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Muslim India, 1995

The year 1995 was a period of re-awakening, of stock-taking and of re-evaluation by Muslim Indians of their situation and of identification of friends and foes, of those who are sympathetic to their legitimate interests and aspirations and those hostile thereto.

The political system also began a serious assessment of the mood of Muslim Indians in the context of the general elections due in the first half of 1996, of the various intellectual and political initiatives taken since late 1994 within the community which have served to create an environment of hope, dissipating the dark clouds of despair which had gathered on their mental horizon in the aftermath of the demolition of the Babri Masjid and which had in turn given rise to feelings of self-pity, mutual recrimination and passive inaction, as if the sky had fallen.

The revival of the community within three years into self-confidence and its healthy distrust of traditional suitors indicate a level of maturity, not attained since Partition, in facing the many ups and downs in its fortunes and the many turns and twists on its path. Today the arena of action by opportunist brokers appears to have been limited; the chance of the community being hijacked by political adventurers is much less. Its euphoria for the secular forces and its dislike for the communal forces have been tempered with realism and appreciation of the ground reality that it constitutes a permanent minority and that while the permanent majority cannot wish it away, neither can the secular parties, not even the left parties, come to its rescue and support it or protect its interests at the cost of losing the Hindu votes. So it has dawned on it that its survival in its homeland in dignity and equality calls for better skills, superior public relations, wider political contacts, increasing intellectual input and less emotionalism and even less sentimentalism than has hitherto been exhibited.

Political Field: The Sangh Parivar

Not surprisingly, the year 1995 was marked by show of concern for the Muslim community by the Sangh Parivar itself while its various constituents continued to play its old game of Muslim-baiting and to propagate its ideology of Hindutva, which by definition excludes Muslims and other religious minorities from full participation on terms of equality in the affairs of state and the management of society. Perhaps old habits and ingrained attitudes die hard. Perhaps the show of concern was an exercise in opportunism and hypocrisy. In any case the Sangh Parivar, particularly its political arm, the BJP, did not succeed in convincing any sizeable section of the community of its bonafides and the genuineness of its new-found love, when on all fronts it continued to inject venom in the body-politic and press into service

Sants, Mahants and Shankaracharyas, Sadhus and Sadhvis to promote the message of Hindu Rashtravad, not so much to consolidate the Hindus or to reform Hindu society, but to prepare them psychologically and physically for the inevitable and eventual 'final solution'.

These tactics came into the open after the BJP-Shiv Sena came to power in Maharashtra. This 'Hindu' Government took one step after another to translate its long-held ideas into reality: it abolished the Minorities Commission; it reduced the grant to the Urdu Academy and Urdu institutions; it adopted a 'uniform civil code', albeit for the State of Maharashtra; it re-named many public places including Aurangabad, a city founded by Emperor Aurangzeb; it sabotaged and finally abolished the Shri Krishna Commission of Inquiry charged with investigation into the Bombay disturbances of December 1992--March 1993, which was not less than an organised war by the Shiv Sena against the Muslim community with the support of the local police. No doubt it also made some gestures like permitting the Muslims to spread out of their mosques on Fridays, to build up a friendly relationship between the police and the community or to allow the use of loudspeakers for azaan. But it did not fulfil its promise of permitting the construction of multistorey mosques nor did it open the doors of the police force to the community.

The BJP continued to put forward a double face, projecting Advani and Vajpayee alternately with the old tunes of 'cultural nationalism' and 'minority appeasement' playing in the background. The problem with the BJP lies in the fact that its support base has reached a plateau and for its final assault on the peak of power it needs that extra bounce. So it must try to attract all possible votes, including the Muslim, disenchanted with the Congress and the secular parties. Perhaps it wishes to take advantage of the opportunism and naivete which still persist in a section of the Muslim community.

Congress: Religious Web

The Congress has also been trying hard through assorted brokers including a Hindu astrologer, some Imams, some Qazis and some Maulanas to regain Muslim support. But it has not resolved the old dilemma. Can it afford to lose Hindu votes in order to gain Muslim votes? The dilemma in fact freezes it into public inaction while continuing with private subversion on the false premise that the Muslim clergy, such as it is, can be bought and depended upon to deliver the goods. It seems that despite age and experience the Congress is still infantile in its approach, obsessed with the modalities it experimented with unsuccessfully, as history shows, during 1937-47. During 1995 it tried not only to come to terms with the Bukharis, but also courted the Deobandi ulema and, what

Muslim India, 1995

1995 was a period of re-awakening, of re-evaluation by Muslim Indians of their identification by friends and foes, of pathetic to their legitimate interests and hostile thereto. They also began a serious assessment in the first half of 1996, of the political initiatives taken since the community which have served to hope, dissipating the dark and gathered on their mental : the demolition of the Babri in given rise to feelings of and passive inaction, as if within three years into distrust of traditional, not attained since and downs in its on its path. Today rs appears to have community being much less. Its s dislike for with realism constitutes a permanent e secular rescue and ing the l in its kills, cts, and d. wishes to take advantage of the opposition which still persist in a section of the Congress: Religious Web

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The BJP continued to put Indians have grown up and projecting Advani and Vajpayee even by the show of support tunes of 'cultural national esri with Tariq Anwar and with the BJP lies in the fact that the person of Narasimha Rao reached a plateau and for its final political fact, primarily because all possible votes, including the destruction of the Babri Masjid with the Congress and the secular like a massive jump in the Haj wishes to take advantage of the opposition, the expiry of TADA and the Congress: Religious Web

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the economic and educational cross-tabulations, remained locked up five years after the census. Coaching facilities have been budgeted but the funds have remained unutilized. Access to Government service, whether it was the cadre of the IAS and the IPS or the post of constable or peon, remained barred. A National Council for Development of Urdu and a National Committee to Monitor Education of the Minorities have been formed but exist on paper while Urdu-speaking students have been denied the facility of receiving their primary education through the medium of their mother-tongue or even of learning their mother-tongue upto high-school level, even in the school systems which function directly under the Centre. TADA has expired but TADA cases remain. What the Muslim community, therefore, sees is motion but no movement, hollow promises and empty gestures but no concrete results.

Communal Violence

The respite in communal violence noted in 1994 thankfully continued during 1995 but nothing was done to relieve the underlying tension or to establish a dialogue. The community remains in a state of siege: insecure, fearful and apprehensive of a sudden explosion. These tensions in the body-politic can be eased only by a well-structured dialogue leading to mutual acceptance, by strict application of the Rule of Law on the basis of a National Code for Minorities, and through the practice of the principles of secularism in all state activities. On the other hand, the Government has allowed Indo-Pakistan relations to cast their shadow over inter-community relations within by permitting the publication of exaggerated reports about the ISI network penetrating and operating through the madarsas, masjids, and mohallas. Such propaganda serves only to feed hostility and hatred and to sharpen the image of Muslim Indians as Pakistani agents, despite the fact that the muhajirs who are of Indian origin continue to face not just rough weather but fire and blood in the streets of Karachi.

Personal Law

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board failed to regain its stature in the community; its biennial meeting in Ahmedabad during 1995 was a routine event and did not achieve any significant results; it only reiterated the old, largely unimplemented, programmes. It failed particularly to take due notice of the rising consensus in the Muslim community on the questions of triple talaq and unbridled polygamy. While it reacted strongly to any move towards the uniform civil code, it failed to take notice of the healthy development which made women's organisations review their strategy and give priority to the reform of the Muslim Personal Law, and other personal laws, over introduction of a uniform civil code. The Board did not lend support to the formulation of a standard nikahnama which would secure the rights of Muslim women in the Indian context. However, the

Government for its own reasons, but perhaps also due to fear of further alienation of the Muslim community, stood up to the pressures of the Supreme Court for expeditious introduction of a uniform civil code. These two developments may provide the time needed for the crystallization of an internal consensus within the community into much needed legislation.

Educational Progress

The tempo of educational endeavour further picked up, though the Supreme Court failed to make any pronouncement on the issues pending before it relating to the scope and application of Article 30. Muslim educational institutions, therefore, continued to be forced into setting aside 50% of their capacity for 'other' students. They were also obliged to apply for and obtain prior approval of the Government as well as the affiliating/examining bodies before establishing institutions of their choice as a matter of constitutional right, which thus stands substantially eroded.

The Aligarh Muslim University despite assumption of office by the new Vice Chancellor faced a difficult situation during the year and it had to be closed down following a spell of disorder orchestrated by the campus mafia which having lost the Patronage was trying to overawe the new Vice-Chancellor into 'cooperation'. The fact however remains that the AMU has lost touch with the community and the campus is divided into hostile camps. The Court and the Executive Council did not meet and the University functioned under the emergency powers of the Vice-Chancellor, which is extended to the ludicrous limit of his own approval of his own Annual Reports and Annual Accounts before submission to the Government!

Economic Status

There was no marked improvement in the economic status of the community. The credit floor, even at the rural level, remained constricted. Official institutions under the Ministry of Welfare, namely, the Minorities Commission, the Central Wakf Council, the Maulana Azad Educational Foundation and the Minorities Finance and Development Corporation continued to plod their weary way with half-hearted steps and did not make any significant contribution to the development and progress of the community at the national level.

It is a significant fact that ever since the establishment of the Minorities Commission in 1977-78 and the announcement of the 15-Point Programme in 1983, the Parliament has not found the time to discuss the status of the minorities or the Annual Reports of the Commission, largely due to the very low priority accorded by successive governments and perhaps because of their apprehension of embarrassment if their inaction over half a century after Independence became widely known.

Muslim Organisations

At long last, the All India Muslim Majlis-e-Mushawarat, which had become almost totally defunct was revived with the election of new office bearers in October 1995 by a partially reconstituted Central Majlis. But since then the Mushawarat has relapsed into stupor and even its Central Working Committee has not been constituted or held its first meeting.

Babri Masjid Movement

The Babri Masjid movement, including the Babri Masjid Committee formed by the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, showed some signs of life from time to time even as the issue continues to throb in Muslim hearts. The BMMCC, the AIBMAC and the AIMPLB BMC jointly organised a massive public rally in Hyderabad to mark the anniversary of the introduction of idols in December 1949. This was the high point of the year. It revived the hope of unity, so that both on the political as well as the legal front the issue could be kept alive and that the judicial proceedings before the Supreme Court and the Special Bench of the Allahabad High Court, the criminal case before the Special Court and the inquiry before the Commission could be well handled.

Towards the 1996 Test

As the General Election approaches one notices an upsurge in the community: there is assertion and articulation but there is little organization and less guidance. There is a mushroom growth of Parties, Committees, Councils and Tanzims, each financed by someone behind the scene, each loyal to its political mentor. The so-called Muslim leadership is thus in a state of fragmentation, and the community in a state of bewilderment. Perhaps the masses, with their survival instinct, may act unitedly, even if the so-called leadership is engaged in mutual recrimination. Thus a new leadership may emerge from the village/mohalla, block/town, district/constituency levels.

The Muslim Indian has learnt by experience. As 1996 opens, he recognizes his genuine friends and he is not likely to be taken in by his foes, nor prepared to be exploited, as peaceful co-existence and social harmony must be based on just and acceptable ground rules. In 1996, the Muslim Indian who is beginning to come out of his state of siege will face the real test of his foresight, of his intelligence, of his goodwill towards his neighbours, of his unquestionable loyalty to his 'Watan' and of the depth of his commitment to Democracy, Secularism and Social Justice. The Muslim Indian is looking for the Secular Alternative beyond the Saffron and the Pale Saffron.



New Delhi
1 March, 1996

(SYED SHAHABUDDIN)

Eminent Jurist Nani A. Palkhivala on Hindutva Judgement

It is unfortunate that while our Supreme Court has rendered signal service to the nation on a number of occasions, it has at the same time given occasional judgements, as regards both casteism and secularism, which are not merely erroneous but contrary to the basic structure of the Constitution.

In December 1995, came the judgement of the Supreme Court in Manohar Joshi's case which was ... against the basic scheme of the Constitution. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan had summarised the fundamental principle of our Constitution in the following words: "The Indian state will not identify itself with or be controlled by any particular religion".

The judgement of the three judges last month has upset the well-settled law on the point. The three-judge Bench virtually abolished the distinction between sublime Hinduism as understood for thousands of years and Hindutva, the pernicious doctrine evolved against Mahatma Gandhi's advice by the Hindu Mahasabha in 1924. The great jubilation in the BJP and the Shiv Sena camps over that judgement is misconceived.

The law of India is to be gathered not from any single judgement of the apex court but by reading the various judgements of that court together. In case after case the Supreme Court has reaffirmed that the concept of secular democracy is the very basis of our Constitution and the separateness of religion from politics has been repeatedly emphasised.

The Bench of three judges was clearly bound by the law as laid down in Bommai's case where nine judges reiterated the principle that secularism is the cardinal basic principle of the Indian Constitution; and that mingling of religion with politics is unconstitutional. The nine-judge Bench attached such supreme importance to this principle that they went to the extreme length of upholding the President's Proclamations under Article 356 declaring that the BJP governments in Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, should be unseated because the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh had been involved in the demolition of the mosque at Ayodhya.

The Constitution which provides for a secular democracy remains unamended. The view that the latest judgement of the Supreme Court has changed the law is wholly untenable. India was a secular democracy and it continues to remain, emphatically, a secular democracy.

Mr. Manohar Joshi said in one of his speeches that "the first Hindu state will be established in Maharashtra". Justice Verma held it not to amount to a corrupt practice on the ground that it was "only the expression, at best, of a hope". Whether it was a hope or the expression of the policy of the government, it clearly amounted to mingling religion with politics. One can understand the desire of

countless Hindus to have a Hindu Rashtra - a Hindu state; but a little thought would show that it would be against pure Hinduism which believes that noble thoughts should come to us from every side. Fanaticism or fundamentalism is basically alien to Hindu dharma.

If you want to introduce Hindutva or Hindu raj, you cannot do it by amending the Constitution since the basic feature of the Constitution cannot be amended, having regard to Kesavananda's case (AIR 1973 SC 1461). And nothing would be more dangerous than to try to draft a new Constitution. It would be the surest way of disintegrating and dismembering India. Is there any sensible citizen who thinks that Hindutva is a fair price to pay for the disintegration....

To say that Hindutva does not involve religious bigotry is wholly irrelevant. The question is very simple. Admittedly, you cannot ask for votes on the ground of religion. Can you get over the prohibition by invoking the same grounds masquerading as Indian culture? If an appeal to Hinduism constitutes a corrupt practice under the election law, can you achieve the same result by appealing to Hindutva? The question is not one of semantics. No amount of learned discussion as to what constitutes Hindutva can help to solve the problem. As has been decided in a number of English cases, the question is - what would the man in the Clapham omnibus think? Indian languages are sufficiently unambiguous to enable us to choose the right words if we sincerely desire to be unambiguous. After all, one should be sincere with one's self before one can be sincere with the world.

When Dr. K.M. Munshi the greatest exponent of Indian culture wanted to start an institution to propagate Indian culture, he had no difficulty in selecting the name of the institution which is even today the home of all Indian religions - he called it the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

Confusion in the public mind regarding the election law is always undesirable. But it can be fatal at this juncture when national and state elections are in the offing. At this moment it would be disastrous for India to live under the shadow of uncertainty as to what the Constitution dictates. No one can deny that India has more than its fair share of fanatics and fundamentalists in public life. The country cannot afford to remain in the twilight of uncertainty as to the right interpretation of the Representation of the People Act.

The duty of the Chief Justice of India is plain and incontrovertible: He should form a Bench of nine or more judges, as soon as possible, to resolve the confusion created by the recent judgement of the three judges last month. ...

(Source: The Times of India, 5 February, 1996)

Kuldip Nayar on Hindutva Judgement

... The fact is that Hinduism is a religion. It is the faith which 82 per cent of Indians follow. They have their own beliefs like the transmigration of soul. They have their ways of worship and their own images and symbols. Religion is very much the path of Hindus' daily life.

During the census, Hindus are counted as such, a separate religious entity. The column for religion is in every form of application to which the government seeks answer. The word, Indian, will not be accepted in place of Hindu. It is like writing Islam in place of nationality.

The Constitution itself accepts Hinduism as a religious entity when it explains in Article 25: "... The reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jain or Buddhist religion, and the reference to Hindu religious (Italics are mine) institutions shall be construed accordingly." Again, when reservations for the Scheduled Castes were accepted, the Constitution makers were particular to give concessions only to the lowest caste, Harijans among the Hindus, not if and when they embraced another religion.

Indeed, the entire thrust of BJP's propaganda is that Hindutva is a cultural appellation because Hinduism stands for Indianism. If it is so, then why not replace Hindutva with *Bhartiyata*? This will be more in consonance with the secular polity that India is. The BJP is the *Bharatiya* Janata Party (Italics are mine), not *Hindutva* Janata Party.

The reasoning that Hinduism is equivalent to Indianism would have force if the minorities, constituting 18 per cent of the population, were to feel the same way. Do Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and Parsees believe that Hindutva is no more than a cultural entity? That is the test. In a pluralistic society, the minority is as much an integral part as the majority, the numbers do not matter.

All religions claim to be generous and accommodating. Hinduism is not superior to any other faith...

Perhaps Hindutva would have conveyed a different meaning if the country had not seen it in its true colours. In the name of Hindutva Babari Masjid, the symbol of our composite culture, was demolished. The votaries of Hindutva are still after the mosques in Varanasi and Mathura, where the two share the same premises with temples. They do not realise that Hinduism is accommodating, not destructive.

The intensity of communal violence has increased manifold from 1989 when the concept of Hindutva had begun to be re-emphasised...

Many things have happened (to smudge) the image of secularism... More recently, the telecast of the Ramayana

and the Mahabharata was questionable because the effort was to obliterate the distance between religion and culture. The state could not be a party to it.

Still more objectionable is the visit of President Shankar Dayal Sharma to Somnath temple to preside over the celebrations on its completion... Sardar Patel, then home minister who laid the foundation stone, was admonished by Mahatma Gandhi on his return. He told Patel that as home minister of a secular party, he should not have associated with the reconstruction of the temple.

The Supreme Court's definition of Hindutva has come at a time when secular forces in the country feel besieged. The BJP has already chalked out its strategy on how to use the judgement in support of its stance on Hindutva... There should be some way whereby the constitutional bench has a look at the verdict, which relates to secularism, a basic feature of the constitution.

(Source: The Nation and the World)

Savarkar's Definition of 'Hindu'

Apart from the religious aspect involved in the conception of the words 'Hindu' and 'Hinduism', Veer Savarkar had to coin some new words such as 'Hindutva', 'Hinduness', 'Hindudom' in order to express totality of the cultural, historical, and above all the national aspects along with the religious one, which mark out the Hindu People as a whole. The definition is not consequently meant to be a definition of Hindu Dharma, or Hindu religion. It is a definition of 'Hinduness'. It is essentially national in its outlook and comprehends the Hindu People as a Hindu-Rashtra-a Hindu State'.

(-Preface to V. D. Savarkar's *Hindutva: Who is a Hindu*, 1922)

Misinterpretation by Lohia and Chagla New Delhi, 4 March, 1966

... "that all those who live in India are Hindus. I would like to qualify this definition. I would say that those who lie in India, and are loyal and faithful to the motherland, are all Hindus, whatever their religion."

-R.M. Lohia

... I agree with Savarkar that all those who live in India are Hindus, whatever their religion. The word 'Hindu' has a connotation similar to that of 'Hindi' and 'Hindustan'. The connotation of Hindu should not be confused with that of Hindu dharma. ...

-M.C. Chagla

Kewal Verma on Hindutva Judgement

The observations made by a Delhi magistrate... while acquitting Sadhvi Rithambara who had been charged with making inflammatory speeches, is a significant event in the country's judicial history. The magistrate dismissed the prosecution charge that she was inciting the Hindus to shed their blood for a Ram temple in Ayodhya on the ground that Sadhvi Rithambara didn't say anything against the Muslims...

The Delhi magistrate obviously took a cue from the recent observations made by the Supreme Court in Manohar Joshi's case. The learned judges put their seal of approval on the concept of Hindutva. But they erred in one vital aspect. They believed Hindutva to be synonymous with Hinduism and Indianisation. Who would deny that Hinduism is a great religion, a tolerant religion? The learned judges have shown their scholarship by quoting various authorities on Hinduism. But the issue before them was not the nature of Hinduism, but Hindutva.

(What) the learned judges quoted... (do not) include the word "Hindutva", the word used is either Hindu or Hindu religion. The word "Hindutva" is a 20th century innovation. It is the politicisation of Hindu religion. The father of the concept of Hindutva was Veer Savarkar. According to his thesis for the Hindus, India (Bharat) is both a fatherland and a holy land. For Muslims, at best it could only be a fatherland, it is not their holy land. According to him, therefore, Muslims are less committed to India than Hindus who are more patriotic than the Muslims. A great interpreter of the concept of Hindutva was M.S. Golwalkar. He elaborated what Hindutva means in the following words:

"Non-Hindus may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment - not even citizen's rights" Thus, when the members of the Sangh Parivar or Shiv Sena use the term Hindutva, they mean what was spelt out by Savarkar and Golwalkar. This is also what ordinary politically-alive Indians understand from the word Hindutva.

What is more surprising is that the Supreme Court accepts that Hindutva and Indianisation are synonymous and to support their point of view the learned judges quoted one Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. "The word Hindutva is used and understood as a synonym of 'Indianisation', i.e. development of uniform culture by obliterating the differences between all the cultures coexisting in the country".

But the idea of attaining a uniform culture by obliterating the differences between cultures violates the spirit of the Constitution. Article 29 states: "Any section of the citizen residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script, or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve it". Obliterating cultural differences is a fascist concept. India's basic philosophy was best summed up by Jawaharlal Nehru:

'Unity in diversity'. Perhaps this is the most slippery part of the observations made by their lordships.

Furthermore... what the Supreme Court overlooked is who is using it and in what context. When Gandhiji said that he would like to establish Ram Raj, even his Hindu audience took it not as a Hindu Raj but as a just raj, an ethical raj. But when Rajiv Gandhi used the word Ram Raj while inaugurating his 1989 election campaign in Ayodhya, the audience responded with shouts of 'Har, Har Mahadev, Bolo Bajrang Bali Ki Jai', as they understood it to be Hindu raj.

Similarly, when those who condoned or participated in the demolition of the Babari Masjid talk of Hindutva, it produces an effect which incites anti-Muslim sentiments in a Hindu audience... It is not certain whether the judgement is a sign of the times and reflects the changed political values of the civil society or whether it is just an aberration. The Supreme Court's judgement is a signal to the lower courts to take a lenient view of communalisation of political campaigning.

Perhaps the Chief Justice (who was not on the bench which gave this judgement) had this danger in mind when... in a public speech, he said: "Secularism is the basic feature of our Constitution which cannot be permitted to be destroyed".

To retain faith in the Supreme Court as the last guardian of our secular Constitution, the whole question of use of religion in politics must be reconsidered by a Constitution bench which would apply its mind more vigorously and thoroughly to the question...

(Source: The Business Standard, 17 February, 1996)

Subhash Chandra Bose on Social Revolution

The Indian movement can be analysed under two aspects: 1) the (struggle) of national liberation... 2) the endeavour to create a new social order on the basis of social justice.

... We who are fighting for national freedom are not out to hand over our country to a small group of landowners. We are not fighting to substitute a brown bureaucracy for a white bureaucracy. We want to inaugurate a new social order where men will be free; caste, sex and wealth distinction must be abolished.

... It is ... difficult to create a new social order.

... The feeling is growing that the Nationalist Party should make its position clear with regard to the social question. ... The feeling is growing that the Indian National Congress should declare itself more explicitly on the side of the masses. The net result so far, of this criticism, has been that within the Nationalist Party people are beginning to think more on the social question - we are moving in the direction of socialism.

(Address in Paris, 17 March, 1936)

PUCL: Report on 1989 Bhagalpur Riots

Conclusion

Official response in the aftermath of a riot thus follows a two-pronged channel. One, through the criminal justice system and two, through the Commission of Inquiry. It is to prevent possible biases in the normal process of prosecuting the cases - through filing a police report, framing charges and going to the courts - that a Commission of Inquiry is instituted. For, as in the case of Bhagalpur, state representatives are often directly involved in the rioting. Then those guilty of abetment, connivance, dereliction of duty and negligence are not likely to charge themselves or prosecute others responsible. The data collated from the annexures stands testimony to the fact that intentional dereliction of duty and negligence by police continue in the aftermath of the riot.

Time bound commissions of inquiry are appointed to perform two tasks. (1) to identify the guilty officials so that they can be charged and that the administration can be reorganised to prevent the guilty persons from hampering the process of justice; and (2) to suggest measures to prevent such occurrences in the future.

The failure of the state government to initially appoint an impartial inquiry prepared the way for delays in the Commission. The play of communal politics and an insensitive judiciary furthered these delays. Consequently, while five years of reconstitution dragged on the same administration, which was later indicted by the Commission for connivance with the rioters, continued to register, investigate and prosecute the crimes committed during the riots. Necessarily this resulted in non-registration of crimes, cursory investigation and weak prosecution.

Hence, the Members Report apart from making suggestions and fixing responsibility also points to the need for proper investigation and prosecution of crimes which had occurred five years ago. And this aspect of the recommendations of the Commission has neither been publicised nor any action taken or promised regarding it. The Bihar government has not yet even submitted the Memorandum of Action Taken, violating the legal stipulation of six months.

The real problem lies in the failure of the state to safeguard the lives and property of its citizens both during the riots and in their aftermath. That the Commission of Inquiry is properly constituted, allowed to function, and justice done according to its recommendations depends on the political will of the government. This will is singularly lacking. For it inherently follows from the lack of political will to

prevent riots in the first place. So, first, representatives of the state allow, if not actively instigate communal riots. Then they shield those who have perpetrated the arson, loot and killings through formal measures like departmental inquiries. The state sets up a Commission of Inquiry, whose functioning can be thwarted by vested interests in the state itself. The circle is complete, and the subversion of rule of law, total.

The fate of the Srikrishna Inquiry Commission probing into the Bombay communal riots in December, 1992 and January, 1993 is the worst example of this process. On 23 January, 1996, the Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party government in the state decided to wind up the Commission. The reason provided was that the government has spent Rs. 1.7 crore on the Commission and that its term had been extended five times since its inception. Worse still the government defended its decision by saying that the Commission "had become an exercise in futility". And that ever since the new government took charge "Maharashtra has been witnessing complete communal harmony. The Commission's proceedings would have unwittingly vitiated this atmosphere" (Times of India, January 24, 1996). Masked by these arguments for efficiency is the original reason for setting up the Commission. The deaths of over a thousand people and large scale destruction of property three years ago which the Commission had been investigating hang in the balance.

The gradual dilution of this democratic institution today has reached a point where it has been explicitly debunked on grounds of futility and expenditure. What becomes evident from the aftermath of the 1989 Bhagalpur riots is the deliberate nature of the delays and attempts at rendering the institution of the Commission futile.

The arbitrariness of this decision of the Maharashtra government has ominous implications for democracy. The NHRC has now taken over the inquiry into the Bombay riots. After one institution is made hollow from within and its working obstructed at every step, the work is taken over by another newly created institution. Exposed in this is an absence of commitment to the rule of law by ruling and opposition parties. In Bhagalpur the Congress was in power when the riots occurred, the BJP provided the immediate occasion for the riots, and the Janata Dal that came to power after the riots has failed to prosecute guilty officials even after half a decade.

The fundamental principles of the Constitution - the right to life and equality before the law - holds little meaning for the political parties, the government, the

administration, and the police. It has little meaning for the general public itself, except when various sections suffer the consequences of the deliberate flouting of the constitutional guarantees by the state and its institutions.

And for some of the victims of this failure, such as the families of the 628 killed in Bhagalpur for whose murder no FIR has been filed, the hope for redressal is faint. Thus for many of those who died in these riots, there is inequality not only in life but in death.

Thus rule of law, the mainstay of the Constitution, gets subverted out only during the functioning of the Commission of Inquiry, but more insidiously and dangerously, because of its very invisibility, in the subversion of the normal procedures of the Cr. P.C. and the I.P.C. The sad chronicle of the Bhagalpur riots and its aftermath is a pointer to the erosion of the Constitution from within by those very authorities who have pledged themselves to obey and preserve it. Our hope lies in that small minority which hearkens to the dangerous portents of our times and are willing to struggle for the right to life and equality for all our people.

Fate of the Cases

	All	Murder
Pending	87	26
Acquittal	44	11
Conviction	11	1
Total	142	38

Punishment to the Guilty

	In all Cases	In Murder Cases
Accused	1392	406
Trial Pending	961	311
Acquitted	381	94
Convicted	50	1
Total	2784	812

Government Statement on Handing Over of Bodhgaya Temple to Buddhists

The National Commission for Minorities has recommended enactment of suitable and appropriate legislation to vest the management of Bodh Gaya Temple exclusively in the Buddhist community. The Commission has also suggested to the local administration various steps for keeping the temple clean, maintaining unhindered access of pilgrims to the holy place, proper accounting of offerings and drawing up a plan for long term development of the area and construction of guest houses.

The report has been received on 28th February and is being examined.

Sudhir Kakar's Colours of Violence

A Review by Dipankar Gupta

Once again Sudhir Kakar the psychoanalyst steps out of his clinic to examine live issues which are of intellectual concern to both specialists and laypeople. This book is about the victims and the perpetrators of communal violence, and the setting, quite appropriately, is the riot-prone walled city of Hyderabad.

Kakar begins by making his methodological assumptions clear. According to him, it is important to factor in the author's subjectivity in order to render analytical exercises meaningful. This privileging of subjectivity allows Kakar to go back to his childhood and tell us about how he gradually accumulated his bag of prejudices, and how these prejudices keep returning in spite of his self-conscious exorcising of them. This section, in which he ruminates about his childhood, sets the stage for his study and also eases the reader into a kind of easy informality with the author...

After demonstrating the need for subjectivity, Kakar trains his guns at the naivete of secular historians who believe that communal identities, like Muslim and Hindu, were non-existent in the past and are only recent colonial creations. I believe this is a good point to make...

I find Kakar's position against idealised versions of traditional Hindu-Muslim tolerance quite refreshing. According to Kakar, what passed for tolerance was really a function of indifference, "sometimes bordering on brutal incomprehension of the imperial bureaucrats to local conflicts of the peoples they rule". I think this is an excellent point which can and should stir many researches. Kakar is not encumbered by the secularist myth of tolerance, he can squarely face the conundrum as to why British beef-eaters were not disliked by Hindus the way the Muslims were. His answer is interesting too. According to Kakar, the British took their proteins in secluded bungalows and remained "strangers" to the end, while the Muslims were the immediate "other" as they lived cheek by jowl with the Hindus.

Elsewhere, Kakar tries to probe into what would be considered appropriate behaviour by Hindus and Muslims, both in times of peace and during riots. The exercise suffers on two counts. The first is that the sample is very small.. The more serious drawback is that these interviews were conducted in normal times and, therefore, the standard ethic comes to the fore and not emotions inflamed by the heat of the riot. This is why the interviews concluded that for both Hindus and Muslims, it is improper to rape at all times, and that it is proper to give shelter to members of the persecuted community. Anybody who has seen a riot will find such conclusions highly dubious. ...

(Source:; the India Today, 15 December, 1995)

National Foundation for Communal Harmony Programme and Activities 1994 - 95

The basic thrust of the Foundation ... is to provide care to the children affected by communal riots... (and) assistance to the physical and psychological rehabilitation of such children... The salient features of the scheme drawn up for the purpose are as follows:-

- i) The scheme is applicable to children affected by communal riots which have occurred on or after 24th July, 1991 i.e. the date on which Government's decision to create such a Foundation was announced.
- ii) Children who have become orphan or destitute in the sense that either both the parents or the surviving parent or the main bread winner has been killed or permanently incapacitated because of communal riots and who are below the poverty line as laid down by the Planning Commission are eligible for assistance.
- iii) The identification of children is to be done by a District Committee set up under the District Magistrate/Collector with Superintendent of Police, District Social Welfare Officer, District Child and Women Development Officer, and such other persons as the District Magistrate/Collector may decide as members. The Committee is required to verify the eligibility of the beneficiaries and suggest the best mode of assistance, e.g. through child's own family, relatives, educational institutions, local guardians, foster-parents, adoption, children homes, etc. The District Committee is required to send its recommendations to the State Level Committee which, in turn, will send the consolidated list of approved cases to the Foundation.
- iv) The identified child is to be provided assistance @ Rs. 425/- p.m. per child in Class 'A' & 'B' cities and Rs. 375/- p.m. per child in other places. The assistance would cover items like text books, stationery, food, clothing, health care and recreation. The supervisory expenses incurred by voluntary organisations, if any, would also be covered. Normally, the assistance would be given only till the child becomes 18 years of age. In exceptional cases, however, it may be extended up to 21 years. Apart from general education, assistance could be provided for vocational education, skill training, etc., the objective being that by the age of 18, the child should develop some skill whereby he can earn his livelihood.

... The total number of children assisted by the Foundation rose from 135 at the end of 31st March, 1994 to 764 as on 31st March, 1994. The assistance released

during the year also increased from Rs. 3.03 lakhs at the end of 31st March, 1993 to Rs. 21.86 lakhs at the end of 31st March, 1994....

District-wise Details of Children

Assisted as on 1.4.1994			
State	District	No. of Children Assisted	Amount Released (Rs.)
A.P.	Hyderabad	9	68,850.00
	Adilabad	23	96,750.00
	Nizamabad	4	6,000.00
Bihar	Sitamarhi	31	136,125.00
	P. Singhbhum	4	9,000.00
	Munger	6	9,000.00
Gujarat	Ahmedabad	77	462,400.00
	Bharuch	33	172,125.00
	Baroda	3	3,375.00
Karnataka	Surat	113	319,875.00
	Belgaum	21	115,875.00
	Uttar Kannad	15	16,875.00
U.P.	Chitradurga	2	2,250.00
	Varanasi	14	102,250.00
	Lucknow	12	20,400.00
Maharashtra	Kanpur	50	85,000.00
	Haridwar	2	9,750.00
	Bombay	201	262,650.00
M.P.	Bhopal	123	184,500.00
	Ujjain	5	24,375.00
	Delhi	16	79,050.00

(Source: Annual Report, 1993-94)

Karnataka: Socio-Economic Survey Level of Education

	Muslims	Dalit Christians	Christians
Educated Upto Secondary	9.06%	16.43%	22.28%
Educated Upto Pre-University	2.19%	5.26%	7.46%
Degree Level	1.12%	2.89%	5.28%

Income Level

	Muslims	Dalit	Christians
Annual Income Below Rs. 10000/-	71%	56%	50%
Below Rs. 6000/-	55%	43%	35%
Income Below Rs. 3600/-	31%	27%	18%

A.G. Noorani on Aborting Bombay Riots Probe

... In response to a national clamour.. the Maharashtra Government appointed, on January 25, 1993, a Commission of Inquiry to probe into the riots, headed by a highly respected Judge of the Bombay High Court, Justice B.N. Srikrishna... nominated by the Chief Justice.

Scope
No sooner had the Shiv Sena-BJP coalition came into power in the State last March, than it began to make noises about the futility of the probe. On July 6, 1993, six Sena leaders led by Manohar Joshi had demanded expansion of the scope of the inquiry to cover the bomb blasts in Bombay, on March 12, 1993. By then the Commission had begun recording evidence. On July 7, 1993, the Sena itself filed an affidavit before the Commission. So did the then leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly, Mr. Gopinath Munde, the BJP on October 28, 1993. He is now Deputy Chief Minister.

On April 6, 1995, the Commission very fairly adjourned the proceedings till April 28 in order to give time to the new Sena-BJP Government to decide on its stand on the inquiry. ... On May 15, 1995, the Government expanded the terms of reference of the Commission by adding three terms: "the circumstances and the immediate cause of" the bomb blasts, whether they had "any common link" with the riots, and whether "the circumstances, events and immediate causes" of the riots "were part of common design".

These were the Sena and the BJP's charges. Their incorporation in the terms of reference as late as last May implied that they were prepared to back them up in a judicial forum. The Commission's dissolution implies that these charges were groundless while those against the Sena and the BJP could not be defended.

... "Matters relating to the investigation and trial of serial bomb-blasts cases pending before the TADA designated Court" were explicitly excluded from the amended terms of reference. In June 1995 the Commission promptly invited statements on the additional matters. On the riots' part, it had finished 23 of the 32 police station areas... The Government cites its own wrongs in support of its decision. It first stalled the Commission's proceedings and, next, imposed additional tasks only to argue now, as Mr. Joshi does, that "it would have needed more time to probe the circumstances that led to the blast".

The malafides are apparent. The Judge's opinion was not sought. He would have replied...

The reasons Mr. Joshi cites are cognisable by the Courts in determining the malafides of his decision "to scrap the Commission under Section 7 of the Commissions of Inquiry Act". It was no mere refusal of extension of time. It was a resolve to "scrap" the body for four reasons - delay; usefulness of delayed findings;

pending cases concerning the riots and the bomb blasts and media coverage of the proceedings. Not one of them is new or relevant. All were known when the body was set up. Mr. Joshi's elaborations make matters worse for him. "I feel the Commission's existence is unlikely to expedite the judicial process or the pending cases". This alone suffices to vitiate the action... No Commission works to "expedite... pending cases" but for ascertainment of the whole truth of the matter beyond individual culpability. Everyone knows that a Commission's findings do not bind a court of law as the Supreme Court ruled in Shan Kant's case in 1992.

Since the action has been taken avowedly under Section 7 of the Act, its provisions are relevant. A Commission appointed in pursuance of a resolution of the legislature can be dissolved by a resolution for its "discontinuance" Section 7(b). The reasons will become apparent in the debates. The provision does not stipulate the grounds. In contrast, one appointed by the Government can be dissolved by it only "if is of opinion that the continued existence of the Commission is unnecessary" Section 7(a) and on no other ground.

... Mr. Joshi's party is very much under a cloud for something worse than corruption. It is for participation in the taking of human lives.

Justice P.B. Sawant rightly observed in S.R. Bommai's case: "Secularism is a part of the basic structure of the Constitution. The acts of a State Government which are calculated to subvert or sabotage secularism in our Constitution, can lawfully be deemed to give rise to a situation in which the Government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution" - and thus justify imposition of President's rule. ...

(Source: The Statesman, 31 January, 1996)

Government Statement on Bombay Riots

The National Human Rights Commission has revived the cases relating to December 1992 Bombay riots which are pending before it. The Commission had decided not to proceed with these cases earlier since the Maharashtra Government had constituted the Srikrishna Commission of Inquiry into these incidents, in view of the bar provided in Section 36(1) of the Protection of Human Rights Act 1993. As the Srikrishna Commission has now been wound up, the National Human Rights Commission has revived these cases and decided to dispose them of.

The National Human Rights Commission has informed that no definite time frame can be fixed for conducting the inquiry at this stage.

(Source: LSUQ No. 372 dated 29 February, 1996 by P.D.S. Patel)

Shiv Sena Cannot Have its Way Editorial, The Mainstream

... Much is being written these days on ... corruption in public life... and the ... menace of criminalisation of the polity. However, that should not lead one to the conclusion that the struggle against fissiparous trends, particularly the scourge of communalism, eating into the vitals of national unity has been relegated into the background and lost its priority importance now that more than three years have elapsed since the demolition of the Babari mosque at Ayodhya and there has not been any spurt in communal violence... In fact the recent events in Maharashtra have in a flash highlighted the significance one should continue to attach to the danger posed by the communal approach...

... It was believed... that chastened by the responsibilities of running the State administration, the alliance partners would at least adopt postures which would be different from their rabid communal stance while in Opposition and during the election campaign. Such naive hopes have been dashed to pieces by the systematic steps the combine ... has taken to undermine the interests and rights - and hence the confidence - of the minorities. The abolition of the State Minorities Commission, the scrapping of the Haj Committee, the disbanding of the Urdu Academy were not measures to bring the Muslims into the "mainstream" of national life as the proponents of Hindutva would make us believe. In the name of doing away with the so-called "appeasement" of Muslims as their political rivals had practised while in power, the Sena and the BJP were actually aiming to place the minorities in a disadvantageous position and inject an element of fear in their minds that runs counter to the cherished values of secularism independent India has all along firmly sought to uphold.

The latest - and perhaps the gravest - attack on the minorities' sense of security in Maharashtra has come with the State Government's decision to wind up the Srikrishna Commission probing the gruesome and ghastly communal riots which rocked Mumbai in December 1992 and January 1993 following the destruction of the structure of Babari Masjid by a bunch of Hindu fanatics. It is beyond dispute that those riots were organised in a cold blooded manner - they did not happen in a spontaneous outburst of senseless hatred - and the organisation which lent cover, sustenance, strength and vitality to the miscreants was the Shiv Sena. The State Government's action in winding up the Srikrishna Commission has thus exposed itself to the charge of blatant partisanship: the compulsion of covering up the

traces of the Shiv Sainiks' colossal misdeeds during the communal violence on the Muslim community was so great that all other considerations had to be thrown to the winds. Indeed the real face of the Shiv Sena in all its viciousness has been unmasked by this move...

As has been brought out in bold relief by Y.H. Muchala representing the Lawyers' Legal Aid Committee before the Commission, the act was not only politically naive (as it revealed the guilt-conscience of the major partner of the ruling coalition) but also a transparent manifestation of moral cowardice.

The basic fact is that the Srikrishna Commission, having collected evidence and other material running into 25,000 pages, would have prepared within six months a report that would have been one of the most convincing indictments of the Sena's anti-Muslim - and hence anti-national - proclivities. That the Sena was not in a position to withstand. Hence it "short-circuited"... the only hope of justice nurtured by the riot victims. It is also striking that the Commission was wound up on January 23 whereas... one of the star Sena performers - Madhukarrao Sarpotdar, an MLA and a detenu under the National Security Act - was to be put on the dock on January 25 when in the course of the cross examinations the Sena's real motives would have been stripped naked. That is precisely why Manohar Joshi resorted to all kinds of lame excuses to justify the move - false alibis that cannot stand close scrutiny.

But the Sena cannot have its way with or without the complicity of its alliance partner, the BJP. There have been certain welcome developments following the Shiv Sena's decision... First, in response to an application moved by a CPI member, the Bombay High Court has ruled that all the evidence gathered by the Commission should remain in the custody of the court. Secondly... the National Human Rights Commission has lately decided to inquire into the 1992-93 Mumbai riots determined as it is to bring out the truth...

In the wake of the Shiv Sena's depredations in Mumbai and the impunity with which the protagonists of majority communalism are attempting to subvert both secularism and democracy, as upheld by our Constitution, the President's message on the eve of the Republic Day for a public initiative against communalism assumes special significance...

The struggle against communalism cannot thus be slackened under any circumstances and at any cost...

JD, CPI and CPI(M): Joint Statement 25 January, 1996

The leaders of Janata Dal, CPI(M) and CPI met on January 24, 1996. The following representatives of the parties participated in the meeting:

Janata Dal

Shri S.R. Bommai
Shri L.K. Gujral
Shri B. Jaipal Reddy

Shri Ram Vilas Paswan
Shri Surendra Mohan

CPI(M)

Shri Harkishan Singh Surjeet

Shri Prakash Karat

CPI

Shri Indrajit Gupta
Shri A.B. Bardhan

Shri M.A. Farooqui
and 2 others

During the meeting ... they exchanged extensive notes on the current political scene in the country, and on the situation in various states in the context of ensuing Lok Sabha election. It was felt that the need for strengthening the third alternative, which is committed to secular democracy, self-reliant economy and social justice, is all the greater now. The meeting expressed its grave concern at the threat posed to national security as evidenced in the arms-dropping in Purulia and the manner in which the hawala racket has been handled.

The leaders of the three parties were deeply disturbed to note that the government is completely clueless even after one month of arms-dropping.

As for the hawala racket, they were shocked by the inordinate delay and deliberate indifference that characterised the CBI probe and adverse impact of involvement of senior leaders and bureaucrats, including the prime minister, on the security of the nation. They, therefore, emphasised the need for transparent investigation, speedy trial and deterrent punishment to all those involved in the hawala scandal.

CPI(M)-CPI Joint Statement On Third Alternative

New Delhi, 20 February, 1996

The leaders of the CPI and CPI(M)... exchanged views on the current political situation (and) reiterated their commitment to forge a wider alliance of the Left and secular opposition forces. Efforts towards this should be stepped up and there should be no further delay. Such a third alternative is required by the people...

The two parties, in order to strengthen Left intervention in the coming elections, decided to finalise their electoral understanding on seats by the end of the month.

The meeting welcomed the talks which have been held between the president of the Janata Dal and the president of the Samajwadi Party in Lucknow... which should help pave the way for an understanding. In view of this, the two parties decided to initiate talks with the Samajwadi Party for an electoral understanding in UP....

Statement of the CBCI On the General Elections

We the Bishop's of India, gathered in our biennial General Assembly at St. Mary's Malankara Seminary, Thiruvananthapuram, February 13 to 21st, 1996, issue these guidelines to the Catholics of India, in view of the forthcoming elections in our country.

The obligation to vote is a very serious one. It is primarily through this action that a citizen can participate in the decision making powers of the country. We are all aware of the need for a constant renewal of the structures of Indian society and exercising our franchise is an essential element in this renovation.

During the General Elections the largest democracy in the world will be electing a new members of Parliament and or it, their right and obligation to participates in this election process. Every vote is important as it might be the decisive one.

The main problem just now is to select the candidate or the party. The Catholic doctrine. In a more positive way the party should be selected according to its manifesto which should include the following objectives.

1. It should respect human life in all its stages, promote the dignity and value of the human person, and ensure ecological and environmental protection.
2. It should have a preferential bias towards the poor, especially the dalits, the tribals, the economically underprivileged, the women, children, aged and disabled.
3. It should treat the Christian dalits in the same way as it treats the dalits of other religions, so that there is no discrimination.
4. It should be more committed to the development of the rural areas and rural masses, and the urban poor.
5. It should envisage the structural transformation of Indian society at least in some degree, where all Indians can live in fellowship based on equality, justice and freedom. We should reject any party that ignores it or openly wants to programmes.
6. It must have effectively programmes for fostering peace and communal harmony at all levels.
7. It must ensure that the value of Secularism be upheld according to the Constitution of India, so that the State must allow freedom for every religion to flourish without favouring any.
8. It should be committed to recognise and preserve India's religio-cultural pluralism as a way of enriching the country. It should in a special way respect and protect the minorities.
9. It should have a political will to fight against corruption at all levels especially in public and political life, to ensure accountability to the people and to take adequate steps to prevent wastage of public funds.

(Contd. on page 123)

Janata Dal: Dilemma Between Mulayam Singh Yadav and Kanshi Ram

Krishna Ananth in *The Hindu*, 21 January, 1996

Lok Sabha, the party witnessed its floor leader - Mr. V.P. Singh - quitting his membership of the House....

While a recap of these developments would suffice to describe the state of the Janata Dal, the present round of internal wranglings appear to have surpassed all standards set by the Lohiaite tradition of party organisation. The tradition of individual preferences, rather than ideological positions, set the agenda for fission and fusion in the party. In a sense, a discussion on the Janata Dal affairs will be impossible if one seeks to explain the differences in terms of issues.

The current differences in the party on the question of identifying an alliance partner in Uttar Pradesh is essentially a battle between Mr. Sharad Yadav, on the one side, and Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan, on the other. However, the two rivals are one in conveying the real message that the Dal is a virtual non-entity in Uttar Pradesh today; a State where the Dal had managed to keep the Congress(I) and the BJP at bay even when it was engaged in a triangular battle in 1989.

...Similarly, at the height of the 'Ram' wave in 1991, Uttar Pradesh returned as many as 22 Janata Dal MPs to the Lok Sabha.

It is indeed reflective of the crisis in the ranks that the Janata Dal is now left with a mere half-a-dozen MPs after a large number of them had left the party with Mr. Ajit Singh to join the Congress(I). Some others had joined Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav....

In fact, the Dal's hold in Uttar Pradesh started eroding from 1991 and Mr. Mulayam Singh emerged as the inheritor of the Socialist legacy in the State in November 1993. By striking an alliance with Mr. Kanshi Ram and dismissing the Janata Dal as a "press conference party restricted to Delhi." Mr. Yadav had rallied the minorities and the backward classes behind him.

Though the Janata Dal had still managed a 10 per cent plus popular votes in the Assembly elections in November 1993, the fact that this was not reflected in the number of seats that the Dal managed in the Assembly led to a steady exodus of the local leaders of the Janata Dal to Mr. Mulayam Singh's fold. The singular factor that had led to this exodus was the announcement of Mr. V.P. Singh that he would keep away from active party politics.

Mr. V.P. Singh's decision has triggered the current round of disputes in the Dal and it is incidental that the theatre of dispute is Uttar Pradesh. Implicit is an admission among the leaders that the party is at best a marginal force in what had been the Dal's bastion in 1989.

In fact, the debate is not on choosing between Mr.

Mulayam Singh Yadav and Mr. Kanshi Ram... Mr. Sharad Yadav's penchant for keeping the BSP option open is essentially a part of his camp's strategy to keep a check on Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav.

After having been reduced to a virtual non-entity in the State, the Sharad Yadav camp - which to an extent has the blessings of Mr. Laloo Prasad Yadav - is keen on having Mr. Kanshi Ram to play the role of a watchman on Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav. As for the Paswan camp - blessed by another Janata Dal Chief Minister, Mr. Deve Gowda - there is no way that Mr. Mulayam Singh's claim to Uttar Pradesh could be disputed.

While in the case of Mr. Deve Gowda the "love" for Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav could be traced to their mutual "friendship" dating back to "the good old days" when they revolted against Mr. V.P. Singh's leadership in November 1990 under Mr. Chandra Shekhar's leadership, the case of Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan is different.

Having founded and nurtured the Dalit Sena, which Mr. Paswan had been putting into effective use to keep him in good stead in the Janata Dal, any alliance with the Kanshi Ram-Mayawati duo in Uttar Pradesh would mean that his efforts at dalit consolidation in Uttar Pradesh and other northern States would go waste. It is this personal preference that Mr. Paswan managed to sugarcoat with the BSP's "opportunistic" alliance with the BJP.

It was in this context that the Janata Dal leadership decided two months ago to initiate talks with Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav's party for seat adjustments in Uttar Pradesh. Interestingly, this decision was taken after Mr. V.P. Singh, the "reluctant leader", intervened...

Though Mr. Singh had been stressing he need to keep the BSP option open ever since the SP-BSP alliance broke up in Lucknow, his sudden preference for the Samajwadi Party raised many eyebrows within and outside the party.

All these, however, did not settle the muddled waters in the Janata Dal and the Sharad Yadav camp is persisting with its demand that the BSP option should not be closed even if it is at the cost of the Samajwadi Party and in this he finds support from among a majority of the party leaders still left in the Janata Dal in Uttar Pradesh.

...The tussle in the Janata Dal, primarily caused by personality clashes, is showing all signs of becoming a street brawl with the rival camps unhesitatingly using the press to level charges and countercharges against each other.

Ram Rao's demise has thrown the Dal into a fresh crisis. The party will now have to go through the task of choosing a Chairman for the National Front before embarking upon the task of constituting the Front.

BJP: Views of A.B. Vajpayee

The Congress is in poor health. It does not have significant presence in any major state in the north, barring Madhya Pradesh, where the BJP is sure to avenge its defeat in the next elections. The ruling party is also losing ground in the south. In the west - both in Maharashtra and Gujarat - the party stands vanquished. In the eastern region too, it has not shown any signs of revival... With NTR gone now, the National Front-Left Front has an uphill task. The contest in the next election will be between the BJP and the Congress.

The BJP has been successful in delivering its message to the masses notwithstanding the misleading propaganda unleashed against us by our opponents. The Supreme Court too, through its judgments in vital cases such as the need to enforce a uniform civil code and on the definition of Hindutva, has endorsed the BJP point of view. Our mass base has been expanding. There are a number of positive factors to ensure our victory.

We don't have to look for issues in this election. Problems are crying out for attention. Hawala and St. Kitts are not the only issues. The insurgency in Kashmir, periodic bomb explosions in the Capital and elsewhere and the latest dropping of arms by a foreign plane reveal gaping holes in national security. All these issues, along with Ayodhya will ensure a BJP victory.

... No doubt minority support is valuable, but elections can be won even without it if the bulk of the electorate is with you. In any case, do not entertain thoughts that we have doubts about minority backing. I would not like to reveal the number of Muslims who have enrolled as BJP workers. But I can share with you that the feeling in minority circles is: "Let's go with the BJP if this is going to be the winning party."

Who has identified us as enemies of the minority community? For the BJP, all Indians are equal. I am sure members of the minority community will understand us and our stand on various issues better. We are working for it. Our record in the states where we have been in power speaks for itself. There is no discrimination for or against anybody on the basis of religion. And let me clarify here once for all that the BJP will follow middle-of-road policies if it is voted for power at the Centre. ...

I do not think that the BJP is packed with communal fanatics. Different persons in the party are likely to have different views on the various issues and problems. All our decisions are taken after due deliberations and after taking everybody into confidence. ...

(Source: The Times of India, 10 February, 1996)

Ajay Singh on BJP's Decline in UP

The cutting edge of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) political weapon, the trident, which is made up of three major political planks - corruption in high places, criminalisation of politics and national security - appears to have been blunted by recent developments.

After the chargesheet against BJP president L.K. Advani in the hawala case, the party seems to have lost its moral right to claim to be the sole "torch-bearer" of probity in public life...

... While BJP strategists are yet to recover from the shock of the hawala scandal, the charge against BJP Lok Sabha member Brij Bhushan Saran Singh - of harbouring the hitmen of Dubai-based mafia don Dawood Ibrahim - has dealt a body blow to the party.

In the fast-changing political scenario, the BJP appears desperate. The party appears to be losing its ability to make strategic moves and set the agenda for others to follow...

The recent political events have robbed the BJP of its main electoral planks... The charges slapped against Mr. Brij Bhushan Saran Singh under the provisions of the Terrorists and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) came as a bolt from the blue. The CBI's chargesheet seems to have knocked the bottom out of the BJP's second electoral plank of "criminalisation of politics". The party's reaction to the TADA charges against Mr. Singh betrayed nervousness in the Hindutva camp. ...

... The BJP had exposed itself to the charges of harbouring a criminal who maintains close links with Dawood Ibrahim. The damage done to the credibility to the party was further compounded with party spokesperson Sushma Swaraj making an absurd attempt at feigning ignorance about Mr. Singh's criminal past.

... BJP strategists are searching for an issue that can regain advantage for their party. What contributes further to the party's dilemma is that emotive issues like Ram Janmabhoomi, Kashi Vishwanath or Mathura issue are not cutting ice with the electorate.

However, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) may try to whip up hysteria on these issues to enable the BJP to take a lead over its political adversaries. But these attempts are unlikely to yield electoral dividends in the changed scenario in the Hindi heartland, where the BJP has a significant base.

... The fallout of the Gujarat crisis and the growing dissidence within the party is yet to be assessed in electoral terms. And, in Karnataka groupism is taking hold. These expose the BJP's vulnerability on many counts.

(Source: The Pioneer, 13 February, 1996)

Thackeray Thinks Too Much!

Editorial, The Hindustan Times

Mr. Bal Thackeray has gone vocal again, coming up with a bouquet of ideas and expressing them with characteristic virulence. He seems to want to usurp the extreme right-wing Hindu platform... He feels that Kashi and Mathura should be "liberated" as soon as a BJP government can be formed at the Centre. On the other hand, he is not sure whether the BJP can form such a government at all, and "predicts", in the alternative, that there will be a hung Parliament followed by civil strife, violence and a military takeover. If he is serious he ought to be orientating the party programme towards coping with such an eventuality, instead of building temples in Spain. Whether his prediction comes true is less to the point than the certainly that in his scenario, he will be among the early ones to be kicked to the kerb. Unable to throw Pakistan out of POK and annihilating that country in war Mr. Thackeray is content to take it out on the Pakistan cricket team...

... What is less serious is Mr. Thackeray's attempt to appeal to pan-Hindu sentiment to the extent of supporting the LTTE in Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan Government is, after all, adopting exactly the approach he advocates for Kashmir - sten-gun against sten-gun. But then, Mr. Thackeray does not feel the need to formulate positions which have the merit of consistency. He is immune from such frailties. It is a miracle that with such thinking - if thought it is - the Shiv Sena manages to have any kind of coherent programme. The party's national ambitions could drag Mr. Thackeray into further intellectual convolutions as he pronounces on situations where mutually exclusive positions have to be reconciled. What is abhorrent to Mr. Thackeray, as to all totalitarian leaders, is neutrality, the ability to see different sides of the problem. In the interests of his party, he should leave day to day politics to those who understand its scope and limitations. Mr. Thackeray should concentrate on providing entertainment - but not too often. The best stars do not overexpose themselves.

Subhash Chandra Bose

On Communalism and Regionalism

... As against the outside world, India is one unit and the different provinces and different communities ... should line up under one banner and one policy, if we are to bring about the speedy emancipation of our people. Fissiparous tendencies, whether of a provincial or of a communal character should be regarded as the greatest curse ... and all lovers of freedom should take their stand on a broad socio-economic programme for the emancipation of the masses, which will cut across provincial and communal divisions. ...

(Address at a Public Reception in Calcutta, 6 April, 1937 - published in the Calcutta Municipal Gazette)

BJP: Election Strategy

The three major election planks of the Bharatiya Janata Party - shucheta, suraksha and swadeshi (cleanliness in public life, security and economic nationalism) - which had been hammered together to help the party brave the choppy election seas, appear to be coming apart. ...

Hindutva Plank

In fact, it seems, that the one "plank" the BJP could use to traverse the rough seas of an election campaign is its Hindutva slogan. Directly or indirectly, the party campaign will emphasise what the BJP describes as the "vote bank policies" of the other parties. By this it means the so-called "appeasement" of Muslims. No doubt, this is a line which appeals to crass communal feelings, and the party knows this, and exploits it. Even party stalwarts, when pressed to explain how Muslims have been "appeased", find it difficult to mention anything substantial, except some government help for performing "hajj", not enforcing a uniform civil code, allowing them to run their own educational institutions under Article 30 of the Constitution, and so on.

But this is the area which will be used by the party to consolidate further its own Hindu vote bank. Whether it is the plight of Kashmiri refugees, or the influx of Bangladeshi Muslims, the uniform civil code, or the alleged ISI network in the country - the targets will be the Muslims. The BJP has always indirectly suggested that it is the minority community which harbours "anti-nationals" and it is the BJP's Hindu supporters who are the "nationalists", that voting the BJP means voting in Hindu interests, whatever that means. But will this ploy succeed?

(Source: The Hindu, 10 February, 1996)

Shubhangi Khapre

On Secular Alliance in Maharashtra

... If the Republican Party of India (RPI) is able to sustain its unity till the election and if the Third Force emerges the single largest party at the Centre, the Congress will lose on two counts. First, its Dalit base would have eroded and, two, there is every possibility of Muslims voting in favour of the Third Force.

At the moment, one cannot say which way the Muslim vote will go, and there is still no State leader in the Third Force who can effectively sway the Muslim vote to its side. In such an eventuality, the Congress stands to gain. Unlike in the last Assembly election, when Muslims voted en bloc against the Congress to avenge the Babari Masjid demolition and the riots, this time their main concern would be to defeat the Shiv Sena-BJP.

The RPI is already drawn up strategies to woo Muslims to its fold. It has set a target to swing 27% votes in the State, the same polled by the Shiv Sena in the last Assembly election. "With 9.5% Buddhist votes and 15 per cent Muslim votes we can achieve this", says Athavle confidently. Whether the RPI will succeed in its endeavour remains to be seen. But Dalit unity has certainly alarmed the Congress. (Source: The H.T., 25 Feb, 1996)

CPI(M) Leader Prakash Karat on VHP's "Hindu Agenda"

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad has come out with a 40-point "Hindu Agenda" which it wants political parties to endorse for the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. This so-called agenda is nothing but the advocacy of a theocratic Hindu Rashtra and a recipe for national disintegration. The VHP's agenda falls in line with the strategy of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's political designs.

The Bombay session of the BJP had adopted an electoral platform which spelt out the Hindutva agenda in an understated manner while harping on national security, Kashmir, economic difficulties and corruption. The BJP leadership, in concert with the RSS, wishes to capitalise on the all-round discontent against the Congress regime, and is trying to pose as if it has a comprehensive platform which can appeal to all sections of the people who are fed up with the Congress rule. But whether it be economic policy, national unity or corruption, it is difficult for the BJP to pose as a real alternative to the Congress. The Gujarat tussle..., the volte face on Enron and now the hawala scandal in which L.K. Advani has himself been implicated; all point to the difficulty in projecting the idea of a "party with a difference". Hence the communal agenda will be the mainstay of the RSS-BJP combine. But in order to maintain the fiction of not advocating a communal platform and inviting possible judicial retribution, the RSS has directed the VHP to underpin the BJP's electoral campaign with its rabid communal platform. This is the context in which the Vishwa Hindu Parishad has set out the "Hindu Agenda".

The VHP expounds the ideological position nurtured by the RSS that Hindutva and nationalism are synonymous and that "Hindu interest is the national interest"...

National unity is... to be preserved by the imposition of a Hindu identity all over the country and on all communities. Article 370 of the Constitution with regard to Kashmir is to be scrapped and Autonomy (is to be) denied to the diverse communities and linguistic groups; Sanskrit is to be made a compulsory subject in schools.

Special attention is reserved for depriving the minorities of their elementary rights. Urdu will be deprived of the status of a second official language in the states where it is so; those who suffer social discrimination because they are of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe origin cannot avail of reservations if they leave the Hindu fold; only the activities of the Hindu religious institutions will be entitled to government patronage and facilities. Women definitely occupy a subordinate status in the Hindu patriarchal order.

Abortion is to be banned as it promotes "immorality".

History is to be rewritten as per the Hindutva ideology and the teaching of "Bharatiya culture and dharma" will be made compulsory.

Non-essential administrative expenditure is to be swollen further by the ridiculous proposal to set up "Gau Sewa" ministries at the centre and in the states. The demand for ban on cow slaughter is extended to all types of cattle. The food habits of a vast majority of Indians is to be modified, with "non-vegetarianism to be discouraged by the government".

Obviously, the Hindu agenda has to look after the interests of the swamis and the religious orders, many of whom are members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. The VHP displays a practical and commercial attitude to religion: one of the demands is that puja, archana and religious construction activities of maths, mandirs and ashrams be exempt from income tax. Further, its demand that a specified portion of government revenue be earmarked for various dharmic objectives, is tantamount to making Hinduism the official religion.

BJP in Strait Jacket

These are some of the highlights of the agenda drawn up by the Ashok Singhal and Dalmias of the VHP who work under the direction of the RSS... BJP will find itself... constrained to espouse some of these issues on its electoral platform... Faced increasingly with the damage to its overall credibility after the hawala scandal, the BJP will be tempted to identify more with the VHP agenda.

One ought to be grateful to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad for frankly stating its vision of a Bharat based on Hindutva. Such a Bharat, of course, will not come into existence, as the adoption or implementation of such an agenda by the state in India would bring out the death knell for the country itself.

The VHP talks about the freedom attained after a thousand-year slavery for the Hindu nation. But conveniently, it fails to say that the Hindu social order based on upper caste chauvinism has, for centuries, meant slavery for a large section of those who are called Hindus. The VHP-RSS combine's efforts to impose their narrow interpretation of Hinduism as a state religious order, will lead to the revolt of not just the minorities, but a big section of the oppressed Hindu themselves.

... Any sane Indian who is patriotic, will find the VHP agenda reprehensible. It will be interesting to see how the BJP responds to the VHP call... The BJP cannot evade an answer. If it... camouflages its support due to electoral and judicial compulsions, then the people will easily see through the subterfuge.

(Source: The People's Democracy)

RSS, BJP and VHP's Hindu Agenda

Analyses by Amulya Ganguli

... The BJP harbours MPs in its ranks who do not agree with the party line and are not scared of letting it be known. This suggests one of two things. One is that the MPs concerned are either particularly brave or that they... are articulating a view that is secretly held in the party. In doing so, they are aware of deviating from the party's stated position on the issue but, at the same time, know that the deviation may be winked at since the possibility of a change in line is acknowledged within the organisation and widely suspected outside...

The outsider, of course, cannot know which of the two interpretations is correct. So such episodes will tend to substantiate the belief that the BJP likes to speak in two voices - one for its hard-core supporters who favour an aggressive line in the propagation of its theory and the other for those who are still doubtful about the virtues of its Hindutva policy. The switching back and forth between L.K. Advani and Atal Behari Vajpayee is seemingly in keeping with this double-track approach... The BJP is currently operating in a somewhat low key, with the moderate Vajpayee as its prime ministerial candidate rather than the more hard-line Advani since it apparently believes that the high note of the Ayodhya demolition was struck a bit earlier than was advisable.

However, this is clearly not the Vishwa Hindu Parishad's view. In fact, the recent observations of some of its leaders seem to suggest that the sangh parivar is not such a well-knit group after all. For instance, after becoming the new working president of the VHP last month, Ashok Singhal indicated that he considered the Shiv Sena's views to be closer to those of his organisation than of the BJP. He pointed out that he still had "hope in the BJP since it has a nationwide network" and had made "a beginning" on the Ramjanambhoomi issue when Kalyan Singh's government was in power in UP.

But he hinted that it was the Shiv Sena which was seemingly more ready to accept the VHP's "Hindu agenda" than the BJP. The Shiv Sena's only deficiency was that its base was limited. Not long afterwards, when the 40-point Hindu agenda was published, the VHP clarified that it would support any party which accepted it. There seems to be more in these pronouncements than the familiar double-talk... intended to confuse its opponents... The RSS, too, had at one time seemed close enough to the Congress for Balasaheb Deoras to wonder why such a "hue and cry" was being raised about the Bofors deal when it was known that "all defence deals in the country involve kickbacks and commissions". This was when the BJP was part of an Opposition alliance. ... However, the BJP's parliamentary presence at the time was minimal and Balasaheb Deoras may be pardoned for thinking that there was a better chance of the Hindu agenda being implemented by the Congress than by the BJP....

Nor was this the first time that a member of the sangh parivar had expressed a clear preference for the

Congress as opposed to the BJP. After the Congress had fared well in Jammu in the 1983 elections after a campaign waged on communal lines... K.R. Malkani, then the chief editor of *Organiser*, the sangh parivar's mouthpiece, wrote: "BJP candidates may have been defeated, but the BJP platform has won. Ideas are more important than seats. As the Hindus of Jammu saw it, the BJP could at best sit in the Opposition and articulate grievances. But the Congress could come to power and redress grievances".

It is clear, then, that the RSS, the VHP and the BJP can all pursue policies which can separately advance their own distinctive causes. It is worth noting in this context that, in a recent TV interview, Vajpayee referred to his differences with the RSS on a number of issues. As long as there were no other Right-wing parties with some support, the RSS, notwithstanding the occasional soft word about the Congress, evidently expected the BJP to implement its mandate... The situation has now changed, but in a tantalising manner in which any hasty step can spell disaster. The BJP, with its longer political experience, understands this. Hence, its "one step forward, two steps back" policy. The RSS probably also realises that it must hasten slowly. The odd man out is evidently the VHP. As a newcomer, it is impatient. ...

The RSS set it up, of course, to serve a specific purpose... (It) was expected to whip up religious fervour so that the BJP could gain. Undeniably, it did a good job in this respect (helped by Rajiv Gandhi's mistakes and the Congress' precipitous decline), but perhaps it was a bit too good. For the VHP has now developed ambitions of its own and is prepared to force the pace, reviving the old fears about the tail wagging the dog.

The Shiv Sena's success in Maharashtra has also encouraged the VHP, for it is clearly more a party after its own heart than the circumspect BJP. What we may be witnessing, therefore, is the appearance of an extended sangh parivar. True, the parivar has not exactly been a closed entity. The BJP, for instance, has been quite indiscriminate in admitting members... The result has been its so-called Congressisation...

... The VHP's Hindu agenda, however, represents an ideological challenge... These developments show that there are some in the parivar who not only consider the BJP to be not Rightist enough, but can speak about leaving the party or agitating against it or associating with more Right-wing organisations if the need arises.

The communist experience is instructive in this context. The undivided Communist Party split in 1964 because some of its members thought it was not revolutionary enough, and then the CPI(M) split in 1969 because the Naxalites wanted the party to move even further to the left. The end result has been the weakening of the Left movement in India. It is too early to say whether a similar fate will overtake the Rightists as well....

(Source: *The Indian Express*, 24 January, 1996)

Ausaf Saied Vasfi on Muslim Representation in the Next Lok Sabha

The plural character of Indian polity hinges today on 80 to 100 Lok Sabha Muslim concentration constituencies, where minority population is predominant to the extent that either a really secular Hindu or a sober Muslim contestant can easily win there.

... Through deft play, good Muslim presence in the House of 525 can be assured. But it requires imagination, strategy and astuteness.

Avoid Vote Split

The success of the minority candidates chiefly depends upon the failure of the saffron brigade to split Muslim vote. Otherwise the success of communal forces is assured at the hustings, and in New Delhi as well.

Probably there is no dispute among the National Front-Left Front constituents and the Congress-I on the question of Muslim representation in the Lok Sabha. If so, why not a tacit understanding between the National Front-Left Front and the Congress that Muslim vote shall not be allowed to split. Maybe the National Front-Left Front agree to the proposition. ... This is the minimum to demonstrate earnestness towards Muslims by the Muslims.

(Despite a) genuine grouse (against Congress(I), the Muslims have lost sight of the saffron... threat looming over their already battered heads and the national horizon.

The Muslim minority can reconsider its electoral preference provided the Party makes due amends; its President sincerely expresses regret to Muslims for his inexplicable lapses and make a firm commitment to abide by the final verdict of the Supreme Court, which the Muslims, unlike the Parivarists, say, will honour... This is the minimum the Muslim minority expects from the Congress before they commit their electoral preference.

... Mr. Rao's current strategy to woo Muslims is both queer and interesting. When the front rank Muslim leadership, despite repeated official coaxings, refused to accommodate his biased, unjust views, he contacted the second and third rank leadership of the minority, represented by a few nondescript Imams, Muezzins, Mujawirs and Mutawallis. Mr. Rao must know these faceless entities, mostly the keepers of Mazars and Dargahs, stand nowhere near the electorate. He is just wasting money on them.

As far as his schemes to win over Muslims are concerned, these suffer from a fatal flaw... They seek to deliberately ignore or sidetrack the "key-issue". Without removing Muslims "basic" grievance, no plan aimed at their upliftment would carry conviction with their bruised psyche.

As an explanation of the "key-issue" or "basic grievance" it has to be plainly stated that ... the willful destruction of Babari Masjid was not a mere dilapidation of a "ramshackle, moth-eaten structure, of crumbling walls". It was a calculated assault on the Muslim self-esteem, their religion, culture, history and psyche. It was an essay in subjugating them and bludgeoning them into submission. The Congress abetted this crime against minority by indirectly collaborating with the criminals. First, undo this perfidy... Then, think about peripheral, secondary things.

There is no difference of opinion between the traditional Muslim leadership and young leadership of Muslims on any issue, much less on this crucial issue. The ruling party at the Centre is misleading itself and others by alleging that the younger generation of Muslims is "prepared to forget the Ayodhya wound" and is "eager to join the national mainstream". This is self-delusion, self-deception - pure and simple.

The ... Congress spokesperson want the nation to believe that the post-1950 Muslim generation wants to live with "dignity and self-respect" by not insisting upon the restoration and reconstruction of the Babari Masjid at its original site...

Mr. Jaffer Sharief's exit from the cabinet has, once again, focused attention on Muslim attitude towards the Congress. Now there is renewed talk of accelerating the minority welfare schemes.

... The former Railway Minister had only warned against duplicity and hypocrisy... If this is harsh and unpalatable, what can one do? So has, unfortunately or otherwise, now been done by the high-profile Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. Salman Khurshid, who is (dis)credited with the view that the mood of the minority community is still not favourable towards the Congress despite efforts to woo them back into the party fold... Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad said the other day in Hyderabad that the Congress-I led Central Government shall tender an apology to Muslims if it could help salvage their hurt sentiments.

The Congress faction led by Mr. Rao refuses to read (the writing) on the wall.

In the meantime, Muslims themselves should work out the permutations and combinations... It is their existence as a self-respecting entity of plural Bharat that is at stake. They can make their presence felt in the House of 525 by returning between 80 to 100 Parliamentarians after elections to the 11th Lok Sabha.

(Source: The Radiance Viewswweekly, 17 December, 1995)

Asghar Ali Engineer on Muslim Vote

Now that the general elections are slated to be held in April it has become quite urgent for various parties to court Muslims. It is generally thought, and rightly so, that the Muslim vote can make a vital difference. All secular parties, and even parties like the BJP try to woo the Muslims. Generally the BJP fails to make it and hence comes out with dubious theories like 'appeasement of Muslims' by the secular parties. But it also wants the Muslims to vote for it. However, there are serious limits to which it can go to woo Muslim voters.

First, the BJP is tied to the RSS which is a proponent of Hindu Rashtra. It cannot break this connection. This completely puts off the Muslim voters. Second, the BJP has created a hard core believing firmly in the Hindutva philosophy. Whenever it relaxes on its commitment to the Hindutva ideology, this hard core revolts and threatens the leadership....

The fact that the BJP tries to woo Muslim voters is proved by its recent attempts to attract Muslims through slogans like "Talim, Tijarat and Tarbiyat" (education, commerce and training). It told the Muslims that the Congress only tried to appease them without doing anything and that it would try to provide them the opportunities for education, commerce and training in various fields. The BJP came out with this slogan immediately after the Assembly elections in Maharashtra in early 1995 in which the Shiv Sena-BJP alliance captured power and a small section of the Muslims - about five per cent - voted for the alliance. This raised the BJP's hope of attracting a greater percentage of the Muslim vote. It is quite true that the Congress woos the Muslims without doing much for them in concrete terms. It does try to use the Muslims as its vote bank though it does not always succeed in it. The Congress is not sincerely committed to the welfare of Muslims. It announces some programmes on the election eve and once the elections are over, everything is forgotten. This is very clearly proved by the lackluster manner in which the 15-point programme... has been implemented. ...

Of course, the Congress tries to woo the Muslims in other ways too. The issue of Imams' salary is another instance. First the Government announced that it will pay the Imams. When it faced criticism it quietly announced that it was for the wakf boards to pay the Imams. Another issue is reservation. The Union Welfare Minister, Mr. Sitaram Kesri, was fielded to say that the Muslims also deserved reservation. He said this at a conference convened by Syed Shahabuddin and others in Delhi on the reservation issue and this was when the elections were near. The Muslim masses very well understand such games...

In the post-Babari Masjid demolition period there has been a great change in the attitude of Muslims. They no longer respond emotionally to various issues as they did before December 6, 1992... Emotional appeals are now

ignored.

It is heartening that the Muslims in general have realised that their future lies in making sincere efforts to improve their lot through education and economic progress. Many organisations have sprung up in the last couple of years to promote education and economic well being. Some Muslim intellectuals are also trying to promote social reforms. Though they may not succeed right away, they will certainly succeed in creating an awareness and even a sense of urgency.

Today it is much more difficult to sway the Muslims by throwing some emotional bait before them. Thus it is important to see which way the Muslim vote will go. One thing is however, certain. Muslims continue to be deeply alienated from the Congress in general. It is mostly on account of the soft attitude of the Narasimha Rao Government has towards the Hindutva forces on the one hand, and, its neglect of concrete Muslim problems. on the other. The Congress will find it very difficult, though not impossible, to induce the Muslims to vote for it. It will be very difficult at least in the northern States to attract Muslim vote...

It is utterly simplistic to say that the Muslims have been a vote-bank for any party whether it "appeases" them or not. Muslim masses have voted very intelligently right from the first general elections in 1952... It is also not true that there is any all India pattern in Muslim voting. It can and does change from region to region. In the south too there is variation in Muslim voting from State to State. But whenever there is a general trend or wave in the country in favour of some party or the other the Muslims also vote accordingly... The Muslims prefer whichever party the people of India prefer...

It is too early to say how the Muslims would vote in the coming Lok Sabha elections. Much will depend on unity in the National Front-Left Front. If there is viable unity, the Muslims might opt for it. It is my opinion that in the post-Babari Masjid demolition period, the Hindu masses are also looking for a viable alternative to both the Congress and the BJP. But if there is no unity in the NF-LF, the Muslims will vote differently in different States. They may vote for Mr. Mulayam Singh's party in UP, for the Janata Dal in Bihar and Karnataka, for the Congress in MP, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Gujarat, for the CPI(M) in West Bengal, for the Muslim League and the CPI(M)-led front in Kerala, for the Telugu Desam in Andhra Pradesh, for the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu and the Asom Gana Parishad in Assam. There may not be any all India pattern at all. However, there is likely to be variations according to the credibility of the candidates too. Gone are the days when people voted as per directives. They are now acutely aware of the political situation and vote quite intelligently according to their own perceptions.

(Source: The Hindu, 23 January, 1996)

Shahabuddin, National Convener, Insaf Morcha's Statement

On Milli Parliament, 1 January, 1996

The so-called Milli Parliament organised by Mr. Rashid Shaz, the self-appointed director of the Institute of Islamic Affairs, Aligarh, has no permanent membership and it considers anyone who comes to its meeting as a 'delegate'. This is nothing more than a paper organisation which serves only to bolster the ego of its founder. Had the sponsoring Institute held an annual conference to discuss the problem of the Muslim Indians, it would perhaps be useful upto a point. But to call it a 'Parliament' is both a joke and a tragedy.

A misconceived endeavour, it hurts the larger interest of the Muslim Indians by providing grist to the mills of anti-Muslim propaganda by the mass media and especially by the Hindu organisations. On one hand, it serves no purpose for the Muslims, on the other hand it makes them a target of hostility and suspicion.

The proclaimed purpose of the so-called Milli Parliament is to 'liberate Muslim community of India from the political slavery of the Mushrikeen (non-Muslims)'. This leads to a direct collision with the Constitution and political framework of our country. Even assuming that the so-called Bill to be adopted by the Milli Parliament contains a set of fair and legitimate demands of the Muslim community, why should any political party pay any heed to such a charter adopted by an organisation which calls upon the Muslims to reject political guidance and seeks to challenge the legitimacy of the system? How will the Milli Parliament then achieve its objective? By waging a war and by proclaiming a Jihad against the State? Shall Mr. Shaz inform the community of his chosen method or programme?

The brochure issued by the institute questions the utility of elections and calls upon the Muslim Indians not to respect the laws of the country. It appeals to them to 'capture power to ensure their future'. The establishment of Muslim power in India is nothing more than a wild dream and a result of confused thinking and of misunderstanding the spirit of the time.

I demand that Mr. Shaz disclose the names of the permanent members of his Parliament and of his financiers and foreign patrons and associates.

I call upon the Muslim community to reject such adventurers and such carpet-tigers and pseudo-mujahideen and boycott the so-called Milli Parliament which should be exposed as an anti-Muslim and anti-Indian enterprise, financed by forces which are hostile to the country and do not care about the genuine interests of the community.

The constitution of Pakistan itself does not say that Kashmir is part of this country (Pakistan)

- Dr Sher Afghan
Special education and social welfare minister of Pakistan

Imam's Emoluments Editorial, The Patriot

The Centre has said at last that the Imams and Muezzins working in mosques in the country will be paid their salaries and remuneration by the State waqf boards and the Union Government would have nothing to do with it... Arrangement of funds for the purpose would be made by the waqf boards themselves under the provisions of the waqf law... There can be no justification for spending from the government treasury for meeting the financial requirements of religious shrines, irrespective of the faith they may represent...

It surely is the State's responsibility to ensure smooth functioning of the waqf boards and the Centre's efforts in this direction are welcome. If the issue had been allowed to fester for some more times, particularly when the parliamentary elections are round the corner, it would have been exploited for electoral gains. Mr. Kesri's clarification should set at rest the misgivings the ministers' previous statements on the subject had created.

Muslims and Congress in UP

The Congress has come out a cropper in its effort to win over the crucial support of the Muslim community before the Lok Sabha elections in the most important State of the Hindi heartland.

Two functions specially organised in the past six months to win over Muslim support evoked strong protests from them as they are apparently not in a mood to forgive the party for the demolition of the Babari mosque in Ayodhya.... In fact Muslim leaders see a game in these efforts also. According to them the Congress was aiming to divide the Bareilvis and Deobandis to win over the support of the former, which was a large group in terms of their population...

The various conferences held in the State capital in the recent past have also seen fraying tempers of the leaders against the Congress party specially Mr. Narasimha Rao. Besides, the All India Muslim Personal Law Board has rejected the proposal of giving salaries to the Imams. Some of the Muslim leaders feel that the Congress should have taken some serious measures for the economic and social welfare of Muslim community instead of depending on any religious leader.

Muslims first got alienated from the Congress in 1989 when the then Congress Government had granted permission for the shilanyas of the Ayodhya temple. Still a section of them continued to support the Congress till the demolition of Babari Mosque. In the 1991 general elections the Muslims supported the Janata Dal but after the demolition of the mosque, they turned towards SP leader Mulayam Singh Yadav. From 1993 elections in UP till today they continue to support Mulayam Singh Yadav and appear to be in no mood to go back to the Congress fold. The... condition of the Congress in the State is also one of the reasons for alienation as they feel that the party was not in a position to defeat the BJP.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 3 January, 1996)

Shahabuddin's Reply to Muslim Super-Secularists

A Rejoinder to Seema Mustafa

I must confess that the argument of Seema Mustafa's article "Muslims, Secularism and Secular Parties" in your issue of January 6, 1996 is not clear even to an initiated reader like myself.

Much before December 6, 1992 dawned, the year 1971 constituted a psychological watershed for the Muslim Indians and since then their rejection of pan-Islamic rhetoric of the orthodox Right and their commitment to secular politics have never been in doubt. The demolition of the Babari Masjid came as a shock and caused agony to the Muslim Indians because they had rightly put their faith in the efficacy of the secular order, based on equality and justice and supported by the rule of law. It is, therefore, not that on December 6, 1992 Muslim Indians suddenly woke up to the imperative of the secular order for a religious minority.

The Muslim Indians with the exception of Kerala, which has very special circumstances of its own, are not known to have voted for any Muslim political party or its candidates even in Muslim concentrated constituencies since 1971. However, the fact remains that as a target community they look upon the Muslim components of the leadership of secular parties - at national, regional or State levels - and Muslim MPs and MLAs of such parties for the defence of their legitimate interests and the articulation of their genuine grievances in an increasingly communalised environment. The fact also remains that most of such persons failed to come up to the expectations of the community because, in order to ingratiate themselves with other leaders of their parties and to project themselves as secular, they became ultra-secular. For them even to ventilate a genuine grievance or to suggest a remedial measure to meet the situation became a taboo. Herein lies the genesis of the disenchantment of the Muslim masses with the so-called Muslim leadership which, I repeat, is nothing more than the sum total of the Muslim component in the leadership of various political parties. This discontent of late has been transferred to the secular parties, in the government or in the Opposition, and even to the secular order itself.

Leadership is an organic growth: it does not drop from the heavens or sprout from the earth overnight. All efforts by the government and by secularists like Seema Mustafa in the aftermath of the tragedy of December 6, 1992, to support and substitute, and even to supplement, the traditional leadership have failed. Official patronage, generous facilities and conveniences, financial flows, statements in seminars and symposia, and articles in intellectual journals do not create an alternative leadership. So, the old guard, whatever their failing, is back in business and the secular parties are busy making

deals with them on the eve of the general election. In fact, the system has given birth to a new generation of vote-brokers whose services are being engaged resulting in such fiascoes as witnessed in Barilly, Darbhanga and Kanpur.

When there is a demand, there is a supply. And our intellectual secularists including academicians and journalists, bearing Muslim names, are not above washing their hands in the waters of the flowing Ganga. In the process, even the Ulema who are largely secluded in the seminaries have come to the fore and are being feted and feasted in five-star comfort, dressed up and presented in the court of the Raja as well as those of the pretenders as the delivery-men for Muslim votes. As to the visible promotion of education and employment, one welcomes it but that does not relieve the secular government and the secular parties and the self-appointed champions of the secular order from the duty and responsibility of fulfilling the legitimate demand for more schools in Muslim concentrated areas and more jobs for the Muslim youth. But even the educational trend among Muslims predates 1992, since we are yet to be advised and any serious initiative taken officially or privately after December 6, 1992.

Seema Mustafa has been silent on educational facilities and resolutely opposed to reservation in public employment. However, she has not stated how she proposes to bring the unemployment among the educated unemployed Muslim youth, short of reservation, down at least to the level of the national average. Why does she fight shy of demanding more primary, middle and secondary schools, more ITCs, more ITIs, more polytechnics in Muslim concentration panchayats, blocks and districts?

Seema Mustafa tries to blame the Muslim communities for the private - and in some cases government - inspired and perhaps also Sangh sponsored - endeavour to keep the Babari Masjid pot boiling through the Muslim mainstream consensus is to keep it on the back-burner and to press for expeditious adjudication and to wait for the judicial verdict but not to sign away the Masjid-site. She names shadowy organisations which are trying to fill the agitation vacuum but do not represent the community.

Seema Mustafa also articulates a very dangerous thought. If every articulation of Muslim grievances and any demand for remedial measures within the bounds of the law and Constitution will help the Sangh Parivar, then should the Muslim Indians and their well-wishers take a vow of silence? In a democracy only the creaking wheel

(Contd. on page 119)

Harbans Mukhia on Secular Ferment in Muslims

If one phrase could capture the mind of the Indian Muslims since independence, it would perhaps be 'siege mentality'. Almost everyone concerned with the Muslim community contributed to this mentality. The orthodox Muslim leadership, symbolised today in Imam Bukhari and Ayed Shahabuddin, revelled in projecting the image of the community as if it were on the brink of collapse. The liberal Muslim intelligentsia reinforced the 'community in decline' picture by harping on the decline of Urdu and the under-representation of Muslims in government jobs. The Congress could feel secure about the Muslim vote by forever bringing home to the community the RSS sword hanging over its head. And the RSS and its family members could turn around Congress 'projection' to the Muslims as pampering them. The Left parties contested communalism, but they were frequently willing to underrate minority communalism and the problems it created for the Muslim community itself.

The dominant premise of this scenario may be termed the politics of visible symbols. Each group imaged the community either in decline or being overly favoured in terms of the number of heads in high flying positions. The high degree of its stratification, like in the other communities, was consequently overlooked. Had that been taken into account, both the propositions of its uniform decline or universal pampering would have appeared as dubious. Like their other fellow Indians, a small segment of the Muslims has done exceedingly well for itself since Independence, a large chunk lives below the poverty line and the largest portion lives in between.

'Pampering' too has brought affluence and recognition to an infinitesimal number of Muslim individuals and families, though, like with the other communities, not always well merited. If the Muslim percentage in government jobs does not square with their demographic strength, it does not by itself substantiate the image of the community in an economic crisis, for the economy's reach surely is immensely greater than government jobs. Nor indeed has Urdu suffered the kind of decline attributed to it. To take just one example, the number of Urdu newspapers and journals in 1958 was 185; in 1990 it had risen to 2003. Their circulation too had risen from 4.4 lacs to 25.4 lacs. In both years the Urdu papers were next only to those of Hindi and English in numbers and in circulation.

The twin images of decline and pampering are two sides of the same coin, though with an in-built tension. It was this tension which led to the demolition of the Babari Masjid at Ayodhya on December 6, 1992. In the immediate aftermath of December 6 what was most feared was the withdrawal of the Muslims into insular shells in a sullen mood. What really has happened is the

contrary: the community at large is, in a silent ferment, challenging the dichotomy itself, its massive participation in the elections in the wake of the Ayodhya events, and owning up the political process through which it could change governments, is one manifestation of its response.

In the late 1940s and early '50s, in the context of the country's partition along communal divide, many Muslims who rose high in India did so by virtually erasing their religious identity publicly, like Dilip Kumar, Meena Kumar and Madhubala ... Today, Shahrukh Khan and Aamir Khan wouldn't think of sacrificing their names and their Muslim identity at the altar of success. A similar change is noticeable even at the lower rungs of society. The number of scooter rickshaws flaunting khuda hafiz or the number 786 ... in Delhi is impressive. ...

The mass of Muslims is thus quietly breaking out of the straitjackets in which the working of Indian polity over the past nearly five decades had tied them. They have shown a definitive will to face modern life's challenges as they come, instead of brooding over the issues of the masjid and the triple talaq. In doing so they erode not merely the leadership of their own community which had thrived on constructing the fear of ever-impending doom; they are also rewriting the digits of Indian politics, including BJP's politics. ...

Indeed, the whole spectrum of the Indian political scene has repeatedly given out signals that it wished to look to the future rather than the past. ...

(Source: The Times of India, 22 January, 1996)

(Contd. from page 118)

gets the oil and if the target community is silent, one does not see even the most secular parties coming to their rescue. But her thought perhaps represents the electoral strategy of some secular parties which wish to run with the hare and hunt with the hound and do not wish even to pay lip-service to the cause of defence of minority interests - an essential element of the secular order - for fear of losing "Hindu" votes. These parties do not realise that the "Hindu" votes are already lost to them, but the "Hindu" votes do not constitute a majority yet and if such parties wish to keep their Muslim support, they have to tread the path of truth and justice. They cannot win wholehearted endorsement of the Muslim masses (or of any oppressed section) in a democracy by looking the other way, maintaining eloquent silence and pushing the ugly under the carpet.

In the last sentence, Seema Mustafa has seemingly recognised that the Muslim Indians have some legitimate aspirations. Will she spell them out and call upon the secular fraternity at least to use them as window-dressing for their manifestos? In the circumstances that will be solace enough.

(Source: The Mains'ream, 17 February, 1996)

The Somnath Temple and the Congress as the Voice of Hindu Cultural Nationalism Bhagwan Josh in the Indian Express, 24 December, 1995

On December 1, amidst the chanting of Vedic mantras, President Shankar Dayal Sharma performed the Kalash Parishthan of the Somnath Temple's Nritya Mandap and dedicated the temple to the nation. Thus, the reconstruction process which began in 1948 has been completed... In 1948, the process of reconstruction of this temple precipitated a serious crisis in the Cabinet as the move was sharply opposed by Jawaharlal Nehru... who had understood this move in terms of the rise of Hindu communalism.

Surprisingly, this time the event has passed almost unnoticed. No secular political party or a group, despite their articulation of Nehruvian discourse, thought it fit to criticise the President (and by implication the Prime Minister) for presiding over the ceremony. The 'event'... was considered so ordinary that no leading newspaper from Delhi carried the news of this ceremony on its front page. Very clearly, a significant shift has occurred in the perception of the nation as a whole. But does this convey any important message? In other words, how should one decode the symbolism embedded in this silence of national consensus? Does it tell us anything about the cultural complexion of the Indian nation today?

... For a section of the national movement the cultural impulse for temple renovation was umbilically linked with the political project of India's Independence. On November 12, 1947, Sardar Patel accompanied by Jam Saheb and Kaka Saheb Gadgil, went to Junagarh. It was, precisely, then that the idea of temple reconstruction was mooted. According to K.M. Munshi, though the Government sponsored the scheme, Patel decided that it should not make any contribution in the form of money for the temple reconstruction. In 1949, Patel appealed for public contributions to rebuild the temple of Somnath.

Sardar Patel, K.M. Munshi and their other friends were fully aware of the meanings of the motion associated with the temple reconstruction. On 25 December 1947, the State Ministry decided to request the Junagarh authorities to lease a sufficiently large area around the temple. On 23 January 1949, a conference was held at Jamnagar which was attended by Patel, Gadgil, Jam Saheb, Dhebar, Chief Minister of Saurashtra and Samaldas Gandhi, administrator of Junagarh. The trust, which was to supervise the overall planning and construction was to consist of two representatives of the Government of India and two representatives of the Government of Saurashtra. The restoration of the temple was interpreted by Munshi, a Minister in Nehru's government, as a 'national urge'. He ascribes to Patel an 'uncanny insight' in being able to see that "we would

never genuinely feel that freedom had come, nor develop faith in our future unless Somnath was restored".

Nehru was unhappy with the way the function to inaugurate the temple was being given 'a politico-religious colour'. Nehru tried, in vain, to dissuade the President, Rajendra Prasad, from associating himself... Writing to chief ministers in 1951 about the impending ceremonies at Somnath, Nehru observed that some of his colleagues were associated with it "in their individual capacities", and the Government of India as such had "nothing to do with it". He told them that he recognised a certain measure of public support to this 'venture'. But then observed: "... we have to remember that we must not do anything which comes in the way of our state being secular".

During this critical period, Nehru wrote to his friends that communalism was invading the minds and hearts of the Congressmen. Was the Congress turning into a communal organisation as asserted by Nehru? Perhaps what was happening was that large number of Congressmen were finding it difficult to maintain the strict division between 'culture' and 'politics' as required by the discourse of secularism. Because, in their heart of hearts, many were equally convinced that the Congress now could and should legitimately reflect the cultural pride of the Hindus without having pangs of guilt. In their eyes, having a legitimate pride in one's own cultural traditions was very much a part of nationalism, i.e., "cultural nationalism", and "political nationalism" went hand-in-hand. But once the cultural aspirations were driven underground in the name of "communalism" the Congress could not possibly be an adequate vehicle for the expression of Hindu cultural hegemony. Before the partition many of these Congressmen could understand the rationale of keeping the discourse of "culture" underground as the pragmatic need of the Congress policy of uniting with the Muslims demanded this. But after the partition they could not but have perceived such attitudes as self-imposed censorship.

Under Nehru, Congress as an organisation ceased to become a significant vehicle of Hindu cultural identity. People like Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, the erstwhile president of the Hindu Mahasabha, realised that for people like him there was no place in the Congress. This was the background which gave birth to an organisation such as the Jana Sangh. But the problem was that it could not evolve a more radical social programme of national development as compared to the Congress....

Beyond a particular point, as we know, the cultural

(Contd. on page 127)

Government Statements

On Autonomy to J&K

In the recent past, different ideas and suggestions have been given by individuals and groups on issues like Autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir. In this context the Prime Minister had made a statement on 4 November, 1995 in which, while urging upon the people of Jammu & Kashmir to take a determined stand against terrorists and to help restore a representative government, he reiterated the commitment of the Government not only to maintain the special status of the State under the Article 370 of the Constitution but also to strengthen within the Constitution the autonomy of the State keeping in view the aspirations of the people belonging to all the regions of the state. The commitment of the Government to fully implement the Agreement reached in 1975 between the Centre and the State was also reiterated along with a further statement that the Government would have no objection to the restoration of nomenclatures of 'Wazir-e-Azam' and 'Sadar-e-Riyasat' if the state legislature were to take action for amending the State Constitution for the purpose. The Government have continued to maintain that it is open to dialogue and discussions with various individuals and groups with the aim of building up an environment, and further consolidating the improved situation in the State, so that peace and normalcy can be restored and a democratic and representative government brought about through free and fair elections at the earliest. Such dialogue and discussions could also include issues pertaining to the question of autonomy as mentioned in the Statement of the Prime Minister. The Government shall continue to follow this approach and pursue its efforts towards achieving the above objective and there shall be no let-up in the efforts in this regard.

(Source: LSUQ No. 250 dated 28 February, 1996 by P.R. Bhardwaj)

On OIC Stand

There is some change in the stand of the countries of OIC on Jammu and Kashmir in the recent past. ... Government have taken a number of steps to apprise the member countries OIC regarding the situation in Jammu and Kashmir and the involvement of Pakistan in terrorism and militancy in the state. These included a briefing of the government authorities in these countries at highest possible level, and briefing of ambassadors of these countries based in Delhi by the Ministry of External Affairs followed by an aide memoire through our missions in the respective countries as well as their missions in New Delhi. External Affairs also wrote to his counterparts in a number of OIC countries, highlighting the external inspiration and support to terrorism and militancy in J&K. Government have also taken steps to brief suitably legislators, media, scholars, think-tanks and various other opinion-makers in these countries, apart from disseminating factual information on a continuous basis to these countries on facts regarding the situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

(Source:LSUQ No.1205,11 March, 1996)

Govt. Statement On President of Pakistan's New Year Greeting Card, New Delhi, 2 Feb., 1996

The new year greeting cards received by President and Prime Minister from the President of Pakistan carried a photograph of a scene of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. Foreign Secretary called in the High Commissioner of Pakistan to convey India's strong resentment at the discourtesy shown to President and Prime Minister by including such a photograph in the cards.

NATION AND THE WORLD

Nation and the World is a magazine for a cause, the cause of the underdog, the underprivileged. What the others summarily dismiss as the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Backwards and the minorities, *Nation and the World* takes up cudgels on their behalf, articulates their fears, hopes and aspirations. Giving a voice to Muslims and Dalits, and helping in shaping tomorrow's world by crusading for today's oppressed.

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Edited By Saiyid Hamid
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The Jammu Declaration by the Assembly of J&K Leaders and Intellectuals Jammu, 7-8 May, 1995

1. The Assembly expresses anguish and shock on the present state of affairs caused by kidnapping, killing, bomb blasts and failure of the State Administration to establish its authority and provide protection to the lives and property of the innocent people.
 2. Urges the revival of democratic institutions in the State.
 3. Expresses solidarity with all efforts to find a solution to all problems through an unconditional dialogue and discussion with all shades of political opinions in J&K... and calls on all political parties to respond to this call to prove their sincerity and commitment for the welfare and development of all the three regions of the State and press for equitable development of all the three regions.
 4. Calls on the people to openly condemn all such acts of kidnapping, killings, arson in the name of so-called struggle for Azadi, which amount to violation and infringement of civil, political, economic and social rights of the people.
 5. Condemns the foreign mercenaries and the angry youth for criminal acts, calls on the Kashmir youth to dissociate from guns and violence and take political platform for the redressal of their genuine grievances through discussion, dialogue and democratic means and methods, as the gun culture and ... fundamentalism are against the spirit of Kashmiriyat...
 6. Feels that J&K is a national political problem that needs political solution and neither guns of the militants nor military solution is any answer to the problem of J&K...
 7. Urges the Prime Minister to convene a meeting of the representatives of J&K Leaders representing all political parties in order to work out a consensus to seek a final settlement of all issues and problems including those related to the people of the three regions. Hails PM's offer to grant maximum autonomy to J&K minus Azadi and invite Hurriyat leaders to join the political parties for discussion.
 8. Urges law and order authorities to act strictly in accordance with the principles of natural justice, rule of law and respect for fundamental rights. Condemns all acts of violation of rule of law by both the security forces and the militants.
 9. Urges the release of political prisoners who are not involved in any serious offence to start a confidence building process and the speedy trial of all other prisoners.
 10. Expresses serious concern on the plight of migrants living in the most tragic situation in various refugee camps and urges the safe, secure and honourable return of all migrants to their homes.
- Appeals to all sections of the society to preserve communal harmony, unity and brotherhood and to defeat the ugly designs of the enemies of the State.

The Hindustan Times Situation Report

The completion of six years of Central rule in Jammu and Kashmir last week went unnoticed for there were no achievements worth recalling.

Militancy, the main target during this period, is yet to be completely neutralised. And whether the State is ready for Assembly polls is a matter of intense debate.

Since January 19, 1990 when the Central rule was imposed in the State after the National Conference-Congress coalition Government headed by Farooq Abdullah quit in protest against the reappointment of Jagmohan as Governor, holding of fresh elections has become a moot point.

That Jammu and Kashmir is still not ideally suited for holding polls in spite of the fact that it is the only State in the entire country to have remained under the Central rule for such a long period is because there were "inconsistencies in the policy on Kashmir throughout this period", political analysts say.

Over all these years, there were inherent contradictions in fighting militancy and restoring normalcy. If there were occasions when it appeared that the Government was following "bullet for bullet policy", on others it was more than apparent that Government was bending in front of the secessionists.

The burning down of Charar-e-Sharif shrine last year was demonstrative of this conflicting approach. First, the militants entry into the holy town was not checked, then there was a cordon to force the militants to come out. Neither the shrine could be saved nor the militants could be arrested.

In all fairness, it can be easily said about Governor K. V. Krishna Rao that he has attempted to adopt a single line object of curbing militancy. It was during his period in October-November, 1993 when the Hazratbal imbroglio was resolved in a manner which dealt a severe psychological blow to the militants. It shattered faith of the people in the secessionists as they started asking questions as to why they (militants) had to "surrender when the people were killed in dozens". It was an obvious reference to October 22, 1993 Bijbehara massacre which claimed 37 lives and left 70 others wounded.

The resolution of Hazratbal crisis which distanced people from militants, has been often described as a "turning point" in... Kashmir.

In spite of this ... the militancy now has started rearing its head in Jammu region. Doda presents a dreadful example of that.

A relentless fight against militancy at the cost of other core problems in the State has seen unprecedented rise in corruption....

Bureaucrats... are not interested in the revival of the democracy. "Everything is going well, why should there be an elected Government and a jumbo size Ministry to rule over us, ultimately we run the Government," a senior officer holding a key position in the Government said...

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 26 January, 1996)

I.K. Gujral on Kashmir Problem

... The 'Hurriyat' leaders have after years of turmoil and violence, seen merit in establishing offices in Delhi and Jammu to initiate a dialogue with various segments of the national polity and also to listen to the differing viewpoints. This may make them realise, if they had not seen that already, that neither the gun nor canvassing with Pakistan or any other outside power can bail them out of this self-inflicted agony. In the words of a poet:

"Gairon Se Kaha Tum Ne
Gairon Se Suna Tum Ne
Kabhi Hum Se Kaha Hota
Kabhi Hum Se Suna Hota"

(You have frequently talked and listened to others. It might have helped if you had talked and listened to us too).

(Hurriyat) offers a "simple alternative (for) a meaningful and peaceful dialogue between all contending parties with the help of the World Body or any friendly country..."

The President, the Prime Minister, Ms. Bhutto, Mr. Nawaz Sharif and Mr. Abdul Qayoom of the Occupied Kashmir had told me separately that the contentious issue concerned only Pakistan and India. "The issue (they had told me) is bilateral and not trilateral". Therefore, asking for a trilateral meeting is neither acceptable to India nor even to Pakistan. Now would any political party permit a third party intervention that was ruled out in the Simla Agreement.

... A diverse Indian society is not a bonded vote bank of any political party, nor is it committed to a single point of view. But all are united to preserve the nation's secular unity. Our accommodative and resilient democracy has often made adjustments and there is no reason to believe that the valid and secular aspirations of the Kashmiri people cannot find their space in this polity. ...

... Their opening the office... must be responded to with the needed sympathy and understanding. Postponement of the polls, for whatever reason, provides an opportunity for initiating a helpful dialogue at some level or the other.

A prudent leadership that includes all parties need not be rigid and insist on preservation of the status quo. The Opposition parties have now received a call for assistance. They must.. help in fording the agonising chasms of alienation.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 7 December, 1995)

(contd. from page 109)

10. It must uphold the unity and integrity of the country.

It is good for us to note that no party is going to qualify fully for our choice on the basis of the guidelines. The guidelines are given in a clear and sharp way to present the Christian vision without any vagueness. But we can choose the party which fulfils these conditions

Iqbal A. Ansari on Kashmir Problem

... For the Muslims of Kashmir, their Islamic identity may find legitimacy in this scheme. But they have to ensure that the democratic rights of non-Muslim Kashmiris to live in freedom and dignity as equals are not curtailed in the process.

It is in this context that Indian Muslims can be expected to play a role in the resolution of the conflict. By deciding to be pragmatic they can contribute towards a just and peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute. This will once and for all heal the festering wound of partition.

The rest of India for its part must... destigmatise Muslims from the supposed sins of medieval monarchs and partition and deal with them with an attitude of trust. Unless this is done they will not feel reassured and confident enough to play a normal role in the subcontinent. Besides, Indian nationalism must not be defined in terms of one particular religious or even secular culture based on the motto "one nation, one people, one culture. This is bound to cause resentment among the non-dominant groups, especially in Kashmir. Each group's identity will have to be recognized both in law and in reality.

(Since) Muslims are not here on sufferance, policy-makers in India should also realize that while no fundamentalist outfit can be allowed legitimacy in politics, to deny it a public role in the socio-cultural life of the Muslims is proving counter-productive. A greater sense of discrimination would be required to differentiate between the different shades of fundamentalism and to be able to judge what is valid and what is not.

By ensuring an honorable place to Muslims in the Indian state, it will be possible to revive the hope that Kashmiri Muslims can still seek their destiny within a federal/confederal India. It is also possible for Muslims in Kashmir as well as the rest of India to evolve a culture based on the humanist tradition of Islam, one which will partake of both... Sufism steeped in love and tolerance and the ... Shariat... up-holding justice and mercy.

(Source: The AIM, November, 1995)

most. The choice depends entirely on the freedom of the individual.

In conclusion, while trying to provide guidelines for the coming Election, we take opportunity of encouraging our lay people, to take an active part in the political and public life of the nation. As we prepare ourselves for the General Election, we call upon the Catholic Community to begin a campaign of prayer.

Once more we make a fervent appeal to our lay people who have a special charism for the political fields, so that they can assist members of the Catholic community to exercise their franchise in this critical period of our nation's history.

Ajit Bhattacharjea on Kashmir Situation

More than six years of insurgency and counter-insurgency has left its grim mark on Kashmir. Killings, rapes, abductions, torture, have been commonplace. Insurgents have paralysed normal life by burning bridges, schools and public buildings, and by threatening to kill anyone who fails to go along. Some are criminal groups, led by foreigners. The security forces have responded with harsh searches, occasionally providing opportunities for molestation and theft, in which... suspect is taken away and interrogated; something he fails to return or his corpse is discovered elsewhere...

Winning the hearts and minds of the people has been given the lowest priority by the insurgents as well as the security forces. Fear is the primary weapon to gain dominance. Casualties have been heavy; some 40,000 according to the insurgents. More than 6,500 of them have been killed, according to official sources. The extent of violence can be gauged from the fact that in six years, the toll has overtaken and far exceeded casualties in the quarter century old insurgency in Northern Ireland. It continues to be pushed higher every day.

It is against this background that the latest proposal for unconditional talks, without the participation of Pakistan, by four Kashmiri militant leaders must be evaluated. Such an offer by leading figures in what were once hardline militant organisations - Hizbul Mujahideen, Muslim Janbaz Force, Al Barq and Muslim Mujahideen - indicates a significant change of attitude...

For several months, there have been indications that the insurgents in the Valley, as well as their supporters, were tiring. In contrast, the security forces were being constantly strengthened...

... It would be a mistake, however, to assume that they will now embrace an unchanged relationship with India. What has changed is insistence on Pakistan being given equal importance in evolving a settlement. Pakistan has paid for its inability to fulfill the assurances of direct and international help for the insurgency, and of India's inability to counter a prolonged guerrilla campaign. It is, therefore, now seen as an obstacle to talks while in a position to pressure India. As the statement itself shows, however, the demand for self-determination has not been given up. Azaadi remains the most popular slogan.

The militant initiative poses a profound challenge to New Delhi. Our own hardliners would like to interpret it as virtual surrender... The first step they would recommend is early elections under the existing system, with no promise of autonomy. This would be based on the assumption that Kashmiris had learnt their lesson. This is the kind of response that will ensure permanent unrest and insurgency in the Valley. Fatigue does not last forever and there will always be neighbours ready to fan

discontent. It would throw the militants who are having second thoughts back into the arms of their own hardliners. The Hizb leadership has already threatened punitive action. The Pakistan card remains attractive, as the reactions of the Hurriyat combine and other groups show. The popular moderate, Mr. Shabir Shah, has taken the same line. But many of them have to be won over if a proper settlement is to be reached.

The Union Home Secretary, Mr. K. Padmanabhaiah, has told newsmen that any talks would have to be constitutional. Unfortunately, this ignores the essence of the militant case and cannot be regarded as the unconditional approach demanded by the militants and conceded by the Home Minister... If the deliberations are to be restricted in advance to a relationship limited to what the Constitution permits at present, there is little chance of success.

None of the four militant signatories to the statement - Bilal Lodhi, Syed Imran Rahi, Babar Badar and Ghulam Mohideen Lone - are front-rank leaders... Talks with them will carry weight only if the initiative is supported by most Kashmiri leaders. Even independence need not be ruled out for discussion; it may be possible to convince Kashmiri leaders that the economic and defence limitations are insuperable.

The first objective is to convince the people of Kashmir of New Delhi's sincere desire to implement and adhere to a settlement that guarantees maximum autonomy. After what they have suffered, only then may they be willingly persuaded to consider remaining part of the Indian Union. The militant offer provides a small window of opportunity.

It may seem attractive to be able to play off the militants against the Hurriyat, and thus weaken both. This is the kind of game that the Home Ministry loves to play. But for a settlement to win the support of enough Kashmiris to make it viable, New Delhi will have to reach out to all groups. Many may respond if convinced that New Delhi means business, except those enmeshed inextricably with Pakistan. There is no reason why New Delhi should not commit itself to seeking Pakistan's recognition of a settlement, if it is reached. More and more Pakistanis are agreeing that it would be best to accept the Line of Control as a border in J&K. The prospect of changing it has become remote and the cost of a continuing military confrontation with India unacceptable. The former Finance Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Mahbub ul Haq's... solution was that both India and Pakistan withdraw their troops and give the Kashmiris a chance to govern themselves. This does not suit New Delhi, but is totally unacceptable to Islamabad.

(Source: The Pioneer, 16 February, 1996)

Sunil Sethi on Ayodhya Situation

Ayodhya: On that fateful day of December 6, 1992, when the Babari Masjid was demolished, Haji Mehboob Ahmed, a prominent citizen of Ayodhya, and his family... fled in terror from their ancestral home on the periphery of the Ramjanmabhoomi complex. Amidst the frenzy and police firing, some of them found a safe passage to the local police station. Mehboob Ahmed's two sons and many of Ayodhya's 400 Muslims spent the night huddled with fright in a cramped room. When they returned home it was to find their property damaged and looted.

This might seem no different from the suffering of Muslims in the riots... Except that five years later, the wounds are still raw in Rama's birthplace.

... Muslims in Faizabad and Ayodhya point out that as the general elections draw closer some Congress leaders from north India like Salman Khurshed and Ghulam Nabi Azad have been bending over backwards to please. They have repeatedly admitted that the demolition was wrong, a tragic event, and that the ruling party had made a grave mistake. But why has Narasimha Rao not said a word? "The Muslims of this area are firmly with Mulayam Singh Yadav. We feel totally betrayed by the Congress"...

On the surface, Ayodhya appears calm, with pilgrims pouring into its thousands of temples, dharamsalas and akharas. The faithful take their ritual bath at Ram ki Pauri on the river Sarayu or trudge up the hill of Hanuman Garhi, but approach the janmabhoomi complex a little nervously. Its vast perimeter ringed by a high metal fence and teeming with policemen, it looks like a high security prison. Entry is restricted to a few hours a day. Visitors proceed in single file after heavy security checks to the cloth-covered mound of rubble where the mosque once stood. Only one entrance is used... and lingering is not permitted. Because they are hustled in and out, people think of it as a trouble spot, and many, except the ardent believers, prefer to stay away.

But everywhere else there are ample reminders of December 6. Every panwari stocks audio-cassettes of Sadhavi Rithambara's inflammatory speeches and glorified verses and songs of triumph about the demolition in a dozen different variations and tunes. Pavement stalls and water-sellers outside shrines push ten-rupee booklets with colour pictures of the mosque-that-was and the blood and gore details of the 'martyrs' who perished during the 'holy task' of its demolition. One of the first sights that any rickshaw puller will take you to see in Ayodhya is a little lane off the main street that is now called "Shaheed Gali". Here he will point out the bullet marks on white walls where several kar sevaks were during the firing and which have now been highlighted by painted blood.

At the end of "Shaheed Gali" lies the famous Digambar Akhara, the monastic establishment of Mahant Paramhans Ramchandrar Das, one of the strongest votaries of the mosque's demolition. Religious akharas are not merely wrestling pits but monasteries that rose to power in mediaeval times when religious orders began to acquire property and impart training in the martial arts as a way of exercising power and ensuring self protection. Or, as Mahant Paramhans himself explains, they are places where the principles of using shastra (weapons) and shaastra (scripture) are taught in tandem...

Politically, the mahant uses all the old arguments of hardcore Hindu revivalists: that the demolished mosque was not sacred but only a 'structure', that it was intolerable to have an Islamic structure at Rama's birthplace, and that the campaign to cleanse places of Hindu worship has only begun and will conclude with the demolition of the two mosques in Varanasi and Mathura.

I asked him if he thought a temple would ever come up on the disputed site, and he said that work had already begun on it. "The concrete foundations have been laid and hundreds of artisans are working night and day to fashion the pillars that will eventually uphold the shrine. ...The Mahant is pegging his hopes on the BJP coming to power in Delhi. But he holds politicians (including BJP leaders) in low esteem and is particularly contemptuous of institutions like... the Supreme Court.... As I left after our long meeting he said, "If the only punishment Kalyan Singh received (for the Babari demolition) were a night in Tihar jail and a fine of a few thousand rupees. Please tell the Supreme Court that I will happily spend three nights and pay a fine hundreds of thousands of rupees to get rid of the structures of Varanasi and Mathura".

(Source: The Pioneer, 11 February, 1996)

Cong(I): Salman Khurshid

On Responsibility for Demolition

Rashtriya Sahara (Urdu), 4-10 March, 1996

In 1992 the Babari Masjid was demolished and we had not prepared ourselves to protect it. This was our mistake and we accept this mistake. However, the question of apology is rather grave... Apology is not a remedy. We should look for a remedy... However, you can come to your own judgement or history will decide.

Shri Narasimha Rao had not promised to reconstruct the demolished Masjid. He had only expressed his wish and desire that the mosque should be built on the same site. This was an expression of a wish just as one wishes to have a child.

Eminent Townplanner S.S. Shafi on Slow Destruction of Jama Masjid

... Built by Shahjahan almost 400 years ago, the Jama Masjid on the Bhojla Pahari was placed at the highest point in the city of Shahjahanabad. Thus it become the focal point, not the Lal Qila...

As an aftermath of the Revolt of 1857, the Jama Masjid was closed. No prayers were held for quite some years and the British had canons placed in the beautiful verandahs; their cavalry was parked inside the mosque as well. As a sequel to 1857, the entire area between what is now an open space between the Lal Qila and the mosque was demolished, including the famous Akbarabadi mosque. It was years later (in 1862), when the Muslims were permitted to pray in the Jama Masjid and, as a gesture, a hospital was also built facing its northern facade till it was demolished during the 1975 Emergency.

The most unfortunate was the senseless demolition of the structure at the mosque's western rearside. It was a pavilion integral to the Jama Masjid providing foot-support to the portion of the mosque carryig the heaviest load. ...

As of now, Shahjahanabad, the seventh city of Delhi and its Jama Masjid form an integral part of the living heritage of India and deserves conservation. The Conservation Society of Delhi and the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) are striving for Delhi to be recognised as the World Heritage City by UNESCO....

On every Independence Day when the Prime Minister of India addresses the nation from the ramparts of the Lal Qila, it is the Chandni Chowk and the magnificent Jama Masjid that forms the magnificent backdrop, furnishing a living panorama of India's composite culture.

Delhi's Jama Masjid is known the world over and is acclaimed as one of the most magnificent and elegant mosques in the world; universally acknowledged as one of the finest masterpieces of India's Islamic architecture, a noble edifice constructed by man to invoke the blessings of the Creator. Ironically, it is not "protected" by the Archaeological Survey of India; and as such it is the most "unprotected" of all the monuments within the Delhi metropolis! Its precincts have been used, misused and abused without let or hindrance by one and all.

Since 1977, the space adjacent and around the Jama Masjid has been usurped, of all people, by the so-called Shahi Imam and his son, Naib Imam Ahmed Bukhari. Both the Wakf Board (a body responsible to take care of its upkeep) and the Delhi Development Authority have, more or less, abdicated their legitimate responsibilities. Its space has been mercilessly usurped by a mindboggling array of uses and activities, most of them out-of-place, out-of-tune and contrary to ambience of the place. What E.M. Foster described as the most noble of all mosques that he had seen, finds itself encircled by an ugly

quagmire of chaos and confusion. Its beautiful domes have been tarnished into shades of grey due to the accumulation of flash and soot emitted daily by the Indraprastha, the Rajghat and other power stations; and on its walls can be seen peepal saplings germinating. Sadly, nobody seems to be bothered about it in the least, such is our respect and regard for heritage.

... Delhi's Jama Masjid is the distinguished landmark of our nation's capital. It is visible from the East and the West; even Lytyens who thought rather little of Indian architecture, nonetheless, furnished an extraordinary visual connection between this structure and Parliament House, thus linking New Delhi with the immediate past city - Shahjahanabad. The exquisite domes and minarets of the Jama Masjid are visible all through the length of the Parliament Street now called Sansad Marg.

There are many ways to destroy heritage - ignorance, indifference, apathy, neglect and callous disregard towards upkeep and maintenance are some of them. And more recently by planning an orchestrated agitation... Yet another equally sinister way to defile a monument is destruction by construction. It is currently being perpetrated on the southern facade of the mosque facing the only Urdu Bazaar in India. In the name of a Wuzu Ghar (Wuzu Khana) an (un)authorised construction is going ahead without clearance or permission of either the municipal authorities (MCD) or DDA. ...

Such an (un)authorised construction... is lamentable but it also poses a challenge to all authorities functioning in India's national capital, for there seems to be no one capable of taking up the challenge thrown to the authorities. The whole project is insidious in the extreme; what is being done is cunningly conceived and timed within the known parameters in the belief that, given the propensities of an impending election, no one would dare interfere in the nefarious activities. The construction commenced on January 5 this year.

Meanwhile, the Wuzu Ghar will become a fait accompli and no one would dare to demolish this illegitimate structure actually built on the public right-of-way. In fact, it is yet another example of an ever-increasing vandalism!...

... The tragedy is real: instead of taking genuine pride and keen interest to care and protect the mosque and to improve its environs, the community which should be the most concerned through their apathy are not only "destroying" the noble edifice, a priceless piece of world heritage, they are greatly undermining themselves. ...

Future generations will never forgive us for letting us destroy our heritage. But there does not seem to be any authority which can take the courage to stop the sacrilege and vandalism.

How very appropriately an Urdu poet once lamented: "Iss ghar ko aag lag gaye ghar ke chirag se (This house was burnt by its own candle).

(Source: The Indian Express)

Ministry of Welfare: Annual Report, 1995-96

On Welfare of Minorities

Introduction:

Five communities, namely, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians have been identified as minority at the national level...

Prime Minister's 15-Point Programme has the objective of securing life and property of the minorities, providing special consideration for them in employment and ensuring non-discrimination in development programmes and provision of financial benefits. Points 1 to 7 relate to maintenance of communal harmony and prevention of communal riots including relief and rehabilitation of riot victims. ... The nodal agency for monitoring implementation of programmes relating to Points 1 to 7 is the Ministry of Home Affairs which has issued guidelines to the State Governments from time to time covering all aspects relating to these points. ...

Recruitment in Public Employment

... The need for increasing the percentage of minorities in recruitment to various State and Central services and for providing representation of minorities in the Selection Boards/Committees for achieving this purpose has been pursued with the concerned agencies... For improving the employability of minorities in public employment and increasing their intake in professional courses, a Pre-examination Coaching Scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Welfare from 1992-93. During the current year, there is a budget provision of Rs. 2 crores for this scheme of which Rs. 6 crore has been released. 32 institutions have been assisted which would cover 1520 candidates for coaching. The progressive achievement under the scheme since inception includes 138 institutions assisted for coaching of 6300 candidates... The performance report received in respect of Pre-examination Coaching being implemented by Ministry of Welfare indicated that the rate of success among the minority candidates was 27.26%...

National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation

... The Corporation has so far sanctioned 245 schemes at a total cost of Rs. 106.90 crores. Of this amount, the NMDFC share is Rs. 76.15 crores till date, the Corporation has disbursed Rs. 31.32 crores covering 11,377 beneficiaries.

Multi Sectoral Plans

Government has approved area based approach for socio-economic development of minority concentration areas... In the first phase, 41 districts identified on the basis of 1971 Census would be taken up... Guidelines for preparation of multi sectoral plans have been issued. Financial assistance for preparation of such plans would be provided to the State Governments. These plans would incorporate provision of credit, raw-material, appropriate technology and market support.

National Commission for Minorities

... The 11th Annual Report shall be laid on the Table of both Houses of Parliament during this session. The National Commission for Minorities has made a number of recommendations which are being process. ...

The Wakf Act 1995

The Wakf Act, 1995 was enacted in the year 1995 and the same was notified for enforcement w.e.f. 1st January, 1996...

On 12th January, 1996, Union Welfare Minister has written to Chief Ministers/Governors etc. to initiate action for implementation of the Wakf Act, 1995.

Scheme of Payment of Remuneration of Imams

... A scheme for payment of remuneration to Imams of different kinds of mosques in the country... has been filed before the Supreme Court on 2nd January, 1996.

Maulana Azad Education Foundation

The Foundation which is functioning as a Society under the Presidentship of Union Welfare Minister has sanctioned an amount of Rs. 240.90 lakhs to 10 organisations for establishment/construction of residential schools and hostels for girls, Vocational Training Centres for girls and for the purchase of equipment.

Punjab Wakf Board

The Punjab Wakf Board... has reported an income of Rs. 6.36 crores during 1994-95. It has a target of raising income to Rs. 6.80 crores during the current financial year.

Scheme for Development of Urban Wakf Properties

Under non-Plan scheme of Development of Urban Wakf Properties... a provision of Rs. 120 lakhs has been made for the year 1995-96.

(contd. from page 119)

issues of identity begin to be intertwined with caste and class issues and power relations.... Therefore, the birth of Jana Sangh, purely on a programme of cultural identity, further deepened, though unwittingly, the parv division in the spectrum of Hindi cultural nationalism. The moderate complex of Hindu identity continued to stay underground within the Congress while the strong voices came to be articulated through the Jana Sangh. The very logic of the formation of a new political party dictated that if it was to acquire a position of power then it must claim to be the 'sole spokesman' of Hindu identity.

Today, the Congress is faced with a serious dilemma: should it openly articulate itself as a vehicle of a relatively moderate Hindu identity or not? But the Congress is a kind of party which allow practice to speak louder than words. If the ceremony at Somnath is any indication, the Congress is certainly moving slowly but steadily, towards the resolution of this historic dilemma.

Conference of Social Welfare Ministers and Secretaries, 3 February, 1996

Speech of Mr. Justice Sardar Ali Khan, Chairman, National Commission for Minorities

... According to the 1991 Census data 17.17% of India's population consists of the five minority communities of which the Muslim minority itself constitutes about 12%. In 25 States and Union Territories, the population of minorities is more than 10%. Leaving apart the relatively prosperous Sikh community, the general perception of other minorities is that they have low literacy and low income levels. The general perception is that due to their low share in the services of the Centre and States the minorities are not in a position to play their rightful role in national life. This syndrome of low literacy resulting in low income has to be faced not only for the development of the minorities but also from the overall point of national integration and nationalism. ...

The National Commission for Minorities was given a statutory basis in May, 1993. It has been given powers of a Civil Court including the powers to summon records and individuals to be exercised in certain specific cases. However, the powers of investigation have not been vested in this Commission as yet. We have made a recommendation to the Central Government to amend the Act to give powers of investigation to this Commission and to bring it on par with other Commissions. We have also recommended further amendment... to ensure that on the analogy of the Commission of Enquiries Act, the statutory recommendations of this Commission should be placed before Parliament/Vidhan Sabhas within a period of 6 months. We hope that these two amendments will further strengthen the working of the Commission.

We have made some practical suggestions to the States for the welfare of minorities. I would like to reiterate them:

- i) Educational and other qualifications for minorities candidates should be relaxed for recruitment to State Police Forces on the lines of those already in vogue for SC/ST candidates;
- ii) A Department for Welfare of Minorities should be set up in States having minority population of 10% or more.

I am glad that Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have set up separate Departments. It is hoped that other States would also be urged to follow their examples.

I would further suggest that in States where the minority population is more than 10% they may also consider setting up separate Commissions for Minorities as these Commissions provide a very useful link between the people and the policy-makers i.e., between the people and the Government. The Commission independently has the time to go into matters in detail and assess the real problems of the minorities and make suitable

recommendations to Governments. The State Minority Commission can, therefore, play a complementary role with the State Government and the inputs provided by the Commission can be invaluable. The Commissions also act as safety valves for minorities and as fora where they can go with their collective or individual grievances. In our endeavour to work in close proximity with the State Governments, we have proposed to the Central Government that the Commission would like to set up 6 regional offices in different parts of the country. These regional offices would be located in areas where there is a density of Minority population and special attention has to be paid to the problems of minorities. The Commission is contemplating to set up a Regional office at Mumbai in Maharashtra to be followed by other regional offices.

To the Central Government also we have made some more recommendations for the welfare of minorities... Some of them are:-

- i) A separate Department for Minorities Affairs should be set up in the Central Government.
- ii) Legal Status should be accorded to the 15-Point Programme.
- iii) Educational and other qualifications should be relaxed in the case of Minority candidates for recruitment to Central Police Forces on the lines of those already in vogue for SC/ST candidates;
- iv) Continuance of privileges/statutory benefits to individuals belonging to SCs after their conversion to Christianity and Islam - as already in force in respect of converts to Sikhism and Buddhism.
- v) The statutory recommendations made by the NCM should be placed on the Table of both Houses of Parliament. A time limit of 6 months is recommended as obtains in the Commission of Enquiries Act.

Education provides the key towards national integration and development of minorities. The Central Government has drawn up a 79 item Minority Education Plan but its recent review has shown that greater awareness and effort is required by the States for its implementation. (We have to) go out of our way to help and encourage the minority communities to set up their own educational institutions as they will lighten the burden of the State in the field of education. Minorities are facing difficulties in obtaining recognition of their institutions. It is necessary to enable them to maintain their minority character under Article 30 of the Constitution. In some States, even after the AICTE which is the only competent and legal authority in this field, grants recognition, they run into difficulties with the States and Universities...

Madarsas need to be modernised. In 1994, the

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Central Government had announced a scheme for giving grants to modernise madarsas. The progress has been disappointing. Out of about 12000 madarsas in the country, 89 had applied for assistance... State Governments (should) activate this scheme, publicise it, convince the minority managements... to take advantage of this Scheme.

The Commission has been monitoring the flow of funds to minorities in 41 identified minority concentration districts. By and large, we feel that whereas under the rural development programmes the share of bank loans to minorities communities is just about adequate, their share in loans for economic activities like industry and services is low (which) is an indication of their involvement in economic activities and self-employment.

The NCM has also been monitoring the left-over TADA cases... Some State Governments had blatantly misused this law against the minorities. This Act caused national rethinking (and) the law was allowed to lapse last year. This Commission was the first Commission (to) suggest that it should be allowed to lapse.

It was also at the NCM's initiative that the Rapid Action Force was created. This Force has justified its existence as it evokes... faith among the minorities in time of trouble.

... The focus which minorities have in employment in public services need hardly be emphasised. For the reservations, training, encouragement and a sympathetic approach are required. A rightful share of the minorities in services particularly in the police force is a sine qua non and will go a long way in creating... confidence... in the law enforcing agencies of the State.

... The Wakf properties in different parts of the country are in a miserable position. It can safely be said that at least 60 to 70% of these properties are under illegal occupations and encroaches have turned the land covered by Wakf as a business venture... The (new) Wakf Act has been passed... and has come into force on the 1st January, 1996.... Unless executive power of ejection is given to the Wakf authorities parallel to those given to the Commissioners under the Hindu Religious Charitable Endowments Act, it would be almost impossible to safeguard the wakf properties. The Governments at the Centre and the State are already in a mood to burden the Wakf properties with new obligations and it is not known from what source the Wakf boards could raise the resources to meet them...

... The National Commission for Minorities Act of 1993 has to be judged by the response and hopes it creates among the people... directly concerned with it... Though the hopes have been raised high but a lot remains to be done in the field of implementation by the Central and State Governments to make it a creative and living enactment.

Govt. Statement on National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation

Equity Capital (Amount Rs. in lakhs)		Working Capital	
Central Government	5000.00	Cash & Bank Balance	305.49
Uttar Pradesh	695.00	Loan and advances	2882.23
Kerala	100.00	(Including Interest due)	
Initial Subscription from Promoters	0.14	Investments in Bank	2929.83
		(including Inst. accrued)	
Total	5795.14	Total	6117.55
		Less: Current Liabilities	0.96
		Net	6116.59

Total administrative expenditure:

During 1994-95	3.29
During 1995-96 (budget)	105.29
During April - December (Actual)	36.44

The National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation does not directly give loan to the beneficiaries, instead it routes the loan through the State Channelising Agencies (SCAs). Upto 31.12.1995 an amount of Rs. 31.32 crores for 11,377 beneficiaries was disbursed to SCAs.

Amount advanced till 31.12.1995 to various SCAs is as below:-

	(Rs. in Lakhs)
Andhra Pradesh	98.00
Tamil Nadu	464.00
Kerala	327.14
Karnataka	253.43
Uttar Pradesh	1376.41
Maharashtra	582.95
Madhya Pradesh	30.32
Total	3132.25

Board of Directors

1. Mohd. Hidayatullah Khan	Chairman
2. Chairman, UP Alp Sankhyak Vittiya Avam Vikas Nigam Ltd., Lucknow	Member
3. Managing Director, Bihar State Minorities Financial Corporation Ltd., Patna	Member
4. Managing Director, Karnataka Minorities Development Corporation, Bangalore	Member
5. Managing Director, A.P. State Minorities Finance Corporation Ltd., Hyderabad	Member
6. Chief General Manager (DPD)-FS, Natioal Bank for Agriculture and Rural Dev. Corporation (NABARD), Bombay	Member
7. Managing Director, Small Industries Development Bank of India, Lucknow	Member
8. Joint Secretary (M.C.), Ministry of Welfare, Govt. of India, New Delhi	Member
9. Gurcharan Singh, Managing Director, National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation, New Delhi.	Member

(Source: LS.U. Q.No. 424 dated 29 Feb. 1996 by S.Shahabuddin)

Madhav Godbole's Plea to Remedy Neglect of Besieged Minorities

With elections to Parliament in the offing, the so-called secular political parties have, as usual, started wooing the 'minorities' - a misnomer for the Muslims. With a population of 120 million, the Muslims can hardly be called a minority, except in a relative sense of the huge majority being Hindus.

After the demolition of the Babari Masjid in December 1992, the approaches of political parties and organisations have perceptibly changed. There is a new urgency in the Congress to establish its secular credentials after having failed to protect the disputed structure. Its recent decisions to increase the quota for Haj pilgrims from the next year and to increase the emoluments of Imams indicate the desperation in the party to win back the Muslim support. ...

Aggressive Posture

The Muslims themselves are now taking a somewhat aggressive posture on their demands. Syed Ahmed Bukhari, the (Naib) Imam of Jama Masjid, has given a ten-point charter of demands to the Prime Minister... (which) include, among others, proportional representation for Muslims in Parliament and state assemblies. The Milli Parliament at its two-day session has demanded separate electoral rolls and constituencies for the Muslims... There is increasing demand for the reservation of seats in educational institutions and jobs for the Muslims. The latest entrant to join this chorus is Union minister Ghulam Nabi Azad. The All India Muslim Personal Law Board has recently demanded (sic) the setting up of *darul-qaza* (shariat courts) in various cities and towns to protect the shariat from the interference of the civil courts in matters like divorce.

This has justifiably raised serious doubts about the future of secularism, even in the minds of those who are not taken in by the ideology of Hindutva-based political parties and organisations. Perhaps the time has come to recognise that in genuine secularism, religion is not recognised as a criterion to distinguish one citizen from the other. Its three basic features are common citizenship, fundamental rights and a common civil code... The state has to be clearly neutral between religions. This is not the same thing as *sarva dharma samabhav* (all religions are to be treated equally)...

This by no means implies that the genuine grievances of the Minorities in general, and Muslims in particular, should continue to be neglected year after year as has happened. In this context the first annual report of the National Minorities Commission (NMC) for 1977-78 is revealing. It shows that the apprehensions and fear expressed by the minorities, including the Muslims, are as true today as they were nearly two decades ago.

The report highlighted the lack of employment opportunities and hoped that the government would make serious efforts to solve this pressing problem. This

continues to be the main demand of the Muslims even today...

The educational backwardness of the Muslim community was recognised by the Aligarh Muslim University Inquiry Committee in its 1961 report. The Committee emphasised that this was due to their neglect of modern education... The first report of the NMC drew attention to this aspect and urged that action should be taken to provide adequate opportunities to minorities for admissions in colleges, especially professional colleges.

The two remedies suggested by the NMC in their very first report to address the root cause of communalism are as relevant today - (a) discouragement of paramilitary training on a communal basis, and (b) replacement in schools and colleges of text books which tend to instil in young minds feelings of animosity between communities by those which encourage feelings of equality and brotherhood between members of all communities.

The allegations of partisan attitude of the police have continued over the years. The NMC recommended that "minorities, especially Muslims, should be adequately represented in the services in general", and that "the police force posted in sensitive areas should include persons belonging to the minority communities, especially the Muslims". It was found that the representation of Muslims in the police varied from zero in some states to hardly about five per cent in some others. The representation of the Muslims in the armed constabulary, which is generally deployed to deal with communal situations, was almost negligible. This continues to be a cause for serious concern even today.

... Similar observations were made by the Standing Committee of Parliament on the Ministry of Home Affairs in its 15th of May, 1995. The committee underlines the importance of training in behavioural aspects and human rights for the para military forces to enable them to rise above caste and communal considerations.

The increasing militancy among the Muslims is partly a reaction to rising Hindu militancy, particularly in the turbulent period immediately preceding and succeeding demolition of the Babari Masjid. But it can be partly traced to the benign neglect of the basic causes underlying the social, educational and therefore economic backwardness of large cross-sections of the Muslim community. It is time to address these genuine and longstanding grievances rather than indulge in political rhetoric. The Prime Minister's assurance in the Rajya Sabha on July 20, 1978, that "in those cases (relating to the specific grievances of the minority communities) their (NMC's) opinions will be binding on us", remains only on paper, at considerable cost of the social fabric of the country.

(Source: The Times of India, 23 February, 1996)

Findings of High Power Committee on Socio-Economic and Educational Survey - 1994 of Religious Minorities in Karnataka

The survey covered 88% of the Muslims, 79% of Christians and 83% of Jains in the State. The coverage of other minorities like Sikhs, Parsees and Buddhists has been less than 50%. The total 1994 population of these three minority communities is estimated to be about 89,000 as against the total population of all minorities which is estimated at 69.12 lakhs. The coverage is 59.45 lakhs population which account for 86% of the total estimated population of minorities. In all 10,39,566 minorities households accounting for a population of 59,44,610 have been covered in the survey. The average family size of all minorities is 5.72. ...

The sex-ratio among minorities is 930 females per thousand males (compared to 961 females per thousand males in the general population of the state as per 1991 Census....

... Muslim population is 0.52%. Widows/widowers constitute 5.73% of the minority population of them 10.24% were widows and 1.58% widowers.

... Digambar Jains have the highest rural population at 76.11% and Swethambar Jains have the lowest rural population at 13.43%.

... Muslim ... rate of illiteracy... is 47%... Muslims have the lowest level of education after 7th standard...

Overall literacy level of minorities in the state is 56 percent. 37.67% are educated up to 7th standard and only 18.33% are educated above 7th standard. ...

Age group wise analysis of children belonging to minorities who are attending schools indicates 36.42% in the age group 6-10 years, 38.46% in the age group 11-13 years and 26.28% in the age group 14-16 years, which shows that over 60 per cent of population in the age group 6-16 years is not attending schools.

76% of Muslims... in the age group 14-16 years were not attending schools...

The overall percentage of unemployment among the minorities was 10...

Average annual income of 52% of the minority households was less than Rs.6000. The percentage of households having annual income from Rs. 6001 - 10000 was 15 and households with annual income of over Rs.10000 were 33 per cent.

The percentage of the Muslim households with less than Rs.6000 annual income was highest at 64.67% in Bidar district, followed by Bijapur district where the percentage of such households was 63.87%.

Percentage of Muslim households with Rs. 10001 and above annual income was highest in Bangalore urban district (47.15), followed by Dakshina Kannada district where the percentage of such households was 45.78. Among the remaining districts except in the Districts of Kodagu, Mysore and Uttara Kannada less than 30 per cent of the households reported income less than Rs. 10000 per annum. ...

Representation of minorities in public service was 1.61 percent of their population. The percentage of Muslims was less...

Representation of minorities in defence services was only 0.08 per cent.

98,194 persons or 1.65 per cent of the Minorities population was working as beedi workers and 94 per cent of them were Muslims.

Minorities have 6 doctors for every 10,000 of their population.. only 5 among ...Muslims.

There were 5 engineers in a population of 10,000 among minorities... Only 4 ... among Muslims.

Only 0.3 per cent of the minorities were engaged in wholesale business... 1.4 per cent of minorities were engaged in retail business... of Muslims 1.5. 0.3% of the minorities were engaged in street vending.

Money lenders advanced loans to 3.55% of minority households and the banks ... to 7.64% of minority households.

4.52 percent of the total cultivators in the state as per 1991 Census were from among the minorities.

36.53 percent Muslim households... did not have electricity in their houses. 66.22 percent of the Muslim... did not have toilets in their houses. 38.55 percent of the Muslim... did not have bathing facility in their houses.

Drinking water facility in their houses was not available to 38.94% of Muslims...

More than 2/3rd of the minority households did not have sewerage connection to their houses.

Fire wood as a fuel was used by 65 percent of the minority households.

3.7 percent of the owners of the houses had obtained benefit under Ashraya.

10.4 percent of the widows were beneficiaries under widow pension scheme.

10.08 percent of the minority population entitled to vote was not enrolled as voters.

Only 74.89 percent of the minority households had ration cards.

52 percent of the minority households were eligible to hold green cards. Of these less than 50 percent were provided with green cards.

Among the minorities for every 10,000 persons, 3.02 persons were blind, 2.6 persons were deaf and dumb, 2.40 person were polio affected, 4.70 persons were mentally retarded, 2.90 persons cancer patients, 3.90 persons were affected by T.B. and 2.60 persons were affected by leprosy.

22.42 percent of the urban households live in slums. Majority of slum dwellers were Muslims.

The number of households... as a percentage of total households of respective communities who were members of various Co-operative Societies as ... Muslims 6.40...

Mohammed Haji Saboo Siddik College of Engineering, Bombay A Feather in the Cap of Anjuman-i-Islam, Bombay

The Mohammed Haji Saboo Siddik Institution owes its existence to the munificence of the late Mohammed son of Haji Saboo Siddik who bequeathed a large sum of money for establishing, conducting and managing the Institution. It is managed and administered by the Anjuman-i-Islam as the Sole Trustee.

The Institution was founded in 1936 as a trade school with the object of turning out artisans in selected industrial arts and crafts. The M.H. Saboo Siddik College of Engineering was set up in 1984-85. The College conducts degree courses in Construction, Production, Electronics and Automobile Engineering with an intake of 60,60,60 and 30 students respectively. The college is affiliated to the University of Bombay and its courses are recognised by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE). The Institute of Engineers has accredited the courses in Production and Automobile Engineering conducted by the College. The staff strength is 136, with 50 teaching and 86 non-teaching staff members. Students' strength is about 1,000.

... To the First Year courses, a total of 50 per cent seats are reserved for the Muslim minority out of which 50 per cent are free and 50 per cent payment seats respectively. The remaining 50 per cent seats belong to the open merit category to be filled up by the Government of Maharashtra through the Central Admission Cell, out of which 50 per cent are free and 50 per cent payment seats. Five per cent of the total intake i.e. 10 seats are reserved for the wards of NRI's, out of which 50 per cent are filled by Muslim minority candidates. First class diploma holders are selected by the Maharashtra Government for direct admission to the Second Year Degree Course.

The College is also one of the few Accredited Engineering colleges recognised by the Institute of Chartered Financial Analysis, Hyderabad, for conducting courses like Diploma in Business Finance, MBAF (MBA Foundation Programme), etc.

This is the only engineering college with a Muslim minority status in Maharashtra and is also the only institution affiliated to the Bombay University conducting B.E. Degree course in Automobile Engineering.

Principal, Dr. A.M. Chara is a well-known educationist with more than 30 years of teaching and administrative experience, points out: "No students of ours remains unemployed. The Training and Placement Cell explores the possibility of placing students of all four branches for short-term training while they are with us and also for... jobs after completion of studies. Besides, we emphasise the overall development of the personality

of the students - which includes cultural activities, sports and debating skills".

The College is accommodated in a newly-constructed five-storeyed building, centrally located at Byculla at a distance of about 1.5 km. from Bombay Central Railway Station on the Western Railway....

The College library (has) a collection of more than 20,000 volumes of text and reference books. It subscribes to as many as 60 national and international journals, reports and newspapers. Almost all the laboratories of the college are well equipped with modern equipment to give the maximum practical exposure to the students...

It is mainly due to the dedicated work of the faculty that the College is ranked as one of the best colleges in Bombay University. The teachers are regularly sponsored for Quality Improvement Programmes/Seminars/Workshops/Conferences organised by various agencies like the AICTE/Universities/State Government etc... Under the faculty development programme, selected teachers are sponsored for post-graduation programmes every year to further hone skills. Many teachers have won national awards and distinctions...

A number of students of all branches achieved distinctions/ranks in University examinations every year. In the May 1995 University examinations, Desai Nagesh Rao Dattaraj (Final B.E. Production) was ranked fourth in the University. Badar Suhail Sirajuddin and Barshan Afshan Sorab (Final B.E. Construction) were ranked third and fourth respectively.

... Proposals for the conversion of the Construction Engineering course into a Civil Engineering course and starting part-time degree courses in engineering are under consideration.

Shahabuddin on Government Funding of Vedic Studies

Letter to Human Resource Minister Scindia,
22 December, 1995

... Many of the activities undertaken by the Ved Vidya Sansthan, Ujjain, amount to the promotion of a religion, as distinct from that of a language or of a discipline and the expenditure thereon may be questioned on ground of constitutional propriety. I wonder whether the government would agree to establish a National Institute for Quranic Studies and fund similar activities by that Institute.

I would request you, therefore, to kindly review the situation in the light of the Constitution and draw a clear distinction between academic and religious projects.

Jamia Millia Islamia 75 Years Old & Looking Ahead

"Jamia is unique. It is a symbol of secularism. It is an institute which produces leaders who are truly Hindustani". ... The Minister of human resource development, Madhavrao Scindia was speaking at the Jamia Platinum Jubilee celebrations...

Jamia Millia Islamia celebrated its platinum jubilee in 1995...

A special function was organised... Besides Madhavrao Scindia, who was the chief guest, there were other luminaries... Prof. Bashiruddin Ahmed, vice-chancellor, gave a brief introduction of Jamia, its plans, progress and problems. "Jamia", according to him, "has passed through three different stages: 1920-1964, 1964-1988 and 1988 onwards". It started as merely a school and college in 1920. A teacher's college was established in 1938. Later, Balak Mata Centre and Nursery School were added in 1956. Till 1964, the university was strapped for funds. Hence, this period saw a slow and partial growth of the institute. In 1964, Jamia was given the status of a deemed university. The next step came 24 years later in 1988 when... Jamia Millia Islamia was made a central university by an Act of Parliament.

Jamia's progress in recent years has been rapid. With the help of special grants from Ministry of Human Resource and Development, University Grants Commission and the All India Council for Technical Education, Jamia is expanding and modernising its research facilities. The engineering faculty now has a new building, Jamia's teachers are doing research which is attracting attention... within and outside the country.

Though, the university still has unmet infrastructural needs such as shortage of classrooms, laboratories, offices for teachers and hostels for students etc., it still is poised for a major leap forward as a national institution of higher learning due to its academic record.

... Prof. Masud Husain who has been closely associated with Jamia, first as a student, then as a vice-chancellor.. and the chancellor Khurshid Alam Khan, expressed gratitude to the founders of Jamia and stressed that Jamia would strive for its progress.

(Source: The Nation and the World)

Government Statement On Promotion of Urdu

The National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language has been established as an autonomous body with the objective of developing, promoting and propagating Urdu Language. The Council has not made any recommendations so far to the Government.

(Source: ISUQ No. 280 dated 28 February, 1996 by S. Shahabuddin)

Supreme Court On Creamy Layer in Bihar and UP

Ashoka Kumar Thakur, Petitioner v. State of Bihar and others, Respondents.

Constitution of India, Article 16(4) - Reservation for backward class - Exclusion of "creamy layer" - Criteria laid down by Central Government in office Memorandum dated 8.9.1993 - Approved by Supreme Court.

... Bihar Reservation of Vacancies in Posts and Services (for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes) (Amendment) Ordinance, 1995 and Sec. 3(b) of U.P. Public Services Reservation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and other Backward Classes Act, 1994 - is violative of Articles 16(4), 14 and against law laid down by Supreme Court in "Mandal case" 1992 AIR SCW 3682.

The Supreme Court has categorically held in 'Mandal case' 1992 AIR SCW 3682 that a person, belonging to a backward class, who becomes member of IAS, IPS or any other All India Service, his children cannot avail the benefit of reservation. The States of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have added further conditions such as salary of rupees ten thousand or more per mensem, the wife or husband to be graduate and one of them owning a house in an urban area. So far as the professionals are concerned, an income of Rs. 10 lakhs per annum has been fixed as the criterion. It is further provided that the wife or husband is at least graduate and the family owns immovable property of the value of at least rupees twenty lakhs. Similarly, the criteria regarding traders, industrialists, agriculturists and others is wholly arbitrary apart from being contrary to the guidelines laid down by Supreme Court in 'Mandal case'.

Multiple conditions have been provided in all the categories. The 'spouse' to be a graduate and holding property in urban area, are the conditions attached to almost every category. These conditions have no nexus with the object sought to be achieved. Since the conditions are not severable the two criteria as a whole have to be struck-down. Thus the criteria laid down by Bihar Reservation of Vacancies in Posts and Services (for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes) (Amendment) Ordinance, 1995 and Section 3(b) of the UP Public Services Reservation of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes Act, 1994, for identification of "creamy layer", would be violative of Article 16(4), wholly arbitrary - violative of Article 14 - and against the law laid down by Supreme Court in 'Mandal case'. It cannot be said in India where the per capita national income is Rs. 6929 (1993-94), a person who is a member of the IAS and a professional who is earning less than Rs. 10 lakhs per annum is socially and educationally backward.

Eminent Jurist Chimanlal Setalvad on Responsibility for Partition

The Times of India, 15 January, 1947

The die is cast, India is to be partitioned into Hindustan and Pakistan with all the grave dangers inherent in such partition. If the agreement to partition had been the result of mutual goodwill and understanding between the major parties, one might have hoped for harmonious working and the establishment of mutual confidence, leading ultimately to complete understanding and the emergence of a united India. But in this case the British Government had to put before the parties the best solution they could think of and the force of circumstances has compelled the Congress and the Muslim League to accept it. The force of circumstances, as I will show later, was of their own creation.

The solution has been reluctantly accepted by the Congress and the Muslim League and both dislike it; the League has failed to get all that it wanted and the Congress had to accept what had been most repugnant to them, the division of India. ...The question of minorities, instead of being solved by partition, will be intensified. On any supposed or real grievances of the minorities in Hindustan or Pakistan, conflict will arise. ...

It is legitimate to enquire who is responsible for this debacle. In my view, all the parties concerned, viz. the Congress, the British Government and the Muslim League, are all more or less responsible, although on the facts set forth, the Congress should get the first prize. ...

The Congress, on the other hand, instead of promptly accepting the whole scheme, raised various questions about its interpretation and raised objections to clauses grouping the provinces in different sections. They thus repudiated one of the fundamentals of the scheme. They further contended that the Constituent Assembly was a sovereign body and could put its own interpretation upon the provisions of the scheme. A prominent Congress leader said that they had agreed to nothing except entry into the Constituent Assembly. On June 26, the Congress accepted the long-term plan but rejected the interim government scheme. On June 29, the Muslim League Council withdrew its acceptance of both the interim and long-term schemes and directed its Working Committee to declare forthwith a programme of direction action.

From June 1946 onwards, the Congress carried on a campaign against grouping and sections, and on August 10, while purporting to accept the scheme "in its entirety", still repudiated the grouping system. It was not till December 22, after His Majesty's Government issued their statement of December 6, that the Congress accepted the Cabinet Mission's scheme in its entirety and with the interpretation put upon it by the Cabinet Mission itself. They closed the stable door long after the horse had run away. If the Congress had displayed statesmanship

and obvious common sense by accepting the Cabinet Mission's scheme in its entirety and with the interpretation which they ultimately accepted immediately after the acceptable by the Muslim League on June 6, the Cabinet Mission Plan for a united India would have been set working. It was obvious that the Muslim League had with great difficulty persuaded itself to accept the Cabinet Mission scheme, both interim and long-term, and it would have been wisdom on the part of other parties to complete the deal and not give any opportunity or excuse to the League to go back on acceptance. Or the contrary, as pointed out above, the Congress leaders carried on propaganda in the country for months, and even on January 19, 1947, Mr. Gandhi advised Assam to stay out of the grouping.

Britain's Part

The British Government must also share the blame for what has happened. As soon as the Muslim League accepted the scheme, Lord Wavell should have hustled the other party and persuaded them to accept the whole scheme. The British Government should have from the beginning firmly announced their interpretation of the disputed clauses as soon as the controversy arose, and not allowed wrangling about them for months. Further when the Muslim League expressed their willingness to join the Interim Government, Lord Wavell should have clearly stipulated that their coming in the Interim Government must be dependent on their agreeing to enter the Constituent Assembly.

It is futile to attempt to hide the naked truth by saying that force of circumstances has compelled the Congress to accept the partition of India and they had to submit to the inevitable. The circumstances were of their own creation... The cherished boon of a united India had fallen into their lap, but they by their own want of political wisdom threw it out and made it beyond their reach. Some Congress leaders have argued that they could not coerce unwilling parts of the country to join the Union. Between May 16 and June 29, 1946 there was no question of coercing anyone. The Muslim League had accepted both parts of the united India scheme of the Cabinet Mission, but the Congress missed the opportunity of closing the deal. Others say that the partition scheme is better than the Cabinet Mission scheme as in the latter there was a weak Centre. This attempt at face-saving is futile. A common Central Government was a great thing to achieve. Although the Centre had only a few subjects, by experience and mutual consent its field could have been enlarged as was done in the case of the United States, Canada and Australia.

(contd. on page 137)

Eminent Historian Mushirul Hasan

On Muslim Experience in India

... There can be no doubt that individual Muslims felt weak, fearful, insecure; or that some sections were deeply concerned with their identity and the preservation of their religious and cultural heritage. Yet Islam in India was a living and vital religion, appealing to the hearts, minds and conscience of millions, setting them a standard by which to live honest, sober and god-fearing lives. There was no concerted attempt, despite the stridency of Hindu nationalist forces, to undermine their self-perceived interests as a 'community', though Muslim organisations were inclined to make much of the 'persecution' to which their followers were subjected.

Nehru's government on the contrary, created a climate that was conducive to the political and economic integration of large numbers of Muslims. It could not have been any better. As a result, "the realisation is growing that they (Muslims) must sink or swim, and the number of those who find swimming is not too difficult if one decides upon it is gradually increasing". The mood was summed up in 1960 by Maulana Ali Mian, the head of Lucknow's Nadwat-ul-Ulema:

The clouds will disperse, as they are bound to be, and there will be sunshine again. The Muslims will regain the position in the country which is justly theirs. All the schemes for national reconstruction will remain incomplete if they are left to rot and decay.

With this frame of mind, large numbers of Muslims could look ahead with a degree of hope and optimism... With more education, with more industrialisation of India, with more social reform, the barriers between the two communities must inevitably break down". If such hopes were somewhat belied, the explanations would principally lie in the breakdown of the secular consensus in the post-Nehruvian era.

Contemporary politics in India is characterised by a preoccupation with communitarian identities, chauvinistic ideologies and movements that divide religious communities and exacerbate differences. Attention needs to be paid to ideologies and movements that have historically and contemporaneously tried to unite Hindus and Muslims and further the post-colonial agenda of social transformation.

A big question remains over the tenability of the approaches and interpretations of liberal and secular-minded Muslims. Doubts have been expressed over their reading of Indian Islam and their thesis on the nature of Hindu-Muslim interaction in the subcontinent. ...

On Muslim Identity in India

... Consider the history of medieval rule from 1206 to 1757 (officially 1857), the large Muslim population in the subcontinent and their presence, so to speak, as a major component in the evolution of India's society, polity and economy. Consider, too, the chequered history of inter-community relations leading to the partition of the subcontinent on August 15, 1947, and the destruction of the Babari Masjid on December 6, 1992.

Yet the literature on these and other related historical themes is either inadequate and sketchy or marred by a majoritarian perspective. The upper castes, convinced of their own superiority in the realm of ideas and thought, considered Islam as a rather crude approach to the problems of philosophy and metaphysics. There were, consequently, no serious interpreters of Indian Islam, no counterparts of Al-Beruni, Amir Khusro, Abul Fazl, Abdur Rahim and Dara Shikoh. The Muslim intrusion was treated as a break in the continuity of Brahmanical traditions; Indian culture was equated with Vedic culture, Indian philosophy with Vedanta, Puranas and the Upanishads, and Indian religions equated with Hinduism.

Islam had no Max Mueller to detail how its dogmas and tenets were gradually incorporated into regional and local belief structures and rituals; how Muslims, most converted to Islam at different points of time and for different reasons, were integrated with the rest of the population. In the few works that exist, Islam is mistakenly viewed as part of the Great Tradition - codified, rigid and unchanging, insular and closed to external influences. Its followers, whether converted or not, are cast in a specifically Muslim/Islamic mould. Their identity is understood, defined and described, regardless of economic status, caste, language and region, in strictly textual terms. ..(Source: The Outlook, 27 Dec, 1995)

What we need today, more than ever before, is to discover new... interpretations among Muslims that places Indian Islam more firmly in its specific Indian environment. I believe the creative intellectual energy, released in the first two decades after independence, was the outcome of a unique 'Indian Muslim' experience of living in a world that was neither Muslim, Hindu nor specifically western. These experiences and their consequences merit serious consideration, and not whether India was a 'dar al-Islam' (land of Islam) or a 'dar al-harb' (enemy territory), or whether pan-Islamism was an ideal or still a living forces.

(Source: The Economic and Political Weekly, 25 November, 1995)

Amrit Dhillon and N.K. Singh on Cow Slaughter

... According to Hindu tradition, if you give a cow to a Brahmin when a relative dies, it enables the dead person to cross the gigantic Vaitarni river that separates earth from heaven by hanging on to the cow's tail. The Sangh brotherhood hopes that its planned campaign against cow slaughter will help build up the steam to propel it from the opposition benches to the government side.

The language being used, however, is less than spiritual. "We shall cut the heads of those who shed a single drop of cow's blood," threatened a sadhu during a Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) rally at Ramtek near Nagpur last October. "The blood of cows has polluted every river," thundered VHP leader Ashok Singhal.

The agenda is clear. Says its president, Vishnu Hari Dalmia: "We hope this agitation affects the elections." Realising that it can't extract many more votes from under the rubble of the Babari Masjid, and gasping for the oxygen of communal confrontation, the Sangh brotherhood will be pushing the emotive question of cow and animal slaughter from January 21 with a convention at Allahabad, where one lakh volunteers will be brought together by the Bajrang Dal (the VHP's stormtroopers) for 'training' in the prevention of cow slaughter.

The methods to be used are not exactly a model of ahimsa. Cow slaughter is to be prevented "at any cost" and violence has not been ruled out. "Anything may happen. It will be a fight to the finish," says Singhal. The choice of the Bajrang Dal for organising the campaign is as ominous as the potential for conflict is immense. The 'trainees' will form teams to stop cows being taken to slaughterhouses - a list of which has been prepared - snatching startled cows on the way if necessary. One hundred jeeps will roam the country as Gau Raksha Rathes (cow-protection chariots) to detect cow slaughter.

The reaction of the Congress(I) has been somewhat ambivalent. Many Congressmen share the belief that the cow should be protected, but condemn the agitation.... The Left believes the VHP/BJP should remember that beef is an important source of protein for the poor.... None of the anti-cow slaughter agitations in the past has ever picked up momentum. But the Sangh brotherhood is hoping that the latest one will succeed in whipping up public support.

It is true that there is a growing public awareness of the need to minimise the suffering of animals destined for the abattoir, and to ensure that the way they are transported and the manner in which they are killed are humane. The obvious way to do this is to modernise the country's abattoirs, giving them the space and the equipment to kill animals in hygienic conditions - and, in the process, provide consumers with clean meat.

These considerations, however, are not part of the

Sangh's brotherhood's agenda. Its concentration on emotion is understandable given how the facts undermine its claims. It says the country's cattle population (cows, bullocks and buffaloes) is falling. Actually, India has the largest cattle population in the world. In 1982 the figure stood at 262.2 million. In 1987 it was 272 million. The figure for 1992 are still being collated by the Ministry of Agriculture, but officials say there are no signs of a fall. Rather a small rise is expected.

What the Sangh brotherhood ignores is the brute reality of the countryside: ... The Green Revolution and the greater use of tractors have meant that a section of farmers no longer need to use bullocks or male buffaloes for cultivation. Moreover, survival dictates that if a cow no longer gives milk and the farmer can't afford to feed it, he will sell it to a middleman. Or, as frequently happens, he lets it starve and saves scarce fodder for his more productive animals. Hindu sentiment is sometimes strong enough to prevent him from selling the cow for slaughter, but never strong enough to make him feed a creature of no use to him. ...

Land is finite. As humans and animals compete for resources there will be less fodder for cattle, which is why in 1976 the National Commission of Agriculture recommended that "low-producing stock should be progressively eliminated so that the limited feed and fodder resources are available for the proper feeding of high-producing animals." Lack of adequate fodder is one reason why so much Indian cattle is scrawny, gives low yields of milk and produces poor progeny. Basically its genetic quality has degenerated owing to lack of food. As long ago as 1955, an expert committee on cattle said in its report: "The scientific development of cattle means the culling of useless animals... by banning slaughter... the worthless animals will multiply and deprive the more productive animals of any chance of development."

So, on the one hand, logic dictates that uneconomic cattle should be slaughtered. On the other, there is a demand for meat by Indians which is difficult to legislate away. The false notion of Hindus as a homogeneous monolith was an idea the Sangh brotherhood tried to impose during the temple agitation... Now it is seeking to impose its version of correct Hindu eating habits.

Most Indians eat meat. A 1992 National Food Survey by the Indian Market Research Bureau showed that 74 per cent of urban households eat meat. Only 22 per cent were vegetarian. And in addition to Muslims and Christians, a section of Hindus, particularly in Kerala, also eat beef, besides the tribals and some SCs. And if they eat beef, one reason is that it is cheaper than mutton, invariably costing half the price...

The fact that Indians eat meat explains why previous anti-cow-slaughter agitations have fizzled out.

Sociologist Ashis Nandy believes this one will fail too...

The public's demand for meat has ensured that there has always been a supply of cows for slaughter - despite the ban that exists on it in most regions, with the exception of the North-east, Kerala and West Bengal. Either they are killed illegally or are smuggled to states where there is no ban. It's estimated, for example, that one million heads of cattle are taken from the southern states to Kerala every year for slaughter. So the laws exist on paper... because they disregard people's eating habits...

... Muslim dominated villages in eastern Uttar Pradesh ... were terrorised under the BJP government by the lodging of FIRs false accusing the residents of cow slaughter... "You have a law in Delhi banning cow slaughter but no action to deal with the cows roaming in the streets"

In the pursuit of religious propaganda for the sake of votes, statistics are dismissed. The VHP refuses to believe that cattle are not dwindling and does not explain how farmers will go on feeding unproductive animals... Nor does it say how it will dissuade people from eating meat.

Its only solution to all these questions is to say that it will provide gaushalas (homes for cows) for unwanted cows and bullocks. Yet the 3,600-odd gaushalas in the country are in dismal state, with pressure on the land forcing local villagers to take over the area intended for cattle. Even the best run gaushalas are no viable solution when you consider how many thousands of acres would be required to house all the surplus cattle in India. Most countries with large bovine populations attempt to have a coherent animal-husbandry policy. The Sangh brotherhood's idea of animal husbandry is ... a crude exploitation, for the sake of votes, of (the) feeling of affection and veneration for the animal amongst most Hindus.

(Source: The India Today, 31 January, 1996)

(Contd. from page 134)

The Future

As regards the Muslim League, what has happened will be regarded by them as a great triumph... What has happened is indeed a great personal triumph for Mr. Jinnah. Within seven years after the Lahore Pakistan resolution of 1940, he has succeeded in defeating a great political organisation of sixty years' standing with the backing of the large majority of the Indian people. But has he succeeded in doing good to the Muslims themselves and to his country? When the whole world is trying to integrate, it is no service to India to disintegrate the country. India divided and speaking with two voices cannot pull her proper weight in the councils of the nations. But above all, the division of India has laid the foundations of interminable quarrels and chaos which will bring untold suffering to generations yet unborn. This is what the League has accomplished. ...

(Courtesy: The Mainstream, 10 February, 1996)

K.S. Dakshina Murthy On Conversion of Tribals

... For the last one-and-a-half years, insidious attempts are on to convert thousands of primitive, food-gathering tribals in Mysore and Kodagu districts into either Christians or Hindus.

Spearheaded mainly by Christian missionary groups using the front of developmental agencies and Hindu voluntary organisations, the efforts are apparently aimed at converting the estimated three lakh tribals, who dominate the dense forest areas and their periphery in the region.

Until now however, the attempts at conversion have met with limited success as the efforts have evoked hostile resistance from the tribal leadership which has orally communicated to its people that those converted must leave their hamlets at once and never return.

A senior tribal activist told this correspondent that the efforts at conversion were systematic and well-planned with no moves to roll back the attempts despite protests by the yajamanas (tribal heads).

Interestingly, the tribals consider themselves "native worshippers" with their own gods and customs which fall outside the purview of any religion, including Hinduism. In tribal lore, the traditions and culture of the tribals date back to 50,000 years with the present generation in no mood to give up their spiritual autonomy. ...

... With the situation hotting up in recent weeks, the district administration has ordered an enquiry into the issue of conversions. The church groups have taken the stand that "whoever comes voluntarily, we will convert them". ...

... The Vanavasi Kalyana Sangha, an RSS-backed Hindu organisation, has been trying to woo the tribals into the Hindu fold.

But its attempts have been temporarily stymied following displeasure expressed by the State BJP leadership which has informally initiated an enquiry into the complaints of conversion by the Vanavasi Kalyana Sangha. In the BJP view, the tribals anyway belong to Hinduism and there is no need for any conversion. ...

In view of the tribal leadership, spiritual rights are guaranteed under the Constitution and no encouragement must be given to organisations that are attempting to breed what they call "a monoculture religion", in the process destroying plurality of cultures.

Further, the tribals fear that if they are psychologically weakened and lose faith in their own culture they would become second-class citizens in another religion.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 22 January, 1996)

RSS Activities Abroad - A Report in the Organiser

... Two swayamsevaks, Amul Sharma and Maneklal, started the first shakha across the seven seas in Kenya... The RSS prarthana... now reverberates through more than 170 countries of the world.

... The swayamsevaks started various Hindu organisations in the countries where they settled. One among those organisations is the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, which resembles the Sangh very much in its activities.

As the work of the Hindu organisations spread... it was thought appropriate to bring the active workers together for a camp at least once in five years. The first step in this direction was taken when the Vishwa Sangh Shivir was organised in Bangalore in 1990, where 200 persons from abroad participated....

VHP has spread its work and the seva vibhag was also set up in many countries. About 20 branches of Vishwa Hindu Parishad are active in as many countries of the world.

After the Bangalore Shivir the organisational structure of HSS has improved a lot. Adhikaris were appointed for various vibhags and seven-day ITC camps were also held in various countries. Youths under the banner of Hindu Students Council have become very active in the universities of USA and UK. The HSC is active in 46 universities in these countries including the prestigious London School of Economics. The UK, USA and Kenya hold regular annual camps and the First Year Sangh Shiksha Varga. The camps are held for swayamsevaks of various age-groups... Since the last many years a Hindu Marathon is regularly held in the UK in which the local whites also participate. In Kenya and UK there is provision in schools for Hindu religious instruction... An annual youth camp is held in America. The Hindu Vidyarthi Parishad is active in America. A three-day convention held in Boston by this organisation had attracted 400 students from across the United States and Canada. In the UK too Hindu students organise various programmes.

Even though the Sangh is not running any shakhas outside India the ... swayamsevaks have established several Hindu organisations in foreign countries. An association called Friends of India Society International works in the UK and the USA. The Overseas Friends of BJP is active in UK, USA and Canada. In UK and USA, Sewa International helps the service projects. In America similar work is carried on by Kalyan Ashram and India Relief Fund. All these institutions are active in South-East Asia and Middle East Europe, America and the Caribbeans. There are also organisations called Hindu Sevika Samiti, Dr. Hedgewar Institute and such others. These organisations are connected to the Vishwa Vibhag of RSS.

Periodicals too are regularly published (in) some... countries including Amar Bharati and Sangathan in Kenya, Sangh Sandesh and Hindu Vishwa in Thailand, Sangh Vichar in America and Vishwa Hindu Parishad Samachar in South East Asia. The National Hindu Students Forum (UK) publishes a monthly Hum (We). Besides, a fortnightly journal called Samvad is published from Vishwa Niketan (Delhi), which is mailed to the workers living abroad.

Most of the Hindus abroad are economically well-off and take keen interest in seva work in India. NRI Hindus are planning to take Seva International to various countries... Many Hindu NRIs are taking great interest in the economic and industrial growth of our motherland. They have already expressed their willingness to invest in various industrial and commercial projects in India....

The most important achievement of the Hindu organisations is that their work has drawn the appreciation of the local populace. Because of the discipline in the activities of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh and VHP, the local people have come closer to the Hindu society and faith...

The image of the Hindus has improved considerably throughout Europe and America. The discipline in the activities of Hindu organisations has.. won praise from the leaders of these countries. Margaret Thatcher had attended an RSS programme when she was Prime Minister... She garlanded a portrait of Dr. Hedgewar. Queen Elizabeth II impressed by the work done by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad had bestowed on VHP worker Hasmukh Shah the rare honour of inviting him to dinner at her palace. In Kenya, the country's President came to an RSS camp to attend a programme.

It is in this backdrop that the Vishwa Sangh Shivir was held recently in Vadodara. This time 379 Hindu activists from abroad participated in the Shivir... including 125 women. ...

Overseas Friends of BJP, who are already active in America and England, have started working in coordination with the BJP in India. Shri K.L. Sharma who looks after the overseas work also attended the Shivir. Shri L.K. Advani also visited the Shivir.

... The participants discussed various means to counter the Pak-sponsored malicious propaganda war against India in the West. Hindu organisations have already started influencing policy makers in the West through lobbying and other such activities... The participants discussed various methods to increase the political participation of the Hindu NRIs in their respective countries. Altogether the Shivir reflected the vigour and vitality of resurgent Hinduism ... which is bound to sweep the world as a spiritual whirlwind.

(Source: The Organiser Republic Day Special, 28 January, 1996)

RSS: Rajendra Singh's Address to Rally Karimganj, Assam, 28 January, 1996

Increasing number of shakhas and swayamsevaks around the country is an indication of the strengthening of nationalist forces and it augurs well for the nation, facing threats from secessionist elements.

... The unabated influx of foreigners from Bangladesh... had assumed serious dimension, upsetting the demographic structure of the north eastern States. In Mizoram... the growth of population was 100%, in Assam 79% and in Arunachal Pradesh the scenario was not in any way different. He explained that it was not a question of Hindu or Muslim but a very "sensitive issue" with wider ramification. Saudi Arabia identified 25,000 Bangladeshis and deported them and Bangladesh sent back thousands of Mynamar nationals from its soil... Infiltrators, were acting as the agents of foreign powers and posed security risk...

What is the way out of the present morass? RSS is not pessimistic... this country will again become the epicentre of the world... The judgement of the Supreme Court on 'Hindutva' ... has been a slap on the faces of those who have dubbed it as 'Hindu fundamentalism'... Hindus following their high tradition and cultural heritage based upon the teachings of Veda, Upanishad, Grantha Sahil and Gita could never be fundamentalists. Otherwise... how could Christians, Muslims and Parsees from outside live here?

RSS with its social and nationalist commitment and the philosophy of sarvey bhavantu sukhinah works for the upliftment of people and takes pride in running 12,000 schools across the country... It is this tenet of RSS that can stem the decline and restore values and virtues in our life.... Handing over the three holy shrines of Ayodhya, Kāshī and Mathura ... would be a symbolic friendly gesture for the Muslims considering the destruction of 30,000 temples by the invaders and marauders... We will bring the government that will reconstruct Ram temple. It would be a government that would rise above all policy of appeasement and vote-banks...

(Source: The Organiser)

RSS Shakhas Abroad

Country	Up-shakhas	Country	Up-shakhas
Australia	5	Thailand	1
S.E. Asia	19	Middle East	5
Hong Kong	3	Nepal	5
Myanmar	51	Kenya	5
Tanzania	1	South Africa	1
Mauritius	2	Germany	1
Netherlands	6	United Kingdom	53
U.S.A	17	Canada	3
Trinidad	1	Total	179

RSS: Bajrang Dal's Go-Raksha Andolan N.K. Singh in The India Today, 15 Feb., 1996

For the Bajrang Dal, the militant youth wing of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) (did) some communal muscle flexing (for) the launch of its cow-protection programme in Allahabad on January 21, 1996. Nearly one lakh Dal volunteers sporting saffron bandanas converged on the ... confluence of the ... Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati. Spouting profanities denouncing those involved in the meat trade, they "vowed" to stop the slaughter of cows in the country.

The Bajrang Dal, clearly, has embarked on a course fraught with dangerous consequences. By whipping up communal hysteria on the eve of the general election, the organisation hopes to play its part in a wider Sangh brotherhood strategy to create a pro-BJP wave across the country. And a BJP government at the Centre, according to Bajrang Dal activists' light, would be the quickest way to establishing a "Hindu Rashtra". As Bajrang Dal President Jaibhan Singh Pavaiyya said: "We shall use muscle power to stop cow slaughter. If that causes a civil war in the country, we knew how to deal with it".

Having set March 20 as the deadline for a complete halt to cow slaughter in the country, the organisation hopes to pursue its agitation under the auspices of the Goraksha Andolan Samiti, a recently formed outfit comprising the RSS, VHP and Bajrang Dal representatives. To this effect, the Sangh brotherhood has floated a trust, and plans to launch a massive fund-collection drive.

... The Sangh brotherhood has embarked on similar missions in the past, but this being an election year, the possibility of such a drive sparking off communal clashes is all too real.

RSS: Resolution on Rewriting History Bharatiya Itihas Sankalan Yojana Samiti

It is resolved that the history textbooks for students up to XIIth class all over India should contain only the unsuppressed facts of true history of India as re-constructed on the basis of recent archaeological discoveries and re-study of the oldest literature of the country, the Vedas, which clearly prove that the Aryans did not come from outside the ancient boundaries of the country and that they were the same people who gave us the cities and villages of the Indus-Saraswati Civilization more than 5000 years ago.

(Source: The Organiser, 18 February, 1996)

The contest will be between congress and BJP. All other parties are insignificant.

L.K. Advani

Neo-Hinduism: An Agenda for Political Disintegration and Social Conflict

I.K. Shukla in the Mainstream, 18 November, 1995

Passion and purpose culminated in hell's fire that charred India in the wake of Babari Masjid and Rath Yatra. The trail of blood and tears that these twin genocidal enterprises blazed across the length and breadth of an ancient land was unique in many ways. Conceptually bold, it was an act of desperation. Borrowed from its European forbears this was fascistic terror in instalments with the implicit threat of more to come as and when needed. Ostensibly "rectifying" the past it was geared to controlling the present and conditioning the future. its triumphalist orchestration was primed to intimidating the minorities (Hindus and non-Hindu alike) and reassuring the parasitic and privileged plutocracy. It was, too, rejection of democracy and a multicultural society. To that extent, it was virulent strain to tribalist assertion. By extension, a violent repudiation of civic norms of a modern society. Force, not claims of justice, would be the arbiter henceforward in the polity that would be shaped and steered by the resurgent neo-Hinduism - this was the message. It did not go well with the minorities, or if they did not understand, that under the Indian sun, subservience will be their station....

There are a lot of paradoxes and contradictions involved. But reason and logic being subversive, they have been pre-empted and effectively barred. Therefore, it would not do to discuss the manifest incongruities and glaring dysfunctions. However, some of them can be just mentioned: fusion of Dark Ages with state-of-the-art communication technology, the much ballyhooed Hindu tolerance, and its feral reality, selecting only Muslim monuments and landmarks for desecration and demolition but leaving unharmed those of the Christian conqueror's (the British), equating vandalism with virility and 'cleansing' with rape and arson, seemingly all this nullifying the impotence and inferiority of the generations past (or, attesting the impotence and inferiority of the present one?), etc. To use the democratic appurtenances in pursuit of fascistic aims is too evident and historically, too, recurrent to bear any amplification.

Why this autopsy, why now, and why not only for the benefit of the minorities so-called (in any configuration all of them together would constitute the real majority of the nation and this is the delirium tremens of the status quoists, the predatory patricians) but also for those yet regarded within the mainstream, the 'other' Hindus, secular and otherwise?

First, it may not be all that premature. With elections around the corner, and ambitions of the fascistic fringe swirling, there would be no more opportune a time as now. Here is still the time and the space, relatively

unmuddled by the turgidity of instigated emotions of mob fury and fundamentalist fervour, wherein the national collectivity - the intelligentsia and the general populace - can reflect on the ogre of neo-Hindu Frankenstein, threatening not only to shred the past but also to subvert and disfigure the future. The time is now or never.

Secondly, the neo-Hindu recidivism poses a serious threat to India as an entity - political and cultural. Its tribal bent augurs ill for a nation as multifariously constituted as India. There is no nation on this planet which accommodates the bewildering variety of autonomous cultural aggregations as does India... The neo-Hindu hegemony of the superstructure will aggravate and exacerbate the cross-cultural and cross-regional tensions precipitating splintering and sanguinary secessionism.

With strife consuming the populace, with neo-Hindu hegemony and hierarchs safely ensconced in power, the nation will regress to ethnic warfare and tribal bloodletting, harking back to primitivism and hailing the European paradigm of former Yugoslavia... rendering us a 'former India'. With the egalitarian imperative of modern politics cast aside, the populace deflected from mobilising to demand the basics of a civil society, destitution will dig deep and the nation would be thrown into the abyss of massive misery and social degradation. This would be the neo-Hindus' revenge against the Muslim rulers who had given India a central administration, a territorial integrity, a cohesive civil society and a protracted period of peace and prosperity (with) no wealth repatriated abroad.

The theme of revenge is a constant in such drive. In one form or another it will abide. Women being burnt alive by the caste Hindus for the crime of wearing blouse and forgetting that they were low-caste, heads of members of a wedding procession chopped because the bridegroom had the effrontery to ride a horse (the privilege reserved ... for only the upper caste Hindus), demands for better wages drowned in blood and blaze, mayhem meeting the refusal to be bludgeoned or bribed into a vote-bank and thus defying a hoary tradition which kept the lowly in their appointed place and function, tempers frayed by claims staked as citizens to a fair share in the national dispensation, peace disturbed by the assertion that the agenda of the emaciated and oppressed cannot be the same as that of the pot-bellied exploiters and freeloaders - all these qualifying for punitive reprisal - the list will ever remain tentative. New 'crimes' of the victims of age-old repression would continue cropping up and boiling the adrenalin of the pampered lotus-eaters anointed in perpetuity as the 'chosen ones' who are

beyond the pale of law, humanity and morals.

Seen in this light, Babari Masjid and Rath Yatra will recur in various guises and various locations. A soft state would mask its complicity by feigning somnolence - no see, no hear, no speak, confirming, in this instance as in many others, that it has become obsolete, that with it at the helm, democracy is in danger, secularism is in shambles and national security is under siege by enemies home-bred and distant. Masjid and Yatra were coercive and violent pleas by the neo-Hindus to the minorities to be their permanent vote-bank, or else. Fiftytwo per cent of India was being put to sword and fire so that it sees light and switches its electoral loyalty en masse to the neo-Hindu diktat. Mandal Committee Report, was not, per se, very objectionable. Otherwise its recommendations would not be incorporated now in the political platforms of all the parties - including the rabidly communal ones... That they were outsmarted and pre-empted was the shooting pain that convulsed the neo-Hindu aspirants to power. This Report and its recommendations were the only statutory carrot that could be credibly thrown to the 'minorities' to lure them in the fold. V.P. Singh had whisked it away and made Delhi 'too distant'. More, he adopted it flauntingly, without any condescending hedges and convoluted chippings or dilatory deferments. By assigning it again to some parliamentary committee to examine its viability, V.P. could yet have won some political laurels, and the committee could yet have buried it in deliberations long and deep. That would be the standard 'parliamentary practice' as post-1947 India has known and 'permitted'. Flouting this convention was a crime for which the transgressor had to pay a heavy price. Perhaps V.P. Singh had reckoned with it as he took the plunge. Indian politics, or its electoral variant, has not been the same since. It could not be. V.P. Singh had decided right then that it should not be.

There is a more potent reason why the neo-Hindus should be kept at bay. With Pakistan as its geo-political outpost in the region, it would suit the hegemonic ambitions of the US never to let a democratic regimen thwart its designs. Propping up the military and fundamentalist extremism to checkmate any such stirrings will accord with the ever-burgeoning 'needs' and vintage reflexes of the United States. This irritant will be one prong of its bid to "contain" India. The other prong will be the neo-Hindus who will be aided and abetted in keeping India simmering with disaffection and upheaval. It is thus that India would be "contained". Punjab and Kashmir will be made to breed more Punjabs and Kashmirs. If not India, at least Kashmir can be made a phantom state... Just as Afghanistan has been made one under the joint auspices of the US and Pakistan, just as Palestine and Bosnia are being (un-) made thanks to the US-UN, just as banana republics in Latin America and Central America have been (un-) made.

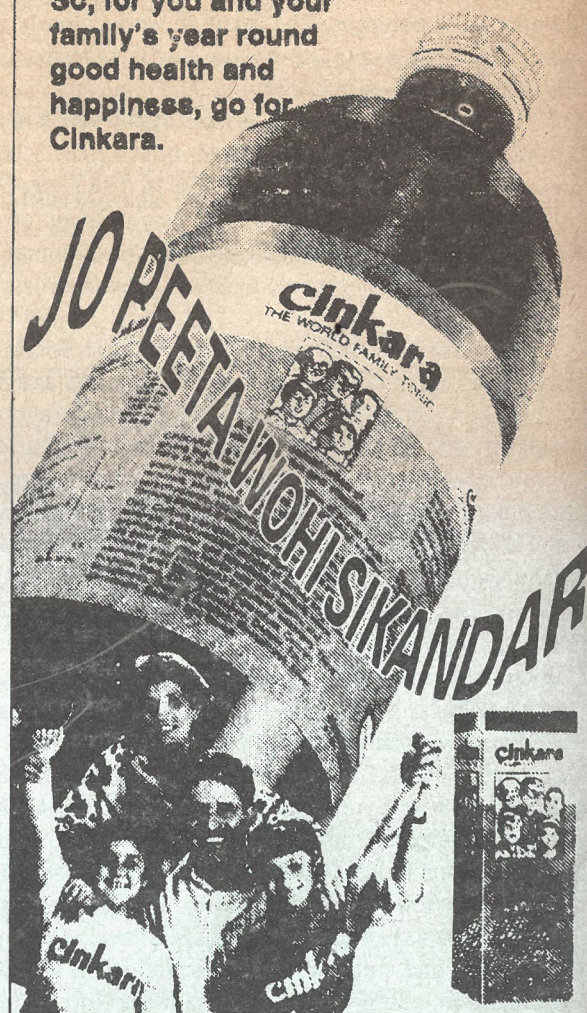


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Islamic Organizations in U.S.A. - A Partial Listing

The **Muslim World League**, US Office, New York based in Makkah al Mukarramah maintains an active program in the United States, enjoys NGO status with the United Nations, provides copies of the Quran and Islamic material, assists with the religious needs of those who accept Islam while in prisons, contributes financially to other Islamic groups, and secures Imams for Masjids. 1655 N. Fort Meyer Drive, Suite 700, Arlington, VA 22209; Tel: (703) 351-5296; Fax (703)351-5241.

The **International Institute of Islamic Thought**, an American social sciences organization founded in 1981... sponsors research and scholarship, organizes seminars and conferences, and publishes classical and contemporary works including the American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences. The Institute works closely with universities and organizations in North America. P.O. Box 669, Herndon, VA 22070.

The **Muslim Students' Association of USA and Canada (MSA)**... the largest and most active Islamic organization... Since its inception in 1963, seeks to provide Muslims - men and women new to Islam or new to this continent - with the environment and human and material resources necessary to foster growth in Islamic sense.

Since the establishment of the Islamic Society of North America, however, MSA concentrates its activities on campuses, establishes Friday and regular prayers on campuses, sets up Muslim reading rooms and libraries of Islamic books, sponsors Islamic events. P.O. Box 38, Plainfield, IN 46168.

The **Islamic Medical Association (IMA)** formed in 1967 provides a forum for Muslim health professionals to meet and share relevant information and services... IMA publishes biannually, The Journal and holds a National Convention annually. 4121 S. Fairview Avenue, #203, Downers Grove, IL 60515.

The **Association of Muslim Scientists and Engineers (AMSE)** founded in 1969 to help promote scientific research and application of science based upon Islamic principles. Publishes a Newsletter and organizes an annual conference. P.O. Box 38, Plainfield, IN 46168.

The **Association of Muslim Social Scientists (AMSS)** formed in 1972 as a professional, academic, educational, and cultural body dedicated to the initiation, revitalization, and promotion of Islamic thought. It holds an annual conference and several discipline seminars. Publishes Newsbulletin. P.O. Box 669, Herndon, VA 22070.

The **Islamic Society of North America (ISNA)**

USA: Iftar on Capitol Hill

This year in the United States, the completion of the Ramadan fast on February 20, was marked by a very special event.

First Lady Hillary Clinton hosted a celebration of Eid-Al-Fitr at the White House, marking the first time an Islamic holiday was ever celebrated there. Approximately one hundred Muslims from around the country and their families were invited.

Khaled Saffuri, Assistant Executive Director of the American Muslim Council (AMC) which had sponsored the Reception presented Mrs. Clinton with a Qur'an and... acknowledged... President's message to Muslims around the world... "as an example of the Clinton administration's efforts to reach out to the American Muslim community".

Also present... was Imam Abdul Rasheed Muhammad, the first Muslim chaplain of the U.S. Army... commissioned... as Captain in 1993.

The Council which also hosted the first-ever Iftar-Dinner on Capitol Hill for members of the U.S. Congress, representatives from government agencies, the Clinton administration and Jewish leaders from the local community and from across the nation.

In a taped Eid greeting to Muslims around the world, President Clinton extended "my personal greetings to the entire Muslim community, here in the United States and around the world... It is a time for rejoicing and celebration, but it is also a time for reflection and rededication. On this occasion, let us rekindle our commitment to the cause of peace among all of the peoples of the earth".

In the United States today there are more than 1,000 mosques, of which more than three-fourths opened since 1980, and an estimated 5 million Muslims. Through immigration, births and conversion, Islam is one of the fastest-growing religions in the United States. ...

formed in 1982 as an umbrella organization seeking to meet the needs of both the transient students and resident Muslims. Headquartered in Plainfield, Indiana holds an annual conference, regional conferences, specialized conferences, and publishes a news and views journal, The Islamic Horizons. P.O. Box 38, Plainfield, IN 46168.

The **Muslim Political Action Committee (MPAC)** [3010 Wilshire Boulevard # 217, Los Angeles, CA 90010].

American Muslim Council, 1212 New York Avenue, N.W. # 525, Washington D.C. 20005; Tel: (202) 789-2262; Fax: (202) 789-2550.

Chronology of the Month

16 January--15 February, 1996

I-NATIONAL POLITICS

Congress(I)

- *V.C. Shukla, Madhavrao Scindia and Balram Jakhar resign from ministership.
- *Ex-Minister H.K.L. Bhagat prosecuted for alleged involvement in 1984 anti-Sikh riots.
- *Kalpnath Rai prosecuted under TADA for harbouring terrorists.
- *Muslim Ministers court imams and ulema for support. Cong(I) leaders meet groups of ulema throughout the country (19 Jan).

Corruption

- *Havala case dominates political scene. During the month many senior leaders including L.K. Advani, M.L. Khurana and Yashwant Sinha of BJP, V. C. Shukla, Madhavrao Scindia, Balram Jakhar and Kalpnath Rai of Cong(I), S.R. Bommai and Sharad Yadav of JD, Devi Lal of SJD, Arjun Singh of Cong(T), and Arif Md. Khan were charge-sheeted by CBI.
- *V.P. Singh proposes 5-point formula against corruption in politics (24 Jan).

Janata Parivar

- *NF Chairman and TDP leader N.T. Rama Rao passes away (18 Jan).
- *Named in Jain diaries, JD President S.R. Bommai resigns and is replaced by Laloo Prasad Yadav; JD Parliamentary Party leader Sharad Yadav resigns from Lok Sabha (28 Jan); Samta(S) leader Chandrajeet Yadav, though not charge-sheeted, tenders resignation from Lok Sabha.
- *AGP undecided about joining NF (3 Feb).
- *Assam JD forms 10-party alliance, excluding Left (5 Feb).
- *JD accommodates Cong(I) candidate in Rajya Sabha election from Bihar (7 Feb).
- *Dalit parties and groups in Maharashtra revive Republican Party (28 Jan), form alliance with JD and Left (9 Feb).
- *SP leader Mulayam Singh reaffirms SP-JD alliance (9 Feb).
- *BSP leader Mayavati wants to go it alone while Kanshi Ram negotiates with JD and Cong(I).
- *DMK demands state autonomy. AIADMK undecided.

Left Front

- *CPM leader Jyoti Basu attacks PM Rao for corruption.
- *CPI(ML) and CPI differ on feasibility of viable Third Front (20 Jan).
- *CPI(ML) urges JD and SP to finalize alliance; fails to organise Laloo-Mulayam meeting as difference on inclusion of BSP in NF surfaces (9 Feb).

Republic Day

- *Marked by total bandh and several blasts in Kashmir and boycott by several political parties in the North-East.

Sangh Parivar

- *L.K. Advani resigns from Lok Sabha and decides not to contest till cleared (16 Jan).
- *RSS launches Lok Jagran Abhiyan (22 Jan).
- *BJP endorses VHP's Hindu agenda (24 Jan).
- *Samta(F) finalizes poll alliance with BJP (26 Jan).

Secularism

- *Several conferences and seminars focus on threat to secular order including two-day conference organised by former

Minister of State Subodh Kant.

- *Ex-PM Chandrashekhar cautions against divisive forces.
- *Arjun Singh endorses Supreme Court judgement on Hindutva while Cong(I) MP Ajit Jogi files writ petition against it (16 Jan).

II-KASHMIR SITUATION

Government

- *Minister of State Salman Khurshid rules out foreign mediation (17 Jan).
- *Minister of State Razi rejects pre-1953 status for Kashmir.
- *Govt holds all-party meeting to assess election possibility: NC and BJP oppose early poll (2 Feb).
- *Home Minister Chavan talks with NC leader Farooq Abdullah (17 Feb).

International Reaction

- *Iran denounces rocket attack (29 Jan).
- *Japan rejects Bhutto's plea for intervention by G-7.
- *OIC appeals for immediate release of foreign hostages.
- *UN Secretary-General Ghali evades discussion on Kashmir with Pak Foreign Minister.

Militancy

- *Marked fall in level of violence.
- *Eleven militants surrender (20 Jan).
- *Republic Day marked by encounters and blasts.
- *Clash among militant groups reported in Srinagar (6 Feb).
- *Al Faran continues to hold foreign hostages.

Pakistan's Stand

- *Heavy exchange of fire across Line of Actual Control; POK mosque hit by rocket of Indian origin. India denies attack (29 Jan).
- *PM Bhutto appeals to Al Faran to release hostages, offers unconditional talks with India on substantive issues. India welcomes talks (4 Feb).
- *Pro-Kashmir rally organised all over Pakistan (5 Feb).
- *Ex-Foreign Minister Yaqub Khan discusses relations with PM Rao.

Political Parties

- *Farooq Abdullah reiterates demand for complete autonomy (27 Jan).
- *Hurriyat organises total bandh on Republic Day.
- *Four ex-militant leaders form forum to solve Kashmir problem permanently and offer unconditional talks; Governor responds positively; Centre adopts cautious attitude (Feb 8).
- *J&K Cong(I) opposes nominated government.
- *Bandh again organised by Hurriyat and JKLF to mark 12th death anniversary of Maqbool Butt.

III-BABRI MASJID

Babri Masjid Movement

- *10th anniversary of unlocking observed by various Muslim organisations.
- *BMCC submits Memorandum to President (1 Feb).
- *Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi denies forgiveness to Cong(I) even if Babri Masjid rebuilt (6 Feb).

Judicial

- *Special Court issues warrants of arrest against BJP and VHP leaders (18 Jan).
- *Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas leader Ramchandra Das arrested and

CHRONOLOGY

released (2 Feb).

*Sadhvi Rithambra acquitted by Delhi magistrate against charges of fomenting hatred between communities by anti-Babri Masjid speech.

Mathura-Varanasi Cases

*State Govt stops VHP volunteers from performing pooja on the premises of Gyan Vapi Masjid (15 Jan).

Political

*Cong(I) Minister G.N. Azad admits Muslim alienation because of demolition of Babri Masjid (20 Jan).

*Cong(I) General Secretary B.P. Maurya and G.N. Azad offer conditional apology (21 Jan); Apology report denied later (29 Jan).

*Cong(I) Minister J.N. Mishra admits genuine Muslim anger on demolition.

*Minister of State Aslam Sher Khan denies Babri Masjid problem or need for apology.

*Home Minister Chavan vows not to apologise (15 Feb).

IV-OTHER MATTERS OF CONCERN

Assam Situation

*ABSU holds 48-hr bandh on Bodoland boundary question (26 Jan).

*AASU resolves not to allow polls on basis of 1994 rolls (14 Feb).

Bombay Disturbances

*Maharashtra Govt allows term of Shri Krishna Commission of Inquiry to expire. Decision universally condemned by secular parties and eminent jurists. National Commission on Human Rights revives inquiry (25 Jan).

*Shahabuddin demands financial assistance to Maharashtra Govt. to cover expenditures of Commission, or establishment of a Central Commission (27 Jan). Amnesty International condemns decision (25 Jan).

*Home Minister Chavan criticizes decision as mistake (31 Jan). BJP leader Vajpayee expresses unhappiness (31 Jan).

*Writ petition filed against decision in Bombay (8 Feb).

*Cases against Shiv Sena supreme Thackeray withdrawn by Maharashtra Govt (31 Jan).

Commemoration

*Seminar on Abdul Haque Muhaddis Dehlvi held in Delhi (17 Jan).

*19th death anniversary of Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed observed officially (11 Feb).

Communal Situation

*Tension in Kishtwar and Dodha due to alleged killing of Muslim family by paramilitary forces; curfew imposed (22 Jan).

*Communal violence in Santrampur in Gujarat; one killed, curfew imposed.

*Three accused in 1991 Rampur riot case sentenced (8 Feb).

*High Court orders compensation for victims of Muzaffarnagar cases, including 10 lakhs for raped women (9 Feb). Mulayam Singh offers apology.

Economic Situation

*WB Govt forms Minorities Finance Corporation (16 Jan).

*Supreme Court permits Delhi Idgah abattoir operation (19 Feb).

Education

*Twelve degree colleges in UP recognised as minority institutions (18 Jan).

*AMU reopens but VC's relations with teaching staff strained (29 Jan).

*Jamia Millia Islamia teachers launch agitation in support of 11-point demands (6 Feb).

*One student killed on AMU campus (7 Feb).

Haj

*Haj House inaugurated in Calcutta (16 Jan).

*Govt increases Haj quota to 56,000.

Hindu Chauvinism

*SC orders Maharashtra Govt to maintain status quo on renaming Aurangabad.

*Maharashtra CM 'takes over' Haji Malang Dargah near Bombay and renames it Baba Malang Samadhi (4 Feb); Muslims debarred from entrance for days.

Historical Monuments

*Unauthorised construction of 'wazukhana' just outside Jama Masjid by Bukhari criticized by media, town planners, historians and architects; Shahabuddin demands demolition (20 Jan). Public interest litigation filed; High Court halts construction (14 Feb). Delhi Govt and Delhi Wakf Board remain silent spectators.

Mass Media

*Supreme Court holds editor responsible for material published in paper (23 Jan).

*Press Council castigates 'Jagran' for communal writing (8 Feb).

Muslim Organisations

*Milli Parliament adopts platform in Patna; causes public furore (16 Jan).

National League and Muslim Forum form state-level alliance in UP (20 Jan).

*AIMPLB Secretary advises Muslims not to vote en bloc for any party.

*AIMIM(Owaisi) refused permission by High Court to hold political meeting in Makka Masjid, Hyderabad (23 Jan).

*Milli Council advises Muslims not to scatter votes.

Other Muslim Countries

*Pak Minister 'admits' custodial killings of muhajirs (3 Feb).

*Amnesty International and European Parliament severely criticize Pakistan.

Personal Law

*AIMPLB organises Shariat Protection Week in late January.

*Kerala High Court awards 2.5 lakhs maintenance to Muslim divorcee.

Reservation

*All India Muslim Minorities Front demands reservation for Muslims in proportion to population (25 Jan). Kesri reiterates support to reservation for Muslims.

*Welfare Minister Kesri criticizes Minorities Commission for poor performance (3 Feb). Chairman Sardar Ali Khan attributes it to lack of due authority and non-cooperation by Govt (5 Feb).

Urdu

*All India Urdu Conference, Hyderabad decries communalisation of Urdu question (17 Jan).

*AP Govt agrees to give second official language status to districts with 10% Urdu speakers.

*Seminar in Delhi calls for mother-tongue as medium of education.