So while the physical pressure has waned, psychological pressure has increased. So also the ideological and cultural pressure, through deliberate

and steady saffronisation of education and mass media.

The long-term objective of the Sangh Parivar is not the physical liquidation of Muslims but the absorption of Islam in the Hindu fold. The Kalpa Yagna introduced in UP schools, the persistent propaganda about financing of Madarsas and Masjids by foreign money and their serving as the ISI hideouts and even training camps, the adoption of Hindu symbols and rituals by the State, the introduction of Sanskrit as a compulsory language, the Hinduisation of 'moral instruction', the blatant misuse of Government controlled mass media for propagation of Hinduism have indicated the shape of things to come. The A.I. Deeni Talimi Council, under the presidentship of Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi, supported by the Fatwas of Darul Uloom, Deoband and other leading seminaries, was forced to advise Muslim parents to withdraw their children from government schools in UP in protest against the compulsory imposition of Vande Mataram, Saraswati Vandana and the Hindu rituals. The State Government was forced to exempt the Muslims students but the task of keeping school education secular, in terms of syllabus, curriculum, textbooks, medium of instruction and culture, under pressure all over the country, is so enormous that Muslim Indians can hardly undertake it all by themselves.

Despite psychological pressure and slow progress in the judicial proceedings in the title suit, the criminal case and the judicial inquiry, the Muslims have refused to sign on the dotted line and surrender the Babari Masjid site. Indeed the anniversary of the Demolition this year served to mobilise all secular forces successfully against the VHP threat of commencing the construction of the Mandir on its site.

In the meantime, the VHP has launched the Programme of Reconversion whose targets are not only those who have recently embraced Islam or Christianity but practically all Muslims and Christians who largely descend from Hindu converts. The immediate targets are the Christian tribals, in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Orissa and MP - resulting in physical violence and desecration of Churches which - thanks to international Christian solidarity has already become a worldwide scandal. During his visit to Gujarat, P.M. Vajpayee gave a good chit to his party's government and called for a national debate on conversion, which has been ridiculed by the secular parties as an irrelevant and diversionary move, since the Constitutional, and legal provisions are crystal clear.

In a replay of Aziz Pasha case on the AMU, thanks to the ill-advised moves by some Khatibs in Calcutta, the ban on the use of the PA System for Azan has been confirmed by the Supreme Court. Inexorably, the ban will now come into force in all states, particularly in urban areas. Muslim Indians have to be vigilant against discrimination by local authorities.

During 1998 Muslim women have shown some signs of awakening to demand access to Masjid for Namaz and to higher education, a review of the customary purdah, marriage and divorce rules. The All India Muslim Personal Law Board's campaign of social reform, though

launched more than a decade ago has not gathered strength and the orthodoxy is not prepared to take a fresh look at the fiqh of marriage and divorce to bring it into line with the practice in most Muslim States or even squarely within the framework of the Shariat. If the simmering articulation is not to give rise to a crisis, the Ulama and other community leaders must take up social reform in right earnest.

Education has become the highest priority of the Muslim Indian but there is no consensus yet on the balance between religious and modern education, on the syllabus and curricular of Maktabas and on the priority areas of educational endeavour and investment. But the open debate has begun.

Madarsas need to be standardized and affiliated to Dar-ul-Ulooms of national eminence. Madarsas and Masjids are the favourite recipients of Muslim charity but since they are largely outside the purview of social audit, the institutions are either being under-utilised or serve merely as means of livelihood for the sub-standard products of religious institutions.

Established in Hyderabad, the Abul Kalam Azad National Urdu University completed its first year but, despite much fanfares, it has not taken any concrete shape. Unable to institute Urdu-medium degree or post-graduate courses in modern subjects, the University is concentrating on regional centres and distance education. The creation of University is pointless if it merely repeats what others are doing and can do, and plays no role in the development of Urdu as a vehicle of information, knowledge and communication in modern subjects, including science and technology.

The year recorded no further progress in the adoption of Urdu as Medium of Primary Instruction and as the First Language at the secondary stage for the Urdu-speaking students in education or as an additional official language in administration in Urdu-concentration areas. One hopes that the new Congress governments in Delhi, Rajasthan and MP shall do justice to Urdu.

Once again the Aligarh Muslim University passed through a crisis marked by the closure of the University by the authorities almost in panic. The authoritarian style of administration, the virtual abolition of University bodies, the communication gap between the VC, on one hand, and the teachers and the students, on the other, the criminalisation of the campus, the pressure of the vested interests, all contributed towards destabilisation. The University has reopened but unless the criminal elements are isolated and the University functions as a team and the community exercises a healthy influence, one does not know when trouble may erupt again.

A UNDP-funded study has brought out that while Muslim Indians are economically below the national average, they are comparatively better off in the field of self-employment enterprises. But even micro enterprises need steady flow of bank credit which is not available to Muslim Indians, even under government sponsored programmes. One wishes that the Muslim Indians would establish a chain of Bait-ul-Mals, which may, inter alia, finance vocational training and micro-enterprises.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

The level of Muslim representation in gazetted services including the All India, Central and State Services remains dismally low, though more and more attention is being paid to provide coaching facilities for promising candidates. There has been no perceptible rise in their level in public employment. From private employment they continue to be barred, the only safety valve being migration to the Gulf. There is at a perceptible exodus to urban areas in search of livelihood. Faced with persistent bias, their legitimate demand for reservation in public employment, higher education and development and welfare benefits is gaining momentum.

Kashmir continued to bleed throughout 1998 and there was no progress at all towards the goal of autonomy. There was no negotiation between the government the Hurriyat which tried to engage public opinion in the country in a dialogue. Militancy has ebbed largely due to fatigue but the people are politically disillusioned and economically dissatisfied. Little has been achieved on the development front. Despite bilateral talks there was no progress towards settlement of the dispute. The apprehension of greater Afghan involvement in Kashmir after the Taliban take over has not materialised.

Muslim Indian constitutes 1/10 of the Ummah but there was hardly any reciprocal involvement. The Muslim Indians took little notice of the happenings in the Muslim world. The situation in Karachi, the sectarian violence all over Pakistan, the civil war in Afghanistan, the fall of Suharto in Indonesia, the trial of Anwar Ibrahim in Malaysia, the US air attack on the Sudan, Afghanistan were noticed. But even the massacres in Kosovo, Israel's negation of the Palestine Accords and the US-UK aggression against Iraq evoked little reaction.

1998 witnessed many seminars, symposiums and conferences by Muslim organisations, institutions and committees all over the country but their crystallisation into united, purposive and result-oriented action remains a distant dream. The elite is not concerned; the intelligentsia is generally wary of associating itself with 'communal' objectives; the Ulema lack an overall grasp, the politicians have no respite from fawning on their masters, the youth lacks guidance and direction. There is a surfeit of organisations but few have an all India reach or possess a national vision. The old, established organisations the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, the Jamaat-e-Islami, the Milli Council and the Personal Law Board continue to plod their weary way, bound to their routine, going round in narrow circles.

Nevertheless, one can smell the whiff of new thinking, to bring all who matter and who can contribute knowledge, experience, skill and resources on a common non-political establish a dialogue on how to safeguard the dignity, promote the creativity and secure the participation and empowerment of the Muslim Indians as India moves into the next millennium.

New Delhi,
1 February, 1999

(SYED SHAHABUDDIN)

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Messages on Minorities Rights Day, 1998

President of India

I am glad to learn that the National Minorities Commission has decided to observe 18 December, 1998 as "Minorities Rights Day".

It was on this day in 1992 that the United Nations proclaimed the 'Declaration of the Rights of persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities', calling upon States to protect their minorities and encourage conditions for the promotion of their respective identities.

The Fundamental Rights and Directive Principles enshrined in our Constitution and its creative interpretation by the Supreme Court over the years, are intended to provide full participation and equal opportunity for all our citizens in the task of nation building.

The nation-wide observance of this day will enhance national awareness of the rights of the minorities and the strengthen the spirit of harmony which has distinguished our civilization for centuries. I wish the National Minorities Commission all success in this purposeful initiative.

UN High Commissioner For Human Rights

... As we turn back the pages of history and remember the atrocities committed in the past, often against innocent people whose only fault lay in belonging to the wrong religious, cultural or linguistic groups, we have learnt of the importance to build bridges between different groups and to promote better understanding and mutual tolerance between individuals and communities. Harmonious relations among Minorities and between Minorities and the Majority is a great asset to the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural diversity of the society. Relations between groups should be considered a great potential for pluralistic cohesion and harmony rather than factors which divide and alienate, leading to tensions and conflict.

The celebration of Minorities Rights Day recognizes the contribution Minority groups can make to the enrichment of society. Tolerance, understanding and above all the respect of the rights of persons belonging to Minorities are crucial in ensuring coexistence, harmony and peace both within the State and beyond... The UN Declaration by creating a balance between the rights of persons belonging to Minorities to maintain and develop their own identity and characteristics, and the corresponding obligations of States, ultimately safeguards the territorial integrity and political independence of the nation as a whole.

Today is an occasion to seek new ways of building bridges with Minorities. It provides an occasion to fuel new initiatives to promote tolerance, understanding and friendship among all groups and individuals in society...

UN Secretary-General

... We have seen too much heartbreak in recent years, too many incidents that shock the conscience and flout the most basic norms of equality and morality. We have seen members of Minority groups incarcerated behind razor-wire in concentration camps; Minority men slaughtered ... raped and brutalized. Others, around the world, have been denied citizenship and banned from speaking their language, wearing their national dress or otherwise enjoying their own culture. There has been an intensification of identity politics; a lack of tolerance and understanding; a tendency to think of "us" and "them"; fear of what is different; and demonization of the "other".

The promotion and protection of the Rights of people belonging to Minorities is an abiding concern of the United Nations, reflected in a number of important international instruments... Six years ago today, the General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities Declaration, let us renew our pledge to stress, in all we think and do, the things we have in common; the universality of human aspirations and Human Rights...

Government Statements

On Renaming of Ahmedabad as Karnavati

The proposal for changing the name of Ahmedabad to Karnavati was received by the Government of India from the State Government of Gujarat after a Resolution in this regard had been passed by the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. The Government of India has, for the present, decided not to change the name.

(Source: LSUQ [No., 1414 dated 8.12.1998 by H. Pathan and S. Warpudkar)

On Lifting Ban on 'The Satanic Verses'

The Government (do not) propose to lift the ban on Salman Rushdie's book 'The Satanic Verses'. Government decision on imposition of ban is taken on the objective assessment of books in question.

(Source: LSUQ No. 2524 dated 15.12.1998 by B.S. Yadav and S.K. Shinde)

On Conversion to Christianity in NE

Such details as the number of persons converted to Christianity in North-East during the last ten years are not maintained by the Government.

(Source: LSUQ No. 1429 dated 8.12.1998 by A.K. Hegde)

Hiranmay Karlekar on Importance of Minorities

The attacks (on Christians) have disgraced India's democracy the vibrancy of which, as that of all democracies, is judged in terms of the safety, opportunities and freedom which the minorities enjoy. Majority rule alone does not distinguish a democracy from a dictatorship...

Democracy ... means minorities enjoying every right to preserve their distinct identities as well as the one to become the majority through democratic, constitutional means. In keeping with this principle, the Constitution of India provides to minority communities a series of rights to safeguard their identities and interests. Besides, the Government of India has also established a Minorities Commission to safeguard the rights and interests of the minorities.

Attacks on minorities-whether religious, ethnic, linguistic or of any other kind-are, therefore, assaults on the spirit, and often on the letter as well, of the Constitution, besides being totally antithetical to the ethos of Indian culture with its emphasis on diversity... Swami Vivekananda beautifully summed up the essence of this when he said, "Love everyone as your own self, because the whole universe is one. In injuring another, I am injuring myself." (The Vedanta Philosophy). He had profound faith in the validity of all religions and a deep regard for Islam. Tapan Raychaudhuri writes in *Europe Reconsidered*, "Sister Nivedita records his (Vivekananda's) joyous pride in the Indo-Mughal heritage a 'great national genius that decreed the birth of Indian sovereigns to be of a Moslem father and a Hindu mother'. He vehemently denied that such rulers were foreigners. He considered the difference between the Hindu and Muslim worlds more apparent than real and found the Muslim's 'a generous race, at heart as Indian as the Hindus'. His highest prayer for the good of the Motherland was that she might make manifest the twofold ideal of an Islamic body and a Vedantic heart."

Given such attitudes, it is not surprising that India has a bewildering variety of minorities... For roughly the first three decades following Independence, none of the other minorities except Muslims complained of insecurity and discrimination. As for the Muslims, there were spells of tension between them and Hindus and riots from time to time. Nevertheless, there was fairly harmonious co-existence most of the time and optimism about progressive improvement in mutual relations. Things began to deteriorate from the beginning of the 1980s.

One can mention the reasons here only in the broadest outlines. Pakistan's proxy war against India which was started in Punjab before being carried to Jammu & Kashmir contributed, so did Muslim anger over the discrimination and prejudice they had often to suffer and

its growing articulation... The rise of Islamic fundamentalism in West Asia and its spread to India where aggressive demands like those for legislation to neutralise the Supreme Court's verdict in the Shah Bano case and the banning of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* raised the hackles of Hindus who felt that a common civil code was in order particularly since their own personal laws had been amended after Independence and bans on books abridged their intellectual freedom.

Hindu anger over isolated instances of conversions to Islam made things worse, as did clash of economic interests, particularly in Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, between Hindu middleman marketing handicraft and Muslims craftsmen producing them. Prosperity among a section of Muslims because of remittances from family members working in the Gulf fuelled the resentment of economically downwardly mobile Hindus in some states. Clashes between Hindu and Muslim criminal gangs sometimes led to communal riots like the one in Baroda in 1982... The final deterioration followed the emergence of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. The Rajiv Gandhi Government ... in power during the most critical period 1984-89, was totally unable to cope with the situation. If its capitulation to Muslim pressure in the Shah Bano case produced a strong Hindu backlash, its permitting of the laying of the foundation stone for the Ram Janmabhoomi temple at Ayodhya gave a massive fillip to the movement which finally culminated in the demolition of the Babri Masjid. After that, and the riots which followed, Hindu-Muslim relations have remained uneasy and Muslims have been continuously haunted by a feeling of insecurity.

Other minorities like the Christians have started feeling insecure only recently.

While the Prime Minister's assurances to them and laudatory references to their role in India are welcome, there is need for protection on the ground and exemplary punishment to the guilty.

Three things need particularly to be remembered. First, minorities have made critical contributions to almost every sphere of Indian life. Secondly, attacks on religious, ethnic and linguistic minorities, if unchecked, can dismantle the constitutional and other safeguards against criminal majority rule and creates a climate of terror in which political minorities and opposition parties can be mowed down. Thirdly, sizeable populations of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) in Europe and the United States are free to propagate their own religions, build temples or mosques or Gurudwaras, and retain their cultural identities. How would it be if, incensed by the treatment of minorities in India, the overwhelming majorities of these countries who are Christians, turn against the NRIs?

(Source: The Pioneer, 18 December, 1998)

Shahabuddin's Letter to The Pioneer, 18 December, 1998

While I appreciate the basic line of argument in Hiranmay Karlekar's article on Minorities Situation (18 Dec.), I would like to point out that major communal riots such as those of Jabalpur, Ranchi, Jamshedpur and Ahmedabad, to recall a few took place during the 60's and the 70's, primarily due to revival and aggravation of communal tension by the Hindu fundamentalist forces which had become dormant following Gandhiji's assassination. He also ignores that despite the Hindu ethos, the legacy of the Freedom Movement and the Constitution, the fact of Partition and a distorted version of history, taught to the younger generation, were exploited by these forces to keep alive the fires of Hindu communalism. Thus it was that the 80's began with the Tragedy of Moradabad.

Secondly, Karlekar follows the Advani line in justifying a 'Hindu backlash' to the Shah Bano case, which had no fundamentalism about it. The Supreme Court judgement was seen by the Muslim masses as an interference within the personal law and as 'judicial' legislation to usher in a uniform civil code through the backdoor. In retrospect, the Shah Bano judgement only served to set back the clock of social reform in the Muslim community.

Thirdly, Karlekar is concerned about reaction in the Christian West but does not say a word about a reaction in the Muslim world. However, the premise itself is very weak. **Is the secular State meant to win good marks from the rest of the world or to serve our national interest?**

Government Statement On Identity Cards for Citizens

A scheme to issue Multipurpose National Identity cards to all citizens of 14 years and above is under preparation. Persons below 14 years are to be separately registered under Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969. Separate coloured cards are proposed to be issued to non-citizens. The Identity Cards to citizens as well as non-citizens will be issued on the basis of an inventory of citizens/non-citizens organised in a computer readable form. These cards will be used for the purposes of issuing passports, driving licences, ration cards, health care, admission in educational institutions, employment in public/private sectors, life and general insurance as also for maintenance of land records and urban property holdings. It will also help in easy identification of persons to check illegal immigration and infiltration as also to trace criminals and subversives.

(Source: LSSQ No.130 dated 8.12.1998 by M. Sirpotdar and Maganti Babu)

Targetting Minorities Editorial The Hindu, 29 December, 1998

The fresh outbreak of communal violence in Gujarat ... is a highly disturbing indication of the grave threat that the religious minorities as a class, not just the Muslims, have increasingly come under in recent times, thanks to ... Hindutva fundamentalists... True to style, the Bajrang Dal and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad have threatened to step up their hate campaign, taking it to more places across the State. ...

The perception that the Parivar is working to a sinister gameplan in targeting the Christian community stands reinforced by such outrageous declarations ... made by some high-level VHP functionaries... In the face of such a naked display of majoritarianism, the minorities have a heightened sense of insecurity. In fact, the calculated Christians-specific offensive has added yet another alarming facet to the minorities-related threat to civil liberties, human rights and personal freedoms associated with a secular and pluralist democratic polity as India's. For its part, the BJP has been scrupulously trying to distance itself from such activities of its Parivar associates... But this hardly carries conviction.

The stark reality is that the BJP cannot absolve itself of its responsibility for the open display of aggression that marks the Sangh Parivar's campaigns—this is not to speak of the Vandé Mataram and Saraswati Vandana episodes where the BJP's culpability is more direct. With the BJP holding the reins of Government at the Centre... the majoritarian ethos has assumed a new dimension that gives the VHP and its ilk a licence of sorts to go ahead with their revanchist and anti-minority campaigns. What happened in Karnataka recently when they threatened to "liberate a Sufi shrine" is one such instance... In the present context with its emphasis on majoritarianism, the minorities in India's pluralist civil society are facing extremely testing times.

They (Christians) think that because of her (Sonia Gandhi) rise, they will also have the best of times and get away with anything.

- V.H. Dalmia, VHP Leader

This kind of systematic, planned violence against one community has never been seen.

**- Alan De Lastic,
Archbishop of Delhi**

Sidharb Bhatia on the Minority Situation in India

During the 1980s Norman Tebbit, the British Minister ... devised the "cricket loyalty test" for Britain's ethnic minorities... Tebbit was ridiculed by the Left-wing Press for ... ultra-Right views... The very notion of the loyalty test was rejected and it was posited that Asian and Caribbean ethnic minorities did not have to prove their "patriotism" for Britain by supporting the home cricket side. By cheering visiting rivals, they were merely demonstrating their sentimental attachment to their ethnic roots, not being disloyal to Britain.

Curiously ... around hat time ... Bal Thackeray started attacking Muslims in Bombay for celebrating whenever the Pakistani team defeated India in cricket. Muslims were being unpatriotic, he alleged, by supporting Pakistan against India... They lived in India but their heart was in Pakistan. Many people, including liberals, bought that argument without any scepticism; that was also the time that people had begun to pay heed to the emergent refrain of "minority appeasement."

The crux of these arguments is that minorities, whatever their shape, colour or religion, must live in conformity with the expectations of the majority; that any minority – linguistic, religious or ethnic – exists because of the sufferance of the majority and cannot expect to have the same rights as everyone else. They can be allowed some concessions at best, that too because of the generosity of the majority, but must learn to behave themselves.

Christians in India have often been described as the "model minority". Presumably this means that as opposed to Muslims, who ceaselessly, and vocally demanded special rights and privileges, Christians keep a low profile in this predominantly Hindu country. They know their place and keep their heads down, going about their work and religion quietly without keeping an overt political profile. Though there have always been some fringe elements who have been critical of Christian missionaries for their alleged proselytising, the majority Hindus of this country have accepted them and accorded them a respectable place in the social hierarchy because of their apparent docile nature.... Christian loyalty to the Pope and the Vatican have not been perceived in the same manner as the Muslim adherence to Islam, because Christians are the "good minority" as opposed to the other one which is "bad".

The very notion of "minority" is an artificial construct that stems from the concept of a nation-state... It presupposes that countries must necessarily be predicated on majorities in which one group dominates, numerically as well as ethnically, while the others are accommodated... For the most part the state is a reflection of the majority opinion...

But India under Nehru firmly rejected the idea that India should become a nation-state and tried to co-opt minorities into the mainstream, thus creating a genuinely

secular republic in stark contrast to Jinnah's theocratic, Islam-based Pakistan. Nehru was more inspired by Lenin's vision of the socialist state than the by the other Europeans like Garibaldi or Bismarck who built nation-states strongly underpinned by ethnic commonalities. Nehru's Hinduism did not conflict with or feel insecure by the presence of minorities; if anything, he saw it as the duty of the majority to make the minorities feel extra secure.

For most of the last 50 years, this legacy prevailed in India and whole generations grew under its influence. Now that is rapidly and surely dissipating. We are in the process of witnessing the efforts to create a new Indian nation... In the emergent weltanschauung, the minorities are a small and insignificant part of India who need to be kept in their place and live according to the terms set by the majority. Citizenship will not by itself guarantee an equal place in society or under the law. The passport, the one symbol that ultimately ... defines nationality will not; the passport-holder must also display cultural traits, defined by the majority, to fully qualify. Thus, members of the Indian diaspora, even if they are not citizens of the Indian state, will form part of the larger Indian family, though those who are second generation Pakistanis but whose parents were born in what is now India, cannot qualify for the People of Indian Origin card. Ergo, Indian Muslims or Christians, because they are apparently loyal to Islam or the Pope, will be under suspicion, while Green-card holding NRIs will be considered truly patriotic because despite living away from India they have still retained vestiges of their Indianness, wearing saris on special occasion and teaching their children to touch the feet of elders.

This is a patently ridiculous and absurd an argument ... but its inherent contradiction is something that most people, even liberals, find difficult to see. That is because all our ideas of loyalty, patriotism, nationalism have been shaped by notions of identity which stem from ethnicity, culture, religion and language and not by legal status. It is indeed a bitter irony that this is happening in a land which for centuries has absorbed every type of culture and religion and assimilate it into the larger Indian nation. But that Indian ethos is dying – in its place is emerging the New India, where Indianness will be given a totally new definition.

... Whether we admit it or not, the strident and violent anti-minorityism, though it may have narrow and expedient political ends, is part and parcel of the overall effort to reshape India. True, the fear that India could soon have its very first Christian Prime Minister has lent an extra edge to the anti-Christian violence...

In time, when the Christians too will be cowed down, the hunt will begin for other minorities who do not conform to the idea of Indianness as defined by the brute majority... Then the great Hindu rashtra will emerge and Jinnah's dream will come true.

(Source: The Pioneer, 12 January, 1999)

Anirudh Deshpande On the Prospects of BJP Government

As the year 1998 draws to an end it should be evident even to the votaries of the BJP that the forces of Hindutva, having set new standards of misgovernance in many parts of the country, could well face decline and isolation by the year 2000 AD. In the last few months centre-left alignments forged along well-known lines have begun to emerge...

The defeat of the BJP in Delhi was a foregone conclusion given the conditions inherited by it in 1993 and created in the capital during the last five years...

In the last six months the BJP-led coalition has done almost everything to harm itself. Much of international opinion has become critical because of the bomb. The masses have turned against it because of prices. The minorities have finally been alienated by its ham-handed education policy. The middle class has turned against it because of its widely perceived inability to maintain law and order. And finally, even business appears unhappy with the failure of the government to formulate and execute effective policies against the stagflation currently plaguing the economy... Now credible is the current 'secular' alternative?

In its hurry to denounce the BJP the Congress seems to have forgotten that it is primarily responsible for the emergence of Hindutva as a major political force in the 1980s and 1990s... Apologies and introspection are gradually giving way to a grossly misplaced optimism which, in turn, is being aggressively promoted by party ideologues. In the official left the mood is reminiscent of the late 1960s and an alliance with the Congress at the Centre is almost as good as made. History, it seems, is set to repeat itself...

There is a school of thought according to which the cynical Congress of the 1970s and 1980s is mainly responsible for the growth of contemporary communalism in India. Intellectuals of this persuasion would have us believe that before 1947 the Congress was a fairy queen of secular nationalism...

All the facts do not support them... Even before independence the real commitment of the Congress to socialism and secularism, despite Nehru's vision, could never be taken for granted. Congress propaganda, often purveyed by well placed leftist intellectuals, has always provided a nationalist mythology which only the naïve will now take seriously. Nonetheless, in the interest of India's pluralistic social fabric, the Hindu right must be democratically removed from power. A Congress-official left alliance seems all set to do so in the near future. But the true opponents of the BJP would do well to realise that a centrist government led by the Congress can, at best, be a weak buffer against the social threat posed by the communal mentality. Therefore their attitude towards the emerging centre-left coalition can only be cautious and conditional...

(Source: The Economic and Political Weekly, 5 December, 1998)

V. Subrahmaniam on RSS-BJP Standoff Straining at the Umbilical Cord

(It) is high-voltage fusillade by any standard – the RSS denying its special ties with the BJP, worse, throwing dark hints about another liaison, at a time the BJP has finally gained power. Without doubt, the BJP-RSS relationship is in trouble... Clearly, the RSS ire is aimed at Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee. Vajpayee has always been somewhat suspect in RSS eyes... Not surprisingly, a guessing game has started in political circles. The scenario thought to be unfolding goes like this. (Vajpayee) will break with the RSS, after which he will run a conservative party minus Hindutva.

... However, while the RSS can switch allegiance to another party, as in fact, it did in the mid-80s, the BJP is bound to the RSS – physically and emotionally. Because of its self-assigned role as the custodian of Hindu interests, the RSS has always considered its duties as going beyond the benefactor of the Jan Sangh and the BJP. This explains why the RSS backed Indira Gandhi through Operation Bluestar and directed its cadre to mobilise support for the Congress after her assassination.

Rajiv Gandhi's 1984 mandate came at least partly courtesy the RSS which by then had accurately sensed that the Congress was game for playing the Hindu card. The biggest casualty of this magnanimity was, of course, the BJP which was reduced to the ignominy of two seats in the Lok Sabha. For the BJP, then, loss of the RSS could well mean loss of emotional sustenance, strategic counsel, electoral backing and above all the support of its own rank and file... However, the crucial question remains: Who will bell the cat?... Should Mr. Vajpayee break free, it cannot be as a leader of the BJP, whose top echelons and the bulk of whose cadres are drawn from the RSS. He has to start alone or join another party. Will he do it?

(Source: The Times of India, 12 January, 1999)

Coomi Kapoor

On Brahmin-Shudra Tussle in BJP

The Brahmin leadership of the BJP is out to cut to size the party's powerful OBC lobby. First, Uma Bharati was completely marginalised in the HRD ministry... Then Gangacharan Rajput... was served a notice for highlighting the fertilizer shortage and threatened with another notice for protesting against the haste in pushing the women's bill. Now the long-standing move to remove Kalyan Singh as Chief Minister of UP has been revived...

Singh's rivals in UP are crowing over their victory, oblivious that they are cutting the very branch on which they are perched. The BJP's victories in the parliamentary poll in north India were substantially due to the support it received from non-Yadav OBC voters such as Lodhs, Kurmis and Nishads... Some 60 to 70 BJP MPs are OBCs. In the recent MP assembly poll, the OBC-dominated Bundelkhand region gave the BJP 18 out of the 24 assembly seats in contrast to the party's indifferent performance in the rest of the state.

(Source: The Indian Express, 21.12.1998)

Family Affair: The Potential for Schism in Hindutva

Editorial, Statesman, 23 December, 1998

What is this pretence about the RSS and BJP having nothing to do with each other, when everybody knows the latter would simply not exist without the former? The top leadership of the party has been drawn, almost exclusively, from the RSS and it continues, in spite of many contradictions engendered by the demands that government is making on it, to defer to it on matters of principle and ideology...

There are many signs indicating that the RSS's influence or pressure on government may increase. One big reason is that the BJP is the only party which has a distinctive ideological profile, all others adopting the broad liberal philosophical outlook promoted by the Nehruvian state. The RSS is the BJP's ideological anchor. This is not apparent mainly because, under ordinary circumstances, the RSS doesn't say much about politics, preferring to liaise discreetly with its permanent representatives in government and party. The only occasions on which it deems it necessary to address the public at large are when certain issues come up: such as the building of the Ram temple in Ayodhya or the singing of Vande Mataram in schools in UP.

... At the chintan shivir – thinking camp – in New Delhi, the RSS openly proclaimed its ideological hegemony over the BJP, and, ultimately, over its government at the Centre. Its position on the opening up of the insurance sector is well-known.

There has been a plethora of announcements.. Then there are conciliatory gestures: call for a dialogue with Muslims and Christians, note taken of the "gender shift" in politics, attempt to come to terms with all the other elements that have infiltrated the polity since Golwalkar... Finally, there is the threat that if the BJP does not stick to swadeshi and nationalism, the RSS may look for other clients. These are political pronouncements – the RSS is not operating incognito anymore.

This indicates that the RSS is even less certain about what to do than the BJP... The BJP can always shelter behind realpolitik, the RSS can't. Therefore, we shall be treated to a succession of discordant notes beneath the mellifluous symphony Vajpayee is trying to coax out of his unruly orchestra, with the possibility that, if this political pressure by the RSS is sustained there may be a division of ranks within the BJP itself over its future course...

Shubha Singh on Intra-Parivar Skirmishes

...The Prime Minister's New Assertiveness has not given the impression that the Government has a grip on the situation. BJP's friends and associates continue to embarrass the BJP-led Government and their rabid statements go unchecked by any BJP leader...

... Events, as they have been unfolding in Gujarat, are a chilling replay of those leading to the demolition of the Babari Masjid. A BJP Government in Lucknow totally disregarded any sane advice, while various people claimed that it was the Muslim groups, which were aggravating the situation in Ayodhya. Various BJP associates had continued to make outrageous statements while no efforts were made by the saner members of the Sangh Parivar to restrain them. And the Babari Masjid was brought down in the presence of the BJP leaders.

The Babari Masjid had been converted into a symbol of Muslim domination, accentuated by the repeated emphasis on what was called Congress's appeasement policies towards the Muslims for purely political reasons. The Christian conversions are similarly being linked to colonial domination and obliquely to the fact that the Congress president Sonia Gandhi is a Christian. There is an effort to dissociate the VHP from the Hindu Jagran Manch, which was responsible for the attacks in Gujarat. But while the VHP stops short of advocating violence, the HJM has no reservations about resorting to strong-arm action. According to VHP's Acharya Giriraj Kishore, of the minority communities, the Parsis and the Jewish communities are not converts, while 99 per cent of Muslims and Christians are converts. According to the VHP leader's reasoning, conversions which took place over a hundred years go, are still rated as conversions three generations after the event. In the same breath, he adds that conversions include elements of force, allurements or blandishments.

With such associates, the BJP is unlikely to retain any of the new supporting parties it had gathered... Divisive politics have been allowed to spawn, targeting another minority community which is too small to threaten the majority in any way and has a minimal influence in politics... At one time it was the BJP's allies who were making the BJP Government seem ineffective. Now it is the BJP's affiliates which are making its leaders look an ineffectual lot who are not up to the rigours of administration. The BJP has no one else to blame but its Parivar...

(Source: The Pioneer, 10 January, 1999)

*Sincere Greetings and Best Wishes for the Id-ul-Fitr to all
Our Subscribers, Readers and Well-wishers of Muslim India
- Syed Shahabuddin, Editor*

Neerja Chowdhury On Congress Tactics

The Congress appears to have decided to make a distinction between the Prime Minister and the BJP and bail out Atal Behari Vajpayee who is under fire from the RSS and a section of his party...

The Congress has realised that by rescuing Vajpayee, it will help deepen the dissensions within the BJP and between the saffron party and the RSS. Widening the chasm between Vajpayee and the RSS weakens both in the long run. The BJP's poll machinery will suffer a setback without RSS cadres to campaign for it, and the RSS will be reduced to a cultural organisation without the benefit of a party.

Such a strategy also given the Congress greater manoeuvrability to determine a time table for a mid-term poll... Many in the party feel the country's mood at the moment is against "khichdi" government and for one party rule. This could dissipate 6 months later.

In the BJP too there is a view that it may be better for the party to cut its losses and go for early polls, which may enable it to retain some of its base. "If things go on as they are, it may be a repeat of 1984 - from 84 MPs down to 2," said a party MP...

(Source: The Indian Express, 19 December, 1998)

Rajasthan: Assembly Elections, 1998

Total Seats	200 (3 pending)		
Muslims	3		
%	6		
% in Population	8.01%		
Party	No. of Muslim Candidates		Names of Muslim MLAs
	Contested	Won	
Congress	15	10	1. Faquiddin Ahmed
BJP	4	1	2. Ch. Tayyab Hussain
BSP	5	1	3. Hafiz Mohd.
			4. Yasmin Abrar
			5. Abdul Hadi
			6. Ameen Khan
			7. Qayyum Khan
			8. Abdul Aziz
			9. Zakia Inam
			10. Bhure Khan
			11. Ramzan Khan Pushkar
			12. Mahir Khan

Laloo's Religiosity in Prison

... During his previous imprisonment ...Laloo's favourite pastime was to cook non-vegetarian food, which he was fond of, for himself ...he had now turned vegetarian ...and left ...cooking ...to jail staff...

Laloo Prasad Yadav has not only turned vegetarian but resorts to every religious ritual to propitiate the gods. It

Left: Fresh Look at the Congress

Annoyed by the Congress (I)'s cold response to their offer of support to dislodge the Vajpayee Government, the Left parties have mounted a sharp attack on that party accusing it of political arrogance following its electoral victories in Delhi, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

(They think that) the Congress (I) was reading too much into the election results which, according to them, were indicative more of an anti-BJP sentiment than a pro-Congress (I) shift in the national mood. They pointed out that the Congress (I) was "deluding" itself if it thought it was on a comeback trail.

The Left's assessment is that with UP and Bihar continuing to be a "no-flying zone" for the Congress (I), the party has little chance of bouncing back; and the story in the South also is not particularly rosy for the party as regional parties remain dominant in most places.

... The Congress (I), according to CPM is "dreaming" if it thinks that on the strength of its victories in Delhi, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh it can come back to power at the Centre on its own.

The CPI ... said that it was "misinterpreting" the Assembly election results... The Congress (I) did well in three States where the Left and other "third front" constituents had been "traditionally" weak. Therefore, you can't extent the logic of these three States to UP, Bihar, the southern States and the North-East...

The Left's disenchantment with the Congress (I) after a brief but hectic "courtship" has revived the talk about the need for a "third front" comprising non-Congress (I) secular and democratic parties. Left parties have come out strongly against "bi-polar" politics, polarised between the Congress (I) and its allies on the one and the BJP and its allies on the other.

They have characterised the talk of "bi-polar" politics as an attempt by the "bourgeoisie to continue its class rule"... as New Age puts it. "The perspective of a third alternative has to be looked into from the class angle", it argues.

Yet, neither of the Communist parties has a clear idea of the composition of the proposed "third front", except as a truncated version of the United Front ... is that a "third front" would not come about by "manipulating" anti-Congress (I) and anti-BJP forces, but it would "emerge" from joint struggles on substantive "class and mass issues". ...

(Source: The Hindu, 30 December, 1998)

is learnt that the cot he used to sleep on at the outhouse of the chief minister's residence has been transported to the camp jail.

Besides, he has started believing in charms and spells and wears them probably to drive away the evil spirits which, of late, he believes have been haunting him...

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 22 November, 1998)

Shivanath Jha On Mulayam Singh's Dilemma

This is a crucial phase in the career of Mulayam Singh Yadav. The man who once came tantalisingly close to becoming the prime minister of India now sees cracks in the platform that he painfully built.

Since the days of the Bharatiya Janata Party's Ram temple movement, Mulayam Singh Yadav has packaged himself as a genuine leader of north India's Muslims. He had credibility, he did what he said and his stand during Advani's rath yatra made the Muslim electorate in India's most populous state of Uttar Pradesh follow him in his electoral journeys.

Mulayam's arrogance and political bargaining power came from his ability to win votes in UP and the strength of his vote bank. He already had the Yadav and backward voters, and the gradual shift of the Muslim votes – away from the Congress to the party Mulayam headed, now the Samajwadi Party – made him a national player...

The SP's rise was parallel to the fall of the Congress in Uttar Pradesh. The party (which had) catapulted leaders from the UP to the top job in the country saw its ranks depleted: it lost the upper castes to the BJP, the backward castes and Muslims to the SP and the dalits to the Bahujan Samaj Party.

...The Muslims did not have an alternative in UP. But only by-election seems to have changed things overnight. The party everyone had written off in UP, the Congress, showed it's back in the business of getting votes in the Agra assembly by-election, here it performed well and Mulayam's party badly.

Samajwadi Party bosses told their partymen and press that ... the result did not show any paradigm shift in UP politics. ...

Mulayam also does not buy the argument that the votes have begun to shift. "When the minorities vote the Congress, they do it under grave compulsion. They voted for the Congress in Rajasthan and Delhi out of fear for the BJP and they voted for the Rashtriya Loktantrik Morcha out of love and respect. The basic difference will have to be recognised", adds Mulayam.

Their speeches, however, prove that things are not quite so. Mulayam who has been urging Congress president Sonia Gandhi to take over the leadership of the country, with his party's support, suddenly turned around to say that her party is the enemy number one and not the BJP. That was not a slip, statements of the same tone and message were repeated at regular intervals.

Why is the Samajwadi party suddenly sending out panic signals? Having already burnt bridges with its natural ally, the BSP, the SP will find it tough to reposition itself in UP politics if Muslim votes shift to the Congress en bloc. Though the shift in Muslim votes may not be the end of the story for the SP, it certainly means a scaling down of its political ambitions.

Says Mulayam: "... We are not using the minorities as a strategy like the Congress. Congress uses the minorities

The Hindu Report On Mulayam Singh's Decline in UP

The recent political happenings at the national level and in UP are not to the liking of SP chief Mulayam Singh Yadav. He was earlier irked over the Congress refusal to make a bid to topple the Vajpayee Government at the Centre. Now he is concerned over signs of Muslims shedding their antipathy towards the Congress and gravitating once again towards it, thereby hacking at his Yadav-Muslim political base in UP.

... The BJP-baiter has now called the Congress his 'enemy No.1' and targets it more than the saffron party, much to the bewilderment of the Muslims. Mr. Yadav had clearly misjudged the political calculations of Mrs. Sonia Gandhi. His thinking was that the Congress may help yet another non-Congress combination come to power at the Centre, wherein he would enjoy clout and even emerge as a choice for the Prime Minister's office...

... Following the stupendous success in the Assembly polls, (the Congress) would allow the BJP government to continue for some time and then look forward to a mid-term poll. The Congress added that in the meanwhile it would concentrate on Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to retrieve its position in those State...

In fact, the Congress, of late, has targeted both the Samajwadi Party and the BJP in Uttar Pradesh...

...The aim is to attract both Muslims and upper caste Hindus. It was Mulayam Singh's strong pro-Muslim stance and sabre-rattling over the Ayodhya issue which drove the upper castes to the BJP fold, as the Congress then was caught between the two extreme postures. But now even those soft towards the BJP feel that the Congress too can echo their sentiments against the pro-Muslim stance of Mulayam Singh.

To make things worse for the Samajwadi chief, many from his party have joined the Congress...

To add to the disappointment of Mulayam Singh the VHP and BJP are keeping a low profile now on the Ayodhya issue. Kalyan Singh Government withdrawing the G.O. on Saraswati Vandana and Vande Mataram has robbed him of another emotive issue.

(Source: The Hindu, 23 December, 1998)

while we are committed to them," says Mulayam.

But the question here is more immediate. How can the SP appear friendly with a party which is poaching its own vote banks in the state that matters most? If Mulayam continues to tell his shaky vote bank that the enemy number one is BJP, they can very well think of voting for a national party which has the potential to defeat the BJP – read the Congress. ...

Mulayam's is a hard choice. **His secular rhetoric suffers when he says the BJP is not the prime enemy. His vote bank may suffer when he says the Congress is better than the BJP.** So in the run-up to the next election, the Samajwadi Party has to walk the razor's edge ... a tough and dangerous task.

(Source: The Indian Express, 4 January, 1999)

Milli Parliament **Decision to Launch Islamic Political Party** **Bangalore Declaration, 22 Nov., 1998**

Realising the fact that ... the political system, through all legal machinations, has virtually ruled out any possibility of emergence of a Muslim political power in future; as it includes (a) abandoning the separate-electorate (b) refusing to adopt a formula of proportional representation (c) reserving Muslim constituencies for the SC/ST (d) redefining electoral constituencies so as to make the Muslim population therein ineffective, etc.

Understanding the fact that all-political parties, be they secular or otherwise, are working **for an un-Islamic agenda** and Muslims of this country do not have a **political Islamic option**.

We, Muslims of India, at this point of history, hereby declare

1. That for the last 50 years Muslim politics has been a wandering in the wilderness and in Islamic terminology this era can only be called an 'era of political slavery'.
2. That ... it is incumbent on all of us to discover from amongst ourselves a **genuine Islamic political leadership** instead of entrusting our affairs to non-Muslim political leaders; for, the future of Muslims in this land lies not in any secular leadership but in a well-spelt Islamic political alternative.
3. That the **secular democracy** has failed us... To end this tyranny and oppression and to liberate the inhabitants of this land, time has come to take initiative for a **just political alternative**.

Therefore, today Muslims of this land, in principle, agree to establish a **National Islamic Political Party**, with an Islamic agenda and universal Islamic vision, to establish an Islamic order in this country...

RSS Leader Sudarshan's Call

For Dialogue with Muslims and Christians

The Sangh Parivar felt it had to establish a dialogue with the Muslims and Christians to remove all misunderstandings. Such dialogue had already commenced at various levels and would continue. The ways of building bridges were discussed at the contemplation camp but the major question was who should take the initiative and how.

We cannot leave out and ignore over 12 crore Muslims and three crore Christians after all they are our people and have not come from abroad. We know that even among the Muslims, particularly the new generation, a section thinks the relations should improve.

During the emergency the RSS and Jamaat-e-Islami

Farooq Abdullah's Clean Chit to the RSS **I - UNI Report**

J&K Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah today came out openly in support of the RSS saying the organisation was not untouchable. Addressing a gathering after receiving the National Amity Award ... he said (It) was not anti-minorities. Their people have a certain ideology but certainly not based on caste, colour or creed. There are certain wrong notions about the leaders of the RSS. These notions are based on hearsay...

II- The Hindu Report, 10 January, 1999

... "We must make an effort to understand each other. Even the religious differences are created only by the power-hungry people to perpetuate themselves. We must give up our prejudices".

In this context ... the repulsive thought that all RSS people were bad was equally a prejudiced view. "There are good people and bad people everywhere. RSS is an ideology, that is all. Are we to believe that one set of people are worthless and another set of people worthy of ruling us? We must sink our differences and reach out to each other in a spirit of camaraderie.

Instituted in 1994 by the Foundation for Amity and National Solidarity, the previous recipients of the National Amity Award Nani A. Palkhivala, Wahiduddin Khan, Jiwan Singh Umranangal and Ms. Nirmala Deshpande

III - Shahabuddin's Letter to **Farooq Abdullah, 18 January, 1999**

Please accept my felicitations for the National Amity Award which was presented to you by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. However, in your speech on the occasion you not only gave a good character certificate to the RSS but advised the Muslims not to shun to RSS.

Those of us who had the opportunity and experience of studying the ideology of the RSS and its functioning at the grassroots level are perhaps better aware than you are of the reality. Ever since its formation, the RSS has been trying to consolidate the Hindu on a never changing platform of suspicion, distrust and hatred for the followers of the other religions of the country, particularly Islam and Christianity. This is self-evident from the basic texts of the RSS the writings of Guru Golwalkar.

Your statement about the RSS has caused distress to many of your friends and admirers including myself. I request you to study the RSS literature and then come to a judgement.

members were together in jails and the attempts had begun to understand each other and the process would have continued. But ... the late President, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed wrote to Mrs. Indira Gandhi that if these organisations came together, the Congress would be wiped out and that resulted in propaganda (among the Muslims)...

(Source: The Hindu, 15 December, 1998)

Ziya-us Salam on Muslim Vote-Bank

... There is nothing like a Muslim vote-bank. The famed cluster is nothing but a figment of the imagination, as discovered by psephologists doing a quick retrospective of the elections over the past few decades.

... Since the time of the Emergency in 1975, almost all the political parties in Delhi have made a beeline for the residence of the Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid. Praying for political bounty, they have all kow-towed to him, asking for a "fatwa" in their favour. Incidentally, the term "fatwa" is a misnomer, for no imam, not even the Shahi Imam of the largest mosque of the country, can issue a diktat on a political issue. He can at best issue an appeal which the masses are free to abide by or ignore.

The Shahi Imam, on his part, has played his cards in a manner reminiscent of medieval king-makers. After dithering on the issue, he has in the past thrown in his lot (and from his reckoning, that of the community, as well) with the party most likely to maintain the myth of his influence. Facts, however, do not endorse the belief.

In the last elections to the Lok Sabha, the Shahi Imam asked the community to vote for secular candidates. However, he made his displeasure with the Gujral-led government in particular and the Third Front in general clear in his address to the faithful on the Friday preceding the day of the hustings... When the time came to cast their ballot, the masses forgot what the Imam had said and voted in favour of the candidates of their choice. Some of them even ... for the BJP...

Incidentally, in the general elections before that, the same Imam had made an appeal to the Muslims to vote for the BSP and its allies. The effect of that appeal is too well known to bear reiteration.

... At the time of distribution of tickets, the parties keep in mind the community composition of the constituency under consideration. They even refer to the problems of the Muslims in their manifesto, promising to alleviate their lot. The underlying assumption being that all Muslims think alike, that they are guided by the herd mentality, that collectivity is paramount in the community and the individual is subservient to the whole. Neither of this ... is true. They merely reinforce the obnoxious popular perception of community members being steeped in ghettos beyond which they refuse to step, of needing a leader who will take them by the hand and show the way.

The fact is that a Muslim living in Delhi has more in common with the brethren of other faiths in the Capital than those practising the same faith but staying in Daulatabad or Darjeeling. His problems are as human as anyone else's. Employment, civic amenities, safety, freedom and dignity. These are the things he craves for. Much like every other responsible citizen for the country.

Only the political parties refuse to believe so. Hence the sops at the time of the hustings and the consistent tokenism afterwards.

The self-appointed Muslim leaders are no different. Come election eve and they get busy in congregations, confabulations. And in no time at all, an agenda ... is drawn up with the acolytes promising a "strengthening of the secular vote". They even promise to form a modern-day version of the Muslim League...

... The community votes no more en bloc than people from any other faith or region. And there is another perspective. As a Jamia Millia Islamia sociologist asked, "Why is the term reserved only for the community. The Brahmins for the first 40 after Independence voted by and large in favour of the Congress. Why are they not referred to as a vote-bank. Of late, the Kayasthas and Ahirs have started voting predominantly for the BJP. Why are they merely called reliable supporters and well-wishers of the party?"... With the Muslims masses refusing to vote on identical lines or following what the self-appointed leaders command, the representation of Muslim candidates in parliament has fallen appreciably... The community leaders are making noises about the marginalisation of Muslim interests. It is time somebody saw through the design and called the bluff of the so-called Muslim vote bank.

(Source: The Statesman, 19 November, 1998)

Shahabuddin's Comments

Letter to The Statesman, 23 November, 1998

Mr. Ziya-us Salam is both, right and wrong, in his "Myth of the Muslim Vote Bank". Indeed there is no national vote bank, not even a State vote bank but there is a constituency level vote bank. Every social group, as pointed out by Mr. Salam, acts as a vote bank for the party of its choice at the constituency and some, even in a region or in the nation as a whole.

In a segmented society and sparse economy, with political parties based on well-defined constituencies promotion of vote bank is a political method. Amazingly, even the Sangh Parivar seeks a Hindu vote bank. Minorities all over the world, as a sine quo non for survival and optimum participation, vote unitedly but the majority group never does, unless for some inexplicable reasons it nurses a minority complex.

The Congress and the BJP are interchangeable coins. Neither of them want the third front to survive.

**- Ram Vilas Paswan,
Janata Dal Leader**

Akshaya Mukul on the Political Strategy Behind Gujarat Violence

- 'Attack on Christians is linked to Sonia Gandhi's rise in politics'.
- 'Sonia symbolises Christian power in this country. In the coming months we will further raise the pitch of our attack against her.'
- 'Mother Teresa's motive was not service (to humanity) but conversion'.
- 'There is a Western design behind Amartya Sen getting the Nobel Prize'.

— Vishwa Hindu Parishad

General Secretary Acharya Giriraj Kishore.

These statements testify to the motives underlying the chilling violence unleashed by the Sangh Parivar affiliates, the VHP and the Bajrang Dal, against the Christian community of Gujarat and Karnataka. Coming two months after similar attacks in October, its revival appears to be better focused, and lacks the alleged spontaneity that BJP leaders saw in it. Giriraj Kishore's statements — and those of Ashok Singhal in Jaipur before — raises disturbing questions: Is the attack on the Christians an attempt to reactivate the Hindutva plank, or is it aimed against Congress president Sonia Gandhi whose political fortunes are on the upswing?

More importantly, does this campaign enjoy the BJP's backing or is it merely muscle-flexing of the lunatic fringe in the Sangh Parivar.

The BJP had publicly disassociated itself from the VHP's diatribes... Yet it has done little to restrain important leaders like Pramod Mahajan from issuing statements supporting the VHP...

Congressmen ... in private have no doubts about whom the Sangh Parivar is in reality targetting... "The VHP is testing waters: If the Hindu community reacts favourably to these initial attacks on Soniaji, they will only intensify it in the coming months", says a Congress leader.

Acharya Giriraj Kishore's statements have proved correct the ordinary Congressman's fears — hostility and differences between Hindus and Christians will be created and widened in the coming months. Kishore, however, disclaims clandestine arrangement with the BJP....

Renowned political scientist Rajni Kothari feels the attack on Sonia Gandhi shouldn't be viewed in isolation. "The conversion issue", he says, "predates Sonia's rise in politics. The Hindu right wing was always averse to the missionaries, but their capturing of power has only widened the chasm."

Kothari thinks the main issue is that after the recent assembly election results the BJP is desperate to arrest the return of the minorities and Dalits to the Congress. Explains Kothari, "The BJP is attacking Sonia to stem the tide of subaltern classes to the Congress. Aware that their campaign against the Rome Raj has failed miserably in the past, they are now harping on her being Christian. This is the most irrational of all political attacks."

Kothari feels the infighting in the Sangh Parivar has also been a significant factor in the current confrontation.

It is yet another attempt by the hardliners to embarrass a moderate Vajpayee. Since the ... abrogation of Article 370 and the Ayodhya temple — have been out on the backburner, they have mounted pressure on him to stray towards extremity... Sonia apart, the criticism of Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen has been equally shocking...

So, in the VHP finding a new enemy in the Christian world, or the West? Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty of Delhi University interprets it thus: "Once you unleash a mobilisation strategy on religious basis it has its own momentum and even if senior BJP leaders wish to control it, they can't do it now"...

For BJP apologists in the intelligentsia and the media, relentless attacks on Christians must have belied their hope of the saffron brigade becoming secular — or rational.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 3 January, 1999)

VHP: VP Giriraj Kishore's Views

Behind the attacks on Christians in the Dangs district of Gujarat ... is the pent-up anger of the local people against forced conversions by the Christian missionaries, who deliberately provoked the locals. They desecrated a Hanuman temple in Rajkot in August. They forcibly occupied a school building in Baroda.... Similarly, missionaries running a girls school in Surat asked the students to sing a pledge saying, "We all are sinners. Only Christ is our saviour".... Even in the Dangs, a peaceful procession of the Hindu Jagran Manch was attacked by the Christians.

The media has grossly misrepresented the facts. The television pictures of gutted thatched houses — supposed to be churches — were fake. They were shot elsewhere. No church was burnt in the Dangs...

The Manch is neither a constituent of the VHP nor is it a sister organisation... We do share our ideology but nothing else.

Missionaries ... have been offering all kind of allurements — from marriage, money to land — to convert the innocent tribals. In Dangs, people were attacked because they were protesting against conversions.

... Money comes ... from western countries, mostly from the USA... Conversions have grown manifold ever since Sonia Gandhi became president of the Congress.

... We convert only first-generation converts.

The Government doesn't allow the VHP to bring in funds from abroad whereas it allows the missionaries to do it... Then they are free to teach anything, even their religious scriptures. And there is a big hungama if we decide to sing Vande Mataram or Saraswati Vandana.

... BJP leadership ... is free to distance (itself) if it feels it as a necessity for running the government... If the BJP supported our Ram Janmabhoomi movement, it was purely for vested interests. They wanted to increase their popularity, their vote share. It was a pure quid pro quo.

Harish Khare on Gujarat as the Hindutva Laboratory

The (official) team has produced a clinical report on the violence against Christians in the South Gujarat districts...(It) has dutifully reproduced the State Government's preferred perspective.

Both (Advani) and Pramod Mahajan have given clean chit to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad; technically both are correct, as they know that it was the Hindu Jagran Manch (a front organisation of the VHP) that had instigated and justified the atmosphere of violence and intimidation against the Christians. The crux of the matter is not the direct culpability of the VHP; rather it is the gradual but systemic encouragement that the agents of provocations have received from the political masters in Gandhinagar.

... The official line in Gandhinagar is that there is no crisis, no organised violence against the Christians and the real culprit is the "English press" which is spreading alarmist stories. Mr. Kaushal has also reproduced the Gandhinagar official spiel that the "churches" destroyed were not churches in the real sense but merely bamboo huts converted into "churches" for religious rites. What is being overlooked is that a place of worship is a place of worship, irrespective of the grandeur of the building. If Mr. Kaushal had visited Dangs district he would have found that there are very few grand buildings in this land of deprivation.

Moreover, the politicisation – and communalisation – of the police force is the most significant contributory factor. It was probably beyond the mandate of the Team, but ... the lower level postings throughout the State have been allowed by the Keshubhai Patel Government to be vetted by the local Bajrang Dal-VHP functionaries.

... District Superintendent of Police for the Dangs District, Ms. Neerja Ghotru, was transferred out three months ago because she had dared to register offences against local Bajrang Dal hoodlums...

Since the DSP was shifted out from Dangs, the district was being looked after by a Dy. S.P. rank officer, clearly in awe of the political clout of the local Bajrang Dal-Hindu Jagaran Manch-VHP crowd. The entire law and order machinery – from the Home Secretary to the DGP down to the range/SP level – has opted to do the politicians' bidding. Only couple of months ago an upright Home Secretary, Prakash Ramrakhiani, was given marching orders... The violence in Gujarat against the minorities is certainly premeditated. It is no coincidence that the atmosphere suddenly deteriorated after the RSS's recent chintan-baithak. At least the Sangh parivar leadership in Gujarat is under the impression that it was expected of it to reassert the Hindutva agenda. Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel is endowed with such a narrow perspective, political and administrative, that he can see no pattern or cause for

concern in the violence against the Christians. The sangh parivar has definitely proceeded on an assumption that no other group – religious, educational or NGO – was to be allowed a voice unless it was in conformity with the parivar's narrow sectarianism. The violence against the church's missionary activities is part of a wider pattern of crowding non-sangh parivar groups and individuals out of the civil society. There is no space for independent groups.

Gujarat has been a veritable laboratory for the sangh parivar in its ... attempts at mobilisation of the Hindutva agenda. The Christians provide soft target; the Muslims have demonstrated that they have a capacity for retaliation. Hence, the special targetting of the Christians in Gujarat. The adverse reaction in and out of Gujarat would be the beginning of the regrouping of the increasingly disappointed "Hindutva forces". The sangh parivar would be closely evaluating the gains and losses after this round of violence...

(Source: The Hindu, 3 January, 1999)

CPI(M): Statement

On PM's Observations, 11 January, 1999

It is indeed deplorable that Prime Minister Vajpayee has given a clean chit to the Gujarat government's handling of the communal violence against the Christian community. By calling for a national debate on conversions, the PM has virtually given credence to the attacks on the Christian community. (He has) chosen not to outrightly condemn ... violent attacks against Christian community... Such a public position can only encourage the communal elements to perpetrate further such attacks.

The Polit Bureau ... warns the BJP-led government that the Indian people will not tolerate such a systematic destruction of the country's secular foundations.

(Source: The People's Democracy, 17 January, 1999)

CPI: Statement on PM's Gujarat Visit

The CPI expresses its disappointment and protest at the statements and observations made by Prime Minister Vajpayee during his visit to Gujarat. It seems that the purpose of his visit was to hand out a certificate to the Gujarat government of his own party... It is shocking to note that Prime Minister has also raised the issue of 'Conversion'. There is no proof of forced conversion even according to the District Collector... The Prime Minister has even proposed a national debate on the issue, when the Constitution and our national policy on it are quite clear. It is an effort to bail out the Gujarat government. ...

The CPI reiterates its demand that the attacks on minorities should be stopped, they should be given full protection and the guilty must be booked and punished.

(Source: New Age, 17 January, 1999)

A.J. Philip

On Atrocities against Christians

... The Christian population today, after 2000 years of 'evangelisation', is less than three per cent. What's more, the census records show that its percentage has been falling. This disproves the point that conversions will change the demographic profile of the country. They ... are either unaware or not confident of the inner strength of Hinduism, which could successfully withstand centuries of foreign rule.

Various myths exist about Christianity's growth. The British were colonisers but they certainly had little interest in spreading their religion...

... An accusation often made is that violence and separation in the Northeast can be laid at the door of the Christians. Far from that, the church has in many ways stood for national integration. The Meiteis, the Tripuris, the Bodos and the Assamese ULFA cadres are not Christian. In Nagaland and Mizoram, the church has helped in restoring peace within the Indian framework.

Equally baseless is the charge that educational institutions are put to use for conversion. There are over 15,000 educational institutions run by Christians and crores of students, including L.K. Advani and Arun Shourie to name two, have passed out of them with their faith intact.

As regards the charge that force is used to convert, there has not been a single case where a person has accused the church of doing this.

Except in the case of tribals, conversion results in the loss of many facilities. Perhaps, the Hindutva agenda is to take away the benefits of reservation from the tribal Christians. If at all coercion is used, the state has a responsibility to crack down on the missionaries. Those who make the charge that the church gets huge funds from abroad, in fact, exposes the government's inability to control such flow of funds.

There is a strong opinion that conversion of tribals ends up in the destruction of their distinct identity... Varrier Elwin (said) "Hindu 'reformers' are apt to import worse things into tribal society than they banish from it. Hinduisation of the tribes in central India has often meant a belief in caste that is more rigid even than that of the ancient Brahmins, and there are places where widow-marriage, which formerly had never been questioned, has now been forbidden, and boys and girls are married at an earlier age than formerly so that they may be saved from 'sin'.

A whole set of new taboos on food and drink have been imported. Worst of all, as Hinduism spreads in a tribal area the tribes tend to sink down to the bottom of the social scale. ...

(Source: The Indian Express, 11 January, 1999)

Nothing but Politics

Editorial, The Indian Express, 14 January, 1999

Atal Behari Vajpayee has been roundly criticised on all sides for letting his liberal mask slip during his visit to ... Gujarat... The proposal for a national debate on conversions in the context of attacks on minorities ... is strange and out of character coming from someone like Vajpayee... However, he went much further. By saying conversions invited re-conversions, he appeared to take the VHP and Hindu Jagran Manch's conspiracy theories seriously and lend legitimacy to their activities. To commend Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel for effective law and order action is to ignore the facts which tell a different story... What he has done ... has given comfort to religious fundamentalists. It is even worse that he failed to condemn lawlessness as strongly as he ought to...

... VHP and HJM activists are trying to settle their disagreement with members of another religion by violence and threats of violence. That has got to stop... Conversion ... is not the real issue... Ashok Singhal's latest and factually unfounded statements confirm ... that the target of VHP propaganda is the Congress led by Sonia Gandhi. Political mobilisation through religious means is nothing new to the VHP. Any excuse will do. No theory is too bizarre, no means too immoral for its political purposes. This time it is the turn of poor tribals in a state ruled by the BJP to be terrorised... How long is the BJP going to pretend that it has no idea what the VHP is up to? Its methods are immoral and illegal.

Animal Welfare Board On Curbing Cow Slaughter

The chairman of the Animal Welfare Board of India and former chief justice of Rajasthan, Ghuman Mal Lodha, lashed out at the Haryana government for its inability to curb the growing incident of cow slaughter in the Mewat region, where around 5,000 cows and calves are being slaughtered daily. He was speaking at a meet organised at Pinagawan, about 90 kms from Gurgaon, on December 1, to promote awareness among the Meos, an illiterate and backward community which depends on cow slaughter for its livelihood.

... "It will require the creation of a special task force covering the states of Haryana, UP, Rajasthan and Delhi, so that the killing of cows and their export to other states for butchering can be stopped", he said.

Lodha further informed the gathering that the Animal Welfare Board was against the export of meat for foreign exchange, adding that the board has given financial aid amounting to Rs. four crore to various animal welfare organisations this year.

(Source: The Indian Express, 4 December, 1998)

Muslim M.P.'s of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha, 1998

State	Rajya Sabha No.	Name	Lok Sabha No.	Name
Andhra Pradesh	2	K.M. Khan K.M. Saifullah	1	Sultan S. Owaisi
Assam			2	Abdul Hamid A.F. Golam Osmani
Bihar	2	Jalaluddin Ansari Obaidullah Khan Azmi	6	Shakeel Ahmed Tariq Anwar Mohd. Shahabuddin M.A. A. Fatmi Md. Taslimuddin Abdul Ghafoor
Gujarat	1	Ahmed Patel	NIL	
J&K	2	Ghulam Nabi Azad Saifuddin Shariq	4	Mufti Md. Sayeed Omar Farooq Saifuddin Soz Syed Hussain C.K. Jaffer Sharief
Karnataka	2	K. Rahman Khan C.M. Ibrahim	1	
Kerala	2	Abdus Samad Samdani Kutty Haji	2	E. Ahmed G.M. Banatwalla
Madhya Pradesh	3	Ghufran Azam Sikander Bakht Adul Gaiyur Quraishi	NIL	
Maharashtra	1	Dr. Najma Heptullah	NIL	
Rajasthan	1	Aimaduddin Ahmad Khan	NIL	
Tamil Nadu	2	N. Abdul Khader Dr. D. Masthan	NIL	
Uttar Pradesh	4	Mohd. Azam Khan Khan Ghufran Zahidi Munawwar Hassan S. Akhtar Rizvi	6	Shafiqur R. Burq Rizwan Zaheer Khan S.I. Shervani Akbar Ahmad Dumpy Arif Mohd. Khan Mukhtar A. Naqvi A.B.A. Ghani Khan Abul Hasnat Khan Hannan Mollah Moinul Hassan Zahedi Mahboob Akbar A. Khandoker P.M. Sayeed
West Bengal	1	Mohd. Salim	6	
Lakshadweep	NIL			
Nominated:	2	Shabana Azmi Mau. H.R. Nomani	1	
Total	25		29	

Muslim Ex-MPs, 31 October, 1998

State	Name
Andhra Pradesh	1. Kamaluddin Ahmed 2. M.M. Hashim 3. Md. Rahmatullah 4. S.M. Laljan Basha
Assam	8. Ali Amjad 9. Ms. Mafida Begum 12. Mrs. S. Anwara Taimur
	5. Syed Rahmat Ali 6. Md. Khalilur Rahman 7. Shaikh galib 10. Ismail Hasan Khan 11. Ataur Rahman

Bihar	13. Mohd. Yunus Saleem	14. Rafiq Alam
	15. Abdul Hannan Ansari	16. Faiyazul Azam
	17. Shamim Hashmi	18. Syed Shahabuddin
	19. Mumtaz Ansari	20. Md. Salahuddin
	21. Sarfaraz Ahmed	22. Shakeelur Rahman
	23. M.J. Akbar	
J&K	24. Mohd. Maqbool Dar	25. Abdul Ghani Goni
	26. Sheikh Abdul Rahman	27. Abdul Rashid Kabuli
	28. Begum akbar Jahan Abdullah	29. Ghulam Qadir Bhatt
	30. Ghulam Mohiuddin Shawl	31. Ghulam Nabi Untoo
	32. Syed Hussain	33. Ghulam Rasool Kochak
	34. Ghulam Rasool Mattoo	35. Syed Nizamuddin
	36. Md. Shafi Qureshi	37. Md. Shafi Bhatt
	38. Mohd. Hasan	39. Shabbir Ahmad Salaria
	40. Farooq Abdullah	41. Syed Mir Qasim
Karnataka	42. Qamarul Islam	43. B. Ibrahim
	44. F.M. Khan	45. Maqsood Ali Khan
	46. S.T. Quadri	47. Azeez Sait
	48. Abdul Samad Siddiqui	49. B. Mujahid
	50. I.G. Sanadi	
Kerala	51. Hamid Ali Schamnad	52. T. Basheer
	53. Ebrahim Sulaiman Sait	54. Salay Mohamed Sait
Madhya Pradesh	55. Gulsher Ahmed	56. Mohd. Ali
	57. Aslam Sher Khan	58. Aziz Qureshi
	59. Ms. Sayeeda Khatoon	60. Ms. Maimoona Sultan
	61. Arif Beg	
Maharashtra	62. Abdul Rehman Antulay	63. C.M. Md. Chafee
	64. Rafiq Zakaria	65. Md. Husain Dalwai
Rajasthan	66. Abrar Ahmad	67. Sadiq Ali
	68. Ayub Khan	
Tamil Nadu	69. A.K.A. Abdul Samad	70. M.S. Abdul Khader
	71. S.A. Khaja Mohiddin	72. Mrs. Nurjehan Razack
	73. T.A. Mohd. Saqhy	74. E.J.M. Pakeer Md.
Uttar Pradesh	75. Syed Sibtey Razi	76. Mukhtar Anees
	77. Ilyas Azmi	78. Begum Noor Bano
	79. Waseem Ahmad	80. Mohd. Masud Khan
	81. Z.A. Ahmad	82. Hayatullah Ansari
	83. Begum Aizaz Rasool	84. Hafiz Mohd. Siddique
	85. Mrs. Hamida Habibullah	86. Maulana Syed Ahmad Hashmi
	87. Khursheed Alam Khan	88. Maulana Asad Madni
	89. Haji Ghulam Mohd. Khan	90. Mrs. Mohsina Kidwai
	91. A.U. Azmi	92. Ms. Aalia
	93. M. Afzal	94. Sarwar Hasan
	95. Bekal Utsahi	96. Salman Khursheed
	97. Rashid Masood	98. Ashfaq Hussain Ansari
	99. Fasihur Rahman	100. M.A.A. Khan
	101. Akhtar Hasan	102. Begum Abida Ahmad
	103. Jamal Khawaja	104. Yusuf Beg
	105. K. Mahmood Ali Khan	106. Zainul Bashar
	107. Ishaque Sambhali	
West Bengal	108. Syed Masudul Hosain	109. Mohd. Idris Ali
	110. Mohd. Amin	111. Sardar Amjad Ali
	112. Saifuddin Chowdhury	113. Zainul Abedin
	114. Ghulam Yazdani	115. Mustafa Bin Qasim
Pondicherry	116. M.O.H. Farook	
Nominated:	117. Tanweer Habib	118. Mohd. Yunus
	119. M.F. Hussain	120. M.H. Kidwai

Eminent Analyst A.G. Noorani on Hindutva's Hymn of Hatred

... With the Sangh Parivar's animosity towards Muslims is well-known, its attitude towards Christians has taken many people by surprise. But, Vishwa Hindu Parishad general secretary Giriraj Kishore said in Chandigarh on November 25: "Today the Christians constitute a greater threat than the collective threat from separatist Muslim elements." Describing G.S. Tohra, president of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, as a "separatist", he said, "all minorities including Muslims and Christians must accept that their ancestors were Hindus". Ergo, they must all return to the Hindu fold.

Violence in speech inevitably inspires violent acts... Those who spread hate are the real perpetrators of violence. The ones who wield the weapons are their mindless agents.

We have tended to ignore a fact that brooks no neglect – the real cause of the communal riots is the rise of the Sangh Parivar. There was communal peace even in the early years after Partition. A Home Ministry review presented to the National Integration Council in 1968 noted: "From 1954 to 1960, there was a clear and consistent downward trend, 1960 being a remarkably good year with only 26 communal incidents in the whole country. This trend was sharply reversed in 1961. "That was when riots erupted in Jabalpur – thanks to the Jan Sangh, the BJP's ancestors. Communal violence has not "looked back" since.

... Report after report has indicted the RSS specifically or its affiliates (Ahmedabad 1969, Bhiwandi 1970; Tellicherry 1971; Jamshedpur 1981; and Mumbai 1993). Violence is an integral part of the RSS credo. "It should be used as a surgeon's knife... to cure the society... Sometimes to protect non-violence itself violence becomes necessary," RSS leader M.S. Golwalkar said in 1952. (*Spotlights: Gururji Answers*, pages 110 and 188). In his fine work *India as a Secular State*, Donald Eugene Smith recalled the desecration of a church in Bihar in 1955 and the almost total destruction in 1957 of the Gass Memorial Centre at Raipur.

V.D. Savarkar wrote repeatedly in his book *Hindutva* (1923): "Hindutva is different from Hinduism". For once, he was right. Hinduism is a religion, it is ancient. Hindutva is an ideology of hate. It is recent. He grouped Muslims and Christians together as ones who do not share "the tie of the common homage we pay to our great civilisation – our Hindu culture". He added: "Christian and Mohammedan communities who were but very recently Hindus... cannot be recognised as Hindus as since their adoption of the new cult they had ceased to own Hindu civilisation (*Sanskriti*) as a whole... For though Hindustan to them is Fatherland, as to any other Hindu, yet it is not to them a Holyland too. Their holyland is far off in Arabia or

Palestine." ...

Golwalkar revealed on May 15, 1963 that his first book *We or Our Nationhood Defined* was based on Savarkar's brother Babarao's book in Marathi on the same theme, *Rashtra Mimamsa*. Golwalkar's second book, *Bunch of Thoughts*, praised the book *Hindutva* and amplified its ideology. The BJP has used it as a political weapon with dangerous consequences. Chapter XII of *Bunch of Thoughts* is devoted to three "Internal Threats" – Muslims, Christians and the Communists. Of the first two he wrote: "Together with the change in their faith, gone are the spirit of love and devotion for the nation. Nor does it end there. They have also developed a feeling of identification with the enemies of this land. They look to some foreign lands as their holy places." They are asked to return to the Hindu fold.

Not that that will be of much help. "For a Hindu, he gets the first *sanskrit* when he is still in his mother's womb... We are, therefore, born as Hindus. About the others, they are born to this world as simple unnamed human beings and later on, either circumcised or baptised, they become Muslims or Christians." The hatred is unconcealed. They have no right to proselytise. Hindus alone have it, for, "returning to one's ancestral faith is not conversion at all, it is merely home-coming."

Bunch of Thoughts first appeared in 1966 but the good work has been stepped up since. To the three "internal threats", a fourth is added – "Nehruism" – and among the perils we face is "Macaulayism"...

... Hindustani literature is intolerant of any cultural and religious diversity. It fosters a siege mentality among Hindus and speaks disparagingly of all others – not excluding Sikhs and Jews. That is not all. A Hindu who does not share its bigotry is attacked as being "anti-Hindu". Its literature represents the spirit, outlook and ethos of the Sangh Parivar...

One is reminded of the loonies of California, the minutemen who lived in dread of a Soviet conquest of the U.S... In the US, the minutemen belonged to the lunatic fringe. In India, the Parivar's ideology is espoused by the party in power, even if it be through dubious alliances. Scruples are not the Parivar's strongpoint...

The virulence of the language reveals the depths of the hatred. This is what Indians are up against – a powerful hatred group, enjoying the patronage of many politicians in power and in the administration, which is out to wipe out all traces not only of secularism and democracy but of religious tolerance, religious and cultural diversity and, indeed, of decency itself from India.

It shall not come to pass. The answer lies not in forging a united front of the minorities; it lies in a renewal of the secular ideal in our politics and in the nation at large.

(Source: *The Frontline*, 1 January, 1999)

C.P. Bhambri on Hindutva and Multi-Culturalism

The Sangh Parivar has launched a very powerful politico-religious offense against socio-cultural and socio-political forces and groups, which firmly believe that the Indian civilisation is historically constituted by many cultural streams and that the country's unity has been achieved by the intermingling of diverse cultural belief systems. The forces of Hindutva represented by the BJP, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the Bajrang Dal, the RSS, the ABVP and the Shiv Sainiks believe that India is "one nation based on one culture" and its heritage is linked with Hindu religion.

The real meaning of "one nation and one culture" is that Hindus must have a privileged position and the various minority groups have to accept their way of life... During the Nineties, they intensified their struggle to capture State power and implement their programme of establishing a Hindu Raj. They forcibly demolished the Babari Masjid at Ayodhya on December 6, 1992...

... In the 1993 State Assembly elections, the voter punished the BJP and Sangh Parivar by defeating them in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and in Rajasthan, it succeeded with difficulty. The message was loud and clear that the BJP definition of Hindu Raj was not acceptable in a multi-cultural plural society. Similarly, the BJP could not electorally cash in on its ideology in the Lok Sabha elections of 1996 and 1998. In March 1998, the BJP formed a coalition government at the Centre and last month, in the "mini-general elections" held in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram and Delhi, the BJP was routed in Delhi and Rajasthan and in Madhya Pradesh... Militant Hindu mobilisation has not brought any political dividends. It has been clearly and repeatedly established that the voter is not enamoured of the self-appointed guardians of the Hindus and this voter does not hesitate to punish the champions of Hindutva.

Any party, in a democracy, examines the adequacy and authenticity of its political agenda, particularly when an electoral verdict is given against its politics and programmes...

Are the BJP and the Sangh Parivar doing some rethinking about their ideological position of "one nation and one culture"? ... The answer is clear. The political and cultural forces of the Hindutva are living in an illusory words of their own self-created Hinduism. But political illusions do not bring electoral successes in a democracy. Since the BJP and its other partners of the Sangh Parivar have a clear ideological agenda of establishing a Hindu state, it has not deviated from its ideology of Hindutva.

A few examples will substantiate the statement that the BJP governments are trying to exercise their power by spreading the message of Hindutva and creating a situation where Hindus occupy a special position in society. First,

the Babari mosque was demolished on December 6, 1992 when Kalyan Singh was the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. In 1998, Kalyan Singh is again the Chief Minister and the State police have harassed a respected Muslim leader, Ali Mian. If Ali Mian can be targeted, ordinary Muslims cannot expect any fair play from the BJP State Government.

Second, under the direct control of the BJP Government in Gujarat, Christian places of worship and schools are under attack by the Bajrang Dal and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. The forces of Hindutva have targeted the Christian minority in Gujarat because the protective umbrella is provided by the State Government. Third, the Shiv Sena leader in Maharashtra has targeted the cricket team from Pakistan and the message to the Muslims of Maharashtra is that the Shiv Sena-BJP government does not respect their sentiments.

Fourth, the Education and Culture Minister, Murli Manohar Joshi, created a controversy at an official meeting of State Education Ministers by starting the meeting with a prayer on Saraswati Vandana. Not only did many Ministers protest against this ritual at a public function, the Joint General-Secretary of the RSS, stated that "anyone who is opposed to Saraswati Vandana is not an Indian". It was a repeat story by the VHP and Bajrang Dal activists when they proclaimed during the anti-Babari mosque agitation that people should "learn to live as Hindus if they wanted to live in India". Hindu cultural symbols are protected and promoted by the BJP-led governments and the minority cultural groups are at the receiving end. A BJP minister of the Delhi State Government hurt the feelings of the Christian community by making a ridiculous public statement, that "wine was served in Churches".

Fifth, the Hindutva forces are suddenly showing a sense of pride in public institutions dealing with the writing of history and culture. The BJP-led government at the Centre and in the states seems determined to use their political power for promoting the ideology and historiography of Hindutva. Since educational and research institutions are the main sources of interpretation of history and culture, the BJP governments have nominated and appointed RSS, VHP and Bajrang Dal activists in such organisations.

Sixth, Arun Shourie, BJP member of Raja Sabha, has launched a bitter attack against historians who interpret India as a multicultural and multilingual plural society.

The Sangh Parivar on the basis of its present political presence in the central government has launched a three-fold strategy to promote the ideology of Hindutva. First, a project for re-writing history and culture has been taken up at an intellectual level by using State power. State patronage has been extended to intellectuals to launch an

attack against interpretations of Indian history, which do not promote the concept of "one nation and one culture". Second, minorities have been given a political message that the BJP led governments at the Centre or the states will openly pursue discriminatory and anti-minority policies. Third, minorities should not expect protection of life and property from State functionaries under the BJP governments...

Politics of multi-culturalism has to confront the politics of Hindutva at many levels. It is not the absent mindedness of Atal Behari Vajpayee, who appointed three stalwarts of Hindutva as Minister of Home, Education and Information and Broadcasting... Advani, Joshi and Swaraj actively, and aggressively, pursued the Hindu agenda in these ministries.

Advani targeted Bangladeshis and wanted an identity card for every Indian as his priority. Joshi and Sushma Swaraj exercised their power to aggressively promote Hindu educational and cultural agenda. Saraswati Vandana, Vande Mataram, teaching of Sanskrit and recitation of mantras and bhajans have suddenly emerged centre-stage... Uma Bharti wants to organise Hindu youth with State patronage.

...The forces of Hindutva are not shy of pursuing their goals with the help of political power... The cultural

agenda of the forces of Hindutva not only has a primacy for all members of the Sangh Parivar; it is also the sole commitment of the BJP government. Social and political forces representing multi-cultural, pluralist and accommodative tradition of Indian civilisation, which is based on composite culture, should understand that the BJP exercises power for its ideology and electoral setbacks do not make any difference to the leadership of the Hindutva forces....

The BJP has nothing else to offer except the promotion of inter-community hatred and violence. Without polarising the different communities, the BJP cannot rule the country and in power, it accelerates the processes of inter-community polarisation. This is the reality and essence of the politics of Hindutva. The forces of Hindutva have been actively opposing secular, democratic and pluralist forces... The results of the elections to the State Assemblies should not make secular forces complacent... (Source: The Hindu, 6 December, 1998)

The attacks on missionaries are due to an awakening among Hindus. The attack is a natural reaction of the local people to the missionary activity...

- B.L. Sharma 'Prem', VHP Leader

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Tanika Sarkar on Fascisization of Society and State

... (The RSS) argues that since Hindus constitute the majority community, their religious idiom ought to provide the binding cultural cement for a variegated people. And that essence should be reflected in State education policies. They also insist that since Hindus are uniquely tolerant, the minorities have nothing to fear from a takeover of public spaces and official occasions by Hindu rituals, nor should they feel insecure if the nation is designated as Hindu. Saraswati Vandanas and Vedas are, in any case, beautiful and profound, and all "pseudo-secularists" who object to their use by the state are anti-Hindu.

It is, however, obvious that religious texts lose their "innocence" when they are used for coercive and discriminatory purposes... Since it is the Sangh Parivar which proposes to Hinduise education, it is irrelevant to refer only to the original, literal meaning of the texts and the hymns, and not to the inclination and activities of the people who will enforce and shape their use. Whether Hindus are tolerant or not is not the point here: no one can deny the Sangh Parivar's record of violent intolerance.

But much more is at issue: secularism, democracy and citizenship rights. In a multicultural democracy, the state and its associated offices and occasions have to be scrupulously non-denominational, not identified with any particular community to the exclusion of others. That has nothing to do with the banishing of religion from social or public life. For, if the state affirms its affiliation to a particular denomination, the citizens belonging to other faiths or to no faith, would be relegated to a secondary status, and located at a greater distance from the State, upon which their claims would become correspondingly weaker. Again, in a democracy, toleration cannot be a substitute for equal citizenship status. Toleration implies a relationship of power, where some tolerate others who are dependent, on sufferance. In a democracy, on the other hand, citizenship is a matter of right, irrespective of what section the citizen belongs to.

If the nation designates itself as Hindu and the state acknowledges it in its official sphere, then non-Hindus will at best be tolerated as minorities, not as equal citizens. Which is why, Article 28 laid down that in government-funded schools, financed entirely by the state, there would not be religious ritual or instruction. In a multi-cultural systems can be taught equally, and to leave out any would indicate to school children that some religious communities are more important than others. In aided or recognised schools, on the other hand, the Constitution permits such instruction, but not on a compulsory basis. Secularists do not oppose this, and, indeed, RSS schools do compulsorily provide Hindu religious instruction.

Does this exclusion of religious instruction or ritual from state schools constitute an offence against Hinduism?

To believe so is to believe that Hinduism cannot survive unless the state props it up. And, if it is an offence against Saraswati that a hymn to Her does not inaugurate a state function, do we not, by the same logic, insult every other faith, and the philosophy of unbelief, by not including them in state-sponsored events?

... The BJP has introduced sweeping purges in all Centrally-funded research institutes... These bodies have been cleansed of subject experts and renowned scholars and packed with men distinguished by RSS sympathies.

(There has been) a methodical doctoring of facts in school textbooks in the BJP States. They pour unverified charges against Muslim rulers, stridently catalogue alleged wrongs perpetrated on Hindu kings and gods, abuse the BJP's adversaries like Mulayam Singh Yadav by name and insert RSS heroes as great freedom fighters.

... The RSS professes the notion of Hindu Rashtra — that India belongs to Hindus alone. That notion depends upon a relentless hatred against all those who think otherwise. It has led to many bloody pogroms against Muslims and, more recently, to gross violence against and abuse of Christians. Universally-respected secular educationists have faced intimidation and threats...

Apart from coercion, formidable hegemonic devices have been perfected over the last 73 years, precisely to teach these values. The RSS shakhas started functioning in 1925. Every day, they have 'doudhik' sessions that train members in imagined "histories" of outrage against Hindus. A documentary on shakhas for infants depicts a favourite game that enacts the "reconquest" of Kashmir through battles. We were proudly told by the headmaster of an RSS-run school in Delhi that he held forth on the Babri mosque saga at the assembly everyday: five-year-olds would clench their fists in fury and swear vengeance under the influence of his oratory. Night schools and sanskar kendras take these messages beyond regular schooltime. The RSS itself is acknowledged to be the classroom for all its affiliates and sub-affiliates: BJP, VHP, Bajrang Dal and hand-picked cadres, trained in daily shakhas over years, come to these fronts to teach RSS values and intentions... Through long and systematic training, through education, for decades now, the RSS has been imparting an education that confuses perceptions of the real and the contrived. It has taught that patriotism is vengeance, that the nation is Hindu, that struggle for human rights and equality and social justice are alien to our culture, they are divisive... The RSS has insisted that we only look for knowledge that is home-grown, however offensive or exploitative that might be to Dalits, to women, to democracy.

As important as what it teaches is what it silences and renders non-issue. It suppresses knowledge about what lies
(Contd. on Page 72)

Sumir Lal on Hindu Rashtra

It is not often that one gets to preview a nightmare, but India has that dubious fortune right now. Picture a country in which a civilised society's most fundamental choices are denied to its people... (and) are made for them by a bunch of unaccountable, self-appointed guardians of morality, and imposed – on pain of physical intimidation and destruction of property – by roving gangs of ruffians with whom the entire apparatus of the state connives.

A nightmare, but this is not Afghanistan. It is ... Gujarat... Welcome to the Hindu Rashtra. The dream of the RSS-led Sangh Parivar flourishes ... in Gujarat. The Parivar's political wing has been elected to power, government organs are in its control, and its multifarious affiliates are implementing without hindrance its agenda. As part of this design, non-Hindu communities are being intimidated and persecuted. But ... the real toll is of ordinary, law-abiding Hindus, who must follow diktats impinging on every aspect of their lives.

It is safe to presume that had the BJP formed a government on its own at the Centre (and, indeed, if it ever does so in future), such would be the pattern of life all over the country. It would subsume the organs of government to further the Sangh cause, while its affiliates would literally run riot on the ground...

BJP apologists might argue that it is unfair to blame it for what is happening in Gujarat... To answer, one must hark back to the 1990-92 period, when the Sangh group used its Ayodhya campaign to build up an anti-Muslim hysteria in the country to the BJP's benefit. The parallels are striking.

Then, the Sangh outfits campaigned on the emotive issue of a mosque that had allegedly replaced a temple marking the believed birthplace of a favourite god. Today, they campaign on another emotive issue: alleged forcible conversions of "Hindu" tribals by Christian missionaries. In both cases, they question the patriotism of the targeted communities. Then, there was a political motivation: to counter the Mandal card of V.P. Singh. Today, it is the need to counter a seemingly resurgent Congress under Sonia Gandhi. Then, the aim was to physically destroy the mosque and reclaim the site. Today, it is to physically hound out the church and reclaim tribals through "reconversion". Then, they argued that matters of faith could not be tried in the courts. Today, they say it is irrelevant whether the Constitution allows conversion.

Then, they presented different faces speaking to different audiences: Vajpayee, the soothing moderate, addressing Hindu liberals and non-Hindus; L.K. Advani, who rationalised emotions even as he sparked them off, mobilising the middle-class; Ashok Singhal, the spreader of hate, marshalling the foot soldiers, the sadhus and kar sevaks... Today, from Vajpayee to Singhal to the

firebrands stalking the streets of Ahwa, the tactic is the same.

Then, too, the Sangh floated new organisations like the Bajrang Dal and various sadhu councils to do its dirty work, and from which its top leadership distanced itself whenever it suited. Today, the Hindu Jagaran Manch serves that purpose in Gujarat.

Then, too, it attacked periodically, on occasions of symbolic or ritualistic significance. Each time the top spokesmen promised that nothing would happen, that the law would not be breached, but each time the foot soldiers got closer to the goal, and the Parivar extracted a bigger compromise. Today, the VHP has already won an offer from Christian organisations to talk about conversions...

Then, the Parivar had a pliable administration under Kalyan Singh, today it has one under Keshubhai Patel...

Then, it attacked the English press and co-opted the vernacular. Today it has done the same in Gujarat. The one crucial difference is in the choice of community. With Muslims, the Sangh was able to touch a chord of bitterness and prejudice that brought, importantly, the so-called "respectable" middle-class to its side. Christians, in contrast, command much goodwill. The middle-class ... has largely benefited – or aspires to benefit – from Christian schools and hospitals, and has no collective memory of discord. The Sangh might just have miscalculated. The unprovoked attacks on Christian institutions and clergy, coming on top of poor performance of the BJP in government, might lose it the support of the middle-class. The test will lie in whether the 'safron constituency' splits vertically – the established strata, with aspirations and a stake in harmony, desert and return to the Congress but the frustrated, jobless, rootless, marginalised segments fall for the propaganda and mobilise behind the Sangh.

In that case, the Hindu Rashtra will be upon us. And the next minority to be attacked will not be a religious community, but the liberal middle-class...

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 10 January, 1999)

(Contd. from Page 71)

behind Indian poverty; it displaces discussions on what is welfare and social justice and how to attain them. The new educational suggestions and policy guidelines are essential to achieve a confusion of priorities on a nationwide scale.

A regimentation of knowledge and a suppression of critical enquiry have proceeded for a long time through specifically RSS agencies. This will continue unabated even if ... misgovernance temporarily robs the BJP of state power. Any effective ideological challenge to the Sangh Parivar must confront the fascisation of society and not just the fascisation of the state.

(Source: The Hindu, 24 November, 1998)

Tahir Mahmood on Empowerment of Muslim through Social Engineering

... The demographic actuality relating to the Muslim presence in India which I have referred to is not at all reflected in the State policies, practices and programmes or the official statistical data and numerical figures. In the Central, State and Local Self Governments, in statutory and autonomous bodies, in decision-making and law-enforcing agencies, in public and private undertakings, and in the educational and professional institutions of national, regional and local levels, the representation of the Muslims is – by all standards – far from being even remotely proportionate to their national, regional and local population. Notably, this is also true of the Muslim-dominated Jammu and Kashmir and Lakshadweep and of all those districts where the Muslim population is above the national average. During these 51 years of Independence, State policies, policy-makers' decisions, legislative enactments, governmental actions, and even judicial pronouncements, have made no efforts to ensure in any way that this community actually gets its due in the material resources and the developmental avenues of the nation.

Through the Constitution, we the people of India had "solemnly resolved" to secure to all citizens "social, economic and political justice" and "equality of status and opportunity". So far as the Muslims are concerned, this resolution unfortunately has not been fulfilled – its prefatory promulgation in the Preamble of the Constitution and its various explanatory provisions enshrined in the Equality Clauses of Articles 14, 15 and 16 notwithstanding. Article 15(4) of the Constitution had in unequivocal words empowered the State to make "special provisions for the advancement of any socially and educationally Backward Classes of citizens". The State has so far made hardly any use of this constitutional principle for the benefit of its Muslim citizens – though it has on different occasions and for different purposes recognised or otherwise treated them as an "educationally Backward Class". On the contrary, successive Governments at the Centre and in the States have been trampling underfoot the Cultural and Educational Rights unconditionally conferred, in their wisdom, by the far-sighted Constitution-makers on all the Minorities of the country. Article 30 of the Constitution, which guarantees equal educational development of the Minorities on par with the Majority, by recognising their unconditional right to set up and run educational institutions, has remained something like this: Constitution proposes Government disposes.

... The Directive Principle of Article 38(2) for the "elimination of inequalities" has not been implemented to any noticeable advantage of the Muslims – despite their known and officially acknowledged economic "backwardness". The Mandate of Article 46 to "promote

with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people", so far as the Muslims are concerned, has been virtually rejected in limine.

As regards educational development, which is the key to economic development, unfortunately even the Supreme Court, which till late Justice Mohammad Hidayatullah's Mother Provincial Ruling of 1970 had been a saviour of the Minorities Educational Rights, withdrew its helping hand in later years. In 1990, by a judgement, the Court reserved 50 per cent admission-seats in Minority educational institutions for non-Minority students, without reserving any percentage of admission-intake for the Minorities in non-Minority institutions – though in the latter institutions the presence of Minority-community students has been, and remains, negligible and is often found nil.

The Muslims, have to seek due empowerment under the protective umbrella of the Constitution that stresses on secularism and equality of all religions. The Constitution is a product of a century-long national movement in which the Muslims had an equal part. On the basis of the actual experience of these 50 years the Equality and Secularism Clauses of the Constitution have to be further strengthened and developed. Protection of the secular Constitution is, therefore, the first imperative for the Muslims for their own empowerment and for the preservation of the country's image in the comity of contemporary nations.

... Muslims have also not played their cards well... They have kept themselves busy with regard to their religious rights leaving not much time for planning and implementing proper strategies for the educational and economic development of the community. However, it was, and remains, equally important for us to make use of our own valuable scripture and religious teachings for educational and economic development.

An integrated use of the mandatory Islamic injunctions regarding attainment of educational excellence by Muslim men and women, the noble principles of Islamic Economics, and the mammoth wealth of Waqfs scattered all over the country, would have placed the Muslims on a much higher pedestal. If the State has been guilty of overlooking its solemn Constitutional obligations with respect to the educational and economic development of the Muslims, Muslims too have overlooked the dictates of their religious code.

Fifty years of state apathy ... coupled with its own indifference ... has led to stagnation of the community.

A programme of empowerment of the Muslims through skilful social engineering should be planned and implemented...

(Source: The Hindu, 3 January, 1999)

[Dr. Tahir Mahmood is Chairman of the National Commission for Minorities]

Babari Masjid Demolition Case: CBI Chargesheet against Advani and Co.

On 5.12.1992 a secret meeting was held at the house of Vinay Katiyar which was attended by Lal Krishan Advani, Pawan Kumar Pandey and a final decision to demolish the disputed structure was taken. Their argument was that there was a ban on construction not on demolition, and Accused No. 1 to 38 assembled near Ram Janambhoomi/Babari Masjid on 6.12.1992 and Lal Krishan Advani categorically said in his public speech, before the demolition of the disputed structure that "Today is the last day of Kar Sewa. Kar Sewaks would perform last Kar Seva.". When he came to know that a Central Force was proceeding from Faizabad to Ayodhya, then he asked the public to block the National Highway so that the Central Forces do not reach the Ram Janmabhoomi. Prosecution has also contended that when the disputed structure was being pulled down Advani asked Kalyan Singh not to tender his resignation till the disputed structure is completely pulled down...

In this background Lal Krishan Advani and Murlidhar Manohar Joshi started for Ayodhya from New Delhi on 1.11.1992 via Varanasi and Mathura. On 1.12.1992 Advani said in Kanpur that Kar Sewa does not mean Bhajan and Kirtan but it is meant for starting construction of the Ram Mandir. Dr. Joshi asked the Central Government to withdraw the Central Forces and he further said that his party would face any hindrance whatsoever that comes in the way of construction of the Ram Mandir. On 2.12.1992 Advani said in Varanasi that the State Government would not use force of any kind on Kar Sewaks. During the same time Sadhvi Ritambhara said at Nagpur, Balharasha and Wardha that the Babari Masjid is a Mandir. A Mandir shall be constructed there with struggle. She asked Kar Sewaks to reach Ayodhya for construction of the Mandir.

From our description it is concluded that in the present case a criminal conspiracy to demolish the disputed structure of the Ram Janam Bhoomi/Babari Masjid was hatched by the accused persons in the beginning of 1990, and was completed on 6.12.1992. Lal Krishan Advani and others hatched criminal conspiracies to demolish the disputed premises on different times at different places. Therefore, I find a prima facie case to charge Bala Saheb Thakre, Lal Krishan Advani, Kalyan Singh, Vinay Katiyar....

(Source: The People's Democracy, 27 December, 1998)

Advani is an accused in the Babari Masjid demolition case. What right does he have to call a meeting on human rights?

**- Jyoti Basu,
Chief Minister of West Bengal**

Kuldip Nayar On Babari Masjid Demolition

... Unlike Operation Blue Star, which was the result of government's over action, the Demolition was because of government's inaction. Some BJP leaders have rightly expressed their regret over the demolition and have felt pain over the disrespect shown even to the Supreme Court, which had ordered for the maintenance of the status quo. But such expressions, however laudable, are not enough. They have to be backed by steps to mollify the Muslims, who feel helpless and let down.

If Parliament were to express regret and seek apology from the community, the wounds might heal. In fact, whenever I have visited Pakistan or Bangladesh, the Babari Masjid's demolition has cropped up in the discussion in one form or the other. It is evident that people in those countries harbour grief. The sooner we make amends, the better it will be for the redress of the hurt caused to Muslims. It will also help remove the stigma on the face of our secular polity.

(Source: The Radiance Viewsweekly, 10-16 January, 1999)

Shahabuddin's Letter to Rajeev Srinivasan, 28 December, 1998

I appreciate your article on the "Demolition of the Babari Masjid in the BJP Today, December 16-31, 1998.

I fully endorse your view that the Demolition was no more, no less than an exercise of power by the Hindu Indians and that **the Babari Masjid Question is about Power not Faith.**

Having said this, may I add that the point at issue is whether power was transferred on 15 August, 1947, to all Indians or to Hindu Indians **only** and whether the Republic of India is a de facto (if not de jure) a Hindu state. The 'secularists' are out of court, if power was indeed transferred to the Hindu Indians and India is indeed a Hindu State.

As a Muslim I would like to correct your misconception about the sanctity of a Masjid. The Masjid is the site, not the structure. A site once consecrated to Allah for worship is a Masjid forever; the structure is merely a convenience and a facility for the worshippers and can be demolished and rebuilt. Therefore, there is no such thing as a 'relocation' for a Masjid. It may go into ruins, it may be abandoned; it may be taken over, by force. But it cannot be shifted.

Historians will tell you that Buddhism had already been "embraced-and-absorbed" by Hinduism before the Muslims arrived on the scene. Nalanda was in ruins and had been reduced to a village when Bakhtiar Khilji overran the area in 1215 AD. I may add that it is the tradition of "embrace-and-absorb" which worries the followers of other religions in India.

VHP: Ashok Singhal On Ayodhya Mandir Project

"The decision start the reconstruction work of Ram Janmabhoomi temple will be taken after the stones for pranprastistha are ready. For that we need about 60,000 c.f. stone and it will take at least two more years. The day the saints take a decision about the construction work, no power in the world will be able to stop them".

"The issue of Ayodhya is equally important even today as it was in the beginning and it will be equally important until a grand temple is reconstructed at the Janmabhoomi site."

... History has witnessed that a decision, taken by the saints cannot go away.

... In the context of the Ayodhya movement .. the saints took the decision of ram Janaki Rathayatra in 1984 to awaken the Hindu society to the urgency of liberating Ram Janmabhoomi. "We have seen that the Ram Janaki Rathayatra was successfully taken all over the country. Then, the saints in 1985 took the decision to get the locks at Ram Janmabhoomi opened. The saints had warned of dire consequences if the lock was not opened by March 8, 1986. But, thanks to the efforts of the saints, the lock was opened on February 2, 1986. Similarly the shilanyas was successfully completed as per the decision of the saints".

Later, he said, the saints under the leadership of ... Shankaracharya Vasudevananda Saraswati, decided on kar seva to be undertaken on October 30 and November 2, 1990. Despite so many obstacles created by the then State Government ... six lakh people left their homes for the kar seva and over 60,000 entered Ayodhya... They not only successfully performed kar seva but also hoisted saffron flags atop the domes of the disputed structure. This incident infused a new strength in the Hindu society. After that the saints decided to perform a sarvadeva anushthan from July 9, 1992 at Ayodhya...

... At last over 5000 saints assembled in Delhi and decided to perform karseva on December 6, 1992. We have seen that the agitated karsevaks out of frustration at the dilatory tactics demolished the disputed structure within five hours and within 36 hours they recreated a new temple at the site. By and large, history has witnessed that what the saints resolve does come off.

(Source: The Organiser, 6 December, 1998)

Government Statement On World Archaeology Conference

A Conference of the World Archaeological Congress was held in Croatia in May, 1998. The Government of India did not send any delegates to the Conference.

(Source: LSUQ No, 3615 dated 21.12.1998 by A. Jogi)

Exorcise Ayodhya's Ghost

Editorial, The Indian Express, 8 December, 1998

... With relief the nation has witnessed the sixth anniversary of the demolition of the Babari Masjid pass by without any major incident... The common people ... deserve to be complimented for the peace that prevailed... They did not fall in the trap of either the Hindutva forces ... or the secularists... Consequently, the turnout, whether at Mathura or Varanasi or Chennai, was poor... Ordinary people are sick of political mobilisation in the name of religion, whether it is by the majority community or the minorities...

... Violence has only served to disenchant the public... Even those who feel under the sway of the Ayodhya Movement when it was espoused by the BJP through Advani's Rath Yatra did not envisage the frenzied kar sevaks razing the ... structure to the ground... The demolition did not have their support as the drubbing ... that the BJP received in the Assembly elections that followed indicated... The party ... lost its image as a liberal, secular party. Various political developments ... show that the December 6 incidents has proved a liability for the BJP. Advani's Statement described demolition as a "singularly unfortunate incident" is a recognition of a political reality...

Since, in the popular perception, Advani and Ayodhya are inseparable, he has had to pay a price... His image underwent a metamorphosis. His "ideological rigidity" cannot be an asset (for) the BJP... Hopefully, he and his party will now ensure that such acts are never repeated again.

Babari Masjid Truth Site

December 6, 1992 was one of the blackest days in the history of India. On this fateful day the Babari Masjid, a historic 16th century mosque, fell prey to the unholy depredations of some mindless, bigoted people, goaded on surreptitiously by a spineless, colluding government.

The first-ever site on the whole Babari Masjid episode is on the Internet. A comprehensive and bold analysis of the sordid events that took place before and after the unforgettable incident is now available for you at:

<http://members.tripod.com/~babrimasjid> and soon on 'http://www.babrimasjid.edu'.

Site Administrators:

<http://members.tripod.com/~babrimasjid>.

(Source: The Impact International, January, 1999)

The Same Gang!

The Jeering, hooting young men who battered down the Babari Masjid are the same ones whose pictures appeared in the papers in the days that followed the nuclear tests.

- Arundhati Roy in "The End of Imagination"

‘Regret’ for December 6

Vir Sanghvi on L.K. Advani’s recent remark

In an article for The Telegraph in January 1993. Written just days after the Demolition, L.K. Advani referred to December 6, 1992, as ‘the saddest day of my life’...

...The problem with Mr Advani’s position on the demolition is not that it is new. The problem is that it promises much more than it delivers. Because of the language Mr Advani uses (unfortunate.... dejected.... sad, etc), one is fooled into thinking that like any moderate liberal, he regards the demolition as a sad day for Indian secularism. Perhaps he is even distancing himself from the communal passions fanned by the Ayodhya movement. Far from it. The point is not that he is a moderate but that he is every bit as hard-line as we thought he was.

His position was that he was ‘dejected’ by the happenings of December 6, but no, this sadness did not ‘stem from any disenchantment with the Ayodhya movement’. He was upset only because these ‘happenings’ had impaired the RSS’s reputation for discipline and ‘would affect the BJP’s over-all image adversely’. And he was distressed because ‘the action plan’ that he had worked out for constructing the temple had gone awry.

As for the Ayodhya movement itself, it was the biggest mass movement since Independence; not a ‘ladder to power’ but ‘the dynamo for a resurgent, resolute and modern India’. Even the demolition (‘happenings’) was seen not as an assault on secularism but as ‘a lack of firm commitment in the general masses to the rule of law’.

The theme of his Telegraph article was this: the demolition was the work of the frustrated masses who were exasperated with the delays caused by the judicial process. He was sorry that their frustration led to these ‘happenings’ because it would affect the BJP adversely. But the Ayodhya movement—which led to these ‘happenings’—was a symbol of ‘a modern India’. Nowhere in the Telegraph article was there one word of regret for the actual demolition.

Even the riots that followed were dismissed with the claim that they weren’t so bad: “when one compares this time’s fallout with what has been happening in earlier years over incidents which can be considered trifling, this time’s has been a contained one.” His regrets were for himself and the BJP (because their image had been dented and because his ‘meticulously drawn up’ action plan had been ‘short-circuited’) and his apologies were on behalf of others, chiefly ‘the general masses’ who had let the BJP down because of their ‘lack of firm commitment to the rule of law’.

I find all this instructive because Mr Advani is saying

exactly the same things again. To The Indian Express, he said that the incident was ‘unfortunate’; it was ‘a setback not only for the party but also for himself’. To The Pioneer, he elaborated on this theme: “his interpretation was that the setback was because Hindus don’t appreciate aggressive attitudes”.

To Outlook he made it clear that Hindutva and the Ram Temple agitation were ‘an inclusive ideology and the only solution to casteist tensions’. Where is the regret? Where is the softline? Mr Advani does not regret the communal passions he whipped up with his rath yatra. He is not distancing himself from the Ayodhya movement. He is not concerned with the setback to Indian secularism. He is concerned only with the setback to the BJP. He is not sorry for the demolition. He is only sorry for himself.

...If he does indeed intend a more comprehensive expression of regret, then he must go beyond the weasel words he used in The Telegraph and in his statements to the Press this December.

He must say that the actual demolition (rather than its manner) is a matter of regret. He must say that he is sorry for the damage to Indian secularism, not just for the damage to the BJP. And he must say that a resurgent India needs to go beyond an obsession with medieval mosques (or structures if he prefers) if it is to meet the economic and political challenges of the next century...

... On December 6, 1992 Mr Vajpayee was distressed by the demolition while Sadhvi Rithambara was delighted. Both were entitled to their views and both have stuck to them. Mr Advani’s problem is that he tries to package what are essentially Sadhvi Rithambara’s views in Mr Vajpayee’s language. And unfortunately for him, it doesn’t wash.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, December 25, 1998)

I have always regarded (Atalji) as my senior. There is hardly any decision we have not taken jointly, except for the Ram Rath Yatra.

- L.K. Advani, BJP Leader

Justice without power is inefficient. Power without justice is tyranny. Justice and power must, therefore, be brought together, so that whatever is just may be powerful, and whatever is powerful may be just.

- French Philosopher Pascal

Kashmir Movement: Not Jihad but Mischief

Views of Haider Farooq Maududi, son of Abul Ala Maududi

... During the last fifty years, India and Pakistan have witnessed three wars between themselves and therefore, we must find a solution to the Kashmir dispute. Kashmiri Muslims should get their rights at par with rest of the Indian Muslims. I told the Kashmiri leaders that the youth of Kashmir is getting wiped out in this battle. Muslims are suffering in every respect – educationally, economically and otherwise also. You should talk to the Indian government and impress upon them about your rights and demands, lawfully and constitutionally.

What kind of a Jihad is being fought in Kashmir? You (must) differentiate between Jihad and mischief... Leave alone Jihad, you cannot even call it revolt or rebellion. One must have the knowledge and understanding of Fiqah (Islamic jurisprudence). A revolt too is permissible only when you are ninety percent sure of its success and here there has been no success for the past half a century.

... My father (Maulana Maududi) had categorically refused to accept any fight on Kashmir as a Jihad. Right from the beginning of this battle, he refused to accept it as Jihad. How can it be (called) Jihad now?

Maulana Maududi, even when Qaid-e-Azam was alive, had made it clear (that) so long as Pakistan government has a treaty with India, it is not appropriate for Pakistan, in the light of Quran and Sharia, to fight against the Indian army in Kashmir.

... Maulana Maududi said in a discourse published in Jamaat Islami's bi-weekly, Kouser (Lahore) on August 17th 1948 at that time Mohd. Ali Jinnah was the Governor General of Pakistan: "... The situation now was like this: while on the one hand Indian armed forces were bent on resolving Kashmir issue on gun point, on the other hand, they threatened to usurp the state of Hyderabad. Pakistan, just besides taking up the Kashmir issue in UN did nothing else. All this was the result of the weaknesses of our leaders. To overcome these weaknesses and the consequences thereof, the remedy is not to do un-Islamic acts and negate what our leaders had accepted and indulge in such belligerent activities, which, as far as my knowledge goes, is not permissible according to Sharia..."

"I am of the opinion that the birth of India and Pakistan was the result of a treaty which both Muslims and Hindus had agreed upon. The treaty itself envisaged that both the countries are not each other's enemy and are not at war with each other but are in peaceful agreement on the discussion for the future of both the countries. Subsequently, diplomatic relations were established between the two countries. Such diplomatic relationship itself indicates that the state of war does not exist (between

the two countries)... No country would enter into any kind of an agreement on trade and economic matters with another country if it thinks it is at war with that country."

After this, in April 1948, there was the Calcutta agreement. Among other mutual understandings on various issues, it was agreed upon that both the countries would instruct their respective media not to publish any material, which might give an impression, that war was inevitable between the two countries. This clearly shows that both the countries had made mutual peace and wished to continue the same.

Maulana had said: "My understanding is that such a treaty does exist between the two countries in the presence of which, according to Sharia, we cannot wage any action against India... I wish to make one more thing clear that making or breaking of treaties is neither the job of media nor of individual leaders, or of preachers and orators but solely that of the government. If the treaty has ceased to exist or was never there then it is the job of the government of Pakistan to say so in categorical terms. Today if the government of Pakistan announces its difficulty then I will admit that the Sharia position is not the same as stated earlier and we are at liberty wage war".

"It is absolutely wrong to say that there is no agreement on Kashmir. In the partition agreement the princely states were given to right to accede to any of the two unions or remain independent. In the light of this we assert that Junagarh was part of Pakistan and India carried out aggression. Again on this very argument we support the right of independence of Hyderabad. Now how can we say that there was no treaty, whatsoever, on Kashmir? We certainly can claim that the state was forced to accede to the Indian union against the wishes of Kashmiri masses and therefore we do not accept such inclusion... We have only two ways – either we get the rights of the Kashmiris recognised amicably or openly send our armed forces to Kashmir, the way Indian forces landed in Junagarh. And third way is not an honest and truthful way but an immoral way... If you wish to opt for this way – do that, but don't drag Islam into this".

Jamaat Islami ... for every martyr gets Rs.60,000. Some of this sum is given to the survivor of the martyrs and the rest is pocketed (by the party). This is like a factory, producing martyrs. They martyr someone else's children and pocket the money. Look at the irony. None of the children of Qazi Hussain had died in Jihad-e-Afghanistan or Jihad-e-Kashmir; instead, one of them is leading a luxurious life in America...

(Source: The Jabroot, Srinagar, 9 October, 1998)

(Courtesy: The Journal of Peace Studies, September-October, 1998)

J&K SHRC Report On Sallian Carnage by Security Forces

The J&K State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) headed by Justice (Retd.) G.A. Kuchay has enquired into the killing of 19 innocent civilians at Sallian village in Surankote on the intervening night of August 3/4, 1998 and submitted its report to the Chief Minister.

On 3rd August last, 19 persons were brutally killed, including 3 adult males, 3 adult women and 13 children...

The incident was supposed to be in retaliation to the killing of Zakir Hussain, a surrendered militant, who had joined the State Police as SPO. As the militant group led by Imtiaz was suspected to be responsible for his killing, it was avenged by killing of members of the family and close relations of Imtiaz. Officially the incident was described as a consequence of inter militant clash.

The Commission rejected this theory and in a 17 page report has blamed pro-government militants and army for the wanton killings. It argued that killing of 19 persons could not be an independent act without the support of the armed forces. The report says "the army people in association with three pro-government militants ran amok in the intervening night of August 3/4 and killed the civilian in a barbaric manner". The report expressed surprise over the role of 9 Para Army camping only 200 meters from the site of occurrence for not visiting the site after listening to the gun roars. The report says that "the silence of the army leads to the conclusion that associates of Zakir Hussain ... took revenge with the active support of the forces". The Chairman of the Commission has further criticised the army for not coming forward to participate in the enquiry, even though the Commission had sent notices through the S.P. (Operations) for personal delivery to the army unit to participate in the investigations...

The Commission's report confirms the general impression among the people of the area and also the common sense view... The army would have been well advised to have cooperated with the Commission and presented its version of the incident...

Apart from restoring the confidence of the people, the Report has helped in preventing the possible communalisation of the situation that such incidents are intended to cause... As the incident was officially described a result of inter-militant rivalry, it did not arouse as much sympathy and indignation among Hindus and Muslims tended to feel aggrieved by their attitude... Killing of innocent people cannot be categorised along religious lines. They have to be condemned irrespective of the religion of the victim.

A point that has often been debated is whether the criticism of security forces is compatible with the national interest... Bonafide criticism prevents further alienation of the people and improves discipline and morale of the security forces. To the extent it restores faith in a national

The Statesman On Waning Militancy in J&K

... Militancy in the border state of Jammu and Kashmir is waning with Pak-sponsored militants failing to generate any support for their cause.

... Militancy was on the decline as the people had turned against the movement which was the biggest failure of Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence.

With people rejecting militancy ... the militants will soon realise that they are fighting a losing battle.

"What has been achieved in Kashmir could not have been done without the help of people of Kashmir, state policy, army and other para-military forces and they should be given the credit for it"...

... There was "fairly heavy shelling" along the Line of Control which resulted in some civilian casualties. But we gave as much as we got...

... Pakistan wanted to keep the pot boiling by continued firing in the areas like Poonch, Rajouri, Kupwara, Tangdhar and Uri.

... In Jammu ... the army had adopted a multi-pronged strategy to counter militancy under which the intensity of troops were increased along the Line of Control. With this, we succeeded in preventing supply of arms, ammunition and additional reinforcement.

(We) were yet to come across any (Taliban). The army, however, had some information regarding the presence of militants in the upper reaches of Peer Panjal but "we were not allowed them to come down"...

(Source: The Statesman, 1 January, 1999)

Hurriyat Report On Kashmir, 1997 and 1998

Year	Killings	Under Custody	Houses burnt or blasted
1998	2939	306	1408
1997	2793	410	706

Government Statement

On Hurriyat Visit to UN

Government are aware that Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Sabir Ahmad Dar, Abdul Majid Banday, Saeed Yusuf Nasir and Altaf Dadri visited New York in September, 1998. Government are also aware that they made false and baseless statements about the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. Government continue to keep a watch on the activities of these persons while abroad and will take such action as is necessary to safeguard national interest.

(Source: LSUQ No. 1632 dated 9.12.1998
by C.D. Gamit and K.S. Rao)

institution. It also promotes national interest. We are therefore convinced that Justice Kuchay and his colleagues have not only enhanced the cause of human rights but also patriotism.

(Source: The PUCL Bulletin, December, 1998)

Riyaz Punjabi

On J&K: Plea for a Concerted Dialogue

... With the restoration of a civilian Government in the State, it was expected that a political process would be initiated and that it would gradually lead to a resolution of the conflict. However, no such process has been initiated and there continues to be a political vacuum which is being used by the militants to their advantage.

... The Governments in the State as well as at the Centre have squandered the gains achieved in Jammu and Kashmir in the post-election phase. Economic issues, corruption and nepotism continue to occupy the centre-stage of the public discourse in the State. The moderate separatist elements and even those who signalled a willingness to participate in a dialogue were ignored and ultimately their role was marginalised...

... All political groupings in the State in general, and in Kashmir in particular had remained in limbo until the militants gained the upper hand. It, therefore, becomes imperative that the repression against the Jamaat, as claimed by its chief, should come to an end... The party should be allowed to follow its political activities democratically. It needs to be recognised that vengeance and suppression prolong the processes of conflict resolution and scuttle political initiatives.

There is an equal urgency to initiate a dialogue with different sections, including the separatists. It is ironical that successive Governments at the Centre have paid little attention to initiating a dialogue with the estranged people...

There is the realisation as well as awareness in the State now that the only way to end the impasse in Kashmir is through a genuine dialogue. In case the political leadership is unable to define the parameters of a dialogue, let the concerned citizens at the national level to so... Any delay, in initiating this process, is bound to push the State into a renewed phase of turmoil with disastrous consequences.

(Source: The Hindu, 1 December, 1998)

Kashmir is not merely a piece of land for us in India.

**- A.B. Vajpayee,
Prime Minister of India**

To hell with PoK. Let them allow us to live in peace in this part of Kashmir.

**- Farooq Abdullah,
Chief Minister of J&K**

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On Introduction of Saraswati Vandana, Bharat Mata Puja and Vande Mataram Insaf Morcha: Convener Shahabuddin's Statement, 22 November, 1998

"The Insaf Morcha welcomes and endorses the call of Maulana Syed Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi, President of the Ali India Muslim Personal Law Board, Rector of the Darul Uloom Nadvatul Ulema, Lucknow, and he most eminent Islamic scholar of the country to the Muslim community to withdraw their children from Government schools if Saraswati Vandana and Vande Mataram are incorporated as compulsory elements in school curriculum and culture. His call has resounded not only across the country but also throughout the world.

To impose Saraswati Vandana on the Muslims is subversive of their faith and violates Article 25 of the Constitution relating to Freedom of Conscience and Article 28 prohibiting religious instructions in government schools. Because the essence of the Islam is monotheism and the adoration or worship of any other object as deity is the most grievous sin a Muslim can commit. This applies equally to adoration of Bharat Mata.

Vande Mataram is no doubt our National Song and its recital has its place in official functions and ceremonial occasions. But to make it a compulsory feature of school assembly or of roll call or any school activity in the name of inculcating patriotism is equally an act of imposition, reminiscent of the chauvinist slogan "Is Desh me Rahna hoga, To Vande Mataram Kahna hoga!" which has now been revised by the Sangh Parivar and the UP Sarkar to say, "School me Padhna hoga, To Vande Mataram Kahna hoga!". Compulsion and political motive make such innovation obnoxious.

The Sangh Parivar has its purpose: to put the Muslims in their place. If inculcation of patriotism is the purpose, the school day may begin with the National Anthem or any other patriotic songs without a religious edge, such as "Sare Jahan se Achcha Hindustan Hamara". Muslims will respond enthusiastically, as they are second to none in their love of their motherland.

The Government of UP has recently made Sanskrit compulsory from the primary level. The major linguistic minority in UP has Urdu as its Mother Tongue. The net

impact will be to deprive the Urdu-speaking children of their right and duty to learn Urdu because no child can learn more than 2 languages at primary and 3 at the secondary level. Denial of Mother Tongue amounts to cultural genocide.

The Insaf Morcha sees this as a deliberate attempt by the Sangh Parivar and its captive governments to erode the concept of the secular state and to use State authority to promote one religion at the cost of the integrity of another, to brain-wash Muslim children and to eventually assimilate Muslims in the Hindu fold. It confronts the Muslims with a cruel choice between religious assimilation and educational backwardness! But when religious identity is under attack, the first duty of any religious group is to protect its identity. So will the Muslim Indians, at any cost. Nor will they accept cultural genocide.

The Insaf Morcha appeals to the Muslim community to respond unitedly and massively to the timely call of Maulana Ali Mian.

The Insaf Morcha calls upon to the secular parties to pressurise the BJP not to push the Muslims to the wall by attacking their religion and culture.

The Insaf Morcha appeals to the BJP-led Government at the Centre to advise the Government of UP to withdraw immediately its orders relating to introduction of Saraswati Vandana, Bharat Mata Puja, Vande Mataram and of Sanskrit as a compulsory subject in schools.

Avaidya Nath ko Gussa Kyon Ata Hai?

The Vikas Bharti School, a public school in Gorakhpur celebrated its Founder's Day on 1 November, 1998 with a cultural programme presented by the school children. Mahant Avaidya Nath, ex-MP and head of the Gorakhnath Temple, walked out of the function alongwith his supporters in protest against the presentation of Iqbal's well-known Urdu poem "Bachcho ki doa" 'Lab pe aati hai due ban ke tamanna meri, zindagi shamma ki surat khudaya meri'....

(Source: The Times of India, Lucknow, 9 November, 1998)

Saraswati Vandana Translation By Prof. K.B. Sitaramayya

Luminous tongued, radiant -- robed,
Beautiful Boon-Giver, Sarada.
May our life be filled with bliss,
White-bordered Flame, Shining Light!

Pure World-Souled, Bright Conqueror,
Player on the glorious lute,
May tranquil notes, Walker in Light,
Echo in vast, pathless skies!

Chooser of Swan, Pure-footed one,
Delighter with decorated nails,
Wearer of a glowing garland of flowers,
Shining with splendid ear-ornaments.

Spouse of the Birth-less, accorded by all
Gods, demi-gods, seers and men,
Also worshipped by Power and Grace,
Beautiful Boon-Giver, Sarada.

Vikram Kumar on Vande Mataram

... Anyone opposing the rendition of Vande Mataram, the battlecry of the nationalists against British imperialism, runs the risk of being branded an anti-national. Yet we would do well to ask ourselves why the Muslim community would go out to put its nationalist credentials under a cloud. Understanding the text and context of Vande Mataram might help us better appreciate the misgivings of the major religious minority of the country.

Vande Mataram was originally written in 1875 by ... Bankim Chandra Chatterji. It became popular in Bengal after Rabindranath Tagore composed new music for it in 1882. It became a nationalist slogan when protestors against the 1905 partition of Bengal chanted it while facing lathi blows from the British police. The British government proscribed it in 1905 and made it immortal. However, the song is mostly remembered in the context of Anandamath which Bankim Chandra wrote in 1882.

The novel is set in 1771 – in famine-stricken Bengal. The story revolves around the efforts of a Sanyasi, Satyananda, to organise a band of volunteers called the Santans (children of the motherland which is identified with Goddess Durga). In the novel Anandamath, Vande Mataram is the invocation song for the Santans. Satyananda is captured by the troops of a Muslim king... Satyananda is released the Santans go on the rampage against Muslims...

The theme of violence against Muslims recurs so often in the novel that it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that it is integral to the novel...

Contrary to popular belief, Anandamath does not evoke the kind of patriotism with which we would like to indoctrinate our children. It is not an exaggeration to say that Bankim's best-known novel is a **manifesto of cultural animosity towards Islam**. It is not for the first time that our national song Vande Mataram has run into controversy. Repeated efforts officially to consecrate it as a hymn of Indian nationhood have come up against resistance from the major religious minority of the country...

... Vande Mataram certainly does not have the pan-Indian vision required of a national song. It is because of its overwhelming Hindu imagery that most members of the Constitutional Assembly rightly preferred Tagore's song Jan Gan Man as India's national anthem. However ... it must also be pointed out that over time Vande Mataram as a song ... acquired an autonomous character.

... Tagore was highly critical of the idiom of political mobilisation which Bankim Chandra propagated in his novel. Bankim's novel Anandamath has cast its shadow on Indian polity in more than one way. Bankim's Santans would be happy to find their political cousins in Bajrang Dal...

(Source: The Times of India, 7 January, 1999)

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Sharad Gupta on Saffronisation of School Education in UP

... The controversial Kalpa Yojna ... on December 5 was not about just Saraswati Vandana and Vande Mataram. As envisaged by the Uttar Pradesh Government, it meant major changes in syllabus and daily routine of schools.

... Within a month of its promulgation in July this year, the scheme was in place in more than 5,000 of the total 1.25 lakh primary schools in the state. Teachers had been imparted special training for the purpose. But for the fatwa issued by Maulana Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi ... to his followers to withdraw their wards from schools run by the Uttar Pradesh Government, the Kalpa Yojna would have gone on to cover others schools as well.

Under the scheme, all state government schools would in effect become "Saraswati Shishu Mandir", which are urn throughout the country by Vidya Bharati, a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) outfit. Among other things, the singing of Saraswati Vandana during the morning assembly and Vande Mataram at the end of the day would become compulsory...

The schools would also have a Bal Bharati, consisting of a president, vice-president, secretary, deputy secretary, senapati (commander) and up-senapati (deputy commander). The Yojna also envisaged naming of classrooms in schools after great leaders (their names figured in a list attached as an annexure to the Kalpa Yojna draft). These classrooms were supposed to display a portrait of the leader after whom they were named as well as anecdotes from his life.

... It included: RSS founder Dr. Hegdewar, Vir Savarkar, Subhash Chandra Bose, Shyama Prasad Mookerji (founder of Jan Sangh) ... and Din Dayal Upadhyay – among the great leaders; Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Swami Ramtirtha, Swami Ram Krishna Paramhans, Swami Vivekanand, Madan Mohan Malviya, Maharshi Arvind, Ishwar Chand Vidyasagar and Ram Mohan Rai – among the social reformers; and Namdev, Tukaram, Sant Gyaneshwar, Shankaracharya, Ballabhacharya, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Sant Hari Das – among the poets.

Though a number of freedom fighters, some former prime ministers and presidents and personalities like Mother Teresa and Mahatma Gandhi also found a mention, the list had a predominant saffron tinge.

The list of quotations supplied with the Kalpa Yojna cited stray sentences from the Bible and occasional quotes of Hazrat Ali or Mahatma Gandhi, but a long list of Sanskrit shlokas from the Vedas and Upanishad.

One of the clauses even made it mandatory for students to chant "Bhojan Mantra" during recess.

The other instructions were: "Portraits of Ma

Saraswati and Bharat Mata be kept in a respectful manner during morning prayers and during dispersal of the school... The portraits should be properly decorated." The clause detailing the procedure for morning prayers, interval and dispersal was titled "Vandana, Madhyavkash and Visarjan."

Even the architects of scheme not "experts" – were ... proponents of the RSS ideology. The team was led by Shukla himself, who is an RSS pracharak... Another "expert" on the Yojna committee was also an RSS full-timer, Radhey Shyam Pandey.

In the preamble of the Yojna draft, Shukla wrote: "The Yojna envisages school as a family. The school family will be expected to prepare a draft scheme to achieve physical and educational aims, the progress of which will be monitored by officials of the Education Department. The SCERT will draft a detailed outline of curriculum and extra-curricular activities to be performed every month. The draft will be made available to every schools to be performed every month. The draft will be made available to every school by the third week of every month through a magazine...

However, with the scheme backfiring, almost everyone is denying responsibility. Shukla says ... "I only asked children to have regular prayers, not necessarily Saraswati Vandana. Even the (government order) issued in April 1997 (during Mayawati's chief ministerhip) asks school administration to make children 'Ish Vandana' (prayer to God)...

However, Shukla sticks to the demand for Vande Mataram, saying: "There is no outcry when the song is sung at the beginning of every Parliament and Assembly session, among others by Muslim MPs... The song finds a mention in the Constitution as well (sic). So why such a hue and cry is being raised when I made it mandatory for our children... Those opposing it are unpatriotic.

Chief Minister Kalyan Singh ... washes his hands of too. He agrees that there was no mention of Saraswati Vandana in either the Yojna or any government order, but says the Vandana mentioned to be performed before a portrait of Goddess Saraswati has to be Saraswati Vandana...

Kalyan has .. claimed that ... Shukla had not taken him into confidence (who has) issued an order on November 5, 1997 making worship of "Bharat Mata" compulsory in government schools in Uttar Pradesh, and that he had had to withdraw the order after a controversy erupted. ... The five-day chintan baithak (conclave) of the Sangh at Nagpur ... most participants justified the decision to make Vande Mataram compulsory in schools and decided to take the matter up with top BJP leaders...

(Source: The Indian Express, 17 December. 1998)

Government Statements

On Modernisation of Madarsas

The Government of India operates a scheme of financial assistance to voluntary organisations/government aided institutions for modernisation of Madarsas, under which funds are released through the State Governments. The major components of the scheme are:

1. Financial Assistance to the extent of 100% for appointment of qualified teachers for teaching of science, mathematics, social studies and languages.
2. Assistance for establishment of book banks and strengthening of libraries in Madarsas for these subjects.
3. Provision of science/mathematics kits and essential equipments etc.

Statement of Expenditure (Rs. in lakhs)

State	Amount Released During		
	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Andhra Pradesh	NIL	10.95	0.30
Assam	19.45	8.37	NIL
Bihar	NIL	44.38	12.67
Haryana	1.32	7.40	NIL
Karnataka	2.74	2.38	19.987
Kerala	12.77	NIL	NIL
Madhya Pradesh	11.09	NIL	24.43
Maharashtra	NIL	1.82	1.59
Orissa	NIL	NIL	1.83
Rajasthan	4.07	11.26	13.71
Tripura	7.30	37.65	NIL
Uttar Pradesh	34.88	91.61	78.84
West Bengal	24.32	24.77	19.04
Delhi	1.52	NIL	NIL
Others	0.60	0.56	0.88
Total	120.07	241.15	173.27

(Source: LSUQ No. 3412 dated 21.12.1998 by S.S. Owaisi)

On Education Schemes for Minorities

Central Schemes for Minorities Education and Madarsa Modernisation and Area Component

Year	Funds Allotted (Rs. in lakhs)	Grants Released
1993-94	227	218
1994-95	240	261
1995-96	342	340
1996-97	464	461
1997-98	1562	1272

(Source: LSUQ No. 3466 dated 21.12.1998 by S.R. Choudhary)

On Girls' Education

National Agenda for Governance (NAG) envisages ... free education for girls upto college level including professional courses. The modalities ... are being worked out...

(Source: LSSQ No. 107/7.12.1998 by C. Patel)

On Promotion of Sanskrit & Vedic Studies

The total budget allocation made by Government of India for Sanskrit education during 1998-99 was raised to Rs.30.00 crores from the 1997-98 RE level of Rs.14.33 crores.

For popularisation and propagation of Sanskrit, the Government has a Central Plan Scheme of Development of Sanskrit Education consisting of five-sub-schemes viz:

- (i) Financial Assistance to eminent Sanskrit Pandits,
- (ii) Award of Scholarship to the Students of High/Higher Secondary Schools studying Sanskrit,
- (iii) Providing facilities for teaching of Sanskrit in Secondary Schools,
- (iv) Modernisation of Sanskrit Pathshalas and
- (v) Promotion of Sanskrit through State Government's own programme.

Government of India also promotes Sanskrit through various institutions namely Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, New Delhi, Maharshi Sandipani Rashtriya Ved Vidya Pratishthan, Ujjain, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, New Delhi and Rashtriya Sanskrit Vidyapeetha, Tirupati.

These institutions implement various schemes including providing financial assistance to Adarsh Sanskrit Mahavidyalays/Shodh Sansthans and to Voluntary Sanskrit organizations.

Besides this the Ministry gives President's Award of Certificate of Honour to fifteen Sanskrit (apart from) one Pali, three Persian scholars, every year for substantial contribution in the respective fields.

(Source: LSSQ No. 314 dated 21.12.1998 by V. Tupe)

Educational Backwardness of Muslims in A.P.

No. of seats in Engineering Colleges	: 18,000 (1998-99)
% of Muslims	: 1 (one)
Literacy	: Boys 37%
	: Girls 17%

(Source: Bashiruddin Babubhai, MLA, ex-Minister)

Let every student have an understanding of, and respect for, all the faiths in India and pride in our national culture. There must be no place for religious bigotry and intolerance.

**- Atal Behari Vajpayee,
Prime Minister of India**

Supreme Court on Minority Institutions

N. Ammad, Appellant v. Manager, Emjay High School and others, Respondents. N. Ammad.

S. SAGHIR AHMAD AND K.T. THOMAS, JJ.

Kerala Education Act (6 of 1959), Section 2(5) – Minority school – claim – Claim for protection – Declaration of school as minority school by Government – Not condition precedent.

When the Government declared the school as a minority school it has recognised a factual position that the school was established and is being administered by a minority community. The declaration is only an open acceptance of a legal character which should necessarily have existed antecedent to such declaration. Therefore, it cannot be said that the school can claim protection only after the Government declared it as a minority school.

Kerala Education Act (6 of 1959), Section 36 – Kerala Education Rules (1959), Rule 44(1) – Appointment of Headmaster in minority school – Right of management to choose and appoint any qualified person – Is protected by Article 30(1) of Constitution.

The management's right to choose a qualified person as the Headmaster of the school is well insulated by the protective cover of Article 30(1) of the Constitution and it cannot be chiselled out through any legislative act or executive rule except for fixing up the qualifications and conditions of service for the post. Any such statutory or executive fiat would be violative of the fundamental right enshrined in the aforesaid Article and would hence be void...

(Source: AIR 1999 Supreme Court 50)

Medical College Project in Maharashtra The Konkani Muslim Education Society

A non-profit organization, established in 1927 to address the problem of illiteracy amongst the Muslim youth. Today Society runs seven high schools, two junior colleges, three computer centres and the Women's College of Arts, Science and Commerce. These institutions collectively impart education to more than 10,000 students, out of which about 50% are girls. KMES is largely dependent on private donations.

On 10 May 1996, the Government of India has issued a Letter of Intent to the Society to start a Medical College for the MBBS course in Bhiwandi for 50 students. This will be the first medical college to be established by the Muslim community in Maharashtra. The cost of establishing a full-fledged Medical College is estimated at US\$ 5 million...

The Society has already constructed a building, over 40,000 sq. ft., to house the Anatomy, Physiology and Biochemistry laboratories... In addition, it has purchased

Shahabuddin on Jamia Millia Islamia Letter to The Pioneer, 26 October, 1998

This has reference to the article, "Jamia Awakes" (21 October, 98) by Malvika Kaul errs in ignoring the historically established Islamic character of the institution since its very inception. The founding fathers did not perceive any conflict between Islam and Nationalism and therefore named it as Jamia Millia Islamia, National Islamic University. Gandhiji himself endorsed the Islamic character of the institution which, however, never closed its doors to non-Muslims. But it always maintained its Islamic ethos and had a preponderance of Muslims not only in its management but in its faculty and student body.

The official bill in 1998 was misconceived. Its primary motivation was to obtain more financial assistance from the state. It was passed despite the opposition of the Muslim MPs. The Bill not only ignored the history of the institution but the very object and purpose of its foundation. It also did not provide due protection to the Muslim interest, either in the matter of participation in its management or any preferential treatment in admission. I had submitted many amendments which were rejected. However, in 1996, the University Executive Council endorsed virtually all those amendments.

Under the present Act, the JMI has totally lost its distinct character and has been reduced to yet another Central University, Particularly in high employability Courses Muslims have been outnumbered. The Muslim community has no option but to lump it and wait over yet another Act of State which deprives them of an institution which its founding fathers had nurtured with their sweat and tears in the hope of creating a viable synthesis between Nationalism and Islam and producing Muslim Indians.

Shahabuddin's Comments

Letter to The Indian Express, 18 December, 1998

Sharad Gupta's report on the Kalpa Yojana controversy in UP, quotes C.M. Kalyan Singh as saying that the Kalpa Yojana has been withdrawn. To the best of my knowledge, no such Government Order has yet been issued. Secondly, he quotes the sacked Minister Ravindra Shukla as saying that the Vande Mataram finds a mention in the Constitution. It does not. Respect to National Anthem is one of the fundamental duties under Article 51A(a). Also, there is no law to regulate the use of Vande Mataram as the National Song as there is for National Anthem. But even this law does not make singing compulsory.

most of the equipment required to start instructions for the 1st year of the course...

Aslam Fakhri, President

4, Sea Glimpse, Walton Road, Mumbai 400 039, India.

Eminent Poet Shahryar On Mushairas as Theatre

Mushairas today have become a performing art... Earlier, there were just 10 per cent who were actors. Ninety per cent of the poets had a literary background. Now, only two or three poets have a literary flavour to their poetry... A special breed of poets recite only a special kind of poetry (on) controversial, burning issues alone. Today there are just four criteria for organising a Mushaira: Who will conduct it? How many women poets are attending it? How many humorous poets are coming? And how many poets can deliver their verse in 'tarannum'? In fact, there are organisers who go around scouting for 'successful' poets in the poet meets held in smaller towns. Almost like an animal fair, where buyers scout for the best cows.

... The public still likes quality. Look at the songs which are hits these days. Only those with content and combine melody with lyricism. So who says people want mediocrity! Moreover, if you consistently offer a diet high on masala, the flavour of good, clean stuff might just be forgotten. With no choice, the public must necessarily opt for the vulgar and the crass. Poetry is a part of culture. You cannot eradicate it from the fabric of our nation.

I haven't stopped writing lyrics for Hindi cinema. Unfortunately But I am choosy. I write only for those films where the songs are an integral part of the film and there is scope for poetry. I cannot write about Kabootars on the rooftops... (Source: The Times of India, 27 September, 1998)

K.C. Kanda: Masterpieces of Modern Urdu Poetry (Translation) Review by Prakash Chander

Faiz Ahmed Faiz described translation of poetry as "a formidable task when languages are as far removed from each other in cultural background, rhythmic and formal patterns and vocabulary of symbols allusion as English and Urdu". K.C. Kanda, retired Professor of English and M.A. in Urdu, has undertaken the 'formidable task' unadaptingly to introduce Urdu poetry to non-Urdu-knowing people in English translation.

This is his sixth volume of selected Urdu poetry in eight years – a truly prodigious effort. Its predecessors were books of masterpieces of Urdu ghazal, of rubaiyat and of nazm, an anthology of ghazals and selected work of Mir Taqi Mir.

He (begins with) Firaq Gorakhpuri (born 1896) and downs (ends with) Praveen Shakir (born 1952). There are ninety-four ghazals and nazms of thirty-three poets of the sub-continent...

In his attempt to select the best he has succeeded by and large. Since any selection is guided by the selector's taste and temperament it should be accepted without a demur. Kanda has maintained near-balance between the

Status of Additional Official Language in Delhi Shahabuddin's Letter to Delhi CM,

1 January, 1999

With reference to our conversation regarding the purposes for which the Additional Official Languages may be used, I find that in Bihar and UP the following purposes have been specified.

1. Acceptance of petitions and application from the public in Urdu and response thereto in Urdu.
2. Acceptance of documents written in Urdu for registration by the Registration authorities.
3. Publication of important Laws and Regulations and declarations also in Urdu.
4. Publication of Government Circulars and Orders of public importance also in Urdu.
5. Release of important Government advertisements also in Urdu.
6. Publication of Urdu translation of the official Gazette.
7. Placement of signboards and name-plates in government offices and public places also in Urdu.

You may like to consider a parallel legislation.

Vajpayee on Urdu

Urdu is one of the national language of India. There are no doubt some obstacles now in the path of its progress. But these obstacles will disappear one day and Urdu shall receive its due place in the country which it deserves.

Urdu On-line Magazine

Asghar Ali Ansari has designed and hosted this Urdu e-zine: www.urdunet.com. This is an attempt to foster the development propagation at Urdu. Mr. Ansari believes that this site will bring Urdu lovers together-especially from India and Pakistan. The site is hosted from Delhi; the very place where Urdu originated Urdunet will cover social, political and literary aspects of the Urdu world. This site should send a cheer among the Urdu lovers.

classicists and the progressives.

Besides the well-known Firaq, Josh, Meeraji, Rashid, Majaz and Faiz, he has also chosen Jazbi (ghazal) and Akhtar-ul-Imam (nazm) masters in their own right but not so popular. Similarly, he has included Sikandar Ali Wajid, Majid Amjad, Ehsaan Danish, Taban, Nazir Kazmi, Munir Niazi, Ahmed Faraz, Nida Fazli, Kishwar Naheed and Praveen among others. Ali Sardar Jafri, is there with four longish poems, including 'Mera Safar' and 'Ek Khwab Aur'.

For some critics, the temptation to pick holes in translation is irresistible. No translation can be cent per cent faithful to a text. One should judge such work with understanding and compassion, not with the help of a dictionary.

(Source: The Hindustan Times)

Government Statements On Illegal Immigration

Illegal immigration not only leads to change in demographic pattern, has an adverse effect on the security of the country but has also a big drain on employment opportunities and social services... However, no systematic assessment in this regard is available.

For checking illegal immigration following steps have been taken:

- Schemes such as Prevention of Infiltration of Foreigners (PIF) in Assam and Meghalaya Mobile Task Force (MTF) in West Bengal and Tripura ... implemented by the concerned States to detect infiltrators.
- Standing instructions ... to the Border Security Force, State Governments and UT Administrations for detection and deportations of infiltrators.
- ... Regular review undertaken to monitor the situation on an on-going basis.

(Source: LSSQ No.130/8.12.1998 by M. Sirpordar and Maganti Babu)

On Infiltration

... Nationals of some neighbouring countries viz. Bangladesh, Myanmar, Tibet region of China, Sri Lanka, etc. Manage to enter illegally into India, but it is difficult to arrive at an exact estimate of the number of such illegal immigrants because they enter surreptitiously and mix with the local population due to their ethnic and linguistic similarities...

Number of Foreign Infiltrators

During 1998 (upto November 30)

On the Indo-Pak and Indo-Bangladesh Borders.

Nationality	Killed	Apprehended
Bangladesh	28	4840
Pakistan	61	86
Myanmar	3	348
Afghanistan	-	2
Iran	-	4
Others	-	4
Total	92	5284

Intruders from Bangladesh border are mostly illegal immigrants; intruders from Pakistan and Myanmar border are generally drug smugglers, cross-border criminals, militants and mercenaries...

As per Section 3 of the Citizenship Act, 1955, every person born in India on or after 26.1.1950 but before 1.7.1987 Shall be a citizen of India by birth irrespective of the nationality of the parents. However, a person shall be a citizen of India by birth on or after 1.7.1987 only if either his parents is a citizen of India at the time of his birth. Accordingly, the status of these illegal immigrants and their children born after 1.7.1987 is that of illegal aliens.

Aliens in Assam

Editorial, The Statesman, 5 January, 1999

It is unfortunate that the Assam Governor, Lt. Gen. (Retd) S.K. Sinha, should involve himself in controversy over such an emotive issue as infiltration. His report to the President, describing those occupying the charland or riverine islands as "foreigners", ignores the fact that they have been living there for years. As if that is not enough the Governor has started a virtual campaign against them... In the circumstances, it is bound to be noted that the demand for repeal of the 1983 Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act is indeed the demand of both the BJP and the All Assam Students Union. He says that enforcing the Act is difficult because tribunals are understaffed. If this is the obstacle, what prevents the Government from appointing judges? Scrapping the Act means violating the 1985 Assam Accord which provides for amendments but says nothing about revocation. The Governor admits it is not possible to detect all who came after the cut-off date of 25 March 1971 and jumps to the conclusion that they should be declared stateless. This again goes against the Accord. Surprisingly, the Governor is silent over the amended Citizenship Act which allows children of illegal migrants to acquire citizenship, which the AASU is opposing... There is nothing new in the report. Both Delhi and Dispur are aware of the problem. Gen. Sinha should have anticipated the consequences. It has already created an atmosphere of communal disharmony which interested groups can be expected to exploit to their advantage... Perhaps Indira Gandhi was not entirely wrong; the General does betray his political sympathies. And not for the first time.

No. of Registered Foreigners in India As on 31.12.1997

State	Foreigners	State	Foreigners
Maharashtra	33,929	Kerala	4,459
Delhi	32,788	Punjab	4,213
Gujarat	15,507	Pondicherry	3,838
Karnataka	11,547	A.P.	2,697
Tamilnadu	9,929	Goa	1,919
Rajasthan	7,488	Chandigarh	1,394
UP	6,826	Haryana	1,051
MP	6,152	Bihar	1,007
W. Bengal	5,588	Others	2,797
		Total	1,53,129

(Source: LSUQ No. 3683 dated 22.11.1998 by R.S. Naik, C.D. Gamit, R.K. Pandey, S. Gautam and M. Rawale)

No. of Foreigners deported during 1997

Country	Deported	Country	Deported
Bangladesh	36914	Pakistan	209
Myanmar	593	Others	318
Sri Lanka	211	Total	38245

(Source: LSSQ No. 126 dated 8.12.1998 by A.F.G. Osmani)

Government Statements On Pending Cases in TADA Courts

... Instructions have been issued to the State Governments for speedy disposal of pending TADA cases. These cases are being periodically reviewed at the State level by the State Review Committees. However, most of these cases are presently pending in the various designated TADA courts in the country. Prosecution branches of the State Governments have been instructed to expedite the trial in these cases and not to seek adjournment.

Government Statistics for 1990-98 (upto 15 November, 1998)

Total Number of persons apprehended and in custody	:	33838
Number of persons released after preliminary questioning	:	18365
Number of persons arrested during the period under TADA (substantive law)	:	14422
Number of persons released U/S 169 Cr.P.C.	:	3234
Number of persons released on bail by competent courts	:	3560
Number of persons presently under interrogation/judicial custody	:	317
Number of cases registered under TADA	:	16620

The Criminal Law Amendment Bill, 1995 which seeks to provide an alternate law was introduced in Rajya Sabha in May, 1995 when the erstwhile TADA(P) Act, 1987 was allowed to lapse. It has remained pending since then because of absence of political consensus on passing of this Bill.

(Source: LSUQ No. 1571/8.12.1998 by B.V. Patil, and C.L. Gupta)

On Outfits in Assam

A number of Muslim organisations like Muslim Liberation Front of Assam (MLFA), Muslim United Liberation Front of Assam (MULFA), Muslim Liberation Tigers of Assam (MLTA), Muslim Volunteer Force (MVF), Islamic Liberation Army of Assam (ILAA) etc. have come up in Assam. The proclaimed aim of these organisations is to safeguard the overall interests of Muslims in Assam. However, reports indicate that some Muslim fundamentalist organisations have indulged in militant activities also.

No proposal to ban these organisations has been received from the State Government so far.

...Action s per law is being taken against any person/organisation found indulging in unlawful of militant activities. The Government is also closely monitoring possible ISI linkage with some of these organisations.

(Source: LSUQ No. 1381 dated 8.12.1998 by J. Rongpi)

On ISI Agents and Militants

Whether the ISI agents and militants of Lashkar-e-

Government Statements On Lease of Wakf Property

It has been brought to the notice of the Government that in Punjab Wakf Board certain wakf properties have been leased out to private individuals at below market rate. Similar cases in respect of other Boards and/or State Governments have not so far come to the notice of the Government. ...

On the advise of the Government, the leasing system in Punjab Wakf Board is being reviewed with a view to increasing the lease amount at par with the prevalent rates.

(Source: LSUQ No. 2584 dated 15.12.1998 by R.S. Gavai)

On Appointment of Non-Muslim in Wakf

It is a fact that a non-Muslim has been appointed as Administrator of the Punjab Wakf Board. Since the Wakf Act, 1995 provides that during the supersession of a Wakf Board, the powers and duties of the Board are to be exercised by a person (designed by the Government as Administrator) without specifying that he should be a Muslim, the appointment of a non-Muslim as Administrator of the Board is not in contravention of the Act or Rules framed thereunder. However, this appointment was only a stop-gap arrangement and a decision has already been taken to appoint a Muslim as the Administrator.

(Source: LSUQ No. 2569 dated 15.12.1998 by S. Pannu)

Karnataka High Court On Administration of Wakf

P. Mohamad Dastagir, Petitioner v. Karnataka Board of Wakfs and others, Respondents.

TIRATH S. THAKUR, J.

Wakf Act (43 of 1955), Section 65 - Administration of Wakf - Appointment of administrator - Requirement of recording reasons in writing for such appointment, necessary only at first stage when Board assumes management of wakf - Such requirement does not extend to subsequent stages and the wakf board can by order, directly relieve/replace existing administrator - Therefore, order relieving the petitioner, and appointing administrator purely on honorary basis without recording reasons in writing - Not valid.

(Source: AIR 1998 Karnataka 297)

Toiba haye taken shelter in Mosques and Madarsas in Uttar Pradesh, if so, the details thereof. As per available information, a Pak national who was allegedly involved in a series of bomb blast cases in Delhi had stayed in a Madrasa in Shergarh, district Bareilly, in November-December, 1996. ...

(Source: LSUQ No. 3778 dated 22.12.1998 by S. Chauhan)

UNDP Award for Fatima Bi, Muslim Woman Sarpanch in AP

Fatima Bi had put her thumb impression on nomination s for the post of Sarpanch three years ago. Now Kofi Annan is going to present her with the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Race Against Poverty award on October 17.

What did she do? A 40-year-old illiterate and seemingly conservative women of Kalva village in Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh, Fatima fought male opinion and laughter – she shrugged off the burkha.

When she was elected sarpanch there were 20 self-help groups of women in the village working independently. Then she went to a UNDP training programme and realised she could do a lot. So, she took village records from mandal revenue officials, mooted the idea of bringing all the self-help groups together and formed a village development organisation, "Proddu" (Sunrise)... Men were the stumbling block. They jeered, they prevented their wives from venturing out, some even assaulted them, but "slowly they realised our potential and took our efforts seriously" says Fatima, a mother of three sons. With the funds available to her, she got cement roads laid in the village and a water tank and a school building built, recounts Zubeda Bi, a member of Proddu. "Fatima was a guiding force. With the cooperation of her husband, she shrugged off the "burkha" and came out for our welfare... Vijaya Bharati (UNDP Project officer) was also of great help," she says.

After Proddu was formed, the seed capital for projects went up to Rs.2.75 lakh. The village organisation started giving loans at the rate of 24 per cent per year as against the 72 per cent interest charged by private moneylenders. Impressed, the UNDP granted a Rs. 10 lakh, interest-free loan to the organisation.

Proddu took the loan and spread it out. A micro-plan was drafted on how to use the money, says Martamma, secretary of Proddu. As many as 230 beneficiaries were identified and loans ranging from Rs. 3,000 to Rs.20,000 were granted. Those who got the money bought horse-carts, bullock carts and land; built cloth shops and cycle stores; planned a dairy, a super bazaar and a hotel.

Now Proddu gets Rs.20,000 in hard cash every month. With money at hand, the women .. identified 18 young widows and some deserted women made the district administration sanction pucca houses and ration cards for them. They were also able to give seven old women disowned by their family members a monthly old-age pension of Rs.50. The women also decided not to marry off their girls till they were 18 years old. And they trained them to be self-reliant e.g. tailoring, embroidery... The next step was to set up a creche, Ammavodi (mother's lap). This allowed women to go to work, adding to the

On Women in Islam Safia Iqbal's Letter in The Pioneer

... The Muslim woman, like her other counterparts, though given ...rights and ... status in Islam, suffers like the rest of all fronts... There is a vast gap between what Islam ... promises her ... and what is doled out to her in practice.

... In reality, she is deprived of all these rights, ... in the name of religion, and conveniently tuned into a bonded labour... She leads the life of a second class citizen, often worse... She ...has her pregnancies and abortions planned by others ... are kept indoors in the name of purdah. The Muslim woman is truly today's "Muslim sati".

Muslim Donates Land for Cremation Ghat

Mushtaq Ahmed, a Muslim, has donated land for building a cremation ghat for the Hindus at Angkoopalaym in Cumbum Panchayat near Madurai... Ahmed's action (is) seen as a gesture to strengthen ties between the two communities.

(Source: The Indian Express, 26 December, 1998)

Religious Identity versus Assimilation Shahabuddin's Letter to The Times of India, 29 December, 1998

Please refer to S.N. Phadnis's comments on Iqbal Masud's article. Partition did not imply abdication on the part of Muslim Indians of their religious identity. Indeed the Constitution guaranteed religious, cultural and linguistic rights of Muslims as of other religious minorities. Therefore, the Muslim Indians are under no moral obligation or legal pressure to merge themselves with the Hindu community.

INDIA is a multi-religious, multi-caste, multi-lingual, multi-racial and multi-cultural state and will remain so even if the Muslims are not here. But multiplicity does not imply fragmentation or partition if all groups equitably share shower and participate in managing the State.

Like all other social groups, Muslims must also come to terms with the modern age. Call it reform, if you like. But that shall also be within the framework of the Shariat.

families' income... The silver lining was adopting three physically handicapped children. Thirteen-year-old Shameem, a polio-affected girl was admitted to a residential school, courtesy Proddu that paid Rs.6,000. Khader Pasha, also polio affected, was admitted to a school in Kurnool. Proddu looks after him now and he helps out by teaching illiterate women. The women are also in the forefront of a shramdan programme. (They have cleaned up a 100-metre nala...

(Source: The Indian Express, 3 October, 1998)

Government Statement On Child Marriage

The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 was last amended in 1978 ... with a view to provide that offences under the Act shall be cognizable for the purpose of investigation and for matters other than matters referred to section 42 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973... No further legislative measures to make the provisions of the Act more stringent are contemplated at present.

The practice of child marriage is deeply embedded amongst certain sections of the society and legislation would not by itself achieve the object of stopping this practice. It is only through social and economic uplift of these sections that the practice can be eradicated completely.

(Source: LSUQ No. 3575 dated 21.12.1998
by D.S. Ahire, A.V. Naik and A.S. Bhonsle)

Man Slits Throat to Please Deity

... A youth slit his throat before a deity ... in a temple in Gujarat's Amreli district on 4 January, 1999. Balubhai Rambhai Makwana, 20, had been fasting for the past four months to 'appease' his chosen deity in Gantada village of Kodinar taluka ... to acquire spiritual powers. On Monday, he performed 'Kamal Pooja' - or offering one's head...

(Source: The Indian Express, 5 January, 1999)

Hands of Dalit Children Burnt

Seven Dalit children, all below 10 years of age, were forced to dip their hands in boiling mustard oil in a village in Pratapgarh. Their fault: they happened to be playing near the spot where a neighbour lost his watch.

The owner of the lost watch, Waheed and his wife, Mehrunnisa, have been arrested while the police are still looking for their son also, one of the accused...

(Source: The Indian Express, 30 December, 1998)

UP Minister a History-Sheeteer

The senior superintendent of police of Kanpur, M.A. Ganapati, has issued a list of dacoits and kidnappers active in the district for the last three years. The name of the Programme Implementation Minister of UP, Raghu Raj Pratap Singh alias, Raja Bhaiyya appears at serial number 19 of this list. Raja Bhaiyya is not the only criminal in the BJP government in UP. (Several) ministerial colleagues of Kalyan Singh are well-known criminals...

(Source: Hindi Daily Jagran, Kanpur, 16 November, 1998)

(Courtesy: The Radiance Viewswweekly)

Two-hour Yagna on PM's Birthday

Some say it with flowers, others with sweets - but the BJP, Delhi women's wing has decided to (mark) the birthday of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee with a special two-hour long yagna....

(Source: The Indian Express, 25 December, 1998)

Dalit Women Crushed by Caste Editorial, The Pioneer, 24 December, 1998

... Dalit women continue to languish on the fringes, trapped as they find themselves in the double bind of gender and caste. Their low status within the family as also within the caste structure renders them vulnerable to exploitation from dual quarters, forcing upon them a greater share of the physical and mental violence perpetrated on their caste in general. With the literacy rate among Dalit women woefully low, they are doomed to settle for traditional vocations like piggery and sheep rearing. They are sexually assaulted for marrying out of their caste; they are routinely raped or paraded naked by upper caste men who seek to "settle" land and other disputes through such barbaric acts; they are forced to work without wages; they are reminded of their lower status in the caste hierarchy by none other than upper caste women who deny them even drinking water at the village well... Dalit women continue to bear the severest brunt of untouchability... Delayed trials in cases of rape have denied justice to countless Dalit women, compounded by the fact that the police at times refuses to register cases of atrocities in the first place...

Khushwant Singh on Sound Pollution

... On religious festivals (people) disturb peace of the neighbourhood, creates chaos in civic life and foul the environment... Be it Dussehra, Pooja, Diwali, Holi, Sikh Gurus birthdays or martyrdom anniversaries, Moharrum or the Prophet's birth anniversary. My reasoning is simple: religion should be confined to the home or a place of worship. Highways and public places must remain accessible to citizens at all times.

... Local administrations are unwilling or unable to impose discipline on the people. Despite warnings and propaganda on radio and TV (very creditable) not to exploded high decibel crackers on Diwali and despite the weather being inclement, bombs started exploding two days before Diwali, became a non-stop barrage of explosions on Diwali and the left-overs took another two days to be exhausted. A cloud smelling of gunpowder hung in the air for another night and day...

... Then there is the continuing menace of loudspeakers. The Calcutta High Court took the lead in banning their use. No other High Court followed the precedent nor did any citizen have the courage to take the matter to a judge. Civic-minded people should file petitions in their High Courts to end this menace. These thekedars of religiosity must not be allowed to make religious practices into a public nuisance.

Of religious practices that have become de rigueur in our country, the most irksome are processions. Worship of

(Contd. on Page 90)

Government Statements

On Declaration of Pakistan as Terrorist State

Pakistan has been actively sponsoring terrorism in J&K and other parts of India. For several years, terrorists recruited, trained, financed and armed in Pakistan and POK have been infiltrated into India. Pakistan has also provided sanctuary to known anti-Indian elements and those declared as fugitives from the law in India. Pakistan has been provided detailed documentary evidence to establish the incontrovertible and irrefutable fact of its sponsorship of terrorism in India. We have consistently demanded of Pakistan that it should forthwith cease these activities and take practical steps on the ground to demonstrate its sincerity in this regard. Pakistan has also been asked to close down its training camps in Pakistan and Pak Occupied Kashmir (POK) and hand over terrorists and fugitives who have been given sanctuary in Pakistan. This demand was reiterated during the discussions between the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan in October 1998 and between the Home Secretary and the Interior Secretary of Pakistan in November 1998. Regrettably, official Pakistan support to terrorists and organisations operating in J&K and other parts of India continues. Government remain firm in its resolve to take all measures necessary to fully safeguard the country's security and territorial integrity.

Government have made known Pakistan's sponsorship of official terrorism to the international community. As a result of our efforts, there is widespread international recognition of these activities by Pakistan.

(Source: LSSQ No. 242 dated 16.12.1998 by S.P. Jaiswal)

On Support to Palestine

India continues to extend moral, political and material support to the Palestinian people. At the donors conference held in Washington DC (1993) and Paris (1996) India pledged US\$1 million each. Under the pledges tea was supplied ... in 1995 and two projects are being implemented in Gaza. Proposals for supplying textbooks to various Universities in Gaza and West Bank are being processed. Training courses are also offered to the Palestinians.

India has pledged further amount of US\$1 million at the third donors conference held in Washington DC on 30 November, 1998. The utilisation of this amount will be decided in consultation with the Palestinian authorities.

(Source: LSSQ No. 44 dated 2.12.1998 by S.P. Yadav and R. Patidar)

(Contd. from Page 89)

God, homage to prophets or saints is not enhanced by marching through the city's ... thoroughfares with elephants, camels, horses, brassbands, gutka players and other kinds of buffoonery which brings normal traffic to standstill for many hours. As it is, we are a people with little consideration for others; religious ritual must not give further sanction for us to be more inconsiderate towards our fellow citizens. ...

(Source: The Nation and the World, 1 December, 1998)

Aggression against Iraq Condemned Shahabuddin's Letter to US and UK Ambassadors, 19 December, 1998

I have the honour to make the following submission on behalf of the Insaf Morcha, for the kind consideration of your Government:

1. The people of India unequivocally condemn the air attack on Iraq by the USA, supported by the UK, as a patent act of aggression, since the UNSCOM Inspectors Report on non-cooperation and non-compliance by Iraq submitted to the UN is yet to be considered by the Security Council and Resolution 678 does not provide a continuing mandate or authority to any State to take the law in its own hands, pronounce Iraq guilty and launch an attack on it at its discretion.
2. Further, the people of India reject the public resolve of the US Administration to force President Saddam Husain out of office not because they nurse any fascination for him and his ways of governance but because they believe that only the people of Iraq have the right to choose and change their government, free of all foreign interference. The US-UK action revives the memories of the era of imperialism and of gunboat diplomacy.
3. The people of India demand immediate stop to air attacks and all other acts of aggression against Iraq and determination of Iraq's state of compliance by a Special Committee of the Security Council, in the light of which the Security Council may decide the future course of action.

Hindu Minority in Indonesia

Hindus in ... Bali have threatened to stage a strike unless President B.J. Habibie fires a cabinet minister accused of insulting the minority religion... Media reports have quoted food minister A.M. Saefuddin as saying that opposition faction leader Megawati Sukarnoputri does not deserve Indonesian presidency because she is a Hindu...

(They) demand Saefuddin, a Muslim party leader, to withdraw his remarks, apologise to Hindus and to resign (and) be put on trial. ...

Saefuddin was reported to have asked: "are the Indonesian people willing to have a Hindu president?" He has apologised, saying he had no intention of insulting any religion. Megawati's paternal grandmother came from the predominantly Hindu Island of Bali. Her father, the late president Sukarno, and her mother were Muslims.

South Punjab in Pakistan has world's most unusual matrimonial tradition in which girls as young as only six months are sometimes married to old men.

The tradition is known as "Watta Satta" in which a family, who has a son and a daughter, marries them in a family who too has a son and daughter. The idea behind this practice is to safeguard family property and also to ensure good relations between the families.

Pakistan: Marriage of Infant Girls

Pakistan Oppressed Nations Movement

Islamabad Declaration, 2 October, 1998 (Extracts)

The Federation of Pakistan came into existence through the amalgamation of the historical national homelands of the 'Bengalis, Sindhis, Punjabis, Pushtoons, Seraikis and Balochs. The "association" of these nations into a single federal state was based on the social contract of 1940 Pakistan resolution that recognized the historical and geographical existence of the nations and homelands of the would be constituents of the new state granting them their autonomous and sovereign status.

Fifty years down the road the federation of Pakistan is passing through a grave period of multiple crisis...

A state derives its legitimacy and power from the people. A federation derives its strength from the federating units. In Pakistan, the constant denial that it is a multi-national country of four federating units and five nations... has been the cause of the failure of the state and the federation.

Unfortunately, myopic rulers, under the influence of the most populous and the most powerful province have constantly used force and applied instruments like Martial Laws and doctrine of necessity and slogans of Pakistan nation, brotherhood and Muslim Ummah to ... deny the people of the federating units of their political, economic, cultural and human rights... We have gathered here ... to ponder over the question as to how to correct the listing ship of the country so that we the people of federating nations of Pakistan can save our peoples' and our common country from the impending threat to their very existence ... live in peace and harmony and develop and prosper.

Having ... considered the ... situation, we hereby resolve that urgent steps be taken to bring into being a new order based on the following principles:

Pakistan is a multinational country comprising of five nations namely Punjabis, Sindhis, Balochs, Pushtoons and Seraikis with their respective five homelands with existence of 5000 years.

All federating units including Seraikistan be autonomous and sovereign and will be referred to as a 'states' in the terms and spirit of 1940 resolution.

These states shall be the fountainheads of all power including finance and federation will be vested with only those powers, which the states confer on it by mutual agreement and consent.

The Pukhtoon federal unit shall be known as Phukhtoonkhwa and the Seraiki federal unit as Seraikistan.

Pushto, Seraiki, Balochi, Sindhi and Punjabi should be declared as national languages and each language and culture of the federating units be given equal opportunity and resources for development and progress.

Each federating unit should have proper and adequate

representation in defence forces roughly commensurate with its population.

The principle of parity and equal representation to the people of all federating states in the federal bodies, services and other institutions should be made applicable with full force in the new order. ...

Adopted by:

Awami National Party, Pukhtoonkhwa Qaumi Party, Mazdoor Kisan Party, Pukhtoonkhwa Milli Awami Party, Balochistan National Party, Balochistan National Movement, Jamhoori Watan Party, Jiayee Sindh Party, Sindh Hari Committee, Anti-Kalabagh Dam Front, Sindh Rehbar Committee, Sindh Democratic Party, Sindh Saghir Party, Sindh National Congress, Hyderabad Action Committee, Jlyee Sindh Inquilabi Party and Sarayeki Rehbar Committee

Resurgence of Islam in Spain

More than 500 years after the end of Muslim rule in Spain, Islam is returning to the country once known as Al-Andalus. The number of Muslims has doubled and more than 100 new mosques have been opened in just eight years and 25 new Islamic Associations were registered in 1997 alone, according to figures quoted by the daily El-Mundo. Spain officially counts around 300,000 Muslims but some estimates put the number at up to 500,000.

There are now mosques in all of Spain's 17 autonomous regions, the total number being around 200, according to El-Mundo. Around 100 Islamic Associations have been officially registered, but the real number could be twice that many, officials said.

The Andalusian City of Granada, the last bastion of Muslim Spain to fall to the Christian reconquest in 1492, is again becoming a centre for Islam.

Home to around 2,000 Muslims, the city has streets with a distinctly Islamic atmosphere. Muslim ... perfume shops to furniture factories are proliferating, women wear headscarves and bearded men walk in the streets...

Around 3-5,000 Spaniards are estimated to have embraced Islam, but the biggest growth factor is immigration from North Africa... Spain ... has some of the world's foremost historic Islamic sites, such as the Alhambra Palace in Granada and the huge mosque and Medina Azzahara Palace in Cordoba.

The Muslim revival in Granada has its roots already in the 19th and early 20th centuries when writers such as Federico Garcia Lorca and Blas Infante began pointing out the richness of Spain's lost Islamic heritage...

(Source: The Radiance View, weekly, 18-24 October, 1998)

Israel's "Ethno-Bomb"

Israel is reportedly developing a biological weapon that would harm Arabs while leaving Jews unaffected, according to a report in London's Sunday Times. The report, citing Israeli military and western intelligence sources, says that scientists are trying to identify distinctive genes carried by Arabs to create a genetically modified bacterium or virus.

... Israel's Nes Tziyona bio-warfare laboratory near Tel Aviv, scientists are trying to use viruses and bacteria to alter DNA inside living cells and attack only those cells bearing Arab genes. The task is very complex because both Arabs and Jews are Semitic peoples. But according to the report, the Israelis have succeeded in isolating particular characteristics of certain Arabs, "particularly the Iraqi people". Dedi Zucker, a member of the Israeli parliament, denounced the research in the Sunday Times. "Morally, based on our history, and our tradition and our experience, such a weapon is monstrous and should be denied".

(Source: The Muslim World, Karachi, 9 January, 1999)

Gadhafi: Muslims, Arabs and Africans

"... The Arab world is finished", declared Gadhafi, peeved at what he perceived as lukewarm solidarity among fellow Arabs for his campaign to escape UN sanctions imposed on Libya because of the bombing of a jetliner over Scotland. "I have no more time to waste talking with Arabs," he said. "I now talk about Pan-Africanism and African unity".

It was a dramatic turnaround for a strongman who has made Arab unity his political touchstone since the 1860s. And Gadhafi did more than talk.. Libya's government eliminated its Ministry for Arab Unity. State television removed the map of the Arab world that has been its backdrop since 1969, replacing it with a map of the African continent.

"I would like Libya to become a black country. Hence, I recommend to Libyan men to marry only black women and to Libyan women to marry black men", Gadhafi said...

... Diplomatic sources here believe that Gadhafi wants the trial of ... Megrahi and ... Fhimah to go forward - but under the Libyan leader's terms... In spite of Gadhafi's irritation with Arabs, the 22-member Arab League is trying to act as intermediary to address Gadhafi's concerns. ...Gadhafi's switch to Pan-Africanism, however, has tended only to alienate his old friends. Gadhafi is wrong to ignore all that Arabs have done to support him, wrote Talman Salman, publisher of Beirut's As Safir, "Gadhafi's Feeling from the Arab World does neither the Arabs nor Libya any good".

(John Daniszewski in The Los Angeles Times, Washington Post News Service)

Mazar-e-Sharif Massacre in Afghanistan by Taliban

... What unfolded in Mazar on Saturday, August 8, and in the days that followed, was slaughter of a scale and brutality without precedent in 20 years of turmoil in Afghanistan. It has brought West Asia face to face with the prospect of wider war and a spreading virus of Shia-Sunni violence. The truth was slow to reach the outside world. The sole foreign reporter in the city, Iranian Mahmud Saremi, was shot dead with eight diplomats by men the Taliban leadership later described as "renegades". Then, ominously, the radical Sunni militia imposed a news blackout ...

Drawn from eyewitness accounts from all the city's racial groups - Hazara, Uzbek, Tajik and Pushtun - their picture is of an officially directed ethnic pogrom in which as many as 6,000 may have been butchered. One senior U.N. official sees "echoes of Srebrenica", the Bosnian "safe-haven" where in July 1995 the Serb military systematically slaughtered thousands of unarmed Muslim males...

No one will ever know how many innocents died in the rape of Mazar. The Taliban certainly were not counting and if they had been would not be telling. Today a traumatized city is liming back to a semblance of normality, though half of its shops are still shuttered.

For its surviving Shia population, many still cowering in their homes, the message has been unambiguous. Their mosques have been closed. And in ranting speeches broadcast on radio, Taliban commissar Niazi has set forth three stark choices: convert to Sunni Islam, go to Shia Iran or die. As they promised in 1995, the Taliban have indeed brought to a once vibrant city the twin blessings of Islam and peace - the twisted Islam of the sectarian bigot and the peace of the dead.

(Source: Michael Winchester in Asiaweek, 6 November, 1998)

China: Demolition of Historic Mosque

The Imperial City mosque in Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, with a history going back 332 years, was destroyed on 22 November 1998 by the authorities despite strenuous efforts by the local Muslim community to preserve it as (a) national cultural heritage. According to a 'report in the International Herald Tribune of 18 December, 'scores of workers and police officers converged on the site in a swift, nighttime raid on November 22 and destroyed the classical wooden' mosque.

The surreptitious manner of this act of sacrilege and vandalism was because Muslims had been trying to rally support to preserve the mosque which was built in 1666, but which had now become valuable real estate...

... The authorities are pretending that the place of worship had been relocated. Most Muslims have rejected this inane attempt to placate them...

(Source: The Impact International, January, 1999)

USA: International Religious Foundation Act, 1998

On 27 October 1998, the International Religious Foundation Act of 1998 (passed by the US Congress on 27 January, 1998) came into force. The Act mandates the US to take cognizance of violation of religious freedom in foreign countries and to negotiate with such countries and penalize them with measure's commensurate with the severity of the violation. Important excerpts are reproduced – Editor.

An Act: To express United States foreign policy with respect to, and to strengthen United States advocacy on behalf of, individuals persecuted in foreign countries on account of religion; to authorize United States actions in response to violations of religious freedom in foreign countries; to establish an Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom within the Department State, a Commission on International Religious Freedom, and a Special Adviser on International Religious Freedom within the National Security Council; and for other purposes.

SEC. 2 FINDINGS; POLICY

(a) FINDINGS – Congress makes the following findings;

- (1) The right to freedom of religion undergirds the very origin and existence of the United States. Many of our nation's founders fled religious persecution abroad, cherishing in their hearts and mind the ideal of religious freedom. They established in law, as a fundamental right and as a pillar of our Nation, the right to freedom of religion. From its birth to this day, the United States has prized this legacy of religious freedom and honored this heritage by standing for religious freedom and offering refuge to those suffering religious persecution.
- (2) Freedom of religious belief and practice is a universal human right and fundamental freedom articulated in numerous international instruments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Helsinki Accords, the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, the United Nations Charter and the European Convention for the protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.
- (3) Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that 'Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. This right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance'. Article 18(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights recognizes that 'Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in

public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice, and teaching'. Governments have the responsibility to protect the fundamental rights of their citizens and to pursue justice for all. Religious freedom is a fundamental right of every individual, regardless of race, sex, country, creed, or nationality and should never be arbitrarily abridged by any government.

- (4) The right to freedom of religion is under renewed and, in some cases, increasing assault in many countries around the world. More than one-half of the world's population lives under regimes that severely restrict or prohibit the freedom of their citizens to study, believe, observe and freely practice the religious faith of their choice. Religious believers and communities suffer both government-sponsored and government-tolerated violations of their rights to religious freedom. Among the many forms of such violations are state-sponsored slander campaigns, confiscations of property, surveillance by security police, including by special divisions of 'religious police', severe prohibitions against construction and repair of places of worship, denial of the right to assemble and relegation of religious communities to illegal status through arbitrary registration laws, prohibitions against the pursuit of education or public office, and prohibitions against publishing, distributing, or possessing religious literature and materials.
- (5) Even more abhorrent, religious believers in many countries face such severe and violent forms of religious persecution as detention, torture, beatings, forced marriage, rape, imprisonment, enslavement, mass resettlement, and death merely for the peaceful belief in, change of or practice of faith. In many countries, religious believers are forced to meet secretly, and religious leaders are targeted by national security forces and hostile mobs.
- (6) Though not confined to a particular region or regime, religious persecution is often particularly widespread, systematic, and heinous under totalitarian governments and in countries with militant, politicized religious majorities. ...
- (b) **POLICY** – It shall be the policy of the United States, as follows:
 - (1) To condemn violations of religious freedom, and to promote, and to assist other governments in the promotion of, the fundamental right to freedom of religion.
 - (2) To seek to channel United States security and

INTERNATIONAL ACTION

development assistance to governments other than those found to be engaged in gross violations of the right to freedom of religion, as set forth in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, in the International Financial Institutions Act of 1977, and in other formulations of United States human rights policy.

- (3) To be vigorous and flexible, reflecting both the unwavering commitment of the United States to religious freedom and the desire of the United States for the most effective and principled response, in light of the range of violations of religious freedom by a variety of persecuting regimes, and the status of the relations of the United States with different nations.
- (4) To work with foreign governments that affirm and protect religious freedom, in order to develop multilateral documents and initiatives to combat violations of religious freedom and promote the right to religious freedom abroad.
- (5) Standing for liberty and standing with the persecuted, to use and implement appropriate tools in the United States foreign policy apparatus, including diplomatic, political, commercial, charitable, educational and cultural channels, to promote respect for religious freedom by all governments and peoples. ...

TITLE I – DEPARTMENT OF STATE ACTIVITIES

- Sec. 101. Office on International Religious Freedom; Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom.
- Sec. 102. Reports.
- Sec. 103. Establishment of a religious freedom Internet site.
- Sec. 104. Training for Foreign Service officers.
- Sec. 105. High-level contacts with non-governmental organizations.
- Sec. 106. Programs and allocations of funds by United States missions abroad.
- Sec. 107. Equal access to United States missions abroad for conducting religious activities.
- Sec. 108. Prisoner lists and issue briefs on religious freedom concerns.

TITLE II – COMMISSION ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

- Sec. 201. Establishment and composition.
- Sec. 202. Duties of the Commission.
- Sec. 203. Report of the Commission.
- Sec. 204. Applicability of other laws.
- Sec. 205. Authorization of appropriations.
- Sec. 206. Termination.

TITLE III – NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

- Sec. 301. Special Adviser on International Religious Freedom.

TITLE IV – PRESIDENTIAL ACTIONS

Subtitle – I – Targeted Responses to Violations of Religious Freedom Abroad

- Sec. 401. Presidential actions in response to violations of religious freedom.
- Sec. 402. Presidential actions in response to particularly

severe violations of religious freedom.

- Sec. 403. Consultations.
- Sec. 404. Report to Congress.
- Sec. 405. Description of Presidential actions.
- Sec. 406. Effects on existing contracts.
- Sec. 407. Presidential waiver.
- Sec. 408. Publication in Federal Register.
- Sec. 409. Termination of Presidential actions.
- Sec. 410. Preclusion of judicial review.

Subtitle II – Strengthening Existing Law

- Sec. 421. United States assistance.
- Sec. 422. Multilateral assistance.
- Sec. 423. Exports of certain items used in particularly severe violations of religious freedom.

TITLE V – PROMOTION OF RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

- Sec. 501. Assistance for promoting religious freedom.
- Sec. 502. International broadcasting.
- Sec. 503. International exchanges.
- Sec. 504. Foreign Service awards.

TITLE VI – REFUGEE, ASYLUM AND CONSULAR MATTERS³

- Sec. 601. Use of Annual Report.
- Sec. 602. Reform of refugee policy.
- Sec. 603. Reform of asylum policy.
- Sec. 604. Inadmissibility of foreign government officials who have engaged in particularly severe violations of religious freedom.

TITLE VII – MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

- Sec. 701. Business Codes of conduct.

US Policy towards Taliban Regime

... The irony of the Sudan and Afghanistan strikes was not lost on anyone. The USA was attacking a man, Osama bin Laden, with whom they till recently had shared interests, at least in Afghanistan. And he was under the protection of a force, the Taliban, in whose creation the US had a big hand. Things have got complicated in the post-Cold War period, with the US still groping for a foe. Could it be Islam?

In fact, Washington has often backed the wrong horse or supported questionable regimes ... in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Does this qualify as hypocrisy?... From the end of World War II to the collapse of communism, the US waged a relentless battle against communist and left wing governments. American commitment was less to democracy, more to regimes ... as long as they were against communism, it didn't matter what crimes these regimes committed against their own people...

... On the US' initial support of the Taliban in Afghanistan despite their record of human rights violations and treatment of women, (the State Department) prefers to keep mum...

(Source: The Outlook, 28 September, 1998)

Chronology of the Month

(16 December, 1998 – 16 January, 1999)

NATIONAL POLITICS

Congress: *AICC approves Sonia Gandhi's proposal for 33 per cent reservation for women and 20 per cent for OBC, SC, ST and Minorities in all party posts and gives her a free hand to reconstitute the Congress bodies to the State level (18 Dec). Outlines strategy of striving for power on its own.

*Sonia Gandhi flays Sangh Parivar as intolerant and communal but relates Secularism to Hindu tolerance (12 Jan).

*Bihar Congress sharply criticises Laloo Yadav (15 Jan).

*Congress leader G.N. Azad accuses DMK Government of harassing Muslims in Tamilnadu (14 Jan).

Sangh Parivar: RSS: *'Chintan Baithak' considers dialogue with Muslims and Christians. Criticises BJP Government for anti-people policies (20 Dec).

*Dr. A.P.J. Kalam inaugurates golden jubilee session of ABVP, student's wing of RSS. Those present include Wahiddudin Khan (25 Dec).

*Farooq Abdullah gives clean chit to RSS and advises Muslims not to treat it as untouchable or as adversary (10 Jan).

*Bajrang Dal attacks egg-sellers, liquor shops and brothels in Gujarat (20 Dec).

BJP: *National Executive meets in Bangalore (3 Jan). Uneasy relationship between RSS and BJP revealed.

*Vajpayee asserts himself and gains free hand (3 Jan).

Shiv Sena: Derecognition demanded for misuse of Shiva for political gain (21 Dec).

Samajwadi Party: *S.P. President Mulayam Singh blames Congress for rise of BJP and declares it enemy No.1 (16 Dec). Rules out alliance or tie-up with Congress (22 Dec). Accuses Congress of being hand-in-glove with BJP (27 Dec). Demands inclusion of RJD (Laloo) in Third Front (10 Jan).

Left Parties: *CPM suggests Third Front without 'discredited' constituents of United Front (13 Jan).

RPI: *National Convention appeals to all democratic and secular parties to defeat communal forces (28 Dec).

BSP: V.P. Mayawati intends to contest all UP seats, when election is held (10 Jan).

AGP: C.M. Patnaik denies tilt towards BJP or Congress (31 Dec).

NATIONAL ISSUES

Reservation for Women in Legislature: *MOS Uma Bharti insists on 50% quota for OBC's, SC and ST (2 Jan).

*SC/ST Parliamentary Forum opposes Bill in present form; demands SC and ST sub-quotas (17 Dec).

*Shahabuddin reiterates demand for sub-quota for Muslim women.

Human Rights: *UP, Bihar and Haryana refuse to set up State Human Rights Commissions. Only 8 States have such Commission at present (22 Dec).

Education: *Association of Indian Universities expresses concern at erosion of autonomy of universities by statutory bodies like A.I. Council for Technical Education (22 Dec).

Small States: *Bills on Uttaranchal and Chhattisgarh tabled in Lok Sabha (22 Dec). Vananchal (Jharkhand) Bill also tabled (23 Dec). Demands for Vidarbha, Bodoland and

Andaman voiced in Lok Sabha.

*Congress leader Scindia supports Jharkhand Bill (14 Jan).

Armed Forces: *Chief of Naval Staff Bhagwat sacked unceremoniously (30 Dec). Move widely criticised. Government fails to produce credible reasons; Defence Minister announces restructuring of Ministry.

Corruption: Fodder Scam: *Former Director CBI Joginder Singh raps ex P.M. Gujral for shielding Laloo Prasad Yadav (13 Dec). *Mishra granted bail by S.C. (18 Dec).

Terrorism: *Car bomb explodes in Guwahati, near CM's office; 8 killed (18 Dec).

*ULFA blows up Assam Police jeep; 10 killed.

Electoral Reforms: *Bill for proxy voting by defence personnel tabled. *CEC Gill appeals for top priority to delimitation. *High Power Committee suggests State funding of elections (14 Jan).

Infiltration: *In a deliberate move to revive Foreigner's Issue Assam Governor Sinha raises bogey of Bangladeshi immigrants taking over NE India in report to President (16 Dec). Leaked Report creates furor; divides Assam on predictable lines (17 Dec). Assam Congress demands recall of Governor (26 Dec).

*BJP President endorses Governor and wants repeal of IMDT Act (27 Dec). *Central Government actively considers repeal of IMDT Act (12 Jan), JUH, Milli Council and UMF, oppose repeal (28 Dec).

*SC demands status report on Bangladeshi immigrants from Centre and W. Bengal (24 Dec).

Anti-Christian Violence: Fresh explosion of anti-Christian violence in Gujarat on Christmas (25 Dec). Churches and schools attacked in the Dangs. Gujarat Government looks the other way (28 Dec). Centre asks for report. 2 more Churches burnt. Central Government dispatches study team (29 Dec). More violence in Gujarat; Central Team blames Sangh Parivar outfits and local officials (31 Dec). PM visits Dangs (10 Jan). Violence continues in Gujarat (11 Jan). Bishops appeal to President (13 Jan).

*Congress condemns anti-Christian violence. Asks VHP to withdraw anti-Sonia remarks (28 Dec). Blames BJP and Vajpayee Government (29 Dec). Expresses disappointment with Government's response. Calls Sangh Parivar fascist (30 Dec). Congress leaders accuse VHP of terrorising minorities (2 Jan).

*TDP and Left condemn VHP's remark against Mother Teresa and Amartya Sen (28 Dec).

*National Commission for Minorities summons Chief Secretary and DGP Gujarat for failure to protect Christians (28 Dec). Recommends invoking Article 355 in Gujarat (11 Jan).

Conversion: *VHP announces 3-year plan to reconvert non-Hindus to Hinduism in 200 districts (24 Dec).

*VHP charges and Sonia Gandhi with backing anti-Hindu Christian for building vote bank (29 Dec).

*VHP seeks ban on conversion (12 Jan).

*PM calls for debate on conversion (10 Jan). BJP supports PM (11 Jan). Some Christian leaders welcome PM's calls. Congress and left reject call as irrelevant and diversionary

CHRONOLOGY

(11 Jan). Sangh Parivar decides to keep issue alive (12 Jan).

*Congress suggests reference to Supreme Court; BJP rejects (13 Jan).

*Congress leader Shukla decries conversion of tribals to Christianity (14 Jan).

*While Vajpayee distances himself from VHP's anti-Christian move, Mahajan supports VHP on missionaries (30 Dec).

*Janata Party leader Swamy demands dismissal of Gujarat Government (1 Jan).

*Lok Shakti chief Hegde condemns VHP and Bajrang Dal (1 Jan). *RLM urges President to dismiss Gujarat Government (12 Jan).

*RSS Chief condemns attacks on Churches but blames Christians for provocation. *RSS and VHP dissociate from Hindu Jagran Manch and demand judicial probe (2 Jan).

*BJP MP seeks White Paper on Missionaries.

*VHP admits reconversion of 500 tribals in Dangs (13 Jan).

Foreign Reaction: *VHP president meets US Ambassador and Canadian High Commissioner (12 Jan).

*BJP objects to foreign comments (13 Jan).

BABARI MASJID QUESTION

VHP: *Board of Trustees decides to defer fixation of date of commencement of construction of proposed Mandir to Dharam Sansad scheduled for 5-7 February in Ahmedabad (30 Dec).

*Singhal reiterates VHP not bound by any judicial verdict (30 Dec).

Government: *Home Minister suggests reference to Supreme Court to decide question of prior existence of temple on Babari Masjid site, in light of observations of Imam of Haram Sharif (16 Dec).

KASHMIR QUESTION

Political: *Hurriyat reiterates its will to fight to logical conclusion (22 Dec).

*Shabbir Shah contacts Kashmiri Pandit leaders in Delhi to pave way for return to Valley (11 Jan).

*10 parties and groups in POK issued joint declaration to continue struggle (2 Jan).

Militancy: *Army finds no evidence of Taliban's or Osama bin Laden's involvement in Valley (1 Jan).

Pakistan: *Lashkar-e-Tayyaba calls for 'Jihad' and 'Ittehad' and opposes reference to UN, dominated by the USA (11 Jan).

*Pakistan Information Minister considers Pakistan incomplete without Kashmir (28 Dec).

UK: *Some British MP's calls on UNSG to appoint Special Representative for Kashmir (23 Dec).

OTHER MATTER OF CONCERN

Ban on Film: *Naib Imam Jama Masjid Delhi criticises Dilip Kumar and Shabana Azmi for approaching Supreme Court in favour of film 'Fire' (17 Dec). Tanzeem Allah-o-Akbar, Bombay demands ban (21 Dec).

Vande Mataram Controversy: *MOS Naqvi condemns opposition to Saraswati Vandana and Vande Mataram (20 Dec).

*Justice Krishna Iyer suggests reciting Preamble of Constitution rather than Saraswati Vandana (27 Dec).

*Haryana BJP proposes making Vandana and Vande Mataram compulsory in schools (23 Dec).

Minorities Commission: *NCM organises Minorities Rights Day with ex-President S.D. Sharma as Chief Guest to mark the 6th anniversary of UN Declaration (19 Dec).

*Seeks minority status for Hindus in 6 States including J&K and Punjab (13 Jan).

AMU: *HRD Minister Joshi breaks impasse. Mediates agreement between VC and junior doctors. Agitation called off following VC's agreement to dissolve ad hoc Students Union, hold Union election, withdraw personal action against doctors and settle criminal cases in their favour (23 Dec). Ad hoc Union dissolved (27 Dec).

Education: *W. Bengal decides to reintroduce English from primary level (21 Dec).

Urdu: *International Seminar on Ghalib concludes. Ex-PM Gujarat and CM Sheila Dixit address concluding Session (15 Dec). *Urdu University, Hyderabad, observes Foundation Day (12 Jan).

Communal Violence: *Communal clash in Suratkal near Mangalore; Karnataka Government blames VHP and Bajrang Dal. 7 killed (30 Dec). Violence affects to Mangalore (3 Jan).

*Nikhraail Massacre (Santhal vs Muslim) raised in Lok Sabha, Home Minister promise amendment in Land Reform Act, if necessary (21 Dec).

*Communal clash in Amod (Broach, Gujarat). 2 killed (30 Dec).

Wakf: *Delhi Wakf Board faces financial crisis (12 Jan).

Iftar Parties: *President, Vice-President, PM, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and leaders of various political parties host Iftar during Ramazan. Media link it to competition for Muslim votes

Commemoration: *Bajrang Dal decides to disrupt official observance of bi-centenary of Tipu Sultan's martyrdom (29 Dec).

*Delhi CM Dixit announces development scheme for Dargah Nizamuddin (16 Dec).

Obituary: *Eminent author Ma'el Khairabadi, 86, passes away in Rampur (18 Dec).

Indo-Pakistan Relations: *Shiv Sena 'impose' ban on Pakistan cricket team; Shiv Sainiks dig up pitch in Bombay and Delhi. Thackeray rejects PM's appeal (13 Jan).

*Pakistan-India People's Forum for Peace and Harmony condemns Shiv Sena for obstruction to reconciliation (11 Jan). *70 prominent citizens of India and Pakistan appeals for sincere dialogue for settlement of Kashmir problem (16 Dec).

*PM of POK demands severing cultural and trade ties with India (12 Jan).

Muslim World: Iraq: *Left Parties condemn US-UK air strikes against Iraq. PM Vajpayee condemns attack in Parliament (17 Dec). *AIMMM and JIH condemn attack.

Kosovo: *OSCE threatens to reconsider monitoring mission, if Serb repression and Albanian terrorism continue (28 Dec).

Pakistan: *Military courts in Karachi sentence MQM workers to death.

*European Parliament condemns Pakistan for violation of human rights and treatment of minorities. Calls for rejecting Shariat Bill (20 Dec).

*Tehrik-e-Jafaria Pakistan withdraws support to Nawaz Sharif Government (14 Jan).