

JPRS-NEA-93-071
28 May 1993



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JPRS Report

Near East & South Asia

INDIA

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Near East & South Asia

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CONTENTS

28 May 1993

POLITICAL

International Affairs

Paper Warns Against 'Surrender' on Kashmir Issue [NAVABHARAT TIMES 15 May]	1
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Regional Affairs

Serial Explosions in Bombay: Articles Views	1
Pakistani Accusation Protested [INDIAN EXPRESS 1 Apr]	1
Two More Suspects Held [DECCAN HERALD 1 Apr]	1
Pakistani Involvement Proved [INDIAN EXPRESS 4 Apr]	2
Rethinking of Kashmir's Separate Status Urged [AJ 12 Apr]	3
Congress Credibility Seen Tied to Retaliation Against Pakistan [THE TELEGRAPH 9 Apr]	4
Relations With Bangladesh Seen on Hold, Progress Slow [THE STATESMAN 8 Apr]	5

Internal Affairs

Tamil Nadu: Hard Times for Chief Minister	7
Opposition Questions CM's Status [INDIAN EXPRESS 31 Mar]	7
Everyone Antagonized [DECCAN HERALD 3 Apr]	8
Rise, Reversal Viewed [INDIAN EXPRESS 4 Apr]	9
Congress (I) Seen Still Beset by Internal Factionalism [BARTAMAN 28 Mar]	10
Rao Party 'Victory' Questioned [BARTAMAN 1 Apr]	11
Causes of Renewed Gorkhaland Demand Viewed [ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA 2 Apr]	13
Demand for Pawar's Resignation Criticized [INDIAN EXPRESS 1 Apr]	14
Tamil Nadu House Speaker: Doordarshan 'Distorted' [INDIAN EXPRESS 1 Apr]	14
Kerala: Politicians Ignore Forest Encroachment [INDIAN EXPRESS 1 Apr]	15
BLITZ Editor Interviewed on Switching Support to BJP [THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA 2 Apr]	15
Nagaland Suffers From Socialist Rebels' Attack [DECCAN HERALD 3 Apr]	17
Rao's Loyalists Rewarded With Foreign Trips [INDIAN EXPRESS 3 Apr]	17
BJP Seen Offering Strong Opposition to Congress Economic Policies [JANSATTA 4 Apr]	18
Jharkhand Militancy: South Eastern Rails Blown [INDIAN EXPRESS 4 Apr]	19
High Court Decision Against Congress Seen Historic [ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA 5 Apr]	19
High Court Judgement Against Congress Seen Significant [AJ 5 Apr]	20
Congress (I) Said Incapable of Meeting BJP Challenge [PATRIOT 6 Apr]	21
Argument for Smaller States Criticized [THE STATESMAN 6 Apr]	22
Sikkim Said Preparing for 'Snap' Elections [THE STATESMAN 6 Apr]	23
Effect of Judicial Verdict Against Congress (I) Viewed [THE TELEGRAPH 6 Apr]	24
Congress Said Failing To Capitalize on CPM Mistakes [THE TELEGRAPH 7 Apr]	24
Mamata Banerjee Termed 'Lost Child' of Congress (I) [THE STATESMAN 8 Apr]	25
Communist Victory in Tripura Called 'No Surprise' [PATRIOT 8 Apr]	26
BJP General Secretary Interviewed on Minorities [THE STATESMAN 9 Apr]	26
New BJP Politician Seen Powerful Mover, Manipulator [SUNDAY 10 Apr]	27
Congress Said Using Reservation Issue to Counter BJP [SUNDAY 10 Apr]	29
Issue Still Unsettled [JANSATTA 10 Apr]	30
Ovaisi Plan Examined [JANSATTA 10 Apr]	32
BJP Muslims Said Disillusioned, in Limbo [THE STATESMAN 10 Apr]	33
Darjeeling Area Said Ready to Violently Explode [THE TELEGRAPH 11 Apr]	34
Nehruvian Secularism Said Inspiring Muslim Fundamentalists [THE TELEGRAPH 11 Apr]	36
Congress (I) Seen Filled With Criminals [ORGANISER 11 Apr]	37
BJP Criticizes Congress' Kashmir Policy [THE STATESMAN 13 Apr]	38
BJP Termed 'Creeping, Deceitful Enemy' [THE STATESMAN 13 Apr]	38

CPM Said Abusing Power by Banning Rallies [THE STATESMAN 12 Apr]	39
CPM Said to Destroy Incriminating Files [THE TELEGRAPH 13 Apr]	39
CPM Blamed for Bengal's Economic Stagnation [THE STATESMAN 14 Apr]	40
New Muslim Leadership Seen More Militant, Confrontationalist [THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA 16 Apr]	41
Rao Said Incorporating Elements of Hindu Nationalism [THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA 16 Apr]	43
Congress Said Unprepared For Elections in Former BJP States [JANSATTA 16 Apr]	44
Jyoti Basu Said Ready to Lead Anti-BJP Front [THE STATESMAN 16 Apr]	45
Joshi Said Out of BJP Leadership Circle [THE STATESMAN 16 Apr]	45
Suspension of Party Member by Congress (I) Seen Harsh, Unnecessary [THE STATESMAN 19 Apr]	46

ECONOMIC

Exim Policy: Major Changes Listed, Viewed [INDIAN EXPRESS 1 Apr]	47
Farmers Rally Under Sharad Joshi for Benefits [INDIAN EXPRESS 1 Apr]	48
World Bank Withdrawal From Sarovar Project Criticized [INDIAN EXPRESS 1 Apr]	48
Economic Commentary: Nation Falling Into 'Debt-Trap' [INDIAN EXPRESS 1 Apr]	48
Policy Changed To Boost Services, Farm Exports	50
Announcement in Parliament [THE TIMES OF INDIA 1 Apr]	50
Policy Highlights [THE TIMES OF INDIA 1 Apr]	51
Budget Said Moving Nation Away From Self-Reliance [THE TELEGRAPH 2 Apr]	52
Commentary Urges Opposition to Dunkel Draft [JANSATTA 3 Apr]	53
Businessmen View 'Global Export Strategies' [DECCAN HERALD 4 Apr]	55
Dr. Singh Opposes Monopoly of Multinationals [DECCAN HERALD 4 Apr]	55
New Economic Growth Forecast in Punjab [THE STATESMAN 13 Apr]	56
1993-94 Budget Critically Examined [JANSATTA 9 Apr]	57
Bengalis Said Harassed by Police in Delhi [SUNDAY 17 Apr]	58
Importance of Verdict Involving Muslim Personal Law Viewed [THE TELEGRAPH 19 Apr]	59
Muslims Reportedly Demonstrate Against Showing of Bible Serial [THE TELEGRAPH 20 Apr] ...	60

International Affairs

Paper Warns Against 'Surrender' on Kashmir Issue

BK2505135393 *Bombay NAVBHARAT TIMES*
in Hindi 15 May 93 p 4

[Editorial: "Dialogue on Kashmir, But Not Surrender"]

[Text] Dialogue is a sweet word, but how harsh its implications could be can be determined from the pre-conditions attached to the proposed talks on Kashmir. Two leaders of a separatist group have said in this connection that they would prefer a dialogue to an armed campaign if it is held in a 'proper perspective.' The 'proper perspective' is that Pakistan is also admitted in the dialogue and Kashmiris are allowed an option of self-determination, meaning there is no harm if the objective, which was intended to be achieved through an armed campaign, is achieved through talks. Obviously, this does not mean a dialogue.

India is being counselled by many quarters to surrender in the case of Kashmir. While one person talks about a plebiscite, someone else advises about entering into a dialogue with Pakistan. Some believe that without giving maximum autonomy to Kashmir things will not be alright. The situation slightly resembles that of a helpless patient about whom everybody advises various prescriptions. Many times there is goodwill behind advice, but there is always a difference between advice given on what is considered a 'lost cause' and scientific therapy. The tragedy of the Indian state is that it has neither respect for scientific therapy nor, perhaps, enough will-power for it. That is why administrative firmness is many times misinterpreted as ruthlessness, softness appears as a weakness, and no prescription proves effective for that alien virus Pakistan. Resolutions condemning Pakistan are often passed, but no strategy is formed to retaliate against it competently. India has lost its way on Kashmir and this could prove suicidal.

There is a need to repeatedly clarify a few points on Kashmir. First, on the issue of self-determination, it should be said that the right of self-determination cannot be used again and again. It has been used once and the matter finished there and then. If the self-determination account is kept open, no country can exist anymore. Second, only as much autonomy is desirable for Kashmir that is given to other states in the country. If the existing autonomy is not enough, it should be increased, but for all states and this quantum of autonomy should be determined by national consultations and not by talks on Kashmir. Third, India is not against talks with anybody, including Pakistan, provided they themselves express a willingness for it. It is necessary, however, to take an initiative for talks with Kashmir rebels because after all they are Indian citizens; and while any state administration has the right to discipline their citizens, at the same time it has a duty to remove misunderstandings, if any, from among them.

Regional Affairs

Serial Explosions in Bombay: Articles Views

Pakistani Accusation Protested

93WR0210X *Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English*
1 Apr 93 p 1

[Article: "2 More Held for Bombay Blasts"]

[Text] Bombay, March 31 (PTI)—Two more suspects, including the one who can provide clues on the movement of high-powered explosives, have been arrested by police who have 30 persons in their net so far in connection with the March 12 serial blasts here.

One arrested man, linked up with the Memon brothers, was a driver who was present during the landing of explosives and could throw light on their movement, Police Commissioner A. S. Samra told reporters here today.

The other suspect was a member of the squad which lobbed hand grenades at fishermen's colony in Mahim with the motive to engineer communal riots on the day when a spate of bombings shook Bombay.

He hurled grenades, sped away in the car along with his accomplices and went out of Maharashtra.

Two More Suspects Held

93WR0210Y *Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English*
1 Apr 93 p 9

[Article: "India Protests Pak Accusation"]

[Text] New Delhi—India on Wednesday strongly reacted to Pakistan's accusation that New Delhi had manufactured evidence to implicate Islamabad in the Bombay blast carnage.

An External Affairs Ministry spokesman also regretted the fact that the Pakistan secretary-general in the Foreign Ministry, Mr Akram Zaki, had referred in "adverse terms to our leaders."

The spokesman maintained that "very specific information" regarding certain members of the Memon family who had travelled to Karachi (from Dubai) had been communicated to Pakistan government with a request for cooperation in apprehending and returning the suspects.

"We continue to seek Pakistan's cooperation and have noted that Mr Zaki in his speech has referred to his government's readiness to persist in sincere efforts to cooperate in discovering the truth," he said.

The spokesman concluded by saying "we trust they will do so."

Mr Zaki, in a nine-page statement issued in Islamabad, alleged that the evidence furnished by India connecting the Memon family was "mostly circumstantial and obviously concocted."

Bomb hoax at DSE: ENS [Eastern Newspapers Society] adds that a bomb hoax disrupted the working of the Delhi Stock Exchange (DSE) and the passport office at Shastri Bhawan in Delhi for over an hour on Wednesday.

At the DSE, chaos broke out following a telephone call by an anonymous caller around 12.30. Personnel of the police and bomb disposal squad, accompanied by sniffer dogs, conducted a through search of the building on Asaf Ali road.

The entire complex was vacated during the search which yielded no result. This is the second hoax call received at DSE following the series of explosions which broke out in Bombay.

Similarly, at the passport office, the entire area was cordoned off as search by police personnel was carried out following the bomb call in the afternoon.

Hoax calls were also received at Shanker's Doll Museum and Safdarjang tomb.

Security at Ayodhya: Keeping in mind the recent bomb blasts in Calcutta the Bombay, the district administration here is being extra-vigilant about security steps during the Ramnavami fair in Ayodhya.

Senior police officials continue to survey the security steps taken for the fair. Additional director general of police (Uttar Pradesh) Harihar Rao visited Ayodhya on Tuesday. He was accompanied by inspector general (Lucknow range) Ram Arun.

Police search at railway and bus stations, besides other crowded places continued. Police also checked several vehicles.

RDX not in Karnataka: Karnataka Chief Minister M. Veerappa Moily, on Wednesday set at rest that explosive material, 'RDX,' which triggered off blasts at Bombay had entered Karnataka.

Replying to Congress I member Harsh Kumar Gowda, in the Assembly, he said the 'RDX' had reportedly moved upto the Belgaum border near Maharashtra.

Agencies

Pakistani Involvement Proved

93WR0210Z Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
4 Apr 93 p 1

[Article: "Serial Explosions in Bombay: Dawood Ibrahim Had Big Role in Pakistani Plot"]

[Text] Bombay—Clinching proof of Pakistani involvement in the Bombay bomb blasts has come to light during interrogation of arrested persons and subsequent

investigations. India is asking, on this basis, Western countries and friendly neighbours to declare Pakistan as a state sponsor of terrorism.

The evidence collected shows beyond doubt that the conspiracy was hatched by Pakistan in collusion with Dawood Ibrahim, the Bombay underworld don based in Dubai, and the Memon family of Bombay, more particularly Ibrahim Abdul Razak Memon alias Tiger, a key lieutenant of Dawood. The recoveries also reveal Pakistan's plan to exploit the hurt Muslim sentiments to create conditions of instability and communal strife in India.

Ibrahim Abdul Razak has emerged as the principal figure behind the blasts. He visited Dubai thrice in the recent past, apparently to make arrangements with Dawood Ibrahim and Pakistan, the first trip lasting from mid-December last year to the end of January this year. With the help of Pakistani ISI a huge quantity of arms was surreptitiously landed in Raigad, Maharashtra. While the main consignment was despatched to Bombay, the remaining portion is believed to have been sent to Gujarat, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.

Tiger Memon, it has been found, played a prominent role in recruiting and motivating volunteers for the blast in Bombay. While the explosives, arms and ammunitions could be obtained through Dawood Ibrahim, the training was arranged near Islamabad between Feb 21 and Feb 28.

One of the trainees, Gul Mohammed, now under arrest, has revealed that he along with others left Bombay on Feb 17 for Dubai with Yakub Khan Wali Mohammed as the leader. Its members were told about the training programme only on arrival in Dubai. The party then left Dubai in two groups by PIA flights on Feb 13 and 20 and was received at the Islamabad Airport.

They were driven off in a covered vehicle skipping immigration formalities. The training camp was located in an isolated forest area about two hours from the Islamabad airport. According to Gul Mohammed, the training was conducted by a bearded instructor speaking Punjabi and Urdu. The training consisted of physical exercises, handling of grenades and firing with Kalashnikov rifles.

The Pakistani complicity is further corroborated by an input indicating that six members of the Memon family—Abdul Razaak Suleman, Hanifa Abdul Razaak, Rahim Yakub, Yakub Abdul Razaak Memon and his two brothers—left Dubai by flight PK 214 on March 17 for Karachi. They were booked on the Bombay-Dubai-Karachi-Bombay with return to the last destination on March 18.

Police investigations with Interpol help have led to sizeable recoveries which include 251 AK 56 assault rifles, 417 rifle grenades, 1100 electronic detonators, 413 hand grenades, 19 bags of explosives and 2730 kgs of RDX. The markings on the hand grenades read

"ARGES-83". The material was manufactured in Peshawar through technology transfer from Vienna.

Despite conclusive proof, Pakistan is denying its involvement. It is evading questions about the whereabouts of the Memons. Indian investigating agencies feel that Pakistan is trying to sidetrack the issue by asking for irrelevant details of the Memons.

Rethinking of Kashmir's Separate Status Urged

93AS0765C Varanasi AJ in Hindi 12 Apr 93 p 6

[Article by Ashok Pandey: "Jammu-Kashmir: A Questionmark About the Necessity of Article 370"]

[Text] Article 370 of the Constitution reeks of separatism. This article negates India's oneness of social diversity from Kashmir to Kanniyakumari. It also encourages anarchy and instability in the Valley. It would be a major surprise if the situation deteriorates in the country because of it. This article carries economic, social, political, and psychological issues hidden in it. The welfare of the poor is openly ignored because of it.

It is important to mention here that the Central Government's property tax, urban land boundary laws, and gift tax are not levied in Kashmir using Article 370 as a pretext. The people are not aware of the real effects of the article and the poor masses suffer the results. Under Article 370, the Indian Parliament can make laws related to defense, foreign affairs, and communication. It can also make laws related to the union and contemporary issues. However, it must get the approval of the state government for any issue related to Jammu-Kashmir. This is a special entitlement of Jammu and Kashmir.

The constitutional assembly of Jammu and Kashmir supported annexation to India in February 1956. The whole issue of Jammu-Kashmir's annexation was resolved with this support; however, the Parliament had been depending on the (Jammu and Kashmir) state for all issues except those related to defense, foreign policy, and communication. The president issued the first directive under Article 370 in 1950. Discussions were carried out between the government of India and Sheikh Abdullah, then Kashmir's prime minister, to impose some other provisions of the Indian Constitution over Jammu-Kashmir. Both governments agreed and the president issued a directive over Jammu-Kashmir in 1954. This imposed other provisions of the Indian Constitution on Jammu-Kashmir. The Jammu-Kashmir Constitution was amended in 1966 and the Sadr-i Riyast title was changed to governor and the prime minister's title was changed to chief minister.

If a woman marries a man from another state, she loses the right to her property. The woman in question receives a certificate from the state government that is effective as long as the marriage lasts. Not only this, that woman also loses property due her from her parents. Such provisions only cause discord between the state and Central governments. These have nothing to do with

justice and impartiality. The state has its own flag and symbol. The flags of the state and the Central Government are raised side by side on government buildings.

What were the circumstances that led to the passage of Article 370? When Pakistan attacked Jammu-Kashmir using its Azad Kashmir Force in 1947, Maharajah Hari Singh requested India's assistance. He signed an agreement in October 1947 to join India and relinquished all decisions related to defense, foreign relations, and communication to India. This agreement was similar to the agreements made with other states. However, due to some unknown circumstances, it was decided that the final decision to join India would be made in the Jammu-Kashmir Constitutional Assembly. Some temporary provisions were added to the Indian Constitution to merge the state with India under Article 370.

The issue of the refugees from West Pakistan is the worst example of injustice. After the partition, thousands of families that left West Pakistan settled in Jammu-Kashmir. They have been living here for four decades, but are still deprived of their basic human rights. They have not received citizenship even now and are not allowed to vote. They cannot borrow money from the government or other agencies for their developmental projects. They cannot get admission to any state medical or engineering colleges. This is happening in our own country, and we cannot even express remorse over it. Instead, we shed crocodile tears over the human rights violations in other countries (South Africa and Palestine).

Jammu-Kashmir always was given a privileged position by the Central Government in various developmental plans. In 1988-89, the state got 74 percent of its revenue from the Central Government in the form of grants and loans. In 1990, its revenues were 90 percent from grants and 10 percent from loans. The 1947-48 state budget was only for 48.2 million rupees. This had increased to 12.35 billion rupees in 1988-89 fiscal year. The per capita government expense in the state was 15 rupees in 1947. It increased to 645 rupees in 1988-89. Jammu-Kashmir has benefited a lot from economic collaboration with the Central Government. Billions of rupees were spent on various development plans in Jammu-Kashmir during recent years. This state has led in receiving per capita assistance from the Central Government even though its population is only seven percent of the national population.

The people in Laddakh have always been dissatisfied with Article 370. They are distressed over the fact that they are not independent citizens of independent India and are at the mercy of the Kashmiris. The Laddakh Buddhist Alliance appealed to then prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru; however, they did not gain anything. Time and again, Laddakh's Buddhist population had started campaigns against Kashmiri supremacy, but were helpless against them.

Under one provision of Article 370, the president can nullify this article with the approval of the constitutional assembly. Why would the Kashmiri ruler want this? It is

important to mention that Jammu-Kashmir is listed as the 15th state in the Constitution's original list. Article 370 was a transitional measure for a short time. At present the constitutional assembly of the state does not even exist and the question of its approval does not arise. The Parliament can pass amendments under Article 368. After it, the provision to get the approval of state's constitutional assembly can be removed. After this process, the president can rescind Article 370 if he so desires. We should not delay this now because the time is right. We must achieve India's culture of "unity of diversity." Humanistic and equitable reforms in political, social, economic, and cultural areas is very important now. The Rao government should take courageous steps to create new history and strengthen our nation's supremacy.

Congress Credibility Seen Tied to Retaliation Against Pakistan

93AS07681 Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
9 Apr 93 p 8

[Article by S. Nihal Singh: "Loud Speech, Small Stick"]

[Text] Every so often circumstances conspire to bring Pakistan back on India's priority agenda. With the serial Bombay blasts and accusing fingers being pointed at Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence [ISI], the question is again a simple and complex one: how to deal with our troublesome neighbour?

Mr Kalyan Singh, one time chief minister of Uttar Pradesh [UP], is a fortunate man if he believes the solution lies in an Akhand Bharat comprising Pakistan and Bangladesh as well. For sane persons and policy makers the options are more difficult and complex, requiring a judicious mixture of firmness and diplomatic finesse.

Leaving diplomatic and legal quibbling aside, it is clear Pakistan has been supporting in material and other ways secessionists in Punjab and Kashmir. If it is conclusively proved the ISI did indeed mastermind the Bombay explosions, it would represent a dangerous and plainly unacceptable escalation of Pakistan's subversion of the Indian state.

A war would be disastrous for both sides even if it is more destructive of Pakistan. India must decide how to cope with its perception of the neighbour's enhanced offensive to harm, if not destroy, this country. Mounting a diplomatic offensive to try to get the United States to declare Pakistan a terrorist state with its concomitant consequences is an easy but not necessarily the best answer. Nor is sabre rattling the wisest course to adopt.

First, let us be clear about Pakistan's motives in acting as it has been in Punjab and Kashmir, if not in Bombay. Apart from the evocative symbolism Kashmir occupies in Pakistani consciousness and politics, the Khalistani movement in Punjab, now largely tamed, and the Kashmiris' alienation from the Indian state in the valley

provided what the dominant ruling elite saw as a golden opportunity to bleed India at a low cost. The causes of secessionism in Punjab and Kashmir were indigenous, but Pakistan has made New Delhi's task of coping with them more complex and expensive.

The reasons for the Pakistani elite's desire to harm India in whatever fashion it can need not detain us here. They comprise a web of circumstances and emotions having their roots in distant and more recent history. Also there is an undying Pakistani desire to make their own lives miserable by trying to match India in every respect, despite the absurdity of the proposition, given the difference in size, potential and degree of economic development. Again, unfortunately, the centrality of an anti-India plank in building up a Pakistani elan has made the peoples of the two countries hostages.

On any rational set of criteria it does not make sense for any Pakistani administration to expand the areas of subversion in India to target such economic centres as Bombay. But then General Yahya Khan blithely led his people to disaster in what was East Pakistan. Given the power struggle in progress in Pakistan it is conceivable sections of the administration are so obsessed with wanting to destroy India that they ignore the consequences of their actions.

It is also true India is in a phase of political transition with a weak leadership and a disintegrating Congress party. The main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] is seemingly willing to go to any lengths to achieve power, even if it should mean the destruction of the Indian state. If a leader of the calibre of Mr Kalyan Singh can wax eloquent over absorbing Pakistan and Bangladesh, other BJP leaders are only too willing to exploit the public perception of Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao's weaknesses and strike out jingoist postures.

It is of a peace with the present state of the Congress government at the Centre that leaders such as the president Maharashtra chief minister, Mr Sharad Pawar, should blame Pakistan for the Bombay blasts without giving thought to the consequences of their statements. For if New Delhi is convinced about Pakistani complicity in the Bombay blasts and remains content with berating Islamabad and getting it declared a terrorist state, they are handing the country on a platter to the BJP.

Despite the costs a nation must seek to preserve its integrity if a neighbour or anyone else seeks to destroy it. With senior Congress leaders having already pronounced Pakistan guilty, they are called upon to undertake countermeasures. If they do not, they are either not serious in making their charge or are too pusillanimous to protect the country's interests.

The country is in the midst of a situation in which both the Indian and Pakistani political establishments are in a confused state, too preoccupied with their own domestic political agendas to see the whole picture or the consequences of their actions. Yet the Bombay blasts and

Pakistan's possible complicity in them must represent a watershed in Indo-Pakistani relations.

Pakistan's protestations of goodwill for India stretch credibility and the same presumably is true of Indian leaders' perorations as far as Pakistan is concerned. But there is an element of unreality about Indian leaders' statements about the happy neighbourhood we live in given the developments and the rhetoric of the two sides.

Indians are thus involved in what would be a comic opera situation if it were not so tragic. The geopolitical aims of the two countries clash even as their different political establishments cope with their own contradictions. In Pakistan, civilian political rule has had limited opportunities while in India the approaching end of the Congress era is leading to confusion and a challenge from the BJP to build a Hindu India.

What lends a new twist to the situation is the changed world scenario. Both sides are conscious of the demise of the old world even as they seek to derive advantages from it. Pakistan is seeking to set out on a hazardous journey into the world of a new compact with Islamic neighbours hoping to snare the nascent central Asian republics. Afghanistan is a cross it must bear in an ampler measure than the rest of the world.

For India the demise of its central geopolitical relationship with the former Soviet Union has prompted it to test the horizons of a new relationship with the United States. Conscious as Washington is of India's potential usefulness, it has other priorities, particularly the affairs of Russia and setting its own economic house in order.

The last thing the U.S. wants on its political agenda is a new flashpoint in south Asia. Washington was naturally interested in expressing its solidarity with India on the Bombay blasts. This being symptomatic of the new urban terror the world has been witnessing, particularly symbolised by the explosion at the World Trade Centre in New York. Washington's interest also coincides with India's in coping with facets of Muslim fundamentalism.

Equally the divergence between Washington's nonproliferation goals and the perceived security interests of India and Pakistan are clear. It is of course not in Pakistan's interest to paint itself into a corner. Although it has thus far made a virtue of staying just within the norms of internationally accepted civilised conduct, despite its continuing subversion of India.

It is unlikely the U.S. would want to hasten to label Pakistan as a terrorist state, despite the warning it has administered Islamabad. The threat of action is often a greater deterrent than acting upon it. Washington can be expected to increase pressure on Pakistan rather than to decree it is outside the pale of civilised society.

The seeming illogicality of the Indian approach to the new crisis in Indo-Pakistani relations is thus likely to come to the fore. If Pakistan is responsible for masterminding the Bombay blasts, the last thing it will do is to

hand over the evidence of its guilt in the form of the Memon family. There are ways to spirit them out of Pakistan and perhaps to destroy evidence, as is being suggested by some reports.

If Indian government spokesmen do not act with greater circumspection, the whole dreadful episode of the Bombay blasts and the deaths and destruction they caused is likely to end up as a domestic political football to kick around.

It is known what the result of such an exercise would be. The BJP will seek to paint the P.V. Narasimha Rao government as weak and pusillanimous. The Congress leaders will continue to berate Pakistan for its perfidy and worse. Relations between the two countries will take a further dive.

Leadership is in short supply in India and Pakistan. But Islamabad retains the trump card. It can twist New Delhi's tail since the Indian political establishment does not possess the will and the sagacity to hurt Pakistan effectively and yet keep the subcontinent out of a dangerous conflagration.

Relations With Bangladesh Seen on Hold, Progress Slow

93AS0768E Calcutta *THE STATESMAN* in English
8 Apr 93 p 8

[Article by Manash Ghosh: "Spirit of Bengal: Why Peace Eludes Delhi and Dhaka"]

[Text] The twice-postponed seventh SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] summit will provide an opportunity for India and Bangladesh to rebuild their relations, almost in a shambles in the wake of the events in Ayodhya. Periodic stress and strain has characterized bilateral relations between the two most populous South Asian neighbours ever since Sheikh Mujib's assassination in 1975, but never before have they been so sour as to stall all political and even bureaucratic level contact. The Bangladesh High Commissioner in India, Mr Farooq Sobhan's comment that the SAARC summit provides an excellent meeting ground for leaders of both the countries to start the process of rebuilding their relations brick by brick should, therefore, be taken seriously.

Angry Leader

Much of the present crisis between Dhaka and Delhi is the result of the postponement of the SAARC summit. For the Bangladesh Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, taking the role of SAARC Chairperson, the Dhaka summit was very important because of her internal political compulsions. A populist leader, who likes to surround herself with the trappings of grandeur, the change of baton at the Dhaka summit was keenly looked forward to. A boost to her sagging domestic image, caused largely by her inept handling of the economy and the law and order situation, was on the cards. Upset with the postponement, she was

brusque with the visiting Indian Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr R.L. Bhatia, whom she dismissed in just two minutes with an expression of disappointment "for the postponement." More was to follow at the last Republic Day reception when the Indian High Commission in Dhaka found the Bangladesh Government represented only by its Water Resources Minister, Mr Majedul Haq. Matters became worse with the burning down of the Indian Information Centre and the Indian Airlines office in Dhaka in the aftermath of Ayodhya, followed by a full-fledged diplomatic war.

The Bangladesh Cabinet and Parliament in unprecedented moves debated the Ayodhya issue and adopted almost identical resolutions demanding reconstruction of the Babari mosque at the original site "for restoring peace, communal harmony and stability in India." Delhi rejected the resolutions as "totally unacceptable interference in India's internal affairs" and asked Dhaka to "follow accepted norms" in maintaining relations with India. But whatever Dhaka's official position, behind the scene it sought to calm down Delhi by explaining the resolutions as the BNP's [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] effort to silence the fundamentalist Jamat-I-Islami.

Good working and neighbourly relations between Dhaka and New Delhi, despite strong reservations that the ruling elite of the two have for one another, were forced by geo-political considerations. This was manifest in June last when India threw open the Tin Bigha corridor much against local political opposition.

Delhi obviously expected a quid pro quo. A transit facility through Bangladesh for quicker and cheaper movement of its men and material to its northeastern States has been a long-standing demand. Mr Jyoti Basu supplemented this by asking for a bilateral motor vehicle agreement to enable Indians to travel to Agartala by bus from Calcutta. He was also keen to get natural gas from Bangladesh to run a thermal power plant in Murshidabad. The transit facility was vital for the economic development of the north-east. Delhi had also sought the use of the modern container terminal facility at the Chittagong port as an outlet for the north-east: was prepared to hear the cost of modernizing the transport infrastructure between Chittagong and Tripura; and pay for it in dollars.

The powerful anti-India lobby both within and outside the BNP forced Dhaka to reject the requests. It said acceding to the request would amount to helping Delhi to increase its economic domination and political hegemony over Bangladesh, which was, in any case, a captive market for Indian goods. Natural gas, Bangladesh's only strategic natural resource, was considered too precious to be sold to India, though many Bangladeshi businessmen and chambers of commerce saw no harm in concluding deals over transit and gas.

Even reputed Indian companies, placing competitive bids for World Bank or other overseas aided projects, get rejected because of Dhaka's strong anti-India lobby.

Bangladesh also refused to utilize the Rs30-crore concessional credit India extended in August 1991 to upgrade some North Bengal sugar mills but accepted Pakistani help for the same purpose. Private importers and manufacturers, however, buy almost all their needs from India, from salt, eggs, onion and other primary products to finished goods like Maruti cars, Tata buses, tyres, engineering goods and medicine. Nearly 40 per cent of India's Rs [Rupees] 800-crore exports to Bangladesh comprise fabrics and yarn for Bangladesh's fastest growing export-oriented garment industry. An equal value of goods is smuggled into Bangladesh because of the resistance to re-introduce legal border trade.

Poor Policy

Instead of cashing in on the post Tin Bigha goodwill, the Home Ministry launched an "operation pushback." The Ministry of External Affairs, which had worked hard for the bilateral ties, had not been informed and in the absence of a co-ordinated approach on the infiltration issue India had to call off the "operation" as suddenly as it had started it, acquiring a bad name for the inhuman treatment meted out to some deportees in the process. By choosing the "shortcut," to resolving the infiltration and deportee problem, the Home Ministry gave Dhaka a chance to pick holes in the "operation" and eventually stall it.

The upshot is that Bangladesh has stalled the proposed meeting of the two Home Secretaries to discuss the issue. All this has affected the cordiality generated by New Delhi's efforts to use its good offices with Bangladesh's outlawed guerrilla outfit—the Shanti Bahini—to sort out its differences with Dhaka. For the first time in November and December last the Bangladesh Government could talk to the top leaders of the Bahini face to face. The guerrilla leaders acknowledged Dhaka's sovereignty over the Chittagong Hill Tracts and even accepted the framework of the Bangladesh constitution for resolving its disputes with Dhaka.

The sharing of the Ganga waters and those of 53 other common rivers in the dry season has, however, damaged relations. With no formal water sharing arrangement in force for the fifth successive year running. Bangladesh, a lower riparian country, is at a disadvantage with the meagre discharge from the Farakka barrage, insufficient at some stretches even for irrigation and navigation. Understandably Mr Sobhan is upset, especially after Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao told his counterpart in Delhi last May that Dhaka's short-term needs would be looked after.

The memorandum of understanding for sharing the Ganga waters expired in 1988 and is not being renewed. Without it the ad hoc release from Farakka gets smaller. Last year's insufficient rains made the water problem acute and a large part of northwestern Bangladesh is threatened with desertification. Two decades of dialogue has not resolved the issue making Dhaka feel as if it is

"living in the shadow of a giant neighbour." Mr Sobhan's "anxiety quotient" is understandably very high.

Little Water

New Delhi's position is that Farakka has insufficient water even in the upper reaches of the Ganga during the dry season. Much of the water is drawn by the upper riparian states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and even West Bengal does not get its share. The permanent solution lies in inter-basin water transfer—from Brahmaputra to the Ganga—through a 100 km-long link canal. But Bangladesh is prejudiced against this proposal, says the South Block. It believes that Dhaka has mixed water with politics to use its demand for more water to counter India's pressure for transit and gas. Water is a good weapon for India-baiting and indeed the BNP is under pressure to internationalize the issue.

Indian water experts blame Bangladesh for its predicament. A clause in the 1977 interim water-sharing agreement required Dhaka to arrange for long-term water augmentation during the five-year period that the agreement would be in force. The agreement was extended up to 1988. Dhaka got a generous share of 34,500 cusecs from Farakka, and India sacrificed its interest in the hope that it would be able to find a solution. But Dhaka did not use the opportunity. Instead it is now pressing India to convert the lapsed interim agreement into a permanent one.

In this overall scenario of mistrust and hostility, however, come sparks of hope. Perhaps the most outstanding one was the role that Dhaka's leading newspapers played during the communal flare-up in Bangladesh in the aftermath of Ayodhya. All save the fundamentalist mouthpieces carried editorials on front pages appealing for peace, and sanity in Bangladesh and India. They emphasized that the minorities of Bangladesh were not responsible for what happened in Ayodhya and the attack on them undermined the ideals of Bangladesh's liberation struggle—nationalism and secularism. Bangladesh's poet laureate Shamsur Rahman, addressing a round table meeting of intellectuals and politicians in Dhaka, said: "By religion we may be Muslims or Hindus, but our identity is Bengali. That is indivisible."

Internal Affairs

Tamil Nadu: Hard Times for Chief Minister

Opposition Questions CM's Status

93AS0754A Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
31 Mar 93 p 1

[Article: "CLP Leader Questions Status of CM as MLA"]

[Text] Madras—The State Assembly witnessed chaotic scenes on Tuesday when the status of Chief Minister [CM] J. Jayalalitha, as a member of the House after Dr

Subramaniam Swamy's petition seeking her disqualification had been forwarded to the Central Election Commission, was raised by [State] CLP [Congress(I) Legislature Party] leader S. R. Balasubramanian.

The CLP leader was prompted to make the reference to the disqualification process against the CM (partially expunged by the Chair) after Speaker Sedapatti R. Muthiah refused to accept his submission that the suspension of two of his party members for the rest of the session be revoked.

The Speaker and the AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] benches, confronted the CLP leader and questioned his authority to raise the CM's status as a member of the House. "Don't try to make political capital of the issue," the Speaker told the CLP leader. "You're trying to create trouble in the House."

In the face of noisy protests from all sides, the CLP leader found it difficult to make himself heard and walked out of the House along with his partymen.

But the Speaker would not let matters rest there: "I have not seen such a disorderly leader of the opposition. Indeed, this House has never seen such a leader of the opposition in its entire history."

As the Congress members were walking out, the treasury benches were heard making threatening noises. PWD Minister S. Kannappan lost his cool and had to be restrained by his ministerial colleagues.

Finance Minister V. R. Nedunchezhiyan then remarked that it was all pre-planned by the CLP leader who acted in contravention of the rules and procedures to bring disrepute to the House. "The CLP leader is trying to get the government dismissed with the help of the Congress government at the Centre by enacting such scenes in the Assembly."

"A responsible member should not behave like this," Mr Nedunchezhiyan said. Although the petition submitted by Janata Party president Dr Subramaniam Swamy to the Governor was passed on to the Chief Election Commissioner, there was no knowing what it contained. "Whatever the consequences, we will be ready to face them. The CM would handle the situation ably," he said amidst thumping of desks by the treasury benches. "The CM is not here at the mercy of the Leader of the Opposition, but because of the faith reposed in her by several crores of people," he added.

The Speaker observed that the CLP leader had been bent on creating a situation for a walk out. He had no right to question the CM's status as a member of the House and had diverted the discussion from protection for Congress members in the House. "His party members should realise that he is unconcerned about their protection."

Earlier, the CLP leader wanted the Speaker to reconsider the suspension of two Congress members, C. Gnanasekaran and B. Ranganathan, from the House for the rest of the session.

The Speaker pointed out that the Congress members had on Monday came near the podium in an improper manner. "They also attacked my security staff before my own eyes," he said.

The CLP leader said that suspension for the rest of the session was the maximum punishment and the Speaker could have suspended the two Congress members for a day or two instead. "Just because we are Congress members and in the opposition, you have done this." This evoked an angry response from the Speaker who warned the CLP leader against attributing motives to his decision. "It would become a privilege issue." It was at this point that the CLP leader made the remark about the issue of disqualification of the CM leading to the unruly scenes.

Everyone Antagonized

93AS0754B Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
3 Apr 93 p 8

[Article by S. Murari: "It is a Testing Time for Jayalalitha"]

[Text] Chief Minister J. Jayalalitha, who received a massive mandate hardly two years ago, finds herself in the eye of the storm now and her survival instinct will be on test in the coming months.

No other Chief Minister has earned so many enemies in so short a time and she has no one to turn to for support except perhaps the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] which, unfortunately for her, does not have any presence in Tamil Nadu and can only champion her cause, however unpopular it may be, at the national level.

The Congress(I), her ally till early this month, has gone in for total confrontation in the Assembly as if the break-up of the alliance with the AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] has rejuvenated it. The increasing assaults on Congress(I) MLAs [Member of Legislative Assembly] shows that the barbs are homing in on her. Janata Party President Subramaniam Swamy's campaign for her ouster is racing towards climax with Governor Bhishma Narain Singh at long last forwarding to the Election Commission his petition seeking her disqualification. With this has ended an elaborate farce enacted to hide the Congress hand behind Dr. Swamy's campaign.

Within 48 hours of the Governor forwarding Dr. Swamy's petition to the Election Commission, Ms. Jayalalitha has obtained an interim injunction from the Madras High Court restraining Chief Election Commissioner T. N. Seshan from proceeding with the matter.

Ingenious Reason

The reason she has cited is quite ingenious: Mr. Seshan is bound to be biased as Dr. Swamy's wife, who is a Supreme Court lawyer, has appeared for him in a defamation case. The next phase of the confrontation will begin if Mr. Seshan proceeds with the enquiry on the

ground that he is a constitutional authority and he can be restrained only by the Supreme Court.

As if this is not enough, the DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] has opened another front by reviving the anti-Hindi agitation. Already party volunteers are going about erasing Hindi nameboards in railway stations and other places and a beleaguered Jayalalitha administration has chosen to look the other way for fear of losing out to the DMK on the issue of so-called Dravidian identity. But it will be on trial on April 20 when the DMK plans to stop trains throughout the State. A confrontation will lead to law and order problem and that will give an unfriendly Centre a convenient stick to beat the Jayalalitha Government with.

On top of all this, the Congress has yet another weapon in its armoury—a chargesheet against the Jayalalitha Government to prepare the ground for an enquiry commission. When the alliance was still on, the Governor rejected the DMK's memorandum listing serious charges of corruption against Ms. Jayalalitha and many of her senior Ministers and officials and seeking his sanction to prosecute them. A similar petition from Dr. Swamy, submitted around the same time, is still under his consideration.

If Ms. Jayalalitha shows staying power and fights the disqualification battle to the bitter end, enquiry commissions can be expected to follow. Already a case is being prepared for the dismissal of the Ministry should the Congress calculations go awry. Any such dismissal will have to be followed by an enquiry commission to besmirch her image and evidence will not be hard to come by, given the rampant corruption in the administration.

By far the gravest and the most immediate threat to Ms. Jayalalitha's position comes from Dr. Swamy's position. He has said Ms. Jayalalitha should be disqualified as Jaya Publications, in which she and Mrs. Sashikala Natarajan are partners, has a subsisting contract with the Tamil Nadu Textbooks' Society. Mr. Jayalalitha has not disputed these facts. Her only contention is that the Textbooks' Society is registered under the Societies Act and is not a wing of the Government. Dr. Swamy has already released documents to show that the society is funded by the Government, that Government officials have been its ex-officio chairmen and that even its letterhead bears the Government emblem.

Congress Waiting

More significantly, Ms. Jayalalitha has said Jaya Publications' contract with the Tamil Nadu Textbooks' Society ended last October and so she cannot be disqualified. Whether the contract subsists or not is a disputed fact and ultimately it may have to be decided by the Election Commission. The High Court, while granting a stay, has issued a notice to the Election Commission returnable by April 26. The budget demands will be voted by then and the Chief Minister will be free to recommend dissolution of Assembly and fresh elections.

The Congress is waiting for the disqualification of Ms. Jayalalitha in the hope that it will precipitate a vertical split in the AIADMK and the rebel group will be only too willing to join hands with it to form an alternative government. Already State Congress leaders have met the Governor and urged him to reject any recommendation from Ms. Jayalalitha for the dissolution of the Assembly.

Even if she is disqualified, it need not be the end of the road for Ms. Jayalalitha. For, the period of disqualification will be co-terminus with the life of Jaya Publications' contract with the Government. She can cure the infirmity by either terminating the contract or dissolving the partnership firm. If she does, she can continue as Chief Minister provided she gets elected to the Assembly again within six months.

The political fallout will, however, be grave. The AIADMK is not a party rooted in any great ideology and Ms. Jayalalitha is not everybody's cup of tea. The same MLAs who fall at her feet now will not hesitate to pull the rug from under her feet if power is seen to be slipping out of her hands. Ms. Jayalalitha is well aware of this. Moreover, Ms. Jayalalitha is not sure whether she will be returned to power. Hence she may not opt for a mid-term poll unless pushed to the wall. By then it may be too late.

Rise, Reversal Viewed

93AS0754C Madras INDIAN EXPRESS (Supplement)
in English 4 Apr 93 p 3

[Article by Rasheeda Bhagat: "Empress in High Anxiety"; boldface words and quotation marks as published]

[Text] With Swamy's corruption charges being forwarded to the Election Commission, Jayalalitha may find that she has to pay a heavy price.

Only till the other day she was the queen of the pack—supreme, independent and disdainful of any criticism directed against her. Today, the queen of Poes Garden is facing a curious dilemma. Having severed her ties with the Congress in the state, she is now being cornered by the men who had paid obsequious obeisance to her a few months ago; vilified by the man who was till two years ago, her ally; and battling the resurgence of a party she had despatched to oblivion. With the DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] regrouping its forces—witness the success of the recent general council meeting at Coimbatore, where party President M. Karunanidhi attracted a mammoth crowd—and reasserting its anti-Hindi plank, Jayalalitha Jayaram is on the backfoot.

The mood today is a far cry from 1991 when she was swept to power on a massive mandate from the people of Tamil Nadu. Romping home with 162 MLAs [Member of Legislative Assembly] in a House of 234 was no mean achievement.

So when the Tamil Nadu Assembly met for the first time after the AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] supremo had reduced her arch rival, the DMK, to the ignominious condition of emerging from the battle with a lone miserable seat—won by Karunanidhi from the Harbour constituency—she was the undoubted empress of Tamil Nadu. With Tamil Nadu Congress Committee chief Vazhapadi K. Ramamurthy singing hosannas in her praise at the drop of a hat outside the Assembly and the 61 Congress MLAs showering adulation on her inside the House, she was exposed to the worst danger a politician can face—zero opposition.

But between June 1991 and March 1993, political events have come full circle and with political equations changing rapidly, the same Congressmen are now clamouring for her blood. With Governor B. N. Singh passing onto the Election Commission a petition from Janata Party leader Subramanian Swamy seeking her disqualification as an MLA, one of the first statements "wholeheartedly welcoming" the Governor's decision came from none other than the same Ramamurthy.

His threat, made hardly a couple of weeks ago, that his party was preparing a chargesheet of corruption against the Jayalalitha Government, was the final straw which led her to snap the AIADMK-Congress alliance. Of course, he had his reasons. Minister after minister in the Jayalalitha Cabinet had openly asked for his scalp, demanding a change in the TNCC [Tamil Nadu Congress Committee] leadership.

An analysis of the sequence of events beginning from her coming to power till now, reveals an interesting and familiar-enough pattern about the Congress culture. The picture of the Congress which emerges is hardly a complimentary one. It is that of a national party which knows too well that it could never get the mandate of the people in an area where the regional party was too strong, and thus decided to ride piggy back on a regional party, getting the best bargain in the Lok Sabha and not doing too badly in the state Assembly.

But political bonhomie does not last long, especially given the Congress culture of using pressure tactics to browbeat regional parties and their leaders. Mrs Gandhi's threat to the late M. G. Ramachandran on his income tax returns and its result is only too well known. But when Jayalalitha was also singled out for the special Congress treatment, she had a surprise up her sleeve.

The first Jayalalitha dose that the Congress got was on the Cauvery issue. Cut up about the raw deal given to the water-starved Tamil Nadu, she threw a tantrum and even boycotted the meeting of chief ministers called by Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao to discuss the issue. Hailing her stand then, Ramamurthy went to the extent of quitting the Central cabinet, and received a public reception from the AIADMK to hail his sacrifice.

To Jayalalitha's credit, it must be stated that she contributed her mite in ridding Tamil Nadu of the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] menace. She had

inherited a state where the separatist group had got away with the murder of EPRLF [Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front] leader Padmanabha and several others in a bloody battle played in the heart of a placid city like Madras.

But came July 1992 and Swamy appeared on the horizon. The very next month came G. K. Moopanar's call to Tamil Nadu Congressmen to regain their 'self respect' by ceasing to be yes-men of the AIADMK. Swamy's campaign gained momentum and on October 2 he presented his petition to the governor, seeking her disqualification as an MLA under the People's Representation Act.

Becoming more and more certain that Swamy could not be operating without the Congress leadership's tacit approval, in November 1992, an angry Jayalalitha is alleged to have levelled corruption charges against Narasimha Rao at her much publicised lunch with a few editors at Delhi. Of course she denied this later.

After this, her attacks on the Centre mounted, be it on flood relief, the hiking of the price of rice without consulting state governments, poor Central investment in the state, or the imposition of Hindi—the issues were not as important as the message that the Congress could not take her support for granted.

The first few days of the budget session saw a fiery Jayalalitha leading the AIADMK assault on the Congress. But after the petition was passed on by the Governor, the Assembly witnessed a subdued chief minister. And on the very first day after this news broke out, Leader of Opposition S. R. Balasubramaniam took a dig at her by raising the question of her status as an MLA.

All eyes will now be on her, and it remains to be seen how she emerges from this setback. Will she adopt a wait-and-watch policy; allow herself to be pushed against a wall; or will she take the bull by the horns by dissolving the Assembly, and daring the Congress to face the electorate once again? Only the inscrutable empress of Tamil Nadu knows.

Congress (I) Seen Still Beset by Internal Factionalism

*93AS0750A Calcutta BARTAMAN (Supplement)
in Bengali 28 Mar 93 pp 1*

[Article by Atanu Bhattacharya: "Is Congress' Fight Over Ideals or Over Power?"]

[Text] This is not a revolt. Sheila Dixit said these words with an extra stress. She is the front leader of the anti-Narasimha Rao Arjun brigade and sister-in-law of the former West Bengal governor, Mr. Uma Shankar Dixit. What's happening in Congress is no revolt.

Exactly, not a revolt, but a forceful fight has begun. Many people may think that Arjun Singh has run out of steam, he has abandoned all hope; but the matter is not that

simple at all. What Arjun Singh is doing is simply politics. In politics, no fight ends after one or two party sessions. Rival factions do not give up. Otherwise, politics on earth would not be that much fun; it would not be such a lucrative profession. Otherwise, the Communists in Russia could not have cornered Boris Yeltsin after the fall of the Soviet Union.

The simple meaning of politics is struggle, dialectics. Dialectics of power, struggle around power. It is a naked fight to grab power. But beyond each confrontation remains some moral or ideological questions. Superficially, the power struggle assumes the character of a moral and ideological fight. The moral or ideological question becomes important. But in essence the nature of the fight remains power-centered. Sometimes, this struggle assumes the nature of a revolt, sometimes it does not. In such cases, the related real situation has an important role.

Today the powerful clash between Narasimha Rao and Arjun Singh in the Congress is the same thing—a power struggle. This fight is gradually becoming naked. But the eternal icing of morality, ideology is covering the fight. Narasimha Rao is both the prime minister of the country and president of the Congress Party. Arjun Singh cannot stand this overlordship of Narasimha Rao. Many others also could not swallow it. But only Arjun Singh has stepped forward rolling up his sleeve. His immediate goal is to displace Narasimha Rao from the post of Congress president. On the other hand, Narasimha Rao is resorting to all sorts of strategy to retain his power seat. Everything is being done with an eye on the throne.

It would be a misnomer not to describe it as a power struggle.

But in his effort to net in wide support in this power struggle, Arjun Singh has brought up certain moral questions, such as the reestablishment of the "one man, one post" tradition in the Congress, launching a movement after a Congress revival against communal forces, rerouting the party along the ideals of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, and Rajiv Gandhi, and on the whole, to revive a sagging Congress. These are all the issues of Arjun Singh and his factions—their first and prime duty. Arjun Singh has emerged in the role of the standard-bearer of conscience of the Congress Party.

The Congress is really exhausted, worn out as a result of BJP's attack. Arjun Singh is today following the motto, "Save the half-dead with more pain." He does not lack any weapon in his arsenal.

Let's go back a little further. This confrontation ensued after the day Narasimha Rao formally became the all in all of the Congress Party and the Central Government. Narasimha Rao was supposed to retire. But fate and forces of circumstances made him extremely powerful. Fate and political situation were not favorable for Arjun Singh and Sharad Pawar at that time. But both Arjun Singh and Sharad Pawar regretted, if Narasimha Rao could make it, why shouldn't we! That was the start of

the cold war or the war of nerves. On one side, Narasimha Rao, and on the other, Arjun Singh and Sharad Pawar calculated their own moves. In their calculations, both Arjun and Sharad were no less than Narasimha Rao. Today Sharad Pawar would have remained an Arjun cohort and could have embarrassed Narasimha Rao. But the political situation was not favorable to Sharad Pawar. The terrible explosions in Bombay immediately after he became the Maharashtra chief minister have compelled Sharad Pawar to leave the power squabbles at the Central level and save his own ground in Maharashtra.

But Arjun Singh was waiting for an opportunity from the beginning. Initially, the fight between Narasimha Rao and Arjun Singh was a cold war of nerves. As the days passed, the edge of this struggle sharpened, because Narasimha Rao almost created the issues for Arjun Singh's use by committing wrong steps. Arjun wanted this—he wanted to intensify the struggle and challenge Narasimha Rao's leadership with some questions and make him powerless in the process. As a politician, Arjun Singh has certainly been successful in his primary goal.

The point should be noted again and again that at first Arjun Singh was not openly against Narasimha Rao. He provoked many an element in the Congress. But he waited for a pressing issue with the precedents of faults committed by Narasimha Rao. He was observing the way Rao was courting BJP in the name of consensus politics, how he handed over the post of the Lok Sabha deputy speaker to the BJP. In return, BJP leader Lal Krishna Advani certified him, saying that Narasimha Rao was the most qualified prime minister after Lal Bahadur Shastri. After this, the destruction of the Babri Mosque on 6 December at the hands of insane religious workers and the day-long silent spectator's role of Narasimha Rao as the prime minister and Rao's prevarication and hesitations in banning the communal organizations have created a ripe situation for Arjun Singh. The secular policy, ideal, tradition of the Congress are being compromised and Arjun Singh has gotten such a big ideological issue. What more can be hoped for! The fight has reached its crescendo.

But did Arjun Singh not get any chance to catch Narasimha Rao on a wrong foot? The Narasimha Rao government committed many a mistake before the Ayodhya incident. The billion-rupee share scam was at hand to destabilize Rao. The economic scandal could have been a moral issue. But Arjun Singh didn't want to throw stones at others' glass houses, since he himself was ensconced in a similar room. Arjun Singh knew that he was involved in the Churahat lottery scandal in Madhya Pradesh. It could boomerang itself if he became vocal against Narasimha Rao on the economic corruption issue. Then Narasimha Rao would be after him with the Churahat lottery scam. That's why Arjun Singh waited until he got an ideological issue to knock out Narasimha Rao.

Narasimha Rao has prepared this ground for Arjun Singh by displaying various compromising, soft attitudes toward the BJP. The Congress has gradually become weak in the Hindi belt. BJP has swelled too. Narasimha Rao somewhat coiled back even when BJP as well as the Sangh clan challenged the Congress of demolishing the Babri Mosque at Ayodhya. There was noticeable prevarication in the government's initial reaction.

Arjun Singh created a hue and cry in the meantime. The Congress needs a full-time president to resolve the crisis—a person who would be able to steer the party against BJP in a proper direction. Thus, Arjun Singh was able to turn the power struggle into an ideological conflict. Moreover, certain steps of the Rao group have made Arjun Singh's task easier. One of the major AICC general secretaries and a close lieutenant of Rao, Mr. Janardan Poojari, said in a statement a few days ago that most of this swelling of BJP happened during the rule of the late Rajiv Gandhi.

To make things worse, Arjun Singh, about a week and a half prior to the AICC session, has really come down on Rao, armed with the blessing and support of Sonia Gandhi. Rao has steered the Congress from the ideology and tradition of Pandit Nehru, Indira Gandhi, and Rajiv Gandhi by compromising with the BJP and communalism. Democracy has to be restored in the Congress. A new president has to be appointed by following the principle of "one person, one post." The Congress has to challenge BJP head-on keeping the secular tradition in mind.

The Rao-Singh fight has another aspect. It is true that Narasimha Rao is trying his best to drive the last nail into the Congress coffin. Today, it is really necessary to have a full-time president to revitalize the Congress Party. Arjun Singh and others have raised this demand. But who is Arjun Singh's candidate? Whom would they install as the Congress president after removing Rao? There is no definite name in this regard. Differences of opinion on the issue are bound to happen. Does Singh himself want to be the Congress president? Does he want to make Sonia Gandhi the party chief? These questions have not been resolved, yet such a noise has been raised about the "one person, one post" issue. What is the gain!

Rao Party 'Victory' Questioned

93AS0750B Calcutta BARTAMAN in Bengali 1 Apr 93
p 4

[Article by Pabitra Kumar Ghosh: "Alas, the Joy of Victory"]

[Text] The sun then rose at Surajkund! Narasimha Rao has returned home, liquidating his enemy. The double crown on his head remains intact. The reins of both the party and the government have stayed in his hand. The Opposition is knocked down. Now, the lackeys in the party should sing around their savior.

But who are in this group of devotees? On whose intellect, advice, ability to devise complexities, cleaver-ness did Rao play his final cards? All of them are old emergency hands. Many of them were Sanjay lackeys. The emergency was their prime time.

The old emergency stars, such as Bhajan Lal, Vidya-charan Sukla, Kamal Nath, S. B. Chavan, Gulam Nabi Azad, etc., have gotten back their full radiance. But Mr. Pranab Mukherjee has beaten them all. He is also a hero of the Indira regime. The prime minister is blue if he is not around. The prime minister cannot bear his absence even for a moment.

The prime minister, surrounded by these stars, proceeded towards victory. This coterie first played their showstopper by continuing the Congress Working Committee session throughout the night and tiring Mr. Arjun Singh in the process. Mr. Arjun Singh was dumbfounded at the beginning of the week. And at the last day of the week, Mr. Singh licked his own dust at the fair ground of the AICC [All India Congress Committee] session. His defeat was despicable, and that too in front of everybody.

The seasoned players of the Narasimha camp have revealed what an undependable leader Arjun Singh is. Mr. Pranab Mukherjee and others have demonstrated successfully that Arjun Singh looks after his own interests only under the garb of high talks—that he is basically a selfish person.

Nobody can beat Pranab Mukherjee in revealing the true nature of the Arjun character. Pranab Mukherjee was a higher place of power and prestige. Arjun Singh was not even known nationally, when Pranab Mukherjee was the second man in the Indira cabinet. That Pranab Mukherjee kept his cool on the Indira assassination day and proposed Rajiv's name as the prime minister. But after a while, he was dissatisfied with Rajiv's policy and works and began protesting publicly. He was a member of the Rajya Sabha. There he fired his first salvo against the economic policy of Rajiv Gandhi. After that in 1985, he was so critical in the presence of Rajiv Gandhi at the Congress centenary celebration in Bombay that the microphone was snatched away from him. Mr. Mukherjee left Congress and formed his own party.

This is the form and tradition of open revolt. But Arjun Singh is fighting with a shopkeeper's mentality. His policy is—heads I win and tails you lose. He wants to win both sides of the coin. Arjun thought that he would be able to win the war by voice power without sacrificing a bit. He will threaten, but will not lose his ministerial post. He will form factions within the party, but will not be punished or expelled.

In his effort to reap all the benefits for himself, he has embarrassed his followers. Dancing to their leader's tune, these followers at first sat for a hunger strike at the AICC pavilion. They tried to create a vocal pandemonium for about 40 minutes after the welcoming address

of the prime minister. But Bhajan Lal's force was ready with batons. They scolded them and the cries fizzled out.

Arjun Singh was on the dias at that time, near the prime minister. He nodded at every proposal. He seemed to have forgotten totally the policy of "one man, one post," for which he shouted for months. He posed in such a way at the AICC session as if he were the most innocent person.

Pranab Mukherjee knows from his experience and has convinced the prime minister that the rebellion of people like Arjun Singh is insignificant, similar to a cotton-ball—it will wither with one blow only. That is why it is unnecessary to fire a canon. Even any severe punishment is uncalled for. Let Arjun be in the party, in the cabinet. There is nothing to worry about. Because he is simply a non-poisonous snake.

Narasimha Rao might have problems with Arjun Singh, but Arjun is a boon in disguise to Pranab Mukherjee. The first AICC session in the Narasimha regime was held in Tirupati in April last year. Arjun Singh startled everybody by bagging the highest number of votes. He has been trying since then to be the chief Congress leader of north India. Arjun is strongly vociferous against BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], because BJP is Congress' main poll rival in north India. He thinks that this strategy would be able to please the Congress workers of the Hindi belt, and it would possibly be recharged also. Besides, the importance of the south, Indian Congress leaders in Parliament cannot be curbed unless the party wins the poll and gets a large number of MPs [members of Parliament], and Narasimha Rao cannot possibly be debunked. This is the reason behind Arjun Singh's continuous anti-BJP tirade.

In the beginning, Narasimha Rao was in favor of compromise. A good relation developed between Narasimha and Advani. The posts of the speaker and the deputy speaker of the Lok Sabha were divided between the Congress and BJP. But Arjun Singh threw spanners in this project of friendship and cooperation—keeping in mind the regional political interests, and his own personal goals. The Congress fired the first salvo against BJP in the first AICC proposal at the Tirupati session of the Congress. The draft of that proposal was written by Arjun Singh.

Arjun Singh began to turn hot-headed around that time. He only displayed his might. The way Devi Lal used to display his mood, threaten, create problems in the cabinet of Vishwanathpratap Singh, Arjun Singh's role is somewhat similar in the Narasimha Rao cabinet. The only difference is that Devi Lal was the leader of the Jats; he had solid political ground under his feet. Arjun Singh does not have all these. That is why he wanted to baffle the opponent through sound and fury.

The Prime Minister was taken aback, too. As a result, the Arjun problem assumed such big proportions to him. But Pranab Mukherjee is a man of a different mettle. He

picked a thorn with another thorn. He cleared all the impediments in his way with this Arjun broom.

First, Pranab Mukherjee could up the responsibility of rescuing the Prime Minister only because the Arjun challenge injected fear in the prime minister's mind. Narasimha Rao appointed Manmohan Singh as the finance minister in his cabinet, dropping Pranab Mukherjee. Manmohan could not help the prime minister during his political crisis. Pranab Mukherjee drove home his point that he would be the savior during a crisis. Rajiv Gandhi, too, realized Mr. Mukherjee's worth in the last two years of his life.

Using the chance created by Arjun Singh, Pranab Mukherjee is disciplining the Rajiv coterie. The lackeys of Rajiv, when he abandoned Pranab Mukherjee, had to go one by one. Fotedar, Sheila Dixit, Natbar Singh were among the hunger-strikers at the AICC session. Their sun has set at the Surajkund. The pro-Rajiv elements are no doubt retreating. The pro-Sanjay group is now at the forefront. Though Narasimha Rao goes to see Sonia Gandhi quite often, Pranab Mukherjee does not go in that direction, and the reason is easy to understand by now.

But what did the Congress gain as a whole? The common people observed that even the AICC session is a place of intra-party squabbles; senior Congress leaders can belch out at a very high decibel level as they do during a street protest. Congress has no authority whom everyone would obey. The high command is saving itself through strategy and deception. Their foundation of prestige is not very firm.

The most important point is that the session was convened during a critical situation of the country, but the main agenda was Congress intra-party quarrels. The rest of the dialogue was a face-saver. People are least bothered by whether or not Arjun Singh is up or knocked down in the mud. Terrorism is much more important. It has spread from Kashmir to Meghalaya. The whole of India is worried after the bombing in Bombay and Calcutta. Nobody knows who will be the victim of the terrorists' bombs and bullets. Nobody would be able to say how much of the nation's properties and lives would be devoured by these terrorists' fire. The intelligence people fail to give advance information.

Narasimha returned from Surajkund at the beat of a winner's rhythm. But he did not discipline the country's enemies, tackle the blood-suckers of the nation, did not touch the bases of the country's corruption and sin. He could not even keep his family free from corruption. He himself has gradually become suspicious. Could it be considered a big win for the prime minister just because he has cornered Arjun Singh and his weaker companions.

Arjun Singh is not an enemy of the country, whatever his personality might be. He acts exactly like other ambitious political leaders. Narasimha Rao did not display a high sense of ideology. The Congress leaders seem to be the two sides of the same coin.

The AICC session cost around Rs [Rupees] 100 billions. It is natural for our minds to be filled with dejection if the neat result is only to hackle Arjun Singh and company, and the leaders' glee knows no bound. It has been revealed once more to what extent the Congress politics is devoid of any sense of reality, but is inward-looking, near-sighted, and of limited judgment.

Displaying a typical ostrich mentality, they think that the Himalayas have vanished. But the enemies have been maintaining flammable outposts at all corners of the country. They have started lighting fire. The nation's leaders are all standing by this conflagration and are engrossed in this display of mock fights.

Causes of Renewed Gorkhaland Demand Viewed

93AS0749B Calcutta ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA
2 Apr 93 p 4

[Editorial: "The Gorkhaland Demand Again"]

[Text] Darjeeling is again bracing up for big trouble. Having effectively discarded the district's autonomous hill council, the GNLFF (Gorkha National Liberation Front) has gone back to its old demand for a separate state of Gorkhaland. On the last day of the last financial year, this decision was approved at a session of the Council. There was enough indication that this was going to happen. At least, the GNLFF and its leader Subash Ghising were talking of this caution from time to time. Their point was that they would begin the Gorkhaland movement if they did not receive Rs [Rupees] 7 billion due from the state government on that day. There was no more than a verbal request to dissuade them. The state government did not try to pay the council the outstanding amount; moreover, the ban on spending the council's money has not been lifted. The elected hill council didn't receive any money to spend on the district's development, though it is responsible for it. Due to this, the council was losing popularity. Side by side, the dominance of the district administration, controlled by the Writers' Building, was slowly being established parallel to the council as the state government was spending money on various projects through the district administration. This way, the honchos of Alimuddin Street who control the Writers' Building were trying to starve GNLFF. The GNLFF leaders realized that their political existence would be at stake if this process were to continue. Hence, this fresh initiative to go back to the old path of demand and movement.

The main allegation of the state government is that the council does not want to give any account of the expenses, and it mostly wastes the money on unrealistic projects and non-plan sector. This allegation is yet to be proved. But the Center also charges similar allegations against the state government. The allegation of a step-motherly attitude that the state government raises against the Center day in and day out is displayed by this

state government against those civic bodies and Panchayats that are not under the ruling party—but controlled by the Opposition. The treatment the civic body of the Baharampur received from the Corporation minister, the way the legitimacy and authority of this autonomous organization has been curbed, the efforts to break its spine through financial pressure, make it hard to believe that similar tactics have not been used against the elected hill council of Darjeeling.

The trend of fulfilling a political vendetta against Darjeeling through stern measures has been noticed since the days when Darjeeling—known as an impenetrable CPM [Communist Party of India-Marxist] bastion—embraced the GNLF. The GNLF gave up the Gorkhaland demand and accepted the autonomous council arrangement with Central arbitration. After that, the state's rulers should have been responsible enough to extend all help to this council and prove its effectiveness. That would have protected the interests of peace and stability. But those who place narrow partisan interests at the top would prefer to bring back the party's old influence and rule. So from the beginning there was a lack of cooperation with the elected council, and all sorts of financial, political, and administrative options were used to prove its uselessness, along with criticism and denouncements. The demand for a separate state discarding the council is the result of all these.

The negative attitude and mentality of the government was reflected even in the political agenda of the chief minister. When GNLF appealed to the chief minister with an ultimatum to pay the dues of the council, he was busy with the gathering of the youth wing's function of the Darjeeling DYF (Democratic Youth Federation), as if to attend that meeting in the Darjeeling hills was more important than the demise of the autonomous council. Not all that Subhas Ghising has been doing is condonable either. But he is still the undisputed leader of the Darjeeling Hills, and the GNLF is elected by the people; DYF is a non-entity. Ignoring Ghising and bypassing the council's crisis of existence as an insignificant incident, the chief minister drove home his point that it does not really matter to him or to his party if Darjeeling again becomes tense and confrontational. Perhaps those moments of disturbances years ago have gone from his quickly fading memory. The problems of a district in his state appear unimportant and unrealistic since he is often summoned to solve crises of national politics. But experience would vouchsafe that this apparently minor problem may gradually assume the proportion of a communal divide.

Demand for Pawar's Resignation Criticized

93AS0755C Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
1 Apr 93 p 8

[Article: "The Moral Factor"]

[Text] The political future of Mr Sharad Pawar, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, has come under a cloud

so soon after his stature as a national-level stalwart of the Congress party had clearly enhanced. This is an inevitable fall-out of the strictures passed against him along with the party MP from Ahmednagar, Mr Yeshwantrao Gadakh, by a Bombay High court Bench in an election petition filed by the latter's independent rival. While setting aside Mr Gadakh's election, Mr Justice A. A. Halbe of the High Court held him as well as Mr Pawar guilty of "character assassination" of the independent candidate, Mr Balasaheb Vikhe-Patil in the campaign in 1991. This offence is actionable under the legislation against corrupt electoral practices. After the verdict, Mr Pawar contended that he was not directly involved in the case and had figured only as a witness. Whether this can save him from the penalty of disqualification under the electoral law will be finally known only after his intended appeal against the High Court's judgment is disposed of by the Supreme Court. In the meanwhile, his moral authority as the Chief Minister as well as a top Congress leader will be widely seen as having suffered an erosion. This is a professional hazard which no politician can escape. Indeed, the taller a politician, the more exacting are the norms he is expected to uphold.

Both in Maharashtra and at the national level, the case is bound to gravely disturb existing political equations. Mr Pawar returned to his home state last month after resigning as the Union Defence Minister in order to restore public faith in the administration shaken by communal riots and also [to effect] a semblance of unity in the faction-ridden Congress there. That itself was a recognition of the enormous clout he has wielded in the state. Since the traumatic series of bomb blasts that rocked Bombay, many, both in the Congress and outside, have felt that no other person could be expected to shoulder the burden of meeting the new threat to the stability of the metropolis more competently than Mr Pawar.

Despite all this, Mr Justice Halbe's adverse observations against Mr Pawar's election speeches are likely to raise doubts in the Maharashtra Congress about his durability as an unchallenged leader. His adversaries in any case will be emboldened to trigger a new rash of factional feuds. It is at the AICC [All India Congress Committee] headquarters, however, that there will be more serious question marks. After the Surajkund session of the AICC, for instance, Mr Pawar came to be looked upon as an invaluable asset to the prime Minister, Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao, in keeping the latter's critics like Mr Arjun Singh effectively at bay. Such calculations in the Rao camp will be in for a serious review, with the rival camp naturally seeing cause for not a little elation over the embarrassing situation in which Mr Pawar now finds himself. The Congress brew of intrigues has never suffered for lack of fuel.

Tamil Nadu House Speaker: Doordarshan 'Distorted'

93AS0755A Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
1 Apr 93 p 1

[Article: "'Distortion': TN Speaker Flays DD"; quotation marks and italicized words as published]

[Text] Madras—Speaker Sedapati Muthiah has charged the Madras Doordarshan Kendra of “deliberately distorting” Tuesday’s proceedings of the House in its news telecast.

“Strongly condemning” the official media for its “calculated move to denigrate” the august House, he recalled that the Kendra had telecast a report to the effect that the Congress members faced the threat of assault by ruling party members. “This is far from what actually happened in the House on Tuesday. It looked as though the Kendra, which was under the control of the Centre, was striving to serve the interests of somebody.”

Informing the house on Wednesday that he had received a notice of privilege against the DD from ruling party member Rajamannar, the Speaker said that *prima facie* it was a case of breach of privilege. However, he would like to reserve his ruling till he was able to obtain the reaction of the Doordarshan authorities. He would accordingly write to the DD.

He advised the official media that it would do well to convey to the public the true proceedings of the House. “I strongly condemn it for deliberately distorting the proceedings.” ENS

Kerala: Politicians Ignore Forest Encroachment

93AS0755E Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
1 Apr 93 p 8

[Article: “Titles for Misdeeds”]

[Text] There was euphoria among all political parties in Kerala over the distribution of title deeds to encroachers on government forest land prior to January 1, 1977. This is understandable with encroachers forming a substantial vote bank, particularly in the high ranges of Idukki district. But for the insolvency of the treasury, the land would have gone to the encroachers totally free. Even so, the modest price that has now been fixed—Rs [Rupees] 1,000 for holdings above half an acre and up to two acres and Rs. 2,000 for holdings above two acres—mocks at the State Resources Commission’s recommendation to realise the reigning market value, which is several times higher, from the encroachers. The latest regularisation exercise, which is the second of its kind, is estimated to cover 28,500 hectares of land and has been made to appear to be the last of the official largesse. Nonetheless, as part of the state’s competitive politics, all political parties have already raised claims over an additional 55,000 hectares of land.

The fact that organised encroachment has continued on a massive scale after the first regularisation of holdings in early 1968 betrays a certain official acquiescence in it. The argument that once the title deeds are given and forest boundary demarcated, fresh encroachment can be effectively prevented was advanced in defence of the first regularisation. And yet, of the total forest areas diverted to non-forestry purposes in the last decade, as much as 82 per cent had been due to encroachment.

Remarkably, the Union Environment and Forest Minister, Mr Kamal Nath, approved a scheme which clearly violated not only the National Forest Policy (NFP) with its express provision banning regularisation of existing encroachments but his own known stand against diversion of forest land for non-forest purposes. What is more, by exempting Kerala from the provisions of the NFP, he has diluted his insistence on the state governments fulfilling compensatory afforestation.

Amusingly enough, Mr Kamal Nath seems to have accepted the Kerala government’s undertaking that it would make available as much as 56,000 hectares for compensatory afforestation and pay the Rs. 110 crore required for this. Apart from Kerala’s poor record in afforestation of which Mr Nath is well aware, it is inconceivable that it would invest money in an area which enjoys comparatively low priority. There is no denying the human aspect of the problem. Also, the state-sponsored encroachment has ostensibly had a role in increasing farm production. But the enormous damage to ecology as a result of unrestrained encroachment cannot be wished away either. The need not merely to stop it but recover vast areas of the encroached lands has been stressed by various committees, some of which were known to be sympathetic towards encroachers. Tragically, none heeds the advice for fear of losing votes.

BLITZ Editor Interviewed on Switching Support to BJP

93AS0734F Bombay *THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA* in English 2 Apr 93 pp 32-33

[S. Balakrishnan Interviews BLITZ Editor R. K. Karanjia: “I Have Ceased Being a Donkey Long Ago”; place and date not given; quotation marks and boldface words as published]

[Text] R. R. Karanjia, the flamboyant 81-year-old editor of the Bombay tabloid, BLITZ, has raised many an eyebrow in media circles by espousing the cause of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and Hindutva. A tabloid known for championing the cause of the communists—specially the CPI [Communist Party of India]—and the Congress, suddenly changed its policy and started rooting for the BJP. But Karanjia remains unfazed by allegations of opportunism. In this interview, he explains why he has taken a sudden liking for the brotherhood in saffron. Excerpts:

There is a good deal of controversy in media circles over your ideological somersault. What is your reaction?

Doesn’t the rest of the press perform what you call an ideological somersault? Change is the law of nature and it applies to publications too. You must accept that the Congress is a dying institution. After what happened in Bombay and the Sharad Pawar-Sudhakar Naik controversy, how can I support that party? The world changes and so does politics. As George Bernard Shaw said ‘consistency is the virtue of donkeys’ and I have ceased to be a donkey long ago. (Laughs). If the rest of

my colleagues consider themselves to be donkeys I cannot help it. I must grow. It is part of evolution.

But, isn't the line dividing change/evolution and opportunism rather thin?

Well, call me what you want. I am what I am. I foresee events. I have what you call the third eye or sixth sense born of more than 60 years of experience in this profession. I am known for my best feature: 'tomorrow's news today.' I am not supporting events. I am reporting them. I give them an emphasis.

We are not BJPites, I am certainly not a member of the party. There are many things about the BJP which I strongly object to and I have written about them in my editorials. In the case of Ayodhya, for example, it was a case of the tail wagging the dog. It is the party which is going to form the government next year and I want to be the first to report it. This is a scoop. You may call this opportunism. What is happening is something more than change. It is the thirst or hunger of a majority community to seek an identity for itself. The wandering Indian wants to be known as something or the other. Like the Jews. Look what Israel has transformed the Jews into; the most powerful community in the world. I think the Hindus want that. Otherwise they are going to get crushed by the emerging Islamic fundamentalism, which is growing worldwide. This is what an American told me yesterday. Pakistan is a confirmed enemy. Bangladesh is a growing enemy. Afghanistan is an ally turned into a foe by Islamic fundamentalism. Teheran is wooing former republics of the Soviet Union. You have Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. It is a huge formation. I know my history and geography too well to ignore this. So there is a definite need for ideological preparedness (to face) this growing threat.

But, Mr Karanjia...

Yes, I was a leftist. I was a socialist. Sometimes I was called a communist. But where has all that gone? Where is the Kremlin today? It has become a satellite [word illegible] the U.S. Where is communism in India [words illegible] the world? I cannot support a [words illegible].

[words illegible] there are indications in the Soviet Union that the communists are asserting themselves again.

I would be false to myself, my ideology and to my god if I continue to support something which has been exposed.

You have no regrets about having supported leftism....

I have no regrets. Communism died with Lenin. Now we realise that what was being practiced was Stalinism. Most of those who are opposing me are Stalinists. I witnessed it in parliament when I was not allowed to speak and again on February 25 during the BJP rally when my MP [Member of Parliament] identity card was taken from me. The repression was so severe that even the Pakistani army would have found it difficult to reach the Boat Club.

At what stage did you decide to revise your policy?

About two years ago when I joined parliament. In my maiden speech, I had clearly said that the electorate has asserted its demand for a coalition government. Therefore, as the second largest party, the BJP cannot be ignored. I suggested a change in the system—a system which has failed with regard to socialism, secularism and non-alignment. I would suggest a Congress-BJP alliance because the BJP cannot stand on its own legs and the Congress can save itself and the country by seeking this alliance.

How has your staff taken to this change?

There has been no trouble.

But there are reports that a majority of your staff is very unhappy about this shift.

If they are unhappy I should be the first to know about it.

What about your deputy editor, P. Sainath, who quit?

Sainath had been wanting to leave for the past six months. I have all the correspondence with me. I know Sainath is a leftist, yet I have never interfered with his column. I shared an excellent relationship with Rajiv Gandhi, yet I did not prevent Sainath from criticising him. On two occasions, Rajiv even asked what had happened. Today, I respect Advani and hold him in high regard, yet, once again I have allowed Sainath to call him a liar six times in his column.

It is alleged that this shift in your editorial policy is motivated by the dwindling circulation of the BLITZ rather than any ideological considerations.

The circulation has not fallen. I can show you the real circulation. If I have any problems, it is with the advertising and the BJP is certainly not going to fetch me that.

You are in parliament because of the Congress. Does the change in your policy mean that you will be quitting parliament?

When I was elected, the ruling party was not the Congress. I was not elected by the Congress. But I still have faith, and therefore, I want to save it. It should consider me god's own saviour. I am for a Congress consensus with the BJP. And the PM [Prime Minister] is known as a man of consensus.

But given the Congress party's pathological obsession with the politics of the vote-bank, is it conceivable that it will join hands with the BJP?

Well, it did. Who helped the BJP with the Ekta Yatra? A patriot, it was the PM who helped it.

You claim that left to himself the PM could have prevented the demolition at Ayodhya. How do you support that claim?

If the PM had simply asked the BJP to help him out, Advani would have responded. I have seen Advani and Vajpayee at Rao's residence. But this communication broke after the Tirupati AICC [All India Congress Committee] session which the PM felt very unhappy about. If the PM had asked for a year's time (to solve Ayodhya) he would have got it. In any case, the Babri Masjid was no mosque at all. The idols did not rise from the air. Not a single Muslim worshiper has been there since our freedom. But unfortunately the whole thing got confused.

But Advani had completely lost control over the kar sevaks. So how would his assurance have helped the PM?

The hotheads would have become coldheads. The PM believes that time heals wounds.

Does this mean that the PM is softer towards the BJP than the rest of his party?

No. It means that he is a realist and is merely taking a realistic attitude towards the second largest party in the country.

Does your adulation for the BJP extend to the Shiv Sena too?

No. Bal Thackeray does not reply to me. My Urdu editor was attacked.

You talk of a Congress-BJP coalition. Why not a national government?

Why not? But such a government has to include the BJP. Why leave the BJP out? Because the leftists don't like it? What authority do the leftists command? Are they leftists?

You mean the leftists have no credibility?

They are not leftists, but rightists. Leftists in their pronouncements, but rightist in their actions. They have no place in a world of market economy. They accuse me of change of policy, but I accuse them of an opportunism of the worst type.

It is alleged that the kind of things which Bombay witnessed recently are the things going to take place once the forces of Hindutva come to power.

No. I don't think so. The Muslims will cease to be a vote-bank. They will become a human factor.

What do you think of the Wahiduddin formula to solve the Ayodhya problem?

In my opinion that is the answer.

What about Kashi and Mathura?

Nobody will bother about that. If they do, I will certainly oppose it. Enough is enough.

Why can't we have an identity without reference to religion?

A nation needs an identity. Why has India lagged behind and why are Korea, Taiwan or Singapore far ahead? Because they have an integrated identity.

But why not an Indian identity?

We have our Hindutva, our Vedanta. It is supposed to be the computerised knowledge of the universe—past, present and future. It gives you the right to become god so long as you follow the rules.

Could a Muslim, Parsi or a Sikh draw inspiration from Hindutva?

As a Parsi, I owe everything to this country. Not the slightest restriction has been put on our religion or worship. Can this happen in an Islamic country? That is Hindutva. I realise, unfortunately too late, that I owe my eminence to Hindutva. The minorities have nothing to fear from the BJP coming to power.

Nagaland Suffers From Socialist Rebels' Attack

93WR0215Z Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
3 Apr 93 p 1

[Article: "8 Shot Dead by NSCN Ultras"]

[Text] Imphal, April 2 (PTI)—NSCN [National Socialist Council of Nagaland] (rebel [I] group) guerrillas shot dead eight persons and seriously injured another at Tingkai under Senapati district on Thursday night, the police said.

All the victims belonged to the Haokip community.

Rao's Loyalists Rewarded With Foreign Trips

93AS0755H Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
3 Apr 93 p 1

[Article: "For Killing Dissent at Surajkund: PM's Men Get Foreign Tours"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi—The party has just begun for all the Prime Minister's men. For their exemplary show of loyalty and streak of ruthlessness in killing dissidence at Surajkund, members of the Union Cabinet are packing their bags for a well-earned holiday in the cooler climes of Europe and America.

Abandoning the so-called austerity raj, the Prime Minister's office has cleared the foreign jaunts of at least 17 members, including those who want a short break before Parliament re-convenes later this month.

Welfare Minister Sitaram Kesri was the first off the blocks, having left for Canada immediately after Parliament broke up earlier this week.

Taking advantage of the parliament recess, the much-harassed Mr P. R. Rangarajan Kumaramangalam is off to the United States later next week. Accompanying him

to a United Nations symposium in Chicago, will be another young member of the Council of Ministers, Mr Salman Khursheed.

Among others cleared for trips abroad effective in May and June are Mr Balram Jakhar, Mr Dinesh Singh, and Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad.

Power Minister N.K.P. Salve is also likely to travel to the Middle-East, Europe and the United States later this summer. However Mr Salve said that his tour plans had not yet been formalised. "There is pressure on me to tour primarily because the funding institutions are abroad. There are also negotiations in the power sector," he said. The Minister clarified that he, in any case, would be travelling club class, "something he had not done all his life as a professional."

Labour Minister Mr P. S. Sangma is headed for Dubai next month for some labour conference. He is currently away in Shillong. Minister of state for Tourism Sukhbans Kaur Bhinder is also likely to be given the green signal for a tour of the United States. Mrs Bhinder's application in January this year was turned down by the PMO [Prime Minister's Office] on the grounds of political instability following the Cabinet reshuffle.

Environment Minister Kamal Nath who perhaps ought to get the flier's award for relentlessly criss-crossing the world is also expected to run away from the heat. His office was tight-lipped, but indicated that some tour was in the offing.

The Minister in any case is scheduled to go to Montreal in June. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, doubtless, heads the list of those in the Indira Gandhi airport's 'departure lounge.' He is slated to leave for Thailand and Bangladesh later this month. Also under active consideration is a trip to the United States in June.

The indulgence of Mr Rao towards his cabinet colleagues is in striking contrast to his earlier tough stand of frowning upon all requests for foreign visits. Other Ministers, quick to realise that the days of austerity are over, have rushed their requests to the PMO.

BJP Seen Offering Strong Opposition to Congress Economic Policies

93AS0748A New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi
4 Apr 93 pp 1, 10

[Article by Atul Jain: "The Sangh Parivar's Opposition to Economic Policies is on the Verge of Confrontation"]

[Text] New Delhi 3 April. The Indian Labor Union is planning a huge rally to protest the government's economic and industrial policies and the swadeshi [promoting domestic production] campaign on 20 April. This is the beginning of the RSS [Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh] family's restarting its fight against the government's economic policies. After this rally, a communique will be presented to the president asking him

not to tolerate pressure from international companies. The RSS family is becoming furious over the Dunkel proposals also. The RSS family is expanding the attacks on the government's economic policies that it started last year under the swadeshi campaign.

The RSS family is trying to make up for the negligence it has shown during the last eight months in the area of economic policy and is going to attack the government from all sides. The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) will play a leading role as usual. The Kisan Sangh [Farmers Union] also rallied recently in Gandhinagar to show its opposition to Dankal proposals. The Bharatiya Janata Party demonstrated the RSS family's interest in the economic area by presenting a parallel budget even before the government budget was presented. The All India Student Federation will also discuss economic issues in its next National Working Committee meeting and plan its strategy.

The truth is that the RSS family wants to use this four-pronged attack to remove the delusion that it has no economic policy. It is becoming more eloquent about its demand for a Hindu economic policy. The RSS family is very encouraged by the prophesy of M.G. Bokre, the former vice chancellor of Nagpur University and once a staunch Marxist economist, in which he said that the Hindu economic system is the economic system of the future. He has also written a book on this topic recently. Professor Bokre is also a convener of the swadesh renaissance platform inspired by the RSS philosophy. Last year, the RSS family swadeshi campaign was gaining momentum before the Ayodhya incident. The RSS had staged this drama in every part of the country. This campaign was suspended for several reasons. The main reason was the involvement of all RSS family organizations' active participation in the Ayodhya campaign. The swadesh campaign was slowed down in July when the kar seva was started.

Additionally, the BMS which was most active in this campaign, got involved in an investigation of the membership of its various affiliates at national level. The Ayodhya campaign had also started then. Since then, the RSS family has been busy in demanding building of the Ramjanambhoomi temple, slowed by the ban on the RSS, and collecting signatures protesting dismissal of the BJP state governments. During this time, the BMS became annoyed at the government's economic policies. Rajkarishan Bhagat, the general secretary of the organization, says that they will not allow these policies for more than two or three years, and they will do anything to stop them. However, they have to develop the right attitude of the people for it. He admits that their contact with people was interrupted when they stopped the swadeshi campaign. They are going to start this campaign with equal thrust. He calls the rally scheduled for the 20th the beginning of this fight.

However, the swadesh campaign got a big jolt from the merger of two major national companies with two international companies. After seeing an affiliate of Godrej

merging with Proctor and Gamble, Tomco announced its merger with the Hindustan Lever Limited. The swadeshi renaissance platform was advocating use of soaps manufactured by Godrej and Tomco instead of using foreign products. However, this development has not disheartened the RSS family. Mr. Om Prakash Agghi, the veteran BMS leader, says that these incidents only support their fears. If these international companies can devour even major Indian companies what hope is there for small companies? Mr. Prabhakar Ghate, another veteran leader, contends that the boycott of international products is just a symbolic gesture; their main goal is to instill regard for swadeshi products among the people. This would be the measure of real success of the campaign.

The various organizations within the RSS family have also started a serious effort this week to plan their strategy against the Dunkel proposals. Madandas Devi, co-director of the swadeshi renaissance platform, said that the greatest challenge they had was to free the government from the pressure of international companies. They are willing to cooperate with other groups to achieve this goal. The active participation of the RSS family parties in a recent meeting held on patent laws surprised everyone. Madandas Devi said that his party was not predetermined about any issue. "All we want to make sure is that our government does not forsake our national interests under international pressure."

Jharkhand Militancy: South Eastern Rails Blown
93WR0215Y Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS in English*
4 Apr 93 p 1

[Article: "Jharkhandis Blow Up Rail Tracks"]

[Text] Ranchi—In the biggest attack on the railways during the ongoing economic blockade, Jharkhand militants blew up rail tracks causing derailment of the Puribound Utkal Express between Ghatsila and Dalbhumgarh stations on the South Eastern Railway's Tantanagar-Kharagpur section early on Saturday.

According to official reports one metre of track was blown up by powerful explosives let off by the militants minutes before the Utkal Express passed.—UNI

High Court Decision Against Congress Seen Historic
93AS0749A Calcutta *ANANDA BAZAR PATRIKA*
in Bengali 5 Apr 93 p 4

[Editorial: "A Historical Judgment"]

[Text] The top leadership of the Congress, so accustomed to going to gurus and godmen, may as well try to find out what evil conglomeration of planets has caused the repeated dashing reprimand from the court. Three times, and that too within a week. In the first two instances, the chief ministers of Maharashtra and Goa were directly involved; on the third occasion, the court's

frown was straight on the Central Government. In other words, the prime minister and the Congress president have to face the music on all occasions. Another case, which is in limbo in the court, may become a cause the prime minister a headache, but that's his family matter—not a party or government problem. Narasimha Rao has to think about Sharad Pawar, whom the prime minister almost forcibly returned to the chief minister's chair—not so much for the interest of the riot-torn, mishap-ravaged Bombay, but more for the party's interests. Besides, Sharad Pawar pumped in a lot of backing to the prime minister in the recent Surajkund session. It is not possible to forget that beneficence. Goa's chief minister, Mr. Rabi Rayek, was also threatened by a court verdict. The Opposition has brought the proceedings of the Assembly there to a standstill on the occasion of this verdict. The Jabalpur verdict followed, which has suddenly put wind in the sail of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] at a single stroke. This has nullified the president's order to dismiss the then government in Madhya Pradesh. Due to that order, the Sundarlal Patoa government was dismissed and Madhya Pradesh was under president's rule. The order was signed by the president but the decision was, of course, taken by the Central Government. Everybody should ponder the significance of illegally announcing that order! The Jabalpur High Court has given the Government two weeks to appeal to the Supreme Court against its own verdict. Maybe, the highest court won't accept that verdict. Yet, nobody can deny that the Jabalpur verdict is historic.

On 15 December, when the elected government in Madhya Pradesh was dismissed and president's rule was imposed, it was voiced that the state's law and order situation was about to break down. All around there was excitement and the administration was virtually at a standstill. Contesting the president's order, the debunked chief minister went to court. One of his points was that it had been done by the Central Government to take political revenge; the question of law and order has been unnecessarily mingled with this. The opinion of the Jabalpur High Court is that the mention of deterioration in the law and order situation in Bhopal and two other cities mentioned in the governor's dispatch was not sufficient to impose president's rule in any state. It has also not been proved that the then state government has failed in fulfilling its constitutional obligation or that the administration was about to disintegrate. So the court could not ignore the appeal of Sundarlal Patoa. The chief minister of Himachal Pradesh, Mr. Shanta Kumar, also went to court against the president's order. In fact, president's rule has been imposed repeatedly on many states, but no debunked chief minister did go to court against those orders. From that perspective, too, the verdict of the Jabalpur High Court would remain a special precedent.

Now, only to look forward to the Supreme Court—what will the Supreme Court's decision be! The BJP is naturally the happiest in the current course of events. Because the more the Congress is at a political disadvantage, the more the BJP gains. But the sacking of their

party's governments in four other states has given the BJP leaders and workers a forceful cause to continue their movement. Even if the Supreme Court verdict goes the other way, this edge will stay. The ruling Congress at the Center will have to think that the logic of a decision has to be determined before taking the extreme step of firing any elected state government and imposing president's rule. It is true that the 6 December incident at Babri Mosque created an unprecedentedly tense atmosphere in the country. The government had no other alternative but to take stern steps. But when president's rule was imposed on the BJP-ruled states, such as Madhya Pradesh on 15 December, this initial excitement was absent, and there was a marked improvement in the riot situation. There would perhaps have been no harm in displaying some more patience, a little extra restraint. Besides, it is always wise to consider judiciously before sacking any state government, irrespective of the ruling party. If the Jabalpur verdict ensures this, then the resultant constitutional gain will not be less. In the future, at least no president will have to feel awkward after signing similar orders.

High Court Judgement Against Congress Seen Significant

93AS0748C Varanasi AJ in Hindi 5 Apr 93 p 6

[Article by Shashi Shekhar: "The Question is Not Just That of Dismissing the Patwa Government"]

[Text] The Jabalpur High Court has put the government in the accused box. The court ruled that the New Delhi government's dismissal of Sunderlal Patwa's government was unconstitutional. The court has given two weeks for the central government to appeal the decision. It is expected that the Center will make use of this opportunity to present its case with all the supportive information. However, no one disagrees that this decision has raised some questions, which neither the government nor the courts can answer. These will be answered in the court of the people, and the government will have a hard time in this court.

Sunderlal Patwa and his associates did not form the government with anyone's sympathetic help or by cheating. They received the mandate of the people through the elections. The people, who are powerful only during the elections, had willingly showered the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] with their votes. Were these votes just trash paper? No, these votes carried the wishes, dreams, and trust of the people of the Indian republic. The New Delhi decision to establish president's rule and dismiss the rajya sabha had kicked all these out. At that time, the question arose as to how appropriate it was to ignore a clear mandate from the people. What negative results will this action cause?

It was also said that time that dismissing the governments and vidhan sabhas in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Himachal Pradesh was not appropriate. The disputed structure was demolished in Ayodhya on 6

December. It was Kalyan Singh's government that did not keep its promise and failed to follow up on the court orders. Why did the government leaders in Bhopal, Jaipur, and Simla had to suffer the consequence of the mistakes made by Lucknow rulers? If the Center wanted to dismiss a government, it should have dismissed Kalyan Singh's government. At that time, the question whether there was any solid reason for dismissing the UP [Uttar Pradesh] Vidhan Sabha also had echoed in the wilderness of Indian politics. This vidhan sabha was also elected according to the Constitution. The BJP majority in it was also the straight and honest expression of the people's feelings. This was not a political party's fraudulent action, so that the minority government of Narasimha Rao should get angry at it and try to destroy it. They did not only dismiss the Lucknow government but also the vidhan sabha there. Kalyan Singh had already submitted his government's resignation to the governor even before New Delhi issued orders. Still, he was fired. Things did not stop there. Governments in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Himachal Pradesh were also dismissed. Why was all this done?

Narasimha Rao and his associates in power gave a naive excuse that all these governments were BJP governments, and all the cabinet members and officials had direct relations with the banned Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, and other organizations. Therefore, they could not let these governments stay in control. However, these great political scholars did not even have any flimsy excuse for dismissing the vidhan sabhas in these states. What could they say, anyway? The sun of truth was shining with full elegance on the top of their heads. They could not hide it with the dark shroud of their reasoning.

Every wise person understood it. The minority government of Narasimha Rao had staged this farce to push the increasing BJP supremacy in Uttar Pradesh into a ravine. They felt that it was necessary to stop the progress of the BJP which had won the north and was ready to spread into the south. The safest method to do this was to find an excuse to dismiss the four BJP governments so that the BJP would see its quest for power to be a short dream. This way the BJP would be fighting to keep its hold on power and would be stuck in northern India.

The truth is that the frustrated mentality of the Congress Party was behind the actions of the New Delhi rulers. After being in power for a long time, the Congress Party people had developed this specific "power mentality." They consider it important to share power in any party's growth. A decade and one-half ago, there was no challenge to them. The same is not true now. Had they studied the increasing popularity of the BJP, they would have learned that this party was very tightly organized and striving very hard. Being in the government had always hurt it. We wonder if the Congress rulers have forgotten what happened when the RSS merged with the Janata Party in 1977. With only one and three-fourths of a year in power, this party managed to destroy the

four-decade-old solid traditions of the RSS family. That is why, after the disintegration of the Janata Party and at the creation of the Bharatiya Janata Party, the top leaders of this party had taken the oath to protect their original character, vis-a-vis their hold on government.

They did stand by this oath. They did not join the Janata Dal which was formed on the Janata Party formula. The BJP endorsed the Janata Dal only on principle and formed an election coalition with it. Later, it also gave support to V.P. Singh's minority government. However, it did not participate in the government in spite of repeated invitations. They did benefit from it. In the 1991 mid-term elections, the BJP emerged as a powerful political force. It formed majority governments in four states. It also increased its vote percentage significantly, and emerged as the largest party after the Congress (I) in the Lok Sabha.

How its progress made other parties nervous is clear from one small example. Only four years ago, in 1989, all non-Congress parties, including the BJP, joined forces against Rajiv Gandhi. The situation had totally changed in the beginning of 1993. All political parties including the Congress (I) are thinking about forming a coalition against the BJP. The BJP definitely did not gain this power by being in the government or getting support from someone; it got it by pure hard work. It is deplorable that those in the New Delhi government forgot this important aspect when they started to work on obliterating it. It is a foregone conclusion, however, that it will be the BJP that will benefit from it all.

One more thing. The Central Government had argued, when dismissing the Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Himachal Pradesh governments, that the cabinet members of these governments had direct relations with the banned parties. It could not take reasonable action against these parties and unconstitutional groups unless it dismissed these governments. However, had the Central Government implemented this pious plan? The top leaders of these banned parties are still roaming fearlessly. They are doing their job and are issuing press releases openly. The government could not gather moral courage to arrest them to this date. Among the leaders named, only Vinay Katiar was restricted in Rasuka. However, Katiar has not made the list of the top leaders in the RSS family. Efforts were also made to arrest Balasahab Devras, RSS's acting president. However, the government had to retreat because of the strong reaction by the people. It is clear that the Center assassinated its own logic through its own actions before it even took root.

In this situation, the Jabalpur court decision will prove to be very anti-government. A panel of three judges has declared two to one that the dismissals of the Madhya Pradesh government and the vidhan sabha are unconstitutional. It is possible that the Center knocks on the Supreme Court door to complain against this decision. It is insignificant what decision the Supreme Court makes; it is clear that the Jabalpur High Court decision had once

again put the government in the accused's corner in the people's court. The results of this decision will definitely be far-reaching, because in the court of the people the questions will not be limited to the dismissal of the Patwa government.

Congress (I) Said Incapable of Meeting BJP Challenge

*93AS0769D New Delhi PATRIOT in English
6 Apr 93 p 4*

[Article by R.N. Sharma: "Taking on the BJP Challenge"]

[Text] Believing in the time-tested theory that offence is the best defence, the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] decided to go on the offensive from the very day when its cadres along with the kar-sewaks of the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] and RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] demolished the mosque in Ayodhya. Its leaders were probably right in saying that now onwards their party would be deciding the political agenda for the country. There is no denying the fact that for the last two months or so, the BJP has been calling the shots, compelling their rivals to adjust their strategies and plan their moves accordingly. However, the major political party that is directly effected by the BJP onslaught is the Congress. In fact, the BJP is also targetting at the Congress alone as also its government at the Centre.

But is the Congress ready to take on the BJP? Probably not because so far it is groping in the dark, and does not know how to cope with the situation created by the BJP's strategy of confrontation. The rank and file of the Congress, which is looking towards the leadership for guidance, has been left in the lurch. As a matter of fact, the leadership is more busy in intra-party factional fights and has no time to work out a strategy to counter the BJP offensive.

The administrative actions (dismissal of the BJP run State governments, banning of the religious organizations and banning of the BJP rallies and such like steps), mostly taken in haste and panic by the Congress government at the Centre, provide no answer to the political challenge thrown by the BJP.

The Congress leadership should know that the BJP has a well-oiled organisation and very disciplined and committed cadres. To this have been added the more disciplined workers of the RSS and dedicated sewaks of the VHP and the Bajrang Dal. The Congress cadres (if at all there are any) are no match to the combined strength of the so-called Sangh Parivar. The Congress leaders and workers have only learnt to fight and win elections (without power they always behave like fish out of water). They are yet to learn the alphabets of the strategies to fight the political challenges, especially the one thrown by the BJP and, that too, probably, for the first time in the Independent India. The Congress was lucky to have mass-leaders like Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi who had been fighting the political battles for it.

Now there is none who can carry the party on his or her shoulders. Mr Narasimha Rao does not fit into such a slot.

While Mr Rao and his party dithers and gropes in the dark, the BJP seems to have prepared itself well to confront the Congress on all the fronts. Its spokespersons have almost launched a war of words on the Congress and the Central Government. The manner in which they comment on the day to day affairs of the country and also on the government's working, shows as if the BJP is already making itself ready to take over at Delhi (the spokespersons give an impression of a shadow cabinet). The Congress leaders, on the other hand, are so pre-occupied with their factional fights as also busy in fire-fighting missions in different States, that they do not have time even to think of the strategies to counter the BJP propaganda, leave alone taking on the BJP by horns.

It is, however, time that the Congress should wake up to the fast changing political scenario in the country and the challenge thrown to it by the BJP. It should be noted that the BJP challenge is not just a passing phase. It is growing with every passing day and the Congress can ignore it only at its peril.

Argument for Smaller States Criticized

93AS0734C Calcutta *THE STATESMAN* in English
6 Apr 93 p 5

[Article by Hardwari Lal: "Smaller States: Look Before you Leap"]

[Text] With the Ayodhya outrage and its repercussions having become the focus of national attention, other sensitive issues, such as creation of smaller States, have taken a back seat. But they are merely dormant.

Take, for instance, the demand for a separate Jharkhand which is still being voiced and more vehemently than ever before. The speeches of Mr L. K. Advani at Ranchi and Hazaribagh, during a recent tour of Bihar, are most significant. Sensing the weakness of the saffron wave in Bihar, he tried to enthuse his audiences by advocating creation of a Vananchal State by dividing Bihar. In fact, fearing that the temple movement may eventually peter out, the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] seems to be looking on the issue of smaller States as a second string in its bow.

Redraw Map

It will be recalled that the party's manifesto for the last Lok Sabha election prominently mentioned the issue of creation of smaller States. Only a few months ago, the Uttar Pradesh Assembly had passed a resolution for the creation of a Uttaranchal State. Soon thereafter, Mr A. B. Vajpayee strongly demanded the immediate creation of a second States Reorganization Commission "for redrawing the political map of the country." So, the BJP may well make the issue of big States versus smaller States the main campaign plank in the next election, just

to arouse passions and win votes. It may not be forgotten that the BJP swept the 1990 Assembly polls in the hill region of Uttar Pradesh on the promise of supporting the creation of Uttaranchal as a separate State.

Although the matter of reorganization of States has a long history, the Congress has been blowing hot and cold. In 1930, it resolved that units of the country would be formed on a linguistic basis. In its manifesto of 1945-46, the Congress again assured the people that the provinces would be constituted on a linguistic basis.

There was, however, a radical change in the party's stand after Partition. Decrying the demands for reorganization of States, Nehru said that "first things should come first and the first thing is the security and stability of India." The Dar Commission only voiced the view of Congress leaders that India was facing problems more urgent than the redistribution of provinces. Thus, even the old demand for a Telugu-speaking State was strongly resisted. The Centre relented in this case only after Potty Shriramalu's self-immolation.

Seeing the Government's policy of drift relating to linguistic States, the demand for such States continued to mount. A Commission was appointed in 1953 to suggest reorganization of the States. Some of its recommendations were accepted. But there was no stopping the demands for linguistic States. In 1960, Bombay, a bilingual State, was divided into Maharashtra and Gujarat. A few years later, a weak Centre crazily agreed to the reorganization of Punjab which Nehru had been rightly and strongly resisting since 1956. This resulted in the creation of three separate States: Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh.

The question of linguistic homogeneity apart, economic disparities among different regions of the country have also given rise to regional parties and demands for separate States. Something certainly needed to be done after 1950 about the reorganization of administrative units. But the electoral calculations of different parties and political leaders have prevented the consideration of various demands for separate States on a rational basis. For example, if any State needed to be divided on administrative grounds, it was Uttar Pradesh [UP] Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant announced that U.P. could be divided only over his dead body. On this, the case for the division of the most unwieldy State of the country was, for all practical purposes, closed.

Right Balance

Politically and economically, the country is in deep crisis. It will be ideal if contentious issues facing the polity are shelved for a few years. But if the creation of smaller States remains a live issue, the primary factors which should be taken into account are: administrative convenience and the economics of smaller States. If our claim that we have unity amidst diversity is valid, linguistic homogeneity should not be cited as a reason for the division of bilingual States. It is, of course, imperative that regional imbalance in the matter of

development is swiftly corrected, for the case for smaller States rests on the argument that such States can be efficiently administered and rapidly developed.

Haryana's phenomenal development since 1966, when it came into being with only six districts, is often ascribed to its small size. A protagonist of a separate Jharkhand State, Dr Munda, recently said that a separate Jharkhand State would be as rich as Haryana. Now, it is true that throughout the country Haryana has been considered to be a success story these last 20 years. But this stems from lack of complete information.

Haryana, along with Punjab and western U.P., has become a rich grain-growing region solely because of the Green Revolution and the Bhakra Dam, a source of irrigation for parts of Haryana and a supplier of energy. Formed in 1966, Haryana had become selfsufficient in foodgrain by 1967. Proximity to Delhi has also helped Haryana greatly.

Delhi is the market for Haryana's milk, vegetables, poultry and fodder. It offers employment to Haryana's youth and businessmen, their income finding its way to the State. Some of Haryana's towns have grown into major industrial centres because of their location on the periphery of Delhi. An expanding Delhi and the increasing number of industrial units established along the highways passing through Haryana have sent the price of agricultural land sky-high, marking quite a few farmers in Haryana millionaires during the last two decades. Haryana's prosperity, therefore, owes nothing to its small size or efficient administration.

Unhappy Lot

There is much else which goes against the concept of smaller States. There is, for example, a notable deficiency of political talent in those parts of the country which are striving for separate Statehood. Even Haryana, which is known for its material attainments, has been governed all these years by small-time politicians who have not exactly been the role models to be emulated by politicians as a breed in this country. In fact, Haryana has proved that small-sized administrative units are unlikely to have the proper sort of administration. Sick of personalized administration, the elderly folk of Haryana are nostalgic about the British days.

There is then the operational cost of reorganization. The smaller the number of MLAs [Member of Legislative Assembly] the more difficult it is to keep the flock together. For example, up to 1965, composite Punjab never had a Ministry of more than 10. After its reorganization in 1966, the resulting units have had to bear the cost of armies of Ministers and high-ranking bureaucrats.

Thus, in Haryana, every second MLA has had to be appeased with a place in the Ministry or with an equally attractive job outside. Further, there are now half a dozen Financial Commissioners, countless Commissioners, a number of Directors-General of Police, a host

of Inspectors-General, and quite a few Deputy Inspectors-General. Among themselves, the three States of Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh are spending on their Ministries and services at least 10 times the money Punjab was spending up to 1966. It is hardly surprising that all the three States are now in the red and all development work is at a standstill.

Sikkim Said Preparing for 'Snap' Elections

93AS0734B Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
6 Apr 93 p 5

[Article: "Sikkim Congress(I) To Prepare for Snap Elections"]

[Text] The Sikkim Pradesh Congress(I) president has asked partymen to pull up their socks, as two Congressmen are expelled for anti-party activities

Gangtok, April 5.—The Sikkim Pradesh Congress(I) Committee president, Mr Ashoke Kumar Subba, has called upon his partymen to gear up the organizational activities and prepare for a snap poll in Sikkim at the end of this year, reports UNI.

Talking to reporters here yesterday, Mr Subba said there might be a snap poll any time after September. However, he did not elaborate on the reason. The general election is slated for November 1994.

Meanwhile, the SPCC(I) [Sikkim Pradesh Congress Committee], at a party meeting yesterday, passed a number of resolutions, including those on the expulsion of two district Congress(I) presidents for anti-party activities and full support to Mr Subba's leadership in the State.

The South district and West district presidents, Mr Rajen Gurung and Mr Hemlall Basnet, respectively, were expelled yesterday for anti-party activities, and the resignation of the East district president, Mr Dadul Bhutia, was accepted by the SPCC(I).

The resolution accepted the appointment of the South district president, Mr Thakur Singh Rai, in place of the expelled leader, Mr Gurung. The elections of West and East district presidents would be held soon, Mr Subba said.

Disciplinary action would be initiated against the AICC(I) [All India Congress Committee] Mr Gurung, for his anti-party campaign programme. The SPCC(I) would send a letter for disciplinary action against him to the party High Command and the Prime Minister today.

Mr Gurung, son of the former Chief Minister, Mr Bhim Bahadur Gurung, was also demanding disciplinary action against Mr Subba for his alleged involvement in the Tripura lottery scam in February.

In another resolution yesterday, the SPCC(I) extended full support to Mr Subba's leadership till concrete proof

was found against him about his alleged involvement in the scam, the SPCC(I) general secretary, Mr Athup Lepcha, said.

Effect of Judicial Verdict Against Congress (I) Viewed

93AS0734A Calcutta *THE TELEGRAPH* in English
6 Apr 93 p 6

[Editorial: "Benchmark"]

[Text] The overriding image conveyed by the decision of the Madhya Pradesh high court to strike down the presidential proclamation that dissolved the legislature, dismissed the Sunderlal Patwa ministry and imposed president's rule on the state is one of unprecedented judicial resolve. It would be more accurate to say it takes some previous judgments on the modalities of such proclamations to their logical extreme. It has ramifications as well on a less rarefied plane. On one level the 2-1 verdict has inflicted the legal equivalent of corporal punishment on the P. V. Narasimha Rao government and its questionable motives in dissolving three Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] governments. If the discrepancy in imposing president's rule on pacific Himachal Pradesh while not doing so on blood soaked Maharashtra received only passing commentary earlier it was partly because of public cynicism regarding the abuse of Article 356. On another level, the judgment is further example of a remarkable flexing of judicial musculature even more impressive than the Aurangabad high court's humiliation of Mr Sharad Pawar.

Even a cursory examination of the Jabalpur verdict makes it evident the Congress government barely bothered to do the paperwork when it declared president's rule. The failure to specify the Patwa ministry's supposed "acts of omission and commission" and the lack of any statement in the governor's report that the ministry was not enforcing the ban on the Rashtriya Swyamsevak Sangh [RSS] were surprising lacunae given the Congress' long experience with Article 356. The bench was wholly right to distinguish between law and order problems as opposed to the sort of constitutional breakdown that is supposed to provide the basis for president's rule. Sectarian violence, as the court noted, nowhere reached sufficient proportions in the state to constitute anything more than a matter of law and order. If riots alone were sufficient basis to impose Article 356 then half the states of the union, West Bengal included, should have suffered the same strictures.

Whatever the final decision of the Supreme Court regarding the matter, the Jabalpur bench deserves to be applauded for extending the purview of the judiciary into the activities of the executive. The Supreme court set the basis for judgments on the use of Article 356 in 1977 so that Jabalpur verdict is sure to leave a mark. This and the Aurangabad verdict are remarkable in that they represent a judicial enforcement of the spirit and the letter of existing legal statutes that have simply been

ignored. Nonetheless, their lordships should realise the limitations of judicial activism. Courts are not invested with the sort of popular legitimacy to infringe too often in the political sphere. History records numerous confrontations between judges and rulers and how when push comes to shove it is generally the former who have found their authority curbed. But Jabalpur has reminded the Indian public that political mischief is not necessarily free from challenge.

Congress Said Failing To Capitalize on CPM Mistakes

93AS0751B Calcutta *THE TELEGRAPH* in English
7 Apr 93 p 10

[Article by Tarun Ganguly: "Sparing the Opposition's Rod"; italicized words as published]

[Text]

If the CPI(M) Has Failed its Duty To Enforce Law, the Congress Has Failed To Take it To Task

It is the best and worst of times for the West Bengal Congress. The December riots followed by the Bowbazar blast put a heavensent political scenario on a platter for the party. But, as luck would have it, the Congress is in no position to take advantage of the situation. The recently concluded All India Congress Committee [AICC] session at Faridabad has once again exposed the deep divisions within the party.

The Congress in West Bengal is at war with itself. For long the broad divisions within the party were limited to squabbles between supporters of the Pradesh Congress committee president, Mr Somen Mitra, and the youth Congress president, Ms Mamata Banerjee. Now Mr A.B.A. Ghani Khan Choudhury's revolt against the sycophants of New Delhi has added a new dimension to the fragmentation of the state Congress. Mr Somen Mitra, a protege of Mr Ghani Khan Choudhury, tried to diffuse the tensions created by his guru's dissension at Faridabad. But the veteran Congressman made it clear he was in no mood for a compromise.

Much to the consternation of the Congress president, Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao, Mr Ghani Khan Choudhury has made no bones about his dissatisfaction with the leadership by leading a delegation of dissenters to Mrs Sonia Gandhi. He has even invited the dissident leaders to his hometown, Malda, to address a public meeting there to launch a struggle against the fundamentalism of the Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP].

Mr Gani Khan Choudhury, however, is not alone in his fight against the politics of *status quo*. In her own way Ms Mamata Banerjee has expressed her dissatisfaction with the Central leadership by not participating at the Faridabad session of the party. During that time she visited Tripura to participate in the election campaign there. The PCC [Pradesh Congress Committee] president and his lieutenants wholeheartedly supported the official line

at Faridabad. But ultimately he drew a blank when Mr Narasimha Rao told him categorically to go soft on the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] in West Bengal.

Given that panchayat polls are only a couple of months away, this attitude of the Central leadership has put Mr Mitra in a bit of a spot. He cannot be too critical of the CPI(M), which will of course expose him to the tirade of the Mamata Banerjee camp. Neither can he question the line taken by Mr Ghani Khan Choudhury who is his political mentor.

But what is truly a matter of concern for the Congress is the drift within the party. The Congress legislature party leader, Mr Zainal Abedin has admitted the situation is such it would not be surprising if a section of Congress workers shift their allegiance to the BJP or come to some sort of understanding with it in the panchayat polls. Mr Mitra however has boldly announced his party will take on both the "fascist CPI(M) and the fundamentalist BJP." As things stand, this statement is destined to prove a bluff.

The Rashid Khan issue has also highlighted the confusion within the Congress. The party has tried to bring adjournment motions on the issue twice, asking for a debate in the assembly. On both occasions it failed simply because it could not muster the support of 30 members of the assembly though it has a strength of 41. The failure has raised doubts on the party's seriousness in holding a discussion on the issue.

All this will only serve to help the CPI(M) which, after 15 years in power, is finding it increasingly difficult to keep the faithful away from bourgeois vices. The Rashid Khan incident has highlighted the nexus between a section of party stalwarts and the underworld. It has also exposed the city's law and order machinery as incompetent. No one had any clue about the stockpiling of explosives only a few blocks away from the police headquarters at Lalbazar.

The Calcutta detective police ought to accept responsibility for its criminal negligence in keeping tabs on mafia dons which resulted in the loss of more than 70 lives in the Bowbazar blast. The assistant commissioner, anti-rowsy section, Mr P. N. Roy, who was primarily responsible for keeping a watch on underworld activities has since been transferred. But why and how he was appointed for the post are questions to be answered. The link between some policemen and politicians and Rashid Khan has to be probed.

Mr Tushar Talukdar is an honourable man, and an honest and efficient officer. Yet, despite umpteen assurances, he failed to arrest men like Moghul and Sridhar. His department has not framed proper chargesheets in time which only helps criminals to get away on technical loopholes. One would also like to ask him what prevents him from interrogating small time politicians known to be connected with mafia dons. Mr Talukdar has to answer these questions. He cannot avoid them by simply

clamping a ban on newsmen at Lalbazar or delegating the duty of regular police briefings to his underlings.

All said and done, the December riots and the Bowbazar blast have exposed the inadequacies of the police. People are tired of the anti-capitalist tirades of politicians and the attempt to divert public attention from the enormous criminal implications of the Bowbazar blast by turning it into just another imbroglio between the police and the press.

As an opposition party it is the duty of the Congress to take the ruling Left Front to task for its utter failure to ensure law and order. Unfortunately, the entire issue has become a game of one-upmanship between a handful of leaders, thanks to the internal politics of the state Congress. Things are already hotting up in the party over nominations in the panchayat polls. It will not be surprising if Congressmen remain preoccupied washing more of its dirty linen in public during the run up to the elections.

Mamata Banerjee Termed 'Lost Child' of Congress (I)

93AS0768D Calcutta *THE STATESMAN in English*
8 Apr 93 p 8

[Editorial: "Congress(I)'s Lost Child"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Miss Mamata Banerjee has not been able to resist exploiting the embarrassing revelations since the Bowbazar blast to stage a stormy comeback. If her march to Writers' Buildings on Monday was not quite the same as her November 26 rally on the Maidan, it is partly because she has been left to her own resources while she claims to be speaking as much on behalf of the West Bengal Congress(I) as for herself in expressing resentment against the Left Front's misrule. That she has greater credibility in her belligerence than any in the 50-member cheering brigade that headed straight for Surajkund cannot minimize the isolation forced upon her. It is only to be expected that the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] would try to cash in on the confusion in the PCC(I) [Pradesh Congress Committee] ranks to rally anti-Marxist forces in West Bengal.

The march to Writers' Buildings was symbolic since it is now clear that Miss Banerjee has some hard decisions to take after the Prime Minister's astounding declaration that the AICC(I) [All India Congress Committee] had to refrain from criticizing the Marxists "in the wider interest of the nation." The PCC(I)'s enfant terrible has intelligence as much as guts to realize that the "wider interest" does not extend much beyond the party's survival. Tactical moves by the High Command to appease the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] have fooled no one and the transparent moves of the AICC(I) to adopt an anti-CPI(M) resolution, largely for the record, have lent little credence to its hollow campaigns against the Left Front. Naturally, Mr Narasimha Rao was in no position to oblige even after Mr Somen

Mitra managed to restrain Mr Ghani Khan Chowdhury from joining the dharna by the dissidents. However, there is still disturbing evidence that the PCC(I) chief's mentor is working hand in glove with Mr Arjun Singh. Quite apart from the farce involving Mr Khan Chowdhury, the Prime Minister has compelling reasons for leaving the West Bengal unit of his party to its sorry fate. Sacrificing a faction-ridden unit showing no signs of concerted revival might be a small price to pay for holding the delicate balance at the Centre with Mr Jyoti Basu's support. That still leaves Miss Mamata Banerjee in a grave dilemma. Going off to campaign in Tripura while the rest of the State unit's leaders joined the Surajkund circus was her way of keeping everyone guessing. Even now, with the popular support she draws, she is as much a source of concern for the High Command as she is for the CPI(M). The High Command is perhaps reconciled to the virtual death of the party in West Bengal. If there is still hope, it is that the rebel, with all her excesses, refuses to be chained and sacrificed along with the party. To what purpose, is far from clear.

Communist Victory in Tripura Called 'No Surprise'

93AS0769C New Delhi PATRIOT in English
8 Apr 93 p 4

[Editorial: "Back in the Left Front"]

[Text] Tripura's election results have produced no surprises. A thoroughly discredited Congress-TUJS [Tripura Upajati Juba Samiti] coalition has met with its deserts—a crushing defeat at the hustings. In fact, notwithstanding former Chief Minister Samir Ranjan Barman's recent boastful declaration that the Congress-TUJS would be voted back to power, the shaky position of the coalition had been obvious from the start. That perhaps explains the desperation with which the State government, ably assisted by the AICC [All India Congress Committee] poll observer for Tripura, Union Minister Santosh Mohan Deb, had launched a win-at-all-costs electoral campaign earlier in February. The Chief Election Commissioner was obliged to postpone the February polls. The intervening period helped the CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist]-led Left Front to cash in on the growing public disaffection with the Congress-led coalition. After five years, the Left Front thus has bounced back to power. Of the 37 results available, the CPI-M has bagged 29, while the RSP [Revolutionary Socialist Party] and Forward Bloc have got one each as against the Congress which has managed to retain only three seats. Its coalition partner, the TUJS, has fared much worse, winning just one seat, compared to its seven in the last Assembly. What is more significant is that while the winning candidates to the Left Front have improved their victory margins, those of Congress-TUJS victors have been drastically reduced. Of course the fact that 12 of the 30 seats won by the lowest margin last time belonged to the coalition had, in view of the mostly multi-cornered contests this time, made the Congress-TUJS position extremely vulnerable to even

the slightest swing in voting. But poll arithmetics apart, it was obvious that rampant factionalism in the Tripura Congress adversely affected its electoral chances. The Congress was a house divided against itself—with all prominent Congress candidates, including former Chief Minister Barman, and TPCC [expansion not given] president Radhika Ranjan Gupta, pitted against rebel Congress candidates. The party could hardly have been expected to fare better. No doubt the rival CPI-M too had been afflicted by a continuing power struggle between the party's old guard, as represented by former Chief Minister Nripen Chakrabarty, and the upcoming new leadership in the party. But the coalition government's lapses had provided it the opportunity to present itself as the better alternative to the perennially feuding Congress satraps. The indictment of the State administration for electoral malpractices by the Election Commission backed the Left Front's criticism. This perhaps explains why the Left Front has not only wrested power from the Congress-TUJS alliance in the tribal belt, as was expected, but has fared well even in urban Bengali majority areas.

BJP General Secretary Interviewed on Minorities

93AS0768F Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
9 Apr 93 p 16

[Interview with K.N. Govindacharya by THE STATESMAN; place and date not given]

[Text] Question: Are the minorities safe under BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] rule?

Answer: Absolutely. Have you witnessed any riots in the BJP-ruled States? Our battle is not against minorities but against minorityism, which allows vote-hungry politicians to use them as vote banks. However, we would not like to pamper them but regard them as co-citizens, with equal rights. You can say we want to bring an end to the exploitation of minorities by politicians.

Question: But hasn't the Ram Janambhoomi-Babari Masjid issue created a lot of ugliness between majority and minority communities?

Answer: Yes, it has polarized the nation, but between the rationalists and pseudo-secularists. If there was a backlash from any quarter, it is because of the misconception and malpropaganda against us. The masses have understood our concepts, but the politicians are vitiating the atmosphere, resulting in mental blocks among the people. Minorities, especially Muslims, continue to be with us. We have seen their large participation during our Ekta rally. But we are against Khomeinization of religion.

Question: Do you support the Babari Masjid demolition?

Answer: The complexity of the issue and the unexpectedness of happenings warrant neither condonation nor condemnation but a deeper understanding as to the causes that led to the incident.

Question: Were you present then? If so, what would you have done? Would you have stopped the demolition?

Answer: I would have kept myself rooted to the spot and would have done nothing else. You see, I have some self-control and don't give myself away to emotions and sentiments.

Question: Where do you get the self-control?

Answer: It comes from practice and awareness.

Question: Don't you consider the BJP's Hindutva an anachronism in the present-day world?

Answer: Why should it be so? Hindutva includes other modes of religions and worship, takes divergent views and disparate ideologies into its fold. You can describe it as a sort of commonwealth of religions. The masses have realized the concept but the problem lies with the politicians. We do sincerely try to imbue this spirit of Hindutva among the people and see that it is not ignored by practice of minorityism in the name of secularism. It will only give the nation and its citizens an identity, pride and self-respect. Aren't these essential for India at this juncture?

Question: Don't you think that the Ram temple issue has outlived its utility?

Answer: Not at all. The Ayodhya temple issue aims at several objects. It tries to correct the distortion in the practice of secularism. At the same time, it aims at infusing the concept of the identity of nationhood in the geo-socio-cultural sense and not in the territorial sense. We would like it to be a symbol of stimulating the native genius by ensuring further involvement of the people. Let it be a symbol of our national identity.

Question: But couldn't it give rise to a majority complex which is dangerous to the country? Can one compare the situation to Nazi Germany?

Answer: It's not true at all. As I said earlier, we are against minorityism and not against minorities. There is no question of the majority swamping over the minorities. But we want an end to pseudo-secularism.

Question: Since you are not making any headway outside the Hindi heartland, are you in search of fresh issues which will have an all-encompassing hold?

Answer: I don't think we need any other issues. The Ram temple issue, I believe, has that all-encompassing hold over the masses.

Question: But aren't you exploiting the Ram temple issue as well as other political parties latch on to various other issues? Where is the need of raking it up?

Answer: The BJP didn't do that. There was accumulated anger among the people because of the way the minorities were being protected in the name of secularism. The BJP has just responded to this situation and to the

sentiments of the people. These had been ignored and, one can say, kept trapped by the vote-hungry politicians.

Question: Who do you rate as the stronger political enemy—the Congress(I) or the Leftists?

Answer: I won't say enemies, but they are competitors. The Leftists, the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] in particular, are better ideological competitors. To the credit of the CPI(M), it is also responsible for the lumpenization of the State apparatus. They are the masters in that art.

Question: Religion and politics—shouldn't these two be ideally kept away from each other? Why does the BJP encourage sadhus in politics when they should be elsewhere, away from these complications?

Answer: I am pained to see this shrill criticism against the participation of sadhus and sanyasins in the political realm. They are citizens and during times of crisis they are welcome to contribute to society if they have the capacity to do so. But I am against sadhus queuing up for party tickets. If the party needs them, they should be requested to that end and it is up to them to respond.

Question: The Prime Minister has said he will build a temple on the disputed site in Ayodhya through a trust. Will this move take the wind out of the BJP sails?

Answer: I think the Prime Minister is only buying time. Unless he spells out his action plan in a detailed manner it would not be proper to react. But he is only delaying matters. In our opinion, the temple should be built at the original site, with the mosque outside the Panchkoshi.

Question: Why are you so keen on attaining power at the Centre? How could you raise the temple issue when there are so many basic problems that are unresolved?

Answer: Power is not the be-all and end-all, but only instrumental in ensuring peace and prosperity for the people. We are confident of ushering in that peace and prosperity for the people, when in power. If our goal is correct and the path scientific, we will achieve that end.

Question: Are they correct and scientific really?

Answer: Yes. I sincerely believe so.

Question: Would you have attended the Pakistani High Commissioner's Iftar-cum-dinner party, as was done by your party president, Mr Murli Manohar Joshi? Would you have done so, if invited?

Answer: In the present situation, I would rather have avoided the invitation.

New BJP Politician Seen Powerful Mover, Manipulator

*93AS0769E Calcutta SUNDAY in English
10 Apr 93 p 27*

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] Here is your quiz for the day:

- Who was it who warned Mrs Gandhi that Operation Bluestar could have tragic consequences?
- Which moral giant was it who advised Giani Zail Singh against taking any precipitate action against Rajiv Gandhi?
- Which vastly popular politician so threatened N.T. Rama Rao that he threw him out of the Telugu Desam?
- Which man of action promised that soon Doordarshan would be far better than the BBC?
- Which former minister in the V.P. Singh government was better known to journalists as a railway PRO [Public Relations Officer], who made the rounds of the offices, offering them coupes in fully-booked trains?

All right, the last one gave the game away, didn't it? You're right, it was none other than the man in the ill-fitting safari suit, P. Upendra, recent convert to Hindutva and latest recruit of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party].

But if some of the questions posed above startled you a little bit, don't worry, the answers have startled us all.

Did Upendra really warn Mrs Gandhi about Bluestar (more to the point, did Mrs Gandhi know who Upendra was?), and did he really stay the Giani's hand in 1987? Well, apparently he did. We have this on good authority—Mr Upendra's own word.

Last year, he published a political chronicle in Telugu, entitled Gatam-Swagatam which, apparently, translates as *The Past—An Aside*. According to THE TIMES OF INDIA, our man of many parts "surprised readers with his lucid style, simple prose and gripping narrative."

Gripping it certainly was, considering that by his own account, he was not only in a position to offer advice on matters of national importance, but that he was always, but always, right.

As for the slightly credibility-damaging claim that NTR [expansion not given] was jealous of his growing popularity, that comes from an interview he gave SUNDAY in March 1992. ("Interviewer: That's very hard to believe. Upendra: I still maintain that he was envious of my growing popularity.")

And the risible stuff about turning Doordarshan into a better organisation than the BBC comes from another SUNDAY interview: in 1990, when he had just been appointed information and broadcasting minister.

If all this makes P. Upendra seem like some Andhraite Walter Mitty, as a man who is a legend in his own mind, then don't be misled. He may talk big, but by God, he thinks big too.

Consider how he started out. A railway PRO, he was a familiar figure in newspaper offices in Calcutta where journalists would groan inwardly each time his grinning form was framed in their doorways. They knew that he was there to push a press note and they knew that they would have to put it in if they were to count on him for getting railway bookings.

Most PRO's remain PROs. But during the 1977-79 Janata government, Upendra was fortunate enough to become special assistant to railway minister Madhu Dandavate. Once he was ensconced in a position of power in Rail Bhavan, it was clear that his days of explaining why broad gauge was better than meter gauge were over. He attracted the mentorship of Jaipal Reddy and seemed set to join politics.

But he was no dummy. Rather than languish in obscurity with Reddy and the Janata Party, he struck up a friendship with NTR in 1982. When the mercurial Andhra Pradesh politician took a liking to him, Upendra resigned from the railways and joined politics full-time.

NTR sent him to Delhi where he became the Telugu Desam's liaison with the national Opposition, and used his PR skills to get vast amounts of media coverage for himself. According to Gatam-Swagatam, it was Upendra's idea to make NTR the chairman of the National Front in 1988, and he has frequently claimed in his interviews that he 'projected' NTR throughout the country.

All this paid off when V.P. Singh made him minister for parliamentary affairs and information and broadcasting in his National Front government.

That proved to be Upendra's moment of glory and it has been downhill ever since. He says that NTR's family (in particular, his son-in-law) resented his closeness to the great man.

Moreover, he claims that even NTR was getting jealous of him. ("Telugu Desam cadres were flocking around me," he told SUNDAY in 1992.) Hence, says Upendra, his days in the TDP [Telugu Desam Party] were limited.

Nevertheless, he was not part of the Desam rebels led by V.K. Raju, who defied the party whip in 1992. Still, NTR and family held him responsible for the revolt and he was kicked out of the party.

At this stage, Upendra began playing the martyr. (Sample quote: "I am like a woman who has been thrown out on the streets by her husband.") But he also began exploring possibilities with the Congress(I). Gatam-Swagatam is full of attacks on NTR, contains excuses for Mrs Gandhi (she didn't want to dismiss NTR, others did it, but her commitment to democracy ensured that she reinstated NTR), and says nice things about Rajiv Gandhi.

Nice try, but no dice.

Narasimha Rao did not clasp him to the Congress' bosom.

And so now. Upendra found a new home. No doubt, his next volume of autobiography will deal with the manner in which he projected L.K. Advani.

Congress Said Using Reservation Issue to Counter BJP

93AS0769F Calcutta SUNDAY in English
10 Apr 93 pp 22-23

[Article by Nirmal Mitra: "Breach of Faith"]

[Text] The Mandal issue held centre stage of Lok Sabha on 19 March. Angry Opposition members stalled the proceedings in protest against a government report identifying the "creamy layer" of the backward castes which is to be denied the benefits of reservations. The government, they said, had not taken the House into confidence before deciding on an issue of immense national and social significance.

It was not only the Opposition that raised hell. Even Digvijay Singh of the Congress(I) joined Janata Dal and Left party MPs [Member of Parliament] in arguing that all sides should have been consulted on this matter. In view of such strong feelings, Speaker Shivraj Patil permitted brief speeches by the MPs, saying that a detailed discussion on the issue would be taken up later. Which made minister for welfare Sitaram Kesri nod in approval.

And for good reason. Congressmen believe that implementing the Mandal Commission report at this stage would help undermine the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s Hindutva campaign. Especially, when the BJP is trying to co-opt both the backwards and the Harijans.

But even if this move hurts the BJP, not everyone is sure that it will benefit the Congress. It may be recalled that the Janata Dal (JD), the party which brought the report out from cold storage and made a national issue of it in 1990, was badly battered by a nationwide agitation in protest against the reservation system.

Nevertheless, the government's assessment is that the Mandal issue can take the wind out of the BJP's sail. But by avoiding a thorough discussion on the "creamy layer"—those among the backward castes who should be excluded from the reservation benefits because of their already advantageous economic position—the government was only subverting the Mandal report, the Opposition argued.

How would the backwards benefit if the decision on the "creamy layer" was taken arbitrarily? True, the Supreme Court had assigned the task to the government. But should the Lok Sabha have been presented with a fait accompli?

The government had set up an expert committee with Justice (ret'd.) Ram Nandan Prasad, a former judge of the Patna High Court, as chairman to suggest the criteria for identifying the "creamy layer." Also on the panel were

M.L. Sahare, the former chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), R.L. Majithia, the former chairman of the Rajasthan Revenue Board, and P.S. Krishnan, a former secretary to the Union government.

The committee stated:

—Social and educational factors, and not income, were to be the guiding principles.

—Only when social and educational advancement of the backwards is such as to put them "at par with the forward classes" can they be placed in the excluded category.

—The rule of exclusion would apply to a person who is able to shed the attributes of social and educational backwardness by gaining employment or engaging in a trade or profession of "high status," as categorised in the report.

—Being appointed as a Class-I officer in the government would bring one into the "creamy layer," and the rule of exclusion would then apply to a Class-I officer's spouse and offspring.

—The rule of exclusion would not apply to the family of a Class-I officer who dies, or is permanently incapacitated.

—The brothers and sisters of a Class-I officer would not be denied reservation.

—While the rule of exclusion would apply to the offspring of a couple where the husband and wife are both Class-II officers, it would not be applicable if only one of them is a Class-II officer—unless, of course, the male officer gets promoted to Class-I category before reaching 40 years of age.

According to the expert panel's report, only when the "creamy layer" is "substantial and stable, formed after crossing the rubicon of social backwardness, then alone can it be made the basis for disentanglement."

A similar set of criteria for exclusion would also apply to the officers in the public sector, banks, insurance companies and universities. Also excluded would be the officers in the armed forces of the rank of colonel and equivalent. And, of course, it will be also applicable in the case of those holding constitutional positions such as the President, vice-president, judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts, chairman and members of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), and state public service commissions, the chief election commissioner and the comptroller and auditor general.

What does this amount to as a step towards social uplift? Most parliamentarians who spoke during the debate on the bill creating a National Commission for Backward Classes, 1993, in the Rajya Sabha, on 17 March, agreed that it would help the backwards considerably—even though it was a measure aimed at gaining political mileage.

But J.K. Jain of the BJP argued that it wasn't enough to state who will be excluded from the reservations but it also needed to be stated who would be entitled to it. And, because the Mandal report had identified 3,743 castes on the basis of questionable criteria, that it had been challenged in court. If the government was not certain about the criteria for exclusion from reservations, how was it so sure of the criteria for inclusion? he asked.

Ram Jethmalani of the Janata Dal (JD), who had argued the case in the Supreme Court, said: "The criteria for inclusion has been laid down by the Mandal report, and those criteria have now been accepted." But he pointed out a flaw in the Backward Classes Commission Bill: "You must impose a statutory obligation," he told the minister of social welfare, "on your government and future governments that when you do not accept the advice of these commissions, you shall have to record your reasons so that we know whether the work has been done for good reasons or bad reasons."

Said N.E. Balaram of the Communist Party of India (CPI): "By implementing this legislation, at least ten backward people on the basis of this reservation can be brought in as Class-I officers in the central government. Now they can come nearer to power, something they had been deprived for so many centuries."

But H. Hanumanthappa of the Congress sounded a note of dissent. He wondered why the principle of keeping out the "creamy layer" should apply only to the backward classes and not to other categories. What was the logic, he asked, in excluding the families of backward class IAS [Indian Administrative Service] from reservations when the families of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe officers were entitled to such benefits?

But, then, that was a matter that had been decided by the Supreme Court.

Given the discontent among the members of the Lower House, the least the government could have done was allowed a debate before announcing the acceptance of the expert committee's suggestions. The issue is sure to be debated in future, but the dye has already been cast.

Issue Still Unsettled

93AS0766A New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi
10 Apr 93 p 6

[Article by Prabhash Joshi: "Not From the State, Not From Terrorism"]

[Text] All this happened under the leadership of Ali Mian, who was once expected to resolve the Ayodhya issue. Even during the V.P. Singh era and Chandra Shekhar's four months' rule, it was believed that Ali Mian had such a moral-religious influence that whatever he decided would be acceptable to all Muslims, and Shahabbudin and Imam Bukhari would not be able to practice their intolerant politics. However, after 6 December, under the pressure of traditional leaders and

when the Muslim society was in a shock, the representative groups, under the leadership of Ali Mian, issued a communique to the prime minister that does not leave hope for resolution of the Ayodhya issue. It does not appear that the All India Muslim Personal Law Board has adopted this attitude, seeing the rising Muslim emotions and the changed situation.

For example, this communique demands the removal of Ram's statue that was placed in Babri Masjid on 6 December and the new structure that was built illegally. The prime minister promised on 6 December and later that the mosque would be built at that site. They have also asked that the case given to the Supreme Court under Provision 143 be recalled and all cases be combined and heard in the Supreme Court in its daily hearings and that the land that the Center has confiscated in Ayodhya be returned. The government should keep the disputed land owned by the mosque and the Waqf Board under its control until the case is settled.

It is not necessary to mention here that the Board does not accept the government's proposal to establish separate trusts for building a mosque and a temple after the Supreme Court issues its opinion. Just as the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] family is calling for this trust to be a government trust and wants full control to build the temple, the Muslim Personal Law Board also claims that any mosque built to replace the destroyed mosque will not be acceptable according to the Shari'ah and no Muslim will enter it. It is clear that the Board is responding to the RSS family's claims in the same vein. The RSS family will say that they are using the fundamentalist Muslim language since it is the one they understand. Neither of the two groups is willing to learn from the loss of religion, humanity, and property that occurred on 6 December and later, and take a more discerning step.

It is difficult to make the maulanas in the Muslim Personal Law Board understand that their fundamentalist attitude only strengthens the RSS extremism. The people practicing the politics of religion will use the Hindu religious leaders and priests to deal with the Muslim fundamentalism. This craze about getting even will not lead to an astute path. The religious polarization caused by this confrontation is not only precipitating political instability but is also poisoning the society in a way that it cannot live in peace, harmony, and happiness. The people who believe that the Hindus can control the Muslims by uniting keep forgetting that the Muslims could not control this nation for long even with the power of the sword. The vicious cycle of revenge does not allow justice and equality.

What a positive and thoughtful attitude Maulana Wahiduddin Khan has, when compared to the attitude of the Muslim Personal Law Board. Two days before the leaders of the Board went to see the prime minister, Maulana Wahiduddin was speaking in a public meeting in Bombay. He was choked with emotions. He told the people that he had worshipped in Babri Masjid and had

spent all his life studying Islam. Therefore, he added, once a mosque is built, it remains a mosque forever. "However, the fact is that the mosque is torn down and we have to keep that fact in mind. There are times in our lives and in history when things we do not want to happen, happen. We have to accept the reality. Each person has great hopes and desires, but all of us have to make compromises. Gandhi never wanted the nation to be divided. He had said that it would happen over his dead body. However, the country was divided, and he had to accept that. Jinnah did not get the Pakistan that he wanted. He called what he got a 'termite-eaten and dissected' Pakistan. The Ayodhya issue can also be resolved similarly."

The Maulana Wahiduddin presented his proposal, which had three points in the beginning. However, Palkiwala, who is an expert on constitutional law, suggested removing one point. The two points call for compromise for goodwill and harmony, ask the Muslims to willingly give the Babri Masjid site to the Hindus, and the Hindus not to start any other issue in Mathura or elsewhere. The law is there calling for a pre-1947 status quo in Ayodhya. He called for obeying this law. The third demand asked for a constitutional guarantee for this arrangement, which was to cause many problems according to Palkiwala. Maulana said clearly that this was the way to resolve the conflict. This was just a beginning and not the end of the efforts.

Two other proposals were also introduced in that meeting in Bombay. The first was introduced by Rustamji, the founder of the BSF [Border Security Force?]. The second was introduced by the well-known former diplomat and famous administrator, B.K. Nehru. One proposal asked to improve the police and security administration, and the second called for a constitutional amendment to deal with the present crisis. Several persons spoke, criticizing and amending both proposals. However, no one opposed or criticized the proposal introduced by Maulana Wahiduddin. There were many Muslims present in that meeting and they all supported this proposal. The Hindu speakers not only spoke in this proposal's support but also demonstrated their respect and love for Maulana Wahiduddin in the meeting. This atmosphere assured everyone that the bridge of understanding between the Hindus and the Muslims was still unbroken and it needed to be strengthened so that the extremists are unable to destroy it. His proposal was passed unanimously.

The warning note was started by journalist Syed Naqvi. His family has been living in Faizabad district for many generations. He said, "Before 1985, most Muslims did not know where Babri Masjid was located. However, the Muslim society is suffering now because of leaders like Shahabuddin. It is smoldering inside. It would be very difficult to force Maulana Wahiduddin's formula on them now." Javed Akhtar, film songwriter, also made some sharp comments last February in Aligarh University. He said that the soul of Hindu communalism was living in the parrot of Muslim communalism. When you

twist the parrot's neck, the huge demon of communalism would die automatically. He asked why we should ask the government to rebuild the mosque. How could the government that could not even protect the Babri Masjid built another one?

I have met many Muslims and their leaders and none of them says privately that the Babri Masjid should be rebuilt at that very site. Most of these people agree that this mosque will not be a place for worship; it will be a place for fighting. They ask: Who will go to worship there and who will go to protect it? How many Muslim households are left in Ayodhya after 6 December? How long and how well can the soldiers defend them? The Muslims will get the message listening to any RSS family leader. Someone said that this is being considered the defeat of the whole nation and this is not good for them. They also said that this would only force the unnecessary confrontation to continue. Let us forget Shahabuddin, Shahi Imam, and Ali Mian. The main concern for the average Muslim is not where the Babri Masjid is going to be built. Why have the Muslim Personal Law Board and Ali Mian adopted such a narrow attitude?

The Muslim leaders have adopted the attitude that the government must solve disputes between Hindus and Muslims since the British era. The British rulers themselves wanted the Muslims to have this attitude so that the British could control the Hindus. In Indian society, the government does not make decisions over disputes among various groups. This tradition was started by the British, continued by the Congress Party, and will be practiced by the BJP if, God forbid, it succeeds in forming a government. What the British and the Congress Party had been doing to keep Muslim support will be copied by the BJP to keep the Hindu support. What will the Hindu unity that emerged from the accusations of Muslim pacification do? One example of it is what Kalyan Singh's government did in Uttar Pradesh and Ayodhya. Now the RSS family is showing some respect for the law after the Madhya Pradesh High Court decision. Here, we should also remember that the Allahabad High Court had dismissed the order to confiscate 2.77 acre land because it believed that the original order was given just to appease the RSS family.

It will not be in the Indian society's favor if governments continue to act as the arbitrators between various feuding groups. The majority does rule in a democracy; however, unlike in a communist dictatorship, the majority does not impose autocracy. Appeasement could be of Hindus or Muslims. Our experience shows that it does not help increase social and group harmony. It only encourages communal violence, and our country is suffering from that. And this so-called appeasement is really of the wholesale vote merchants. The widespread backwardness of the Muslim community is a living proof of this practice. The RSS family is also raising those issues and supporting the persons who can help collect the Hindu votes and put them in the BJP ballot box. Until the Muslims start dealing directly with Hindus at their own level and stop asking the government to interfere,

the unfair distribution of resources will continue. The formula presented by Maulana Wahiduddin shows the simple and original path to goodwill among the Hindus and Muslims.

The second dangerous and suicidal tendency of the Muslim society is taking the path of terrorism with foreign assistance. We have seen the first explosive result of this in the form of bomb blasts in Bombay. Many people in Pakistan and Afghanistan and several other countries are ready to help; however, the Muslims will only hurt themselves if they play into their hands. The so-called international Muslim terrorism is a fable invented by the Americans. Those who started the tradition of training and supplying weapons to terrorists are now raising a hue and cry against terrorism. The terrorism that is targeting Islamic Arab countries is also labeled Islamic! Recently Iraq tried to devour Kuwait and both of these countries are Islamic. Iran and Iraq had been shedding each other's blood for many years. Anti-India Islamic countries can provide assistance to the Muslims for terrorist acts, but they cannot divide India. Neither India nor other powerful nations will allow them to succeed. Therefore, those who are taking the path of terrorism in their disappointment, should know that when they harm India, they harm themselves as well as the whole society. The Punjabis can tell you what Punjab suffered because of terrorism.

Ovaisi Plan Examined

93AS0766B New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi
10 Apr 93 p 6

[Article by Asrar Khan: "The Reality of the Ovaisi Plan"]

[Text] An emergency meeting on the Muslim Personal Law Board was held in New Delhi on 3 April. After repeating the decisions made about the Ayodhya incident, they added a new twist: The Muslims of India will vote only for the party for which the Muslim Personal Law Board tells them to vote. It is called the "Ovaisi Plan" because he introduced this idea in the Board meeting. Salauddin Ovaisi is also the president of the Babri Masjid Action Committee. All in all, the situation has reached the point where the Personal Law Board does not know how to increase its influence among the Muslims, since the Muslims are very dissatisfied with its actions so far. It would not be inappropriate to say that most Muslim youth organizations, Muslim intellectuals, and some well-known religious leaders have denied even the existence of the Babri Masjid Action Committee. It has been accused of accepting money and being in cahoots with Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao. Therefore, we have to believe that the officials of the Babri Masjid Action Committee and the Babri Masjid Raabta Committee want to use the banner of Muslim Personal Law Board because of their blemished images. Since the members of the Muslim Law Board come from various Muslim organizations and the Board is known to

be the most important organization of the Muslims, the Muslims have to obey its orders.

It is important to notice here that, after Babri Masjid's demolition, Muslims have begun to raise their voices asking that these Babri committees be dismissed, because the mosque cannot be protected while these exist. There was a situation of total confusion for one month. Finally, an emergency meeting of the Muslim Personal Law Board was held in Delhi on 9 January. The Board decided at that meeting that all decisions related to Babri Masjid would be made in the Board and other Muslim organizations must remain silent. However, no one accepted this decision because the Board had referred to the Shariat and had demanded that the mosque be rebuilt at the same site. Obviously, the Board decision was not acceptable to the majority of the Muslims because this would lead to more confrontation and tension, and dreadful riots were taking place in Bombay at that time. At that time an average Muslim wanted to stop this catastrophe, while the Board members wanted to fuel the fire even more.

The purpose behind the Ovaisi plan is to defeat the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] in the next vidhan sabha elections. It is definite that elections will be held in the four states where the Central Government has dismissed the BJP-led governments. It is assumed that the BJP will be able to form governments in the four states again if the remaining parties do not form coalitions in those elections. It is also obvious that the other parties are not going to work together. The best that could happen is that a new equation could arise in Uttar Pradesh where the Janata Dal, Mulayam Singh, and Kanshi Ram have two-thirds of the votes among themselves. This is not true in the case of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Himachal Pradesh, because the BJP will contest the Congress there.

In this situation, it would be appropriate to say that the Muslim Personal Law Board is sowing this seed of discord following its policy of double standards and is expecting the Muslims to vote under its directions. The first goal is to save some of the Muslim Personal Law Board's prestige among the Muslims, if Mr. Rao accepts some of the demands that the Board has made of him. The other aspect of this is the fact that, if the Muslims do not vote for the Congress in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, the BJP will definitely win. That is the deal the Board leaders are trying to pull. It is known to all that the Muslims are more angry at the Congress than at the BJP. The obvious reason for this anger is that their eyes were opened after the incidents that followed the 6 December episode. They do not have to know now who is deceiving them more. The Indian Muslims know now that the Congress Party had been repeatedly snatching their votes, promising them a false sense of security. In this situation, if the Personal Law Board openly endorses the Congress Party for Muslim votes in order to defeat the BJP, the Muslims will not like it at all. The Muslim is very knowledgeable now and will decide for whom to

vote and will do that in secret. The Congress can benefit from it only if it remains silent.

The most dangerous result of the Ovaisi plan appears to be its efforts to restrict the scope of millions of Indian Muslims. It has become the organization of the mentally fundamental and professional Muslims so that the feeling of being a minority remains there. It is definite that the Muslims cannot join the mainstream of progress in such a situation. We do not want to raise the question whether the Indian Muslims are a minority here. However, we must say that if the Indian Muslim feels like a minority, then this feeling must have resulted from a conspiracy, because the Muslims ruled India for a long time and decided to stay in India as an equal after independence. The truth is that we have to leave the Hindus and the Muslims out. The real minorities in India are Christians, Jews, Sikhs, Parsis, and Jains. Therefore, all conspiracies to destroy the remaining pride in Muslims must be made unsuccessful, and throw out a useless issue as rebuilding of the Babri Masjid.

This is the way to take revenge on the Congress. We will also get rid of the middlemen who are playing with the Muslim feelings through their professional political ploys. We have to say that, because the majority of Indian Muslims believe in the "Indian Islam," and do not hate the Hindu or the Hindu religion. This is India, therefore, let it be a country of human beings, and not a country of a religion or caste.

BJP Muslims Said Disillusioned, in Limbo

93AS0768G *Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English*
10 Apr 93 pp 1, 9

[Article by Gautam Chaudhuri: "Muslims in BJP Left Out on a Limb"]

[Text] Nazrul Islam, 28, a Muslim from Balurghat, joined the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] in 1989. That year marked the party's first attempt at kar seva at the disputed Ram Jammabhoomi-Babri Masjid site, and Islam happened to be one of the thousands who travelled to Ayodhya for that. He considered himself a sincere party workers—until December 6 last year.

That was the day the Babri Masjid came down—and shattered his dreams. His father disowned him and turned him out of the house, his cousins began to avoid him, and he was socially ostracized. As a last resort, he started staying with a BJP leader of West Dinajpur Mr Abani Sarkar, whom he accepted as his godfather.

But the pressure of society on him was too much, and soon he was forced to leave his native place. In desperation, he came down to the State BJP office in Calcutta and sought shelter. He has been staying there for about three months now, knowing for sure that his relations with his family and neighbourhood have snapped for good.

Nazrul Islam epitomises the plight of the 400-odd Muslim BJP supporters who, brushing aside traditional Muslim suspicion of the BJP, voluntarily came over to the party sometime back. At that time, they were welcomed into the party's fold as the induction of Muslims was viewed as a move that would enhance the BJP's credibility as a national party among minority communities.

For the newcomers, however, the inspiration was different: it was a plain political decision. Most of them were former Congress(I) supporters cheered off by the perennial infighting in the party's State unit and frustrated by the CPI(M)'s [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] stifling domination in rural Bengal. "We thought the BJP can be a third alternative in the country," said one of them.

They came from all over Bengal, from North and South 24-Parganas, Midnapore, Howrah, Nadia, Hooghly, Murshidabad and even from distant West Dinajpur districts. And most of them from poor and middle-class families.

Convictions apart, opportunities and other benefits also had a role to play in weaning them away from the party Muslims have traditionally supported in West Bengal. The switching of political loyalties picked up pace when the BJP emerged as the largest Opposition party in the country and grabbed power in four North Indian States.

The BJP's prize catch was Mr Muzaffar Khan, former General Secretary of West Bengal Youth Congress(I) and convener of the All India Muslim Youth Conference. Mr Khan joined the BJP despite his well-known standing within the State Congress(I), and, by virtue of his political credentials, boasted considerable clout among the State's Muslims.

The December 6 incident came as a rude awakening to all of them. "How can we forget as a Muslim that a mosque was demolished? It hurt our sentiments," said one of them. Today, most of them have distanced themselves from the BJP. A few have gone underground while others have dissociated themselves from party activities.

For Abdul Wadood of Titagarh, Hasim of Akra, South 24-Parganas, Abdul Kasim and Mussaraf Hossain from Howrah, and Hafiz Kalimullah of Budge Budge, however, religious hurt is not the only reason for their disenchantment with the party. There was social ostracism and pressure from within the community to snap links with the BJP.

"We do not want to end up like Nazrul Islam," said one of them, a lawyer. "We cannot risk being considered as pariahs by our families, friends and neighbours with whom we have lived for years." The pressure on us is tremendous—after all, we have to care for the safety and security of our children and family members as well, many of them said.

These party workers lay their disillusionment at the door of their BJP leadership. According to them, after the

December 6 demolition, the party leadership only made feeble attempts to explain the rationale behind the act. Also, many said, the party never clarified the actual role of the BJP in the demolition episode.

Even so, some of them may yet go back to the party. We need a firm assurance from the BJP leadership that they are not against minorities, they said. "Let them prove it by their deeds so that minorities do not harbour any apprehensions about the party. By that, we mean Muslims as well as many others flocking to the BJP." But for a party that seems to have long decided what card to play to reap the majority vote, these idealistic Muslims may be just asking for disappointment.

Darjeeling Area Said Ready to Violently Explode

93AS0768H Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH (Supplement)
in English 11 Apr 93 p 1

[Article by Keshav Pradhan: "Spring Fury in the Hills"]

[Text] Come spring and Mr Subhas Ghising is bound to spring a surprise. His first stir for statehood was launched seven years ago on Nepali New Year's Day, April 13. Last spring, and the one before that, he made three false starts on his route to "Gorkhaland," namely, his movements for "greater Nepal," "no-man's land" and "Gorkha bhasa."

Now, he has set aside the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council, for which he had relinquished the statehood demand, to go back to agitating for a Gorkha homeland. By doing this, he is not only threatening another partition of West Bengal, but also effectively putting the Centre's efforts to solve the Jharkhand, Uttarkhand, et.al, problems to nought. He has also pushed the hills to the verge of another fratricidal war that could completely cripple the socio-economic life in the hills.

If the movement takes a more aggressive form than being confined to graffiti and demonstrations, it is bound to have a long-term effect on the hills' economy. Even before Mr Ghising began flexing his muscles, the state government was incurring a daily expenditure of over Rs 1 lakh on paramilitary security for CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] strongholds and other government installations. The government is said to have spent Rs 5 lakhs on Mr Jyoti Basu's security during his recent trip to the hills.

"It will be a disaster. Even if a minor clash breaks out when the flow of spring tourists is slowly picking up," says a worried hotelier in Darjeeling where there are over 400 hotels and guest houses employing a few thousand people. Several owners of such places disclosed that they have been receiving calls from customers asking if they should cancel their bookings. Even the tourists who are already in Darjeeling look worried.

Planters and tea garden officials are similarly keeping their fingers crossed. The first flush plucking season, which yields top quality tea, is about to start. More than

50 per cent of the hills' population live in the 72 tea gardens which saw more violence and bloodshed than the urban areas during the previous stir. They were hoping to make up for the losses incurred last year due to a drought and the loss of the Russian market.

"We're really in for hard times again. I had to send my teenaged sons out of Darjeeling during the 40-day strike in 1988 to save them from the police," said a government employee who used to be a GNLF [Gurkha National Liberation Front] sympathiser.

"Earlier, the GNLF said it was fighting for an Indian identity. Now it is fighting for its existence. But who will fight for water, light, employment, education?" say many residents.

But hardcore Ghising followers like Mrs Hema Lama, who was a councillor and is the president of the Gorkha National Women's Organisation, speak differently. "We have freed ourselves from bondage by quitting the council. Now we will fight for the cherished goal of 'Gorkhaland'," Mrs Lama said.

Mr Ghising's move may be a calculated one to consolidate his own position which was slipping. It could be a strategy to wrest more powers for the hills in view of the Centre's willingness to grant more powers to autonomous councils as in the case of the Bodos. It could simply be that he is abandoning compromise for confrontation.

The first indication came from the maverick Gorkha leader himself. "Time shapes and reshapes a man's destiny. Bengal took advantage of our generosity and patience in accepting the council. The time has come for us to reshape our destiny once again by discarding the council in place of a full-fledged state," said the soldier-turned-painter-turned-poet-turned-politician. "It may take 10 years, 20 years but we will not stop," he added.

The chief minister, Mr Jyoti Basu, was equally firm in his stand during his recent hectic visit to the hills. "We have not committed any mistakes. And the GNLF will not get anything out of the agitation."

The CPI(M) central committee member and former MP from Darjeeling, Mr Ananda Pathak, added, "As chairman of the council, Ghising has failed in every respect. He needs to do something now to cover up his failure."

However, the most strident criticism has come from Mr Ghising's one-time colleague in the Pranta Parishad and president of the Gorkha Democratic Front, Mr Madan Tamang, who commented, "Ghising is trying to blackmail the government for money. At a time when his support base is fast eroding he should not be talking of any agitation. He is not strong enough even to fight a local election." Mr Tamang also alleged that Mr Ghising was a RAW [Research and Analysis Wing] agent and the government had been using him to suppress the Gorkhas' aspirations for statehood.

Mr Ghising, it seems, has succumbed to pressure from militant partymen to plunge headlong into a confrontation with the government. Last year, when the GNLF-led council fell out with the government, Mr Ghising made these militant councillors quit while he continued as chairman.

Yet, the shrewdness and respectability he has acquired over the years have kept him ahead of the rapid developments since the council's dissolution on March 31. On April 2, he obtained authority from the party to continue negotiation with the Centre while he returns the council's funds, assets and liabilities to the government in a phased manner by April 30.

Apart from monetary problems, the overriding factor that led to the disbanding of the council was the alleged persecution by the police and administration of GNLF councillors, most of whom shot into prominence as militant activists during the preceding agitation. The police and the civil servants, on their part, are not to be absolved of such charges. They have been a party to the CPI(M)'s hasty efforts to make a comeback in the region.

While the police maintains that they punished GNLF activists only on specific charges, it is true that the administration failed to either read the GNLF's mind or build a rapport with it which could have been useful at a time like the present. As a result, the government failed to obtain an accurate feedback and this became clear when its representative, Mr Amitabha Mukherjee, joint secretary in the hill affairs department, cut a sorry figure at the March 31 council meeting which dissolved the body.

The countdown to the dissolution had actually begun on July 5 last year when Mr Ghising unilaterally locked out 18 council departments.

Mr Ghising unceremoniously sacked five civil servants deputed by the state government, drove away the chief executive officer of the council, Mr Lalit Bahadur Pariyar, one of the seniormost IAS [Indian Administrative Service] officers in the state, retrenched about 500 staff members, returned vehicles allotted to him and other councillors and stopped flying the Tricolour.

According to the resolution of the executive council, among the key factors that led to the dissolution were nontransfer of departments as per the tripartite accord, an embargo on council funds, nonavailability of administrative and technical wings and interference by the government in its activities. Mr Ghising, two years after the council was formed, pinpointed certain lacunae in the council Act. Copies of the Act were burnt by his men on July 22 last year.

But the most unfortunate was that just when the situation demanded careful handling, relations between the GNLF and the state government turned hostile. First, Mr Ghising offended the government by raising "no-man's land" and "Gorkha bhasa" slogans. In retaliation,

the high-profile state information minister, Mr Buddhadev Bhattacharya, called Mr Ghising pagol (mad) and siyana (shrewd) and said he should go to a primary school for basic lessons. Mr Bhattacharya is in charge of CPI(M) affairs in the hills.

The GNLF leader hit back with equal vengeance when he called a three-day strike to foil a Nepali language convention called by the minister. The meet, to have been attended by the chief ministers of Sikkim and West Bengal, failed to take place.

It is not only the GNLF that has been complaining about the council Act. Both the CPI(M) and the CPI have also demanded more autonomy for the hill body. "Had our government been more gracious in allotting money and powers as promised to the GNLF at the time of signing the accord, Ghising would have got nothing to hide inefficiency," commented a member of the CPI(M)'s hill zonal committee that does not see eye to eye with the information minister or his junior.

The controversy over the council's funds has been both knotty and intriguing. Within a few months of the GNLF taking charge of the council in December 1988, the CPI(M) and the state government embarked upon a relentless campaign alleging misappropriation of funds by Mr Ghising and his men.

There was some ground for these allegations as the council mixed up heads of allotted money, set the wrong priorities and sometimes even made investments without maintaining fiscal discipline. "The council bought expensive houses in Delhi and Calcutta instead of providing water and roads for the people," Mr Jyoti Basu said.

There were also conflicting statements on the amount of money the council had received so far. When the state finance minister put the figure at Rs 144 crores, the GNLF said it was Rs 94 crores. When the state government modified its statement to Rs 94 crores, the GNLF put the amount at Rs 60 crores and the money kept on reducing to Rs 20 crores by December last year.

Even now it is not clear how much the council received. The government also stopped talking about the corruption charges against Mr Ghising.

"The CPI(M) and the state government have betrayed the people. The Left Front has proved that it is the most corrupt government under the sun," commented Mr Madan Tamang who had aligned with the Marxists during the language movement.

Now with the first meeting between Mr Basu and Ghising failing to break the stalemate and with the GNLF deciding to dissociate itself from the Darjeeling accord signed on August 22, 1988 by rejecting the very concept of the autonomous council, the situation looks uncertain in the hills which are on the threshold of the spring tourist season and the first tea plucking session.

Memories of bloodshed and terror-filled days have begun to haunt the people as the GNLFF activists have fanned out all over the hills. The party has also chalked out a long-drawn programme to mobilise people and fight against the government.

Many of its former supporters who have left the party after getting disillusioned with it have also returned to the fold.

The success of Mr Ghising's movement will also depend greatly on how the CPI(M) and other pro-"Gorkhaland" parties such as the Gorkha Democratic Front, the Gorkha Liberation Organisation, the Uttar Bangal Parishad, the Pranta Parishad and the Akhil Bharatiya Gorkha react to his activities. Most leaders are of the opinion that Mr Ghising has "begun to nag the government after a more effective council was given to the Bodos recently." Thus the question is whether he will continue to agitate for a separate state or settle for a council with more autonomy.

Nehruvian Secularism Said Inspiring Muslim Fundamentalists

93AS0769A Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
11 Apr 93 p 7

[Excerpts from article by Masooma Ranalvi: "Wooing Godmen of the Ghettos"]

[Text] "The moment you hear of an attack on the Babri Masjid, raze every temple of your locality, village or town to the ground"—such was the venom spewed by Maulana Kachauchvi, former Congress member of Parliament and president of the Uttar Pradesh unit of the Babri Masjid Action Committee, at a meeting at Jama Masjid on August 3, 1992.

At that moment an outraged Mr. Wasim Ahmed, national secretary of the Janata Dal, jumped on stage and lambasted him in public: "It's people like you who have ruined the community; you ignite the fires and then vanish, leaving the illiterate masses to suffer the brunt. Your rhetoric and actions help the Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh-Bharatiya Janata Party combine and weaken secular forces."

These opposing views prove the Muslim community is not a monolith but that it is characterised by intense conflict, contradictions and turmoil. In the days to come this conflict can only intensify. Every Muslim will have to take a clear stand. He has to decide whether to rally behind reactionary fundamentalists or strengthen the movement for democracy and against Fascism. The latter requires a battle that has to start within the community itself.

Maulana Kachauchvi does not belong to either the Jamaat-i-Islami or the Islamic Sevak Sangh, but to the Congress. He is the classic example of the Congress' half-hearted secularism offered to Muslims over the last 40 years. Diehard ideologues of Nehruvian secularism

may term the presence of Maulana Kachauchvi an aberration. But this is untrue. Nurturing of fundamentalists like Kachauchvi is a logical outcome of Nehruvian secularism.

One of the many ideas Nehruvian secularism set out to promote is the "protection of minorities." For many years the Congress had the mandate to translate this ideal into reality. And protect the minorities it certainly did. But just one per cent of them comprising the mullahs, the imams and the syednas. The "secular" Congress state pampered the most rabidly fundamentalist sections of the Muslim community who kept the masses socially backward and tied to fatwas, who used the deadly weapons of excommunication and social boycott to keep them in line, who imposed the most reprehensible social laws on women and shackled them, who pushed Muslims into ghettos where they lived in poverty and illiteracy.

The policy to protect fundamentalist Muslims was no accident. It was a conscious policy which can be understood by the fact [that] the Nehru dynasty built "modern" India by savage exploitation. To ensure the exploiter classes reaped the benefits of progress and appropriated what belonged to the working classes, it was essential the unprivileged were kept as backward and unorganised as possible.

For this reason Nehruvian secularist governments patronised not just the self-appointed custodians of Islam, but also similar custodians of Hinduism and other religions.

One offshoot of the ideal of the protection of minorities was preserving their cultural identity. But in the guise of allowing minorities to preserve their culture, Fascist outfits like the Jamaat-i-Islami and dictatorial high-priests like the Syedna were allowed to open and run educational institutions and thus get a strangle-hold over the minds of people. They were given full freedom to teach what they liked in madrassas, schools and colleges. Government recognition, aid and free and subsidised land was made available.

Thus the Jamaat could refuse to teach science and technology in most madrassas and the Syedna could victimise the principal of his school for allowing a skit depicting Hindu life to be staged. The question is what kind of cultural identity has been preserved—the reactionary or the progressive?

The era of Nehruvian secularism saw to it the promotion of cultural identity became the sole preserve of opportunistic thekedars who extracted unaccountable amounts of money from the public to set up so-called charitable trusts. These trusts, enjoying tax concessions and other benefits, controlled charitable institutions like hospitals, hotels, orphanages, dharamshalas, community halls and educational institutions. All of which only served to strengthen the hands of fundamentalists who strut about as the godfathers of their communities.

In the name of preserving the identity of minorities, Nehruvian secularism gave free rein to Muslim fundamentalists to formulate and implement an obnoxious set of social laws collectively called the Muslim personal law. Reactionary practices like the unilateral right to divorce for men, child marriage and polygamy which have been considerably reformed and even done away with in several Islamic countries continue to be imposed on Indian Muslims.

In the case of Bohra community, the Syedna has been given full liberty to throttle Bohras with a rigid code of conduct and dress. He has been allowed to extract Rs.300 million annually from the community as religious taxes. He has been allowed to violate the fundamental constitutional rights to life, liberty, dignity and freedom of expression with impunity. While paying lip service to secularism, fundamentalists like the Syedna run their empires like mini-theocratic states within the Indian state.

True secularism means support to and promotion of progressive elements within all communities. Progressives should be encouraged to run educational institutions where a scientific temper and modern outlook are instilled in the minds of students. Young people must be taught to question all that is harmful and retrogressive. Secularism means women are freed of their age-old chains and helped to stand on their own feet. It means strengthening the fight against chauvinistic values and infusing a spirit of communal amity in the nation.

Nehruvian secularism did precisely the opposite. It sidelined progressive elements in favour of fundamentalists who helped augment the Congress's vote-bank by keeping the masses backward. Take the case of Mr. Mushirul Hasan, the pro-vice-chancellor of the Jamia Millia University. He was not only hounded by fundamentalists, even the "secular" government committee humiliated him and forced him to apologise. Similarly, secular Congress governments have turned a deaf ear to the pleas of thousands of Bohra reformists who have been fighting the tyranny of the Syedna.

The Nehruvian policy of protecting minorities has, in practice meant they have been hounded from all sides. Fundamentalists have hounded Muslims with reprehensible laws, imposed particularly on women, by breeding intolerance and pushing them into ghettos. And they have turned young Muslims into victims of lumpen godfathers.

Congress (I) Seen Filled With Criminals

93AS0769B New Delhi ORGANISER in English
11 Apr 93 p 6

[Article by M.V. Kamath: "Strange Admissions"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Mr Sharad Pawar, Chief Minister of Maharashtra, whose name has been associated by no less than his predecessor Mr. Sudhakar Naik, with one Pappu

Kalani, a bad character booked by the police, told the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly that if the Congress had harboured some criminal elements in the past, it was an "aberration" and that his party has the courage to undo its mistakes.

It is not a question of 'if'. The Congress is known to harbour many criminal elements and it is gradually coming out. Pappu Kalani is not the only one in Congress good books in Maharashtra. Bhai Thakur is another. It would not amuse anyone in Bombay to learn that Yakob Memon, a prime suspect in the bomb blasts in Bombay had been named a member of a Peace Committee earlier in January! He had a photograph of his taken with a Minister of State, Shivajirao Shendge!

During the January riots in Bombay the only woman shot was a Congress (I) Municipal Councillor who was noticed inciting mobs to loot Muslim shops. What the exact nature of the nexus between the Congress (I) and criminals is hard to quantify but that such a nexus exists has long been known. Mr. Pawar's admission, however circumloquacious, merely confirms rumours.

INDIAN EXPRESS (19 March) quoted Mr. Jaswant Singh, deputy leader of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] Parliamentary Party, as saying that Rusi Bhai Pathan, arrested from Madhya Pradesh along with a truck load of ammunition, was known to be close to the Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mr. V.C. Shukla. The same paper quoted Mr. L.K. Advani as saying that underworld dons had developed deep links with major political parties and top politicians and that Rashid Khan, who had been arrested in connection with the Calcutta blast, was a CPM [Communist Party of India Marxist] supporter while his rival Omar was close to the Congress.

And that is not all. In Karnataka, as many as 97 cases have been filed against the state legislators, including eight Congress (I) Ministers and 29 MLAs [Member of Legislative Assembly] and MLCs [Member of Legislative Council]. The information, incidentally, was provided by the Chief Minister himself, Mr. Veerappa Moily. The Ministers—all of them, naturally, Congress (I) Ministers—against whom cases have been filed are: Transport Minister Bheemanna Khandre for rioting and criminal intimidation, Housing Minister R. Gopinath for criminal intimidation, unlawful assembly, rioting, house trespass and 'mischief' (whatever that might mean), Minister of State for Finance Ramalinga Reddy for rioting and causing hurt, Minister of State for Horticulture A. Krishnappa for rioting and house trespass, Minister of State for Textiles H.K. Patil against whom a case of rioting and dacoity had been registered (though reportedly he was found to have been not involved in the case) and Minister of State for Planning and Institutional Finance T.M. Manjunath for using criminal force and intimidation. Chief Minister Moily also revealed that a case of attempt to murder and criminal intimidation against H.M. Revanna (Congress-I) was pending in the Session Court. Police had filed a B-report in a murder case against S. Ramesh (Congress-I), and Shafi Ahmed

(Congress-I) has four cases pending in the court for rioting and related offences.

It is an impressive list and no doubt if one were to throw the searchlight on Congress Party officials in various states at various levels, more unsavoury things will come out into the open. Congress politics has been largely a snatch-and-grab politics open to criminals of all kinds. The latter began merely with supporting Congress leaders but were quick to realise that it was better to get into politics directly rather than just support those who were already in. No wonder Mr. Advani feels that criminalisation of politics in the past two decades, besides Pakistan's attempt to destabilise India has been the major contributing factor behind the Bombay and Calcutta carnages.

Power and the arrogance of power have been the contributing factors to not just the destabilisation of the country, but of our very character. What can one possibly say of the Bofors Case that still remains unresolved? What can one possibly say of the even larger bank scam that surfaced in April, 1992 and in which several distinguished names were involved such as of Mr. Chidambaram then Minister of Commerce and Mr. Krishnamurthy, a top member of the Planning Commission? Congress Ministers and officials had become a power unto themselves. Arrogance was the most noticeable feature of this characteristic. Planes would be delayed to accommodate late-arriving Ministers. There is the classic instance of Lok Sabha Speaker Shivraj Patil not only arriving late while a plane-load of passengers quietly suffered the delay, but daring to admonish an irate passenger who had the courage to stand up and complain by ordering him to "behave himself." Good behaviour is not expected of Congressmen in high places. It is mandatory on the koi hais.

A vast derangement of society and its values has taken place in recent times that calls for an explanation. Politics has ceased to be an arena of public service but of self-aggrandizement and public exploitation. Not so recently the Congress(I) Chief Minister of Assam, Hiteshwar Saikia sent letters to several industrialists and businessmen asking them to buy Donor Cards worth Rs 25,000 each for admission to an Assam Note organised for raising funds for Artists. That was plain and simple extortion. How many businessmen would dare to refuse the contribution demanded of them? People with criminal tendencies and even criminal charges against them are given Congress(I) tickets to Municipal Corporations, State Legislatures and the like and no questions are asked. Some of them are even made Ministers. The Lok Sabha Speaker insults a passenger. The Prime Minister's son, P.V. Prabhakar Rao is involved in a scam and the case reportedly has been referred to the Central Bureau of Investigation which, no doubt, will sleep over it for months until the whole affair is forgotten. So where do we go from here?

The Prime Minister promises to draft legislation that will make it impossible to mix politics and religion and

banish communalism from India for all time even when his own party in Kerala survives on the support given to it by the highly communal Muslim league, whose representatives in the Karunakaran Cabinet refused to light a lamp at a school ceremony in Thiruvananthapuram and elsewhere because it was un-Islamic to do so. Who will ever take Mr. Narasimha Rao seriously? Before Congress(I) seeks to reform others, it must first put its own house in order and reform itself. But that, as everyone knows, is too much to ask.

BJP Criticizes Congress' Kashmir Policy

93AS0768A Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
13 Apr 93 p 1

[Text] The BJP national executive committee has expressed fears over the Centre's supposed move to revert to the pre-1953 position on Kashmir. The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] has threatened to launch a mass movement to thwart any such move by the Narasimha Rao Government. Accusing the Centre of being bankrupt of ideas and policy, Mr L.K. Advani said on Monday: "I cannot but feel apprehensive. What will happen to the country if the Congress(I) Government at the Centre behaves as it is behaving?"

The BJP leader, who was appalled at what he thought was a preposterous idea, said the Centre was "incapable of understanding the Jammu and Kashmir situation and did not have the capacity of knowing what is in the interest of the country and what is not."

The national executive body debated the Kashmir issue at length and adopted a resolution ratifying the Jana Sangh's 1951 demand that Kashmir be completely integrated with India. The BJP leader felt that it was ludicrous that after so many years the Government was trying to turn the clock back. He blamed Mr Farooq Abdullah and Mr Rajesh Pilot, the Minister of State for Internal Security, for the "disastrous step."

Mr Advani said it was also alarming that instructions had been given to the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir to move in the direction of a general amnesty for extremists in Kashmir, now behind bars. The BJP leader said it would have been done earlier but for the intervention of officials who said that certain procedures had to be followed and amnesty could not be given off the cuff.

The BJP leader said it would tantamount to a war and from Pakistan's point of view a very inexpensive war with the minimum amount of risk. "If our response is amnesty and dialogues with the militants, it reveals that the security of the nation is in grave peril in the hands of the Congress(I) Government at the Centre."

BJP Termed 'Creeping, Deceitful Enemy'

93AS0768B Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
13 Apr 93 p 8

[Editorial: "Lotus Pocus"]

[Text] The Bharatiya Janata Party's [BJP] Calcutta meetings make it clear that, whatever the rhetoric of its presidium, the party does not find it easy to forge an identity that goes beyond the Ayodhya stereotype. Despite the leadership's talk of a brave new swadeshi model and diplomatic tough talk against infiltration, the perception of those arrayed against it as well as those supportive of religious revivalism is that they have little else to offer other than stoking the flames of communal passion. This is what keeps the party's prospects alive while any attempt at communal harmony can only marginalize it. There is, however, continuity among Ayodhya, swadeshi and anti-infiltration. All three issues rest on xenophobia; the inept handling of these festering problems helps the BJP suggest that the forms of redressal cannot be strictly parliamentary; incidentally, such moderation would rob the party of its militant image and the penchant for quick and drastic "solutions." The BJP viewpoint is that of individuals trapped in the framework of a glorious past and trying to return to an era of romantic fantasy. The appeal of romanticism does not include a coherent outline of the kind of social order the party contemplates, that can stand up to the test of logic.

The greed for power suggests that there is something more than innocent mental regression involved in peddling this ideology. For the moment, the Ayodhya issue has slipped out of the party's hand and the initiative rests with the Prime Minister. Mr Narasimha Rao can now time his moves and the BJP is left to react to them. The Congress(I) may be softer and steeped in corruption but it understands the playing field better than the BJP. This is what makes the latter so nervous about a prolonged wait. In trying to regain the upper hand after December 6, the BJP think-tank decided on a multilayered strategy for the masses—a fear of unbridled infiltration that would eat up jobs and manna for middle class intellectuals who fear a competitive milieu and feed on the bogey of another colonial takeover. As with the temple issue, both these problems are the Centre's creations that the BJP is cynically trying to exploit. Together, they can plunge India into turmoil and misery beyond the worst nightmares of those who are happily financing the nation's ruin. Should it succeed, India will witness the emergence of a militant Right-wing movement for the first time since Independence, with an appeal based on hatred and intolerance. Nevertheless, the BJP has a long way to go and this wait for an elusive power could drive it towards greater neurosis. There are wide gaps in the party's programmes. It lacks a slogan that appeals to the south and has no answer to checking the disintegration of Hindu society. There is enough time and ammunition for the Congress(I) to neutralize the BJP. But can the party unite against a creeping and deceitful enemy?

CPM Said Abusing Power by Banning Rallies

93AS0775E Calcutta *THE STATESMAN* in English
12 Apr 93 p 8

[Editorial: "Abuse of Power Again"]

[Text] The West Bengal Government has only itself to blame for its discomfiture over the refusal to allow the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] to hold a political meeting on the Brigade Parade Ground in Calcutta on Sunday. Permission was sought six weeks ahead of the date of the meeting, there was no reply until the Calcutta High Court directed the Police Commissioner to come to a decision. While the Commissioner maintained a studied silence, Mr. Buddhadev Bhattacharya, the irrepressible Minister for Information and Broadcasting, and much else besides, said publicly that the meeting would not be allowed. The Division Bench headed by the Chief Justice had no hesitation in holding that the Commissioner's order refusing permission suffered from "non-application of mind". The order under Section 144 of the CrPC was to expire on April 8. The Commissioner refused to relax the prohibitory order under this section for a meeting to be held on April 11. Mr. Talukdar is not entirely at fault in assuming that Section 144 would be extended for a further period of two months from April 9. Long before he assumed responsibility for the Calcutta Police, the practice was well-established to use Section 144 for purposes for which it was not intended. The Section may be invoked only if there is "sufficient ground" and "immediate prevention and speedy remedy is desirable". These are questions of fact but they are justiciable as the Calcutta High Court has demonstrated. What is essential is the satisfaction of designated Magistrates, the political objectives of a Minister or his personal satisfaction are wholly irrelevant. The Chief Minister might ponder the consequences of allowing his ministers to walk all over the Police force usurping their functions.

On the ground, there was little reason to interfere with the BJP's meeting. This is also the finding of the judges. Mr. Jyoti Basu has repeatedly said that the threat posed by the BJP to the country's established traditions must be met politically and he has criticized the Central Government for resorting to administrative measures instead. His Government clearly failed to take his advice. The High Court verdict seems to have been accepted with poor grace, witness the refusal to allow people to come in processions and the reported ban on the use of loudspeakers. The temple issue is now a squeezed lemon and there is some indication that the BJP is getting ready to spend much more time on economic matters. If this suggests that the party is about to break out of its isolation and begin the slow climb from the depths to which it has sunk and rejoin the mainstream, it is assured of a warm welcome.

CPM Said to Destroy Incriminating Files

93AS0769J Calcutta *THE TELEGRAPH* in English
13 Apr 93 p 8

[Article by Sanjoy Basak]

[Text] Calcutta, April 12—The detective department's attempt to find out details about the satta don, Rashid Khan's passport has yet again met with failure. This

time, officials of Security Control, the department of the city police which keeps copies of all passport applications, claimed today that "Rashid's passport file which was in our custody has been destroyed."

An earlier attempt by the police to dig out the file from the Regional Passport Office (RPO) also proved futile when the officials there said the satta don's file was missing from their office. The "disappearance" and "destruction" of the satta don's passport file from the RPO and the Security Control makes it virtually impossible to locate who had recommended Rashid Khan's application for a passport, an officer said.

The deputy commissioner, Security Control(I), Mr Haran Bhattacharya, told THE TELEGRAPH, "It was not possible to locate Rashid's passport file as it was almost eight year's old." "We generally destroy all files lying with us for more than five years due to lack of space in the office. We believe that Rashid's passport file has also been destroyed," he said.

Mr Bhattacharya said Rashid Khan's passport was issued in 1985. "Even if the file is not destroyed it is now impossible to locate it among the huge piles of old files," he said.

The deputy commissioner, detective department, Mr Gautam Bhattacharya, who is heading the investigation, refused to comment on the "destruction" of the file. However, some of the investigating officers felt that the satta don's passport file would probably have helped in "confirming" his links with politicians and the police.

Meanwhile, the Army squad which had seized 28 crude bombs from the blast site 24 hours after the Bowbazar explosion, is yet to give its report to the police. A senior police official said that though forensic reports had confirmed these were live bombs, the delay in the Army report was preventing the police from officially declaring them as such. The officers were tightlipped about the reason behind the Army's delay in giving the report.

CPM Blamed for Bengal's Economic Stagnation

93AS07691 Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
14 Apr 93 p 6

[Article by Sarala Mukherjee: "Sense of the Ephemeral"]

[Text] The new Bengali century will be a time for reckoning. Either a morbid fascination for the glorious past will devour the Bengali spirit or it will be swept aside in the rush to catch up with modern times. The Bengali renaissance is dead. The nationalist movement for independence is forgotten. Communism and socialism are on their last legs. India has crossed that point of the timeline that marks the start of the age of post-independence nationalism.

The very Bengali Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] may turn out to be the biggest anachronism of the new century. While the rest of the world is headed for

the 21st century, the CPI(M) clings to the ideas that created and then destroyed the Soviet Union.

The familiar signposts that have guided the state's ideological left have been broken down. If the Bengali left is to survive, it will have to learn an entirely new set of rules. The traditional alliance with the working class, the peasants and that portion of the bourgeoisie arbitrarily defined as progressive needs replacement.

The left oscillates between wooing big industrial houses and castigating labour to abusing the capitalist and pampering the proletariat. The result is that even as the Goenkas and the Tatas promise to invest millions of rupees in the future of the state, nothing actually happens to herald the revival of industry.

Years ago a former state finance minister, Mr Ashok Mitra, wrote about the Bengali's sense of alienation. A sense born of rising frustration as opportunities for employment shrank and West Bengal slid down from being the topmost industrialised state in India to some anonymous middle status. The sense of alienation has grown, bolstered by the left's insistence West Bengal is different and therefore better than the rest of India.

The symbols of West Bengal's development are not substantial. They are ephemeral things like communal harmony, a sense of nationhood, pride in Bengali culture, a belief women are safe and civilised interaction is possible in this state alone. On the other hand, unemployment continues to rise by 400,000 a year. The total number is a staggering 4.5 million.

The left's response to the problems of unemployment, alienation and frustration are hackneyed hollow sounding slogans. There is only one saving grace. Politically, the alternative to the left is in a shambles. The CPI(M) led Left Front remains in power not because it can deliver the goods but because it is believed nobody else can.

The index of Bengali progress is easily measured. Almost 150 years ago, the poet Ishwar Gupta wrote, "Mosquitoes by night, flies by day, the two together make Calcutta today." The city is no better off now than it was before independence.

For years the CPI(M) insisted the Congress was to blame for the decline of the city. But since it acquired control over the Calcutta Municipal Corporation, the conditions in the city have not shown a marked change. The ever shifting attitudes of the Left Front have wreaked havoc throughout the state.

In the first flush of victory in 1977 the CPI(M) denounced the World Bank's aid for the city's improvement. Then it reluctantly decided it could accept the aid, provided it set terms and conditions. Today the state government is unashamedly soliciting World Bank assistance to refurbish Calcutta.

The choice now is between taking tainted World Bank aid or selling out to the promoters' lobby that has

become increasingly powerful. We therefore see the state urban development minister, Mr Buddhadev Bhattacharya, swearing he will not allow promoters to fund the housing development plans of the Calcutta Metropolitan Development Authority. At the same time the state housing minister, Mr Gautam Deb, has signed up with Peerless General Finance and Investment to build housing colonies.

Policy has shifted from pumping vast sums into ailing state run corporations and taking over ailing private companies to selling the unprofitable state run units. The best example of such wild swings is the Calcutta Tramways Company [CTC]. It was first nationalised. From 1977 onwards new routes were introduced. Recent left wisdom insists the CTC ought to be shut down and the surplus staff retrained to run buses.

The habit of making grand gestures and then failing to see them through is symptomatic of the left's chronic disease—one step forward and two steps backward.

The left's electoral victory in 1977 was significant. It succeeded in winning over the conservative middle class from the Congress even in Calcutta. Instead of consolidating this gain the left turned its focus on the rural areas, where it succeeded in implementing needed land reforms.

The CPI(M) then discovered an easy way out. Chunks of the middle class, particularly the state government employees, it found could be manipulated with infusions of money. Work ethics declined but the votebanks delivered the seats to the CPI(M).

In its attempts to strengthen the rural base, the CPI(M) established a new class of rural elite via the panchayats. Once this was done the class struggle in the rural areas, for the CPI(M) at least, ceased to exist.

The achievements of the left in West Bengal in the first five years after 1977 were not repeated after 1982. The CPI(M)'s membership rose from 51,000 in 1977 to almost 200,000 in 1992. This was not a measure of success. The expansion of the party meant ideological commitment was diluted to accommodate the rush of new members.

A system of *raccomandazi*, of the party recommending and the administration responding, came into existence. Those who received benefits were not necessarily the deserving, but the recommended. The powerless and the poor became as exploited under the CPI(M) as under any other bourgeois system. Ideologically the crime was far worse. After all, the CPI(M) masqueraded as champion of the poorest of the poor.

The dilemma is transparent in the debate over how the Left Front will vote against the Union budget. Having postponed the decision to oppose the economic liberalisation programme in 1992, the left has to take a stand this year. The pressure from traditional labour to resist liberalisation is forcing the left to face the political

consequences of voting against the budget. The internal resistance within the left, particularly the CPI(M), has coalesced around a single issue. The CPI(M) is very shy about facing a mid-term election at this stage.

The risk of taking a political position that is ideologically appropriate for the left, of opposing economic liberalisation, is being weighed against the advantages of remaining in power in West Bengal and playing broker to the Congress at the Centre.

The temptation to play a role at the centrestage of national politics in the best past traditions of West Bengal, when men like B.C. Roy were sought by the prime minister, is overwhelming. The only difficulty with recreating myths is that the Centre does not have lollipops like the Durgapur industrial complex to distribute.

The CPI(M) can hope for a revival of West Bengal only in so far as it succeeds in persuading potential investors that the funds going into the state will yield profits justifying the investment.

The CPI(M) has therefore made a cardinal mistake in its interpretation of Marxism. Instead of learning from history, the CPI(M) has chosen to dwell in the past reliving the glory oblivious of the future. It is a reflection of Bengalidom in general. If Bengalis want change in the new century the place it should start first is among the left.

New Muslim Leadership Seen More Militant, Confrontationalist

93AS0775G *Bombay THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA* in English 16 Apr 93 pp 32-33

[Article by Tabish Khair: "Another Son Rises"; first paragraph is introduction paragraph; quotation marks and italicized words as published]

[Text] Now that the Shahi Imam of the Jama Masjid, Abdullah Bukhari, appears to have withdrawn from couch politics, it is his son, the Naib Imam, who has picked up the reins: only, his stance is far more overtly political confrontationist. Tabish Khair profiles the new self-styled messiah of the Indian Muslims.

The recent activities of Ahmed Bukhari, one of the three sons of the Shahi Imam of Delhi's Jama Masjid and otherwise known as the Naib Imam, have an element of history and *deja vu* about them. Here is a son suddenly flexing his muscles and overshadowing his aging father. Haven't we seen this before—Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb, for example?

But we do not have to look for such far-flung and exotic parallels. The current Shahi Imam, Syed Abdullah Bukhari, himself 'replaced' his own father (Hamid Bukhari) as the effective head of the Jama Masjid, long before the death of the elder Bukhari. The ascendancy of the latest Bukhari and the gradual 'retirement' of the

huge, bearded and dark-glassed Abdullah Bukhari is also in keeping with a trend that has continued over the last three decades. Hamid Bukhari was a largely non-political man. Abdullah Bukhari turned out to be more involved in politics, though never participating in direct 'political' actions. The Naib Imam, Ahmed Bukhari, seems to have taken this tendency a step further by personally leading demonstrations and courting arrest in the manner of an experienced politician.

Physically, there is little in common between Shahi Imam and the Naib Imam. The former is huge and has had little or no exposure to modern education. The latter is relatively thin and rather sleek in his appearance. He has also gone to a prestigious Delhi school and holds a BA degree. However, there are two factors in common between father and son—a short temper and a firm belief in their "hereditary rights" over the Jama Masjid and the neighbourhood.

When Abdullah Bukhari had 'taken over' the mosque from the father, the Delhi Waqf Board (which looks after 500 local mosques) had considered his appointment irregular. This had led Abdullah Bukhari to storm and scatter a meeting of the Waqf Board in the Walled City area in 1975. He had been arrested by the Indira Gandhi government and there had been riots. By the time he was released, he had consolidated his hold on the Old Delhi Muslims and the Jama Masjid.

While Ahmed Bukhari has not yet performed any such act, he is known for his short temper and repertoire of untranslatable words. He was also reputed to be the force behind the much-touted and short-lived Adam Sena, which had sought to 'counter-balance' larger armies such as the Shiv Sena. Ahmed Bukhari's most physical act came recently when a mosque was desecrated (by monkeys or men) in the Walled City area and a small, neighbouring temple was damaged (by men, this time) in retaliation. When a group of Muslims tried to repair the temple, they were abused and pulled away by the Naib Imam and his men. Reportedly, the Naib Imam wanted "the men who desecrated the mosque to be arrested first."

The politics of the Naib Imam has been largely criticised by various Muslim personalities. Qamar Mahmood, ex-secretary of the Waqf Board, who has had ample opportunity to observe the activities of the Imam and his son at close quarters, states that the recent actions of the Naib Imam "do not help create goodwill". He adds, "The actions of Ahmed Bukhari are not helpful to the Muslim community. It is important for Muslims to live with dignity, but this cannot be achieved by following a policy of confrontation."

Describing Syed Shahabuddin and Ahmed Bukhari as shopkeepers who have "opened different shops for Muslims on the same street", Mahmood notes that the high rate of illiteracy within the community enables such leaders to survive without addressing the "real issues". His words are borne out by the support the Naib Imam

seems to evoke from Akram, a rickshaw-puller in the Old City area. Says Akram, "I have supported the Imam and will support his son because I can go to them in times of (communal) trouble." What about the police? Akram retorts, "do you expect me to go to the police after what happened in Seelampur and Bombay?"

Evidently, just as the Hindutva parties feed on the "identity crisis" of the Hindus, leaders like Ahmed Bukhari draw their strength from the "fear and persecution complex" of the minority community. Sayeed Khan, who has been associated with local politics for decades, opines, "As far as this leadership goes, it is depressing. The Imam's voice was restricted to the (area around the) mosque and so is the voice of Ahmed Bukhari. However, Ahmed Bukhari is more irresponsible. He does not even know the real issues."

Currently, the Naib Imam has been leading various 'protests' in the old city area. To his credit, it must be said that he has taken precautions to keep these protests from turning violent. He has told newsmen that his demonstrations are attempts at keeping the Muslim youth from "exploding" by giving them an opportunity to "let out steam". However, characteristically, he has also stated that "the way things are developing, it might be very hard to hold them back".

Simply speaking, Ahmed Bukhari is the personification of a type of leadership (now discredited) that has tried to help the Muslims and has ended up harming them more often. He is also a man caught between two worlds—the world of his own faith (as he interprets it) and the larger world of non-Islamic India. Faced with this non-Islamic larger world, he has had to choose between Hindutva and secularism. He has chosen a type of outward secularism after December 6, in the absence of any Islamic alternative. But his is not a natural choice for people of this thinking—and, very often, the mask slips. And then he talks about "militancy by the frustrated Muslim youth".

The other motivating factor behind his actions is an effort to preserve the legacy of his father—the mysteriously conferred crown of "the leader of Indian Muslims". (Interestingly, even the Imamhood and Naib Imamhood assumed by the father and son do not have an Islamic basis, according to leading Islamic scholars) the title of "Leader of Indian Muslims" had been conferred on Adullah Bukhari more by the media and political parties than by Indian Muslims. It was also based more on hype than on ground realities. For example, Ahmed Bukhari had told a journalist in the V.P. Singh days that "the party that is supported by the Shahi Imam has always gone on to form the Government of India".

On the face of it, this was a true statement. Abdullah Bukhari had opposed Indira Gandhi after the 1977 elections (when she tried to "interfere" in his Jama Masjid fief) and she had lost. He had supported V.P. Singh in 1989 and Singh had won. But with characteristic common sense, the elder Bukhari had always ridden

the wave. In 1990, when he tried to go against the wave, by supporting V.P. Singh, his support did not help.

The edifice of Muslim leadership had started crumbling in 1990 itself. For the first time, it has become obvious to non-Muslims that the Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid can hardly influence Muslims beyond the old city area. After the December 6 tragedy, this edifice has developed further cracks. A large number of Muslims do not want a religious head to interfere in political matters any more.

This may be the reason why the Shahi Imam seems to have taken to sanyas from couch politics. In his wake, there has come his son—the Naib Imam—riding the steed of Muslim frustration and anger. Interestingly, the people following this charge into the mythical land of minority leadership have dwindled significantly since the 1980s. This has put Ahmed Bukhari between the horns of a dilemma—either he abandons the charge and lets his horse out to grass, or he tries to gather a few more of the faithful by letting out louder war-cries. It would be interesting to see what the young and ambitious Naib Imam decides.

And, of course, it must be said that, regardless of what he decides, warhorses are hard to keep under control—as the “moderate” section of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) found out in Ayodhya on December 6.

Rao Said Incorporating Elements of Hindu Nationalism

93AS0775F Bombay *THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA* in English 16 Apr 93 p 15

[Article by Swapan Dasgupta: “A Sophisticated Gameplan”; first two paragraphs are introductory paragraphs; quotation marks, italicized and boldface words as published]

[Text] Surajkund saw Rao reincorporating elements of Hindu nationalism into the Congress. In one smooth stroke, he could dilute the BJP's [Bharatiya Janata Party] appeal and project his party as a bulwark against irresponsible militancy.

A sophisticated gameplan, says Swapan Dasgupta, but one that could misfire, given his partymen's impatience.

There was a time, at least until 1978, when the sessions of the All India Congress Committee [AICC] were routine affairs and an occasion for the faithful to interact annually. Not every session was as momentous or ideologically path-breaking as Nagpur (1920), Tripuri (1939), Avadi (1956) or Bangalore (1969), but even the element of predictability could not detract from the fact that AICC sessions were a necessary drill for India's largest democracy, not least as a point of contact between the various levels of leadership.

It is, therefore, heartening to the cause of democratic politics that P.V. Narasimha Rao departed from the casual attitudes of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi

towards the organisation. Whatever the reasons which prompted the meeting to be convened in the first place, the mere fact that an AICC session was held less than 12 months after the show at Tirupati is encouraging.

Unfortunately, this is where the platitudes end, in actual terms, there was a two-point agenda before the delegates at Surajkund: to determine whether or not the prime minister enjoyed the full confidence of the party; and, to evolve a viable strategy that would enable the party to cope with the heady onrush of Hindutva in the aftermath of the Ayodhya happenings. The twin themes were also linked to the challenge posed by Arjun Singh who has positioned himself—in the media at least—as the only leader capable of blunting the Bharatiya Janata Party offensive.

In the event, the AICC succeeded in coming to grips with only the first issue. For all the ridicule heaped on him for his masterly inactivity over Ayodhya, Rao successfully demonstrated his control over the party. Of course, this was accompanied by some needless sycophancy and strong-arm methods against a handful of pathetic dissidents. However, even this overkill was widely appreciated by party members brought up in an atmosphere of overriding leadership.

His authority established, the AICC did, however, look to the prime minister to lead the battle for survival against the BJP. Decisiveness was all the more necessary because there is a genuine confusion in the minds of Congressmen over the most effective strategy to counter the BJP. This confusion is best epitomised in the seesawing responses ranging from ‘hard’ secularism to ‘soft’ Hindutva.

In a nutshell, the problem can be reduced to the paradox that whereas the majority of the Congress has nothing but undying contempt for the BJP as an organisation—hence the generous overuse of epithets such as “knicker-wallah” and “*bania* party”—there is, nevertheless, a sneaking sympathy for Hindutva. An average Hindu Congressman may not have much patience for the stridency of Sadhvi Rithambara and Vinay Katiyar, but he would heartily approve of the need for a Ram temple at Ayodhya and go along with the proposition that minorities in the country have been excessively pampered. Most important, the Congress worker would be uncomfortable with any strategy which makes the party appear anti-Hindu.

With her formidable grasp of political nuances, Indira Gandhi managed to straddle these two worlds. However, the emergence of the Ram Janam Bhoomi movement and Rajiv Gandhi's inadequate understanding of the phenomenon resulted in the BJP establishing its monopoly over Hindu nationalism. This, combined with L.K. Advani's astute grasp of symbolism and realpolitik, has endangered the Congress's existence in the Hindi heartland, and after December 6, the party stands in real danger of being reduced to the status of a non-player.

Rao's thrust towards reincorporating elements of Hindu nationalism into the Congress was too apparent at Surajkund. Basing himself on the assumption that the Muslim voters will veer round to the Congress, tactically if not enthusiastically, to avoid splitting the anti-BJP vote, Rao seems intent on denying the saffron brigade the sole credit for the Ram temple. By diluting the BJP's appeal and, at the same time, projecting the congress as a bulwark against irresponsible militancy, the prime minister is calculating on a long haul to make the BJP agenda redundant.

The innate charm of this approach is its sheer sophistication. Unlike the gung-ho secularists who would scream "fascism" at every Ram bhakt and outlaw the BJP by a pre-poll disqualification clause, Rao is pitching the Congress at the level of decency. But ironically, it is the sheer loftiness of the approach which poses a problem for the Congress. Accustomed to coping with political challenges through rough and ready means, a demoralised party finds Rao's wiliness too rarefied. They would rather go for frontal confrontation than a prolonged war of attrition.

Which is why, in the ultimate analysis, there is a possibility of Rao's elaborate gameplan going awry in the face of an unreceptive party looking for a quick-fix. At Surajkund, Rao refused to oblige, but can he withstand the pressure for long? More to the point, how long can he continue delaying the polls in the four states?

Congress Said Unprepared For Elections in Former BJP States

93AS0765B New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi
16 Apr 93 p 1

[Article: "Congress in Four States Unwilling To Hold Elections"]

[Text] New Delhi, 15 April. The Congress Party leaders in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh do not appear to be ready to hold vidhan sabha elections in their states. In a meeting with Narasimha Rao, the Congress president and prime minister, the leaders of state Congress coordinating committees continued to make various excuses. One or two of them wanted to know when the prime minister would be in a mood to hold elections. The prime minister remained silent in response. The prime minister will meet the leaders of the coordinating committee from the four states separately tomorrow.

According to Chandulal Chandrakar, the Congress spokesman, from among the 47 leaders of the coordinating committees, 37 persons including Arjun Singh were present in yesterday's two-hour-20-minute long meeting. When they were asked to give their opinion, they said that (Narayan Dutt) Tiwari had already said whatever was to be said. Mr. Tiwari said the people considered president's rule to be the Congress Party's rule. The Congress workers were facing a lot of problems working at district levels. The strength of the BJP

[Bharatiya Janata Party] should be measured. Ram Lal Rahi, Balram Singh Yadav, and Mahavir Prasad also spoke in the meeting. According to the spokesman, one person also expressed the need to suspend Uttar Pradesh's governor; however, Mr. Rao did not say anything in response to it.

According to the spokesman, the leaders of the four states gave accounts of the political situation there. They said that they were fighting the BJP's separatist challenge with the help of secular people. They believe that immediate attention to developmental work is essential. The BJP government had emptied the government treasuries and never started any developmental work. All of them emphasized the need for tightening up administration. It is obvious that they are not happy with the governors' performance. According to Mr. Chandrakar, the state presidents explained their programs, and all of them have plans until October. This comment also hints that these states are not mentally ready for new elections. The prime minister asked them what kind of problems they were facing in the administration at district and block levels since these were very important. He also asked what kind of help they expect from IAS [Indian Administrative Service] officers. Sita Ram Kesari, Himachal Pradesh' welfare minister, said when his turn to speak came that the BJP had always been raising religious and emotional issues. The Congress government was implementing plans for backward and scheduled castes and other minorities. "We have to tell these groups what we are doing for them." Vir Bahadar Singh and Keddi Sultanpuri said that the religious propaganda can be countered only with developmental projects. Vidya Charn Shukla spoke representing Rajasthan.

Digvijay Singh, president of Madhya Pradesh's Congress party, expressed concern about the rising influence of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). He said that the BJP will continue getting the votes in the name of Ram, and the BSP was weakening the Congress vote base also. According to him, it was important for the backward castes to understand that the BSP cannot form a government and a vote for it would be simply wasted. He said that in Madhya Pradesh, 23 percent of the votes come from tribals, 15 percent from scheduled castes, seven percent from minorities, and the remaining 48 percent are from backward castes. All of them are being told about Congress Party's achievements while it was in power and how the BJP had ignored them.

Ghulam Nabi Azad, chairman of the state's coordinating committee, also expressed the need for tightening up the administration. He said that the BJP had stopped issuing leases and this system should be started again. The "seeds scandal" that occurred during the BJP rule should also be brought to light. The BJP had stopped giving bonuses for growing tendu [ebony] leaves. The 1.13 billion rupees reserved for this bonus should be paid out. The tribal people will begin to trust the Congress government when they receive this money. All welfare plans should be accelerated because of the increasing drought situation in the state. Pranab Mukherji, Naval Kishor

Sharma, Jitendra Prasad, Pramod Tiwari, Sheila Kaul, Dinesh Singh, Satish Sharma, Sushil Kumar Shinde, Shyam Charan Shukla, Shiv Bhanu Solanki, Hans Raj Bhardwaj, Balram Jakhad, Abrar Ahmed, Sukh Ram, Janardan Pujari, Harish Rawat, Ramesh Cheninthala, and Manish Tiwari were also present in the meeting.

Jyoti Basu Said Ready to Lead Anti-BJP Front

93AS0769H Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
16 Apr 93 p 9

[Text] Lucknow, April 15—Mr Jyoti Basu may emerge as the obvious choice to lead the proposed secular front against the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]. The other likely candidate, Mr V.P. Singh, former Prime Minister and senior Janata Dal leader, who is facing serious trouble within his own party, with his faded charisma and eroded mass appeal is no longer regarded as a winning horse.

An early realization by the non-Congress(I) parties that it would be difficult to meet the challenge of the BJP's "Hindutva" plank in the Hindi belt without forging a joint front has set off a chain of consultations among the leaders to find a consensus leader before forming the secular front. The National front has lost its relevance, with three major splits in the Janata Dal, the lost fortunes of Mr N.T. Rama Rao's Telugu Desam and the Asom Gana Sangram Parishad going the Desam way.

Clash of personalities at the top has reduced the chances of most of the leaders of the Hindi heartland of being accepted as the consensus choice. This is where Mr Jyoti Basu comes in to play his subtle game with the help of Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav, Chief Minister of Bihar, and Mr Mulayam Singh Yadav, former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and Samajwadi Party leader. The two Yadav's have been in touch with Mr Basu, and are learnt to be willing to canvass for him.

While leaders like Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav, Mr Biju Patnaik, the Orissa Chief Minister, Mr Mulayam Singh Yadav and Mr Ajit Singh, Janata Dal(A) leader, cannot aspire to play a national role in spite of being strong in their respective domains, Mr Chandra Shekhar, former Prime Minister, is the only man in the Gangetic belt with a national stature, besides Mr V.P. Singh. But Mr Chandra Shekhar no longer inspires confidence and there are strong reservations about the aging "young Turk" being given a second chance to lead a party.

Long before the Ayodhya incident of December, Mr V.P. Singh had ceased to be a "sought-after" leader even in the Janata Dal. Relations between Mr V.P. Singh and the Bihar supremo are so strained that Mr Yadav would prefer anyone but Mr V.P. Singh as the next leader of the nation. Orissa is another Janata Dal-ruled State where there is no role for Mr V.P. Singh.

The scene in Uttar Pradesh is different since Mr Mulayam Singh Yadav has emerged as the centre of opposition to the BJP with his new Samajwadi Party striking an alliance with

Mr Kanshi Ram of the Bahujan Samaj Party. Mr Kanshi Ram has made it known that under no circumstances would he accept any alliance or coalition with Mr V.P. Singh. Today Mr Mulayam Singh Yadav would like Mr V.P. Singh to merge his stature and standing with Mr Yadav's party or else to remain where he is.

The initial move of the Communist leader is to make the leaders of the Hindi belt realize that they are no more a force to challenge the BJP in their own territories notwithstanding the fact that the Communists, too, do not have any support base in the Gangetic belt, except in Bihar (courtesy the Janata Dal). The Communists also realize that without the help of the votary of the Mandal issue, there would not be much of a following in the cow belt. It is the sheer exigency of real politik that will lead to the coming together of the various factions of the Janata Dal under one umbrella and the revival of the Janata Party experiment for the third time, with the Communists providing an enlarged canvas.

There is a growing preference in the Communists' camp for early elections to the Lok Sabha since the Congress(I) continues to be discredited in the Hindi belt. The Muslims are so hostile to the leadership of Mr Narasimha Rao that the minorities would rather vote for the BJP than for the Congress. Mr Mulayam Singh Yadav is of the view that with the support of the Muslims and one-third of the Hindu electorate, the Congress could be reduced to a poor third.

Joshi Said Out of BJP Leadership Circle

93AS0769G Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
16 Apr 93 p 1

[Article by Raju Santhanam: "Joshi Out of Leadership Race"]

[Text] New Delhi, April 15—The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] national executive's decision to hold elections for the post of party president in June is being viewed by observers as a setback to Mr Murli Manohar Joshi, who is now clearly out of the leadership race. This also means that the hardliners are on the run at least for the time being.

Previously, Mr Joshi had himself suggested elections at the meeting of the national executive in Calcutta but there was considerable behind-the-scenes lobbying to ensure that Mr Joshi "fell in line" with what the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] leadership had decided already. The BJP session has been described as a "bloodless coup" by the moderates and represents a sharp contrast to the Congress(I) show at Surajkund, where loyalists and dissidents clashed before the media.

Senior partymen, close to Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangha leaders who are the "puppeteers," point out that Mr Joshi was "not averse" to continue as president for some more time. His supporters wanted the elections postponed and hence, Mr Joshi's term to be extended. Mr Madan Lal Khurana, considered a Joshi loyalist, had

advocated a postponement on the plea that the BJP would not be able to gear up for party elections at a time when it had to face up to the Assembly polls in four States. Arguments that there was a "national crisis" were also cited.

However, the leadership is learnt to have decided not to continue with Mr Joshi for a variety of reasons within a few days of the Ayodhya demolition. His reported clash with Mr Kalyan Singh, the former Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, highlighted by the media, is cited as one. The other charge was that his supporters were breeding indiscipline in the party. A section of the RSS leadership felt that the December 6 demolition showed that his supporters were and continued to be in a belligerent mood.

Even as the BJP leadership had decided on a change of guard, with Mr Sundar Singh Bhandari announcing the elections some time ago, leaders like Mr Madan Lal Khurana kept up the pressure for postponement of the elections.

According to sources, the whole "operation" was effected with Mr Joshi virtually declaring himself out of the contest. Technically he can contest for a second term but not without embarrassing himself. The leadership has already floated two names—Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and Mr L.K. Advani. The former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr Kalyan Singh's was ruled out because of the coming elections in the State, where the party believes that it is necessary for Mr Singh to be re-installed in Uttar Pradesh.

Mr Vajpayee has shown that he is not interested in becoming the party president, Mr Advani, however, does not want to become party president as well as leader of the Opposition.

Suspension of Party Member by Congress (I) Seen Harsh, Unnecessary

93AS0775D Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
19 Apr 93 p 9

[First paragraph is introductory paragraph]

[Text] The Central leadership, under the impression that the detractors of J.B. Patnaik were also opposed to Rao, decided to suspend Biswal in a move viewed as harsh and unnecessary.

Bhubaneswar, April 18.—The decision of the Congress(I) Disciplinary Action Committee to suspend Mr. Basant Kumar Biswal and Mr. Lalatendu Mohapatra yesterday, has shocked party circles here. The move is being viewed as a step towards further disintegration of the party which would benefit the Janata Dal Government of Mr. Biju Patnaik.

Although very few Congressmen are prepared to go on record regarding their resentment against the move they feel the action was too harsh and unnecessary. Some of them felt Mr. Biswal and Mr. Mohapatra were made scape goats while dissident heavyweights were let off the hook. They argued that if the heavyweights were brought to book it would have discouraged dissident actively in the party at all levels. The Central leadership's attempt to project an impartial image by suspending these two members from different factions within the party has also come to naught.

Both were leaders in their own right with Mr. Biswal being a former Minister, CLP(I) [Congress Legislature Party] leader and PCC(I) [Pradesh Congress Committee] vice-president who has been a member of the Congress(I) throughout. Mr. Mohapatra had become an active Congress(I) leader by organizing the party's student wing. During 1985 Mr. Biswal was denied a ticket but he fought in the next elections and was among the 10 Congress(I) members who won. But he was later removed from his post as the Congress(I) Legislature Party leader. Between 1980 to 1990 Mr. Biswal, who was once the closest ally of Mr. J.B. Patnaik had fallen out of favour and turned out to be his arch rival. Recently he led the dissident camp in a bid to oust Mr. Patnaik, followed by violent scenes at the Congress Bhavan on February 14, this year. This clash, in which several leaders, including Mr. Biswal and his followers were injured, brought him to the notice of the Central leadership. The AICC(I) [All India Congress Committee] sent the Union Minister and vice-chairman of the Disciplinary Committee, Mr. Balaram Jhakar, to study the situation.

Many congressmen felt Mr. Biswal had failed to muster support among the leaders in New Delhi. With Mr. Ram Chandra Rath, M.P., attending one of the Biswal camp meetings the message sent to the Central leadership was that the detractors of Mr. J.B. Patnaik were also the detractors of Mr. Rao. Efforts by some rebels to remove this misconception apparently proved unsuccessful.

Although the J.B. Patnaik camp might feel elated at Mr. Biswal's suspension the joy will be shortlived. Mr. Mohapatra, considered the blue-eyed boy of Mr. Patnaik's camp was one of the few who had kept the Congress(I) active by organizing demonstrations and rallies. Political circles here feel had the DAC [expansion not given] thought about the party instead of individuals, it would have tried to issue a caution to both camps, asked them to unite and waited for sometime before taking strong measures. There is no point in taking action against leaders in Orissa when matters are worse at New Delhi, they stated.

Mr. Biswal who rushed back from Sambalpur today, made no comments on the DAC's decision.

Exim Policy: Major Changes Listed, Viewed

93AS0755G Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
1 Apr 93 p 13

[Article: "Major Changes in Exim Policy"]

[Text]

144 Items Off Negative List

New Delhi—The government on Wednesday announced some major changes in the export and import policy offering fresh concessions to encourage establishment of export oriented units in the agricultural sector and a new scheme for the services sector.

In a statement in parliament, Commerce Minister Pranab Mukherjee also announced a substantial pruning of the negative list of exports removing a total of 144 items.

To involve the state governments in export efforts, a centrally sponsored scheme for assisting the states in the establishment of industrial parks, with high standards of infrastructural facilities was also being formulated, Mr Mukherjee said.

Under the revised policy, which would come into effect from April 1 and would be part of the long term export and import policy (1922-97) units engaged in agriculture, aquaculture, animal husbandry, floriculture, horticulture, pisciculture, poultry and sericulture, can avail of the benefits of duty free imports under the EoU/EPZ scheme even if they export fifty per cent of their production. They can sell the remaining fifty per cent in the domestic market as against the limit of 25 per cent permitted for non-agricultural sector.

The definition of "capital goods" under the policy has also been widened to cover capital goods used in agriculture and allied activities so that units engaged in this sector can avail of the export promotion capital goods scheme for importing their equipment at a concessional rate of duty.

Further, certain inputs and materials required by the agricultural sector are being removed from the negative list of imports so that they are freely importable.

New Definition of Capital Goods

Among the items are prawn, shrimp and poultry feed, edible, wax for waxing fresh fruits and vegetables, grape guard paper, dipping oil for treatment of grapes, wheat gluten and fish meal in powdered form. Together with the incentives announced for the agricultural sector in the 1993-94 budget, Mr Mukherjee hoped, these changes in the exim policy would give an impetus to exports from agriculture and allied activities.

Another major change made in the policy would benefit the services sector, trade in which is increasingly becoming an important segment of world trade. To tap the potential of this sector, a new scheme, called the

"export promotion capital goods scheme for the services sector" has been introduced.

Under the scheme, capital equipment at a concessional rate of duty of 15 per cent may be imported by those who render professional services such as architects, artists, chartered accountants, consultants, doctors, economists, engineers, journalists, lawyers and scientists. The scheme is also open to other services such as hotels and restaurants, travel agents, tour operators and diagnostic centres. The export obligation to be achieved by them will be in the form of the foreign exchange earned by them. This new scheme will meet a longstanding demand that the services sector should be treated on par with the manufacturing sector, Mr Mukherjee said.

The minister said the modifications announced by him were based on the government's interaction with trade and industry and the experience gained in implementing the policy over the last one year. "We have given particular attention to the simplification and streamlining of the policy and procedures in making these changes," he said.

Other highlights of the new policy are:

Scheme for Services Sector

In the case of the existing export promotion capital goods (EPCG) scheme applicable to the other sector, the window of import of capital goods at the concessional rate of customs duty of 15 per cent is only being kept open, and the other window of import at 25 per cent duty is being deleted in view of the general lowering of customs duties in the budget of 1993-94. There is representation from the trade and industry that the advantage of the EPCG scheme has been eroded with the reduction in the normal customs duties on capital goods. In order to provide certain flexibility in the scheme, in the case of capital intensive projects or projects involving sophisticated technology, the government is working out alternatives and detailed guidelines in this behalf will be announced shortly. Further, the requirements relating to the provision of bank guarantee by the importer have been liberalised and the procedures simplified in order to reduce the cost to the importers in furnishing bank guarantee.

In the context of the need for achieving a rapid growth in exports the Minister said it is somewhat anomalous that there is a long list of items included in the negative list of exports. A careful scrutiny of the negative list has revealed that there is scope for a substantial pruning of the list. The government has therefore removed a total of 144 items from the negative list of exports. In respect of those items which have been excluded from the negative list, but in respect of which it is necessary to attach certain terms and conditions on the exports like the minimum export price and the like, a separate public notice is being issued specifying those terms and conditions, but no export licence will be required for their exports.

Farmers Rally Under Sharad Joshi for Benefits*93AS0755F Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
1 Apr 93 p 12*

[Article: "Farmers Set Deadline"]

[Text] New Delhi - Shetkari Sangathan chief Sharad Joshi and members of the Kisan Coordination Committee (KCC) have set a May 31 deadline for the Government to "take bold initiatives" on liberalisation measures aimed at benefiting farmers. This was announced at a farmers' rally in the Capital on Wednesday.

They have warned the Centre that if this was not done, farmers throughout the country would stop all payments to the Government from June 1—including dues towards electricity consumption, water use, revenue, cess, taxes, repayment of loans from nationalised and co-operative banks.

The KCC members have also lashed out at the draft national agricultural policy "which abounds in contradictions, generalities and conveys nothing and is myopic to changes in the economic policies of its own Government." According to the KCC, the farmers have already given themselves an agricultural policy in the form of the Shegaon declaration of November 10, 1991.

In the presence of Sharad Joshi from Maharashtra, Mr Bipinbhai Desai from Gujarat and member of Parliament Bhupinder Singh Mann, hundreds of farmers celebrated "the fall of the Nehruvian policy" by burning an effigy on the grounds opposite Shanti Van.

Earlier, Mr Joshi and KCC members accused Minister of State for Home Rajesh Pilot of "going back on his promise to allow the farmers' rally at the Boat Club." The farmers—mostly from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh—also courted arrest to register their protest.

The rally never attained the promised heights but Mr Joshi and his colleagues sent out the signal that they were all for freeing the economy of Government interference and in particular for abolishing all licensing requirements for agriculture-related industries like fertilisers, sugar, alcohol, cotton ginning and rice milling.

Policemen watched from a distance as KCC members climbed atop a bus, converting it into a dais, and warned farmers not to fall for "campaigns by vested interests against the GATT proposals."

World Bank Withdrawal From Sarovar Project Criticized*93AS0755D Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
1 Apr 93 p 8*

[Article: "Victims of Indifference"]

[Text] India's decision to forego the remaining \$170 million World Bank loan for the Narmada dam has obviously been influenced by the fact that the concerned states are unable to

comply with the requisite standards on resettlement and rehabilitation (R&R) of oustees. The police language of India's statement terminating the loan agreement with the World Bank cannot disguise the true import of the decision. In response to what the independent Bradford-Morse Committee established last year as serious failures in the implementation of the Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP), the World Bank drew up a series of R&R benchmarks in consultation with the Government of India and the three states. It was on the basis of this so-called Action Plan that the executive board of the WB agreed last October, and in the teeth of strong opposition from major shareholders like the U.S. and Britain, to continue funding the SSP for six more months. But the states have not been able even to meet targets for surveys of the affected people or identification of land for rehabilitation by the agreed deadline of March 1993.

For voluntary agencies and environmentalists who had hoped that the agreed Action Plan would make amends to thousands of displaced tribals and farmers, the termination of the loan agreement will be a serious setback. The World Bank which willy-nilly had to lend a sympathetic ear to the international environmental lobby will no longer have much leverage to use on SSP authorities. On behalf of India, Dr Bimal Jalan has told the WB Board of Directors that the government had been closely monitoring the progress being made in the respective areas of responsibility in meeting the agreed benchmarks on rehabilitation, resettlement and environment. But what is the result of this monitoring? He has conveniently refrained from giving specific information and confined himself to making the vague claim about "satisfactory" progress in meeting the tests. It is hard, therefore, to take at face value the government's renewed commitment to compliance with the accepted standards.

Even at this stage, however, the committee of representatives of the state governments' project authorities, and interested Non-Governmental Organisations ought to try and at least minimise the hardships of the affected poor tribals and small farmers. The SSP is supposed to give a tremendous boost to economic development in the three states. But it will be a cruel mockery of development if, in the process, the lot of tens of thousands of the affected people becomes infinitely worse. It is to be hoped that the activists who have so far exerted pressure on the World Bank to good effect will not be unduly disheartened by the Bank's withdrawal from the project. They still have a role to play to avert large-scale misery to the oustees.

Economic Commentary: Nation Falling Into 'Debt-Trap'*93AS0755B Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
1 Apr 93 p 8*

[Article by Madhu Dandavate: "Towards a Debt-Trap"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] The Union Finance Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, in his budget speech, made many extravagant claims. He is gloating over a very low budgetary deficit of

Rs [Rupees] 4,314 crore. However, it has to be analysed as to whether he is justified in taking a complacent view about the low budgetary deficit. Dr Singh also claims a great success in reducing the fiscal deficits to the World Bank-IMF prescribed limits of 6.5 per cent and 5 per cent of GDP [Gross Domestic Product] in successive years. The third claim is that of a sharp reduction in inflation. Lastly, Dr Singh has optimistically said that as a result of full convertibility, the rupee will become strong and stable. These claims need to be tested on the touchstone of realities.

The low budgetary deficit of Rs 4,314 crore projected by Dr Singh is not the real indicator of the financial performance of the government as is the extent of the revenue deficit. Revenue deficit depends upon the suitable scheme of taxes and duties and their compliance, efficient steps taken to reduce exorbitant non-productive expenditure and also plans to unearth unaccounted black money in circulation exerting inflationary pressure on the economy. Against this background, Dr Singh need not be over-enthusiastic about the low budgetary deficit of Rs 4,314 crore, because it is a direct consequence of capital surplus of Rs 13,316 crore produced through large assistance from the IMF and the World Bank and through commercial borrowings. We have still a long way to go before we economise the revenue expenditure and augment revenue receipts.

Another important area is that of fiscal deficit. In the 1992-93 budget the fiscal deficit was Rs 34,408 crore and in 1993-94 budget it is Rs 36,959 crore. In the two succeeding years, the government has no doubt reached the IMF and World Bank Limits of 6.5 per cent and 5 per cent of GDP. But was the limit reached by augmenting revenues and reducing non-productive expenditure? The results have been reached by slashing capital expenditure. This has proved counter-productive and inflationary.

So much is being said by Dr Singh about the success of the government in sharply curbing inflation. It is totally forgotten that as a combined effect of structural adjustments like 20 per cent devaluation, slashing of fiscal deficits by cutting down capital expenditure, induction of Rs 8,500 crore of foreign currency in the economy without commensurate rise in production level, partial convertibility of the rupee, initial increase in bank rates and increase in special excise duty, inflation rose sharply and reached a maximum level of 16.7 per cent within a few months. Because of the high base level, later rates of inflation appeared comparatively low but were irksome. Besides, these rates of inflation are based on the scheme of 'point-to-point' inflation under which prices at a point in a time-frame are compared with a corresponding point in the previous year. For a consumer, what matters is average inflation over a substantial period. Another discrepancy regarding inflation is that the inflation figures are based on industrial labour price index and those based on agricultural labour price index are often higher by more than 7 to 8 per cent.

In the Railway Budget for 1993-94 the hike in freight rate is Rs 1,417 crore. This too is going to have its inflationary impact. The full convertibility of the rupee to which Dr Singh has referred to in the budget is restricted only to trade account and not to capital account. Dr Singh anticipates such a surge in exports that trade gap between imports and exports will be quite small and as such there would be no devaluation of the rupee and the imports, particularly of oil will, not be costly as feared in various quarters. Dr Singh fondly hopes that after the adoption of a unified exchange rate in place of the previous official RBI [Reserve Bank of India] rate and market rate, the exchange rate would stabilise at even below the present market rate of 31 rupees per dollar. It is most unscientific to imagine the 'weighted mean' of the official RBI exchange rate and the open market exchange rate under the old 40:60 regime will be below the old market rate. It cannot be forgotten that the old market rate matched the demand for imports or the foreign exchange needed to finance this import with the supply of 60 per cent of the foreign currency inflow allowed into the market.

The budget for 1993-94 is aiming at augmenting economic growth by reducing custom duties. The imports will therefore increase rapidly. Excise duty has been reduced for a number of elitist consumer goods. The majority of these require imported inputs. Thus there will be a new boost to imports, and the rise in demand for foreign currency to pay for the imports will put pressure on the rupee. There will eventually be further devaluation of the rupee in the face of external trade deficits. Especially in the oil sector, the import bill will rise to a great extent. The burden of costly imports will be thrown on the consumers and there will be further inflation. The success of full convertibility of the rupee is difficult in the midst of fiscal imbalances like trade deficits, inflation and heavy external loans.

The net inflow of deposits (amounts deposited minus the deposits withdrawn) in 1992-93 presents a dismal picture. The net inflow of NRI [Nonresident Indian] deposits in U.S. dollars in May '92 was (+) 474 crore; in June '92 (+) 629 crore; in July '92 (+) 382 crore; in August '92 (-) 97 crore; in September '92 (-) 55 crore; in October '92 (-) 94 crore and in November '92 (-) 260 crore.

The total amount given away by Dr Singh through Custom and Excise Duty concessions is Rs 5,522 crore. In the last budget he had given a bonanza of concessions to wealth tax payers including extension of exemption limit from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 15 lakh. This time he has added exemption from wealth tax on a single dwelling house. The priority is not housing for the poor.

The budget makes no provision for dearness allowance as compared with Rs 2,200 crore in 1992-93. When the need for the payment of dearness allowance comes, it will be met by forgoing certain development projects thereby contributing to the fall of production and

increase in inflation. With the tendency of the government manifest in the 1993-94 budget to have less reliance on internal resource mobilisation for rupee resources and on removing the imbalance between imports and exports to solve the problem of balance of payments by heavily depending on the IMF and the World Bank with harsh conditionalities and also on commercial borrowings, the way is being paved for India moving towards an external debt-trap.

As of September 1992, India's external debt was U.S. \$71.11 billion, i.e. Rs 2,02,900 crore, with a debt ratio of 29 per cent of our export earnings which will be spent only on servicing the external loans and not on productive activities. Mexico, Argentina and Brazil faced similar situations and the net result was indebtedness, increased economic disparities, growing poverty and aggravated social tensions. The danger signals given by them are clear.

Policy Changed To Boost Services, Farm Exports

Announcement in Parliament

93AS0739A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 1 Apr 93 pp 1, 13

[Text] New Delhi, March 31. In an effort to boost exports of services and agricultural goods, the government today modified export/import policy (1992-97) giving a liberal import access to the exporters in these two key sectors.

Announcing in Parliament a set of important changes in the five-year policy, effective from April 1, 1993, the commerce minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, said the revised policy paid special attention to the growth of exports in the agricultural and allied sectors aimed at stepping up investment and raising the income generation capacity in the rural areas.

The revised policy keeps the negative list of imports largely intact, thus belying expectations of further liberalisation of import regime to cover certain consumer goods. The negative list of exports has, however, been considerably pruned by taking out 144 items for which the requirement of export licensing has been dispensed with.

The changes announced today signify the priority being attached by the government to exports in general and agro exports in particular. The liberal import access for agricultural exports has been given in the liberal policy through several policy devices including the relaxation in the norms for duty-free import of capital goods and raw materials.

PTI adds:

An updated and revised edition of the handbook of procedures is also being published today, the policy said adding centrally sponsored scheme for assisting the states in establishing industrial parks would soon be formulated.

While the negative list of exports was drastically cut by 144 items to remove anomalies, several inputs and materials required for agricultural exports has been removed from the negative list of imports.

The policy also simplified the criterion for recognition of export houses, trading houses and star trading houses and their recognition would henceforth be based on Freight on Board (FoB) value of physical exports.

As a result the scheme for special import licences for these houses as [words illegible] the electronic sector would also be based on the FoB value of physical exports.

The commerce minister said the Exim policy, announced on March 31 last year, would continue to remain valid till March 31, 1997. The changes being incorporated in the policy now were intended to carry forward the process of liberalisation, he stated.

The modified policy effective from tomorrow allows duty free imports under EoU and EPZ [Export Processing Zone] scheme for units engaged in agriculture, aquaculture, animal husbandry, floriculture, horticulture, pisciculture, poultry and sericulture.

The scheme would be available even if the units exported 50 per cent of their production.

The units could sell remaining 50 per cent in the domestic market as against the limit of 25 per cent permitted for non-agricultural sector.

The definition of capital goods under the policy has also been widened to cover capital goods used in agriculture and allied activities.

In the case of Existing Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) scheme, the window of import of capital goods at the concessional rate of customs duty of 15 per cent was only being kept open.

The other window of import at 25 per cent was being deleted in view of the general lowering of customs duties in the budget of 1993-94.

The policy statement said a centrally sponsored scheme for assisting the states in the establishment of industrial parks, with high standards of infrastructural facilities is being formulated. Mr. Mukherjee hoped it would be announced soon.

To give an impetus to the agriculture exports, certain inputs and materials required by the sector have been removed from the negative list of imports.

The items are edible wax for waxing fresh fruit and vegetables, grape guard paper, dipping oil for treatment of grapes, wheat gluten, fish, meat in powdered form and grand parent stock (poultry).

Under the EoU/EPZ scheme, the export obligation to be achieved by the units is subject to the prescribed value addition.

At present, the value of indigenous inputs purchased by an EoU/EPZ unit is also deducted in the computation of value addition.

The policy statement said in order to encourage the use of indigenous inputs by such units, the formula of value addition has been revised so as to exclude the value of indigenous inputs from the computation of value addition.

The new formula also provided a special dispensation for capital intensive units.

The other measures being taken to step up exports is that exporters who have completed their exports before March 1, 1992 and who have not exchanged their REP/Eximscrips before February 27, 1993, they will be given a further opportunity to surrender the Eximscrips to receive the premium of 20 per cent on them.

Policy Highlights

93AS0739B Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA
in English 1 Apr 93 p 17

[Text] New Delhi, March 31 (PTI). Following are the highlights of some important changes in the export-import (Exim) policy announced by the commerce minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee in Parliament today, which would take effect from April 1, 1993.

- Agricultural exports to get a shot in the arm. Units engaged in agriculture, aquaculture, animal husbandry, floriculture, horticulture, pisciculture, poultry and sericulture to avail of the benefits of duty-free imports under the export-oriented unit (EOU)/export processing zone (EPZ) scheme even if they export only half their production.

These units are allowed to sell the remaining 50 per cent in the domestic market, against the limit of 25 per cent permitted for non-agricultural sector in domestic tariff area (DTA) sale.

- Definition of capital goods widened to cover capital goods used in agriculture and allied activities so as to enable units engaged in this sector to avail of the export promotion capital goods (EPCG) scheme for importing their equipment at a concessional rate of duty.
- Inputs and materials needed by the farm sector such as prawn, shrimp and poultry-feed, edible wax for waxing fresh fruit and vegetables, grape-guard paper, dipping oil for treatment of grapes, wheat gluten, fish meal in powered form and grant parent stock (poultry), removed from the negative list of imports. These are now freely importable.
- Export promotion capital goods scheme for services sector unveiled to enable import of capital equipment at a concessional rate of 15 per cent duty. Beneficiaries include architects, artists, chartered accountants, consultants, doctors, economists, engineers, journalists, lawyers and scientists. This scheme also open to

other services such as hotels and restaurants, travel agents, tour operators and diagnostic centres.

Export obligation to be achieved by these service category people to be in the form of the foreign exchange earned by them, regardless of whether the services rendered are in India or abroad.

- For existing EPCG (export promotion capital goods) scheme applicable to other sectors, the window of import of capital goods at concessional rate of customs duty of 15 per cent being kept open, while the other window of import at 25 per cent duty being deleted in view of the general lowering of customs duties in 1993-94 budget.
- Government is working out alternatives and detailed guidelines for capital-intensive projects or projects involving sophisticated technology which suffered erosion of the advantages of the EPCG scheme following reduction in normal customs duties on capital goods.
- Requirements relating to the provision of bank guarantee by the importer liberalised and the procedures simplified to reduce the cost to the importer in furnishing bank guarantee.
- A total of 144 items removed from the negative list of exports. On items excluded from the negative list but where it is necessary to attach certain terms and conditions on the exports like the minimum export price and the like, a separate notice to be issued. But no export licence to be required for their exports.
- Criterion for recognition of export houses/trading houses/star trading houses to be based on their f.o.b. (free on board) value of physical exports and not on net foreign exchange (NFE) earnings.
- The scheme for special import licences for these houses as well as for the electronic sector to be based on the FOB value of physical exports instead of the NFE.
- The formula of value addition for EOU/EPZ units revised so as to exclude the value of indigenous inputs from the computation of value-addition.

Exporters who have completed their exports and realised proceeds before the introduction of full convertibility to be paid a cash amount equivalent to 8 per cent of their unutilised import licences.

- In case of exporters who completed their exports before March 1, 1992 and who had not exchanged their REP/exim-scrips before February 27, 1993 a further chance to surrender the exim scrips and to obtain the premium of 20 per cent on them to be offered.
- A centrally-sponsored scheme for assisting states in the establishment of industrial parks with high standards of infrastructural facilities to be formulated.

- An updated and revised edition of the handbook of procedures published.
- To expedite the grant of licences under the duty exemption scheme, standard input-output and value addition norms published for over 2,200 items.
- Based on the experience of value-based advance licensing scheme, both the quantity and f.o.b. value of the exports specified in the licence to be achieved by the licence-holder to minimise the possibility of the misuse of such licences.
- Exim policy announced on March 31, 1992 to continue till end-March, 1997.

Budget Said Moving Nation Away From Self-Reliance

93AS0751A Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
2 Apr 93 p 8

[Article by Raj Kumar Sen, teaches economics at Rabindra Bharati University: "Selling a Sell Out"]

[Text]

The Budget Will Take the Economy Another Step Away From Self Reliance.

The leaders of industry have hailed the 1993-94 Union budget. Their appreciation is attributable to several budgetary measures—full convertibility of the rupee on trade account, expansionist concessions granted to export oriented and other industries by slashing import duties on a number of raw materials, the design to sell nationalised banks' shares in the stock market indicating a move towards their privatisation and reductions in excise duties on a host of consumer items.

The euphoria needs to be tempered. In the race for competition there is every possibility small land medium industry would be driven to the wall or even eliminated by multinationals and big domestic business houses.

The prospects of export led growth look bleak. It is expected to grow in 1992-93 by six per cent in dollar terms as against the targetted eighth plan average of 16 per cent per annum. Even an optimist cannot hope exports which consist mainly of gems, mineral ores, food items like prawn, cashew kernels and fine rice, will grow by such an enhanced rate annually.

The country still imports medium quality rice to feed its millions while exporting fine quality rice to pay for the imports of petroleum and defence equipment. Boosting exports at the cost of domestic consumption betrays how unsound the economy is. Floating the rupee will not do the trick. Unless India can immediately reduce its dependence on imported fuel, petroleum prices will rise and so will the rate of inflation.

The foreign debt situation would have been somewhat better had India not gone in for fixing the rouble debts at

absurdly high levels. A balance of payments strain may lead to a crisis situation of the 1991 magnitude which forced the country to go for globalisation. One need not subscribe to any specific ideology to consider the present situation as one step ahead of the debt trap.

The claims of keeping fiscal deficit and inflation within limits through successful management of the economy sound unrealistic. Fiscal policy is not a numbers game. Like Turkey and the Philippines, who at one time played unsuccessfully with their data on money supply and foreign currency reserves, India too appears to be playing with the net borrowing figures from the Reserve Bank of India [RBI] to remain within the performance criteria of the International Monetary Fund. Further, the volume of revenue deficit financed by borrowed money is likely to go up to Rs [Rupees] 176.3 billion next year against the budgeted figure of Rs 138.8 billion for 1992-93. This shows frugality is still banished from North Block.

As for inflation, the wholesale price index based on provisional figures and not the consumer price index which is relevant for consumers is the basis of the claim of lower rates. The rate of inflation had come down from double digit figures in October to a single digit figure in the beginning of the year. But that is mainly due to a good agricultural performance.

Inflation is not under control. The claim the budget is non-inflationary has to be judged by the pre-budget and post-budget administered price hikes which are not only undemocratic but also against the transformation process to a full fledged market economy liberalised from state control.

Hikes in sugar and coal prices, rail freights and the issue price of food grains from the central pool, made before the budget, and the likely post-budget price increases in imported LPG [Liquified Petroleum Gas] and kerosene, fertiliser and electricity will make the inflation rate soar in the coming months.

The railway budget, in particular, has been highly inflationary in its withdrawal of exemption of freight increases on mass consumption goods and crucial inputs like cement and steel. The apparently non-inflationary budget requires to be analysed in the context of all these ominous signs in the price front.

The tax relief on a wide range of goods is unprecedented. The opposition parties have termed these unexpected concessions as electoral sops. The finance ministry views it as essential for industrial revival in the white goods sector currently suffering from recession.

The revival of white goods industries will benefit the urban rich and upper middle class. It will also set a trend for diverting scarce resources to this sector at the cost of the rural and urban poor.

The budget contains virtually no incentives for savings. And in taxation, it continued the discrimination between male and female tax payers with respect to standard

deductions for income tax. Having neglected the tax paying salaried class, the only honest tax paying group in India, and by floating the gold bond scheme and other measures for the black money earners in earlier budgets, the government would like us to believe we are moving towards a just society.

The government would like to avoid a serious discussion on the problems of black money, the circulation of which may now amount to Rs 1,000 billion and which grows with a multiplier effect. This was reflected during 1992-93 when stock market speculations reached an all time high. The biggest ever securities scam clearly brought out the hard realities lying under the apparent buoyancy.

The government had to come to the rescue of the nationalised banks deep in debt by injecting a capital of Rs 57 billion from this year's budget. This is the price for lending practices not concerned with the quality of portfolios. But the budget provision which has paved the way for banks to get access to the capital market may make the depositors' money a bit unsafe beyond the insured amount. And notwithstanding the government's optimism, how far the privatisation of banks will lead to higher efficiency in the face of an all out opposition from the employees is a difficult question to answer.

It appears we are confused about the true meaning of privatisation, market forces, liberalisation and efficiency. Market force related efficiency is actually economic efficiency arising out of pure competition. In a market where collusive oligopoly is the rule rather than exception the results will be different. Similarly, liberalisation means end of unnecessary bureaucratic controls and this should not be confused with privatisation which entails changes of ownership.

What is needed in India is liberalisation for smooth and free economic operations and not privatisation aimed at dismantling the well built public sector at one go. This is more so when consumer sovereignty is a far cry. This year's budget is a fine instance of one leading the country away from the avowed goals of self reliance in an irreversible manner.

The budget puts all its eggs in the foreign trade basket and sanctions a debt financed existence irrespective of the conditions attached to the loans. The finance minister, Mr Manmohan Singh, should be congratulated on being able to pursue this policy in a country which not only has the largest concentration of poverty but also a population more than that of all the industrialised countries taken together.

Commentary Urges Opposition to Dunkel Draft

93AS0748B New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 3 Apr 93 p 4

[Article By Rakesh Singh: "The Dunkel Proposals Should Be Opposed"]

[Text] The fast growing farmer power in opposition to the Dunkel proposals is also suffering from the decay of

division. Sharad Joshi, the leader of Shektari Sanghatana of Maharashtra had quit before the campaign began. However, his return to farmer politics as a supporter of the Dunkel proposals is pointing to another division in the farmer politics. The leaders of Karnataka Rayyete Sangh and Bharatiya Kisan Union are still united. It was under their leadership that the farmers united to demonstrate against the Dunkel proposals at the historical Red Fort. They want to put pressure on the government not to accept proposals that are detrimental to India's progress. They believe that acceptance of the Dunkel draft would mean for the Indian government to relinquish its right to set farm product prices and subsidize agriculture. The intellectuals in the nation are also divided. Some consider it selling the nation's self-respect and the others think it is part of the liberal trade policy and a proposal that will help improve our economy.

The question arises: What are the main purposes of the Dunkel draft? While the farmers unions opposed it, Sharad Joshi has praised it. Why? Will the Indian farmers benefit in international markets if the Dunkel proposals are approved? Or will it uproot all the efforts taken to date for self-dependence, poverty eradication, and village development? The main objectives of the Dunkel proposals are related to agricultural trade. Approving it would mean letting GATT decide rates for farm products and subsidies. The countries that do not need to import food grains will still have to import two percent of their total grains consumption from abroad. Not only this, but we have to follow the plant breeders rights and let the international seed companies control seed business. The international seed organizations will keep the seed patents in their control and have all rights for growing seeds.

The experts who support the Dunkel proposals believe that if the GATT member countries accept these proposals, then the poorer nations in the Third World will benefit from it. The subsidy given to farmers in advanced nations will be reduced by 20 percent every year and our farmers will benefit from exporting grains. The grain prices will go up in the international market. This would lead to increase in exports and the farmers' income. The country will become prosperous! The Basmati rice can play a very important role and can become a major source of earning foreign currency. The experts also believe that the government must give up its policy of controlling prices and should buy the grains from the farmers at market rates. Until now, the farmers had to sell a portion of their crop at a price lower than the market. Now the time has come for food grain prices to go up because of the cuts in subsidies to farmers in Europe and the United States. Our farmers will benefit from this development.

If we objectively study the Dunkel proposals, we would conclude that smart businessman Arthur Dunkel's proposals will put all the authority and control in the hands of advanced nations' companies and will make the Third

world countries slaves of these companies. If the European Common Market nations reduce agricultural subsidies, then only moderate climate agricultural products' prices will go up. The prices of warm climate products will stay the same. In other words, the prices of wheat, vegetable oil, sugar, and dairy products will increase. India mainly exports warm climate agricultural products and imports large quantities of wheat, vegetable oil, and some sugar. The cost of imports will go up if prices of these items increase and our foreign exchange problem will get worse. The World Bank and the IMF which are issuing India more and more loans to internationalize its economy, will turn their faces away. The loans will stop, demands for payment will begin, and there will be a large question mark on India's new industrialization plans. The Green Revolution is limited to Punjab, Haryana, and western Uttar Pradesh. This has reached its culmination and we should not expect any increase in food grain production. We did not pay any attention to farming in the arid regions. There has been no progress in agricultural production in the eastern region where the land is very fertile and the water level is high. How will we be able to establish our identity in the international agricultural market? There is no hope of it. What we need is to give economic grants to these backward regions so that they can invest according to their needs to increase their production. In India, we need irrigation, cheap fertilizers, and cheap loans badly.

There are three goals behind the government's agricultural policy: encourage the farmers to increase production, protect consumer interests, and stabilize prices. Too much reduction in agricultural products' prices can be very harmful. This reduces farmers' income and he loses incentive to use new tools, better seeds, and chemical fertilizers. Too much increase in agricultural prices is also damaging. This affects the average person. In the Dunkel proposal, in addition to reducing economic assistance, they ask to end the special prices for agricultural products. Purchase and sale prices would be decided by international market rates. This policy will benefit the farmers who have surplus grains for sale. Such farmers in India are less than 20 percent of the total number of farmers. Seventy-six percent of farms are smaller than two hectares. Most of them are small farmers. The number of agricultural and industrial laborers is increasing many fold. One-third of our population is below poverty line. Can the government of a country like ours afford to let the supply and demand decide prices? This would be impossible. Prices in the market will increase if price control is stopped. Small farmers and laborers, be they rural or urban, will be ruined because of inflation.

The government started public distribution system in order to stabilize prices and provide basic items to the poorer section of the society at reasonable rates. This system is limited to cities only and was not expanded in villages and backward areas. Bureaucracy and corruption is rampant in this system. The supporters of Dunkel proposals are opposing this system because of these

flaws. They keep forgetting that most of the poor people live in villages. It is important for the government to provide grants in order to extend this system in rural areas. Small and marginal farmers have to buy grains in the market even though they grow their own food. The farm laborers are mostly the consumers. In this situation, the policy of selling and buying food grains will increase poverty, and also create other problems.

Economic aid is given to Indian farmers in the form of subsidies to purchase electricity, irrigation, and fertilizers. The purpose of these subsidies is to make these available to the farmers who are financially weak. The increase in fertilizer prices under the new economic policy is the first official step in implementing the Dunkel proposals. The finance minister has made the rupee fully convertible in order to synchronize the Indian economy with the international free trade system.

The Indian farmers who depended on cow dung for fertilizing decades ago will be forced to go back to it. The Dunkel proposal used for reforming the negative economic system will prove fatal to our agricultural economy. The use of fertilizers in our country is lower than the world average. Good seeds, fertilizers, and machinery are important for improving agricultural production. All these need capital, therefore, subsidies are very important for agricultural and rural development. Small and medium level farmers lack capital. The future of Indian farming depends on these small farmers. Ending the subsidy for fertilizers will regress our farming. Small and marginal farmers will not be able to use modern agricultural implements, fertilizers, and pesticides. Their production will go down. Because of the lack of capital, the small and marginal farmers will lose their farms and join the increasing army of farm laborers. This will lead to a famine-like situation in our country, and we will have to import grains at high rates.

Indian farmers have united and strongly opposed the control of seeds by large companies and have asked for protection under property rights. The Karnataka Rayyet Sangh has started a strong opposition to these international companies with its demand from the company to quit India in front of the Cargil Seeds head office in Bangalore in December. These international companies are establishing their monopoly over food grain trade. The farmers will lose the right to register or sell their seeds under the plant breeders' right rule. For centuries, Indian farmers have been saving a small part of their grains for seeds for use next year. The advanced seeds helped bring the Green Revolution to India. If the right of the farmers to refine their seeds is given to the international companies, the Indian farming will regress. The seeds that were sold for 100 rupees a kilogram will be sold for 600 rupees per kilogram. The small and marginal farmers have a hard time saving money for the expensive fertilizers, tractors, harvesting paddy, and other labor. They cannot use the tractors, harvesters, and pump sets even when they are available. Is not the future of our farming endangered by the international companies because of the issue of seeds ownership? Not only

this, the research done on seeds will be patented. The future of these research centers is also in danger and the Indian farming will be used to meet the needs of other countries. These international companies will be able to establish their supremacy in India and will sell dangerous chemical fertilizers and low-grade seeds at high prices in India. This way, the helpless Indian farmer will become a puppet in the hands of these international companies. The farmers all over the world are opposing this colonial system. This conspiracy hatched by international companies will uproot the farmers in developing and advanced countries.

Businessmen View 'Global Export Strategies'

93AS0755I Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
4 Apr 93 p 3

[Article: "Steady Rupee Sign of Global Confidence: US Consul"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Bangalore, April 3—The relatively small depreciation of the rupee during the past year reflected the confidence of the international markets in Indian goods and services, the U.S. Consul General, Ms. Ernestine Heck, said today.

Speaking at the inaugural session of the seminar on "Global export strategies" organised by the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce here, Ms. Heck said that depreciating the value of one's currency was but a step in an elaborate and sometimes befuddling attempt to promote exports. It was a step that can be taken by the Government, she said, and added that, the actual value of one's currency was, however, ultimately determined by the financial markets.

India and the United States, traditionally domestic-oriented economies, have the capacity to become large exporters, she observed.

She pointed out that India was the beneficiary of the many steps taken by the U.S. Government to encourage more U.S. exports. Observing that the U.S. was undergoing major budget cuts, she hoped that President Clinton would continue to support the departments promoting U.S. interests abroad.

Delivering the keynote address, EXIM BANK Chairman and Managing Director Kalyan Bannerji said that the division of labour was now across the boundaries and not limited to the shop-floor.

He said the day was not far when the foreign companies would compete on the Indian soil. India was quick in absorbing technologies when compared with other comparable nations, he said. The next one year would be a preparatory stage for adopting strategies to overcome fragmentation at the national level, he felt.

Presenting a paper on "Globalisation of Consumer products: an Indian perspective," Mr. Bipin Shah, former Chairman of Lipton India Limited, said the global trade

today stood at \$3.7 trillion of which the Indian share was less than 0.15 per cent at \$20 billion.

He felt that the promotion of Indian exports would not only alleviate the balance of trade problem but also enable the country to import goods and services desperately required for an accelerated development.

Even with the limited exports, the country had largely remained commodity suppliers to the international buyers. India's tea exports was to the extent of 220 million kg every year, while the share of branded tea was just 10 per cent.

Mr. Shah felt that Indian brands should establish themselves to play a critical role in the future. People by large were constantly seeking tangible and intangible benefits in the products and when a company builds a brand, it was creating for itself an asset, he added.

In his paper on export marketing strategies, Mr. V. Balaraman, Managing Director of Pond's India Limited, said Indian economic efforts had traditionally been directed at self-sufficiency and indigenisation and exports had received little attention.

Any export promoting strategy should take cognisance of currency fluctuations and manage them to emerge a winner, he said.

Dr. Singh Opposes Monopoly of Multinationals

93AS0755J Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
4 Apr 93 p 9

[Article: "Manmohan Not for Monopoly of MNCs in India"]

[Text] Jaipur, April 3 (PTI)—Finance Minister Manmohan Singh today said the Government will not allow multinationals to gain monopoly in the Indian market and domestic investment will be the main determinant of Indian investment.

Addressing a press conference here, he said the pace of reforms would not be in accordance with the pleasure of foreign investors but what suited India's interest.

The labour laws of the country would not be changed as foreign investors wanted but would be done keeping the interest of the working class in mind, Dr Singh said.

He said that to prevent any irregularities in the banking system, the supervisory role of the Reserve Bank of India [RBI] has been strengthened and more power delegated to the Securities Exchange Board of India.

The reserves of the country had reached 6.5 billion dollars due to the new economic measures adopted by the Government, the Minister said.

He said India has to increase its export growth rate to have a strong place in the world economy. The new economic measures would improve the export performance of the country. The two to three billion dollars

which earlier went into hawala market would now flow into the official channel, he said.

Referring to the 1993-94 budget, Dr Singh said it would improve the climate for industrial growth and development.

New Economic Growth Forecast in Punjab

93AS0768C Calcutta *THE STATESMAN (Supplement)*
in English 13 Apr 93 p 1

[Article by Aynohita Mojumdar: "Season of Renewal Ushers in Fresh Hope"]

[Text] Year-end is the time for stock-taking, and for the farming community in India the festival of Baisakhi is a season of renewal and hope, and for gathering the fruits of their labour. However, for the people of Punjab Baisakhi assumes a greater significance this year and the gains have been more than ordinarily welcome, since they have come out of what has been several years of a painful existence of struggle and sacrifice in a battle-weary land.

Punjab, one of the most fertile states in the country, crossed by two rivers, has been the home of the prosperous farming community. Ravaged during Partition, the community fought back against all odds, with families migrating often with nothing but the clothes on their backs.

Living in refugee camps, hoping for the return of family members who had disappeared, the community fought back against the blow, and starting from scratch rebuilt their lives, their businesses, to emerge as one of the richest in the country.

The State saw the Green Revolution in the 1960s catapult it to attain the position of the richest agricultural community and the land of plenty as agricultural yields doubled and trebled leaving the rest of the country stunned. However it was a prosperity that was to be short-lived as political maneuvers pushed the state into an abyss, from where few people hoped it would be able to emerge.

The Punjabis are known for their hard work, enterprise and their legendary capacity to live life to its fullest to the rest of the country. It is however a capacity that has taken a battering in the past several years, where every citizen of the State has lived in a situation of uncertainty and many have seen their kith and kin succumb to the terrorists' bullets.

Families and homes have been ravaged, and those who have survived have done so with great difficulty their lives severely curtailed. Movement within the State has been difficult, work has been nearly impossible and the small entrepreneurs have often succumbed to the pressure of terrorists and fled from the State.

For the rest of the country, the name of Punjab has become synonymous with that of terror, and killings which once hogged the headlines were later relegated as routine news. However, in the past one year the situation has undergone a sea of change and the people of the State

have seen the restoration of law and order, and the reawakening of hope tentatively.

The year has been one which has seen a resurgence of life, work, hopes, and above all, of normalcy. The people of Punjab, recognised all over for their hardiness and their willingness to work, have shown that despite their lives having been a struggle against odds, they have managed to recover from a decade of struggle which would have cowed down any other people, exhibiting what is perhaps their best known characteristic, the desire to survive.

Though their lives and homes have been ravaged by the shadow of terror hanging over them for so long, the people have used the opportunities placed before them this year to resurrect their lives and to build up their hopes. Rather than complaining about the injustices done to them, and looking back on their losses, they have only looked forward to the promise of a better future, which they must build themselves.

The development of agriculture and industry has been on a rapid scale this year putting the economy of the State back on the rails.

The determination of the people of Punjab to build up their lives and achieve self-sufficiency is reflected in the enthusiasm of Mr Karam Singh Gill, the State Industries Minister.

Mr Gill states that the Centre is obliged to help the State and pull it out of the doldrums it had sunk into in the past one decade since what the State was facing was not a problem that was limited to the State, but a problem of the country as a whole, the problem of terrorism.

Mr Gill feels that Capital investment in the State has already increased greatly and there is no dearth of finance for the setting up of new units. While the emphasis is bound to be on agro-based industries since the economy of the State is primarily agricultural, all industries are to be encouraged in the State.

The State, he points out already has the reputation of being the leader in the textile industry in the country, and has come to be known as the Manchester of India. Woollens, electronics, motorparts, are industries that already have a base in the state, and the attempt now will be to encourage hi-tech industries. In the coming years Mr Gill envisages the rapid growth of technical and skilled manpower.

A reflection of the regeneration of the State's economy, Mr Gill feels is the increase in the price of land, which has nearly doubled in the past one year. The proposal to award dual citizenship will also be a major step, as it would encourage capital investment in the state greatly.

Even as the State Government makes all out efforts, setting up development schemes, providing financial help to entrepreneurs, and building up the marketing and warehousing facilities for agriculture, it is the people of the State, who individually and collectively take the

State forward as they build their own lives. Willing to take the risk of investing in business, of building homes, they exhibit a faith in themselves and the capacity for survival which makes Punjab, once a synonym for terrorism provide an example of the survival of humanity and hope to the entire country.

1993-94 Budget Critically Examined

93AS0765A New Delhi JANSATTA in Hindi 9 Apr 93 p 6

[Article by Rudra Dutt: "The Budget's Facts and Myths"]

[Text] Finance Minister Manmohan Singh has asserted that the proposed budget will reduce the expectations of inflation, change the 1992-93 uncertainty about industrial rebuilding into a strong resurrection in 1993-94 year, limit the 1992-93 non-developmental spending, accelerate the tax reform plans, give full support to agriculture, and provide a form of a national campaign to encourage exports.

In order to stimulate an increase in exports, he has proposed a standard exchange system and has decided to revoke the 1992-93 policy of double exchange rate involving the 6:40 ratio formula. While supporting the appropriateness of full convertibility, the finance minister said, "The partial convertibility hurts the exporters and other foreign exchange earners who have to get government exchange rate for 40 percent of their income and can use the higher market rate only for the 60 percent of their earnings. Therefore, the government has decided to end this double exchange rate policy. All exporters and those working abroad earning foreign exchange will have permission to exchange their total earnings at the market rate. At the same time importers will also have to pay the market rate."

The finance minister has also proposed a reduction in import duty and has admitted that we will lose Rupees [Rs] 32.73 billion in import duty. The finance minister justified the cuts in import duty and said, "Even after the adjustments made in our import duty rates during the last two years, these rates, especially on investments, are higher than most of our competitors. Because of these duty rates and the resulting high costs of investments, our manufactures will not be able to compete in the world markets."

It is important to analyze the trap of full conversion into which our finance minister has pushed us. In 1992-93, the government imports will cost \$8.5 billion—six billion on petroleum and petroleum products, one billion on fertilizers, and another \$15 billion on defense imports. These imports are figured at the present exchange rate of Rs 26 to a dollar. Since the market exchange rate for the dollar is Rs 32, there will be an additional burden of six rupees per dollar. This additional burden is based on the supposition that the going rate for dollar exchange is Rs 32. At this rate, the same level of import will cost us \$10.5 billion. In other words, our nation will have to pay an additional \$2 billion.

However, if the rupee is further devalued and a dollar costs Rs 35 to 40, as many international observers believe, the additional burden of imports will increase even more.

The argument given to reduce import duty is to make Indian industries more competitive and give up the protective import tariffs. Its goal is to facilitate foreign and Indian investment. In other words, we can say that our finance minister wants to adopt an export-oriented economic policy in order to develop self-dependence instead of forming a strategy of reducing imports. Reducing the import duty will help the foreign competitors to introduce their products into the Indian market and will also help push out our domestic products. Since the industrialized nations, especially the United States, are going through a recession, this policy will help them increase their imports to India. The World Bank and the IMF are being encouraged to issue huge loans to India to enable it to import more. How can we explain why India's imports during the first nine months of 1992-93 fiscal year have increased to \$16.63 billion compared to \$14.24 billion during the same period in the 1991-92 fiscal year? This is an increase of 16.5 percent in one year. Compared to it, the exports increased from \$12.64 billion to \$13.08 billion during the corresponding period—a mere 3.4 percent increase. The trade deficit of \$1.63 billion in 1991-92 more than doubled to \$35.5 billion in the 1992-93 fiscal year. All this is happening because developed nations have forced India to reduce import tariffs in the name of internationalizing our economy and are hurting our industrialization efforts. Professor Prabhat Patnayak, while explaining the predicament we are in because of the decision of full convertibility, writes that the reduction in import duty will make it easier for foreign competitors to push out our domestic products from the market. Now the government is saying that this kind of harm to our domestic industry will not happen. However, if the rupee continues to lose value, as most of the economists and businessmen believe, then the effect of the reduction in the import tariff will be nullified. This will result in inflation.

Forty percent of our exports are from small industries, and our budget has not given any incentive to small industries. All it said was that the upper limit for investment in small industries will be increased from Rs 750,000 to Rs one million. However, this increase would become meaningless because of the increase in prices effected in 1990. The second recommendation that exempts production taxes up to Rs 3 million is commendable. It would have been a lot better if the finance minister had offered cheaper loans to help these industries. This would have definitely encouraged exports and increased employment in this labor-centered sector. However, the finance minister had decided to reduce production taxes for products for urban areas regardless of the high quality of their products. How can the small industries sector benefit from the finance minister's appropriations in such a situation?

The second strategy the finance minister has used is reduction in production taxes. Production taxes on automobile, television, refrigeration, and air conditioning industries have been reduced to help their development. Production taxes on products such as talcum powder, shampoo, shaving cream, and face cream, that make the lives of middle and prosperous classes more comfortable and lustrous have been reduced from 120.75 percent to 75 percent. This gamble will cost the government treasury Rs 12.49 billion. It is feared that the manufacturers will not pass this profit onto the consumers. This fear is unfounded in industries that involve change, as is evident from the announced price decreases by the automobile industry. The government is pressuring the manufacturers and builders to reduce the prices of consumer goods. This is happening now. This pressure should be continued so that the manufacturer can make more profit by higher sales. The finance minister hopes to earn Rs 337.5 billion in production taxes in the 1993-94 fiscal year after losing Rs 12.49 billion in taxes now. In the 1992-93 fiscal year, Rs 325 billion were earned in production taxes. This is an acceptable situation.

The finance minister's claim that the inflation rate was reduced from 17 percent in 1991 to seven percent is only half true. Actually the inflation rate was only 13.6 percent, according to the wholesale price index in 1991-92, which has fallen to below seven percent in January 1993. However, prices of sugar, grains, and coal are expected to increase before the budget session because of the government's announced increases. These items affect the economy greatly and also are very important to the wholesale price index. The big increase in railway fares to raise Rs 1.84 billion for the government affect industrial prices in all areas. According to the National Council of Economic Research, there will be a 9-10 percent increase over the pre-budget prices. The country suffers 10 percent inflation in a year when there are good rains and record agricultural production and have strict economic discipline. This gives us some feeling of relief; however, as the finance minister has said it would be a mistake to become complacent in such a situation.

The 1992-93 budget emphasized a reduction of all major subsidies. The subsidies for food grains, fertilizers, to encourage exports were Rs 122.9 billion in the 1991-92 fiscal year. These were reduced to Rs 89.87 billion in the 1992-93 fiscal year. However, another estimate shows that these subsidies will increase to Rs 106.08 billion, an increased burden of Rs 16.21 billion. Finance Minister Manmohan Singh may have limited the subsidies to Rs 78.750 billion in the 1993-94 budget; however, because of the unanimous recommendation to continue subsidies for fertilizers, which passed in the chief ministers conference, his projection in this area will prove to be an underestimate. The finance minister can be successful in reducing the subsidies to an extent because the government has decided to increase prices of food grains. However, because of the pressure from the farm lobby, the finance minister has no choice but to provide subsidies to purchase fertilizers.

The finance minister, who is also a respected economist, has zealously claimed in his speech, "We have proved wrong those professional prophets who had forecasted unemployment for millions of people." What solid proof has he offered to support this statement? We can study the statistics for employment available from the analyses done on the 1991-92 and 1992-93 budget years. Is the government deliberately hiding the facts, or has the labor ministry failed to compile these statistics? The finance minister would know more about it.

The idea of "initial deficit" was introduced first time in the 1992-93 budget, and the hint that, if the interest expenses were separated from the budget, an initial surplus of Rs 30.41 billion would be created in the 1993-94 budget. Thus, Manmohan Singh claimed that, if there was this initial deficit of Rs 42.22 billion in the 1992-93 budget, this would be changed to a surplus of Rs 10.41 billion in the 1993-94 budget. This surplus is an indicator of the success of government's economic planning.

According to economic experts, the strategy formed by the finance ministry is ideologically flawed. The interest paid by the government is deducted from the budget, but the interest earned by the government from loans issued to various agencies are added here. This is wrong and the interest should be deducted from the treasury deficit.

The lower estimate for the budget deficit has resulted by two reasons. First, the finance ministry has no provision in its budget to include payments made for dearness allowances. The salaries, allowance, and travel expenses of the central government staff will increase to Rs 145.75 billion in 1993-94 fiscal year. This is Rs 11.13 billion more than the amount spent in 1992-93. The estimate for additional dearness allowance for the next year will cost an additional Rs 10 billion. Therefore, the usual increase in salaries and allowances will cost an additional Rs 21.13 billion. Since no provision was made in the budget for it, the budget deficit is still underestimated.

The increasing burden of interest is forcing the government to curtail its expenses in other areas. Since the government has failed in reducing expenses in the non-productivity areas, various ministries have found ways to protect themselves. They have started to use planned budget monies in non-productivity areas. As we fail to reduce using borrowed money (domestic and foreign) to pay interest, we have to reduce non-plan related expenses as well as expenses reserved for planned productions.

However, if India continues to borrow blindly and fails to create a surplus in its operating budget, the assumption that India will join the rank of low-income nations with heavy debts is becoming stronger. This is a very dangerous situation, but also a bitter truth.

Bengalis Said Harassed by Police in Delhi

93AS0775A Calcutta SUNDAY in English 17 Apr 93 p 37

[Article by Priya Sahgal: "Midnight Knocks"; italicized words and quotation marks as published]

[Text] Abdul Hashim, a tailor, has been living in Jehangirpuri, a Delhi suburb, for the past 30 years. Last fortnight, however, he was in for a shock. Policemen from the local *thana* raided his house, picked him up and threw him in a lock-up. He was there for 52 hours, and released after great trouble.

Hashim faces two problems: he is a Muslim, and he speaks Bengali. That seemed to be enough for Delhi's cops to make him out to be an illegal Bangladeshi immigrant, and make attempts to throw him out of the country. Today, in the capital's Seelampuri, Jehangirpuri, Seemapuri and Welcome Colony areas, thousands of indigenous Bengalis are being wrongly identified as Bangladeshi nationals and maltreated like Hashim.

Hannan Mollah, a CPI(M) [Communist Party of India (Marxist)] MP [Member of Parliament] from West Bengal, raised the matter in Parliament. "The police are not stopping at identifying the Bangladeshis and deporting them," he said, "they are harassing any Bengali-speaking resident of these areas, regardless of whether they are Bangladeshis or Bengalis from West Bengal."

People are being dragged out of their houses at night, subjected to threats, abuses and even beatings in police stations, and forced to identify themselves as Bangladeshis—despite the fact that most of them have been living in Delhi for the past 30-40 years, and even hold ration cards.

Names are even being struck off the electoral rolls. When some residents of Seelampur complained about this, they were fobbed off with the excuse that the concerned department had run out of inclusion forms.

On 21 March, at least 100 people from Jehangirpuri's C Block were 'arrested' by the police. Out of them, only 25 have been released so far. And 5 families from the J Block are missing as well.

Horror stories abound. Abdul Hussein was woken up at 3 am. "Four men came and kicked open the door. My wife and I were both woken up with abuses. We were not even allowed to change our clothes, or go to the toilet," narrates Hussein.

Even his one-year-old son was not spared. "The policemen kicked him whenever he cried," said Hussein, who was released after three days of imprisonment. "No proof was asked from me. I was only asked which district of Bangladesh I was from. I am not from Bangladesh, but from Murshidabad in West Bengal."

Protima Halder was woken up at 6 am. Her husband was away on a business trip. "But the police did not believe me. They thought I was hiding him somewhere. They dragged me down the stairs by my hair," she recounted. Protima was locked up along with her child till 9 pm. She and her husband are from Bihar.

Although the majority of those being harassed are Muslims, there are instances of even Hindus being whisked away by the police. The priest from Jehangirpuri's Kali

temple is one of them. "He was woken up at 3 am, and taken away. My mother and 15-year-old brother were also dragged off," sobbed his daughter. Interestingly, a local Muslim, Alauddin Mullick, testified for him: "The family has been staying here for the past 40 years. They are definitely not Bangladeshis."

No one is being spared, including children and pregnant women. Rumours of rape are also doing the rounds. There is no trace of a young widow, and four unmarried girls who were taken away a week ago.

The station house officer (SHO) of Jehangirpuri, Ishwar Singh, however, maintains that only the genuine Bangladeshis are being detained and deported. "The others are set free, after they have proved that they are from West Bengal," he claimed.

"Ration cards are not regarded as valid proofs," the SHO clarified. "They have to furnish proof of property owned in West Bengal, or some other concrete evidence. We just deported 75 people on 30 March."

"The question is not really whether they are actually from Bangladesh or from West Bengal," said Dr. Roy Burman, a noted anthropologist. "Basic human values are being violated by the way these people are being manhandled by the police. I am sure a more humane method of identifying and deporting the Bangladeshis can be found," he maintained.

Importance of Verdict Involving Muslim Personal Law Viewed

93AS0775C Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
19 Apr 93 p 7

[Editorial: "Secular Justice"; italicized words as published]

[Text] If verdicts by the Aurangabad and Jabalpur high courts had not monopolised the limelight two cases where Muslim Personal Law [MPL] came into conflict with India's secular legal code would have attracted the attention they deserve. The decision of the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad high court to require a Muslim husband to pay a monthly maintenance to his divorced wife will disappoint those who see the misnamed Muslim Women's (Protection of Right on Divorce) Act 1986 as an obstacle to minority progress. As it stands the verdict undermines the legislative fallout of the Shah Bano case. But the All India Muslim Personal Law Board's appeal is almost sure to succeed. The Hameedan case in its initial phase was merely a case of a husband's neglect. It became linked to the Shah Bano controversy only later when the husband divorced her, an act he had not bothered to do before abandoning her. With the divorce the 1986 act is almost sure to prevail unless the review court indulges in some legal jugglery. The case does provide a stark reminder that the act is a scourge on Indian Muslim women. Its presence in the law books contradicts the concept of progress India has striven for since independence.

If the Hameedan ruling has reopened questions on the Muslim Women's Act, a recent judgment of the Bombay high court has served to weaken the underpinnings of the MPL. The justices in effect decided the Indian Penal Code's [IPC] clauses protecting minors took precedence over any interpretation of the *Shariat* that defended the right of a post-puberty girl to marry. As it is the defendant's claim the MPL was on his side was questionable as child marriage is not specifically endorsed in the *Quran*. What makes the Bombay judgment significant is the decision to declare the IPC the final authority in the dispute. In effect whatever the personal law may say, there are certain basic rights that are of greater import. This leaves even the original Shah Bano judgment in the shade. That verdict was based on a liberal interpretation of the *Shariat*. This verdict implicitly states that in the absence of a uniform civil code, there is a uniform yardstick or social progress.

There has been a muted reaction to the Bombay judgment. Possibly its implications have yet to be fully recognised. Probably it is overshadowed by the largely political conflict between the secular and fundamentalist Hindu. However Indian Muslims who feel threatened by such judicial activism should keep in mind that the judges are only reflecting mainstream opinion of what constitutes social justice. Reacting by calling for new laws of the likes of the Muslim Women's Act will have two main consequences. One is to force the community into ever more rigid definitions of Muslim law, depriving it of the liberal and humanitarian face of Islam. The other is to provide grist to the saffron mill and the *sangh parivar*'s claim Muslims are by definition outside the pale.

Muslims Reportedly Demonstrate Against Showing of Bible Serial

93AS0775B Calcutta *THE TELEGRAPH* in English
20 Apr 93 p 4

[Text] Srinagar (Reuter): Six persons were killed and four injured in Kashmir on April 19, when paramilitary police opened fire on students demonstrating against a television serial about the Bible.

The paramilitary police turned their guns on some 500 protesters marching towards a sandbagged bunker in Sopore town, 30 miles northwest of Srinagar, police and witnesses said.

Four students and two horsecart drivers were killed when the police returned fire from armed militants mingling with the demonstrators.

The students in India's only Muslim-majority State were protesting against a weekly Sunday morning telecast of "Bible Ki Kahania" on State-run television.

The serial, which has been televised for the past four months throughout India, was suspended for a brief period last month for what Indian authorities said were technical reasons.

Muslims in Kashmir say biblical figures such as Abraham and Jesus are also revered as prophets in Islam, which says the human depiction of them as blasphemous.

Jamiat-ul-Mujahideen, the pro-Pakistani militant group, has launched an arson campaign against the serial, setting fire to at least 20 official cars and half-dozen government buildings in the Himalayan State over the past two week.

A government employees' union, in a written petition issued on April 18, also demanded the serial be taken off the air because it "hurt the sentiments of Muslims."

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