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**REPRESENTATIVES
OVERSEAS**

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7, Woodville Road,
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Tel: 455-6281.
- U.S.A.** **Dr. K.A. Mallick**
810-73rd Street,
Downer's Grove, ILL 60516
Tel:(708)969-6755
- K.S.A.** **Syed Shariq Ali**
P.O.Box 11447
Jeddah-21491.

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SECULAR ALLIANCE, ADJUSTMENT OR UNDERSTANDING?

An Appeal to All Secular Parties to Save the Secular Order

The Ayodhya Tragedy of the 6th December, 1992, has become a watershed in our national politics. Ruthlessly and cynically the Sangh Parivar deliberately violated the rule of law and made an assault on the dignity of the Judiciary and the Legislature. The misuse of the executive and judicial authority and defiance of the legislature, in the name of Hindutva, by the Sangh Parivar made all the secular parties conscious, as they had never been before, certainly not between 1967 and 1991, of the serious threat, the BJP, as the political arm of the Sangh Parivar, posed to the very survival of the democratic and the secular order in the country, nay, the civil society itself. The political harvest of the Demolition was to make the BJP politically untouchable.

Whatever the mask it may wear, howsoever mellifluous the tunes it may play, irrespective of tactical twists and turns it may do, the BJP continues to stand for Hindu Nationalism as opposed to Indian Nationalism, for a Hindu state as distinct from the Secular-Democratic state, for "one nation, one culture", or Cultural Nationalism, as opposed to Multi-culturalism and Composite Culture. Behind Hindutva as opposed to Bhartiyyata or Hindustaniyat, whether sold under the label of Gandhian Socialism or Integral Humanism or Cultural Nationalism, the various ideological masks behind which Hindu Nationalism has masqueraded, lies the thesis that India is, par-excellence and above all, the land of the Hindus, that only those who call themselves Hindu, or are prepared to do so, are Indians and therefore legitimate citizens of the country and deserving beneficiaries of its resources. The thesis goes beyond the political to its religious counterpart that the only true religion is the Sanatan Dharma and that all other religions, if at all acceptable and shorn of their "objectionable features", are "panths" of the Dharma. Indeed the BJP was, in and shall continue to be the political front of the RSS - no more, no less.

Some secular parties - national and regional, which had not paid much attention to the BJP or its underlying mission, did realize at long last that entering into formal or informal alliance, adjustment or understanding with the forces of Hindutva would not only compromise their ideological integrity but also their political access to the Hindu mind.

In its our of glory in 1996, when the BJP for the first time emerged as the biggest party in the Lok Sabha and was invited by the President, even though it did not command more than 190 odd votes against the minimum required, 270, and formed the government, even those who had earlier found their company compatible shrunk back and distanced themselves from the party in power and desisted from supporting it. Beyond the Samata Party, caught in the whirlpool of anti-Laloo politics in

Bihar, the Vishal Haryana Party, lost in the fight among the three Lals, the Shiromani Akali Dal, with its historical grievances against the Congress leadership and the tactical sympathy extended by the BJP, not one party, big or small, not even one additional M.P., crossed the floor in response to the BJP's SOS.

Since then the BJP leadership has been licking its wounds and making a public grievance of being treated as a political "untouchable". The BJP leadership, however, did not give up and engaged itself in formulating and implementing a multi-dimensional strategy of cutting into the votes of the alienated groups, the Muslims, the OBCs and the Dalits, roping in the regional forces in the name of federalism and attracting the urban, liberal intelligentsia by promoting itself as the 'party with a difference'; emphasizing its Vajpayesque look and attacking corruption, criminalization and communalism.

Unfortunately, the secular parties are still caught in the mental and political grooves of the yesteryear. There is no rethinking by some of their leaders to adjust to the new patterns of BJP-centric politics. Some of them have been traditionally anti-Congress and their anti-Congressism had led them into opportunistic alliances in the past, even a merger in 1977, with the then Bhartiya Jan Sangh.

So both in March 1996 and again in December 1997 the secular parties have failed to forge a National Secular Alliance. On one hand, in May 1996 their common refusal to have any truck with the BJP and its allies reduced the life of the Vajpayee Government to a 13 day wonder. On the other, in December, 1997 their refusal to read the writing on the wall may make short shrift of the prospects of the secular order.

The identification of the BJP by the secular parties, covering the entire spectrum from the centre to the Left, as the political adversary or as the "Other", is not enough to save the country or the secular order. They must collectively endeavour to stop it in its tracks and force it into reverse gear. In 1996, the BJP secured 20.29% of the votes polled in the country as a whole but a higher percentage in Bihar (20.54%), Maharashtra (21.81%), Karnataka (24.85%), U.P. (33.44%), Madhya Pradesh (41.32%), Punjab (42.36%) and Gujarat (48.52%). To add the votes of its allies, in Bihar with Samata Party the Hindutva share goes upto 34.99, in Maharashtra with Shiv Sena, to 38.64%, in Punjab, with SAD to 55.20%. As mentioned above, the BJP has not been resting on its oars, it has been trying for changing its Chehra and Chal (I am not sure about Charitra and Chintan), in order to enlarge its social base, to attract the hitherto hostile social groups, the rising middle class and the government employees. Assuming that it succeeds in maintaining its present social base - the High Castes with a section of the

OBC and SC and ST and its alliance with its present partners, namely, SAP, SAD, Shiv Sena and HVP and in raising its own votes by only 5%, at least in the states where in 1996 it had already reached a level of 25% and above, no one can stop the BJP from forming the next national government in a multi-party contest.

There is no doubt that today the secular voters far outnumber the "Hindu" voters, almost in all constituencies because the BJP has won only about 35 seats in the whole country by securing more than 50% of the votes cast. It is statistically obvious that the BJP's chance of winning a seat rises with the number of contestants ranged against it. To put it in a nutshell, in a straight fight the BJP will be reduced to less than 50 seats. In a triangular contest it will emerge as the single biggest party or alliance. But in a quadrilateral contest, the BJP and its allies will secure a clear majority in the Lok Sabha.

In this view of the situation, it is indeed unfortunate and tragic, looking at the political scene today, that the secular forces continue to be a divided house. This division has its roots in history but has been nourished and perpetuated by unrealistic hopes, unwarranted aspirations, old animosities and local rivalries and ego clashes.

The two traditional antagonists are yet to change their mode of thought; the Congress which is still dreaming of re-establishing its political hegemony and the Left Front, the Janata Parivar and the regional parties, which together form or support the United Front, are still obsessed with their anti-Congress rhetoric and their petty games of one-upmanship. The political imperative today is an alliance of all secular forces, which should include the Congress, the Janata Parivar, the BSP, the Left and the regional parties, to man the defences of the citadel of secularism from their respective vantage points. This can alone ensure the survival of the secular order. Only in this way, they can save Democracy, today, for Political, Social and Economic Justice tomorrow.

Unfortunately while this political truth has dawned on all secular parties, they do not publicly acknowledge it. And as of now it seems unlikely that the common political vision shall lead to an electoral alliance, based on a common programme, although a formula, based on equity and proportion can be evolved by their strategists, in the interest and to the benefit of all.

- * The votes of each alliance or each constituent party should be extrapolated to cover the entire electoral space.
- * The number of Lok Sabha seats should be assigned to each alliance/party in proportion to the extrapolated votes.
- * Lok Sabha quota of a party should be filled, firstly, by the seats it had won in 1996, and, secondly, by the seats which it had lost to the BJP or its allies.
- * Remaining seats which would be few should be allotted to a party on the basis of its special claim to a

particular seat, in terms of the social demography of the constituency, its own social base and the availability of a suitable candidate.

- * Parties may put up the sitting legislators/the defeated candidates or project new faces in the allotted seats and enter into bilateral exchange of constituencies within the alliance.
- * Parties should ensure due representation to all segments of the people, in terms of communities and sub-communities, castes and sub-castes and linguistic and racial minorities so that the alliance list reflects the electorate in all its diversity. The alliance collectively will gain and command the confidence of all.

In this way, each member of the alliance will be certain to bag more seats in the coming general election than it had in the 11th Lok Sabha.

The alliance may not have a common manifesto or conduct the electoral campaign jointly.

But it should function as a united and programme-based front and commit all its constituents to participate in the coalition government to be formed after the election, while leaving the question of leadership open to be decided democratically after the election.

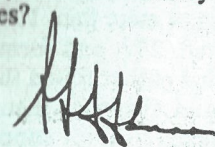
Since the 'dream alliance' may not materialise, let us consider other variations on the theme.

- * If all secular parties can not come together, into a single alliance. There may be 2 or 3 alliances and they may arrive at adjustment or even understanding on contesting 'winning' seats and thus giving a one-to-one fight on most seats.
- * Alternatively, there can be an alliance between the two of them, with adjustment/understanding with the third.

Still other alternatives exist.

- * The first, as proposed by Shri V.P. Singh, is that such an agreement may be limited to the States where the Congress, the United Front and the Left are not currently pitted against each other.
- * The second is that the agreement should cover at least the 100 or so constituencies of Muslim concentration in all states so that the Muslim vote is not divided and wasted and is massively cast for one secular candidate in each Constituency, irrespective of his religion or his political label.
- * The third is that the arrangement be limited to the seats won by the BJP in 1996 and those lost by it by a small margin, say less than 5% of the votes cast, and to BJP-ruled States.

Will the leaders of Secular parties rise above personal and party considerations and save the day for the Secular Order and for themselves?



New Delhi,
1 January, 1998

(SYED SHAHABUDDIN)

C.P. Bhambhri on Minorities Problem

The dominant sections of the Indian political class have always believed that diverse cultural groups deserve not only Constitutional and legal protection for their specific cultural, linguistic and religious needs and that they also require a concrete policy and programmatic interventions to take care of their perceived feelings of "psychological vulnerabilities". In spite of the various efforts made by the Government of India and political parties during the last fifty years, the question of the Muslim minority in democratic India continues to be complex, critical and in many ways unresolved. ...

Every communal riot has contributed to the creation of a siege mentality and a feeling of "social outsider" among the Muslims and M. J. Akbar's moving account in his book on "Riot after Riot" (1988) makes us to conclude that the problem of physical insecurity really haunts them... Every assertion of the forces of Hindutva and retreat of secular political formations have strengthened the feelings of insecurity among the Muslims.

The upshot of this is that the Muslim question in India occupies a special position and the political discourse of the 1990s around the temple-mosque controversy has brought into focus the problematic of "social insiders and outsiders" and of political Hinduism and the 'others'. Political responses to such complicated political and social questions need to be based on a proper understanding of the real felt needs of the Muslim community.

It is essential to demystify the concept of the Muslim community because, like all other religious and cultural communities, the Indian Muslims are internally highly differentiated and socially stratified... The Indian Muslims like all other communities have distinct region-based differences and also problems... The Muslims of India are an artificial political construct like the so-called Hindus of India. ...

The regional diversities prevalent among the attitudes and beliefs of various communities facilitate or aggravate the problems of Indian Muslims. Social and cultural distancing among various communities which lies at the root of social stereotypes has also regional variations... Muslims living in a village, or a small town or a big city or a metropolitan capital, have very different kind of inter-community relationships than a homogenized view about the Muslims which is reflected by the political class and policy makers.

The emphasis on regional variations of the Muslim question has been made to suggest that some special policy responses for the Muslim community in the south of India will not have the emotive resistance as it will have in the north. Hence any all-India Muslim policy of the Government of India has to be based on great caution

because different regions have different social milieu and instead of resolving a minority question, an all-India uniform policy may complicate the problem.

It is essential to grapple with some basic demands of the Indian Muslim leadership for analysis and policy making... The demand for the induction of Muslims in police and para-military organisations for providing a feeling of physical security to the Muslims should be completely rejected. The implication of the Muslim quota in the services of the Government will completely communalise the Indian State apparatus as militant supporters of caste reservations have completely casteised the public services.

... Quota-based reservations will not help the majority of Muslims who need special public promotional policies for their uplift... Communal biases play a role in the performance of public duties by a section of public services. The remedial action for effectively curbing the disease of communalism lies in the creation of a powerful quasi-judicial body and also public citizens' committees on the pattern of the Race Relations Committee in the UK... Communal bias in the services should be investigated case by case and functionaries with such bias should be severely punished, but the evil of communalism in the Government cannot be eradicated by according a communal representation to the Muslim minority.

While the demand for reservations in public services has been always voiced by the upwardly mobile Muslim or caste elite, the Indian State should respond to the real needs of the struggling Muslim artisans, unskilled workers, small shopkeepers and traders. Muslims deserve positive support by the public institutions in the form of new skills for work, loans ... for launching trade or small industrial enterprises. Since Muslims are a highly differentiated community, the effective approach to their specific problems will also have to be highly decentralised. The Panchayati Raj institutions, the urban local governments, the State Governments under the effective leadership of the Central Government should involve themselves to promote specific programmes for the uplift of the vulnerable and socially dependent Muslim poor and lower middle classes.

The secular political class ... should campaign for widening the base of education for Muslims. Muslims, like Hindus, have to be gradually brought out from the influences of mullahs, imams and mosque ... supported educational institutions. Secular educational institutions provide a proper ethos for inter-cultural integration than the minority-based educational institutions. Hindu-Muslim social stereotypical attitudes are a road block in the way of a healthy development of inter-community relationship and this distance can be shortened by secular

OVERVIEW

educational institutions and not by the so-called madrasas or waqf - supported programmes.

The Indian State has to rescue the Muslims from the madrasa and also provide in a positive manner opportunities to the various deprived sections ... for their real development. Political tokenism like reservations in public services or some restructuring of institutions for governance will not provide either physical security or a developmental future to the Muslims. A democratic system in every multicultural society is challenged by different minority groups with demands for ... space and

Shahabuddin's Letter to The Hindustan Times, 6 December, 1997

Apropos Mr. C.P. Bhambhri's article "The Muslim Question" (4 December, 1997), permit me to state that to begin with Dr. C.P. Bhambhri not only concedes the legitimacy of constitutional and legal protection for the culture, language and religion of the minorities but also favours state intervention in terms of concrete policies and programmes in their support. He also concedes the need for institutionalised state machinery to deal with the problems and grievances. More importantly, he concedes that communal bias plays a role in the performance of public duties by a section of the public services. Yet when it comes to remedial measures he rejects not only reservation in public employment but even the limited but longstanding proposal, agreed to in principle by successive governments for higher representation of the Muslims (and other targetted group) in the police and para-military forces. His only argument is that a Muslim quota will "communalise state apparatus". But has it in Kerala or Karnataka? And why shouldn't the coercive apparatus of the State be composite in character so as to command the confidence of all sections of the people, even if there is no special or proportionately high representation of the target groups. His argument does not hold water. One cannot fight 'bias' in a court of law.

Prof. Bhambhri argues in favour of special policies and programmes to promote the uplift of the minorities. Will special facilities for educational and economic development to the minorities also not attract the charge of communalisation? In any case, such special programmes tend to receive very low priority in funding. When it comes to programmes for artisans, workers, shopkeepers and traders, why should the Muslims be singled out? Why can't much programmes be applied universally, according to verifiable economic criteria, irrespective of religion, caste, language or culture? But in the case of non-universal (because of paucity of

rights in public life... Every thinker on democracy is grappling with the problems of political accommodation of unequal social groups in political systems.

... If ... secular forces have to challenge the religion based political formations, specific programmes for the uplift of various categories of Muslims should be evolved by the Central and the State Governments. Politically populist responses to win over Muslim votes will prove counter-productive and in the present political milieu highly dangerous.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 4 December, 1997)

resources) welfare or development programmes, the State has to ensure that eligible persons at the operational level or any social group are not totally left out or marginalised, depending upon the whims and passions of the distribution or selection authority. Only a quota system, proportionate to social demography in such programmes will help to curb bias and injustice?

Prof. Bhambhri should not treat reservation in employment, education or welfare, on the basis of religion-cum-backwardness different from the reservation based a caste-cum-backwardness. Articles 14 and 15 apply equally to caste or religion-based. Neither should be equate reservation to religion-based politics discrimination.

Prof. Bhambhri has argued in favour of secular education. No one can disagree but if a religious community wants its children also to have a modicum of religious instruction, in order to maintain its religious identity, why should be object?

Prof. Bhambhri has also attacked the concept of minority-educational institutions. The religious minorities would join him, if he were to ensure their proportionate representation in all educational institutions of the country, state or private. In any case, a minority educational institution need not be a cultural or religious ghetto. it must have a fair proportion of students not belonging to the establishing community, perhaps a minimum of 25% to a maximum of 49%, if the community does not throw up enough candidates to match minimum admission requirements.

The entire gamut of State welfare and development intervention needs to be decentralised, not only for Muslims but for every one, so that not only the priorities, targets and allocations are keyed to the ground reality but also all social group benefit equally or equitably, subject to uniform and verifiable criterion.

Best Wishes

*for the New Year 1998 and Holy Ramadan
to all our Subscribers and Readers*

Renovation of Hindu Temples by Rajasthan Government

Shahabuddin's Letter to The Hindu, 29 Nov., 97

According to a news report in your issue of 18 November, 1997, the Government of Rajasthan has chalked out 5-year plan for renovating and beautifying Hindu temples out of the government funds and 60 temples have already been identified for the purpose.

The renovation and beautification of temples (or any place of worship) is not a responsibility of the Government as public funds cannot be used for any religious purpose. Use of government funds for repair and conservation, however, permissible for those protected monuments which may include places of worship. It is doubtful whether any of the identified temples have been declared protected monuments. In any case, the object of the plan appears to be religio-political rather than techno-archaeological. The Government of Rajasthan may, however, establish an autonomous State Board for Rajasthan which may undertake renovation and beautification out of the donation of the pilgrims etc.

Prakash Narain's Letter On Pseudo-Secularism

... Irrespective of our individual views in regard to religious matters, it is clearly most inappropriate for the "Government of Delhi" to accord, at public cost, a reception to any religious leader. The political party in power in the National Capital Territory of Delhi has sworn by secularism even though it asserts that its concept of secularism is different from those of some other political parties which they condemn as "pseudo-secularism". However, according to any concept of "secularism", "pseudo" or "genuine", surely the holding of a public reception by a government in honour of any religious leader is untenable.

It is one thing for an individual chief minister or Prime Minister to attend religious functions or a reception in honour of a religious person in his personal capacity. But it is another for a "government" to hold a reception of this nature.

... (Unlike) State funeral to Mother Teresa, a Christian missionary ... (but) an outstanding social worker and Nobel laureate. The reception by the Government of NCT Delhi ... was clearly announced to be in their capacity as "His Holiness", as seen from the advertisement itself. We do hope that the enlightened elements in all political parties ... will not allow the destruction of accepted national and international values like secularism...

Wherever the Congress is in a direct fight with the BJP, the SP would not do anything which ensures a BJP victory.

- Mulayam Singh Yadav, Samajwadi Party Chief

Kumbh Mela Preparations in Full Swing

The Uttar Pradesh Government, learning from past experience, is adopting a more scientific and systematic approach for the Kumbh Mela to be held in this town from January to April next year. Hectic preparations are on for the mela, which is expected to turn this town into the "Vatican of India."

The Mela is expected to bring lakhs of devotees and the sanctity attached to the event is so great that it has been difficult to handle the devotional frenzy in the past...

The Mela will begin on January 14, the first important bathing day for the devotees. (There are) important days on which the devotees will have a dip in the Ganges...

While round-the-clock activity is taking place in all important sites in and around Hardwar which is expected to be the focus of devotional fervour during the Kumbh Mela, the thrust is on developing a scientific approach to the entry and exit of devotees into Hardwar by dividing the town into as many as 22 sectors, by increasing the free circulation area within the town and by managing the traffic flow into the town in such a way that the flow of man, vehicle as well as essential commodities are not hampered... A permanent office has been established and a sector plan has been prepared which has been data-fed into a computer as well. A transport plan has been prepared and the geographical information base is readily available for day-to-day co-ordination of all activities...

A large number of new bathing ghats have been developed on the Ganges so as to disperse the crowd of devotees that shall throng the town next year. Three permanent bridges are being developed in the town... As many as 27 temporary bridges have also been constructed... As many as 18 departments were involved in the preparations to be completed by November, 30...

Security will be tight and modern telecommunication equipment like Close Circuit televisions, hi-tech camera equipment, etc, will add colour to the event.

A quality control cell has been established ... and a grievance cell during the mela ... to listen to the complaints. ... The traffic plan will ensure that most of devotees walk up to the mela site as almost all parking areas are at the entrance to the town...

RJD: CM of Bihar on Secularism

There is no discrimination or bias in my place. Even in my household, main people are Muslims. I have engaged in Muslim women as a Cook. The driver of the OSD is a Muslim; the PA is a Muslim. The main people of the 'Saheb' (Laloo Prasad Yadav) are mostly Muslims. You can count them. However, if the Muslim Chairman (of the Boards, Commissions and Corporations) have not received due facilities, they shall be definitely provided. But it is also partly their own mistake and weakness. They should demand their rights.

(Source: The Nayi Duniya, 18-24 November, 1997)

**BJP: President L.K. Advani's Statement,
11 December, 1997**

... Now that the Lok Sabha has been dissolved and fresh elections are due ... we have no doubt whatsoever that the electorate will give a thumping majority to the BJP and its allies and mandate ... Atal Behari Vajpayee to head the next government in March...

1. The people of India did not want a mid-term poll. Rather, this costly and wholly unnecessary election has been thrust on them. Hence, they are determined to punish those parties which precipitated the recent political crisis... The BJP played no contributory role in its genesis or unfoldment.
2. Muslims and the minorities have seen through the self-serving game of the UF-Congress combine to paint the BJP as "anti-minorities". There is a growing realisation in the Muslim community that any strategy that aims to keep the BJP out by hook or by crook, and to use the Muslim "vote-bank" as the pivot of such a strategy, is hurtful to Muslim and national interests.

... BJP (has) growing appeal among the depressed sections of society. Similarly, our consistent and principled espousal of 33 per cent reservation for women in Parliament and State legislatures has expanded the BJP's appeal among women voters.

3. ... The UF and the Congress had hijacked the mandate of ... 1996 elections by treating the BJP, which had the largest number of seats in the Lok Sabha, as an "untouchable"... The people are all set to punish the combine and give the BJP and its allies a chance.
4. The so-called "Dream Budget" of the UF Government has turned out to be a nightmare for the nation's economy... Industrial slow-down, stagnation in agricultural growth, continuing infrastructural bottlenecks, slump in exports and, most recent, ... fall in the rupee's value have pushed the Indian economy into a deep crisis... The common man ... knows ... that political instability is the main factor behind the crisis.
5. The people of India are hungering for a stable and good government at the Centre.. Stability card ... will be the BJP's trump card..
6. The BJP has two trump cards... If "stable government" is one of them, "able Prime Minister" is the other... India is waiting to be led by a leader like Atal Behari Vajpayee whose ability is enhanced by his universal supra-party popularity.

For the first time ... the people of India have only once choice for the Prime Minister's office: Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee... The conspicuous failure of

**BJP: Resolution of Central Office-Bearers,
6 December, 1997**

The ignominious exist of the Gujral Government marks the denouement of the farce that began with a rickety United Front assuming office 17 months ago, using the Congress as a crutch. The mutual protection racket between historically anti-Congress parties and the Congress has been busted, ironically by the Congress itself. The BJP welcomes the departure of unprincipled politicians who manipulated events in order to play a larger than life role on the centre stage of national politics.

The President of India, while ordering the dissolution of the 11th Lok Sabha ... has summed up the two issues that will be uppermost in the mind of the voter this time: Stability and good governance. The people see the BJP as the only party which can offer both stability and good governance...

(Source: The Organiser)

**Pran Chopra on BJP
A Party of High Caste Hindus**

... Despite the efforts of such of its leaders as Mr. Vajpayee, the BJP has never ceased to be a party of the high caste Hindus, who are a small minority in the total Hindu community and smaller than the Dalits, with whom the BSP has managed to identify itself... The latter are rebels against the traditional dominance of the high castes.

The drama of the defections played out in mid-October, 1997 has further emphasised the Hindu high caste identity of the BJP. Those who defected from the Congress are the remnants of the traditional higher caste component of the Congress who have been drifting to the BJP over the years. Those who defected from the BSP were part of the small segment of the higher castes whom the BSP had recently tried to coopt. Both defections have painted the words "high caste" on the forehead of the BJP - a serious liability for the party in the politics of coalitions or elections.

(Source: The Hindu, 7 November, 1997)

- the Congress and the UF to present any candidate ... places them at a clear disadvantage.
7. The Congress party is disintegrating at the margins ... and decaying at the Centre... The United Front is almost certain to get disunited before the polls. The situation will undoubtedly benefit the BJP.
8. ... The Janata Dal, is in the process of performing the vanishing trick...
9. ... The certainty of BJP's victory ... is hastening the realignment of political forces in the country and, conversely, the realignment of the political forces is contributing to the certainty of the BJP's victory.

H. Khare, N. Vyas and B. Muralidhar Reddy On BJP-Induced Defection

... Advani ... himself could not resist boasting that his party would repeat its Lucknow performance, first in Gandhinagar and then in New Delhi. But the 'domino' theory clearly did not work.

... The failure in Gandhinagar did not deter the BJP from trying even harder in New Delhi when trouble arose for the Gujral Government.

... Advani himself claimed ... immediately after his meeting with the President ... that "40 Congress MPs" were willing to form a separate group but this could not be formalised as under the anti-defection law a minimum of 47 MPs were needed for a lawful split. Of course, no one in the BJP has any explanation that three days after the dissolution of the Lok Sabha, when there is no constraint of numbers, why the "unhappy Congress" MPs are not coming out of their party of forming a separate group or joining the BJP.

The BJP's desperation ... was so great that ... party leaders such as Advani and Vajpayee risked their personal reputations to virtually encourage defection from the Congress... Shorn of even the delusion of a moral veneer, the BJP, like the Emperor in the Hans Christian Andersen fable, stands naked...

(Source: The Hindu, 7 December, 1997)

Uttam Sengupta On Political Line-up in UP

... Numbers indicate that Mulayam Singh Yadav and Mayawati together can stop the BJP in its tracks.

In the last Lok Sabha elections, the BJP had bagged 52 of the 85 seats, largely because of a sharp division of opposition votes. The Samajwadi Party had secured 16 seats and the BSP just six seats. But together, the SP and the BSP notched up more than 40% of the valid votes polled in the Lok Sabha and assembly elections in the state last year. Remarkably, the votes polled by all the three major political parties in the state remained by and large the same in the two elections, held within a space of three months. While the BJP got 32% of the votes in both the elections, the SP and the BSP bagged 20% each. The Congress, which contested the assembly polls in alliance with the BSP, secured eight per cent votes.

With the anti-BJP votes in the state appearing to have stabilised around 50 per cent of the valid votes polled, it is widely believed that a polarisation of the opposition votes this time could well reduce the BJP tally by half.

"The BSP is the only party in the state whose votes can be transferred whichever way Mayawati likes," said a BJP watcher... This is also the reason why the continuing war of attrition between Mulayam and Mayawati is deemed to be suicidal for the non-BJP fronts. Although the two leaders have publicly ruled out the possibility of

Inder Malhotra on BJP's Moral Decay

... What one say about the BJP, once held up as an example of discipline, cohesion and probity, which has not only discredited itself thoroughly but is also persisting in its apparent determination to be the architect of its own undoing?

The sudden eruption of the crisis between the U.F. and its main prop, Congress (I), had given the saffron party a golden opportunity to live down, at least partially, the ignominy and obloquy that have been its deserved fate because of the shameful collapse of its Ministry in Gujarat, the naked display of Congress-style factionalism in its rank almost everywhere and, above all, its despicable performance in UP...

From the word go, diverse BJP leaders started declaring that they would "divide" the Congress(I) and form a government in Delhi, as ... in Lucknow. The nadir was reached when a good man like Atal Behari Vajpayee declared ... that "some Congress friends" had been "in touch" with his party; that the "signals were encouraging; and that if "legal defections" (oh, what a lovely phrase!) could take place in requisite numbers, the "new-comers" would be welcomed by the BJP with open arms. In a later statement by L.K. Advani, after the party had abandoned its ambition to form a government because the Congress MPs anxious to cross over to the Hindutva party were only 40 and thus seven short of the mandatory number required by the anti-defection law, the phrase "legal split" was used. But, in essence, the two top leaders of the BJP were saying politely what Mr. Kalyan Singh had been bellowing in Lucknow ... obscenely...

Advani's claim of the number of potential defectors having risen to 40 may be exaggerated ... or even false. Just as the Congress(I)'s claim that the BJP was offering both cash and ministerial office to Congress members of the Lok Sabha willing to rat on their party may be baseless or vastly magnified. But the country believes that Congressmen are capable of the worst betrayal... A large number of prominent Congressmen themselves asserted that about 40 of their colleagues were indeed ready to jump on the BJP bandwagon. ...

(Source: The Hindu, 7 December, 1997)

any poll alliance, the last word on the subject may not yet have been heard. It would come as no surprise if the BSP eventually tilts one way or the other... The BSP's dilemma is that although its vote bank remains intact, on its own it cannot make much of a difference to the BJP's calculations. ...

Once the dust settles, UP is likely to witness some strange bedfellows coming together. But eventually, if the SP and the BSP fail to come together, it could well prove to be a cakewalk for the BJP in the election. For the Congress, it would be all over barring the shouting.

(Source: The Times of India, 13 December, 1997)

BJP: Tariq Hasan

On Impact of Overtures to Muslims

In Aligarh, the BJP's recent overtures to the Muslim electorate have not made any "perceptible impact" on the community. The conflicting signals emanating from different BJP leaders, seemed to have dampened the enthusiasm, even of those Muslims who are strong proponents of a dialogue with the BJP. ...

According to Tariq Mansoor ... "The Babari mosque demolition issue is still bearing heavily on our minds and the fact that senior BJP leaders have repeatedly been saying that the temple will be constructed once the BJP comes to power at the Centre, is a matter of concern and cannot simply be brushed aside." Mr. Mansoor is also the secretary of the AMU Staff Association...

Many at AMU are of the opinion that once the BJP takes a final stand on Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura, the Muslims are expected to become "conductive" to the idea of having an open dialogue with the BJP.

A Janata Dal supporter on the AMU campus admitted that Muslim hostility towards the BJP has waned. "If the present ambivalence continues to prevail amongst Muslims, it would indirectly benefit the BJP. By sending conflicting signals and somehow allaying Muslim fears, the BJP is trying to reduce the anti-BJP hysteria among them. This move can prevent last-minute polarisation in the Muslims vote and can also reduce the percentage of polling by the Muslim electorate."

Several other teachers (said) "Our perception of the Congress had slowly started to change for the better after many years, but in one blow, the party has succeeded in reversing this process and in the process, it has ... identified itself with the objectives of the BJP".

The proposal that the United Front should have an electoral understanding with the Congress in states like Maharashtra, MP, Gujarat and Rajasthan seems to be "quite acceptable" as far as the Muslims are concerned.

According to Mohammad Gulrez of the department of political science, "... Today more than ever, they are in the grip of a collective apathy, the result of unilateral fatigue. They are watching with dismay the failure of the secular parties to deliver the goods. They have, thus, now started paying attention to the BJP's utterances."

(Source: The Times of India, 14 December, 1997)

Muslim Vote

The Congress' famous Muslim vote bank has suffered a sharp erosion in the '90s, sharper than its overall decline from 59% in 1971 to 37% in 1996. This election will show if the erosion was a shortlived reaction to the demolition of the Babari Masjid, or something more enduring. More important, (is the question) if the decline in Muslim turnout in 1996 indicated a long-term trend of political alienation.

(Source: The India Today, 15 December, 1997)

BJP: Quest of Muslim Vote

In its quest for power the BJP has decided to woo Muslims in a big way by promising a "riot-free" country and adequate representation to the minorities.

... BJP vice-president K.L. Sharma said that the party manifesto would seek to assuage misgiving among the minorities and assure them ... riot-free country and a corruption-free administration."

Hinting at a shift from the party's earlier strong pro-Hindu line, Mr Sharma said, "Every election has its own background and reality; the February polls are definitely going to be fought on the issues of stability, credibility and good governance."

He said that though the party was not going to give up any of its old causes, it would at the same time appreciate the "importance of certain issues for the coming elections."

Mr. Sharma said that his party expected a "large chunk" of Muslim votes in the elections. The minorities ... have always tended to side with a party likely to come to power. Once they voted for the Congress and this time ... the BJP could be their choice... "A good number of renowned personalities from the minorities are likely to contest the polls on the BJP ticket," he said.

He said that the party would give the minorities an adequate share of its tickets. referring to the Muslim Youth conference, the party organised (in Delhi in December, 97) the BJP leader said, "It was a clear indication of the BJP's growing acceptability among the Muslims." ... Mr. Sharma said that party leader Atal Behari Vajpayee being projected as the Prime Ministerial candidate was going to prove a "decisive factor" in the elections... "Vajpayee can inspire non-committed voters to back the BJP"

(Source: The Times of India, 7 December, 1997)

BJP in Gujarat

Both in Gujarat and Punjab, the BJP appears to be ahead of its political rivals...

The Congress, however, is clearly ahead of other parties in terms of poll preparedness... Despite being out of power for more than a year now, the BJP continues to exude confidence to take on the Congress. The scenario could change if the Congress forged an alliance with RJP. Although no formal decision has been taken so far, the Congress and the RJP appear to be keen to forge an alliance...

All is not well with the BJP. There is a sharp division within the party, with the hard-core members of the Sangh Parivar insisting that the leaders who had wavered at the time of the split effected by Vaghela be denied party nomination. According to them, the leaders having remote links with the RJP leader should not be accommodated. But others in the party argue that those who had resisted the temptation ought to be rewarded with the party ticket.

George Fernandes: Letter to Socialist International, 10 November, 1997
On Tactical Adjustment with the BJP

1. Such tactical adjustment was first made (with the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, now BJP) in the aftermath of the Chinese aggression of India in 1962/63, when Dr. Rammanohar Lohia dubbed the Congress party as "a party of national disgrace", since it could not save our frontiers, and asked for a tactical adjustment among all patriotic parties to fight the Congress unitedly in the ensuing elections.
2. In the general elections to the Lok Sabha and to the State Assemblies in 1967, it was this tactical adjustment that enabled the non-Congress parties to defeat the Congress in nine States of the union, and almost defeat it in the Lok Sabha. The non-Congress governments that were formed in all the states where the Congress was defeated were coalition governments in which the then Jan Sangh (now BJP), the Communist and the Socialists were partners.
3. In the 1971 general elections to parliament there was a grand alliance to confront the Congress, in which the Socialist Party, Jan Sangh, Congress(O) and Choudhury Charan Singh's Bharatiya Kranti Dal (BKD) came on one platform.
4. In 1975, Mrs. Gandhi declared ... Emergency. The entire Opposition came under attack and some even from her own party were arrested and detained. It was then that Jayaprakash Narayan united all the opposition parties in the country to lead the fight against the Emergency. When elections were announced by Mrs. Gandhi, he demanded that the Socialist Party of which I was then the President, Congress(O), BKD and the Bharatiya Jan Sangh unite into one party. ... The Janata Party came into being.
5. In 1989, the present day Janata Dal had seat adjustments with the BJP. Mr. V.P. Singh became prime minister with the support of the BJP. The BJP and the Marxists were taken into confidence on all issues which the V.P. Singh government proposed to legislate on, and on other matters, including appointments etc., the government wished to make. This was done as and when necessary, and one specific day of the week set apart for the purpose ... the leaders of the BJP and the Left parties met at the Prime Minister's House for discussion and dinner.
6. The trade union organisations of the CPI (Marxist), CPI and the Janata Dal-Hind Mazdoor Sabha have a permanent standing committee of which the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, led by the RSS-BJP, is an integral part.

And for the record, the Praja Socialist Party, of which Prof. Madhu Dandavate was then a leader, was able to get some of its members elected to the Bombay Municipal Corporation by making an alliance with the Shiv Sena - Mrs. Pramila Dandavate being one of the members elected through that alliance.

Neena Vyas on BJP's Political Strategy

The BJP seems to have forgotten that on the fateful day, December 6, 1992, when the masjid was brought down in Ayodhya, Mr. Singh resigned acknowledging his failure to protect the structure and to keep the solemn assurances he had given to the Supreme Court and the National Integration Council... Mr. Advani himself resigned as Leader of the Opposition, owning responsibility for the events that led to the demolition of the Ayodhya structure, admitting that he had "failed" as a leader to control the mob which took over. The party itself expressed "regrets" over the "unfortunate incident."

... From 1989 to the end of 1992 the party's stance (was) that the Ayodhya issue was not justiciable as it was a "matter of faith", the party does not admit any contradiction. The Supreme Court, while rejecting the Presidential reference in the Ayodhya matter, stated it could and must be decided on the basis of the normal law of the land and that the High Court concerned was competent to do this. But the BJP to this day has not stated that it would abide by the court verdict. In fact, that is the heart of the dispute in Ayodhya.

The BJP's strategy, if one could so call it, is to let the other parties focus on the Ayodhya case. It continues to consider its own role in it heroic and sees no political danger in this. Rather, it blames the Congress for the events that led to the demolition.

Of course, the party would prefer to forget that immediately after December 6, 1992 its MPs in Parliament were united in shouting that ... Yeh to pehli jhanki hai, Mathura Kashi baki hai. That was as loud an affirmation of the party's own role in Ayodhya as one could expect. Yet the BJP, which carried on a virulent public campaign for building a Ram temple at the very site of the masjid and which gathered thousands of volunteers who pulled down the masjid in the presence of a galaxy of leaders of the party, is today pleading "not guilty" to the charge that it hatched a conspiracy to demolish the structure. (Source: The Hindu, 5 October 1997)

BJP: Open Arms Policy

In its search for alliance partners for the coming Lok Sabha elections, the BJP has virtually adopted an "open arms" policy. It is hoping to cash-in on the open discontent and divisions within the Cong. (I) and the JD...

The BJP's goal is clear - it wants to capture power in New Delhi And to do so, it is willing to keep its various coalition partners in the States in good humour. The party is working on the presumption that its alliance partners in various States have political ambitions which are limited to a particular State. The BJP would be happy to help them get power in those states if they can help the BJP win a few more Lok Sabha seats.

(Source: The Hindu, 11 December, 1997)

Vidya Subrahmaniam on Politics of Alliances in UP

October 1997 merits being recorded as a milestone in Uttar Pradesh's chequered history and not merely for the spectacular manner of the BJP's return... Mandir rather than mandal seemed to be the new buzzword - because where mandal restricted votes, mandir expanded them.

Strange things were happening in UP... One-time BJP-baiter, the Samajwadi party's Mulayam Singh Yadav, was sounding more and more like spokesman for the BJP - whether this was in advocating the cause of the upper castes or in joining fellow OBC leader Kalyan Singh to say the most outrageous things against the BSP. The BJP ... seemed to have forgotten who its enemy was. Mr. Yadav, whose only ideology was anti-BJPism, seemed to have forgotten what his mission was.

The idiom that Mr. Yadav spoke and the symbols that he used were all distinctly upper caste Hindu... Mr. Yadav was quoted as offering to repeal the Dalit Act... Mr. Yadav assured job reservation to the upper castes... Mr. Yadav talked of honouring Hindu religious sentiments; of organising meeting with sadhus and sants; of reversing the Mayawati regime's pro-Dalit measures.

Maulana Mulayam

Was this the same man who thundered, "ek parinda bhi par nahin mar sakta" (even a bird cannot fly over the Babari Masjid); who was crowned 'Maulana Mulayam' for his supposedly unwavering devotion to the Muslims? Mr. Yadav is no political novice. He is unlikely not to have known the hurt his changed worldview would cause to the Muslims and the OBCs, the backbone of his support base. If not for ideological reasons, at least in the interest of his constituency, he couldn't afford to exchange mandal for mandir. Was this not hara-kiri, then? Mr. Yadav, evidently didn't think so. **The Muslims and the Yadavs were more or less captive; they had nowhere else to go.** This being the case, he had only to exploit the rift between the upper castes and the BJP by consciously playing the upper caste card to add to his already substantial vote base... In short, what was at work here was cold arithmetic, Muslims plus Yadavs plus Thakurs plus Brahmins equal to chief ministership.

Unfortunately for Mr. Yadav, he made some wrong assumptions. he presumed that the BJP-BSP pact would hold. Indeed, the success of his scheme depended on that - for only if the BSP was associated with the BJP would the upper castes turn to a new ally. He also mistakenly thought that he could beat the BJP at its own game.

Mr. Kalyan Singh may have shared bhai-bhai OBC vibes with Yadav, but he was certainly not going to stand for the latter carving up his electoral base. So, from the moment he assumed office, he was one step ahead of Yadav. While Mr. Yadav was pursuing his upper caste agenda, confident that Kalyan Singh's anti-Mayawati tirade was only a posture, the chief minister was already

on the job of breaking the Congress. Kalyan Singh's aim was three-fold. Checkmate Yadav, win back the estranged upper caste and OBC communities and free himself from his alliance. The burden of Kalyan Singh's song was that the BJP-BSP pact was more damaging than beneficial: the Dalit votes it brought in would only be at the cost of the BJP's traditional upper caste and OBC votes. This argument had not cut much ice with the BJP leadership which had pushed him into the alliance; now that he was the boss, he would show them who the real boss was.

This explains why Kalyan Singh was deliberately provocative... The G.O. against the misuse of the Dalit Act was somewhat excessive... The non-Dalit castes read in it a message to settle scores with the Dalits... Violence broke out as a consequence...

Yadav joined in this anti-BSP campaign unmindful of the effect that would have on a community which had suffered the hardships of its isolation for generations; a community which was just beginning to realise its self-worth. Yadav should have also known better than to try and fight the BJP on its own turf. The Thakurs and Brahmins, whom he was courting, went in droves, not to the SP - but to the BJP so as to give it a majority in the assembly.

... Wisdom seems to have dawned on the SP leader... He has realised the folly of embracing an agenda that was alien to his professed beliefs. The truth is that the bulk of the upper caste voters is committed to the BJP, this has been so ever since the BJP replaced the Congress in their affections. The BSP and the SP have their own contradictions - both at the leadership and ground levels. The Dalits and the OBCs are traditionally antagonistic. But as the 1993 elections showed, this antagonism can be bridged provided the message is conveyed to voters and workers alike in an acceptable idiom... Yadav should learn to see the BSP's predilection to change partners as the only means ... for growing. Mayawati should similarly show accommodation...

The BSP-SP alliance has the potential to sweep the elections. Between them they polled nearly 50 per cent of votes in the last elections, which is bad news for the BJP. Even otherwise, the BJP may find it has been too clever by half. It has lost the potentially unbeatable national alliance with the BSP while adding nothing to its base... The flood of mostly upper caste MLAs (has) reinforced its upper caste image. This altered caste equation, with the balance tilting towards the upper castes, will no doubt make for the return of the upper caste voters - but that is not an addition, only a restoration of status quo... In other words, the best it can hope for even with a divided opposition is a return to the 1996 position when its vote stood frozen at 33.7 per cent.

(Source: The Times of India, 28 October, 1997)

UP: Will SP, BSP and Congress Combine?

Harish Khare in The Hindu, 14 Dec., 1997

... In 1996, the BJP (won) 52 seats. Obviously, if the BJP hopes to achieve a near-200 seat target, it will have to retain its present strength from Uttar Pradesh. Not an easy task.

By the same reckoning (if) the anti-BJP forces ... want to stop Vajpayee's presumably unstoppable anointment in New Delhi, then it becomes incumbent on them to devise strategies, eschew egos and to forget the past and recent animosities to get down to the business of denying Uttar Pradesh to the BJP. Nobody seems to understand this better than the Congress president, Sitaram Kesri... An alliance between the social forces represented by the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party can constitute a formidable combine; if to this is added the "traditional goodwill" of the Congress, the front could become almost unbeatable.

... It cannot be presumed that they would go about the job systematically. To begin with, a section within the United Front can be expected to work on the egos and sense of self-importance of a number of leaders in the Samajwadi Party; the U.F. crowd has not had much success in making Mulayam Singh Yadav revise his

views about the irrelevance of the knee-jerk anti-Congressism. Therefore, the UF prima donnas are working on those around Yadav to keep alive the anti-Congress flames.

The task of the anti-Congress elements in the UF becomes easier because of the cultivated animosity between the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party. For now, both Mayawati and Yadav have avowed, predictably enough, to carry on their animosity to its bitter end, even if it means the BJP walking away with the lion's share of seats from Uttar Pradesh. Even within the Congress, a section of the UP-based leaders may not be thrilled at the prospect of playing second fiddle to Yadav or Mayawati.

The UP Congressmen ... can be relied upon to botch up the task of arriving at any reasonable and honourable understanding with the BSP and/or the SP. For now, the BJP has the upper edge because of the total supremacy Kalyan Singh has chalked out for himself in the affairs of Uttar Pradesh; his rough and pragmatic approach to matters political should provide the cutting edge to the BJP's electoral prospects.

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Amulya Ganguli on Ayodhya Dispute's Impact

Mr. Kalyan Singh has added another dimension to the BJP's plan for building the Ram temple in Ayodhya. In a recent interview, he said that the temple cannot be built "unless the BJP forms a government at the Centre and has a majority in UP."...

There is an element of whistling in the dark in these assertions. For, if the chances of the BJP coming to power on its own at the Centre are dim, its chances of being in power both at the Centre and in UP at the same time are dimmer. So, the temple is likely to remain unbuilt in the foreseeable future.

But that is not all. The BJP leaders could not have failed to note that the reaction of even their allies to any move on the temple has not been favourable. So it is not the godless "pseudo-secularists" who are supposedly alienated from the common people (and) opposed to disturbing the status quo in Ayodhya.

The BSP... has made it abundantly clear that it would not countenance any unilateral move in Ayodhya... The more acquiescent Samata Party, too, made the same point after Mr. Kalyan Singh's recent visit to the makeshift temple. So have the Akalis.

... Even if, for argument's sake, the BJP comes to power at the Centre, it has to be under a coalition arrangement...

But as the alliances of various parties with the BJP in the States have shown, the saffron outfit generally prefers to maintain a low posture in order to enable the government in which it has a stake to survive. The BJP's thirst for power is deep...

... Even during its brief sojourn at the Centre, it showed the same servile mentality.

The BJP... offered to "freeze" all the controversial items on its agenda - Article 370, the uniform civil code and so on to persuade the other parties to help it. So much for its adherence to principles when the choice is between (principles) and power.

... There is little doubt that Ayodhya, too, will be "frozen" if the BJP feels that it will hamper its quest for office.

Arguably, the BJP might not have minded putting this controversial issue on the back burner for it has never been sure about its overall impact... The demolition of the "disputed structure" and the proposed construction of the temple have kept it in state of uncertainty. Nothing testifies to this more than the varying responses of its leaders. While... Vajpayee has regretted it... Advani has regretted not the demolition but the "manner" in which it was carried out.

Unlike its previous endeavour, the BJP's current plan appears to be to move forward in combination with

other parties for which at one stage, it even suggested the formation of national democratic front. Although it never took off, that remains its preferred course. However, to advance in this direction, it will have to ensure that the more contentious issues do not come to the forefront.

The chargesheets in the Ayodhya case, however, preclude such a possibility... It is difficult to predict in what way the virtual reopening of that shameful chapter will affect the BJP in particular and the political scene in general. There is a belief in some circles that by bringing the Ayodhya issue to the centrestage yet again, the court case will help the BJP, but no one can be certain...

As the BJP and the Shiv Sena cope with the charges, the Sangh-Parivar's other allies are bound to watch the scene with considerable interest... to reassess their options...

There is little doubt that the Ayodhya case will bring up the questions of the Mathura and Varanasi shrines, too, not least because the RSS has reiterated that it fully endorses the Vishwa Hindu Parishad's plans for "liberating" these two places of worship. Even if the BJP contends that its agenda does not include the two, the focus will once again be on a hard-line plan of action involving three shrines which has no support from any of the BJP's allies apart from the Shiv Sena. ...

... Now that the focus is on Ayodhya again, it has to explain its past acts and announce its future plans... (As it is) its policy in this matter has always been full of subterfuges.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 13 October, 1997)

Proceedings of the Parliament (19 November - 2 December, 1997)

I - Rajya Sabha

Papers Tabled:

- 20 Nov : Jain Report on Assassination of Rajiv Gandhi and on ATM.
- 24 Nov : Annual Report of NMDFC for 1996-97.
- 24 Nov : Annual Report of C.W.C. for 1995-96.
- 1 Dec : P.M. Gujral's letter of resignation and President's Reply thereto.

II - Lok Sabha

(19 - 24 November and 2 December, 1997)

- 20 Nov : Jain Report.
- 2 Dec : PM's letter of resignation and President's reply thereto.

Adjournment:

- 24 Nov : Adjourned sine die.
- 2 Dec : Recalled and adjourned sine die.

Anirudh Deshpande on Importance of Being Laloo Yadav

... Despite his surrender to the CBI (Laloo) continues to rule Bihar by proxy. Moreover, despite his arrest and the political inexperience of his wife, his party, the RJD, appears firmly united behind him. From the beginning of the CBI probe, he dominated the proceedings. He broke the JD leaving it without a mass base, won Kesri and a faction of the JMM to his side and stumped his opponents by making his wife lead a RJD government in Bihar. Can you remember a single politician in recent times who has turned the tables on his adversaries as swiftly and decisively as Laloo Yadav?...

In Bihar many people still admire Laloo Yadav for a variety of reasons. In the rest of the country he has become a hated man. But his importance lies in the face that he cannot be ignored even as he rules Bihar from custody... (Those are) three acts. The first displays the attitude of the Congress towards him. The second exposes the sanctimoniousness of the CPI-M... And the third highlights the usual irresolution of the UF government. However, the play as a whole has buttressed... Laloo Yadav and the RJD...

The Congress, prone to greater Mandalisation pressures under Kesri, has always been ambivalent towards corruption and this ambivalence has been translated into its support of the RJD ministry in Bihar... It has propped up the RJD for obvious reasons. The Congress feels that despite the recent setbacks Laloo Yadav remains, perhaps, the only charismatic mass leader in Bihar. He has also proved to be a formidable opponent of the Hindutva forces. As a Yadav leader of social justice par excellence he might yet emerge as the biggest vote catcher against the Leftists and other Centrists opposed to the Congress in the next Lok Sabha polls.

Furthermore, if Laloo is found innocent by the courts before the next elections, his popular appeal will grow tremendously. But even if Laloo is in jail during the next Lok Sabha polls there are sufficient grounds to assume that a Congress-RJD alliance will give its enemies on the Right and Left a run for their money. In short, therefore, a Congress hoping to rule from the Centre once again is supporting the RJD to simultaneously check the BJP, Leftists and the JD in Bihar...

Having projected him as the secular alternative in Bihar for long... the CPI-M's sudden dislike of Laloo Yadav has little to do with corruption or criminalisation of politics. It is predicated instead upon his image amongst the largely upper caste bhadralok and the intention to poach on his mass base with the help of Dalit leaders... Furthermore the CPI-M does not want anything to upset its plans of promoting Mulayam Singh Yadav as the Champion of Secularism in north India. With Laloo Yadav behind bars, the RJD hopefully decimated and Mulayam busy fighting the BJP (CPI(M)'s leaders can

continue their backseat driving in New Delhi with the help of an eternally vacillating prime minister. Hence an unstable Centrist coalition at the Centre will continue to give the CPI-M power without responsibility.

This leaves the problematic of Centrist politics unaddressed. At least the Congress and CPI-M have a strategy relating to Laloo Yadav but what do the Centrists, led by the JD... have? As usual, nothing. For the moment the Gowda camp has triumphed against Laloo Yadav but at terminal cost to the JD. Not only have Gowda, Paswan and Co. driven Laloo Yadav decisively into the arms of the Congress, but they have also managed to reduce the JD to shadow of its former self in the citadel of social justice...

Premier Gujral's failure to take a stand on Laloo Yadav will not be forgotten... by his friends and critics... In 1997 it is intellectually fashionable to wax eloquent on the new age of coalition and the maturity of democratic politics in India but as Laloo episode shows... the armchair theory of coalitions is far removed from its... futile and intractable practical contradictions.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 12 September, 1997)

God-fodder of Scam

Editorial, The Pioneer, 19 September, 1997

... The fodder scandal has claimed, along with deposed Chief Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav, the other erstwhile "stalwart" of Bihar politics under whose chief ministership the fraudulent withdrawals first took place. If Mr. Laloo Prasad Yadav "fathered" the scam to dizzy heights, it was Mr. Jagannath Mishra who, it can be said, was its "godfather". Available evidence suggests that he was deeply involved with all facets of the scam. More than anything else, Mr. Mishra's arrest should silence those who had been accusing the investigating agencies of (caste) bias... Mr. Mishra's arrest, however, also reinforces the extent moral degeneration of Bihar's politics with two (ex) Chief Ministers currently in jail. If the image of the political class has hit an abject low with the people... if the fair name of democracy in the country has been besmirched, it is these mean men of straw who, masquerading as messiahs of the masses, have done the tarnishing.

It would be appropriate remind the law-enforcing agencies, chiefly the CBI, that mere arrest of those charged with corruption in the Bihar fodder scam is not enough. It now redounds on the CBI and the judiciary to expedite the trial into one of the most brazen instances of the looting of public exchequer... It would be a travesty of justice if a conspiracy now is hatched to slow down the progress of further investigations. While the IAS officers accused of involvement have been grilled by the CBI, the agency appears to be going soft on the politicians.

Kumar Ketkar, Editor, Maharashtra Times on Shiv Sena: Lumpenisation of Maharashtra

For the past 30 years, Thackeray ... he has grown from strength to strength and even today ... the 70-year-old Shiv Sena chief, continues to draw huge crowds anywhere in Maharashtra...

In 1966, when he launched the Shiv Sena from the sprawling Shivaji Park ground in central Mumbai... Bal Thackeray then was a popular cartoonist-editor, in his 40s. He himself was stunned by the response to his appeal... To him all Southerners were Madrasis and all Northerners, Bhayyas... His grandest vision was to fill all the vacancies in Big-blue-chip companies by Marathi peons, clerks, head clerks and junior officers.

He was no fiery speaker. He had no programme. He had no ideology. He did not even have any exciting ideas. He had no intention of launching a political party. Indeed, he was critical of politics per se...

He did not quote inspiring passages from the Maratha history. He did not use the name of the great Maratha warrior Shivaji in his otherwise lacklustre speech. He thundered against the Madrasis for snatching the jobs that he though belonged to the Marathi people. His philistinism was transparent as much as his political innocence...

Having identified the villain, Bal Thackeray declared a war against the lungiwallahs. The aimless, lumpen, energetic Marathi youth promptly formed gangs of stormtroopers whose target was Udipi hotels.

The Sena chief was neither a militant Hindu nationalist nor a classical anti-communist and fascist leader. He could not be defined or typified and that was his strength. He did not know what to do with the huge following he had established. He had the cadre but no party. He had popularity but no programme.

Ironically, (the) Congress provided the Shiv Sena with a programme. The internal struggle within the Congress had begun to intensify... The Syndicate decided to 'cleanse' the party. The cleansing meant removal of Nehruites and fellow travellers from the Congress... The Sena (also) came in handy to break the communist hold over the trade union movement.

... Thackeray could not adjust himself with Morarji Desai-led Janata Party. Again he found himself in political vacuum - no programme, no ideology, no political line. But the lumpen mass base remained more or less intact. This lumpen mass was not criminalised till the early eighties... The criminalisation of the Sena began after the collapse of the textile industry, caused by Datta Samant's mindless strike and millowners's sinister tactics... The textile workers were crushed and uprooted. Most of the cadre of Shiv Sena as well as Arun Gawli's

S.S. Banyal

On BSP's Electoral Strategy

The Bahujan Samaj Party leaders have started sending feelers to the "like-minded" political parties to explore the possibility of an alliance with them during the mid-term poll slated for next year.

The BSP is one of the many small parties which had not entered the coalition of the UF Government. It had also kept away from the political hullabaloo which preceded the dissolution of the Lok Sabha...

Mr. Kanshi Ram, the BSP supremo has from time to time declared that his party would ally with such parties in the next Lok Sabha which will give it a position of prominence. Now that the time has arrived for working out political alliance, the BSP is examining all the available options.

In the 11th Lok Sabha the BSP had 11 seats, out of which it had won seven from Uttar Pradesh and two seats each from Madhya Pradesh and Punjab. Unfortunately for the BSP no political party seems to be like-minded. It has burnt its fingers with the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Samajwadi Party of Mr. Mulayam Singh.

The Congress maintains an ambivalent attitude towards the BSP. During the '96 polls, the BSP had insisted that the Congress should allocate 25 Lok Sabha seats to them but the latter had declined.

However, this time Mr. Kanshi Ram may be a little more magnanimous... The Congress has also kept its doors open both for the BSP and the SP and the party which gives a better offer will be acceptable to it...

Since in Uttar Pradesh the BSP has alienated the upper class people, its bargaining power with the Congress has been impaired ... but the BSP still has strong pockets of influence and has held on Dalit voters and that would keep the BSP in demand. The Congress is therefore not averse to a poll understanding...

The biggest surprise, however, could be the revival of an alliance between the BSP and the BJP... Last movement parleys between them could not be ruled out. A compromise can be reached again between the two just in order to keep the Congress and the SP away from UP. The BJP-BSP alliance in UP could be lethal for the other political parties...

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 8 December, 1997)

Akhil Bharatiya Sena come from them.

...(Thackeray) retains the alliance with the BJP for the upper-caste-upper-class-urban support. He continues to attack the Congress because that is what provides a raison-d'être for his otherwise substance-less politics.

Thackeray is not an enigma. He represents a phase as well as a face of lumpenisation of Maharashtra.

(Source: The Pioneer, 21 September 1997)

Bihar: RJD-Congress-JMM Alliance

At the invitation of the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), Congress and JMM leaders will ... finalise their proposed alliance and formalise seat-sharing arrangements.

The move coming after the dissolution of the Lok Sabha aims to go one up on the others parties and to regain ground lost after the fodder scam.

According to a senior Congress leader, the party has expressed its desire to contest 22 seats but the RJD has agreed to accommodate it only on 20 seats. The JMM is likely to be offered 6 seats and the rest of 26 seats will be contested by RJD candidates.

... Besides some minor changes, the leaders agree to this formulae... In fact ... Laloo Prasad Yadav sees the Congress as the best ally of the RJD if it is to fight the BJP. He also ... does not want to antagonise Congress chief Sitaram Kesri at a time when Kesri's help is needed to bail him out from the fodder scam.

The RJD leadership is also wooing the minorities. It is in favour of renominating all its 16 sitting Lok Sabha members, and has decided to put up Dalits, SCs and OBC candidates on the rest of the 10 seats.

Most of the 26 seats the RJD will be contesting are in North Bihar, which leaves Central and South Bihar for the Congress and the JMM. The seats being offered to the Congress are either held by the Left parties or the BJP... Laloo does not intend to clash with the Left parties, particularly the extremist groups active in South and Central Bihar directly...

(Source: The Indian Express, 8 December 1997)

Shahabuddin's Reply to M.V. Kamath

On Raising Muslims Value in Politics

M.V. Kamath has raised some questions in his article "Raising the Value of Muslim Indians in Politics" (Organiser, 13 July, 1997).

Muslim Indians, given a chance, are learning English, Hindi and all useful languages. But in order to maintain their religious identity, they are also learning to read Arabic and about essentials of Islam.

Muslim Indians do not have to change food habits, since majority of Hindus are non-vegetarians and very, very few are so rigid as to refuse a cordial invitation only because non-vegetarian dishes may also be served. Of course a good Muslim host would not serve any beef product out of deference for the religious sensitivities of his guest.

Yes, Muslims do, should and will, participate in celebrating Hindu festivals, short of joining in Puja, but this has to be a reciprocal gesture.

A Muslim Indian, as an Indian, lives the Indian culture. Hindu culture may be its core, its bedrock, but, all said and done, is only one element, not the whole. As an Indian, he is equally proud of Buddha and Ashoka. He respects the universal elements of the Vedas. Iqbal translated the Gayatri Mantra. But respect and tolerance must also be mutual.

CPI(M)'s Statements

Resolution on UP, November, 1997

The manner in which the BJP has installed the Kalyan Singh ministry in UP has thoroughly exposed the party's unprincipled opportunism and resort to corrupt practices. The formation of a 93 member ministry with a large number of persons with criminal backgrounds, and the attempts to lure further defectors has damaged the party's credibility and its so called adherence to principles. The BJP top leadership is now openly advocating similar tactics at the national level which shows how deep the rot has set into the party.

The Central Committee condemns the partisan role of the speaker of the UP Assembly...

The Central Committee noted that for the first time a majority of MLAs belonging to the Congress (I) in a state assembly have crossed over to the BJP ... in Uttar Pradesh. This shows the extent of corrosion in the political-ideological level of the Congress party which claims to represent secular traditions in the country. The compromising approach to communalism, which became the hallmark of the Congress ... is now coming home to roost. It is for the Congress leadership to forthrightly give up this wrong approach taken in the past and take firm secular position. (Source: The People's Democracy, 16 Nov., 1997)

Statement on Mid-term Poll, 20 Nov., 1997

The Congress party has withdrawn support to the UF government. It has used the pretext of the Jain Commission's interim report which has made out no case whatsoever about the DMK's involvement in the assassination Rajiv Gandhi. The people will disapprove this action of the Congress party; it only indicates the desperate straits the Congress finds itself in, unable to project a viable political platform to revive the party. ...

The resignation by the prime minister and the stand taken by all the UF constituents that they will not support any BJP or Congress-led government shows that ... the Front will foil any unscrupulous manoeuvres... There is no other option but to go in for elections. This will be the only democratic way to resolve the present crisis...

Both Muslim and Hindu Indians have to adjust to each others as neither can wish the other way. What is much more important is that while Muslim Indians play their due role in national politics, the national leadership which is largely Hindu be responsive to the legitimate grievances and aspirations, of Muslim Indians? Will the non-Muslim legislators take up their problems, articulate them and seek official intervention and suggest remedial measures?

It is not important that a Muslim Indian be elected as the Prime Minister. A Muslim President or Vice President made no difference. What is important is whether Muslim Indian will be heard with sympathy and receive a purposeful and effective response?

(A Letter to the Organiser, 7 September, 1997)

Charting Paths to Peace - II

Report on the Visit of an Independent Study Team to India and Pakistan Sponsored by the Kashmir Study Group, New York

7. Monitoring of Cross-border Activity:

The Team believes that Pakistan, for its part, should simultaneously undertake a convincing confidence-building measure of its own by agreeing to station on its side of the Line of Control an adequately staffed regional or other international body with a fresh mandate for observing and reporting all cross-border activity.

The process of normalization, and, in particular, the reaching of any bilateral agreements with India in regard to Kashmir, cannot be expected to progress far without the Government of Pakistan's adopting confidence-building measures of its own. That government must make explicit, in other words, the strength of its commitment to help in creating a regional environment congenial to serious and sustained dialogue with India. One possibility for doing so would be public and strongly expressed verbal disapproval of any and all acts of indiscriminate violence, whosoever may be responsible for them, committed in Indian-controlled areas of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. But the most material and convincing gesture that the Government of Pakistan can make is in relation to covert cross-border interference. Pending establishment of an appropriate bilateral (India-Pakistan) peacekeeping mechanism, as proposed in section below, the Team believes that the Government of Pakistan should invite the setting up for this purpose of an interim international body - under the auspices, perhaps, of the Commonwealth, the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), or possibly even of SAARC. Objectionable cross-border activities, in the Team's view, must not only be subject to observation and reporting, but also should be both renounced and denounced by Pakistan if, in fact, they do occur.

In making this recommendation, the Team lays claim to no authoritative knowledge that covert cross-border activities are currently underway or are being advocated. Indeed, creation of such a body must be understood neither to imply nor to relieve the related responsibility of any party to this dispute. Neither should the existence of the proposed body suggest that hostile cross-border actions were necessarily confined to the sector of the India-Pakistan border constituted by the LOC. Its sole and entirely constructive purpose would be to facilitate the process of normalization and, specifically, to enable the parties to the Kashmir dispute to enter agreements pointing to the restoration of normal civil life in J&K.

While the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), the peacekeeping organization already in existence in Kashmir, is certainly technically qualified to carry out the monitoring function described here and might conceivably have its mandate

converted to that purpose, the political difficulties involved in such a step, in the Team's judgement, might prove to be insuperable. India's unfavourable view of UNMOGIP's mission has been demonstrated; but some mechanism might be found to alter that view.

8. Strengthening of peacekeeping on the Line of Control:

A logical follow-on to the last recommendations, in the Team's judgement, would be for India and Pakistan to explore together various modalities for strengthening peacekeeping on the Line of Control. One such option would be to constitute a Joint Border Security Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) as principal peacekeeper on the Line of Control.

Already given some consideration in the context of the India-Pakistan negotiations over the Siachen Glacier, a joint peacekeeping arrangements on the LOC would formalize security cooperation between India and Pakistan while at the same time providing a mechanism for reducing and perhaps eliminating the grounds for the frequent military clashes between them on the LOC. Introduction of a Joint Border Security Group would also give explicit, institutional acknowledgement to the incontestable fact that the situation in the Indian-controlled sector of Jammu and Kashmir is in some part interstate in origin and therefore requires interstate cooperation for its amelioration.

Regrettably, UNMOGIP itself has been weakened over the years and is now unable to serve the purposes noted above. Upgrading of its capabilities, in light of political attitudes in the region, presently seems improbable. A formalized peacekeeping apparatus of some kind is obviously required in the region, however, and UNMOGIP should not be discarded until a durable agreement is reached on a viable successor.

Assuming a Joint Border Security Group is established and demonstrates its efficacy, consideration should be given to gradually expanded demilitarization of sections of the Line of Control to a width of up to ten kilometers on either side of the line. Such demilitarized sections - which would be subject to the same type of inspection as the sections that are not demilitarized - would go far towards eliminating the all-too-frequent trans-border exchanges of fire that presently occur along the Line of Control.

9. Monitoring of Compliance with human rights Covenants:

It is equally crucial, the Team believes, that the Government of India take public steps to formalize and strengthen monitoring of India's compliance in Kashmir with applicable United Nations human rights covenants.

There are several ways by which the Government of India can protect human rights in Kashmir. One is aggressive and unfettered involvement of the government's own monitoring agencies - the Indian Human Rights Commission and the newly-formed Human Rights Commission of Jammu and Kashmir state. Much more likely to generate widespread confidence in the fairness and fullness of monitoring procedures, however, would be official encouragement including, for instance, the highly respected People's Union for Civil Liberties and the South Asian Human Rights Documentation Centre. The Team is of the view, however, that free and unfettered access to Kashmir by international humanitarian agencies and human rights monitors would even better assure India's credibility. Ideally, to strengthen the practice of local human rights monitoring over the long term, such agencies should be formed from within the region, perhaps under the auspices of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), and should include members from all the states in the region. Also desirable, however, would be India's prompt removal of all barriers to monitoring by such established international organizations as the International Committee of the Red Cross, Amnesty International and Asia Watch.

10. Initiation of Domestic-level Talks with Kashmiri Leaders:

The Team believes that India should initiate formal and unconditional domestic-level talks with a broadened slate of Kashmiri leaders, including the leadership of the All Parties Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference. India's willingness to take this action is essential for progress to be made towards the restoration of normal civil life in Kashmir. In addition, this action would be an important confidence-building measure.

These talks, which would be separate from and preparatory to trilateral discussions within the normalization framework (as recommended in Section 4 above), can be variously structured. They must certainly not exclude representatives of the present National Conference-led state government. They should have as their initial objective winning the support of the state's political leaders, whether in or out of power, to the project for restoring normal civil life to Kashmir.

11. Commitment to Eschew Violence:

A parallel confidence-building measure that the Team considers equally important to the successful restoration of normal civil life in Kashmir would be a clear commitment given by all of the armed militant and counter-militant Kashmiri groups of their willingness to eschew violence and to participate constructively in the process of political dialogue.

An unambiguous declaration by all these groups of their willingness to suspend all military activity and observe a complete cease-fire pending the outcome of talks with India is one obvious and very likely essential such commitment.

12. Role of the International Community:

The international community, the Team believes, can play a helpful role by emphasizing to all those concerned the importance of implementing measures to restore normal civil life and by pointing out to them the high costs of failing to do so.

Major and direct involvement by agencies within the international community at the present preliminary state of negotiations over normalization between India and Pakistan, unless sought by both India and Pakistan, would more than likely be counter productive. Assuming these negotiations proceed along their present positive trajectory, however, a substantial and relatively near-term supporting role for the international community, or at least for particular state-level or regional agencies within it (as proposed in Section 7), can be envisioned. Should it happen that these negotiations falter or break down entirely - not at all a remote possibility in view of the history of India-Pakistan relations - then reexamination and reconfiguring of the role of concerned actors within the international community would certainly be required.

For the moment the Team believes that the primary focus of the international community - including here interested governments as well as non-governmental and inter-governmental entities - should be upon communicating forcefully and frequently to the governments of India and Pakistan the urgency of their undertaking and the willingness of the international community to assist in facilitating its success.

Conclusion:

The Kashmir dispute has now bedeviled relations between India and Pakistan for half a century and is, the Team is convinced, the principal obstacle to normalization of relations between those two states and to broaden cooperation in South Asia. Two costly wars have been fought between India and Pakistan for control of the erstwhile princely state of J&K and a third war between them, relating primarily to the separation of what is now Bangladesh from Pakistan, soon spread to Kashmir as well. Within the Indian-held portion of Kashmir, a grim civil struggle has been raging for the better part of a decade. And the possibility of its escalation into a fourth international war cannot be discounted.

There can be little doubt that, virtually since the moment of their independence, the high costs of military preparedness borne by India and Pakistan, to no small extent because of the Kashmir dispute, have acted to the detriment of most of the people of the subcontinent, roughly two-fifths of whom still live below the poverty line. Thus, one can see that 99% of the combined populations of India and Pakistan (see frontispiece) are, in effect, held hostage to the struggle to extend or preserve Indian or Pakistani control over the remaining 1% who happen to inhabit the area constituted by Jammu and Kashmir. It is not merely the peoples of Jammu and Kashmir who suffer from the struggle, but also, in varying degrees, the entire South Asian region. At the moment of independence, South Asia led the countries

Southeast Asia in respect to most indices of development. Today, those countries of Southeast Asian that have been spared the scourge of war lead India and Pakistan by substantial margins. These observations are not merely the carping of critical outside observers, but were conveyed to the Team repeatedly by its Indian and Pakistani informants as well.

Yet, despite the widespread recognition of the dangers and costs engendered by continued conflict over Kashmir, the maddening complexities of that dispute have prevented its resolution to date. Nevertheless, a good, though still modest and tentative, beginning has been made by the governments of India and Pakistan to normalize relations between the two states. The Study Team sent to South Asia by the Kashmir Study Group warmly applauds that initiative and urges its continuation and expansion. It has put forward in this report a number of recommendations that, in its view, will further this process. These recommendations, intentionally modest in scope, are aimed primarily at the restoration in Kashmir of a normally working civil society, marked by conditions of peace and respect for fundamental human rights. These are the essential prerequisites for carrying on a sustained dialogue in which not only the two national governments, but also the voices of all significant segments of the peoples of J&K can be heard. The Team is convinced that, with mutual forbearance, a spirit of accommodation, and a willingness to compromise, the parties to the dispute can work out for themselves a peace settlement that is at once honourable and just.

Eminent Journalist M.J. Akbar On Kashmir

Why did Iqbal exclude Kashmir from his list of contiguous Muslim-majority provinces in the north-west of India that would constitute the Muslim homeland? Did the answer lie in realpolitik? One reason may be that he was not sure of the status of the princely states in free India, and did not want to antagonise the Muslim nawabs and the Nizam who sought their territories beyond the life of British rule. They were after all patrons of the League. But that answer fits Jinnah, the cool mathematician of human strengths and weaknesses, rather than the spirit of Iqbal. It is just as likely that Iqbal never saw the Muslims of Kashmir as being part of cultural homogeneity he found between the Hindu Kush and the Indian Ocean. And if history be any witness, then the anger of the Kashmiri against the Punjabi and the Afghan is severe... Emperor Akbar ... is still considered an imperialist by Kashmiris. Similarly the Afghan rule which preceded the Dorgas was, if anything, more oppressive... Just as Iqbal could not find much in common between the Muslim of U.P. and the Muslim of Punjab, he could not envision political unity between the Kashmiri and the Punjabi...

(Source: The News from India)

Tavleen Singh on Kashmir Problem

When it comes to Pakistan, our patriotism is at its strongest... We have waited 50 years for India's negotiators to come up with something substantive in the many rounds of talks they have had with Pakistan... Our negotiators do not talk straight. Let me correct that slightly. They do talk straight when it comes to telling Pakistan to stop exporting terrorists and weapons across the border. They also talk straight when it comes to hurling some justified abuses at that most efficient of terrorist training schools, the Inter-Service Intelligence. But when it comes to what Pakistanis call the "core issue" - and what we call "Kashmir" - we talk in circles.

Why is it so hard for us to say that there is no way there will be any further division of India? Why it is so hard for us to say that the only solution to the Kashmir problem is for everyone to accept that the LOC is the border? Once this is stated clearly and categorically, we may actually be able to have a real dialogue with Pakistan. We could even talk about Kashmir, which they want to do so desperately. Forget about trying to take Kashmir or redrawing the borders, we could say, and forget about such outdated suggestions as plebiscite...

We could perhaps extend the exercise to the Americans. Personally, I do not share the general Indian perception that America's main foreign policy objective in the subcontinent is to break up India. But I do share general irritation at the Americans constantly poking their nose into a problem they barely understand. ...

Yes, we do need to be friends with Pakistan - if only because 50 years of enmity have caused South Asia to be universally acknowledged as a place of the most wretched, demeaning poverty in the world. A recent survey reveals the shaming fact that we have more poverty and less development than even sub-Saharan Africa. We need to spend more money on fighting poverty than fighting each other and we can only get there by talking to each other. But this dialogue ... will be worth nothing unless we can spit out the truth on Kashmir... The ordinary Pakistani is as sick of 50 years of rancour and enmity as the ordinary Indian.

(Source: The India Today, 6 October, 1997)

APHC's Memorandum to the UN, 10 December, 1997 (Extracts)

... The Kashmir dispute is today the oldest unresolved issued on the agenda of the UN due to which the people of J&K have been suffering worst type of repression and oppression for the last fifty years at the hands of occupation forces... We once again appeal to the conscience of the international fraternity in general and UN in particular to impress upon government of India to put an end to its policy of genocide in J&K and resolve the Kashmir conflict in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions and according to the wishes of the people. We also appeal to your excellency to intervene effectively (and to) send a deputation of human rights observers and (arrange) relief and rehabilitation of the affected people.

Kashmir: Rhetoric at OIC Summit, 1997**K.K. Katyal in the Hindu, 11 December, 1997**

Once again, the OIC has chosen to deal with the Kashmir issue in a manner that reflects the deep-seated prejudice of some its members against India...

Compared to the rhetoric on other issues, the India-related statements are peripheral and, as such, do not represent the major concerns of the grouping. Thanks to the pro-Pakistani elements in the OIC secretariat, the drafting of Kashmir related anti-India resolutions has become a routine affair. This set of documents is adopted without much discussion as part of a set operation at the instance of the hardliners, with the moderates either making feeble noises or letting it go through without much ado. In the process, the resolutions, whether on Kashmir or Babari Masjid or any other India-related issue, get the OIC stamp. That is enough for the Pakistani lobby to lap up these documents and to derive the maximum propaganda advantage.

At one stage in the past, the Government chose to involve into discussion the IOC hardliners who set the tone... It did not work because of the pre-determined and prejudiced attitudes of the OIC activists. That job was given up.

The collective anti-India noise at the OIC, it was found, did not conform to the views expressed by individual members of the grouping in their bilateral talks with India. The relationship between India and most of them was governed by economic and other powerful factors and there was a marked keenness to strengthen those ties. It was not unusual for New Delhi to hear defensive explanations from the moderates...

Either in explicit terms or impliedly, the OIC document attacked India on three counts - disregard of democratic norms, violation of human rights and religious bigotry. A comparative analysis of the situation in India and the record of some of the leading lights of the OIC would be highly revealing... As such, it is considered ironic that they should be lecturing India on these matters.

Though not perfect, democratic institutions in India have taken deep roots, as is evident from the vibrancy... The widespread condemnation within the country of the Ayodhya episode substantiates this point. The excesses by the administration or other agencies attract instant critical notice of the public and the press... Even on Kashmir, the Central Government and the political leadership are often taken to task for going slow on the promise for increased autonomy for the state. The OIC hardliners, on the one hand, fail to appreciate all this and, on the other, seek to romanticise trans-border terrorism as freedom struggle...

(Source: The Hindu, 11 December, 1997)

**WITH BEST
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**WASHINGTON DC
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Minorities Council of India: Memorandum to National Human Rights Commission On Statutory Compensation to Victims of Communal Riots

An analysis of most of the inquiry reports into communal riots by Human Rights NGOs as well as by several official commissions reveals the failure of the law-enforcing agencies to impartially enforce law for prevention and control of riots and for speedily bringing the rioters to Justice.

In view of this, leading Jurists, human rights (activists) intellectuals and scholars specialising in the area consider major communal riots as culpable failure of governance... This view gives legitimacy to the demand often made by minority group who have generally suffered heavy loss of life and property in riots... for payment of adequate compensation under law to (victims) of communal riots.

Agreeing with this view the National Commission for Minorities in 1979-80 had "strongly urged upon the Government to pass appropriate Legislation and formulate schemes for giving compensation to victims of communal riots".

Section 1 clause 1 of the Prime Minister's Fifteen Point Programme on Minorities of 1983 holds prevention of communal tension as one of the primary duties of the DMs and SPs; and Clause 5 takes it as government's responsibility to provide the victims of communal riots with relief and adequate financial assistance for their rehabilitation.

No State Government has, however, considered it a legal obligation to provide relief and financial assistance for their rehabilitation to victims of riots.

For the first time in a landmark judgement delivered by Justice Anil Dev Singh of the Delhi High Court on 5 July, 1996 in the Civil Writ Petition No. 1429 of 1996, the learned court has taken the view that in the situation that obtained during anti-Sikh riots in Delhi in 1984 the Government "cannot escape the liability to pay adequate compensation to the family of the person killed during riots as his or her life has been extinguished in clear violation of Article 21 of the Constitution", awarding to the petitioner, a widow of a person killed in rioting, an amount of Rs. 2 lakhs with interest as compensation. It also directed the Delhi State Government to identify all such cases and provide within four months (the same) compensation to them.

The learned court has also pointed out the need for enacting a law providing for adequate compensation to victims of riots. The law, in its view, should also provide for locating administrative responsibility for riots, and derelict officials of the state to make reparations to the

victims and to face disciplinary proceedings.

In view of the fact that neither the Government of Delhi nor of any other State or any individual or organisation challenged in the Supreme Court the interpretation of Article 21 by the Delhi High Court in its judgement of 5 July, 1996 in the case cited above and in view of the fact that no other law is in existence in any of the States and Union territories of India dealing with payment of compensation (in) communal riots contrary to this opinion, the said judgement of the Delhi Court should be treated as one of "the laws within the territory of India" whose equal protection has been guaranteed under Article 14 of the Constitution to all persons, irrespective of their origin, affiliation, faith and domicile or even citizenship.

As the protection of Human Rights Act (1993), Chapter III Clause 12, especially sub-clause (d) and (j), have entrusted the National Human Rights Commission with the responsibility of reviewing the "safeguards provided by or under the Constitution or any law for the time being in force for the protection of human rights" and of recommending "measures for their effective implementation" and with "such other function as it may consider necessary for the promotion of human rights", the Commission may forcefully impress upon Governments of all states and Union Territories of India to uniformly implement the law as enunciated by the Delhi High Court in its judgement of 5 July 1996 in all ... communal riots ... within their jurisdiction in the past without any limitation of time, especially since 1980 till date, and pay the amount of compensation at the rate of Rupees two lakhs with interest to the next-of-kin of those killed.

The Commission may consider, if necessary, approaching the Supreme Court for a direction to Governments of all States and Union Territories...

The Commission may also consider strongly recommending to the Union and State Governments the need for enactment of comprehensive laws dealing with compensation to all those who suffer loss of life, limb or property in such communal riots. Such laws may also provide for fixing executive and administrative responsibility, so that all such persons held responsible for failure to prevent and control riots within reasonable time and those who act with partiality or prejudice against any community or section of people may be duly punished.

Communal Tension in Coimbatore: Hindutva on the Rampage

T.N. Gopalan in The Pioneer

The psychology of the Muslim community in Coimbatore has been changing subtly, influencing fiery young men who, deeply suspicious of the police, feel desperate enough to take to arms. In Abu's personality the transformation can be discerned easily...

Indeed, the targeting of innocent Muslims in the recent Coimbatore riots has spawned (revenge) in almost every affected Muslim household. Insulted and humiliated ... they are potential recruits for any fanatical, fundamentalist or even terrorist outfit. Al Ummah is allegedly such an organisation, and has been blamed for provoking the vicious police backlash against Muslims. In fact many from the community, too, lament Al Ummah's activities, its blackmailing and terrorising tactics, its foolhardiness in confronting the police. But there are others, eager and vocal in their support to the outfit...

There is no denying it is the Muslims who suffered most in the recent riots: 17 of the 20 people killed were Muslims, their properties worth crores of rupees were looted or destroyed. The ferocity of the attack can be gleaned from another fact - it was the first time since 1965 ... that the Army was called in to restore law and order in Tamil Nadu. The other starting dimension of the riots was the brazen revolt of the police, forcing the authorities to beseech their subordinates to return to work, and promising prompt action against the killers of traffic constable Selvaraj, whose death sparked off the grisly rioting in the city.

Others, however, point to the ironic twist - the fact that the city was sucked into violence after the Muslim community handed over those accused of killing Selvaraj. A senior police officer agrees his men looked the other way when the attack against the Muslim community was unleashed, but promptly denies allegations that they played a more direct role...

... When the Muslim areas were under a veritable siege and the people were starving, no voluntary organisation stepped in to arrange food supply. Though many concede privately that the outrage was totally disproportionate to the alleged provocation, yet none has demanded compensation for the Muslims. The popular perception is: The Muslim community has been, in one way or another, responsible for the mushrooming of dangerous outfits like the Al Ummah and hence it must pay.

Meanwhile, Hindu fundamentalists are exploiting the situation, seeking punitive action against the Muslims and widening the chasm between the communities through scurrilous speeches and writings. Politicians themselves,

from the local DMK MLA to Chief Minister Karunanidhi, appear more anxious to shake off the charge of having encouraged Islamic fundamentalism than in assisting the traumatised Muslims, or bolstering their confidence in the law enforcing agencies. The media, too, has remained silent on the losses the Muslims suffered, harping on the need to crush terrorism than on compensating the victims.

No wonder, for the first time in Tamil Nadu the Muslims, at least those of Coimbatore, feel completely alienated from the mainstream, and are overcome by a siege mentality - characteristic of the community in the North. ...

Yet oases of sanity do exist in the city. In the bleak and eerie ambience of Coimbatore it is heartwarming to hear the 80-odd Hindu families in Kottaimedu assert, one after another, that they live in perfect amity with the Muslims and that their neighbourhood was relatively unaffected through the rioting and the curfew...

... Kottaimedu, a congested locality having a population of about 35,000 Muslims, mainly of the middle and lower middle classes ... has had bitter experiences of curfews. Says (a resident) "Way back in 1993, November-December, the police descended on the area in a full strength, cordoned it off, and systematically ransacked our houses, humiliated our women and beat up the youngsters indiscriminately. They were apparently looking for those involved in the blasts at the RSS headquarters. But it was the innocent who had to pay a heavy price... That was the time the Al Ummah took roots here"

... The police during the Jayalalitha regime erected checkpoints to monitor the alleged flow of arms into the colony. ... Coimbatore, perhaps, represents the classic dilemma before a government confronted with ethnic dissidence, terrorist or otherwise (like Kashmir). How can it shield itself from dastardly attacks of motivated fanatics even while winning over the misguided youth and an alienated population in general?

This Manchester of the South has been thrice racked by riots in the last one year alone. Some observers see in these the role of North Indian textile owners who want to strangle the competition from Coimbatore by instigating such clashes. Those who blame the police ... say the police are upset and angry because the Al Ummah has appropriated the lucrative task of settling disputes out of court, thereby depriving the men in uniform of their booty.

There is indeed no denying that the social and political condition in west Tamil Nadu has been vitiated...

The Coimbatore Riots The RSS View

... Muslim fundamentalist organisations have been indulging in attacks on Hindu leaders and offices of Hindu organisations, beginning with the destruction of the RSS office in Chennai and the murderous attack on Hindu Munnani leader Shri Rama Gopalan.

There have been bomb blasts in Tamil Nadu suggesting ISI hand in them. Three of them occurred in the early hours of December 6 in expresss trains, in protest against the demolition at Ayodhya in 1992. In fact an open poster campaign had been launched by the Tamil Nadu Muslim Munnatra Kazhagam denigrating the Hindus in general and Bharat Mata in particular as a prelude to (the proposed) conference at Chennai on December 6....

When three Muslims belonging to the Al-Umma were challaned for violation of traffic rules, the Muslim rowdies stabbed a police constable on traffic duty and sliced his neck... The local police rose to a man and struck work. The CRPF and the Army were called in to control the killings, arson and loot indulged in by the Muslim fundamentalists led by Al Umma.

The violence in Coimbatore is not just a local affair. It is part of a larger design to place Tamil Nadu on

Shahabuddin's Letter to Naib Amir Sharia, Patna, 12 November, 1997

As you know in the context of the overall breakdown of law and order in Bihar, the Muslim community finds itself a particular target of murder and plunder. Over the last few months, unfortunately there have been quite a few cases of rape of Muslim women in Muzaffarpur, Samastipur, Darbhanga, Khagaria, Nawadah, Phulwari Sharif and now Gaya.

I feel that the Imarat-e-Sharia should set up a Legal Cell to preserve such case in which specially women, have been targetted and if the local machinery fails, to raise the matter before the National Commission for Minorities and the National Human Rights Commission.

The latest cases of Firoza in Phulwari Sharif and of Zaibun Nisa and Khairnu Nisa in Gaya deserve immediate attention.

communal, fundamentalist powderkeg. It requires immediate attention of not only the State police but also the ... Home Ministry in New Delhi... Unfortunately the pseudo-secularist camp and even the media are exhibiting their communal angularities by blaming both the Muslims and the Hindus for the situation in Tamil Nadu.

(Source: The Organiser, Editorial, 14 December, 1997)

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Gautam Navlakha on Judicial Delays

... Liberhans Commission set up in December 1992 after the demolition of the Babari Masjid, little is known about its current status. ... Narasimha Rao Government had appointed a sitting judge to head the Commission. The sitting judge is now the Chief Justice of Madras High Court. The Commission was further hampered by other logistic problem with the judge from Chandigarh, the commission's headquarters (first in Lucknow, then) in Delhi and most its witnesses from Uttar Pradesh. The Rao Government tried to dissolve it in January 1994 before the Commission even got off the ground.

By the time it began to work, it faced delaying tactics from the Sangh Parivar. Between August 1995 and July 1996, the Commission's work was stalled when Delhi High Court issued stay order on notices issued by the Commission against 41 persons and five organisations. Their stay was lifted on July 23, 1996... Since then we know nothing about the course of the inquiry.

Nearly five years have passed since the country was brought to the brink of civil war, and 15 months since the United Front came to power on the ostensible plank of secularism and one of the principal accused re-occupies the seat of Government in Lucknow.

Considering that the demolition was as big a criminal act as the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, by the very same forces of hatred and violence, what has become of (the inquiry).

Sharad Gupta

On VHP's Revival of Mandir Issue

A cold reception (awaited) the Sangh Parivar's Dharma Jagran Yatra... The week-long yatra, which began from Karsevakpuram in Ayodhya (on 5 December), was meant to "awaken" the people to "the need for a BJP government at the Centre if they wanted the Ram Janmabhoomi temple in Ayodhya."

However, barely a few hundred people turned up at the "big" meetings planned by VHP leaders at Sringeri Rishi Ashram on the banks of the Saryu river and in Gosainganj town. Turnout was even poorer at the dozen welcome meeting planned along the way.

The VHP, however, tried to explain the poor public response to its "deliberate strategy" to keep things in low key. "We do not want to create problems for the BJP Government in UP ... said Mahant Paramhans Ram Chandra Das, Convenor of the Ram Janmabhoomi Trust.

Significantly, BJP leaders avoided the yatra... Local MP Vinay Katiyar participated only in the yagna before the yatra and left...

(Source: The Indian Express, 7 December, 1997)

Imam of Haram, Makka's Advice

The Imam of the highest religious place for Muslims, Haram-e-Sharif (mosque of Mecca), Muhammed bin Abdullah Al Subayyal, while talking to newsmen said that if archaeological and historical facts prove that the Babari mosque was built after demolishing a Hindu temple, the Indian Muslims should hand over the complex to the Hindus and Muslims must avoid bloodshed in this connection. But if the foundation of the mosque was not over a temple Muslims must build a mosque at the same site where the demolished mosque stood...

(Source: The Observer of Business and Politics)

BMMCC: Shahabuddin Welcomes Suggestion of Imam of Haram Sharif, 21 November, 1997

Since its inception in December, 1986 the BMMCC has taken a clear and consistent stand that if the Babari Masjid is found judicially to have been indeed constructed on the site of a standing Ram Janambhoomi Mandir after demolishing it, the Babari Masjid is not a Masjid under the Shariat ab initio and should be given up and handed over to the Hindu community for the proposed reconstruction of the Mandir. Indeed, this was the historic question referred by the Government of India to the Supreme Court in 1993. The Supreme Court in October 1995 declined to give an Opinion and asked the Allahabad High Court to revive the pending consolidated title suit, in which one of the issues identified is this very question.

Earlier, the BMMCC had agreed to the proposal of Justice V.R. Krishna Iyer to place this matter before a Commission of Inquiry and to the suggestion of Shri Rajiv Gandhi, then Leader of the Congress, that the Commission of Inquiry should have Supreme Court Judges as its members, subject to the conditions that the VHP commit itself to accept the verdict of the Commission and stop all agitations in the meantime and that this should not serve as a precedent. However, the VHP did not accept the proposal and the then Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar did not pursue the matter.

However, now that the revered Imam of the Haram Sharif, Makkah, has made the same suggestion, the BMMCC welcomes it so long as the historical fact is decided by the judicial process and the Sangh Parivar commits itself to abide by the judicial finding and stops all agitation and, in the context of 1991 Act on Places of Worship, it also desists from claiming other Masjids, in order to save the nation from interminable turmoil and consequent waste of national energy."

Siddharth Varadarajan on the Legacy of Ayodhya

... Only those who saw "grave communal disorder" as "a natural, if ghastly, process tending in its own way to the solution of the Indian problem" would have stood on the sidelines silently - or cheered lustily - as the Babari Masjid was reduced to rubble five years ago today. We now know that the Narasimha Rao government at the Centre was kept fully briefed about the deteriorating situation and could have intervened to prevent the mosque from being destroyed. Yet it chose not to. **For this reason, the Congress is as guilty as the BJP for what happened in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992.** ... The harsh reality of what the (BJP) did will not be forgotten for a long time. And the Congress, under whose watchful eyes the ancient monument was brought down, will never be able to live down its dishonorable role in the disaster either.

The demolition of the masjid was the culmination of a cynical and irresponsible game of competitive communalism played by the Congress and the BJP. The role of Rajiv Gandhi in reopening a dispute which had remained dormant for decades is too well known to bear repetition. The 1980s were a time when the Congress party openly fostered communalism on a broad scale, sometimes targeting Sikhs (as in the November 1984 massacres) and sometimes Muslims (as in Meerut in 1987). Together, Congress and BJP leaders tried their best to communalise the polity and divide Indians on the basis of religion - as a means of either holding on to or capturing power for themselves.

This strategy has not worked well for either party. It is not accidental that Congress today is on the verge of irrelevance. Its leaders have no agenda... In many ways, the Congress party is the most spectacular victim of the curse of Ayodhya. The party couldn't claim credit either for the demolition of the masjid or for saving it. It could not even prosecute those involved... All the cases launched by it are still meandering their way through our labyrinthine judicial system due to a lack of official cooperation. In the three years that the Congress remained in power after the destruction ... the Liberhans commission ... barely got off the ground, again due to governmental indifference.

Given its actual record on the communal front, how then was the Congress different from the BJP, a party it claimed to be in mortal combat with? this lack of space between the two is what has led to the decline of the Congress, especially in UP, with its former support base going either to the BJP or to those seen as putting up a

real fight against the BJP.

The BJP's calculation that its reckless disregard for legal norms ... would generate momentum which would take it all the way to New Delhi has not happened and the party has been forced to backtrack. The fact that its leaders today are shamefaced and evasive about an act which was meant to be the crowning glory of a renascent 'Hindu nationalism' shows that they are aware of the limitations of their divisive politics. The experience of the past 18 months would suggest that the BJP is still far from overcoming the 'untouchability' factor brought about by its adherence to an agenda of historical revanchism.

Its leaders constantly raise the emotive issue of mandirs: most recently, Mr. L.K. Advani told a gathering of Muslims that should they give up their claim to the disputed site in Ayodhya, the BJP would not press for the 'restitution' of 'temples' in Varanasi and Mathura. Even this 'concession', however, has already been shot down... The RSS rally in Lucknow attended by UP chief minister Kalyan Singh and other BJP leaders (told the) Muslims to give up their mosques in Varanasi and Mathura.

The major weakness of the BJP, however, is not that it is a communal party but that, like the other parties which are 'secular' it too has no solutions to the problems people face... All it wants to do is replace the Congress as the central reference point of Indian politics. Above all, the BJP is a party of status quo and is deeply opposed to changes which will empower ordinary citizens... BJP's 'Hindu nationalism' is a cover for an agenda that is totally sterile.

If Ayodhya discredited both the Congress and the BJP... The politics of the 'Third Front' suffers from a natural limitation beyond which it seems unable to develop. In the name of secularism, the country has witnessed a government that has not only done nothing to redress people's grievances on the communal front (such as giving them justice) but has also not paid any attention to delivering justice on the social front... The problems India faces are structural and run much deeper than the threat any one party poses. Five years after Ayodhya, it is time to move the debate beyond merely identifying who is 'secular' and who is not and then uniting on that basis... If a political formation ... on the basis of opposition to the BJP has no other agenda and, if elected, does nothing to fulfil the basic needs of the people, it will only end up handing the country over to the BJP.

(Source: The Times of India, 6 December, 1997)

M.V. Kamath on Ayodhya Movement

There surely are hundreds of thousands (if not millions) of ordinary Hindus ... who have felt a deep sense of hurt at Muslim atrocities against their ancestors down the centuries and have never been reconciled to that fact...

Irrespective of what the BJP, the RSS, the VHP or the SS have said in the matter of the demolition of the Babari Masjid (and they have said a lot, often in an apologetic manner) that structure was a standing insult to the sensibilities of Hindus. It should have been relocated a long time ago. It should not have been built in Ayodhya in the first place. Ayodhya is holy for Hindus, whether one accepts it as a fact that Sri Ram was born there or whether a temple once existed as has been argued, on the Janmabhoomi site. Islam simply had no business to set up shop in Ayodhya any more than Hindus can claim a secular right to build a temple in Mecca or Medina. May it be remembered - forget Ayodhya for the nonce - that a mosque was built in Banaras and in Mathura, both cities considered holy by Hindus under the most insulting conditions; in Banaras idols of gods were strewn for the Muslim faithful to tread upon.

All this is recorded history. To tell Hindus that all that was for their own secular good and that they should forget the past is to add to insult injury. What was involved in Ayodhya was not politics; it was a self-respect movement. Mr. Ganguli concedes that "one reason why the medieval rulers attacked places of worship was political - to show that they were masters of the land and to eliminate the possibility of the shrines acting places of congregation of their opponents." The building of a mosque in Ayodhya, Mr. Ganguli surely will concede, was not for any spiritual reasons but for simply asserting Islamic hegemony.

Mr. Ganguli dismisses as "hype" the alleged BJP claim that there is a "Hindu resurgence". According to him the "Ramjanmabhoomi movement is essentially political (and) there is nothing spiritual about it". I see nothing wrong with that why shouldn't it be political, pray? The building of the mosque in Ayodhya was essentially a political move - on Mr. Ganguli's own admission - and there was nothing spiritual about it. All that the people who demolished the mosque did was to reassert their self-respect which had been besmirched by a thoughtless Islamic ruler. Had a Shiv linga been installed in a Shiv Temple in Mecca next to the Kaaba, five hundred years ago in plain opposition to the sentiments of the people and was demolished in 1992, how would Mr. Ganguli have reacted to it?

To say that anyone who supports the demolition of the Babari Masjid has "vindicated at one stroke the sectarian fanaticism of Jinnah which led to the vivisection of India" is so far-fetched a comparison as to evoke laughter. The tragedy of India is that its intellectuals have so far lost their sense of identity that they do not even

recognise their degenerate faces in the mirror. If one asserts one's self-respect, one becomes communal! Why, one would like to know, doesn't anyone ask of the Muslim leadership that it face up to past atrocities and show some signs of atonement? A magnanimous Muslim leadership would have tried to understand the deep wounds in the Hindu psyche and sought to assuage it by voluntarily giving up all claims to the Janmabhoomi site and - if nobility and magnanimity were not under such discount - even volunteered to build a Ram Mandir where the Babari Masjid stood, at its own cost. Think what that would have done to cement Hindu-Muslim relationship. The Muslim leadership, however, sought, under prodding from Hindu, BJP-baiting "secularists" to take a confrontationist stand. It paid for the folly.

Every now and then the names of Akbar or some other Muslim ruler is thrown in our face to "prove" that all Muslim rulers were benevolent and Hindu-loving. I quote from a chapter on "The Hindus under Islamic Rule" in Wilhelm von Pochhammer's fascinating book "India's Road to Nationhood". Pochhammer is not Toynbee, but he is a German scholar who had made deep study of Indian history. He writes: "The first reaction of the Hindus to the occupation of North India by conquerors professing Islam was one of great horror in the face of cruelties they had never before experienced. The immense and uncontrollable bloodbaths, the brutality with which civilian populations were massacred and women and girls dragged into "harems" which to the Hindus appeared as no better than brothels, the introduction of slave trade in which thousands of people including children were sold, all these generated a hatred for foreigners the like of which had never been felt by Indians before."

The hatred was increased by the shameless way in which the foreigners destroyed holy places after first having defiled them in the most senseless way... If success was obtained in preserving Hindu culture in the hell of the first few centuries, the credit undoubtedly goes to the Brahmins...

The evil that Muslim rulers did has lived after them. The past can be forgotten if Muslims today dissociate themselves from their ancestors and truly live as "rice and dal in a kichdi" (the phrase is Mr. Ganguli's) instead of fighting Hindus with their hurt psyches at every step, assuming a posture of injured innocence, that is least convincing. Mr. Ganguli plainly lies when he says that "the targeting of mosques is similarly meant to tell the Muslims that to live in peace in India they must pay the price for the sins of their ancestors. It is like the wolf in Aesop's fables telling the lamb that if it did not muddy the waters, its parents did". This is a despicable analogy. In the first place Mr. Ganguli gives the impression that "mosques" (in the plural) have been "targeted" (mark the use of the provocative word) conveying the impression

BABARI MASJID

that hundreds and thousands of mosques are due to be levelled down. That is a cheap shot. Yes, the VHP has asked for three - just three, out of over 3,000 recorded temples destroyed and built-over with mosques - sites to be handed over to it. Will any Muslim holy man or objective judge, despite the fact that the temples in Mathura and Banaras were desecrated?

The argument is that the sins of one's ancestors should not be visited on those living today. The analogy, again, is wrong and totally misleading, and a willingly and diabolically presented. It is not still too late for the Muslim community to show a magnanimity that transcends the past and promises hope for the future. Sins were in the past committed and there is no reason why

they should not be rectified. It is well to remember that the Pope went all the way to Paris and to apologise to the French Protestants for the St. Bartholomew Day Massacre perpetrated some 500 years ago. Mr. Ganguli should pull up the Pope for this Christian behaviour. The apology was made on August 24, 1997.

The worst enemies of Muslims are not the BJP, the RSS, the VHP or the SS, but men like Amulya Ganguli who are afraid to face the truth. Hindus are not revanchists or fascists. They would cheerfully forgive the past even if they can't forget it, but not when the Gangulis of this country keep insulting them and rub salt in their wounds.

(Source: The Hindustan Times, 11 November, 1997)

Shahabuddin's Letter to The Hindustan Times, 19 November, 1997

Apropos Mr. M.V. Kamath's article "Assertion of Self-Respect" (HT, 11 November), I must say that this article merely recycles the limited stock of information (or disinformation) and ideas that Mr. Kamath possesses on the Babari Masjid question. There is not one bit which he has not utilised in his recent articles on the subject in the Free Press Journal, Bombay. I wish he had something new to say. But perhaps there isn't. As it is Mr. Kamath merely repeats ad nauseam the arguments trotted out by the Sangh Parivar since they began the campaign in 1983.

Mr. Kamath disclaim affiliation with the Sangh Parivar. Indeed the Sangh Parivar has many supporters in all fields and in many institutions. The Parivar must indeed be proud of such honorary foot-soldiers!

May I inform Mr. Kamath that "the ordinary Hindus not share his deep sense of hurt at Muslim atrocities against his ancestors down the centuries"? They are too concerned with the present and to some extent with the future, to worry about righting "historic wrongs" and demanding apologies and demolishing places of worship. Indeed no true Hindu would even think of defiling, far less destroying a place of worship. Even the people of Ayodhya - Sants included - did not look upon Babari Masjid as "a standing insult to the sensibilities of the Hindus' fits only to be erased! Had they done so, the Babari Masjid could not have existed for 464 years!

Mr. Kamath says that the Babari Masjid should not have been built in the first place and the Muslims should not have "set up shop" in Ayodhya. He is not aware of the fact that Ayodhya was no more than a deserted hamlet when Muslim arrived on the scene about the end of the 12th century and that Ayodhya was not a recognised place of pilgrimage for Hindus. The Ram cult was the off-spring of Tulsi Das's Ramayana and flowered only in the 17th-18th century. That is why there is no Ram temple anywhere in India older than the 17th century. Indeed, the Ram Janamsthan Mandir in Ayodhya (situated next to Babari Masjid) is reported to be the second oldest Ram temple in the country. A conqueror does not exempt any territory from his jurisdiction though he is expected to respect the religious rights of the conquered.

To me it appears that men like Kamath suffer from deep seated persecution and insecurity complex and that is why they seek comfort in apologies and atonement by the Muslims, dream of Hindu invasion of Islam's Holy Places, justify demolition of Masjids and generally see Muslim Indians as a continuous threat to the Hindus.

The renaissance of a community or a country is never based on negative but on positive impulses. That is why I fail to understand why men like Kamath reduce Hindu-Muslim relations to a zero-sum game. To gain something for the Hindu, must they inflict an injury or a damage or a loss upon the Muslims? Perhaps their real purpose is not to gain something for the Hindus but only to inflict humiliation on the Muslims.

Why shouldn't we look upon our history as a process of cultural interaction between two civilisation which changed both and unleashed new forces of creativity to write a golden chapter in our long history? History is both sweet and sour. We have to accept it and not try to look for sacrificial goats for the rites of atonement!

The legal rights of all citizens and all social groups are today based on the Constitution. Their claims are to be judged in the light of the laws of today and not in terms of something done centuries ago by someone or against someone. Then for the next 1000 years, we would all be engaged in balancing inter-group accounts: Muslims vs Hindus; Shaivites vs Vaishnavites; Hindus vs Buddhists and Aryans vs Dravidians or indigenous tribes. The list is endless.

Muslim resistance to the demand for surrender for Babari Masjid has indeed closed the flood-gates. Otherwise by now thousands of Masjids and Mazars would have been targetted. As it is, thousands have been illegally occupied in Punjab, Haryana, Himachal and Delhi, during the Partition and scores since then in other parts of the country.

Muslims know their friends and enemies. But what matters really who the friends and enemies of our nation and our state are. The biggest enemy are the forces which dig up the past and use the rubble to block the national caravan's march to its glorious destiny.

A Babari Masjid: Will Apology Do?

Editorial, The Indian Express, 7 August, 1997

An apology for the omissions of the Congress that led to the demolition of Babari Masjid is a meaningless exercise if the real intention is to assuage the hurt feelings of Muslims. It is a simplistic solution inasmuch as it presupposes that the alienation of Muslims from the Congress is primarily on account of the demolition.

It is true that Muslims felt cheated when the Congress Government at the Centre remained a mute witness to the razing of the Ayodhya shrine. For them the demolition was clinching evidence that the Congress could no longer be trusted...

What shook Muslims' confidence in the secular credentials of the Congress was the Rajiv Gandhi Government's hasty decision to open the gates of the Ayodhya shrine following a court order. Seldom before had the Congress shown such enthusiasm in respecting court orders.

In their perception, the Congress compounded its guilt by permitting a controversial shilanyas at the disputed place and launching its subsequent election campaign from Ayodhya with the promise of Ram Rajya. And when one of the worst-ever riots occurred in Mumbai in the wake of the demolition, they found that the Congress was incapable of ensuring even their security.

So if an apology is to be effective, it will have to cover a series of lapses by the Congress... Even votaries of the apology such as Sharad Pawar would not like to extend its scope, lest it should boomerang on the party. Kesri has found the convenient argument that the Calcutta session should concern itself only with events that occurred since the Tirupati session in 1992. But then apologies are not time-barred...

But in the case of the Congress, where the doctrine of infallibility is applied in the case of leaders like Rajiv Gandhi an apology that will show them in poor light is simply out of question. After all, an apology implies an admission of guilt.

Since the Congress has found it politically expedient to apologies to Muslims, it stands to reason that it should also make such gestures to the various other communities which it has antagonised over the years through its acts of omission and commission...

Since so many apologies can be time-consuming, why does it not make an omnibus apology for all its failures during its long tenure at Centre and in most states? It may carry greater conviction with the masses even if it may not bring them back into the party's arms.

(Sources: The Indian Express, August 7 1997)

MALKANI'S JUSTIFICATION OF DEMOLITION

Critical Letters in Times of India - I

Malkani's article ... is typical of Hindutva brigade's familiar rhetoric, only it is even more confused. He starts by citing VHP demand for righting historic wrongs, obviously by demolishing various mosques. Then he contends that the Sangh Parivar never wanted the Masjid to be pulled down in this way, an obvious falsehood; the world has not yet forgotten the Tandava dance of Murli Manohar Joshi and others at the site... In between he suggests that some agents provocateurs from Pakistan might have done that! Alternatively, "members of Rao's kitchen cabinet were involved..."

He ends by saying: 'Out of evil cometh good'. I am happy that he recognises that the act of demolition was an evil act; that is why perhaps he is citing so many red herrings for an act of vandalism openly and boldly committed by members of the Sangh Parivar.

- Saral Jhingran, 28 October, 1997

II

Malkani's defence of the demolition of the Babari Masjid (October 13) is a series of disjointed protestations. Malkani draws parallels with the rebuilding of the Somnath temple with cabinet approval. Then why didn't the Sangh Parivar wait for a similar consensus to be arrived in the case of Ayodhya? Historical correction, and that too after centuries, calls for patience. But the VHP, which raised the issue first in 1987 couldn't wait more than five years. Since electoral mileage was the Sangh Parivar's aim, it raised a ruckus over the Babari Masjid. It is a pity that Malkani had to quote Nirad C. Chaudhari - a self-proclaimed Englishman - and V.S. Naipaul (who has never lived in India).

Modern India cannot shut its eyes to the sentiments of different religious and ethnic groups. Malkani proudly claims that the demolition solved the communal issue once and for all. But he fails to acknowledge that the riots in December, 1992 - January 1993 and the serial bomb blasts in March 1993 were indeed a fallout of the December 6, 1992 act. That no communal carnage has followed since then is not because the communal problem has been solved, but because the BJP and its allies have wrested power in a number of states... Faced with an identity crisis and in a bid to pamper its vote-bank, the BJP has fallen back on its prime vote-catching issue of yesteryear.

- S. Sinha, 8 November, 1997

III

Malkani should be thanked for inadvertently baring the BJP's perversely selective sensitivity towards national issues. Not a scratch is caused on their 'tender' psyche by the British rulers, such as the shooting at Jallianwala

(Continued on page 30)

Government Statements

On Family Law for Christian Indians

The Government has under consideration a comprehensive proposal for bringing in changes in the Christian personal law regarding marriage, divorce, inheritance and adoption. It has made a reference to the National Commission for Minorities requesting the Commission to inform as to whether an ascertainable cross section of the Christian community is in favour of the proposal. The Government also sought the views/comments of the State Governments/U.T. Administrations on the proposal. It also proposes to hold consultations with the Christian Members of Parliament as soon as possible and in this regard, made copies of the proposal available to certain Members of Parliament.

(Source: LSUQ NO. 520 dated 21.11.1997 by P.C. Thomas)

On Rights of Muslim Women

Attention of the Government has been drawn to the Supreme Court's judgement in July, 1997 ... that a Muslim father was liable to pay maintenance to his children living with their divorcee mother.

No legislation for the purpose is considered necessary for the present.

(Source: LSUQ NO. 656 dated 21.11.1997 by B. Chikmalia, H. Pathak and K. Rana)

Uniform Civil Code Without Tears

Editorial, The Indian Express, 31 July, 1997)

... The legislatures ... have been unable to come up with a uniform civil code after years of fruitless discussion... The courts are necessarily approaching the problem piecemeal... But to their credit, they are getting the job done a lot faster than the political class, and their rulings are finding widespread acceptance. This is effectively the uniform civil code, without tears.

... The some route of case law elaboration can be used to upgrade archaic legislation although it would be time consuming... However welcome the court's role may be, the legislature cannot escape its primary responsibility of law-making, except at its peril.

(Source: The Indian Express, 31 July, 1997)

(Continued from Page 29)

Bagh, the Bengal Famine in which lakhs died of starvation, the massacre of hundreds during the naval mutiny, millions dying and getting uprooted at the time of Partition etc. For the BJP, the history of India appears to have come to a half after the departure of the last Mughal Emperor. It is the desecration of temples during Muslim rule much earlier that deeply wounds their psyche and the demolition of a dilapidated mosque built centuries ago restores it. If they had been really sincere and had firm faith in their methodology, they would have

Shahabuddin's Letter to The Times of India, 19 November, 1997

Shri Rakesh Bhatnagar in his article "All are Equal in the Eyes of Law" (11 November) has spun out too broad a spectrum of generalisation related to the very sensitive issue of State vs Religion. He has ignored the basic premise that the legislature or the judiciary cannot "reform" the essentials of a religion and the Supreme Court has ruled that the essentials of a religion are to be identified in the light of internal i.e. scriptural evidence.

I hope Mr. Bhatnagar does not propose to feed "non-halal" meat to the Muslims or authorise the Supreme Court to promulgate a uniform civil code.

Another example he cites is about the spread of Friday congregation to the side-walks and even on parts of public roads, in one or two places in Mumbai. I feel that the authorities should allot more sites for Masjids, as the population grows, or at least permit the existing Masjid to add more floors to avoid such contingencies. In any case, the road should not have been totally blocked, even for a short time.

He has touched the customary procedure of divorce and maintenance. These questions must be judged in the light of the Quran and the Sunnah. Perhaps Mr. Bhatnagar is not aware that several Muslim sects reject "triple" or instantaneous divorce and that the Shariat makes the father responsible for the maintenance of his children upto a certain age, even if there is a divorce and the children are living with the mother. Even many Muslims would question the motivated use of the right to change religion for facilitating a marriage but can the misdeed of a few be reason enough to nullify a fundamental right of freedom of conscience for all.

The judiciary cannot sit in judgement over religious beliefs based on scriptures whether they are conducive to what he calls "secular living". Religion does not change according to the fashion of the time.

Secularism in the Indian context is an attribute of the State, not of the individual citizens who may well be orthodox in practising their faith but who must not lean towards or discriminate against any religious group in exercise of official function or authority. Law must equally protect all religions and all religious groups.

also called for the demolition of monuments of the imperialist British rule, such as the Viceregal Lodge (now Rashtrapati Bhavan), the Victoria memorial or the Gateway of India.

In reality, the so-called wound to the psyche is a way to fan communal passions. This is the way the BJP obtains political mileage in an attempt to ultimately achieve power at the centre.

- V.S. Mokashi, 8 November, 1997

Socio-Legal Status of Muslim Indian Women

Survey by Muniza Rafiq Khan

To find out the status regarding these issues particularly as concerns Muslim women form lower socio-economic status, field research was done in 1988 in Mirzapur, U.P. It is found that the social status of Muslim women is low. Traditional customs and marriage practices still continue in Muslim society. The average age of the respondents was 27 years, average age at marriage 18.5 years and the average age at divorce or separation 22.5 years. Mehr is generally not paid even after divorce or separation. The amount of mehr is generally paltry. Polygamy and purdah are still observed by many. The status of the women is not secure in marriage and divorce.

Lower caste respondents get less dowry, while most of the upper caste respondents get cash, gold and expensive articles. Dowry is increasing among the youngest generation, having become a status symbol...

A majority of the respondents have not heard about the Shah Bano case and the Supreme Court judgement. Their opinion, after a briefing is, if they are divorced or separated, in favour of Shah Bano and the Supreme Court judgement. They want a strict government law to solve the divorce and maintenance problems. Illiterate women who have no knowledge of personal law or religion either have no opinion or want a law to solve the problem. They have no choice and freedom to say anything against Islam or Muslim personal law because their husbands do not want any change. Upper caste or high income respondents ... do not want any change.

Some respondents, including some divorcees and separated women, want whole life maintenance after divorce. Other hold that after divorce the husband has become a stranger, and there is no question of taking money from him, that it will be against Islam to get maintenance after iddat.

... Women do not want to go to court for maintenance. Even if they do, their parents or brothers are against it. The latter believe that the courts insult women, take too long and do nothing. They also cannot afford the expense. ...

The behaviour and attitude of relatives and friends towards a divorcee generally do not change. All the divorced or separated women live with their parents, brothers or sisters. There is no visible effect on children. A few children do remember their father sometimes...

The rate of separation is much higher than that of divorce. Divorce costs money to a husband in terms of mehr, iddat maintenance, and maintenance later on. Also, he cannot easily get her back if he so desires. The separated women are much worse off than a divorced woman. The latter can remarry in addition to getting mehr and maintenance. Separation is more common among upper caste or middle-income group families. In the total of six divorce cases two belong to the upper caste and four to the lower caste. None of them got mehr or maintenance. Only one divorcee has sued filed for maintenance, and the case is hanging fire even seven

years later. The majority of the women do not know about the legal provisions available to them.

The quantum of mehr money is decreasing while dowry is increasing. During the data collection one dowry-related death was reported from a high caste Muslim family. Dowry — and bride burning — is increasing among educated, high caste and socio-economically better placed families.

The major reasons for divorce or separation are bigamy, drinking, quarrel with in-laws and other family members on different family matters, dowry and economic. In all divorce cases the manner of divorce is irrevocable (talaq-ul-bidda) ... one-sitting divorce. None of the divorcees get proper written tilaqname. Two received their divorce from their husbands written in inland latter cards. The rest were divorced verbally.

Polygamy is still prevalent, falling in love being the main reason of the second marriage. Love affairs also lead to inter-caste marriages. Two respondents have married inter-caste. All the women in the study are against polygamy. Purdah is not in vogue among lower income, lower caste families but is invariably found among upper caste uneducated women. Educated families do not practise purdah. Outside the home, lower caste women just cover their heads with their dupatta or length of cloth. The lower caste do not practise purdah for economic reasons, and the upper caste because of education.

Among lower income families divorce rate is high, but they do not take it seriously. The affected women are generally busy in different types of income-generating works. They are not ambitious, content with doing domestic work alongside some income-generating tasks in the parents' house. They had to work for livelihood at the husband's house too, so it does not make much difference for them.

Divorced males marry virgins, but a divorced woman can only get a widower or a divorced male to remarry. Three divorcees who have remarried have aged husbands with one or two children from an earlier marriage.

Women generally do not get their share in parental property, and maintenance after divorce... The majority still live insecure about their marital status, uncertain about the stability of their married life.

It is evident from the case histories that generally the tragedy occurred in the age group 19-22 years, and only in one case 16 years. Out of the 25 women, eight have no children. After divorce they have to depend on their parents, brothers or sisters. They are neither educated nor have developed any special skill for a comfortable life. A few among them are trained in beedi-making or wool splitting. It is clear from the study that the life of a divorced or separated Muslim woman becomes a social problem for herself as well as for the parents. She loses her social status and has to depend on petty skilled or unskilled jobs for survival. She is deprived of substantial maintenance or any other relief from the husband's side.

Sunil Bhattacharya on Politics of Language

... In the central Gangetic plain the artificially generated conflict situation between Hindi and Urdu on communal and political consideration remains a dangerous explosive issue...

Fifty years ago ... a decision was taken to make Hindi the national language while retaining the status of English as ... the language of communication among the states within India and with other countries in the world. This decision was based on the argument that the largest number of people spoke some kind of Hindustani, which is akin to Hindi. In the beginning, was some degree of general consensus in this regard. In the subsequent years organised efforts were undertaken in a crude manner to purge the so-called alien features from Hindustani and impart a sanskritic ... content to it on the one hand, and to impose the new-look Hindi, on the other hand, on the people in other states. This evoked a feeling of disenchantment, which gradually turned into resistance, and at times into language riots... Thus, language, a bridge for communication, became an instrument ... of discord that threatens to endanger political unity and integrity of India.

Language ... apart from being means of communication is being used, with the backing of the state power, for securing economic benefits and political power...

That the language issue has been blatantly used by a certain segment of politicians irrespective of their party affiliation is irrefutably proved by the treatment given to Urdu, a beautiful, musical and rich language. Disregarding the indigenised development and secular background of this language, an impression has been artfully created ... that Urdu is the language of the Muslims...

Urdu belongs to Indo-Aryan family and is based on prakritic languages. It is closely associated with Braj, Punjabi, Saraiki and Haryani, though the standard Urdu is based on Khariboli, spoken in and around Delhi. Being on the confluence of North-Western and Central dialects, Urdu developed as assimilative and receptive genius much before the advent of the Mughals, from the mid-thirteenth century, i.e. the times of Amir Khusrau, the earliest poet of both Hindu and Urdu...

... Urdu has a preponderance of borrowings from Arabic and Persian, while Hindi borrows liberally from Sanskrit. A part of borrowings from Arabic and Persian in Urdu has also been assimilated in Hindi. The inflectional base of both the languages is the same: the evolved forms (tatbhava) are totally identical. Hindi uses Devnagari script, but Urdu uses Persian script in an indigenised form. The grammar of both the languages is more or less identical.

Politics before and after the transfer of power in August 1947 was instrumental to a great extent in the creation of a certain degree of antagonism between the adherents of Hindi and adherents of Urdu.

... Urdu was not confined to any the specific geographical areas and among any specific ethnic group. It has not, therefore, attained the status of a state language in any of the states in Indian. As per census records, Urdu is the second largest language in five Hindi states where Hindi is the official language: Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. It is the third largest in seven states and the fourth largest in three states. In other words, Urdu is used in fifteen states in India... But it is not given its due recognition in any of these states. ...

The trends of development during the last several decades irrefutably indicate that the era of domination hegemony in the sphere of human endeavour can hardly survive for long. No linguistic group can perpetually dominate over the others... In recent history, rise and fall of Soviet regime offers an insight into the importance of language policy in emotional integration in a multi-lingual country... The hegemonistic attitude of the mainly Russian-speaking ruling elite was one of the main causes of disappointment growing into bitter distrust among the people belonging to other linguistic groups. The role of linguistic hostility in the dismemberment of mighty Soviet Union has not yet been adequately recognised...

... A democratic language policy helps in the unhindered ... development of all languages and dialects, prevents hegemony of one language over another and allows natural course of voluntary acceptance of an appropriate language for communication in a multi-lingual country. Such a policy of encouraging and promoting all the diverse languages and dialects will be in consonance with the cultural heritage of India...

(Source: The Radical Humanist, August 1997)

B.N. Pandey, Gandhian Scholar on Partition

... The British were responsible for the partition. And we allowed ourselves to be used in this game. That was our weakness. Gandhiji wanted to fight till the last. Others were not that eager. He realised that two of his close associates Nehru and Sardar Patel were totally exhausted. I think, after 1942, nobody wanted to go to jail or do satyagraha. Everyone was tired. So how does one fight with tired people? Whatever the British offered they accepted. Probably they thought by such acquiescence the problem would be solved at the earliest. They should have stood firm.

(Source: The Nation and the World, 1 September, 1997)

Government Statement**On Modernisation of Madarsa Education**

The approved outlay (under) the VIIIth Plan for the Scheme for Modernisation of Madarsa Education was Rs. 100.00 lakhs. The actual released was Rs. 383.25 lakhs, much in excess of the allocation.

State-wise Break-up

State	No. of Madarsas	Total Amount (Rs. in lakhs)
U.P.	318	141.23
M.P.	39	16.86
Haryana	25	10.24
Kerala	42	12.77
Tripura	127	44.95
West Bengal	92	49.09
Assam	49	27.82
Tamil Nadu	1	0.30
Rajasthan	(Book Banks for 186 Madrasas)	15.33
Delhi	5	1.52
A.P.	36	10.95
Bihar	146	44.38
Maharashtra	6	1.82
Karnataka	9	5.12

The Planning Commission have not finalized the Ninth Plan. However, a budget of Rs. 700.00 lakhs have been allocated for 1997-98 for the Scheme.

(Source: LSUQ No.708 dated 24 November, 1997 by Mukhtar Anis)

A.P. High Court**On Recognition of Technical Institution**

Devarakonda Edl. Society, Petitioner v. All India Council for Technical Education and others, Respondents.

B.K. SOMASEKHARA, J.

Constitution of India, Article 14 - All India Council for Technical Education Act (1987), Section 23 - All India Council for Technical Education (Grant of approval for starting new technical institutions, introduction of courses or programmes and approval of intake capacity of seats for courses or programmes) Regulations (1994), Regn.8(10) - Technical institution - Starting of - Refusal to grant approval - Validity - Two reports by expert committee - Order refusing approval passed on view of Chairman of expert committee in second report and not on view of committee with all its members - Reports contradicting with each other - Deficiencies noted in first report complied with... - Order to withhold approval must be considered to be arbitrary.

... While rendering decision, council acts as quasi-judicial authority - It is required to act objectively, judicially and judiciously... No opportunity given to applicant to explain and fulfil deficiencies - Council has violated principles of natural justice.

(Source: AIR 1997 Andhra Pradesh 389)

**Shahabuddin's Recommendation to NCERT
On Education of Muslim Girls,**

1 December, 1997

The religious and social sensitivities of the Muslim community have to be kept in view while promoting education of Muslim girls - for example, its general aversion to co-education beyond the age of 10 or 12 i.e. V or VII class, the need for high standard and socially relevant education at the secondary and higher secondary level because most parents would adopt it as the terminal point, the need to teach Mother Tongue in Urdu-speaking areas and to use it as medium of instruction, as far as possible, the need for residential facilities, specially at the block level because Muslim girls beyond a certain age will not be permitted to walk to the schools from their villages and the need to curb the imposition of a Hindu religious ethos in the school culture.

Stephen David

On C.M. Ibrahim's Engineering College

It has neither a principal nor any infrastructure; there's only a shell of a building with not even a name-plate. There's just one thing that the Hazirat Khwaja Quthubuddin Bakhtiar Kaki (HKBK) College of Engineering does have: students. And when 180 young hopefuls landed up at 81 Benson Cross Road, Benson Town, Bangalore - the address they had been given - they discovered a sprawling pink house called Bagh-e-Inayat, the residence of Union Civil Aviation Minister and Janata Dal leader C.M. Ibrahim. The students were allotted seats in HKBK after they cleared the Karnataka Government-run Common Entrance Test. They have already paid Rs. 7,500 as admission fee. Their worry is: where do we go from here? ... Ibrahim, who is also the chairperson of the Karnataka State Muslim Federation (KSMF) that runs the HKBK, admits: "We have not even selected a principal so far"... Having recently applied for minority status for HKBK, the KSMF is hoping ... to control admissions to 50 per cent of the seats (as a non-minority institutions, it can control only the 5% NRI quota seats). And that means money.

... Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) insists that there is no question of changing the "private unaided engineering college" status accorded to HKBK in September. In fact ... it asked the HKBK management to start courses without waiting for the minority status, even warning it of derecognition...

In September, 1996 the KSMF sought permission to open an engineering college. A local inspection committee (LIC) of the Bangalore University checked the college building, which even today is far from complete; a second LIC from the DTE visited the site in January,

(Continued on Page 44)

Government Statement on Coaching Schemes

During the Eighth Plan period, University Grants Commission (UGC) has incurred an expenditure of Rs.1,90,83,405/- on the Coaching Scheme for Students belonging to the Minority Communities and Other Weaker Sections. The UGC has made a budgeting provision of Rs.100.00 lakhs for the Scheme for 1997-98.

The Coaching Scheme is being implemented in 22 Universities and 31 Colleges. The list is annexed.

List of Universities under the Scheme of Coaching Classes for Minorities

S.No.	University	Students Coached
1.	Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University, Agra (UP)	322
2.	AMU, Aligarh (UP)	1713
3.	Allahabad University, Allahabad (UP)	1246
4.	Bangalore University, Bangalore, Karnataka	228
5.	Barkatullah University, Bangalore, Karnataka	110
6.	Calicut University, Calicut, Kerala	699
7.	Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Indore (MP)	1940
8.	Gauhati University, Gauhati, Assam	413
9.	Gorakhpur University, Gorakhpur (UP)	4067
10.	Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi	792
11.	Jammu University, Jammu, (J&K)	400
12.	Kakatiya University, Warangal, (AP)	124
13.	Kashmir University, Srinagar, (J&K)	NIL
14.	L.N. Mithila University, Darbhanga (Bihar)	297
15.	Lucknow University, Lucknow (UP)	466
16.	Nagpur University, Nagpur (Maharashtra)	NIL
17.	Osmania University, Hyderabad (AP)	102
18.	Patna University, Patna (Bihar)	NIL
19.	South Gujarat University, Surat (Gujarat)	154
20.	M.D. University, Rohtak (Haryana)	100
21.	University of Bombay, Mumbai (Maharashtra)	NIL
22.	Chaudhry Charan Singh University, Meerut (UP)	NIL

List of Colleges under the Scheme of Coaching Classes for Minorities

1.	Anjuman-e-Islam's Nehru Arts, Science & Commerce College, Ghanthikeri, Hubli	285
2.	APN Degree College, Basti (UP)	168
3.	Acharya Narendra Deo Kisan P.G. College, Gonda (UP)	35
4.	BNKB (IG) Degree College, Akbarpur, Faizabad (UP)	827
5.	DAV College, Mahatma Hans Raj Road, Jalandhar (Punjab)	34
6.	Degree College, Patti, Pratapgarh (UP)	862
7.	Dr. Ambedkar College of Arts & Commerce, Gulbarga, Karnataka	106
8.	Farook College, Calicut (Kerala)	1756
9.	Govt. College, Melarkotla (Punjab)	171

10.	Govt. Girls (PG) College, Rampur (UP)	101
11.	Govt. College, Kesargod (Kerala)	455
12.	Gandhi Faizan (PG) College, Shahjahanpur (UP)	6
13.	Hamidia Girls Degree College, Sultanpur Phawa, Allahabad	635
14.	Iqbal College, Peringamala, Trivandrum (Kerala)	1741
15.	Jamal Mohamed College, Tiruchirapalli (Tamilnadu)	249
16.	Karamat Hussain Muslim Girls Degree College, Faizabad Road, Lucknow (UP)	20
17.	Karnatak Arts, Science & Commerce College, Bidar, Karnataka	360
18.	Kandi Raj College, Murshidabad (West Bengal)	67
19.	MFS Kalladi College, Mannarghat, Palghat (Kerala)	525
20.	Millat College, Laheriyasari, Darbhanga (Bihar)	185
21.	MFS Manpad College, Mallapuram (Kerala)	190
22.	MFS Ponnani College, Ponnani (Kerala)	64
23.	Maulana Azad College, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai Road, Calcutta	418
24.	MFS Asambi College, Vemballur, Trichur (Kerala)	1168
25.	M.M.H. College, Ghaziabad (UP)	210
26.	Pocker Sahib Memorial Orphanage College, Tirurangadi (Kerala)	165
27.	St. Mary's College, Sultan Pattery, Wynad, Calicut (Kerala)	231
28.	SECAB Association's Abdur Razzaga Inamdar College of Arts, Science & Commerce College for Women, Bijapur (Karnataka)	32
29.	S.D. College, Hoshiarpur (Punjab)	1254
30.	Zakir Hussain College, New Delhi	80
31.	Sir Syed College, Taliparamba, Cananore (Kerala)	1944

(Source: LSUQ No. 821 dated 24.11.1997 by Mukhtar Anis)

Government Statement On Foreign Degrees

The legality of foreign universities functioning in the country is before the Madras High Court, on a Petition moved by one Shri R. Sethuraman. While the case is yet to be finally disposed of, the High Court has permitted such universities to operate in the country, subject to certain restrictions till the final disposal of the case.

(Source: LSSQ NO. 76 dated 24.11.1997 by V.V. Raghavan and N.S.V. Chitthan)

NMDFC: Annual Report, 1996-97

... The National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation was incorporated on 30th September, 1994 with an authorised share capital of Rs. 500 crore...

The paid up share capital ... on 31.3.1996 was Rs. 97.9524 crore. After release of another Rs. 36 crore by the Government of India and Rs. 1 crore each from Karnataka and West Bengal, Rs. 5.00 crore by Bihar during 1996-97 ... as on 31.3.1997 was Rs. 141.1624 crore.

During 1996-97, the Corporation has sanctioned loans worth Rs. 49.68 crores to 17 State Channelising Agencies for ... 11000 beneficiaries. The Corporation has also disbursed an amount of Rs. 44.23 crores to 10 SCAs for ... over 10000 beneficiaries...

The cumulative sanction ... till 31.3.1997 was Rs. 136.36 crore, and cumulative disbursement ... was Rs. 80.76 crores.

... The cumulative amount of recoveries upto 31.3.1997 from SCAs as principal amount was Rs. 7.42 crore. Out of (which) Rs. 6.45 crore was towards Term Loan and the balance towards Margin Money Loans. The average percentage of recoveries of principal and interest from the SCAs upto 31.3.1997 was 71%.

... A major corrective measure introduced ... made pre-identification of beneficiaries necessary before disbursement of funds.

Loan limit has been increased in both ... Term Loan and Margin Money Loan w.e.f. 1.4.1997...

... Project costing upto Rs. 5 lakh are considered NMDFC provides loan to the extent of 85% of the project cost subject to a maximum of Rs. 4,25,000. The remaining cost of project is met by the SCA and the beneficiary in the ratio of 10% and 5% of the project cost respectively. ...

... NMDFC provides loan upto 25% of the project cost subject to maximum of Rs. 1.25 lakh per unit. The SCA and the beneficiary are expected to contribute in the ratio of 10% and 5% respectively.

Eligibility Criteria for Availing Loan

- The applicant must belong to any one of the notified religious minority groups.
- The annual family income of the applicant must be below double the poverty line which at present is 22,000/- per annum.

Procedure for Availing Assistance

Persons amongst the target groups interested in availing NMDFC loan have to apply to channelising Agency of their State on prescribed application form.

Channelising Agencies also from time to time, invite applications through press advertisement and personal contact.

Based on the response from the beneficiaries, the State Channelising Agencies prepare schemewise proposals and forward it to NMDFC, NMDFC provides funds to the State Channelising Agencies for disbursement to the identified beneficiaries in respect of proposals found to be technical and economically viable.

Nature of Projects Financed

In general, NMDFC provides loan for any commercially viable self-employment venture ... grouped under following ... sectors:-

- Agricultural and Allied activities.
- Technical Trade.
- Small business
- Artisan and Traditional Occupations
- Transport and Service Sector.

Formulation of Model Schemes and Guidelines

The corporation (has) formulated its guidelines and 50 model schemes...

Financial Highlights

The operations during the year have resulted in a surplus of income over expenditure of Rs. 5.49 crore... The corporation has been exempted from payment of income tax u/s 10(26BB) of the Income Tax Act. ...

Statewise Sanction and Disbursement,

30.9.1994 to 31.3.1997

S.No.	State	No. of Units	No. of Benf.	Amount (Rs. lakhs)	
				Sanctioned	Disbursed
1.	A.P.	2080	2080	151.14	135.15
2.	Assam	0	0	75.29	0.00
3.	Bihar	0	0	1017.45	0.00
4.	Gujarat	393	393	604.40	221.85
5.	Haryana	239	263	190.08	93.45
6.	J&K	230	230	508.08	112.84
7.	Kerala	1642	2104	962.05	633.45
8.	Karnataka	4705	4705	724.09	643.25
9.	Maharashtra	850	850	958.14	582.95
10.	M.P.	2237	2257	741.77	500.37
11.	Rajasthan	0	0	30.60	0.00
12.	Tamil Nadu	1000	1000	620.75	464.00
13.	U.P.	9599	9799	5127.62	3901.83
14.	West Bengal	682	682	931.77	465.55
15.	Others	751	753	992.35	321.74
	Total	24408	25116	13635.58	8076.43

Supreme Court

On Time Limit for Reservation

Jagdish Negi and another, Petitioners v. State of U.P. and another, Respondents.

S.B. MAJMUDAR AND D.P. WADHWA, JJ.

Constitution of India, Articles 16(4), 15(4) - Uttar Pradesh Public Services (Reservation for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes) Act (1994), Section 1 - Statutory reservation scheme - Benefit of - Granted to residents of hills and Uttarakhand areas of State of Uttar Pradesh as they formed socially and educationally backward class of citizens - Backwardness, however, cannot continue indefinitely - State is, therefore, entitled to take its own decision whether citizens cease to belong to reserve category and review its reservation policy.

... A given category of citizens which may form a part and parcel of that class of citizens, namely socially and educationally backward classes of citizens as on date may in future cease to belong to that class. Consequently the question whether a given category of citizens continues to be socially and educationally backward class of citizens at a given point of time or not has to be left to the State concerned for its objective decision from time to time.

The State cannot be bound in perpetuity to treat such classes of citizens for all times as socially and educationally backward classes of citizens... In other words it is open to the State to review the situation from time to time and to decide whether a given class of citizens that has earned the benefits of 27 per cent reservation as socially and educationally backward class of citizens has; continued to form a part of that category or has ceased to fall in that category.

... It is true that since 2 decades residents of Uttarakhand hills region are being treated by the State of U.P. as socially and educationally backward class of citizens for the purpose of being considered eligible for consideration towards 27 per cent reservation. But only on that score, it cannot be predicated that in future they may not cease to be socially and educationally backward. Once at any future point of time they cease to be so they will obviously go out of the umbrella. ...

... Population of hill/Uttarakhand areas is 4% of total population of Uttar Pradesh State 2% representation of residents of hill/Uttarakhand areas in State services by including them in category of socially and educationally backward class of citizens - Is adequate...

(Source: AIR 1997 Supreme Court 3505)

Supreme Court

On Reservation in Promotion

Madhya Pradesh Electricity Board, Appellant v. S.S. Modh and others, Respondents.

K. VENKATASWAMY AND V.N. KHARE, JJ.

Constitution of India, Article 16 - Absorption/Promotion to a post - Cannot be dehors minimum qualification fixed for the post - Minimum qualification fixed for a post is relevant not only for direct recruitment but also for absorption and promotion.

(Source: AIR 1997 Supreme Court 3464)

Punjab and Haryana High Court

On Prior Selection from Common Merit List

Manjit Singh, Petitioner v. State of Punjab and another, Respondents.

ASHOK BHAN AND N.K. AGRAWAL, JJ.

Constitution of India, Articles 14 and 15 - Education - Admission - Reservation of seats for Backward Class candidate - Offering such seat to general category candidate when Backward Class candidate was available - Not permissible.

... Common merit list of reserved and unreserved categories should be prepared first and seats should be filled up as per such merit list - Reserved category candidate in such list is to be admitted as general category candidate - after that reserved category candidate should be considered against reserved seats.

(Source: AIR 1997 Punjab and Haryana 318)

Shahabuddin's Views on Reservation

Letter to The Dalit Voice, 16 October, 1997

... A vast majority of Muslims are not converts from Hinduism but have descended from converts to Islam from Hinduism. That is why and how the caste system came into Muslim society, particularly because even after change of faith, the converts continued their old profession. But there was one change: the Achhuts and their descendants were no longer "Untouchable". This is the reason why the SCs are defined in the Constitutional Order 1950 in relation to Hinduism. This is being challenged now because it is said that Christians and Muslims, who are descendants of Untouchables, continue to suffer disabilities and are educationally and socially backward groups are entitled to be treated as OBCs which is not synonymous with the Shudras though it largely covers Shudra castes. I do not see any additional advantage for Muslim social groups being treated as SC and not as OBCs. In fact, I see many disadvantages: the Muslim community, which is educationally, economically and socially backward, as a whole, is proposed to be divided not only in two but in three sections - thus losing its strength. I request Dr. Ali to prove quantitatively how the Muslim Dalits will fare better on being clubbed with SCs, than with OBCs or with Muslim OBCs or Muslims, as a whole...

Introduction to Islamic Research Foundation, Bombay

The Islamic Research Foundation (IRF) set up in October 1990 as a registered Public Charitable Trust. The office complex of the IRF has a Video Cassette Library, a Publications Department, a Video/Cable/Satellite Television Production Studio, an Audio Video Recording Department, a Multi-Purpose/Audio Visual/Reading Room, a Computer Department, an Auditorium, a sales outlet (called Islamic dimensions), a Ladies' Wing and a Children's Wing.

The Islamic Research Foundation has the objective of the proper presentation, dissemination, appreciation, understanding and clarification of the message of Islam and the removal of misconceptions about Islam - amongst Muslims and Non-Muslims. The IRF strives to convince the people about the overall excellence of Islam and its teachings and values through reason and logic. The IRF specially conveys the proper perspective as well as comparative excellence of Islam to many educated Muslim youth, who tend wrongly to be apologetic about Islam and its values.

The Video Cassette Library has over 3000 Video Cassette on Islam and Comparative Religion ... (more than 2500 in English, more than 500 in Urdu and a few in Arabic and French) which are available for free hire (for 2 days, against a refundable deposit). The titles available include Films, Interviews, Television Programmes, Documentaries and Lectures, Debates and Symposia of world renowned Islamic orators and scholars... Similarly the IRF has a large collection of more than 6000 Audio Cassettes...

The Publications Department has published/reprinted more than 50 English language publications on Islam and comparative religion authored by internationally acclaimed scholars... These are distributed/posted absolutely free to anyone on request.

The Holy Qur'an with Arabic Text and English Translation and Commentary by Allama Abdullah Yusuf Ali, alongwith a complete set of IRF literature, is distributed absolutely free all over India by the IRF, to Universities, Schools, Colleges, Masjids, Madrasas, Islamic and Research Organisations and institutions as well as to interested individuals.

The Video/Cable/Satellite Television Production Studio handles the production of Video Films ... for distribution to Satellite T.V. Channels and Cable T.V. Networks.

... Through the Cable T.V. Networks in Bombay alone everyday for about 2 to 3 hours the IRF video cassettes programmes are relayed to more than one

million homes in Bombay... International Satellite T.V. Channels too have started beaming Islamic oriented programmes of the IRF.

The Audio Video Recording, Department of the IRF handles multiple copying of popular video cassettes and audio cassettes to cater to the demand for purchase of the IRF video and audio cassettes.

The multipurpose Audio Visual Reading Room has free facilities for viewing video cassettes or listening to audio cassettes and compact discs ... or reading books ... during office hours.

The Computer Department deals with data and studies related to the Qur'an and The Hadith and Fiqh and also Islamic Games and Quiz programmes. The Multimedia CD Rom presentation format (for Multimedia format programmes) and Internet is the latest addition... The Computer Section and the Information Section provide "Islamic Information Service" facilities to the Press, Scholars and Persons.

The Auditorium is in regular use for meetings, talks, discussions and debates in which Islamic scholars participate and interact with scholars of other faiths. Every week on Sundays, Mondays and Saturdays (and sometimes even on other days) the IRF regularly holds such programmes...

The IRF organizes important public lectures on Islam by Dr. Zakir Naik and renowned speakers from all over the world in other public auditoriums and halls of Bombay...

IRF deputed speakers to other cities on invitation by other organisations...

The IRF has Islamic books, Audio and Video cassettes, as well as a selection of other Islamic materials available for sale.

The IRF has established a Ladies' Wing, in 1994. It has also a Children's Wing...

Dr. Zakir Naik, President of the IRF, an Internationally acclaimed orator on Islam is the driving spirit and force behind the IRF striving for international excellence in "da'wah". Though a medical doctor by profession, he has made "da'wah" his primary mission in life.

In addition, the IRF also has many ongoing Charitable, Educational and Welfare programmes...

Founder-Patron:	56/58, Tandel Street (North)
Dr. A. Karim M. Naik	Dongri,
President:	Mumbai - 400 009
Dr. Zakir Naik	(India)

Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library: Annual Report, 1994-95

... Established at Patna with the entire personal collection of Khuda Bakhsh (1842-1908) donated on January 14, 1891. The "Oriental Public Library" was opened to the public.

In December 1969, an Act of Parliament declared the Library as an Institution of National Importance; and from July 1970 Library is being governed as an autonomous institution by a Board constituted by the Government of India.

The Library has one of the richest collections of Persian and Arabic manuscripts and of rare printed books and invaluable paintings of Mughal, Rajput, Turkish and Iranian Schools... The Khuda Bakhsh Library has become academic centre with workshops, symposia, talks, lectures and International Seminars...

Manuscripts:

During the year the Library acquired, by purchase/gift, 103 manuscripts...

Printed Material:

... During the year 5,908 printed books and periodicals were acquired by purchase. ... 762 printed books as gift and in exchange... The Library subscribed to 87 research/reference periodicals, the number whereof has besides, 358 periodicals received as gift and 130 in exchange.

Audio & Video Collections:

... During the year 71 audio and 55 video cassettes are added to its audio-visual collection relating to living personalities...

Use of Library Material:

... During the year 62,250 persons from India and abroad visited the Library. Of these 17,050 scholars consulted material for research purpose. A total number of 5,363 printed books and 1,694 research journals were consulted...

Distinguished visitors who visited the Library ... Mr. Kalimuddin Shams, Minister of West Bengal, Mr. Ali Raza Shaikh Attar, Ambassador of Iran, Prof. Javed Khan, Ex-Minister of Maharashtra, Mr T.N. Chaturvedi, M.P., Mr. P.K. Jaswant Singh, M.P., Mrs. Rita Verma M.P., Mr. P.K. Jayaswal, Director, Raja Ram Mohan Roy Library Foundation, Mr. Moosa Raza, Secretary, Ministry of Steel, Mrs. Najma Heptullah, Mr. Motilal Vohra, Governor, Uttar Pradesh, Mr. Sukhram, Minister of Communication, Mr. Mir Kasymov, Ambassador of Uzbekistan in India, Mr. Dharma Vira, Ex-Governor, West Bengal.

Lending Section:

During the year 1,385 members of the Lending Section of the Library borrowed 5,604 printed books.

Reference Section: During the year Microfilm copies of

49 manuscripts and xerox copies of 147 printed books were supplied to scholars and institutions...

1052 academic queries regarding authors, books and manuscripts were replied by post ... besides verbal guidance given to over 4,270 researchers.

Preservation:

During the year 177 manuscripts and 1047 printed books were repaired and bound. 90 manuscripts containing 7216 folios were repaired and bound and 15,681 printed books and manuscripts were fumigated and given scientific treatments and 3984 folios of manuscripts and rare printed books were treated for deacidification.

During the year 13 volumes of the Catalogues were published with necessary corrections and additions...

During the year listing of Urdu manuscripts has been started and, a Union list of Urdu manuscripts preserved in the entire sub-continent is being compiled, besides similar lists in the disciplines of History and Exegesis.

Khuda Bakhsh South Asian Regional Seminars:

During the year on the occasion of the Finale of the Centenary Celebrations of the Library, an International Seminar on Indic Religions (Religions emanating from India i.e. Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and Sikhism) as perceived by Arabic & Persian scholars through the ages was held on 24-26 December, 1994 at New Delhi.

The Seminar was inaugurated by the President of India, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma (who) released a book entitled "Hinduism in Urdu: A Comprehensive Bibliography" by Dr. Ata Khurshid (Aligarh) published by the Khuda Bakhsh Library ... and opened the Exhibition of Books on Indic religions organised by Khuda Bakhsh Library in collaboration with Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu, Jamia Hamdard, Jamia Millia Islamia (all of Delhi) Urdu Research Centre (Hyderabad) and Rahmatullah Khan Sherwani Library (Aligarh).

The Seminar was spread over 8 sessions ... 46 papers were read followed by discussion in which about 90 scholars took part.

Extension Service:

Khuda Bakhsh Lectures: ... During the year under report the following scholars delivered Khuda Bakhsh Extension Lectures: Ms. Diloram Karamatova, Uzbek Scholar, Dr. Shababat Husain, Aligarh, Dr. (Mrs.) Najma Heptullah, Dr. Bakhtiyar Abidov, Tashkent, Dr. Rafi Ahmad Alvi, Aligarh and Mr. Abdur Rahman Kondoo, Srinagar...

Centenary Research & Publications:

During the year the Journal continued regularly bringing the total number to 95, covering about 3,298 pages for the year.

Critical editions:

The Library has been bringing out critical editions of the rare material preserved in the Institution... The Library also brought out several volumes in the series 'Urdu Literature, as reclaimed from the old periodicals'... During the year under the report 26 publications have been brought out... During the year under report the second volume of the Khuda Bakhsh Lecture in Urdu entitled "Tahzeeb, Zaban & Adabiyat" has been published.

Interlingual Translations of Significant Works:

During the year 2 translation items have been completed.

Khuda Bakhsh Fellowship:

In order to accelerate the pace of research, the Library has created Khuda Bakhsh Fellowships, at par with those of ICHR/UGC.

Under the scheme of Khuda Bakhsh Visiting fellowships, so far 12 scholars have been benefitted...

For the award of degrees of Ph.D./D.Litt, research work done by Khuda Bakhsh Fellows have been recognised ... by Kashmir, Gulbarga, Jamia Millia Islamia, Shantiniketan, Bihar and Magadh Universities.

The Khuda Bakhsh Library awards short-term fellowship to the teachers/research students of the Universities to visit the Library and work under the scheme...

Khuda Bakhsh Award:

The Library has instituted a prestigious Annual Award, known as Khuda Bakhsh Award. The Award is given to an outstanding scholar for original and creative work on the specialisation of the Library. The Award carries an amount of Rs. One lakh besides a citation...

... Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, the President of India conferred the first Award on Mr. B.N. Pande on 10th August, 1993...

Strength of Staff:

The Library has a sanctioned strength of 59 including the Director, Deputy Director, Assistant Director and the Administrative Officer.

Finance (1994-95):

Total Receipts:

GOI and GO Bihar Grants

Rs.938424.40

Total Payments

Rs.882300.40

Government Statement on Haj Pilgrimage

A total of 290 officials (97 administrative staff, 94 doctors and 99 paramedical staff) were sent to Saudi Arabia for Haj, 1997 with the period of their deputation varying between four to eight weeks).

(Source: LSUQ on 19.11.1997 by R.P. Rudy)

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind: Resolutions, Hyderabad, 17 November, 1997

This Meet of Jamaat members ... views with grave concern the moral degeneration in 'he various (walks) of life. ...

This Meet appeals ... to the Muslims in India to realise their role as Khair-e-Ummah (the best community), mould their life in accordance with Islamic teachings, and present before the citizens of the country the True Path which is the only Way to Salvation, which alone can eradicate evil and promote virtue and by adopting which they can bring to a naught their backwardness - religious, educational, social, economic and others.

The Jamaat Members Meet ... reminds the media, institutions and persons of their responsibility ... not to be discriminatory, one-sided and biased while presenting news and commentaries.

The Meet appeals to all citizens as well as political and social organisations to pay serious attention to eradicate the evils of discrimination, hatred and enmity among the various communities, and to strive together for social equality and ... equal opportunities for all sections of the country.

This Meet appeals particularly to the Muslims ... to fulfil consciously the requirements of the unity of God and mankind ... so that an environment of real human brotherhood, social equality and economic justice may be created...

The Meet is of the opinion that it is open for women to seek jobs in education and women's studies, if circumstances so require but they should not opt for any profession which tends to deprive them of, and make (them) indifferent toward, their special duties viz. child rearing and education and other household duties which is their natural course of activity.

(Source: The Radiance Viewsweekly, 7-13 December, 1997)

**Government Statement
On International Airport at Srinagar**

... The request from the State Government for upgradation of facilities at Srinagar Airport to cater to international operations has been accepted and the proposal is at the planning stage. The Ministry of Defence have agreed in principle to the proposal. No definite time schedule can be indicated (for implementation) at this stage.

(Source: LSUQ No. 323 dated 20.11.1997 by G.R. Kar)

Bombay Mercantile Cooperative Bank: Annual Report, 1996-1997

... The deposits of the Bank ... increased to Rs. 1618.39 crores as on 31st March 1997 ... showing growth of 14.7%... The Bank's aggregate advances rose to Rs. 973.97 crores on 31st March 1997 ... giving credit deposit ratio at 60.2%. The %age of advances to priority sector as on 31st March 1997 was 46.7% of the total advances...

Profitability: The operational profits of the Bank for the year 1996-97 was Rs. 11.01 crores... Provision of Rs. 1.64 has been made for Gratuity payable to staff (and) Rs. 7.02 crores credited to Bad and Doubtful Debt Reserves. This would leave the net profit for the year at Rs. 2.35 crores...

Foreign Exchange Business: ... The Bank has been able to maintain the increasing trend of the turnover in business ... when it rose to Rs. 1082.04 crores ... showing growth of 14.10%.

Overdues: The overdues ... slightly increased from 11.27% of the total advances as on 31st March 1996 to 14.61% as on 31st March 1997...

Dividend: ... Bank regrets its inability to declare dividend in view of the (existing) provisions.

Capital and Reserves: As against Rs. 20 crores Authorised Capital, the paid up capital of the Bank stood at Rs. 10.90 crores as on 31st March 1997. The reserves of the Bank rose ... Rs. 70.217 crores as on 31st March 1997... The Statutory Reserve Fund has been duly invested in Government and Trustee Securities...

Working Capital: The working capital of the Bank increased ... to Rs. 2010 crores as on 31st March 1997.

Branch Expansion: During the year the Bank has opened branches at Jaipur (Rajasthan), Palanpur (Gujarat), Malegaon (Maharashtra) and Calcutta (West Bengal).

Computerisation: The Bank has implemented computerisation of 16 branches in Mumbai and 14 branches at outstation... The Bank has also provided Teletanking facility to select customers at Calcutta...

Human Resources Development: During the year ... out Institute organised 44 programmes which were attended by 867 bank officials of which 158 were from other Co-operative Banks... The Institute also organised a Seminar on impact of 1996-97 Budget on the Indian Economy.

On December 16, 1996, the following Directors were declared elected:

1. Mr. Edulji Hormusji Turel
2. Dr. Ashiqali Sk. Ahmad Raval
3. Mr. Waseemuddin Azizuddin Azmi
4. Mr. Ghulam Ghouse
5. Dr. Shiraz Asgerali Mamujee
6. Mr. Kasamali Gulam Saleh
7. Mr. Mohamed Nasir Pathan
8. Mr. Rashidahamed Gulammohammed Matadar
9. Mr. Molvi Mustaqim Ahsan Azmi

Socio-Economic Survey of Ayodhya Muslims Irfan Ullah in The Radiance, 23-29 Nov., 97

The twin cities of Ayodhya and Faizabad are situated on the right bank of the river Chapra. It is 127 kms, east of Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh. Ayodhya got world fame after the happening of 6th December 1992, the black day when the centuries old Babari Masjid was demolished in the broad daylight by the frenzy mob of Sangh Parivar, resulting in large scale destruction of property and killing of innocent people in various other cities of the country.

Ayodhya Muslims suffered a great loss but the Ummah (community) helped them to re-establish there. All kinds of help in the form of money and material was provided for them and their immediate problems were solved. But this did not change their educational and economic backwardness. Neither the residents of Ayodhya nor any welfare organisation prepared action plan for the upliftment of the people.

The Darsgah-e-Islam Society, Faizabad conducted a socio-economic survey of Muslims in Ayodhya... Major highlights of the survey are as below:-

1. The population of Muslims is about 1793 consisting of 540 men, 405 women and 848 children. About 280 families are residing in Ayodhya.
2. ... 48.5% (are) illiterate, 3.8% graduate, 2.2% XIIth, 5.5% Xth passed, 5.8% VIIIth passed and 0.2%, VIth passed.
3. Dropouts of XII, X, VIII, VI are 49. They left studies and engaged themselves in small trades of low income.
4. ... 208 children in the age group 5-11 are not attending school. Most of them came from families with low income and poverty.
5. ... 68 persons are not on electoral rolls.
6. ... About 70% (of the) families are (living) below poverty line (income less than Rs. 22,000/- per annum)... A large number of persons are engaged in tailoring, mechanical work, labour, masonry, butchery, etc.

There is no (organised) scheme for their betterment and upliftment... Some persons are still ... collecting money in the name of Ayodhya...

... There are 35 mosques 4 madarsas, 6 Imambaras and 24 graveyard. In 8 Mohallas, not inhabited by Muslims 12 Mosques and 13 graveyards exist...

Mr. E.H. Turel and Mr. W.A. Azmi were elected Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively.

The Board of Directors record their appreciation of the services rendered by Mr. S. Shamim Kazim, Managing Director...

BBC Correspondent Qurban Ali on Media Approach to Problems of Minorities

"The national press has been unfair to the problems of the minority community," Mr. Qurban Ali, Special Correspondent of the BBC News Service in India, and in a lecture on "50 years of Independence and the Role of the Media organised by the Media Monitoring Unit of the Jamaat-e-Islami...

"Unlike in Pakistan and Bangladesh where the freedom of the press has been stifled and the media monitored to become a mouthpiece of the government, the Indian press has played a vital role in shaping 50 years of democracy in the country."

"Barring the few years of Emergency, the Indian press has been allowed to evolve its own pattern of disseminating news, views and information. But this freedom that has been abused time and again to establish a Hindu monopoly and sidelined the interests of the minorities, particularly the Muslims". The fact that there are very few people from the Muslim community in mainstream journalism today is ample proof of the insensitivity of the media.

"The idealism and the missionary zeal of the vernacular press during the freedom struggle got diluted and during the first few decades of Independence, it was only the Hindu point of view that got precedence over everything else.

The situation, however, changed in 1977 when the concept of on-the-spot reporting was introduced by the Sunday magazine for the first time in the country. The advent of the electronic media later also helped in portraying the news in a neutral and unbiased manner."

"Linguistic, ethnic and communal biases, however, continue to underline mainstream journalism today... In 1990, a wave of communal riots swept through North India after three Hindi newspapers reported the death of more than 100 Hindu students at the Aligarh Muslim University...

Even in the wake of the Ayodhya riots, there were various attempts on the part of the media to highlight caste and communal differences. While the interests of the Muslims and their plight in the wake of the riots were totally underplayed, it was only the atrocities on the Hindu community that were splashed across the newspapers.

... The biggest strength of the Indian press has also been its weakness (that) it has been difficult to suppress the truth and present only one version of the story. Thanks to the freedom of the press, we can be assured that we are not being fed with only the half-truths."



Cinkara, a non-alcoholic health tonic full of vitamins and minerals extracted from herbs. Assimilates in the system naturally.

It helps you :

- Overcome fatigue ● Resists infection
- Increases stamina ● Improves mental performance
- Cures anaemia during pregnancy.

So, for you and your family's year round good health and happiness, go for Cinkara.



Two spoonfuls. Twice daily.

GET MORE OUT OF LIFE - WITH CINKARA

Government Statements

On Practice of Sati

The Government has enacted the Commission of Sati (Prevention) Act, 1987 to provide for effective prevention of the Commission of Sati and its glorification.

The National Crime Records Bureau has information only as to the number of cases reported under the Act for 1989 to 1997 as under:

Year	Cases Reported
1989	36
1990	52
1991	17
1992	1
1993	5
1994	2
1995*	2
1996	10

* Figures from Bihar, Rajasthan and Daman & Diu are upto May, October and November, 1995 respectively.

(Source: LSSQ No.80 dated 24 November, 1997 by J.P. Agarwal)

On Female Circumcision

The State of World Population Report 1997 brought out by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) states that "some minority groups in India" are reported to have undergone some form of female circumcision.

Information has been called for from the States/UTs and will be laid on the Table of the House. ...

(Source: LSUQ No. 34 dated 23 July, 1997 by D. Sanchani, B. Chikhalla and S. Gautam)

On Import of Beef

The World Trade Organisation is not pressurising India to allow import of Beef ... even if such meat is not required.

(Source: LSUQ No. 474 dated 21.11.1997 by G.M. Lodha)

Animal Sacrifice in A.P. Secretariat

... At the Andhra Pradesh Government secretariat ... animals were sacrificed right opposite the Press room. Just a few yards away, in another block, is the chamber of CM N. Chandrababu Naidu who was busy reviewing some important projects. Swayed by the fervor of the Navratri festival, drivers of ... Government (vehicles) sacrificed five goats as part of the pooja. ... The drivers ... justified the ceremony saying it was part of the traditional pooja...

(Source: The Indian Express, 11 October, 1997)

(Continued from 43)

country (emphasis added). Like a gambler, over-confident of his wits, he staked high, believing that the other party would compromise on his terms. That would have been for the best of all concerned. But the latter having taken up the attitude of all or nothing, Jinnah was driven to the bitter end - of gaining a victory he himself dreaded and which he did not survive".

(Courtesy: The Radiance Viewswedely, 8-14, June 1997)

(Source: The Independent India, 19 September, 1948)

Murder of the Priest

Editorial, The Indian Currents, 8-14 Nov., 1997

... It is deeply tragic because Father Thomas returned to Hazaribagh only in August '97 for doing field studies ... and was to return to Manila in January, 1998 to complete his studies. Earlier Father Thomas had worked in this area for over 6 years going around setting up village level schools among the poor and the Dalits... The attack so close on the heels of the incident of torture of Father Christudas was carefully planned and executed...

... Forces of social justice are being brutally stifled by the vested interests. These retrograde, nasty, dull and brutish elements have to be identified and hunted down to their lairs... The money lenders, the land sharks, the feudals with their bonded labour and armed 'senas', and the corrupt contractors particularly forest contractors in the area are definite suspects. As usual, there will be no evidence and the criminals will roam free. The terror is such that none can be expected to come in the open and speak against the mafia. No government is worth its salt unless it can uproot this evil ... and restore confidence in the criminal justice system.

Several Left wing extremist groups do also operate in the area... The kernel of (their) ideology is the replacement of the present administration by a system which is for the poor. Father Thomas was a one man challenge to the whole gamut of anti-poor conspiracy in his area... These attacks (are) against the concept of secularism and the idea of service to the poor. The conscience of the Nation should awaken in revolt against this evil.

Catholic Priest Paraded Naked

On September 2, 1997 Father Christu Das, vice-principal and hostel warden of St. Joseph's School in Guhijari near Dumka town in tribal-dominated south Bihar was stripped, disrobed and paraded naked by a mob of students in full view of government officials for having allegedly molested a 12-year-old resident student of class VII, Sakal Hansda on August 30... But missionaries in the state, claiming that the complaint was merely a ploy to malign local Christians were outraged at the alleged connivance of local officials with the rioters and demanded a judicial enquiry... Both the school and the detained missionary are held in high regard by many locals who do not believe the (allegation) to be true.

(Source: The Communalism Combat)

VHP PLAN

At present the Hindu society has a major threat from the north-eastern States where the Church is hatching a conspiracy to chase Hindus out of the region. We will have to fight against their anti-national game plan.

If Christians try to chase even a single Hindu out of the north-eastern region we would not remain silent.

- Ashok Singhal, Working President

(Source: The Organiser, 7 December, 1997)

Views of Pakistan's Information Minister

Mushahid Hussain

... For the born-free generation ... India is just another country, a neighbour; of course a difficult neighbour, and adversarial neighbour. We want to live with India on an equal footing and normalise relations...

India should learn not to be the bully of the block, not to be the big bad brother in the neighbourhood, but live as a country which wants normal relations with smaller neighbours...

... We would like to test Mr. Gujral's rhetoric with the reality of his policies... There seems to be a yawning chasm between rhetoric and reality. ...

The Government of Pakistan has shown its seriousness in talking to India, in initiating a dialogue... We don't want to have a dialogue of the deaf. Let us discuss the issues across the table in a serious and sober manner. If India is interested only on talking about non-issues and tries to skirt the core issue of occupied Jammu and Kashmir then, in the long run, this dialogue will not make much headway... Kashmir is the principal roadblock to India-Pakistan normalisation.

... Substantial trade between India and Pakistan is precluded by the problem of Kashmir unless there is some progress. Trade also means opening up of barriers, creating a new ambience, new environment of cooperation. And that new environment cannot come about if the political and security environment is still frozen ... because of Kashmir and the policies of the Indian Government.

(Source: The Mainstream, 23 August 1997)

Gandhiji: India and Pakistan for both Hindus and Muslims

"If there is one man doing argument something wrong, we should not take his example and do wrong things ourselves. Pakistan and Islam cannot mean the non-Muslims cannot live there. The empire of Islam has spread far and wide. Nowhere has it laid down that non-Muslims cannot live in peace within its reign, Islam has lived on for the last 1,300 years. Great renunciations and sacrifices have been made for its principles. If any other type of (intolerant) Islam emerges, it would not be genuine. It would not be acceptable to true Muslims at all.

"Think over this: True India is not that in which none but the Hindus can live. True Christianity is not that which does not accept anyone who is not a Christian. Only irreligion can be intolerant. The world has not followed the path of intolerant irreligion, is not following it now, and will not follow it in future. Why should we then write a new history? Let us not ruin India and let us not allow Pakistan to be ruined. I have no desire to witness the destruction of true religion, to see the country ruined. If anything I only want to say that we should all die bravely in the attempt to remove the evils in our country."

(Prayer Meeting, 19 September, 1997)

M.N. Roy on Role of Jinnah

"Will Pakistan survive its founder? While one cannot be very certain in this respect, either way, it is an irresistible feeling that anxiety on that account must have been haunting Mohammad Ali Jinnah ever since he won the victory which he most probably, did not expect, or might not even have wanted... Mohammad Ali Jinnah was the most maligned and misunderstood man. That experience made him bitter and it was very largely out of spitefulness that he pursued an object, the attainment of which placed him in the most difficult position. Jinnah was not an idealist in the sense of being a visionary; he was a practical man possessed of great shrewdness as well as of more than average intelligence. Such a man could not be blind to the difficulty which was to follow his highly problematical success. During the latter part of his career, politics was a gamble for him; having played a game of poker with high stakes, he could not pull out. He had to go to the bitter end, so to say. Bitter, because he must have been frightened by the spectre of success when it came within the reach of possibility. But then it was too late to retreat. It was a case of a man getting inextricably entangled in power-politics without having begun with the lust for political power. Few would agree; yet, that is a fact which will win the recognition of impartial and dispassionate historians ... Jinnah was temperamentally not a professional politician. He began as a liberal for whom politics was holiday pastime. Being a man of outstanding merit, he could not remain a back-bencher. Unfortunately, his coming to the front rank of politics synchronised with the desecularisation of nationalism, which doubtful development introduced communalism in politics. The responsibility for that fateful turn in the political life of the country must be judged by history. But since then, politics became a game of wits for Jinnah. Successful in that game, thanks to his own cleverness, he won the opprobrium of being a henchman of imperialism. The fact, however, is that, if distrust and hatred of the British were the hall-mark of patriotism, Jinnah was always as staunch a patriot as any other Indian. The more that fact was willfully ignored by his opponents and he was maligned and misrepresented deliberately, the more was Jinnah naturally embittered (emphasis added) and spitefulness became the motive of his politics. But even then his ambition was not to gain political power, but avenge the wrong which he believed had been done to him... But he was not the devil of the drama, as he was made out of. He is no more with us. Let justice be done to his memory... The homeland for the Indian Muslims was a Utopia; any territorial division was bound to leave many millions of them out, in a very delicate position of being regraded as aliens, suspected of disloyalty to the land they must live in. An intelligent man like Jinnah must have foreseen this tragic consequence of what he demanded. Therefore, I for one do not believe that he really wanted partition of the

(Continued on Page 42)

UK: Hindus Extract Apology for Shoes Named After Hindu Gods

... Britain's Hindu community, who are extremely put out by the fact that one of Britain's largest shoemakers, Clarks, decided to call two designs of shoes after Vishnu and Krishna. Under fire from various Hindu groups ... the demonstrations are being planned in Leicester this weekend to protest ... and demand that the shoes be withdrawn.

The names appear only on boxes in which they are supplied and not on the shoes themselves... Clarks has apologised and ordered its staff to cover up the names on the shoe-boxes...

Mahesh Prasher, secretary of the Hindu religious and Cultural Society in Leicester said that Hindus could not have been more insulted. He said: "Footwear is considered unclean in our religion and that is why shoes are always removed on entering our temples. Hindus also consider the cow to be sacred, so to associate both footwear and leather products with our gods causes huge offence and insult."

... Lord Bagri, chairman of the London Metal Exchange, says that he is "disappointed and concerned by the lack of research by the company. In a multiracial and multireligious society like we have in this country, it is the obligation of marketing departments to make sure that they do not cause offence to religious and other sensitivities."

Keith Vaz, Labour MP for Leicester and self-styled spokesman for all ethnic causes said: "You are not supposed to call the things you walk on after gods..."

A spokesperson for Britain's largest Hindu temple, the Swaminarayan temple in London ... struck a different note: "I am sure it was not meant to be disrespectful. Mistakes happen and it is a part of human life..."

The ever vigilant Hindus of Leicester have in 1992 ... demanded that a French waste management company remove its initials S.I.T.A. from the sides of its garbage vans, as this spelt the name of a Hindu goddess.

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MUSLIM INDIA MONTHLY,

33, FERROZE SHAH ROAD, NEW DELHI-110 001

UK: The Potency and Power of Muslim Votes

One could hardly have had a more potent example of the power of the Muslim vote: The Queen, the Foreign Secretary, and the Prime Minister of the most populous country in the Commonwealth as the cast of a diplomatic row.

The seeds of the problems which bedevilled the royal tour of Indian lay 5,000 miles away in the marginal constituencies of the United Kingdom.

To put in its simplest form, Robin Cook's reported offer to mediate in the Kashmir dispute between Indian and Pakistan would have pleased Pakistanis, and a large section of the British Muslim electorate. The Pakistanis want to internationalise the issue, the Indians want to keep it bilateral. There may well, of course, be moral reasons why the Government want to get involved in Kashmir. There is certainly a very practical reason for paying lip service to doing so.

Historically, Labour has claimed around 90% of the Asian vote. But it can no longer take that for granted, and the proportion has declined over the last decade.

The Pakistani electorate is concentrated mostly in the Midlands and the North-west where there were a large cluster of marginal seats before the election. Mr. Cook should know the psephological details of this well. Two years ago, as shadow foreign secretary, he made a speech in Brent, north London, implying support for the Indian position on Kashmir. He was warned that in at least 30 marginal seats, the Pakistani vote could tip the balance against Labour.

MPs in constituencies with large Muslim populations have championed causes like Kashmiri independence. However, this has not saved them all from falling victim to Muslim activists flexing their muscle. ...

(Courtesy: The Independent, London)

(Continued from page 33)

1997. Soon after came (Karnataka Government's clearance) on the basis of the LIC reports, the State Government issued an essentiality certificate for the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)... The AICTE - headed by T. Rame Gowda, a former Karnataka University vice-chancellor personally hand-picked by Ibrahim's mentor H.D. Deve Gowda ... sent its own inspection team in June 1997. The team asked the management to deposit the mandatory Rs. 50 lakh in a nationalised bank besides paying Rs.50,000 as inspection fee...

Considering the condition of the building and the absence of a principal, it is unlikely though that the HKBK college will take off in the near future. ...

(Source: The India Today, 17 November, 1997)

Some Books of Interest

- ADAMS, J. & WHITEHEAD, P. ASHER, CATHERINE B. : The Dynasty: The Nehru-Gandhi Story. Penguin Books.
- BRASS, PAUL R. : Architecture of Mughal India. Cambridge University Press (CUP), New Delhi.
- BRASS, PAUL R. : The Politics of India Since Independence. CUP, New Delhi.
- BHARADWAJ, H.R. : Law, Lawyers & Judges, Konark Pub.
- BHATTACHARJEA, AJIT : Countdown to Partition. Harper Collins, Rupa, New Delhi.
- BRITTEBANK, KATE : Tipu Sultan's Search for Legitimacy. Islam and Kinship in a Hindu Domain. Oxford University Press (OUP), 1997.
- COPLAND, IAN : The Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire 1917-1947. CUP, New Delhi.
- FRENCH, PATRICK : Liberty or Death: India's Journey to Independence and Division. Harper Collins.
- FYZEE, ASAF A.A. : Outlines of Muhammedan Law - 4th Edition, 1997. Tripathi.
- GRAFF, VIDETTE : Lucknow: Memories of a City. OUP.
- HABIB, IRFAN : Akbar and His India. OUP.
- HASAN, MUSHIRUL : Nationalism and Communal Politics in India, 1885-1930.
- ILALAH, KANCHAN : Why I am not a Hindu: A Sudra Critique of Hindutva, Philosophy, Culture and Political Economy. Saranya Publications.
- JALAL, AYESHA : Democracy and Authoritarianism in South Asia. CUP, New Delhi.
- JEERVAI, H.M. : Partition of India - Legend and Reality (2nd Ed.).
- JOHAR, GUL RAHIM : Paigham-e-Quran. Paigham-e-Quran Open Academy.
- JONES, KENNETH W. : Socio-Religious Reform Movements in British India. CUP, New Delhi.
- KHAN, RASHEEDUDDIN : Rethinking Indian Federation. Indian Institute Advanced Study, 1997.
- LARSON, GERALD JAMES : India's Agony Over Religion. OUP.
- LELE, JAYANT K. : Hindutva: The Emergence of the Right Earthworm, Madras.
- MADAN, T.N. : Modern Myths: Locked Minds. OUP.
- MASUD, IQBAL : Dream Merchants, Politicians and Partition. Harper Collins, New Delhi.
- OOMMEN, T.K. : Citizenship, Nationality, and Ethnicity. Polity Press, UK.
- PANIKKAR, K.N. : Communal Threat, Secular Challenge. Earthworm Books, Madras, 1997.
- RAHMAN, MUSHTAQUR : Divided Kashmir. Bahri Sons, New Delhi.
- RAZA, MAROOF : Wars and No Peace Over Kashmir. Lancer Publishers, New Delhi.
- RAY, MAJ. GEN. ARJUN : Kashmir Diary: Psychology of Militancy.
- RICHARDS, JOHN F. : The Mughal Empire. CUP, New Delhi

- * M.F. HUSSAIN awarded Aditya Vikram Birla Kalashikhar Award. Mumbai, 17 November, 1997.
- * DR. A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM chosen for the Bharat Ratna Award. New Delhi, 26 November, 1997.
- * SHAHNAZ HUSAIN awarded Best Woman Entrepreneur of India in the Golden Jubilee Era Award. New Delhi, 26 November, 1997.
- * JUSTICE SYED SHAH MOHAMMED QUADRI, appointed Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High court. New Delhi, 28 November, 1997.
- * MUZAFFAR KHAN elected Vice-President of West Bengal State BJP Unit. Calcutta.
- * R. FAHIMUDDIN DAGAR awarded Indira Gandhi Memorial Fellowship. 1 December, 1997.
- * SHAMIM JAIRAJPURI appointed Vice-Chancellor of Maulana Azad National Urdu University. New Delhi, 11 December, 1997.
- * ALAUDDIN AHMAD appointed Vice-President of Association of Indian Universities. New Delhi, 16 December, 1997.
- * ABDUS SATTAR awarded Times of India Group Award for saving lives of school children in Wazirabad bus incident, New Delhi.

(Continued from page 47)

Other Indian Minorities: *NCM veto proposed legislation on Christian Family Law (7 Dec). *SGPC issues dictat against all plays by a leftist writer (2 Dec). Sikhs observe 32nd anniversary of Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur (4 Dec). *A.I. Maithila Sangh demand recognition of Maithili in Schedule 8 (28 Nov).

Other Muslim Minorities: *NY Post apologises for anti-Islamic cartoon.

Indo-Pakistan Relations: *Pakistan blames India for failure of 3rd Foreign Secretary level talks (23 Nov). *PM Nawaz Sharif donates ancestral house in Amritsar for conversion into Gurudwara (11 Dec).

OIC: *OIC holds Meeting of Foreign Ministers followed by Summit Meeting in Teheran (7-10 Dec). Despite India's protest includes Kashmir and Muslim minorities in Agenda. *GOI questions locus standi and rejects Resolution (12 Dec). *Farooq Abdullah blames OIC for ignoring interests of Muslim Indians (10 Dec). J&K LF criticises OIC for lack of clarity (13 Dec). *OIC condemns terrorism in the name of Islam (12 Dec).

Muslim World: *Pakistan Foreign Minister Sharif wins battle against Supreme Court and Presidency, with army support, with suspension of C.J. Shah, appointment of new CJ and resignation of President Leghari (2 Dec). *Turkey seeks 33 'fundamentalists' to death for 1993 riot and arson (29 Nov).

*Israeli P.M. rules out independent Palestine (30 Nov). Israeli Chief Rabbi demands reopening of Masjids in Israel, abandoned in Arab-Israeli war (4 Dec).

Commemoration: *Ghalib Academy, Delhi, observes 120th birth anniversary of Iqbal (27 Nov). *119th birth anniversary of Mohammad Ali observed in Delhi (14 Dec).

Obituary: *Underworld don Abdul Latif killed in encounter in Ahmedabad (29 Nov). *Eminent historian and ex-Ambassador Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, 72, passes away in Aligarh (5 Dec).

*Inamullah Khan, ex-S.G., World Muslim Conference, Karachi, passes away in Karachi.

*Eminent Islamic ideologue Amir Ahsan Islahi passes away in Lahore (14 Dec).

Chronology of the Month

(16 November - 15 December, 1997)

NATIONAL POLITICS

U.F. Government: *Congress Parliamentary Party makes an issue of some observations in the **JAIN COMMISSION'S INTERIM REPORT** on **ASSASSINATION OF RAJIV GANDHI** against DMK's indulgence towards LTTE and tolerance of its activities in India, and threatens to withdraw support, if DMK was not dropped from Government (17 Nov). UF refuses to drop DMK (19 Nov). Report and ATR are tabled in Parliament. CWC endorses CPP demand and Kesri writes to PM Gujral (20 Nov). P.M. asks Congress to reconsider (24 Nov). Congress proposes DMK be dropped and kept out till cleared (26 Nov). UF dares to Congress to withdraw support (26 Nov). PM writes to Kesri (27 Nov). Kesri writes to President Narayanan withdrawing support. Gujral resigns; continues as Caretaker PM (28 Nov).

Alternative Government: *Congress tries to rope in SP, TMC and CPM to form alternative Government with Congress at its head (21 Nov). Later offers Prime Ministership to TMC (Moopanar) or SP (Mulayam Singh Yadav). Congress asks President not to dissolve Lok Sabha and explore all possibility of alternative government. Congress formally stakes claim to form government (28 Nov). President asks Congress to produce evidence of majority support (2 Dec). UF and LF refuse to support Congress.

*BJP also stakes claim (19 Nov), formally registers claim as largest party/alliance (30 Nov). President gives same reply as to Congress. BJP encourages split in Congress, encourages revolt of first term members. Vajpayee openly calls upon Congress MP's to defect (2 Dec).

*Cabinet recommends dissolution (3 Dec).

Congress: *After dissolution, Kesri under plays DMK issue and highlights communalism and weaker sections. Kesri writes to UF parties to join hands with Congress (4 Dec). UF rules out alliance with Congress (5 Dec). Kesri explores adjustment alliance with SP in UP and RJD in Bihar (6 Dec). Kesri asks Sonia Gandhi to lead campaign (7 Dec). West Bengal M.P. Mamta Banerjee proposes alliance with BJP in anti-communal front (8 Dec). Bihar leaders J.N. Mishra and Krishna Sahi. resign (11 Dec). Kesri gives free hand to PCC's to choose candidates and make local adjustments (12 Dec). Congress tries to rope in Ajit Singh in UP and R.K. Hegde in Karnataka (14 Dec).

BJP: *Launches election campaign at National Muslim Youth Convention, first ever, in Delhi (4 Dec). Vajpayee predicts split in UF (7 Dec). Calls for support on ground of 'stability' and 'ability' (10 Dec). Names Atal Bihari Vajpayee as candidate for Prime Ministership. BJP approaches several regional parties for alliance and encourages split in JD in Karnataka and Orissa. *RSS warns BJP against downplaying Masjids issue and ignoring RSS workers.

UF: *P.M. Gujral highlights national unity, anti-communalism and cooperative federalism as major issues (6 Dec). Deve Gowda speaks against alliance with Congress or BJP (6 Dec). UF decides against any national understanding with Congress (8 Dec). *TMC favours understanding with Congress (8 Dec). DMK-TMC alliance in Tamilnadu survives (12 Dec).

JD: *Bihar JD leader criticises Gujral for softness towards Laloo resulting in his release on unconditional bail (9 Dec). PAC takes stand against BJP and Congress(I) (9 Dec). Calls ex-JD leaders like Chandra Shekhar and Hegde to return; both refuse (10 Dec). Laloo Pd. Yadav refuses overtures to rejoin

(10 Dec). Orissa JD splits (15 Dec). Fissures surface in Karnataka.

SP: *Mulayam Singh seeks understanding with Congress to fight against BJP in UP (5 Dec). Reportedly plans with BSP and Loktantaric Congress to topple BJP Government in UP (5 Dec). Advocates against maintaining equidistance with BJP and Congress (6 Dec). Blames Gowda, V.P. Singh and Gujral for dissolution (7 Dec). But party formally decides against any electoral understanding with Congress, perhaps under UF-LF's pressure (11 Dec).

RJD: *Laloo Yadav extends support to formation of Congress-led Government at Centre (19 Nov). On release, Laloo announces Secular Democratic Front with Congress, JMM and BSP (12 Dec). Calls upon JD members to join RJD but targets Gowda, Paswan and Sharad Yadav. Meets Kesri (14 Dec). Meets Chandra Shekhar, announces adjustment with Congress, BSP, JMM(S) and BKKP (15 Dec).

BSP: *E.C. recognises BSP as national party, derecognises JP and AITC(T) (25 Nov). Mayawati wants to go it alone in UP (15 Dec).

Parliament: *Conducts no Session between 19 November and 2 December. Twice adjourned sine die, finally dissolved (4 Dec). *Speaker Sangma projected as head of national government fails to gather momentum.

General Election: *E.C. expresses readiness to hold election by 1st week of March, 1998 (4 Dec). Issues orders against transfer of election officials or policy announcements or use of aircrafts by ministers (12 Dec), asks Shiv Sena to hold organisational election or face derecognition (14 Dec).

Massacre in Bihar: *Massacre of 61 men, women and children by Bhumihar's Ranvir Sena in Central Bihar universally condemned (2 Dec). JD and BJP demand President's Rule (30 Nov). Vajpayee visits villages and demands declaration of 8 affected districts as Disturbed Area (12 Dec). BJP formally asks President to intervene (15 Dec).

Bihar - A.H. Scam: *Laloo Yadav's detention without governor's sanction declared illegal by H.C. (28 Nov). Granted bail in one case (29 Nov). Granted bail in second case and released (11 Dec). BJP sees conspiracy behind release (14 Dec).

Terrorism: *Bomb blasts in 3 trains in South India, 9 killed, over 60 injured. Muslim terrorist suspected (6 Dec). State asks for CBI inquiry (7 Dec).

Human Rights: *NHRC declares handcuffing and tying to pillars of the arrested as barbaric (21 Nov). *NHRC censures UP police for custodial death (2 Dec).

*S.C. upholds Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 but issues guidelines (27 Nov).

*PUDR reports 91 custodial death in Delhi since 1980.

*Maharashtra judge sentences 2 policemen for custodial death (14 Nov).

BABARI MASJID QUESTION

5th Anniversary of Demolition: *BMMCC calls for low key observance, avoiding procession and mass rallies but holding dharnas and hall meetings and organising signature campaigns. Move criticised by some groups in Hyderabad and Chennai but accepted elsewhere. *AIBMAC organises Seminar in Lucknow (6 Dec).

*Citizens Committee for Secular Action representing 37 human rights and social institutions hold Dharna in New Delhi. *Janata Dal, Left Parties and Qaumi Tanzeem also hold meetings and

observe Communal Harmony Day.

*AIMIM and dissident MBT call for bandh in Hyderabad after rallies are banned; 1 youth stabbed (6 Dec). Firing on funeral procession kills 1 woman (7 Dec). *Bomb blasts in Kerala and Tamil Nadu trains linked to Babari Masjid anniversary (6 Dec). *IMF (UK) organises Convention in London (6 Dec).

BMM: *Shahabuddin condemns UP C.M. Kalyan Singh for ban on construction of a Masjid within Panchkoshi Parikarma in Ayodhya.

Judicial Action: *AIMPLB W.C. expresses concern on delay in judicial proceedings (23 Nov).

*S.C. rejects private petition to restrain reconstruction of Babari Masjid by VHP or any other organisation (5 Dec). *SC adjourns Contempt cases (20 Nov). *Demolition Criminal Case deferred to 10 Dec. and subsequently to January for non-appearance of accused (21 Nov-10 Dec). *West Bengal Assembly expresses concern on VHP's campaign (25 Nov).

Government: *R.V. Paswan warns VHP (16 Nov). Gujral denounces Demolition as assault on national integration (6 Dec).

Sangh Parivar: *RSS Chief Rajender Singh defends demolition and calls for take over of Mathura Idgah and Varanasi Masjid (23 Nov).

*VHP observes Victory Day on 6 Dec., organises Chaurasi Kosi Parikarma from 5-12 Dec. and rally in Ayodhya for public recognition of Karsevaks (14 Dec). Under pressure from BMM and GOI, Kalyan Singh asks VHP to keep low profile. *VHP calls for installation of "Ram Bhakts" government in Centre (5 Dec).

*BJP President Advani 'offers to persuade VHP' to drop claim on Mathura and Varanasi, if Muslims surrender Babari Masjid (4 Dec). BMMCC and AIBMAC reject Advani's bonafides (5 Dec).

Foreign Reaction: *Imam of Haram Sharif, Macca, on visit to India, advises Muslims to withdraw claim on Babari Masjid, if it is found to have been indeed built on pre-existing Mandir's site. Advice causes controversy. BMMCC endorses it, subject to judicial finding and withdrawal of VHP agitation for other Masjids (21 Nov).

KASHMIR SITUATION

Political Development: *State Committee on Autonomy defers report to 31 December, examines Indian laws approved to State (4 Dec).

*BJP inducts ex-militants who attend BJP's Muslim Convention (4 Dec).

*Hurriyat seeks US mediation (18 Nov). Submits memorandum to UN on violation of human rights (10 Dec). J&K Government accuses Hurriyat leaders of amassing money in name of Jihad (14 Dec).

*Jamaat-e-Islami and Hizbul Mujahiddin distance themselves from each other (29 Nov).

*Governor Krishna Rao opposes internationalisation of existing LOC (12 Dec).

Insurgency: *Abortive bid to blast police station in Srinagar (22 Nov). BSF claims return to normalcy in Srinagar (30 Nov). NC leader among 18 killed (30 Nov). BSF claims destruction of Harkat-ul-Ansar's communication centre (2 Dec). NC leader G.R. Mir shot (4 Dec). Army major among 11 killed (13 Dec).

Foreign Reaction: *Hurriyat invited to OIC, GOI refuses permission. *USA rejects Pakistan's demand for third party mediation (19 Nov). *Yasser Arafat repeats offer to play mediatory role (21 Nov).

OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST

Urdu: *National Urdu Promotion Council holds 3-day Seminar

on Urdu under Colonialism in Delhi. Qurratulain Hyder, Ali Sardar Jafri, Kuldip Nayar etc. participate. Reach consensus against change of script and on Second Language Status in Hindi States (18-20 Nov). *Masud Husain Khan recognised as V.C. of Jamia Urdu, Aligarh (15 Nov). *P.M. Gujral meets Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu delegation and reiterates commitment to recommendations of Gujral Committee (21 Nov).

Muslim Organisations: *Tablighi Jamaat holds Ijtema in Bombay (30 Nov) and in Bhopal (7 Dec). *Campaign for National Unity organises Muslim Convention, Shahabuddin, Azmi and S.K. Sahay speak. Muslim Agenda adopted (12 Dec).

Communal Violence: *Major communal violence in Coimbatore, with police on strike in open collusion with Hindu rioters; 17 Muslims killed; property worth hundreds of crores torched; Army inducted; CM Karunanidhi orders judicial probe and threatens to ban communal organisations (30 Nov-3 Dec).

*NCM forms Committee under Justice V.M. Tarkunde to prepare legislative and administrative anti-riot measures.

State Violence: *Following clashes on encroachment on a graveyard in Jaipur. 6 killed and hundreds injured in police firing. Section 144 imposed. Government announces inquiry and compensation (15-17 Dec).

TADA: *S.P. and Muslim organisations in Bombay demand bail for all detainees and withdrawal of cases under TADA or persecution under IPC (19 Nov).

Education: *Madras HC orders admission in MEI's of students of establishing community only against 50% management quota (4 Dec).

*JUH condemns compulsory introduction of Sanskrit and Hindu rites in UP primary schools (7 Dec).

Wakfs - AP: *Shahabuddin objects to bureaucratic control of Wakfs proposed in draft A.P. Wakf Bill (29 Nov).

Delhi: *Wakf Rules, 1997 notified by Delhi Government (28 Nov). Urgent constitution of Delhi Wakf Board under Act of 1995 demanded. *Delhi Wakf Board alleges unlawful constructions by Imam Abdullah Bukhari in Jama Masjid complex (26 Nov). *Delhi HC admits petition against misutilisation of Masjid Kaziwali in New Delhi for guest house (7 Dec). *

West Bengal: Assembly passes Wakf (Amendment) Bill, 1997 to facilitate utilisation of Wakf land for housing, educational and commercial complexes (25 Nov).

Protected Mosques: *JUH welcomes opening of protected masjids for Namaz and Taravih during Ramadan (21 Nov).

*Qaumi Tanzeem demands removal of PAC from Masjid in Taj Mahal Complex and permission to offer Fatiha and hold Urs (2 Dec).

Haj: *Government permits all 66,000 applicants to perform Haj in 1998 (22 Nov). *Shahabuddin demands reconstitution of Haj Committee and formation of Central Haj Advisory Committee, pending proposed legislation (29 Nov).

Reservation: *Kerala political parties and caste organisations oppose identification of "creamy layer" (28 Nov).

*President of Association of Indian Universities calls for national debate on reservation in University admission and recruitment (13 Dec).

*Balmikis demand separate sub-quota out of SC quota (13 Dec).

Electoral Rolls: *Intensively revised Assam rolls published with 3 lakhs electors marked as "Doubtful and Disputed" (9 Dec). UMF (Assam) challenges legality (15 Dec). AASU organises statewide bandh (9 Dec). Shahabuddin demands clarification from EC (18 Dec).

(Contd. on page 45)

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H. Abdur Raqeeb
President
ISLAMIC CENTRE, VELLORE